

*Abstract for a guest lecture at the Mutra Doktorandenkolloquium, University of Saarland, 29 October 2010*

### **Capturing translation processes**

Maureen Ehrensberger-Dow & Peter Jud  
Institute for Translation and Interpreting  
Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Winterthur

What do translators do when they translate and do they know why they're doing it? Recent research findings have provided insights into the cognitive processes and linguistic resources involved in translation work, but the constraints imposed by the experimental techniques and settings as well as the limited number of participants in some of these studies have meant that their implications for practising translators and translation education are not always clear. The *Capturing Research Processes* project attempts to address some of these shortcomings. It is a large-scale longitudinal study designed to capture the translation processes of students, novices, and experienced professionals at different points in their careers.

The multi-method approach we use in the project is as naturalistic and non-invasive as possible. It combines ethnographic observation of the workplace, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, computer logging, screenshot recordings, and cue-based retrospective verbalizations. In addition, selected translation processes are recorded in a controlled setting using eye-tracking technology to gain more information about the distribution of attentional resources during translation. The combination of techniques in our approach opens a window onto the mind of translators and releases hidden expert knowledge, allowing inferences to be made about the practices and strategies that guide translation processes, considerations translators might make, and the awareness translators have of what they are doing.

We will present a brief overview of the results of the project so far in order to provide an indication of the types of research questions that translation process techniques can address.

### **Background readings**

Ehrensberger-Dow, Maureen & Alexander Künzli, 2010, Methods of accessing metalinguistic awareness: a question of quality?. In: Göpferich, Susanne, Fabio Alves, & Inger M. Mees (eds), *New Approaches in Translation Process Research*. (Copenhagen Studies in Language 39). Copenhagen: Samfundslitteratur. 113-132.

Göpferich, Susanne (2008). *Translationsprozessforschung. Stand - Methoden - Perspektiven*. Tübingen: Narr.

Göpferich, Susanne & Jääskeläinen, Riitta (2009). Process research into the development of translation competence: Where are we, and where do we need to go? *Across Languages and Cultures* 10/2, 169-191.

Hansen, Gyde (2010). Integrative description of translation processes. In: Shreve, Gregory M. & Angelone, Erik (eds): *Translation and Cognition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 189-211.

Hurtado Albir, Amparo & Alves, Fabio (2009). Translation as a cognitive activity. In: Munday, Jeremy (ed): *The Routledge Companion to Translation Studies*. London: Routledge, 54-73.

Massey, Gary & Maureen Ehrensberger-Dow, 2010, Investigating demands on language professionals. *Bulletin suisse de linguistique appliquée* (Special issue), 2010/1, 127-141.