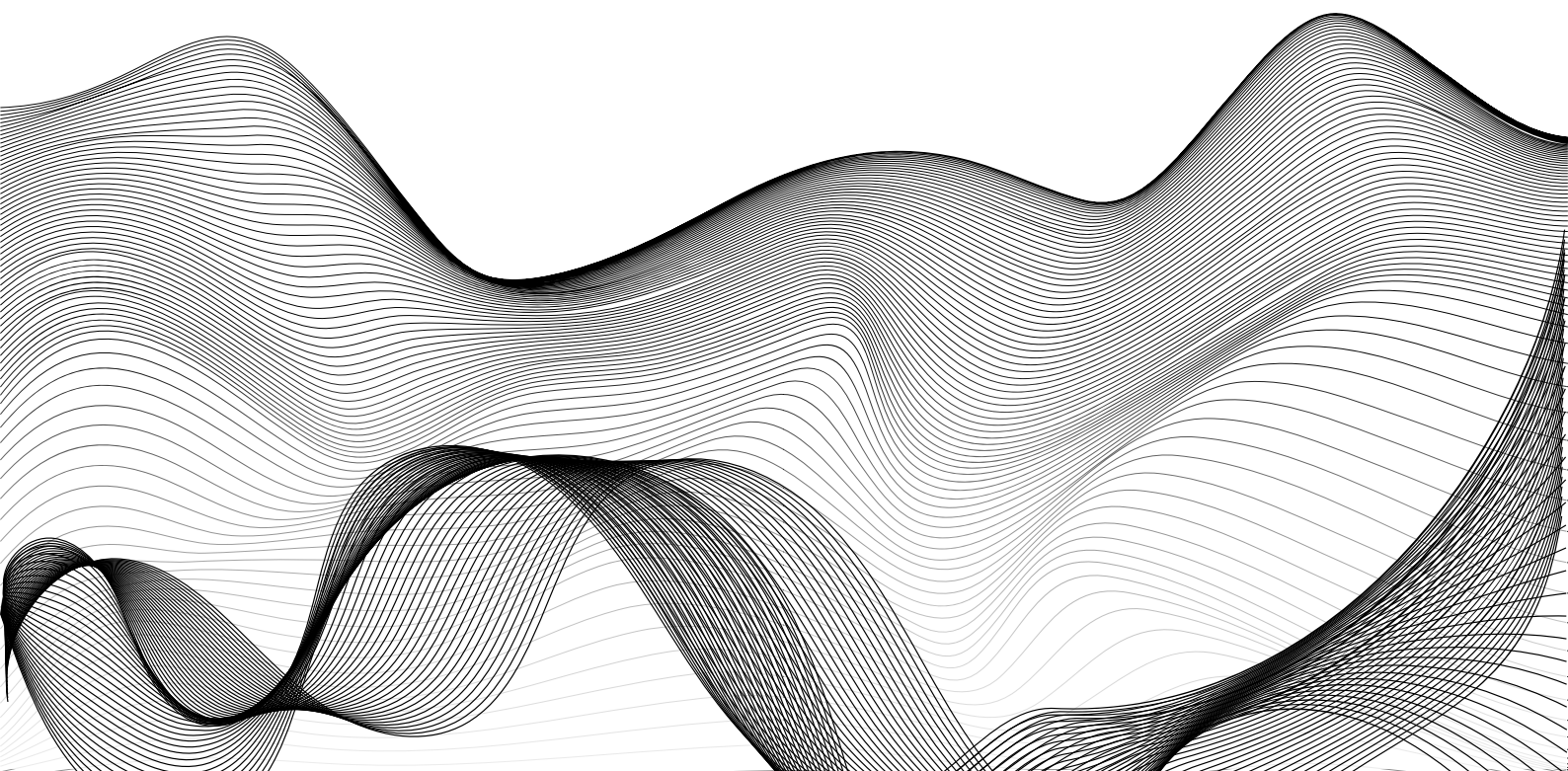


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S C I E N C E S A N D T H E
H U M A N I T I E S

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INTRODUCTION

These recommendations have emerged from a research project entitled 'Political Translation' (2020-2024), which investigated the politics of academic translation in the social sciences and the humanities in Spain. Based at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, the project involved a team of researchers with backgrounds in sociology and translation studies. The recommendations have been shaped by the project's empirical findings, which are elaborated upon in Cussel, Bielsa and Bestué (2023) and Cussel, Raigal and Barranco (2023), as well as by collective discussions and exchanges between all team members.

The recommendations below are addressed not only to translators, but to all users of translation, including authors and readers of academic texts, journal editors and publishers, as well as reviewers. They call attention to the translated nature of many works that are often viewed as originals, and through which English as the academic lingua franca is constantly produced and reproduced in a multilingual space. Rather than approaching translation as a hindrance, they seek to highlight its transformative potential and to call for more constructive approaches to the translation of academic texts. Although elaborated to respond to the particularities we observed in our research context, which involves the translation of academic works from Catalan or Spanish into English initiated by their authors, they aim to be useful for all initiators of translations, whether they are authors, journal editors or publishers, as well as for the translated writers (Rushdie, 1991; Casanova, 2004) who have adopted the dominant language of the scientific field. They also relate to more general aspects of translation that form part of a self-reflexive approach to the production of academic texts.

Contrary to previous guidelines or chapters about the translation of social science texts that are largely focused on conceptual or procedural issues (Wallerstein, 1981; Heim and Tymowski, 2006), these recommendations rely on a theory of translation as a procedure that involves specialised techniques for the rewriting of academic texts (Ortega y Gasset, 2000; Benjamin, 2002), without reducing translation to a merely technical operation. Indeed, they maintain that academic translation relates to the particularities of the language of the social sciences and the humanities, as distinct from that of scientific and technical texts. It is precisely from a recognition of this specificity, as well as from a consciousness of the transformative power of translation, that its vast though seldom acknowledged political potential can be identified.

1. Despite appearances, many academic texts are not the sole product and expression of their author(s); rather, they are the result of a series of processes and interventions that involve a plurality of actors and languages.

In the 21st century, English has been consolidated as the world's academic lingua franca and is concurrently seen as the universal medium for the production and circulation of research. However, this apparent universality is often the result of a series of multilingual processes and interventions that shape texts in substantive ways but are usually hidden from view.

Contrary to prevailing assumptions, the adoption of English as the language of academic writing by a multitude of authors from non-Anglophone backgrounds involves the multiplication of translation, rather than its disappearance. Self-translation into English and the simultaneous use of different languages for research, writing and teaching are widely extended practices. In this context, there is also a need to reflect on the often unacknowledged role of academic translators and editors, whose task has become indispensable in a global academic field.

2. In a multilingual space, writing addresses readers across linguistic divides and cannot be adequately understood without regard to translation.

Writing and translating are inextricably linked in the production of academic texts and should not be seen as fully distinct and independent processes. This has two main consequences. The first regards their inseparability. Writing often relies on previously translated oral and written materials, while translating involves a rewriting of a text or discourse in a different linguistic situation. The second relates to the desirability that all academic authors (including those working in apparently monolingual contexts) have some understanding and practical training in translation and that all academic translators be versed in the production of scholarly writing and the disciplines or intellectual traditions of the texts they translate.

Translation is not only an issue for translators; it is also highly relevant for academic authors, reviewers and editors because a lack of awareness of the complexities of the translation process leads to epistemological ingenuities that directly impact the production of academic texts. These epistemological ingenuities are most often observed in the reduction of translation to a mere technical operation and in the distinctive lack of reflection on its role in textual production. Current submission guidelines for authors in most English-language academic journals directly express these ingenuities, while also serving to perpetuate the invisibility of widespread forms of translation in the academic field.

3. Translation is not and should never attempt to be a mere copy that simply reproduces a previously existing text in a new language; it reinstates but does so through difference, without the existence of which there would be no need to translate in the first place.

The task of the academic translator is to offer a path towards a work that does justice to both the original text and the new social realities in which it will be read; to reconstitute the work in a different linguistic situation.

Rather than erase the traces of the translation process by seeking to emulate the apparent naturalness of original texts, a translation can seek to reflect on the technical apparatus through which it approaches a work, to thematize its own intervention. This type of reflexivity is especially relevant in academia, where scientific reflexivity is seen as a way of keeping an eye on the social factors capable of biasing research. Translational reflexivity provides much needed epistemological vigilance in a highly unequal academic field.

4. The form and style of academic writing are an expression of particular philosophical and epistemological traditions, and not necessarily of differences between natural languages. Be wary of attributing to 'plain English' a notion of clarity that is inherited from positivism.

A recognition of the meaningful nature of social life forces us to devote more attention to language, which is not a mere medium for the communication of knowledge about a social reality that exists in a languageless world. The social sciences and the humanities have a much closer relationship to language than the natural sciences. This fundamentally undermines the old positivist vision of the unity of the sciences and has important consequences for the translation of academic texts.

There is a whole range of approaches, discourses and methodologies, as well as a wide variety of forms and conventions for communicating scholarly knowledge. The standard format for a scientific article that includes an introduction, literature review, methods, results, and discussion may have come to dominate certain evaluative frameworks, yet this is only one model among many. There are no hard truths, such as the need to include a research question or a hypothesis or to employ an impersonal tone.

A text may have a less fixed structure and a manner of expression that is at times murky or fragmented, making opacity and revelation part of its game of articulation. Boldly, the translator should not betray the author by diminishing this real-life complexity or refusing indeterminacy. If the author intentionally uses synonyms to avoid repeating the same word, do not reduce this multiplicity to a single notion in the name of received ideas about clarity.

However, if the translator notices that the author wants to submit to a journal that is clearly a poor fit, it is possible to broach this discrepancy with them. In this way, the translator can protect themselves from blame if the article is rejected and both actors can collaborate to determine how the text needs to be transformed or whether a more suitable publishing platform should be sought.

5. Commissioning a translation should involve adequately specifying the task, including where publication is sought and any disciplinary, terminological and expressive particularities deemed important.

The best translations start with a well-written original. Even if originals will never see publication because they have been produced only for the purposes of translation into English, authors are responsible for carefully and precisely crafting their texts, as this greatly assists the labour of translation.

A detailed specification of the translation task is to the benefit of both authors and translators of academic texts. Indicate the length of the document, deadline and the name of the journal or publisher to which the translated text will be submitted, along with any relevant submission guidelines.

The initiator should invite the translator to share any doubts or questions that arise throughout the translation process. It is also helpful to provide resources that situate the context and topic, including glossaries, explanations and reference works. If there are concepts that present difficulty, the initiator may suggest possible translations or send bibliography in which these terms appear translated into English or other languages. If these resources are not provided, the translator can request exactly what they need.

The initiator should carefully revise the final version of the translation and contact the translator to discuss any issues or clarifications. Regarding the deadline, it should not be assumed that translation is like pressing a button and photocopying into another language. The translator needs time to comprehend and translate the text, and additional time might be necessary for revisions and the negotiation of difficult or important translation decisions.

6. Whenever possible, the author and translator should discuss and agree on a strategy for translating the text.

A joint agreement on the translation strategy is in the interest of the author as they are made part of a decision that profoundly shapes a text which will ultimately appear under their name, and it is also in the interest of the translator because the responsibility for how the text should be translated becomes shared. With an explicitly articulated strategy in hand, the translator will have more cues to work with when choosing among translation solutions and may even discover options that might not have appeared otherwise.

An assimilatory strategy can be sought, which is when the translation is made to appear as if it were originally written in English. In this case, standardised academic English is used, and terminology, cultural references and examples are localised or made familiar for Anglophone readers. Conversely, if a reflexive strategy is adopted, the translation presents itself as a translation. This means accounting for its point of view and making readers privy to the decisions the translator faces and the solutions they choose when grappling with all that becomes opaque, strange or different in the new linguistic situation.

7. Academic translators should be viewed as research collaborators and not simply as offering linguistic or technical assistance.

Academic texts constantly evolve throughout the process of production and translation. A solid working relationship between author and translator provides the conditions in which the text under translation can be enhanced by exposure to the differing languages, knowledges and perspectives of each actor. This is not unlike how texts are often changed and improved thanks to input from reviewers.

The author could be said to be the first user with whom the translator shares their translation decisions and strategies. Where possible, they should respond to the translator's queries and provide feedback. If not, translators end up working in a vacuum and have no sense of how their translations are being received. Likewise, the translator is often one of the first users of the author's text. This means that they may be able to provide feedback regarding the development and strength of the arguments, imprecise or confusing fragments, etc. This is part of the process of translation, not the translator overstepping the mark.

Regularly working with the same trusted translator can facilitate collaboration because habits of communication and coordination are likely to form. In addition, the translator will become more and more familiar with the author's research, writing style and idiosyncrasies.

8. Exclusively adhering to the conventions of an increasingly standardised academic English flattens social reality and has the effect of unnecessarily simplifying scholarly discourse.

It is worth bearing in mind that the goal of translation is not to produce a global academia where all actors submit to the rigid rules and authority of journals and/or publishers, nor is it to assist non-Anglophone scholars to pass as authors of standardised academic English. Translators do not have to and should not necessarily be expected to assimilate texts to an apparently neutral English for Academic Purposes, removing the tracks of their origins and heterogeneity (see recommendation 6).

For many authors, work on language and rhetoric are vital forces for the development and presentation of ideas. The translator should be equipped, but also encouraged, to interrogate how authors precisely use language to produce their interpretations and reflections or how they construct arguments in ways that are peculiar to their intellectual or disciplinary backgrounds or sociocultural context. It is important to think twice before standardising turns of phrase or dramatically changing titles, paragraph structures or sentence lengths, especially if the justification for such modifications is the assumption that English must be clear and concise.

9. When seeking to retain and highlight the specificity of the non-Anglophone places in which knowledge is produced, it is necessary to reconstruct the context of certain terms or examples in the new linguistic situation.

Unless otherwise agreed, the translator should be careful not to disguise culturally specific phenomena in referents that belong to the English-speaking world or that are well-known internationally, as if nuances and particular histories were not important. Even what may appear inconspicuous words can carry specific meanings or uses that should not be overlooked. The names given to activities, spaces, roles, groups, policies, etc. are not arbitrary; they belong to a distinctive web of words and contain some of the cultural context and history of the things they name.

For instance, at the time of writing, there are protests by farmers across Europe – or at least, that is who is said to be protesting in most cases in English-language media. In the context of Catalunya, these public demonstrations are mostly referred to as being led by *pagesos* and to a lesser extent by *agricultors*. Nowadays the latter is a term for an occupation, someone who works in agriculture. This meaning is covered by the current usage of the English term “farmer”, someone who makes a living running a farm or whose job is to work on a farm. While the Catalan word *pagès* is also used to refer to the profession of farming, it currently has broader meanings that are mobilised by social actors in different ways – much like the French *paysan*. Thus, when the protesters are referred to as *pagesos*, we must ask ourselves whether this term is being used to mean the occupation or if something more is being evoked.

Pagès may bring to mind the English word “peasant”, which arrived to English via the Old French *paisant*. However, they could not be said to refer to equivalent sociohistorical groups and the use of peasant in the context of England has declined since the 18th century. Historically, the *pagesia* included different figures who had various contractual relationships with the owners of the land they cultivated, however it also encompassed, and still today, small landowners and well-off families. It is also possible to locate various political tendencies within the *pagesia*, such as associationism, republicanism, anarcho-syndicalism, and socialism, and more recently, Catalan independence, Anti-Europeanism, agroecology, and neoruralism.

The persistence of the word *pagès* in Catalan suggests a revindication of not just the profession, but an identity that relates to particular relationships to place, such that it has become a key element in the nationalist imagination, and particular relationships to land, which are perceived to be disappearing, including ancestral or more respectful ways of life and cultural traditions in the rural world. While the social makeup of the “farmers” protesting across Europe is complex, this particular complexity is not rendered by the term “farmer”.

Facing such problems may mean borrowing the original term and placing it in italics or inverted commas and explaining its meaning and connotations through collocations, parentheses or footnotes. Sentences can also be added if needed. In a similar vein, examples often offer relevant information that cannot simply be transferred or assimilated to the realities with which Anglophone readers are familiar. Rather than eliminating or replacing them with examples in English that supposedly demonstrate the same thing, it is preferable to unpack the original examples and provide the context needed to make them relatable. An obvious case is a text on linguistics, in which it does not make sense to simply replace examples of specific phenomena in one language with equivalent examples in another.

10. Translators should be aware when there is a standard translation of a concept, but they should also be able to discern when it is appropriate to produce something new.

Standard translations no doubt form part of the linguistic routines on which all translators rely, but they should not be unreflexively applied. In the social sciences and the humanities, concepts are not universally shared but rather become a vehicle through which cultural, political, historical, or intellectual nuances can be explored and theoretical traditions renewed. Disciplinary specialisation and conceptual struggles over how to describe and explain reality add another level of complexity to existing conventions in ordinary usage in different languages.

To translate a concept, it is crucial to have some knowledge of how it is used and how it tends to be translated in different disciplinary traditions and schools. The translator should also consider in what sense the author is using the concept – perhaps they have transformed or accrued meaning to it. In addition, the translator may find the existing standard translation to be somehow inaccurate or lacking in nuance.

If an alternative or updated translation solution is chosen, it may be advisable to provide brief commentary in the main text or a footnote on the translation history of the concept and why it has been given a new form in this case. This is part of the scholarly work with words that is essential in academic translation.

It must also be remembered that concepts are often made up of ordinary words in which particular meanings are concentrated. For example, there have been various attempts to translate into English the use that Édouard Glissant makes of the distinction between *langue* and *langage*, such as language and *langage* (Glissant, 2020), language and self-expression (Glissant, 1989) or language-voice and language-use (Glissant, 1997). None of these translations seem to contemplate the ordinary distinction in French between *langue*, often related to linguistic multiplicity, and the more general term *langage*, which Glissant uses to refer, following his friend Alejo Carpentier, to a common Caribbean language that is written in different tongues (Creole, English, French, Spanish).

If the translator finds themselves in this situation: it is advisable not to seek consistency by simply replicating the previously coined translations. Rather, they may like to start by establishing a critical dialogue with them. If they feel it is appropriate to produce a new translation of the concepts, it is wise to think heuristically (what does the author want the reader to discover through this concept?) but also lexically (how do these particular words catapult that discovery?). Regarding the second, the translator can consult several dictionaries, including historical and etymological ones, as well as a text like the *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon* (Cassin, 2014) where they will find an evolving history of uneasy fits among various multilingual terms for “language”. The deeper one digs into words, the richer they become. In fact, the translator may find that the initial translation problem, that English does not lend itself to distinguishing between *langue* and *langage*, actually deprives English of its own resources and historical interconnections with other languages.

Finally, to avoid a confusing mess of different translations of the same concepts, which could make it difficult to make connections between a series of works by the same author in translation, it is convenient to cite in some way the words in the original French. However, this does not in itself do the job of advising the readers in the new linguistic situation on how to grasp these concepts.

11. Special attention should be devoted to the translation of quotes in qualitative research as linguistic difference, whether acknowledged or not, increases the distances that inevitably shape exchanges with research subjects and the writing of research.

Just as various types of linguistic differences between researcher and research subject sometimes go unacknowledged or are treated as unimportant, the words of research subjects are often translated into English with no mention of the language in which they were originally uttered or their translated nature. When researching in a multilingual context, it is essential to always state the languages of the research materials (documents, interviews, etc.) used and that analysis has included translating these materials.

In qualitative research, direct quotes from transcriptions of interviews, focus groups or conversations often appear as a window to the world of the individuals whose point of view the researcher is trying to understand. When translated into a different language, another level of mediation is added to these accounts, so we are no longer reading "their words". If the wordcount permits, the best option is to include quotes in the original language accompanied by a translation. In this way, readers with knowledge of the language in which the research has been conducted can access the untranslated materials, while other readers are alerted to the fact that translation has taken place.

With that said, it is vital to make translation decisions after having reflected on why a quote is being used, for this reason a series of "ifs" are now presented according to these various functions. Some researchers employ quotes to give readers the opportunity to access some of the textual data and judge the interpretations of it, but this is not strictly possible once a quote has been translated. If quotes are being used to increase readability, providing the original and a translation will probably not create an engaging reading experience. Alternatively, if the insight lies in the way that a research subject speaks, then something of the original expression must shine through. This may involve borrowing colloquial or idiosyncratic words from the original language and adding a translator's note with a phrase such as "a word best translated as..." and/or some commentary on its significance. It is also possible to bend language to allow the highly charged original words to infuse English. This is not about making English difficult to understand, but rather pushing it to grasp what, in another language, could not have been said better. If this is done artfully, then there may be no need to include the original quote.

The presentation of quotes also demands consideration. If providing the original and a translation, embedded quotes might be better off as indented block quotations. If quotes appear in tables, providing the original and a translation might make them lose their illustrative power. Or if wordcount is an issue, then a description of what was said, a kind of indirect quote, could be more swiftly elucidating.

12. Journal editors and publishers could provide more options to help promote academic translation and make it more visible. This would give authors and translators more room for manoeuvre when dealing with the multifarious issues to which the translation process gives rise.

Currently, decisions regarding whether and how to credit the translator are subject to a series of restrictions imposed by journal editors or publishers, whether explicitly in submission guidelines or through the internalisation of ordinary routines. In the case of articles, most journals consider translation as a kind of technical assistance and do not require or even make it difficult to credit translators, at least when it is authors themselves, rather than journal editors, who are the initiators of the translation.

This, together with the stigmatisation of not being able to write directly in English, leads to the proliferation of covert translation practices. If the name of the translator appears at all, it is normally in the Acknowledgements section and often in the form of a general acknowledgment that obscures what is being acknowledged. This contrasts with what is more or less standard practice in book publishing, where the name of the translator appears under the author's name.

Journal editors and publishers have an important role to play in expanding the options available to authors whose work is translated or involves some of the processes and interventions of translation. As the situation stands, it is harder than one might expect to establish a general rule. Academic texts are increasingly written in such hybrid ways, especially in the case of coauthorships, that it may be difficult to classify some texts purely as translations. Likewise, some translators have no interest in being acknowledged or do not want their names to appear because they have no control over the final version. For these reasons, the emphasis should be on devising options that cater to the preferences of authors and translators and the reality of translation. For instance, journal editors and publishers should be aware that extra space is required to be able to contextualise cultural references, reflect multilingually on the use and meaning of concepts or provide both the original and translation of a direct quote. Consequently, there may be cases where a longer wordcount is justified.

13. The increasing ubiquitousness of machine translation should not make it even more difficult for translators and authors to determine how they want translation to take place.

More and more, translation work is turning into postediting work as various initiators of translations or service providers (translation agencies, university language services, etc.) pre-translate texts using machine translation software to save time and cut costs, paying translators a reduced rate for language editing services. While machine translation can form part of the many tools that are available for making translation decisions, it should not impose a way of working on translators and authors.

It is important to be aware that pasting texts into automated translation tools is virtually the same as giving away this work and all the data it contains as a gift to the companies that develop and make money from them. Machine translation also has the effect of standardising language and style. In addition, a pre-translated text may be difficult to comprehend due to inaccurate terms, shifts in meaning (because of unconventional structures calqued from the original language) and the possible breakdown of the syntactical relationships. The translator has to be able to see the words and structure of the original text to fully undergo the reflexive process of rewriting it in a new linguistic situation.

14. It is only by moving away from the common belief that a translation replicates an original text (see recommendation 3) and the presupposition of monolingual publics that it will be possible to develop a fairer and more productive approach to writing and publishing multilingually.

Many academic authors consider the publication of similar texts in different languages unnecessary at best or even as a form of self-plagiarism that is unacceptable on ethical grounds. There is also the widespread belief that publication in English is for cutting-edge research aimed at an international scientific public (which is nevertheless conceived as homogeneous in linguistic terms), whereas publication in local languages is for a different type of text that will be read by practitioners or a general educated audience. Both authors and readers will benefit if these preconceptions are questioned.

Authors can seek to refine and slightly reformulate their work in translation (regardless of whether they are translating it themselves or not or whether translation is overt or covert), seizing this transformative process as a critical opportunity. Translations have typically provided multilingual authors the space to revise and modify important insights in their work (the French and Russian versions of Marx's *Capital* are a pertinent example). In this way, translation comes to resemble a new edition of a work, rather than a copy, and its right of existence should no longer be questioned.

Different types of texts can be written with different types of audiences in mind, but the readers that authors imagine do not always coincide with the actual readers of their research. Too many texts are written or translated with an Anglo-American readership in mind, but this is more a textual standard than an empirical reality. Readers can benefit from texts that bear traces of their multilingual journeys and depending on their own linguistic repertoires will differently relate to this heterogeneous make up. Even if they cannot understand some of the elements that are present in a text, they will have a more realistic impression of the linguistic diversity that has shaped it.

Academic authors, translators, publishers and editors, and ultimately readers, are all responsible for the way in which the process of translation, as a constitutive element of textual production in a multilingual space, is made visible and reflected upon or simply erased from view.

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These recommendations have been published in *Social Science Information*.

To cite: Bielsa, E., Cussel, M., Raigal Aran, J., Barranco, O. and Bestué, C. (2024) 'Recommendations on the translation of academic texts in the social sciences and the humanities', *Social Science Information*, 62(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/05390184241261509>

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