Abstract

Sharon O’Brien
School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Dublin City University

Is “reinvention” rational? Explorations on the reinvention of translation studies

According to a recent Financial Times article: “Work is impermanent — reinvention is rational”. It has been written that translation is “the second-oldest profession” in the world and this is sometimes implicitly accompanied by an assumption that it will continue to prevail. However, the question has been raised on more than one occasion recently as to whether translation as a profession and translation studies, as they exist today, will survive into the future. Will translation survive the AI age and is reinvention a crucial component for its survival? In my contribution, I will present the context of the programmes we deliver at DCU and the pressure points we currently face, especially given the rise of AI and technologies such as Google Translate. These pressure points include, to name a few, numbers of students, operating in a STEM-prioritised university environment, increasing competition on the national level, public perception of AI, students’ language and cultural competence, and even cost of living. I will also consider the recent role of the EMT competence framework in moulding our programmes, and whether or not this is future proof. Turning then to some of the burning questions, I will ask whether and how to reinvent ‘translation studies’ to cater for the changing career landscapes of the future. Linked to this is how to capture, measure and communicate the value of technology-assisted human translation, as well as the role research can play in informing such value.