

Translation/Traducture as tools for interrogating the future: The case of knowledge management through insights of the global Africana world

Motivation

The main focus of the this proposal to engage in the research is within the context of “moving ideas” across the globe, particularly deeper meaning and sense-making through translation and traducture and their impact and implications within the project “Future Africa – Visions in Time: Narratives of the Future in Modern African History” within the context of the above question theme.

The main approach is in relation to knowledge production and management as a trajectory for global transformation over the time/space conundrum and the important role that translation and traducture have played and continue to play in shaping knowledge management in general but in this case, and our understanding of future in particular.

The traducture input seeks to explore the ways in which languages, and the notions of *traducture* and *translation* can be used to historically illuminate future in relation to Africa and the Africana world and its global impact through communication primarily through literary and intertextual translation/traducture practice using orature, texts, digital tools and localisation, and more importantly, social human interaction and performance as communication itself.

Background

Traducture is based on conceptual frameworks of translation as deeper meaning, which offers a variety of interdisciplinary and intercultural avenues for engaging future and transformation from different standpoints, including perspectives which seek to unravel dominant discourses, through sense-making, restitution and transcreation, particularly where reality is distorted through misrepresentation, such as stereotyping or exclusion. It seeks to re-centre exploration particularly of humanity in its fullness or explore the creation of new discourses or draw attention to existing discourses in varied multilingual, transcultural and transnational locations in relation to future. Future itself, as a site of exploration also needs to be contextualised and the contested emergent theories put to test. Terminology also which lays claim to future also needs to be interrogated. Exploring the question of transitional justice and restoration for the Africana world is central to these explorations and research, scholarship and sense-making, for exploring recovery (re)discovery and complexity.

Justification

The research insights are drawn from research work undertaken in a different context where *traducture* as a conceptual framework and tool was refined. The project is premised on the possibility of bringing various traces or (Brown knowledges to bear through transfer, experienced through diverse times and locations to bear on what is already known and of articulating them in ways that are, or are not known or that are known elsewhere including through memory, description/inscription and reference. The African and African Diaspora reality is a critical case in point, as it offers unique contemporary insights on future owing to its trajectory.

Methodology

Exploring scenarios as methodology and exploring the modelling of the time space/ and complexity in relation to future is the key focus of interest in this project. Traducture also offers a novel approach that may add considerable value to the wider research and to this specific involvement and strand. Additionally, translation and traducture as approach enable unknown and emergent knowledges to surface if conducted in iterative mode, reflecting a desire to assert different discourses, which take into account cultures, locations, ideologies, different and ways of knowing, the environment, the past, the present and also possibilities for future, either from within the discourse or through connections or discoveries within “our own” knowledges as well those of “others”. Some of the insights from these methodologies and their usefulness can be elaborated at a later point owing the centrality of this tension within translation/traducture continuum. The global shifts enlisted of location and subjects on future is of particular interest as a result. Simply put, explorations of the translation/traducture space as sites of knowledge, agency and sites of/for power is critical in this global, interconnected, intercultural and digital context for this proposal. However, we need to understand the complex nature of that site of interconnectedness and intercultural dialogue means in space and time, and the place of ethics and narration within it for future.

Some definitions

Traducture as concept and method is derived from the deconstructive uses of the words *traduction* emanating from the verb to translate in French, and *écriture*, (as defined by the French feminists theorists. It encompasses the deconstruction or critical consciousness in *techné*”, craft, style and content of writing and transfer through translation as rewriting and as (re)*inscribing* including on the “body” as well as the artefacts and methods which emanate from the endeavour and the complexity derived in such transfers. It derives from the idea that culture is invented (Anderson, 1983). Traducture requires this as a critical methodology rather than an “unconscious” action of transfer of translation on the whole as it offers a multi-dimensional approach and also an interrogation of sense-making and deep meaning. Further, it invites the interrogation of the translation and translated sites of production of future itself and can be interrogated using empirical and scientific means.

Some key considerations

The research would particularly wish to examine how knowledge is produced and managed by various participants, from the academy to communities and organisations through what has loosely been termed as “literary and knowledge practice communities” and its impact on future. The project is based on the premise that the Africana world in particular, but knowledge communities in general have not fully appreciated the strategic importance of language and translation/traducture in information knowledge management to future, but more importantly the recovery project, and that it has not responded effectively to the practical challenges of organising and using information and knowledge within and between organizations and communities and geo-political spheres “... at a time of rapid but uneven informational developments and economic and environmental challenges” (Powell, 2008) including virtual environments.

The diaspora in particular is seen as a bridge, as itself a translation across geographies and time, itself an interesting point, but the absence of bridging languages and

methodology has left gaps and fragments which impact on knowledge transfer and development and inherently on our understanding of future. This may have a critical impact on how we address it. The interest is also predicated on an assumption that Africana communities of all types and others often lack adequate knowledge of the Africana realities and vice versa despite growing bodies of scholarship and this has a significant bearing on our understanding of future. Research also shows that the pace of reciprocity is uneven and the time-space/conundrum poses specific issues which have an overall impact on future as time progresses however, this needs further testing. The question of what the impact of exogenous and endogenous knowledges are, and the contested nature of knowledge are also often not incorporated in information knowledge management because of the absence of appropriate mediums and tools for dialogue, information gathering and dissemination either in relation to content or vehicles of communication and the absence of ethical frameworks. The absence of interdisciplinary knowledge practice and the time lag in knowledge across disciplines and therefore huge gaps, the exclusion of the players of history from the story owing to history also pose challenges and further justifications and urgency in such approaches as proposed here. Insights from theories and practice in translation/traducture highlight some fundamental issues affecting the potential effectiveness of knowledge management that can unearth valuable information and support the development of research of future and the restorative project.

By focussing on the complete continuum of translation/traducture (in both the narrow and broader senses) including its players and trajectories, we hope that the engagement will open up time and space through an international interdisciplinary exploration of cultural and literary practice through information knowledge production and management. Therefore, of particular interest, this work will contribute to the develop new insights into how and why such ideas change through time/space and how they relate to each other through complex translational/traducture modes of transfer, memory, experience and references. Questions of ethics, accountability and competence, amongst others, will be explored.

Expectations

The expectation is that models could offer significant new insights into bridging traditional gaps through interdisciplinarity and evolving innovative methodologies and tools including for this project but more specifically for a deeper insight into future. A number of strands will be identified and pursued in line with the broader scope of the project and this specific strand. **Potential and anticipated value**

- Deepen insights into future
- Add value to the “Future Africa – Visions in Time” Research
- Enhance the restorative process
- Raise awareness of translation and traducture and their importance to the research project
- Improve recognition across the disciplines of the strategic necessity of using translation/traducture-as-dialogue as a method between local and other sources of knowledge for the benefit of humanity but more significantly to communities in the Africana world through its implication for knowledge on future

- Create greater understanding of the issues and barriers involved in ‘people having a voice’ through translation/traducture methodology and its impact on the growing body of knowledge on future and within this specific context
- Enhance the environment for innovation, supported by the wider research project on existing and emergent practice, for people working across the disciplines to raise and discuss means of addressing these issues including within this research; and
- Find, create, test and document ideas for processes and tools that will illustrate the range of issues which affect how knowledge can be used and managed for knowledge on future
- Participate in dialogue, collaboration, dissemination and publication.

References

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