



## MIGRATION AND SELF-TRANSLATION: The Case of a Brazilian Linguist at a University in the United States

MARIA ALICE G.  
ANTUNES

### 1. Introduction

Self-translation of academic writing, or academic self-translation, has only recently become an area of interest. This is why the number of studies on literary self-translation far outnumbers the ones on academic self-translation. This condition, however, is slowly changing. Research on the topic is growing (Jung 2002, Polezzi 2006 and 2012, Chan 2016, Pisanski Peterlin 2018, Bennett 2020, Antunes 2022). *Migrating Histories of Art. Self-Translations of a Discipline* is the latest publication that organizes reflections on academic self-translation made by «migrating experts» (Fleckner 2019: 8).

The practice is not recent although its history has not been told in detail. As we will see in Santoyo (2005) and Peñalver (2011) in the paragraph that follows, those writers who produced scientific papers and translated them themselves were not regarded as academic self-translators or as self-translators of scientific texts. Nor were the papers, essays, and monographs they wrote deemed as academic or scientific self-translations. Santoyo (2005) does not introduce the works of those we today would call academic self-translators and their self-translations of scientific texts in his history of self-translation. Likewise, Peñalver (2011) also does not present the same category of self-translators and self-translations as academic self-translators. Nevertheless, we accept the risk of an anachronic analysis as we view some self-translated texts as academic self-translations and understand their contribution to the circulation of knowledge.



Among the academic self-translators and self-translations introduced by Santoyo (2005: 860), we can find Abraham Bar Hiyya (1065-1145) and his *Fundamentos de la inteligencia y torre de la fe*, which he self-translated from Arabic into Hebrew. According to Santoyo, it is the first Hebrew encyclopedia about mathematics, astronomy, optics, and music (2005: 860). In addition, Peñalver mentions the Portuguese mathematician Pedro Nunes (1502-1578), who translated his *Livro de Algebra* into Spanish (Peñalver 2011: 195). Santoyo also mentions Jean Bodin, a European jurist, who translated his *Les six livres de la Republique* into Latin: *De Republica libri sex* (Santoyo 2005: 862).

The history of academic self-translation has continued over the centuries. Nevertheless, it has been disguised behind the general term *self-translation*. It is not difficult to understand why this has happened. Self-translation in itself is an issue that only recently attracted the attention of scholars as an area of research. Santoyo mentions that in 2000, self-translation was «una parcela menor en el ámbito de la traductología, un rincón olvidado, silenciado, obviado, ni siquiera mencionado por los más presitiosos estudios y especialistas» (Grutman, Sportuno 2022: 228)<sup>1</sup>. It is long overdue that we reflect on other relevant issues, such as: the practices of academics who translate their papers and monographs and, among those, the migrants who have become faculty members in foreign universities and self-translate to be recognized by their peers for their scientific capital (Bourdieu 2003).

This article begins by highlighting the relationship between migration and translation, focusing on researchers and their self-translation of academic papers, regarded as «the prime vehicle for scholarly communication» (Van Bonn, Swales 2007: 94). This is a neglected area of research, with no publications being found on the specific topic of foreign language writing by migrant scholars. Most research on migration and translation shows interest in contexts such as «refugees, labor migration, forced migration» (Bachmann-Medick, Kugele 2018). The reasons why foreign language writing by migrant scholars, or academic self-translation, have not been discussed so far are unclear. For practical reasons, it is not the purpose of this paper to delve into this issue.

<sup>1</sup> “A completely minor area in the field of translatology, a forgotten corner, silenced, ignored, not even mentioned by the most prestigious studies and specialists” (the translation of the original version in Spanish is mine – M.A.A.).

Next, I present a broad overview of research on academic self-translation. The following section presents the methodology applied during the analysis of the interview with a Brazilian female scholar, Teresa, – one of the «privileged migrants» (Bachmann-Medick, Federici 2019: 136). This section is followed by the results of the investigation, highlighting the particularities of the case studied. Finally, I conclude with some remarks and suggestions for future research.

## 2. Migration and translation

In migration contexts, translation cannot be analyzed from a narrow perspective, that is, «bound to an original text» (Bachmann-Medick 2019: 134). Bachmann-Medick argues in favor of a translational turn, in which translation is redefined as a process that «comes to embody a broad cultural and social practice, a cultural technique or *modus operandi* in world society» (ibid.) and which is regarded as «an essential medium for global relations and exchange» (Bachmann-Medick 2013: 199). In migration contexts, translation is thus a social practice and part of everyday life. It involves several explicit forms of interaction and «negotiation of complex cultural, economic, political boundaries – and linguistic mobility is a key strategic tool in such processes» (Polezzi 2006: 79). A narrow concept of translation does not encompass these kinds of processes brought into play when the mobility of people is involved (Polezzi 2012, Bachmann-Medick 2019). It does not cover, for example, what happens when a migrant (like Teresa) participates in a selection process for an Applied Linguistics position at an American university in which they would have to teach a class on a topic they had only read about in their native language. During this process, they would likely need to resort to mentally translating that content as the class would be taught in English. It is likely that during the class, they would also have to resort to mental self-translation when retrieving specific terms or structures. The migrant who applies for the position may also have to do a written exam in English, involving another type of broad translation (Chan 2016). In other words, they may have to perform mental translations and write in a foreign language, which in this text will be termed “self-translation”. These are just a few situations encountered when academic self-translation is investigated. Chan (2016) – an academic self-translator

who investigates the use of English as the *lingua academica* in China – also considers the narrow notion of translation, which the author deems as insufficient to address the journey of knowledge across languages. He regards foreign language writing as self-translation, as we will see in the next section of this article. These broad or non-linear forms of translation, as Polezzi terms them,

are common in migration contexts and include all of those cases – and perhaps these too are the norm, rather than the exception – where source and target text interact in more complex ways: at times because one does not simply precede the other, or does not even exist; or because the two cannot be neatly separated; or, often, because the initial translation continues to generate further transpositions, back-translations, and reverberations (Polezzi 2012: 350).

Research into such broader forms of translation and the agents of translation (migrants or otherwise) who operate in the context of migration is scarce. That being so, this study explores the field of academic self-translation and the migrant scholars-cum-self-translators who work (or worked) in the American academic context. However, it should be noted that narrow translation, that is, the type of translation in which a target text is «bound to an original text» (Bachmann-Medick 2019: 134), is also present in academia (Antunes 2022) and in migrant (novel) writing (Polezzi 2006).

In a recent study (Antunes 2022), I demonstrated the use of narrow forms of translation in academic writing, focusing on publications by professors of French and French literature in Brazil, who write papers in Portuguese, self-translate them into French, and publish the two side by side on the web page of an online academic journal. All of this demonstrates what a complex phenomenon translation in the context of migration is, involving many forms of (self-)translation, both narrow and broad.

### 3. Academic self-translation

Most studies on self-translation understand it in two different ways. A narrow understanding of self-translation regards it as «the translation of an original work into another language by the author himself» (Popovic 1976: 19). Meanwhile, a broad understanding regards self-translation as a type of mental translation, as it happens in second or foreign language

writing (Chan 2016). In migration studies, self-translation is understood as the reshaping of writers' identities (Grutman, Van Bolderen 2014), while in postcolonial intercultural writing, it is seen as the «representation of the Self in the language of the Other» (Bandia 2008: 3).

This study focuses on academic self-translation and approaches it from a broad perspective, as there is no source text per se, making any neat separation of source text and translation impossible. Besides, the initial written texts continue to generate products such as abstracts, oral presentations in seminars, classes in undergraduate courses and graduate programs, and, to a certain extent, the interview for this investigation.

### Self-translation from a broad perspective

In an article for Chinese research in English, Leo Chan (2016) presents choices made by Chinese academics over the previous two decades: self-translation or writing in a second or foreign language, with or without a collaborator; translation by a third party, which results in a second text; and, non-translation, which represents resistance to English, the *lingua franca* of science and the hegemonic language (Chan 2016: 153). Both narrow and broad translations are thus used for scientific dissemination by Chinese scholars. The push for writing in English means Chinese scholars have to «choose between two forms of translation: writing in their second language, in effect, self-translating, or having their work translated into English by somebody else» (Chan 2016: 153). In his article, Chan points to the large number of articles published in English in China. The arguments in favor of taking an «English only» approach to publication include the fact that it enables the research results to reach an international audience, rather than being restricted to a national readership (Chan 2016: 155). Indeed, Chan argues that researchers who are not competent in academic written English are at a disadvantage in the global marketplace of scientific knowledge exchange. Chan draws on the ideas of Suresh Canagarajah, who elucidates the differences «between “center scholars” and “peripheric scholars” and elaborates at length on the unfairness created by the promotion of a primary language in research» (Chan 2016: 158).

For Chan (2016: 166), when an author writes an academic article in English, in a second or foreign language, he «translates mentally and his original is the translation» (2016: 166). In addition, Chan views academic writing as self-translation because it shows interference from the mother tongue: «the transference, or “translation”, of generic features from first-

language writing is thus undeniable, making such writing “self-translation”» (2016: 162). Moreover, because there is no source text, it differs from strict translation (i.e., narrow translation). Mother tongue interference in self-translated texts could also be one of the causes of Belcher’s (2007: 8) affirmation that «90 percent of the negative reviews leading to the rejection of a submission by an author from [the Far East, the Near and Middle East, and Latin America/non-English speaking Europe] point to defects in language use/style». In other words, language is a crucial issue when it comes to disseminating science and research results from countries outside Europe and North America. Academic writing rejected by the gatekeepers of international journals may be one of the reasons behind the lack of visibility of Brazilian (and Latin American in general) research in the global marketplace for scientific knowledge (Finardi, França 2016, Masarani 2015).

The most recent work on academic self-translation is that of Karen Bennett. In *Authorship and self-translation in academic writing: Towards a genetic approach*, Bennett (2020) presents the recent interest in studies on self-translation, highlighting the view of self-translation in a narrow sense, as opposed to its «broader, metaphorical sense» (Bennett 2020: 236), and uses both to analyze academic self-translation. Referring to her previous studies into the strategies used by Portuguese scholars from the social sciences and humanities, she finds that the intervention of literacy brokers is the rule in their writing and publishing process (Bennett 2020: 234). She argues that scholarly output cannot be described as a binary activity involving author/translator, source text/target text, and original/translation (2020: 232), and questions the notion of single authorship, which she calls fiction. Bennett questions the role of translation and at what point in the process of global knowledge production it takes place. The author argues that self-translation is the crucial node of the investigation since it is such a «significant strategy in the dissemination» of knowledge (Bennett 2020: 234). The same study reveals that self-translation into English is a routine practice among Portuguese researchers, but that the texts are revised by a language broker (i.e. a reviewer) – usually a native speaker. Indeed, the native speaker seems to be regarded as the only language broker capable of producing a text that meets the quality standards of prestigious international journals. The foreigner – whose speaking and writing skills will bear hallmarks of their non-native status – must submit a draft article to the broker, who is often framed as superior and indispensable. For Bennett,

self-translation is «a common stage in the process of adapting research done in Portuguese for international publication» (Bennett 2020: 237).

In the same article, Bennett presents a new study focusing on academic self-translation. None of the three participants report regularly resorting to self-translation, in the narrow sense, as a strategy for knowledge dissemination. Rather, they write directly in English – i.e. they self-translate in the broad sense (Bennett 2020: 237). One relevant finding lies in the fact that the Portuguese researchers adapt their texts to suit Anglophone standards to help when the text is translated by a third party (Bennett 2020: 237). Bennett concludes that the process of publishing in another language is quite complex and involves changes of varying natures at various stages of the process, way before the interlingual translation takes place. For Bennett (2020: 239), «there is evidence that academic texts may be epistemologically adapted prior to actual translation». Other questions proposed by Bennett are: who intervenes in the text and at what point during the overall knowledge production process? Is it possible to think of a single person being responsible for linguistic and cultural transfer in a world in which people are expected to be competent and write in more than two languages? (2020: 239). Reflections inspired by Bennett's questions may lead to a more detailed and refined understanding of scholarly authorship and how it operates in the global context, including self-translation since the author is not the only person responsible for the self-translated text. Also, self-translation is not a process restricted to two stages, writing the original text first and then translating it, as the term suggests. Bennett (2020: 236) points out that further discussions may occur regarding the concepts of «collaborative self-translation» (Manterola Agirrezabalaga 2017) or «semi-autotranslation» (Dasilva 2016). As we have recently seen (Antunes 2022), multiple agents are involved in knowledge dissemination.

Bennett (2020) argues that genetic translation criticism could help build an understanding of this process by analyzing various types of materials produced by self-translators at the various stages of preparing an article. She draws on the work of Verena Jung and the notion of intertext, which for the author should include the «physical documents» (Bennett 2020: 241) and «mental operations» (Bennett 2020: 241) that are part of the «pre-stage of the original» (Jung 2002: 30). She also uses Anthony Pym's (1998) notion of interculture and describes academia as a space where «all players – researchers, teachers, authors, literacy brokers – routinely operate in a space that contains elements of at least two linguistic and episte-

mological cultures: their own, and the dominant one, as represented by English» (Bennett 2020: 242).

Bennett concludes her paper by pointing to the need to investigate the processes that follow the publication of scholarly articles. These would include, for instance, the rewriting of papers in the form of an oral presentation for a conference and its required abstract, which can be exploited in genetic translation studies and aid in understanding the evolution of these and other *post-texts* (Bennett 2020: 242).

#### 4. Methodology

A case study was conducted with a Brazilian scholar who is a «privileged migrant», insofar as she is one among «independent actors who trigger social transformations» (Bachmann-Medick 2019: 136). Teresa, 58, left Brazil in the 1990s for the United States, mainly for economic reasons. She earned her Master's and PhD degrees in the US.

Teresa lived in the United States at different times in her life. Between 1992 and 1994 she was a graduate student (earning a MA in languages) at a state university. Later, she went on to earn a PhD (in English) from the same institution in 1997. Between 1994 and 1997, she taught freshman composition at the university's Language Institute. Between 2008 and 2009, she was a professor in the Applied Linguistics program at a different state university.

She is a native speaker of Portuguese and has a high level of proficiency in English. Teresa is a respected researcher in the field of foreign language acquisition, currently researching Portuguese as a heritage language.

As a scholar keen to publicize her research among her peers, she constantly writes academic articles, participates in conferences, and gives (oral) presentations both in Portuguese and English. Teresa (self-) translates texts from/into her mother tongue or from/into English, claiming that this is an integral part of her professional and personal lives. She has extensive experience in publishing in English and is, thus, an agent of translation (Cronin 2006).

An e-mail invitation was sent to the scholar with an initial question aimed at confirming that she had experienced migration and engaged in



some form of broad translation. Once this information had been confirmed, the interview was scheduled.

An individual semi-structured interview was conducted using a videoconferencing platform, which lasted about 65 minutes. The interview script contained topics and discussion questions based on a literature review of migration, self-translation, and academic self-translation. The topics covered include the scholar's personal history of migration to the US, her experience in academic writing; how she managed to gain access to the American academic community; the characteristics of the language and the articles she produces; and the influence of English on the Portuguese papers she writes.

The interview was recorded, transcribed, and coded into themes. Issues that arose in this process were resolved through e-mail and/or WhatsApp messages exchanged with the scholar. The analysis of the transcribed interviews allowed a deeper understanding of the connection between migration and self-translation.

## **5. Results and discussion**

In this section, I present the topics raised in the interview with the scholar. The section is divided into three subsections: an introductory one, which presents the categories for describing the characteristics of the migrant scholar; a subsection on the relation between her academic life/work and self-translation; and one covering topics raised by the interviewee when presenting her views on (self-)translation.

### **The categories for description**

The categories proposed for the study of the context of the scholar's migration to the US and the relationship between migration and self-translation were based on the content of the semi-structured interview. They partly corroborate existing discussions about migration and (self-)translation (Cronin 2006; Polezzi 2006; Polezzi 2012; Inghilleri 2017; Bachmann-Medick, Kugele 2018; Bachmann-Medick 2019), but also expand on them, as we will see below. The categories are: (i) the foreign faculty (a gateway into the world of academic research); and (ii) language (self-translating into English). Let us now turn to the categories in detail.

*The foreign faculty (a gateway into the world of academic research).*

In 2008, Teresa became a faculty member at a US university. First, Teresa claims that state university professors ran a workshop for all elementary school teachers at the school where she taught foreign children, one of them being her son. The aim was to help the teachers understand what an L2 was and how to teach an L2 language class. Teresa participated in the workshop, and consequently «discovered the existence of [the] state [university]». After being invited by a professor, Teresa took two summer courses and accepted another invitation from the same professor to teach at the university's language institute.

She started her MA at the same university and began teaching «freshman composition» as a graduate student: «I integrated quite quickly, I think, because of my fluency in English... I didn't see this happening with other friends who were there». A key factor in the migration history of the Brazilian academic is her language skills. English was important for enabling her to integrate into the academic environment, thus facilitating her professional life. She started her PhD soon after her MA was completed. Both studies dealt with the problem of second language acquisition.

Teresa and her family spent some time in Brazil before being relocated to another city in the US where she worked as a translator for four years. After that, she decided to rejoin academia. She learned that an American university was searching for a professor for its Applied Linguistics program and decided to apply. At one stage of the selection process, she had to teach a class: «I taught a class on semantics. They fill the room with students and you're evaluated by the class... the students loved it and I started teaching there». Teresa remembers that among the other candidates for the job, there were two Americans and a Pole, and that the former two were vocal in their complaints that the Brazilian and the Pole were taking jobs away from Americans. However, once she had joined the institution, she did not hear any other comments of that nature. She ends her narrative about her job there saying that «my immigration experience was a happy one. I believe it has a lot to do with the language». Her high proficiency in English enabled her to interact, read, and write effectively both in day-to-day and academic settings, making it a facilitating factor in her immigration experience. Her resume reveals that her first published self-translated academic article dates to 1995. She went on publishing self-translated academic articles until 2001.

What her experience shows is that the Brazilian scholar in this case study is among the «nation's most educated» (Margollis 2013) who left Brazil in the 1980s and 1990s. Moreover, her level of proficiency is excellent as she was quickly employed at universities. Interestingly, while migration provides Brazilians with the opportunity to improve their English (Bergad 2010), it can also give those with a first degree a chance to compete for job opportunities and be recognized for their scientific capital by their peers (Bourdieu 2003).

**Language (self-translation into English).** When speaking about translation, Teresa prefers to talk about her greatest difficulty, which is «going from English to her mother tongue». As a linguistics professor who studied linguistics in English in the US, Teresa claims it is often hard to teach a linguistics class in Portuguese. At first, she says she finds it difficult to find the appropriate terminology and she spends some time trying to (mentally) translate from English into Portuguese. She adds: «The syntax of Portuguese is different. It isn't the same». Teresa affirms: «I tend to use very short sentences. If you take a text of mine, when I revise it, I'm careful, of course, because it [English] is in my head, so I take account of that».

During the interview, Teresa remembers an article she wrote in English. According to the literature she reviews in the paper, students use L1 as a cognitive strategy to understand and produce L2 (Kobayashi, Rinnert 1992, Kern 1994, Cohen 1994). In an experiment with a group of students of English as a second language, Teresa found that the students produced better texts when they processed information in their native language. In other words, mental translation is sure to happen when a speaker of a foreign or second language is writing in the same foreign or second language. He or she will resort to his or her native language. In other words, the mother tongue is an essential reference for the scholar-migrant when they write in a foreign language, or when they self-translate. «The mother saves» she adds. But for Teresa, the linguist, the mother sometimes becomes English since she learned linguistics in English.

Teresa's narrative demonstrates her use of mental translation (Chan 2016) or mental translation strategies (Bennett 2020) in her foreign language writing process. She monitors the process of writing in Portuguese, and she is aware of the interference of English, the foreign language in her case, as Chan (2016) points out in his definition of self-translation. Even more relevant, she notes a change in her academic writing style although she tries to resist the change. Bennett (2020) found that papers written

by Portuguese researchers bore hallmarks of the English academic writing style. In the case of the Brazilian academic, the syntax of the Portuguese language is also modified due to the influence of years of reading and studying in English. During the interview, she reveals her need to carefully monitor the process of writing in her native language. If she does not do so, the result will be a text with short sentences and long paragraphs, which she describes as «a childish text». She insists on the need for careful proof-reading to avoid her Portuguese syntax being heavily influenced by English syntax. However, after reading some of the articles written in Portuguese by Teresa, we can still identify some of the interference of English she mentions. For the sake of exemplification, we include a paragraph from an article published in a Brazilian journal. The source will not be mentioned so that the subject of this investigation remains anonymous.

É comum ouvir professores se lamuriando porque seus aprendizes continuam sem saber fazer a concordância de terceira pessoa em inglês, ou usar corretamente os tempos verbais, mesmo após 300 horas de aula. Ou outros que esperam uma produção igual àquela que está no livro texto, sem se lembrar das forças pragmáticas e dos rituais interacionais que regem a comunicação humana em contextos situados. A boa notícia é que o problema não é a aula que esse professor dá ou traços de sua personalidade que atrapalham o processo de aprendizagem ou muito menos a preguiça e má vontade dos alunos. A explicação reside na natureza PROCESSUAL da aprendizagem. Há que se dar TEMPO e exposição suficiente à linguagem para que o sistema sofra adaptações contínuas a partir do uso da língua alvo em contextos situados.

In this somewhat long paragraph, Teresa makes use of rather short sentences (if we compare it to the length of the sentences that can be found in papers, essays, and monographs published in the Brazilian context).

Finally, it seems evident that broad forms of translation prevail among the migrant scholar, or privileged migrant (Bachmann-Medick 2019) since there is no source text in her writing.

## 6. Concluding remarks

This case study presents innovative reflections on migration and self-translation, particularly because of the context chosen for examination.

Privileged migrants, as Bachmann-Medick (2019) calls migrant scholars, do not feature in the several studies I was able to access.

Teresa earned her MA and PhD at a US university, then went on to join the university's faculty team, becoming a bona fide member of the scientific community and starting to publish and circulating academic and scientific knowledge among her peers. This production and belonging to the university faculty may be part of what makes her the kind of privileged migrant Bachmann-Medick (2019) talks about.

Self-translation enters the lives of the scholar studied here when she joins academia, through the writing of scholarly papers, journal articles, books, and book chapters. Self-translation can certainly be considered part of the labor / professional sphere since all the writing activities are connected to a scholar's working life.

It is also undeniable that both mental translation and the mother tongue are part of foreign language writing. The scholar resorts to her own research in second language acquisition to support her own process of self-translation: «The mother saves» she says. That is, when high cognitive demands are made on a writer as they organize a text or compose an argument, they will try to simplify the argument by thinking in their language.

The scholar studied here mentions having trouble producing the appropriate terminology when self-translating back into her mother tongue. The reason she gives is that she is used to studying and reading in a foreign language. Once again, it is evident that the mother tongue plays a dominant role in the process of writing. Mental translation is visible and occurs in both directions: in self-translation into the foreign language and into the mother tongue.

In February 2017, the British newspaper "The Guardian" published the article «Translation – and migration – is the lifeblood of culture». Its author, the Hungarian writer George Szirtes, points out that when he arrived in the UK, he was not a clean slate: «That slate had already been written on by my family history, my parents, my city, my street and the events of my then short life. I was, like everyone else, a palimpsest» (Szirtes 2017). It seems clear to us that the role of the mother tongue cannot be neglected. In the case of a Brazilian whose scholarly output is in English, it is evident that Portuguese is present during the process of self-translation.

Further investigations are necessary to understand the process of writing in a foreign language – or self-translation. Also, further investigations are needed so that we can find out in how many ways self-translation

can be connected to the professional sphere of a migrant scholar since there are surely other texts s/he produces. In addition, more inquiries are crucial so we can try to discover what else has been written on that palimpsest that is the migrant self-translator.

## Bibliography

- Antunes M.A.G. (2022), *Autotradução Acadêmica: o Caso da Produção Publicada no Periódico Acadêmico Periférico Plurilíngue Ecos de Linguagem*, “Mutatis Mutandis”, xv, 1, pp. 167-188.
- Bachmann-Medick D. (2013), *The “Translational Turn” in Literary and Cultural Studies. The Example of Human Rights*, in: G. Olson and A. Nünning (eds.), *New Theories, Models and Methods in Literary and Cultural Studies*, WVT Trier, pp. 213-233.
- Bachmann-Medick D. (2019), *Translational Turn*, in: Y. Gambier, L. Van Doorslaer (eds.), *Handbook of Translation Studies: Volume 4*, John Benjamins Publishing, Amsterdam, pp. 186-193.
- Bachmann-Medick D., Federici E. (2019), *Migration and Translation: Changing Concepts, Critical Approaches. An Interview with Doris Bachmann-Medick*, in: E. Federici, M. del Rosario Martín Ruano, M. del Carmen África Vidal Claramonte (eds.), *Translating and Interpreting Linguistic and Cultural Differences in a Migrant Era*, “I-LanD Journal”, 2, pp. 132-141.
- Bachmann-Medick D., Kugele J. (eds). (2018), *Migration: Changing Concepts, Critical Approaches*, De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston.
- Bandia P.F. (2008), *Translation as Reparation. Writing and Translation in Postcolonial Africa*, Routledge, New York.
- Belcher D. (2007), *Seeking Acceptance in an English-only Research World*, “Journal of Second Language Writing”, xvi, 1, pp. 1-22.
- Bennett K. (2015), *Towards an Epistemological Monoculture: Mechanisms of Epistemicide in European Research Publication*, in: R. Plo Alastrué, C. Pérez-Llantada (eds.), *English as a Scientific and Research Language. Debates and Discourses*, Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter, pp. 9-36.
- Bennett K. (2020), *Authorship and (Self-)Translation in Academic Writing: Towards a Genetic Approach*, in: A. Nunes, J. Moura, M. Pacheco Pinto (eds.), *Genetic Translation Studies. Conflict and Collaboration in Liminal Spaces*, Bloomsbury Academic, London, pp. 279-301.
- Bergard L. (2010), *Brazilians in the United States 1980-2007*, “Center for Latin American, Caribbean & Latino Studies”, City University of New York, NY.

- Bourdieu P. (2003), *Os Usos Sociais da Ciência. Por uma Sociologia Clínica do Campo Científico* [orig. *Les Usages Sociaux de la Science. Pour une Sociologie Clinique du Champ Scientifique*], transl. by D.B. Catani, Editora da UNESP, São Paulo.
- Canagarajah A.S. (2002), *A Geopolitics of Academic Writing*, University of Pittsburg Press, Pittsburg.
- Chan L.T. (2016), *Beyond Non-Translation and 'Self-Translation'. English as Lingua Academica in China*, "Translation and Interpreting Studies", XI, 2, pp. 152-176.
- Cohen A.D. (1994), *The Language Used to Perform Cognitive Operations During Full-Immersion Math Tasks*, "Language Testing", XVI, 2, pp. 171-195.
- Costa M.T., Hönes H.C. (2019), *Migrating Histories of Art. Self-Translations of a Discipline*, De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston.
- Cronin M. (2006), *Translation and Identity*, Routledge, Oxon.
- Dasilva X. (2016), *En Torno al Concepto de Semiautotraducción*, "Quaderns", XXIII pp. 15-35.
- Finardi K.R., França C. (2016), *O inglês na internacionalização da produção científica brasileira: evidências da subárea de Linguagem e Linguística*, "Intersecções", XIX, 2, pp. 234-250.
- Fleckner U. (2019), *Lost in translation. A Foreword*, in: M.T. Costa, H.C. Hönes (eds.), *Migrating Histories of Art. Self-Translations of a Discipline*, De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston, pp. 7-9.
- Grutman R., Sportuno L. (2022), *Veinte años de estudios sobre la autotraducción: una entrevista con el profesor Julio-César Santoyo*, "Mutatis Mutandis", XV, 1, pp. 227-239.
- Grutman R., Van Bolderen T. (2014), *Self-Translation*, in: S. Bermann, C. Porter, *A Companion to Translation Studies*, pp. 323-332, Wiley Blackwell, New Jersey.
- Inghilleri M. (2017), *Translation and Migration*, Routledge, Oxon.
- Jung V. (2002), *English-German Self-Translation of Academic Texts and its Relevance for Translation Theory and Practice*, Peter Lang, Bern.
- Kern R G. (1994), *The role of mental translation in second language reading*, "Studies in Second Language Acquisition", XVI, 4, pp. 441-460.
- Kobayshi H., Rinnert C. (1992), *Effects of First Language on Second Language Writing: Translation Versus Direct Composition*, "Language Learning", XLII, 2, pp. 183-215.
- Manterola Agirrezabalaga, E. (2017), *Collaborative Self-Translation in a Minority Language: Power Implications in the process, the Actors and the Literary Systems Involved*, in: O. Castro, S. Mainer, S. Page (eds.), *Self-Translation and Power*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

- Margolis M.L. (2013), *Goodbye, Brazil. Émigrés From the Land of Soccer and Samba*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin.
- Massarani L. (2015), *Voices From Other Lands*, "Public Understanding of Science", xxiv, 1, pp. 2-5.
- Peñalver M. R. (2011), *Más allá de la traducción: la autotraducción*, "Trans. Revista de Traductologia", xv, pp. 193-208.
- Pisanski Peterlin A. (2019), *Self-Translation of Academic Discourse: the Attitudes and Experiences of Authors-Translators*, "Perspectives", xxvi, 6, pp. 846-860.
- Polezzi L. (2006), *Translation, Travel, Migration*, "The Translator", xii, 2, pp. 169-188.
- Polezzi L. (2012), *Translation and Migration*, "Translation Studies", v, 3, pp. 345-356.
- Popović A. (1976), *A Dictionary for the Analysis of Literary Translation*, University of Alberta, Edmonton.
- Pym A. (1998), *Method in translation history*, St. Jerome, Manchester.
- Santoyo J.C. (2005), *Autotraducciones: Una perspectiva histórica*, "Meta", L, 3, pp. 858-867.
- Szirtes G. (2017), *Translation – and Migration – is the Lifeblood of Culture*, "The Guardian International Edition", cfr. <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2017/feb/06/translation-and-migration-lifeblood-culture-george-szirtes>> (last access: 20-08-2025).
- Van Bonn S., Swales J. (2007), *English and French Journal Abstracts in the Language Sciences: Three exploratory Studies*, "Journal of English for Academic Purposes", vi, 2, pp. 93-108.

## Abstract

MARIA ALICE G. ANTUNES

### *Migration and Self-Translation: the Case of a Brazilian Linguist at a University in the United States*

Recent data from the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs shows that 4215800 Brazilians live abroad. Of these, 46,06% reside in North America. Voluntary migration from Brazil, often caused by severe economic crises, began in the mid-1980s. Most migrants chose the United States to live and work to escape from poor labor relations, social inequality, and the violence that arose as the result of economic stagnation. In this paper, I present the results of a case study of a Brazilian linguist, 58, who left Brazil in the 1980s largely because of the factors aforementioned. She earned her Master's and Doctorate degrees at a university in the US, she writes academic papers and (self)translates texts from/into her mother tongue or from/into English, a foreign language to her, and claims that (self)translation is an integral part of her professional and personal life. She is, thus, an agent of translation as she has gained the ability to translate (Cronin 2006). This case study was conducted through a semi-structured videoconferencing



interview, as well as through e-mails aimed at clarifying statements made during the interview. The interview was organized around four themes: a (brief) personal account of the migration of the linguist and her family to the US; descriptions of the beginning of her academic career; her writing process; and the place of translation and self-translation in her academic and personal life. My analysis followed several previous studies. Firstly, Bennett (2015: 10) and the discussion on «signs of language change» in Portuguese and the move towards a loss in the particular characteristics of a culture and the standardization of academic language. The second main source, Polezzi (2012), examines the crucial ways migrant writers exercise their agency. Finally, Chan (2016) argues that academic writing in one's second language can be understood as self-translation since writers go through a process of mental translation when they write a text in a language other than their own. The analysis of the semi-structured interview shows her career in three different universities in the US can be seen as successful. The linguist can be regarded as an agent of self-translation as she consciously and mentally translates from and into one of the languages (Portuguese or English) when she writes. The scholar argues that her writing style in Portuguese has changed, and believes this is due to constant reading and writing in English.

**Keywords:** translation, self-translation, academic self-translation, migration, academic writing.