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Translating the City

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Executive Summary

This is a summary of the research outcomes elaborated in detail in the following report, which was conducted as Phase Four of the Birmingham case study of AHRC-funded Translating Cultures project, 'Translation and Translanguaging: Investigating Linguistic and Cultural Transformations in Superdiverse Wards in Four UK Cities'. Linguistic ethnographic research was conducted with an Advice and Advocacy worker in the Chinese Community Centre, Birmingham, in 2016.

- In the process of providing advice and advocacy services to people with a wide range of needs and requests for support, *translation* is a crucial dimension of exchange.
- Advice and advocacy in the Chinese Community Centre takes place in a *translation zone*, where biographies, histories, beliefs, values, and future trajectories of participants come into contact, and shape the interaction.
- The translation zone is a space which offers hope of being heard, hope that there will be a response from those in authority. The translator (mediator, advisor, advocate) offers the possibility that the individual will be heard by the powerful.
- The translator is frequently confronted with the necessity to make decisions and choices in translation. In some cases the translator makes ethical and ideological choices based on social justice for the client. Of secondary importance are questions of adherence to the letter of the law, or loyalty to the neutrality of the translation process.
- Translation in practice extends far beyond the transfer of meanings from one language to another. It includes translation of the complexity of government systems, with their unfamiliar terms and acronyms, and web of rules and regulations.
- A feature of translation is the co-construction, re-telling, and re-formulating of narrative. Every re-telling of a story is a translation. Narratives are recontextualised as they are re-told, through the rearrangement of their structure, the substitution of some words, the addition of new elements, and the deletion of others.
- Discourse may be translated from one semiotic domain to another, 'resemiotized' as it shifts from context to context, from practice to practice. Often narratives told in one language, and in one mode, are resemiotized in another language, and in another mode.
- In the health and welfare benefits systems discourse may gain legitimacy as it is resemiotized, gaining status as it changes from a spoken to a written artefact. As artefacts gain symbolic and economic capital they may become sites of contestation and tension.

- The translator moves in a space between transgression of the rules and insistence on the rules, between the needs of the individual and the governance of the state. In this process she is motivated by her commitment to social justice.
- Translation sometimes encounters the untranslatable, if text is specialized in a subject beyond the translator's knowledge, or if the client is unable or unwilling to engage with the translator.
- The translator adopts multiple roles. The process of translation in the advice and advocacy setting requires a deftness and flexibility, as the translator improvises and adapts to unanticipated circumstances.
- Translators are mediators, as far as they can making the opaque transparent, the obscure meaningful, the unjust just. They do this not only by rendering one language into another, but by rewording, explaining, advocating, and advising.

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Chapter 1

Translating the City

To speak of the multilingual city is to call up an image of simultaneous, parallel conversations taking place across urban terrain. To invoke the translational city is to look for areas of incorporation and convergence, the channeling of parallel streams of language into a generalised discussion. Translators are the agents of this process, carrying ideas across urban space into a single public arena and initiating new forms of dialogue (Simon 2012a). Translators are also mediators, and as such are essential figures on the urban landscape. As intermediaries, shifters, connecting agents, and dispatchers, they are the anonymous heroes of communication, making social space more habitable. They stand for a culture of mediation, where translational tensions reflect the forces on the ground. The production of translated texts usually takes place in the removes of private or semi-private space. That is why it is necessary to draw the portraits of the significant individuals who play this role, to see them gathering information and making connections, putting languages and texts into circulation (Simon 2012a). At the heart of this report is Joanne Wan, one of these significant individuals. Working in the advice and advocacy service in a Chinese community centre in Birmingham, UK, she moves in and out of translation zones, hidden in a shared office up narrow stairs, mediating for whoever comes through the door, translating experience, institutions, regulations, translating herself, translating the other. As translator and mediator she does what she can to make the world not only more meaningful, but also more just.

The translational city is a space of connecting and converging communities, of directionality and incorporation. Relations between languages are indicators of the extent to which the city's languages participate in the more general conversations of cultural citizenship. Citizenship requires, first and foremost, engagement with other people in the creation of shared social spaces. Translation, over and above individual multilingualism, is the key to citizenship - the key to the creation of communities across languages in the public sphere (Simon 2012b). The city questions received ideas of 'foreignness', because members of diverse cultures become neighbours and share a single territory. This means that the frames which dictate the flow and analysis of language exchange must be recast to respond to more subtle understandings of the relation between language and identity. This recognition will put pressure on the traditional terminology of translation studies, in particular the ideal relation of source to target. The city is a network of differences across small spaces. To discuss translation in the city therefore is to investigate the ways in which differences, often conflictual, are negotiated. The translational city is also a space of heightened language awareness where exchange is accelerated or blocked, facilitated or forced, questioned and critiqued. Translation speaks to the relations of tension, interaction, rivalry, or convergence of languages in city spaces (Simon 2016).

Translation and the city are linked through cultures of circulation, that is, pathways which are at once technological, material and cultural. Circulation has a shaping force; practices of communication determine the ways that knowledge is received and transmitted, shaped,

developed, organized and passed on. The cultural meanings of transactions emerge through the ongoing conversations and narratives, the traditions and imaginaries of the city, its spaces of communion and conflict. Translators are a key to investigating the passages across the city. Following the traces of important mediators in their cities and studying their cultural projects means giving a broad understanding to the notion of translation. Without the many forms of translation documented cross-culturally, it is hard to see how human life could thrive either at the level of the individual or the group (Tymozcko 2014).

Cities propose a geometry of divided and contested space, where language relations are regulated by the opposing forces of coercion and resistance, of wilful indifference and engaged interconnection. To attempt to understand some of the elements which create both the appeal of cities and their fragility is a task that can be taken on by a focus on translation. It is not simply the presence of languages that count, but the forces which direct the flow of language traffic and the mood which animates life at the intersection. The intersection is the symbolic centre of the city's imaginative life – it is a site of opportunity and danger, of hopeful encounters and disappointed miscommunication. The kinds of translation that arise there are various, unpredictable and richly formative.

There are no monolingual cities: all are sites of encounter and gathering, and languages are part of the mix. But each city imposes its own patterns of interaction and these emerge out of their spaces and their own narrative pasts. Contact, transfer and circulation of languages are determined by the demographics, institutional arrangements and imaginative histories of urban life. Movement across languages is marked by the special intensity that comes from a shared history, a common territory and the situation of contending rights. Successful negotiation across these commonalities and differences becomes the very condition of civic coexistence. But at the same time, translations are rarely neutral events in a placid field of encounter, rather they are events which sustain or transform social interrelations (Simon 2012).

It is useful to consider the idea of *translation zones* – areas of intense interaction across languages, spaces defined by an acute consciousness of cultural negotiations and often host to the kinds of polymorphous translation practices characteristic of multilingual milieus. All cities have such zones, as well as areas of resistance to – or forced – translation. What emerges, then, is an image of divided and contested urban space, where language relations are regulated by the opposing forces of coercion and resistance, of wilful indifference and engaged interconnection (Cronin and Simon 2014). Languages are kept separate by “semantic zoning” (Apter 2006: 6), enclosed in their own worlds, untranslatable. But in translation zones sites are in-translation, belonging to no single, discrete language or single medium of communication. Nor does the translation zone belong to a single discipline, or view of the world. Rather, it is a nexus at which politics, poetics, linguistics, environment, history, economics, and mobility intersect. Translation is a means of repositioning the subject in the world and in history. Translation is a significant medium of subject re-formation and political change. Translation failure demarcates intersubjective limits.

People have always translated. Before professional interpreters, there were travellers, merchants, ambassadors, and spies. Despite fratricides, we campaign for universal fraternity. Despite the heterogeneity of idioms, there are bilinguals, polyglots, interpreters and translators (Ricouer

2006). Translation becomes a key to understanding the cultural life of cities when it is used to map out movements across language, to reveal the passages created among communities at specific times. All cities are translational, but there are historical moments when language movements are key to political or cultural reversals. The politics of the translation zone do not only reside in the fractures and tensions of contemporary mobility. They are also bound up with the specific ecology of urban centres. As any one culture will only provide a subset of all the possible responses to a situation and generally these responses are tailored to meet situations that have already been encountered, societies that are beholden to the monocultural have immense difficulty in dealing with the unforeseen or the unexpected (Cronin and Simon 2014).

Translation is a lens to track the crosstown voyages of exemplary cultural figures. By examining the changing meanings of these voyages we can explore changing relations across communities. Translation also serves as a figure not only of cross-cultural dialogue but also of failed encounters. The will to translate follows the enthusiasms and resistances of history. It creates points of contact in an enduring dialogue that includes zones of silence. The areas where translation breaks down – as a result of indifference or hostility – are equally important to examine (Simon 2006). Every act of translation is a statement about human relations, about the ways in which languages, cultures, and individuals are the same or different. To believe in the possibilities of full equivalence is to embrace hopes of universalism. Those who refuse equivalence put their hopes in the possibilities of unending difference. Translation is at the heart of these debates. Translation practices allow us to understand the models of culture operating at a particular moment, in a particular community. They are a measure of distance and proximity; they locate sites of uneven relations (Simon 2006).

Rather than collapsing language differences into the maelstrom of an undifferentiated multilingualism, understanding the interactions of the city as a complex, overlapping weave of translations is to identify a field of discreet practices — each with differing stakes and outcomes. These practices can be studied as a key to the interactions among language communities and among forms of cultural expression (Simon 2009). It is necessary to study language as a shaping presence in the city. To make sense of language practices, of what seems like the wanderings of languages through streets and neighbourhoods, it is necessary to hear these languages within a history of conversations. The city is not a background to language; rather, language relations are part of the imaginative world that defines the city.

The multilingual person is not someone who translates constantly from one language or cultural system into another, although translation is something multilingual subjects are able to do if needed. To be multilingual is above all to live in more than one language, to be one for whom translation is unnecessary. The image for multilingualism is not translation, perhaps, but *desdoblamiento* ('doubling'), a multiplying of the self. Translation is a deep but incomplete metaphor for the traffic in meaning. It is not in the long run an adequate basis for a theory of cross cultural meaning making and not a substitute for such a theory. But exploring that metaphor may be a productive way of clarifying what such a theory might look like. Translation can be our constant reminder that the study of cultural mediation will be both a science and a poetics (Pratt 2002).

Pratt (2002) asks what are the strengths and limits of translation for characterizing cultural transactions, the appropriations, negotiations, migrations, mediations, recodings, and transposings that are situated in traffic in meaning? Can the idea of translation sustain or contain all those things? What is lost and gained if it is asked to do so? Where does the metaphor succeed and fail as it changes into theorizing? What questions does such an approach have to ask? What distinctions have to be made? Translation in its normative, linguistic sense seeks some form of equivalence. How helpful is it, then, to treat as translation those processes that involve the purposeful creation of nonequivalence, of new musics not mandated by the original? Musics that capture aspects of the original by being parodic, mimetic, resistant, caricaturesque, or accurate by exaggeration? What about processes that muffle, absorb, appropriate, transpose, conceal? (Pratt 2002). Translators and translation must be reconceptualized because of different effects caused by the increasing networking of the world. It is clear that translation studies must use frameworks from other cultures and other disciplines to interrogate its own discourses and to develop broader conceptualizations of translation (Tymozcko 2014).

If translation is primarily a form of interaction with another language and culture (which in turn modify one's own), then it is to translation that we must look if we want to think about how global neighbourhoods are to become something other than the site of non-interactive indifference. One way to intensify social interaction is to see multilingual, multi-ethnic urban space as first and foremost a translation space, a translation zone. Translation, a fundamental feature of the daily lives of countless millions on the planet, has much to tell us about how humans have lived and how they will live in a world where to know who you are means first and foremost knowing who others are (Cronin 2006). In translation we have the creation of some form of shared sense, some degree of commonality, which gives substance to the idea of translation as not the uncovering of a universal substrate, waiting to be revealed, but the contingent construction of bottom-up commonality. If translation is about attempts to get close to another culture, it also brings into sharp relief the material, social and historically situatedness of peoples, their languages and their texts (Cronin 2009). Acts of translation are simultaneously reflective and directive; they contribute to both the strengthening and the weakening of prior understandings (Inghilleri 2017).

A translation can provide only an approximate understanding or image of the source text, namely an interpretation, not that text itself. Translation is an interpretive act that is not simply reproduction (Venuti 2012). The notion of translation as transfer is outmoded, and ignores the context of translation. Furthermore, the transfer metaphor potentially undermines the self-reflexivity and empowerment of translators. There are no necessary and sufficient conditions that can identify all translations and that at the same time exclude all non-translations across time and space. Different cultures have different criteria for translation as a process and for translations as products (Tymozcko 2014). A translator must not only unpack the embodied and situated knowledge related to cultural configurations and practices in the source text, the source culture, the author or speaker, but be able to interpret the embodied and situated cultural practices and dispositions of the translator's own culture and the culture of the receiving audience. Cultural translation is a compelling and complex topic related to the agency of translators. Translation across cultural differences is at the heart of a translator's agency and skill. A translator is a cultural mediator (Tymozcko 2014).

Translating Translation

In this document we report on a linguistic ethnographic investigation of translation in practice. The investigation was conducted as part of a wider research project, 'Translation and translanguaging: Investigating linguistic and cultural transformations in superdiverse wards in four UK cities'. The project was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council as a Large Grant in the Translating Cultures theme (2014-2018. Principal Investigator: Angela Creese). The aim of the project was to gain an advanced understanding of the ways in which people communicate when they come into contact in changing, complex cities, and to analyse their communicative practices in terms of wider social processes, ideologies, and relations of power. In order to achieve this it was necessary to observe communicative practices closely and repeatedly, over time. We observed people engaged in different kinds of activities, and in different spaces. In designing the research we had to account for the fact that in contemporary cities in the UK we would encounter people communicating through semiotic repertoires which may not be accessible to many or most of the investigators. To ensure a diversity of regional focus, we selected four cities in the UK as broad research sites: London in the South of England, Leeds in the North, Birmingham in the Midlands, and Cardiff in Wales. As a means of collecting observational material associated with a range of activities, we established that we would select four types of research site in each of the four cities. These would include: (i) Business settings, (ii) Cultural heritage sites, (iii) Sports clubs, and (iv) Legal advice contexts. Reports on aspects of the research are available at the project website: Substantial reports were written, and posted to the research project website: <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/publications/index.aspx>. The present report is an outcome of the investigation of a (quasi-)legal advice context in Birmingham.

Linguistic Ethnography

Ethnographers pay close attention to local context, historicity and specificity, but also to non-local, transnational dynamics, connections and relations. For ethnographers the challenge is to understand the different conditions and trajectories of different groups in the superdiverse city, including legal status, life stage, gender and generational dynamics and so on, when the residents in a single neighbourhood originate in different societies and represent different diasporic generations, each with their own histories of migration and settlement. Investment of time is needed to develop the knowledge that enables the ethnographer to go beyond a superficial, journalistic account. A fine-grained, ethnographic understanding of the diversification of diversity as lived experience helps us understand when, where, how, why and for whom some differences come to make a difference (Berg and Sigona 2013). In their study of social encounters in New York, Singapore, and Johannesburg, Vertovec (2015) and colleagues observed that locally constructed understandings of ethnicity or 'race' are just a part of the dynamics of difference: language, class, socio-economic position and legal status combine with ethnicity and 'race' to condition social categories and socio-spatial practices.

To engage with the complexities of situated social identification, ethnography and micro-ethnographic analysis are necessary (Rampton 2016). Since complexity implies a lack of

predictable features in social events and their outcomes, a meticulous ethnographic approach is the research method that is likely to guarantee best outcomes (Blommaert et al 2017). Hornberger and Cassells Johnson (2007) demonstrate how ethnography can illuminate local interpretation and implementation. To study language and superdiversity we do not seek to separate the linguistic from the superdiverse, but examine language as it constitutes, and is constituted in, superdiversity. To do so we engage linguistic ethnography, an interpretive approach which studies the local and immediate interactions of actors from their point of view, and considers how these interactions are embedded in wider social contexts and structures (Copland and Creese 2015). Linguistic ethnography investigates contexts for communication rather than assuming them, and addresses the internal organization of semiotic data to understand their significance (Rampton 2015). Through detailed attention to interactions between people, linguistic ethnography links everyday linguistic and cultural practices to wider social processes, ideologies, and relations of power.

The Chinese Community Centre

Anna Yim, Chief Executive of the Chinese Community Centre (CCC-B), talks about the history of the organization.

When we first started, there were no services available for the Chinese community. People lived, worked in Birmingham in silence. There was no voice for the Chinese community. It was hard, it was difficult. Young families lived in Birmingham with little help because of the language barrier. They were mainly from Hong Kong. Their main dialect was Hakka. No English. So it was hard, it was very hard. Chinese families used to live in a small house shared with three or four other Chinese families. So facilities were really limited. And then CCC-B came along. We helped the families, helped them to settle, got the kids into education, found them a school, housing, then benefits. The city council gave us some funding. That's how we started to get paid staff to work for the Chinese families. It was hard, it was a really hard time. Gradually we had staff to help them, to take them to hospital, to translate for health appointments, to negotiate with social services, to attend parents' evenings in school. Because of the needs of the Chinese community we had to move the office, initially from Sparkbrook to Chinatown, then to where we are now. It's a very long history. We just celebrated our 40th anniversary last week. There are still lots of things we can expand on, we can do more. But the lack of funding makes our job more difficult. Another big change is that we now serve more people from mainland China, who are speaking Mandarin. Luckily, at CCC-B we have members of staff who are trilingual. It's English, Cantonese, and Mandarin, and we are able to meet the changing needs of the Chinese community.

We are still caring, working, and supporting those people who need our help. To help them, to provide language support when they have to deal with the solicitor, or to deal with the tax office. Because they lack confidence in using English they still come to us, asking us to help them. So we are carrying on providing basic services for local Chinese people. At the same time to want to encourage Chinese people to go beyond the Chinese community, to integrate, to make them more aware of what there is beyond the Chinese community. Go and exploit, go and to integrate. It's very important nowadays. Otherwise they will become lost and behind, which we don't want.

We have a carer's project for Chinese people. We are running a health development project, and a day care centre for old Chinese people who are very isolated and vulnerable. We look after their wellbeing, we cook them a hot Chinese meal every day. We are thinking of expanding this service because there is a need here. Older Chinese people need this kind of service, someone to look after them. We run several wellbeing

activities, table tennis, a dance group, Taichi classes, calligraphy classes, language classes for non-Chinese as well as Chinese. We are running a dementia project, which is very successful. And the Advice and Advocacy project is much needed because of the language barrier, they come asking us to help them sort out their issues, maybe with their landlord, their telephone contract, the water authority. Some of them have a simple problem like they don't know how to fill in a tax credit form, or it could be more complex issue, an immigration letter.

In interviews with staff, volunteers, and members of the board of trustees, we heard the view that the Chinese Community Centre provided essential services with few resources. Particular reference was made to the needs of older Chinese people in Birmingham, some of whom relied on the centre for social care and support. We also heard that the Advice and Advocacy service was a first point of contact for many users of the centre, and a *de facto* needs assessment point. Interpreting and translation services were regarded as a key aspect of the centre's provision.

In many of the sixteen research sites we had observed hundreds of interactions between people who looked or sounded different from each other – in Birmingham, for example, a butcher originally from Fuzhou joking with a customer from Lithuania; a librarian originally from Hong Kong assisting a student from Brazil; a volleyball coach also originally from Hong Kong coaching his team of international players. In the final stage of ethnographic observation we planned to examine interactions between people who would not necessarily look and sound different from each other, to extend a sense of the diversification of diversity (Vertovec 2013), ensuring that our empirical and analytical focus was not restricted to differences between people based on ethnic, racial, cultural, or linguistic difference. In order to understand and more fully address the complex nature of contemporary, migration-driven diversity, additional variables needed to be engaged, including different legal statuses, divergent labour market experiences, discrete configurations of gender and age, patterns of spatial distribution, and mixed local area responses by service providers and residents. The dynamic interaction of these variables has been termed 'superdiversity' (Vertovec 2007).

In considering sites for observation of law / legal advice practices in the superdiverse city, the research team was challenged. A firm of solicitors which emphasized the multilingual skills of their team was approached, but after some consideration they believed that their clients were unlikely to consent to be observed. Approaches to the city register office were unsuccessful. Research Fellow Rachel Hu was known to the staff at the Chinese Community Centre, having served as a member of the management committee, and before that as a member of staff. She was therefore very well placed to gain access to the site, and to negotiate with potential key participants. The research team approached the Chief Executive Officer of the organization, Anna Yim. She was interested in the research project, and agreed that the community centre would participate in the ethnographic work. She made it clear that the Advice and Advocacy service was not a law centre, nor was it in a position to give legal advice, *per se*. The terms of reference of the service were to support the needs of Chinese people, particularly, but by no means exclusively, with claims for welfare benefits. Whatever the need for support or advice presented by people coming through the office door, it invariably had legal implications. Whether people were asking for help to complete a benefits claim form, seeking information about applying for British citizenship, or looking for advice about divorce proceedings, there were considerations related to the law. That is, while this was not a law centre, it was a *de facto*

legal advice centre. In this report we adopt the term ‘quasi-legal advice’ to describe the activity of the Advice and Advocacy service.

Ethnographic observations were conducted in the Advice and Advocacy service provided by the centre. One of the advice and advocacy workers, Joanne Wan, agreed to be key participant, and would subject herself to observation and audio-recording. Whereas in previous phases of the project Rachel Hu and Adrian Blackledge had both observed key participants regularly, we decided on this occasion that the space in which the advice and advocacy service operated was too small to accommodate two observers. Furthermore, the presence of a non-Chinese, male researcher might be intrusive in the context of discussion of sensitive issues. For these reasons Rachel conducted all of the ethnographic observations of Joanne working in the advice and advocacy service. Adrian Blackledge visited the Chinese community centre on six occasions overall, but did not focus on the advice and advocacy service. The Principal Investigator of the overall research project, Angela Creese, also visited the community centre on several occasions.

In the course of providing support and advice to her clients, Joanne was inevitably a translator. Almost all of the clients we observed were speakers of Mandarin and / or Cantonese. All of the meetings were conducted largely or entirely in Mandarin or Cantonese. Although it was not the sole reason, most of the clients came to ask Joanne for support and advice because their English proficiency was not sufficient to enable them to navigate the complex bureaucratic systems with which they were faced. That is, first and foremost Joanne was a translator, not only a translator from one language to another, but also a translator of complex systems and bureaucratic processes.

Key Participant

Joanne introduces herself.

English was my subject when I was at university in the southern city of Nanning, so I studied English for four years, and I was assigned a job as a tour operator. And back in the 1990s it was a highly paid job. That's why I had this ambition, wanting to go overseas, because back then people described foreign nations as pollution free, clean, people were polite. And given the opportunity I came and settled here. There was an opportunity to come to the UK to perfect my English. I was one of a group of students. It will be exactly twenty years on 3rd of December. It was a very easy decision for me then because I was young and open. Imagine if it was today I don't think I would have the guts to go to a totally different environment, away from my family, culture, food, people, the whole system. Only when you are young can you make that kind of decision because you don't think about tomorrow. You only think about today, and I wanted to go.

We went to Edinburgh, I did vocational English. I spent two years there and I met my husband, and he's from Birmingham. We moved back to Birmingham in 1999. Ever since then I have lived here. I don't think I was prepared when I got here. I regretted it a little bit, but once you quit your job in China there is no turning back, and today, everyone is self-employed, and they don't pin their hopes on a government job, they can do anything from scratch, but back then we called it the 'iron bowl', the iron bowl I have kind of lost, so there's no choice but to go forward.

Now looking back it is good, because you become more independent, more determined, and make tough decisions for yourself. And if you are with your family you become so reliant on them you never grow up.

You rely on your family for their support, for their ideas, you literally rely on them for everything. But to survive you need to use your brain, or use your hands. I think after a few years spent here a person can be toughened up pretty quickly, much quicker than being in China, because you need to rely on yourself. I remember I needed a part-time job while I was in full-time education. I didn't get home until midnight and woke up at six o'clock in the morning. So you are deprived of sleep, and you've got you do your homework. When I came here I was twenty six years old. Two years down the road I felt I was thirty six. So in a way it was good, you appreciate it a lot more when you go home, when you see your family you realise you need to treat them much better than before.

When you first come to the UK the biggest difference is that in China if you wanted to call your friend you just picked up the phone and dialled. But here it was either pay phone or SIM card. I remember I was living in the college dormitory and there was a pay phone in the corridor, you picked it up and you had to insert money. And you feel, I've never done this before. And I realise no more 'before' I only have 'today' and I concentrate on today, keep going forward, no turning back. And also if you turn back you feel ashamed, people will laugh at you. So for everything, for the sake of your face you cannot turn back.

It was December when I came to Birmingham. Everything was grey, it was cold, but that's just the appearance of the city. Value wise, people here are traditional, polite, and helpful. They don't even look cold. You feel you are welcome to ask them for any help if you are in need, while that's so different in China. That's why I said even though the city's skyline disappoints me, the culture pleases me. I struggled a bit in the beginning. Back then UK was not hiring as many foreign workers, even when I got the right status for work they were not open to foreign faces. So it was difficult you know and I did part-time jobs in Chinese shops. I started working for the Chinese Community Centre until 2003. When I started I was in admin, and then I moved on to carers, and then I was moved to the day care centre, and eventually to Advice and Advocacy. I do feel in this role you can learn so many different things. And you are not only learning, you are making yourself a better person, and also kind of making a better career, if you want to move on.

Methods

Rachel Hu observed Joanne's advice and advocacy sessions two days a week for eleven weeks, noting her observations as field notes. She observed 79 interactions between Joanne and her clients. In all Rachel Hu wrote 22 sets of field notes, amounting to 109,338 words. The field notes describe what Rachel could see and hear as she observed Joanne at work, and in her break time. Rachel joined Joanne and other members of staff, and volunteers, for lunch provided by the community centre. After writing field notes for five weeks Rachel asked Joanne to audio-record herself while she continued to observe her at work. Rachel continued to write field notes throughout the data collection period. Joanne audio-recorded herself with a small digital voice recorder, which she kept in her pocket. A tie-clip microphone was secured to her clothing close to her throat. This meant that Rachel was able to audio-record Joanne's speech, and the speech of her clients. In all cases Joanne explained the project to her client, and asked them to sign a consent form giving permission for observation, audio-recording, and subsequent public use of linguistic material. She also gave them the option not to give consent. Where they refused, Rachel did not audio-record the interaction or write field notes.

We asked Joanne to send us examples of her online, digital, and social media communication. Although she was not an enthusiastic participant in social media, she used 'WeChat', and also used e-mail at work. Joanne copied and sent to the research team 2920 WeChat messages from

729 WeChat screen shots taken from her mobile, plus 15 e-mails. The research team took photographs in and around the community centre. In all 125 photographs were taken. After twelve weeks Rachel asked Joanne to audio-record herself either (or both) in domestic or friendship group settings. She did both, and these recordings, many of them at the dinner table, amounted to 80 hours of interaction. Rachel transcribed the audio recordings, other than recordings of discourse in Cantonese. For these a translator / transcriber was contracted. We collected leaflets and documents associated with the community centre. Rachel interviewed Joanne, and also conversed with her many times while shadowing her at work. Finally, we video-recorded activity in the community centre, but outside the advice and advocacy centre. We took the decision that the video-camera would be intrusive in the relatively intimate space of the Advice and Advocacy service. The video-recorded material amounted to 2 hours. We also interviewed 10 staff, volunteers, board members, and other stakeholders at the community centre.

Joanne took part in a three-day research training course run by the research team and accredited by Open College Network (OCN) at Level 3. The training introduced Joanne to linguistic ethnographic research methods and analysis. It also enabled her to view and reflect on some of the data we had collected. The Participant Research Programme (PRP) was designed to offer researchers and key participants involved in the research project the opportunity to learn about the methods and processes used to gather information, to understand linguistic and cultural changes in superdiverse settings, and to better understand the project's aims, rationale and organisation. The PRP was delivered through a series of interactive workshops. Participants' involvement in these workshops, and the collection of key evidence, enabled them to opt in to the OCN accreditation, which took the form of three-credit unit entitled 'Research in Multilingual Settings'.

Analysis

The research team, Rachel Hu, Angela Creese, and Adrian Blackledge, met weekly for two hours to discuss the field notes, reading through and annotating the texts, having already conducted preliminary annotation of the field notes independently before the meeting. These meetings generated initial analysis of the field notes. This process lasted three months. During and beyond the data collection period Rachel transcribed the audio-recorded material. She listened to all of the interactional audio-recordings, and selected sections for transcription. The selection of sections for transcription was also based on the earlier analysis of field notes. Rachel sent the transcripts to Adrian Blackledge and Angela Creese, together with a reference to the audio file, which was commonly available to them. The research team listened separately to the audio recording while annotating the transcript. They held weekly meetings to discuss the transcripts. This activity continued for some months, as the transcripts ran to hundreds of pages of text. During and after this period Adrian Blackledge wrote thematic summaries of the field notes and transcripts, and these formed the basis of a subsequent report. Rachel also selected examples from the online and digital material, and these were examined in analytical meetings of Rachel, Adrian, and Angela. In the production of a report on the online and digital data, Rachel worked closely with Caroline Tagg, who held responsibility for the analysis of these data across the whole project (REF XX). The first draft of the present report was produced by Adrian

Blackledge, and was sent to Angela Creese and Rachel Hu for additional material, amendment, and critical commentary. However, much of the detailed analysis of data was done either collaboratively in weekly meetings, or was shared between the three authors of the report. That is, the whole effort was collaborative, and was a shared enterprise.



The clients Rachel observed in appointments with Joanne came for support with multiple and diverse issues, some complex, others less so. Many were concerned with claims for welfare benefits. Others were related to passport applications, insurance claims, school admissions, letters from doctors, electricity bills, council tax, and so on. Many clients required support with more than one issue, as their challenges overlapped. Appointments with Joanne could be booked by clients as half-hour or hourly sessions. In some instances appointments ran on beyond the hour. In analyzing the sessions we soon recognized that the structure of the meetings was important – that Joanne would develop a relationship with the client within the confined temporal space of the meeting, and that the structure of that relationship was not negligible. For this reason it was important to consider the interactions between Joanne and her clients as a whole, rather than only selecting key moments in the meeting. Logistically, it would be impractical to reproduce full transcripts here of 79 interactions, normally lasting 60 minutes each. However, in order to examine the interaction as a unit of analysis, for this report we decided to focus on just six of the exchanges we observed. In each of Chapters 2 to 7 we will examine one of these interactions. This raises the question how did we select these six interactions from the 79 recorded. It would seem evasive to argue that they simply presented themselves to us. But this may be the best we can say. We wanted two of the appointments to be exchanges between Joanne and Cantonese-speaking clients, because about a third of the total interactions were conducted in Cantonese. Otherwise, these particular sessions seemed to us to be substantial, significant, but also typical of the larger set. They include:

- a woman applying on her husband's behalf for Personal Independence Payment;
- a man asking advice about demands for payment made by the city council, and an unsuccessful application for housing benefit;

- a man with a diagnosis of schizophrenia (and his elderly parents) whose Employment and Support Allowance has been withdrawn;
- a couple asking for support with their application for benefits related to the husband's absence from work due to his urgent need for a hip operation;
- a man requesting support to apply for housing benefit and Pension Credit;
- a man suffering with depression who requires support with multiple issues, including an insurance claim, and access to his children, who live with his estranged wife.

This set of typical cases makes plain the range of knowledge and expertise which Joanne is required to draw on in her role in the advice and advocacy service. She is a translator, but her role as a translator stretches far beyond the transfer of meanings from one language to another. She is legal advisor, counsellor, advocate, assessor, and mediator. In subsequent chapters we will examine the discursive means by which she translates the world, making it, to the best of her ability, not only more meaningful, but more just.



Chapter 2

Practice

Each interaction between client and advisor in the Advice and Advocacy service constitutes a ‘translation zone’ (Apter 2006). But if translation is the game, what is the source text, and what the translation? The client typically has a story to tell, an account to give: of debt, divorce, or disability; of insurance claims, school admissions, or benefit applications. Every telling of a story is a re-telling (Tymoczko 1995), a translation. Narration is translation, just as translation is narration, constructing the events and characters it narrates (Baker 2014). The client’s tale is a translation of experience, of biography, of life lived beyond the translation zone. It is interpreted by the advisor. The advisor as translator, or interpreter, contributes to the elaboration, mutation, transformation, and dissemination of the narrative. The tale is co-constructed in the translation zone, as the advisor intervenes in the process of narration and re-narration. Often the narrative is summarised and reworded by the advisor. The summary may be entered into a computer, or a telephone call may be made on behalf of the client. Normally the narrative is told by the client in Mandarin or Cantonese, and reworded by the advisor in Mandarin or Cantonese. The rewording, and the summary, are what Jakobson (1959 / 2012) termed ‘intralingual translation’. Entering a summary or précis of the tale into a computer, populating a paper or digital document with content, or re-telling information on the telephone, amount (also) to ‘intersemiotic translation’, an interpretation of signs by means of signs based in another sign system. The version (or translation) of the tale produced for the online document of the officer at the end of the telephone (in the office of, for example, The Department for Work and Pensions, or Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs), is typically in English, and is what Jakobson termed ‘interlingual translation’. All three of these categories of translation are regularly in play in Joanne’s interactions with her client. However, Jakobson’s typology may be limiting as a means of describing the complexity of Joanne’s translation practice. For example, explanation or elaboration may be a form of ‘intersemantic translation’ (Boase-Beier 2011).

The advisor re-narrates the story to the benefits officer on the other end of a telephone line, or to the computer. But this telling may not be fixed and stable. Rather, it is often a shifting process characterized by hesitations, amendments, changes of emphasis, responses to responses, negotiation with the client, and strategic modification. Often the advisor speaks or reads to the client in Mandarin or Cantonese, translating interlingually from the benefits officer’s ‘English’. But of course this is not all that is ‘translated’ in the translation zone. Both client and advisor are confronted with the massive complexity of the welfare benefits system, the regulations of tax revenue and customs, the rules governing debt repayment, the law referring to citizenship application, and so on and so forth. Frequently the client has no knowledge or understanding of these complex systems. Indeed the advisor may not have significant training to help her interpret the vast, multivocal regimes of regulation with which she will engage. Yet engage with them she does, acting as mediator between the client and the system.

Representation

In this chapter, as in chapters 3 to 7, we consider a single interaction between Joanne and a client. The client, X, requires help applying on her husband's behalf for Personal Independence Payment, a government welfare benefit which had recently been introduced at the time of our field work. In order to apply she must provide medical evidence of her husband's disability, and complete a PiP2 form, which ran to 33 pages, and asked claimants questions in fifteen categories. The meeting takes place in the small office in the community centre which Joanne shares with her colleague Amy.

Rachel's field notes record that this is the woman's second visit to Joanne, and that Joanne had started to fill in the PiP2 form on her previous visit.

A woman walks in and sits by Joanne's desk. She is a volunteer at CCC-B who has been looking after her husband with a learning disability all her life. The woman is small and very trim, with short hair, plain but clean and neat clothes. She tells Joanne about her husband as if she's telling somebody else's story. I can't imagine what a strong heart there must be under her petite and delicate appearance. They continue to fill in the form to apply for the allowance the government gives to mentally and physically disabled people.

As we join the interaction Joanne is asking the client about her husband's physical ability, so that she can populate the form. The interaction takes place in Mandarin¹.

Example 2.1

- J 所以前面这几个问题都是关于他身体能力方面的。
以他的情况我们只要实话实说
就可以。这些问题来看
只要其中的任何一个问题拿到满分，
他就一定能拿到。
很少有人这些问题都各个拿高分的。一共多少问题呀
十五个耶。谁要是这十五个问题都拿很高的分数
那整个人就废了。
< so the first few questions are about his physical abilities
in his situation we just need to be honest about it
and after that when we come to here
if you can score a full mark for any of these questions then it's granted
very rarely does anybody score a high mark
in answering these questions
how many fifteen questions
if they score a high mark for each question
they must be be totally wasted >
X 是啊，废掉了就，是吧。呵呵。

- < yea wasted isn't it ehehe >
- J 怎么可能又是身体又是脑力都不行的？这样很少见的，
呵呵。那做饭呢？
< how on earth can anyone be both physically and (2) very rare heh-heh
so cooking? >
- X 他不会的
< he can't >
- J 他不会，所以他不知道怎么煮饭
< he can't (.) so he doesn't know how >
- X 他不知道怎么量多少杯米，需要多少水。
呃，不会的，他什么都不懂的。
有好几次他把我的味精当成盐！呵呵
你每天都告诉他，可他就是记不住，呵呵
< he doesn't know how to measure how many cups of rice how much water
um no he doesn't know anything
so many times he has mistaken my weijing for salt hehe
you tell him every day but still he doesn't remember hehe >
- J 呵呵，所以他不知道怎么去量，也不知道数量多少
< hehe so he doesn't know the measurement (.) and the quantity? >
- X 他不知道的，而且会把同样颜色的东西搞混。
比如说，他味精当成盐，他分不清的
以前更差，他分不清男人和女人的
所以我不让他和别人讲话
他也不知道该怎么叫人
< he doesn't and he mistakes things of the same colour
for example weijing and salt (.) he can't tell them apart
it was awful previously he couldn't tell men from women
so I asked him not to say anything to people
he doesn't know how to address people properly >

At the beginning of *Example 2.1* Joanne explains the form, and tells X that the first few questions are about her husband's physical abilities. She is confident that the application for financial support will be successful, and tells X that they only need to fill in the form honestly. Here Joanne is translating the bureaucratic system for her client. In doing so she presents the process as a game, or a competition, in which it is necessary to score a high mark to guarantee success. This is more than metaphor: the process of making a claim for the benefit was characterized by a scoring system. For example, in the category 'Preparing food', a positive response to the statement 'Can prepare and cook a simple meal unaided' earned the claimant zero points. A positive response to the criterion statement, 'Needs prompting to be able to either prepare or cook a simple meal' earned two points, while 'Cannot prepare and cook food' earned eight points. Rachel's field notes refer to what Joanne says about the scoring system:

Later on Joanne told me that the allowance the woman is applying for is for families or carers who have mentally disabled people to look after. The level of their mental and physical disabilities will be ranked and scored based on the evidence provided in the form. Some applicants will be called in for an interview before the final decision is made. The higher the score the more money the carer can be allocated. This is what Joanne is constantly writing about, as she needs to present the strongest evidence to help these families.

Joanne tells X that if her husband gains a high score for any of the questions, his claim will be granted. She translates for X the rules of the game. Each component of PiP assessment has two levels: standard or enhanced. Each is assessed under twelve activities: ten for daily living, and two for mobility. For both components claimants need 8 points for the standard rate and 12 points for the enhanced rate. Joanne says it is a rare thing for high marks to be scored across the full fifteen questions. In an aside which is less explanation than commentary (and hardly politically correct) she points out that anyone who was able to score high marks across the board would be ‘totally wasted’. The client, X, far from appearing shocked by this shift of register, echoes Joanne, who warms to her theme, asking rhetorically how anyone could demonstrate need in such a diversity of categories.

Now Joanne moves on to address one of the fifteen areas of questioning in the form, ‘Preparing Food’. Joanne introduces the area of questioning concisely: ‘so cooking?’. X responds with equal brevity, ‘he can’t’. Joanne rewords the response in two ways, first by repetition of X’s phrase, and then by summarizing, ‘so he doesn’t know how’. Picking up on the implicit invitation to elaborate, X introduces narrative examples to illustrate her husband’s disability:

he doesn’t know how to measure how many cups of rice how much water

he doesn’t know anything

so many times he has mistaken my weijing for salt

you tell him every day but still he doesn’t remember

day-to-day life

Tell us in the rest of this form how your health conditions or disabilities affect your day-to-day activities.

Q3 - Preparing Food

① Use page 7 of the Information Booklet to help answer these questions.

Tell us about whether you can prepare a simple one course meal for one from fresh ingredients.

This includes things like:

- food preparation such as peeling, chopping or opening packaging, and
- safely cooking or heating food on a cooker hob or in a microwave oven.

Tick the boxes that apply to you, then provide more information in the Extra information box.

Q3a - Do you need to use an aid or appliance to prepare or cook a simple meal?

Aids or appliances include things like:

- perching stools,
- lightweight pots and pans, easy grip handles on utensils, single lever arm taps and liquid level indicators.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

Q3b - Do you need help from another person to prepare or cook a simple meal?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Life stories and life histories are always parts of larger stories and histories in which we find ourselves interwoven or entwined (Kearney 2006). This is where the paradigm of translation as transference to and fro, forward and backward, reveals its everyday power. X selects some parts of her experience of her husband’s disability to highlight and preserve, and so to stand in for other parts. She narrates them as small stories, selecting some parameters and not others to represent aspects of experience. The small narratives told by X are metonymic, in which parts or aspects of the overall story come to stand for the whole (Tymoczko1995). The small story, ‘he doesn’t know how to measure how many cups of rice how

much water', represents a larger story about a man's lack of spatial awareness and his limited ability to look after himself.

Almost all translations are representations: translation as a category is by and large a subject of representation and most individual translations fall within the larger category representation. As a representation, a translation offers an image or likeness of another thing. It exhibits that thing in a tangible manner. It has symbolic significance. A translation stands in place of another entity and has authority to substitute for or act in place of that entity (Tymoczko 2014). Here the client's story about her husband's inability to measure appropriate proportions of rice and water in cooking represents and translates his condition. The second of X's small stories here is at a general level, but with the third of the stories she returns to the specific and detailed: 'so many times he has mistaken my weijing for salt'. X's small story represents and stands in for a wider story about her husband's inability to distinguish between items which appear similar, and again his ability to care for himself. The story about salt and monosodium glutamate is metonymic, representing aspects of experience which are not explicitly told. The fourth narrative ('you tell him every day but still he doesn't remember') veers towards the general again, and indicates that X's husband is unable to retain information from one day to the next.

In a move which was typical of Joanne's practice in the Advice and Advocacy sessions, she summarises one of the key points her client has made, rewording the narrative in an intralingual translation: 'so he doesn't know the measurement, and the quantity?'. X appears to take the summary to be an invitation to elaborate, and she does so by reiterating (rewording) one of her previous stories, and then introducing a new narrative:

he mistakes things of the same colour
for example weijing and salt he can't tell them apart

it was awful previously
he couldn't tell men from women
so I asked him not to say anything to people
he doesn't know how to address people properly

In rewording, or recontextualising, the story she has already told, X explicitly represents the reworded narrative as an example of a broader point. Whereas in the earlier version the specific story was metonymic, in which a small, particular story represented the (untold) whole, now the retold story of her husband's confusion of weijing and salt ('weijing and salt he can't tell them apart') is explicitly an example of the story that her husband 'mistakes things of the same colour'. Although Joanne's question ('so cooking?') had referred to a specific type of activity, X pursues her theme of her husband's inability to identify differences. Making an association from her argument that he can't distinguish ingredients in the kitchen from each other, she tells a story that her husband had been unable to 'tell men from women'. Translations are shaped by ideological discourses (Tymoczko 2014), and here X's elaboration of her narrative appears to be shaped by an ideological discourse which holds that women and men must be addressed differently. In her telling of the story the narrative that her husband was unable to tell men from women was based on a presupposition that treating people all the same meant that he did not address them 'properly'.

No coherent narrative can be elaborated by attempting to incorporate every detail experienced by or available to the narrator. Inevitably some elements of experience are excluded and others privileged. This process of selective appropriation is inherent in all storytelling (Baker, 2014). X is not able to tell Joanne everything about her husband's disability. The story is too complex and long to be told. Inevitably she selectively appropriates parts of the story to stand for the whole. Joanne wants to know about X's husband's ability (or inability) to prepare food. X strays from that limited narrative, in a related but different story, associated with the common theme that her husband is unable to tell things apart. The selective appropriation of stories of X's husband's disability is metonymic. It is the subtle metamorphosis of the metonymic that gives rise to a different idiom, with its multiple translation traces, where the overlapping and partially corresponding tilt the language in new directions (Cronin 2006). Translation is always a metonymic process, and the ways in which a translator represents a source text, transmits it, and attempts to transculturate it will all be metonymic (Tymoczko 2014).

The translator emerges as a full participant in the stories of modernity that are enacted across urban space – modernity understood as an awareness of the plurality of codes, a thinking with and through translation, a continual testing of the limits of expression. Joanne moves between the requirements of the PiP2 form, which represents the contingencies of the state welfare system, and the lived experience of her client, and her client's husband. The client, X, narrates her experience of her husband's experience. Her narrative is a translation, a putting-into-words, a representation. The interaction continues.

Example 2.2

- X 他现在变老了，情况就更糟了
 尤其是要他看医生的时候
 两个星期前他有好几次要去诊所看医生
 你知道吧？
 他的血压有一百九十一
 < he's aging now and it's getting worse
 especially when he goes to see the doctor
 a couple of weeks ago he had to see the doctor several times
 you understand
 his blood pressure is a hundred and ninety one >
- J 所以他的血压高
 < so his blood pressure is high >
- X 医生给他带那个东西的时候他还想打医生
 把那个医生吓坏了所以我把他的病告诉医生了
 好几个工作人员跑过来让他安静下来
 但他就是和他们打架
 他不想让那个血压计上身
 < when the doctor put the thing on him he wanted to hit the doctor
 the doctor got scared and I told him it's his illness

- several staff tried to calm him down
but he just fought with them
he didn't want the monitor on his body >
- J 他就是不懂周围发生什么事
你还没说完呢
我记下来两件事
一个就是他分不清味精和盐
我不知道数量，不知该放多少米，多少水
< it's just he doesn't know what's going on (.)
you haven't finished yet
I've taken down two things
one is that he'll mistake weijing and salt
I don't know how much I should put in (.) like rice or vegetable
what else? what else does he not understand? >
- X um
- J 他知不知道饭熟了
要是煮米饭他知道吗
< does he know if the rice is cooked
when the rice is cooked does he know that >
- X 他不知道的
有时候正在烧饭的时候
他会跑到冰箱边上在里面乱翻找东西吃
他也不知道怎么关火
像我才有的一个很新的炉子
他不知道怎么用
他根本不知道该怎么用这个新的
< he doesn't
sometimes in the middle of cooking rice
he will go and rummage in the fridge and eat things from it
and he doesn't know how to switch it off
like the modern cooker I got recently
he doesn't know how to use it
(xxx) he doesn't know how to use the new one at all >

Although Joanne's focus in this part of the interview is to complete answers to Question 3 ('Preparing Food') on the form, X again offers a narrative that veers away from this focus. *Temporality* refers to the embeddedness of narratives in time and space (Baker 2014). X locates her narrative in time and space, first through the general observation that 'he's aging now and it's getting worse'. Here the present ('now'), past, and future interweave to instantiate a sense of the deterioration of X's husband's health. Then X relates a specific incident, fixed (approximately) in time ('a couple of weeks ago'). In a narrative translation of events, X gives an account of her husband's unhappy visit to the doctor. X tells a story that her husband fought with the medical staff when they tried to monitor his blood pressure. Joanne comes to the defence of X's husband, offering an explanation of his behaviour, in an interpretation that transforms X's

narrative. Joanne's interpretation of X's account both runs in the same direction as the narrative, and runs contrary to it. Translation here is both dependent on and independent of its source.

Joanne does not dwell here, however. As ever time is short, and she restores the focus of the interview, saying that the answers to the questions on food preparation are not complete. She reads aloud in Mandarin what she has typed in English ('I don't know how much I should put in, like rice or vegetable'). If she is moving *between* languages here there is equally a sense that she is living *in* both languages, translanguaging as well as translating. The multilingual person is not someone who translates constantly from one language (or cultural system) into another, although this is something multilinguals are sometimes able to do. But to be multilingual is, above all, to be one for whom translation is unnecessary because one lives in more than one language (Pratt 2010). Joanne seeks further information, asking an open question which seems to temporarily silence the otherwise verbose X. When Joanne rewords the question as a closed question, with a far more limited range of possible answers, X resumes her narrative mode, and further information is unveiled, this time directly relevant to the section of the form in hand. Here we have another type of translation. Style is as important as content in translation – that is, how something is said, rather than only what is said (Boase-Beier, 2011). The way Joanne's question is worded is initially unsuccessful in eliciting further information. It is only when the question is translated that further information emerges: X's husband can become distracted while cooking, and eats from the fridge; X's husband doesn't know how to use the new cooker. Any process of transferring one section of language into another, which says the same thing in different words, is a process of translation. That is, any reformulation is a translation (Boase-Beier, 2011).

Recontextualisation

Any translation is a reformulation. It is also a recontextualisation, in which some elements of the source text are substituted, omitted, and rearranged, and some new elements may be added. In *Example 2.3* Joanne makes a metalinguistic comment to X, explaining the process of translation from Mandarin to the English of the claim form. However, this is not the only process of translation in play here.

Example 2.3

- J 所以这些都是你的话，我只是把它们翻译成英文
 还有什么要加的吗？
 < so these are all your words and I just translate your words into English (.)
 anything else to add? >
- X 哦，他吃饭不知道饱的所以我得告诉他
 < oh he doesn't know if he's full when he's eating I have to tell him >
- J 所以你得让他不要再吃了
 < so you have to stop him >
- X 是的，所以看他加饭的时候我得告诉他不要再吃了
 呵呵，他饿的时候吃饭不知道停的
 我不让他吃那么多饭的

他已经吃了那么大一碗了，哪里还再吃得下？

一开始他爸妈还不信我，以为我不给他饭吃

后来好多次来我家吃饭亲眼见到都给吓到了

见到他吃那么多

尤其是在中心吃饭的时候

他吃那么多真的好吓人的

也不吃菜就是吃饭

所以我们出来吃饭我都得坐在他的边上

那天我婆婆问我问什么他吃那么多饭

看着吓人她说

所以我说我得坐在他的边上看着他

要是他有他喜欢吃的东西他是吃个不停地

有时候吃撑到开始吐了

< yea I have to tell him to stop sometimes when I see him topping up his rice

hehe when he's hungry he doesn't know when to stop eating

I won't let him have as much rice as he wants

he's already had such a big bowl of rice and how can he want more

at the beginning his parents didn't believe me and thought I didn't want to feed him

but later on after they had dinner at ours so many times they were shocked when they saw how much he was eating

especially when he's eating here at the centre

it's scary to see how much rice he's eating

no other dishes but rice

so if we eat out I have to be at his side

the other day my mother-in-law asked me how come he ate that much rice

it's scary she said

so I said I have to be at his side when he's eating so I can control his food

if there's something really delicious he doesn't stop at all

and sometimes he will eat so much that he'll start to vomit >

Again Joanne asks a relatively open-ended question to her client to elicit further information. On this occasion X responds fulsomely, providing multiple versions of a single narrative about her husband eating too much rice. It is possible to investigate the elaboration of a given narrative in an individual translation or interpreter-mediated encounter (Baker 2014). In the narrative here none of the versions of the narrative are the original, or source text. Rather, each version responds to all of the others, working in concert with them, reformulating and recontextualising the story. The simple narrative is: 'he eats too much rice'. Other versions riff on this central chord, adding colour and texture.

he doesn't know if he's full

I have to tell him to stop

he doesn't know when to stop

I won't let him have as much as he wants
how can he want more?
his parents were shocked
it's scary to see how much rice he's eating
no other dishes but rice
I have to be at his side when he's eating
he will eat so much that he'll start to vomit

Each version of the story complements the others, contributing to the overall narrative. Beyond mere repetition, each reformulation rewords and restates the other versions. X claims support for her narrative through the invocation of the (directly and indirectly) ventriloquized voices of her parents-in-law. Storytelling is above all an act of interpretation. The storyteller frames the stories she tells according to her understanding of them, amplifying the information she conveys through the narrative she unfolds. Traces of the storyteller cling to the story in the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel (Maitland 2017). This is X's story of her experience of her husband's experience. It bears the prints of her hands.

Abbreviation

Joanne turns to another question on the PiP2 form, which refers to 'Washing and bathing'. Multilingual contexts put pressure on the traditional vocabulary of transfer, and its concepts of source and destination. Translation can no longer be configured only as a link between a familiar and a foreign culture, between a local original and a distant destination, between one monolingual community and another (Simon 2012a). As before, rather than translating the language of the form 'literally', or 'word for word', Joanne sums up the questions with an abbreviated version, 'now shower and washing'.

Example 2.4

- J 现在是冲凉和洗漱
 < now shower and washing >
X 哦他洗澡我得告诉他要出来了
 不然他可以一直呆在里面，半个小时
 因为他有高血压
 又是他洗澡一洗就是一个小时
 所以我得半个小时看一下他
 因为热水器不能开太长时间
 要是超过一个小时会爆炸的

- 所以他要是老不关水我得去检查一下
要是他在里面超过半个小时
< oh shower I have to ask him to get out
if he's in there for more than half an hour
cos he has high blood pressure
each time he'll spend an hour in the shower
so I have to check up on him after half an hour
the boiler has a time limit for how long it can be on
if it's on beyond an hour it will explode
so as he won't switch it off I have to check on him
when he's there for more than half an hour >
- J 那他洗澡在里面都干什么呀
就呆在里面?
< so what is he doing there in the shower?
just staying in? >
- X 是呀就站在淋蓬头底下
好舒服的嘛他喜欢的
< yea just standing there under the shower
very comfy and he likes it >
- J 呵呵，好的
< hehe ok >
- X 是呀就是这样的
每次我买一瓶新的香波他一次就用掉半瓶
< yea just like that
each time I buy a new bottle of shampoo he'll use half of it in one go >
- J 哈哈
< haha >
- X 他都没有头发买次洗澡的时候还有用掉半瓶香波
< he has no hair but he can use half the bottle each time he showers >
- J 所以他每次洗澡的时候就那么自己站在里面半个小时，没问题的吗?
< so he just stays there by himself for more than half an hour and he's all right? >
- X 是的，他可以的，浴室的门里面没法锁的
< yea he's OK the door can't be locked from the inside >
- J 淋浴里面也没有扶手什么类似的东西?
< and there's no handle or things like that inside the shower? >
- X 没有这样的东西
< no nothing like that >
- J 所以他自己身体方面可以的
没有问题自己一个人洗的
所以你要告诉他什么时候冲凉?
< so he's able physically
no problems in doing things for himself
do you need to tell him when to have a shower? >
- X 当然我得告诉他

你不叫他洗他不知道去洗澡的
< of course I have to let him know
if you don't ask he won't shower >

Again X needs little invitation to move into her story, which she illustrates with graphic examples. She tells the story to Joanne, who acts as a mediator, gathering information and making connections, moving across language zones, putting languages and texts into circulation (Simon 2012a). Mediators are involved in activities of exchange that involve a range of activities which exceeds mere translation – they are multilingual authors, self-translators, often active in a variety of intercultural and inter-artistic networks, often migrants, who develop transfer activities in several geo-cultural spaces. In sum, mediators are the true architects of common repertoires and frames of reference, a model of an urban, national or international culture (Cronin and Simon 2014). Joanne's skill as a mediator facilitates X's narrative, which is told with a touch of dark humour. Translation across cultural differences is at the heart of a translator's agency and skill. A translator is a cultural mediator (Tymoczko 2014). But this interaction is no cosy chat, no garden-fence gossip about incompetent husbands. The stakes are higher than that, and Joanne populates the template of the PiP2 form with elements of X's narrative for a particular purpose, and with a particular goal in mind.

Translation zones

As before X offers detail in her narrative. Joanne's role as interpreter is to pick out elements of the story which will enable her client's husband to meet the criteria of the claim form. Some parts of the story will be more relevant than others. The point that X's husband uses half a bottle of shampoo despite his lack of hair is less relevant than the question of whether he will independently remember to take a shower. Joanne mediates all this, maintaining a convivial relationship with her client while keeping a professional eye on what counts as evidence according to the Department for Social Development. She translates X's metonymic stories and renders them fit for the hard-nosed purpose of scoring points in the Disability and Carers Service calculator. All this Joanne does in the translation zone, an area of intense interaction across languages, a space defined by an acute consciousness of cultural negotiation, and host to the kinds of polymorphous translation practices characteristic of multilingual milieus. All cities have such zones, as well as areas of resistance to translation. The translation zone of the city acts as a hub of resilience. Translation as the clearing house of possibility reveals the immensity of the resources that a city can draw on to manage unpredictable and uncertain futures (Cronin and Simon 2014).

After a brief discussion of X's husband's elaborate teeth-brushing routine, Joanne continues to type on her laptop and is ready to read to X what she has typed in this section of the form.

Example 2.5

J 这一项是关于冲凉和洗漱的
 我自己可以冲凉和洗脸
 我刷牙洗脸需要半个小时

- 我不知道什么时候该去洗澡
 如果我妻子让我去洗澡
 我有时会去有时不会
 如果我洗澡我会呆半个多小时
 我妻子得经常过来查看我有没有问题
 < so here is showering and brushing teeth
 I can take a shower and wash my face
 and brushing teeth can take half an hour
 and I don't know when to shower
 and if my wife asks me to shower
 I sometimes will and sometimes won't
 if I shower I stay there for more than half an hour
 and each time if I stay in the shower for more than half an hour
 my wife comes and checks on me >
- X 要么不要写半个小时
 就说很长时间
 因为他就不会看时间
 < maybe don't say half an hour
 Just say a long time
 cos he doesn't know how to tell the time >
- J 呵呵，应该没问题，因为我们用的是第一人称 I
 三十分钟也太长了
 十分钟就很长了何况半个小时
 就是洗的时间太长呵呵
 < hehe it should be ok cos we are using the first person I >
 thirty minutes is already too much
 ten minutes would be too long let alone thirty minutes
 it's just too much heheh >
- X 有时候可以洗一个小时！
 一开始他爸妈还不相信我说的
 < an hour it could be
 at first his parents didn't believe what I said >
- J 要是在里面时间太长会晕倒的
 < he could collapse staying there that long >
- X 而且他会把水温调的很烫
 我都换了五六个淋浴了
 还好我们不需要付钱
 不然要花好多钱
 < and he turns the tap on very hot
 I've already changed five or six showers
 fortunately we don't need to pay for them
 if we did it would cost so much money >
- J 如果里面太热他会喘不过气来的
 < if it's too hot there he can't even breathe >

- X 如果太热了就得把窗户打开
< it's so damp and you have to open the window >
- J 所以得把窗户开着
开的大大的，不然他会头晕的
< so you have to keep the window open
keep it wide open otherwise if it's too hot there he could faint >

Q6 – Washing and bathing

① Use **page 8** of the **Information Booklet** to help answer these questions.

Tell us about whether you can wash and bathe.
This means things like:

- washing your body, limbs, face, underarms and hair and
- using a standard bath or shower

This doesn't include any difficulties you have getting to the bathroom.

Tick the boxes that apply to you then provide more information in the Extra information box.

Q6a – Do you need to use an aid or appliance to wash and bathe yourself, including using a bath or shower?

Aids and appliances include things like:

- bath / shower seat,
- grab rails

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Sometimes

Q6b – Do you need help from another person to wash and bathe?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Joanne knows that one of the criterion statements related to this section of the form that carries two precious points in the evaluation of X's husband's needs is as follows: 'Needs supervision or prompting to be able to wash or bathe'. Her statement, in the voice of X's husband, is carefully worded, 'I don't know when to shower'. Here Joanne is not only translating between English and Mandarin without appearing to translate, but is also translating between the domestic detail of X's narrative and the formal requirements of the government document. In Joanne's practice translation is rarely one-way, rarely the translation of the source text alone. Rather, translation is almost always multiple, multi-directional, and multivocal.

Negotiation

X negotiates with Joanne, 'maybe don't say half an hour say a long time cos he doesn't know how to tell the time'. X is concerned that an assessor further up the line in the anonymous, Kafkaesque system might be suspicious of the voice of the claim form, as her husband has little sense of the concept of time. Joanne dismisses her suggestion, and as if to mitigate the disagreement she articulates her concern for X's husband, who she says could collapse after being in a hot shower for so long. The two women align in their disquiet, sharing their worry, but not without some (also shared) amusement that X's husband could stay so long in the shower. Joanne acts as a mediator, aligning with her client as they comment on the behaviour of the husband. In moving from questions to comments Joanne finds common ground with X. Her translation goes beyond what is required to populate the claim form. She picks up the client's register and inhabits it, living inside it, translating not only X's words but also her world. Joanne's discourse runs in the same direction as X's discourse, they overlap communicatively, and they are fit to move on to the next set of questions.

Question 8 of the PiP2 form requires information about the claimant's ability with dressing and undressing.

Example 2.6

- J: 拿自己穿衣服，脱衣服呢

- 这方面有没有问题
 这是要看他的手指是不是灵活
 能不能系鞋带或者类似的事情
 < how about putting on and taking off clothes?
 any problems with that?
 this is to see whether or not his fingers are flexible
 like doing his shoe laces and things like that >
- X 鞋带儿
 他现在老是丢东西
 昨天我们出去买东西
 他吧我让他拿的东西全都丢掉了
 哦医生第一次查出来他有高血压的时候
 就说他以后会是这个样子的
 因为他的病他的手指是不灵活的
 < shoe laces
 nowadays he tends to lose things
 yesterday we went out shopping
 and he just lost whatever I asked him to carry
 oh the doctor said when he was first diagnosed with high blood pressure
 the doctor said that he'll be like this
 his fingers are not flexible because of his condition >
- J 所以他的手指不灵活
 那他能系鞋带么?
 < so his fingers are not flexible
 can he do his shoe laces? >
- X 他能但要好长时间
 < he can but it takes ages >
- J 所以他可以但要好长时间
 那系扣子呢
 < so he can just it takes longer
 how about doing buttons? >
- X 系扣子，像昨天
 我们去给他买了一条裤子
 他不会系扣子的
 你知道那种圆的扣子
 你得这样让扣子平着钻过去
 可他不会这样
 他让我教他怎么系
 < buttons (.) like yesterday
 we went to buy him a pair of new trousers
 and he didn't know how to do the buttons
 you know those round buttons
 you have to do this to button up
 but he doesn't know how to do it

- he asked me to teach him how to do it >
- J 所以你得教他怎么系扣子
那解扣子呢
他会解扣子吗?
< so you have to teach him to do the buttons
how about unbuttoning?
does he know how to unbutton? >
- X 他会就是
< he does but just >
- J 很慢?
< very slow? >
- X 很慢的
所以这是为什么他让我给他买带拉链的裤子
< very slow
so that's why he asked me to buy him clothes with zippers >
- J 哦他会拉拉链, zipper 没有问题的
< oh he knows the zipper >
zipper he can handle that >
- X 有拉链的裤子就可以
要是系扣子的裤子他就不穿
< if the trousers have a zipper that will do for him
he won't wear them if they have buttons instead >
- J 好那我就写我不喜欢系扣子的衣服
< ok so I just wrote I don't like clothes with buttons >

Joanne's initial question here is translated from the PiP2 form, which refers to 'putting on and taking off clothes'. Joanne adds another layer of translation, explaining in Mandarin that 'this is

Q8 – Dressing and undressing

① Use **page 9** of the **Information Booklet** to help answer these questions.

Tell us about whether you can dress or undress yourself

This means:

- putting on and taking off clothes, including shoes and socks
- knowing when to put on or take off clothes, and
- being able to select clothes that are appropriate

Tick the boxes that apply to you then provide more information in the Extra information box.

Q8a – Do you need to use an aid or appliance to dress or undress?

Aids and appliances include things like:

- modified buttons, front fastening bras, velcro fastening, shoe aids or an audio colour detector

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Sometimes

to see whether or not his fingers are flexible, like doing his shoe laces and things like that'. Here Joanne translates the language (the word) of the claim form, and also translates its rationale (the world). X echoes the phrase 'shoe laces', but introduces a narrative that initially seems to be unrelated either to dressing and undressing, or to the more specific question about his ability to tie shoe laces. X's narrative is a story of a shopping trip she took with her husband the previous day, when he lost whatever she asked him to carry. Almost without pausing X offers another narrative, this time one closer to Joanne's question, but still not central to the topic of

dressing and undressing. She tells of her husband's visit to the doctor, and the fact that the doctor had said that his fingers may have restricted flexibility due to his health condition. Joanne

rewords X's response ('so his fingers are not flexible') before returning to her original question about X's husband's ability to tie shoe laces. Again Joanne rewords X's answer ('so he can just it takes longer'), the loyal translation of X's responses acting as affirmation and encouragement. Joanne rewords X's responses when they are brief, and when they are focused on the agenda. When X strays into territory characterized by narrative which is barely relevant to the criteria of the claim form, she moves on without translation.

Joanne asks X whether her husband can fasten buttons, again translating the language of the PiP2 form. Once more X chooses to reply with a small story. This time the narrative has direct relevance to the question, as X tells another story based on the previous day's shopping expedition. The narrative serves as an answer to Joanne's question, as it illustrates the fact that X's husband is unable to fasten buttons. Again Joanne rewords the response ('so you have to teach him to do the buttons'), before asking whether X's husband can unfasten buttons. X is a little hesitant in her reply, pausing after saying 'he does but just', and Joanne fills the gap, anticipating X's answer in saying 'very slow?'. X echoes Joanne's suggestion. The process of translation is two-way, complementary, co-constructed, back-and-forth. X elaborates on her echo of Joanne's offer, with a brief narrative about her husband's preference for zips over buttons. Joanne once again rewords, and X extends her point. Finally Joanne reads in translation what she has entered into the form, which turns out to be a concise account of what has gone before, in the voice of X's husband: 'I don't like clothes with buttons'.

Linguistic hospitality

Joanne engages in linguistic hospitality, taking X through the process of applying for welfare benefits on X's husband's behalf. She engages in the act of inhabiting the word of the other, paralleled by the act of receiving the word of the other into her own home, her own dwelling (Ricouer, 2006). The 'other' here is the forbidding and almost incomprehensible world of the welfare benefits system. But Joanne and X are also the other to each other. They are, admittedly, to some extent at least, within the same 'community'. They are not foreigners exactly, but the everyday other, *der Fremde*, the foreigner. There is something foreign in every other. It is as several people that the translator (and we are all translators) reformulates, explains, tries to say the same thing in another way (Ricouer 2006). It is through translation that people demonstrate different degrees of linguistic hospitality, or the willingness to reside in more than one language and play host to another's culture (Inghilleri 2017). Translators are key players in influencing the degree to which linguistic hospitality is extended. Joanne simultaneously and seamlessly demonstrates interlingual, intralingual, and intersemiotic translation, inhabiting a space in which she is at ease with her repertoire. But her translation repertoire extends beyond these elements, as she rewords, aligns, affirms, encourages, and maintains a tight hold on the focus of the interaction. All these are elements which are key to the success of interaction in the translation zone.

Joanne moves on to the section of the form that deals with 'Communicating'.

Example 2.7

- J 所以前面的部分都是关于他身体能力的方面
但我们加了很多其他的信息
就刚才咱们写的这些东西
你肯定就能拿满分了
下面这些是更为重要的
是关于他不能和别人交流的方面
< so the previous sections are all about his physical capacity
but we've added so much more information
you definitely will have scored full marks already
with what we've done so far
the following part will be the most important
it's about him not being able to communicate >
- X 哦 他哪里会和别人沟通呀?
他什么也不会说
他也不分人的, 记不住谁是谁
< oh how on earth does he know how to communicate
he doesn't know how to express himself
and he can't remember people or tell them apart
他只记得祝 Amy, 萍姐和小宁
就这么几个人, 还有黄国辉
他去过我们家里几次
他记不住人名的
他要是想说是谁他也不知道怎么说
过会说来过我家的, 像他一样没有头发的
我还想这会是谁呢
他说就是那个开车的, 在厨房的
他是说是在中心帮厨的那个
可他也不知道说是 CCC 的厨房
我才想起来是黄国辉可他又不记到人家的名字
< he only knows Amy, Sister Ping and Xiaoning
these few people only like Huang guohui
who has been to our place several times
he doesn't remember his name
and when he wants to refer to him he doesn't know how
and only says the one who's been to our home he looks like me with no hair
so I was thinking to myself who that could be
the one who's driving (.) in the kitchen
by which he means this person who works in the kitchen at CCC
but he won't tell you which kitchen he's referring to
Huang guohui but he can't remember the names >
- J 就像是我现在说话
他不明白我说的是什么
他听不懂得是吧?
< so for example if he's here and I am talking

- he won't know what I am talking about
and he won't understand it? >
- X 呃，可不可以写要是是关于他的他还是懂一点的
< um can you say he'll understand it if it's about him >
- J 关于他的？
< about himself? >
- X 是的，虽然他不聪明可是他也有自尊的
< yea although he's not clever he has self-respect >
- J 所以他可以说他自己的？
< so he can talk about himself? >
- X 他可以，他最怕看医生了
每次医生都要问他那些他做不了的事情
所以我得带他像医生说明他的情况
这就是为什么他那么恨我
因为我总说他不好的地方
< he can and what he fears the most is to go to see the doctor
each time the doctor asks about things that he can't manage
so I have to speak on his behalf
that's why he hates me so much
because I say negative things about him >
- J 所以你得说他好的地方，夸他
说他不好就不行
不好的习惯或者类似的事情
< oh you have to say good things about him
so it's not OK to say bad things about him
bad habits and things like that >
- X 嗯你不能说他傻
他不承认他傻的
< you can't say that he's stupid
he won't acknowledge that he's dumb >
- J 不承认他自己傻，呵呵，好的。
< won't acknowledge that he's not witty hehe OK >
- X 就是他也有自尊的
所以他很怕看医生
因为医生会问他很多事情
如果我待他回答
他到家就不肯吃药
也不和我说话
我就说他也是有自尊的
< it's just that he has self-respect
so he's very afraid of seeing the doctor
as the doctor will ask things about him
if I say something to the doctor
he will refuse to take medicine when he gets home

what I mean is that he has self-respect >

Almost all translations are representations: translation as a category is a subject of representation

Q9 – Communicating

① Use page 9 of the Information Booklet to help answer these questions.

Tell us about whether you have difficulties with your speech, your hearing or your understanding of what is being said to you. This means in your native spoken language

Tick the boxes that apply to you then provide more information in the Extra information box.

Q9a – Do you need to use an aid or appliance to communicate with others?

Aids and appliances include things like:

- hearing and voice aids
- picture symbols, and
- assistive computer technology.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Sometimes

and most translations fall within the larger category representation. As a representation, a translation offers an image or likeness of another thing. It exhibits that thing in a tangible manner. It has symbolic significance. A translation stands in place of another entity and has authority to substitute for or act in place of that entity (Tymoczko 2014). X represents her husband, offering an image, a likeness of him, giving him voice, accounting for his silence, constructing him as a character in the world of her narrative.

Joanne translates the system for X, summarizing the progress they have made so far, encouraging

her by saying they have scored full marks already, and explaining what the next section of the form will bring. Translations are examples of representation, standing in lieu of a source text. Since Jakobson (1959) translation studies has recognized translation as a form of metatext, involving reported speech. Translations almost always construct a cultural image of a source (Tymoczko 2014). X's narrative account of her husband is both translation and representation. She says he doesn't know how to express himself, and he can't remember people or tell them apart. She gives specific examples of the limited number of people her husband can recognize, and represents him through ventriloquation, allowing her husband's own (supposed) voice to speak for him. Translation as representation does not stop at reported speech, however, as X adds exegesis, reporting her husband's speech and saying 'by which he means this person who works in the kitchen'. Here translation is layered, as X translates not only her husband's voice, but also her own interpretation of her husband's meaning. She goes on to represent her husband as one who is unable to remember people's names. Joanne rewords X, co-constricting the narrative ('if he's here and I am talking he won't know what I am talking about and he won't understand it?').

At this point co-construction of the narrative representation of X's husband becomes more explicit. Whereas previously Joanne has summarised X's representation and populated the claim form accordingly, now X begins to negotiate what will be entered on the form: 'can you say he'll understand it if it's about him'. Joanne seeks clarification, and X says of her husband, 'although he's not clever he has self-respect'. Joanne repeats her request for clarification, and as before X gives an example from recent experience, describing her husband's reaction to having negative things said about him at the doctor's surgery. Joanne rewords X's narrative, continuing to co-construct the representation of her husband. Joanne twice more reiterates her point that her husband 'has self-respect'. Repetition is translation, as a changed context (and even a minimally changed context) is not the same as the previous context. The interpretant cannot be taken to be the same when the text is reiterated and then reiterated again. Now X is emphatic: for all his disabilities, and the needs they bring, her husband has self-respect.

Translation is negotiable, and is taken to be negotiable. It is an interpretive act, not simply reproduction (Venuti 2012). It includes acts of mediation which are not language transfer in the conventional sense, but are more broadly practices that take place at the crossroads (Simon 2012). Here translation, and representation, are negotiated, and co-constructed. But negotiation and co-construction are not always straightforward, and are contingent on relations of power in play in the translation zone, and on the orientations of the participants.

Ventriloquation

In *Example 2.8* the interaction concerning X's ability to communicate continues, with Joanne asking whether he is able to understand a spoken conversation.

Example 2.8

- J 要是有人跟他说话
 他能明白别人说的是什么吗?
 < if someone talks to him
 can he understand and join in the conversation? >
- X 他不会说话的, 只会说 yee yee ey, yee yee ey
 < he won't say anything but just yee yee ey, yee yee ey
- J 所以他不会说话的, 只会出一些声音
 < so he doesn't talk, just makes noises >
- X 他不知道回嘴的
 每次我们要是吵嘴他就会发一些奇怪的声音
 好像在学我说话的样子
 可他都不会和别人吵架的
 < he won't answer back
 each time we have an argument he just makes funny noises
 to mock the way I talk to him just like that
 he doesn't know how to quarrel with people >
- J [lowers her voice:] 我看我还是别写这些事情了
 要是写我听的懂别人说我的话
 这样不会帮你拿高分的
 < I think I'd better leave out the part that says
 I understand what people are saying if they are talking about me
 as it won't help you to score >
- X 就是说别人要是说他蠢他还是知道的
 < it's just to say he knows if people are saying he's stupid >
- J [lowers her voice:] 因为这部分是关于他的沟通能力的
 如果你加进来这句话谁看了都会觉得
 噢那你还是能明白别人说的话的
 我的意思是
 < because this question is about communication

- and if you add this statement here whoever reads it will think
oh so you actually can understand other people
what I mean is >
- X 他听不明白的，也不是所有的都懂
不是百分之百都不懂只能听懂很少的一点点
< he doesn't understand and he doesn't understand much
not a hundred per cent only a tiny weeny bit >
- J 我们加到后面吧还是，别在这里提这些
< we will add it in at the end but not here >
- X 好的，他真不会和别人说话的
只会说一两句简单的，像是你吃过了吗？我吃过了，像这样很短的
就说他不会和人谈话，也不知道该怎么开始说话
他就不知道怎么和人说话，(3) 别人笑他也笑
< right. he doesn't know how to converse really
just one or two simple sentences like have you eaten (.) I ate
short as that
just say that he won't start a conversation or chat with other people
he doesn't know how (3) if others laugh he will copy >
- J ok

The use of quoted speech in narrative makes a scene come alive and serves to add detail (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012). X responds to Joanne's question, deploying reported speech, translating her husband's characteristic spoken style, 'yee yee ey, yee yee ey'. Joanne rewords X's response, saying 'so he doesn't talk, just makes noises'. X is keen to elaborate on the ventriloquation, explaining in narrative that rather than engaging in conversation her husband 'just makes funny noises to mock the way I talk'. At this point Joanne becomes anxious that she had earlier acceded to X's request that she add a statement to say X's husband understands speech if it is about him. She lowers her voice conspiratorially, and says she had better leave out that part, as it would not score on the assessment. X holds her position, and Joanne, still conspiratorial, expands on her argument, herself ventriloquating the voice of an anonymous official in the Department for Work and Pensions, 'whoever reads it will think oh so you actually can understand other people'.

Like Brecht's liberal judge (Buden and Nowotny 2009), Joanne acts democratically precisely by not carrying out her duty to the letter of the law. She is willing to betray the sovereign order and take a flexible approach to the regulations governing the allocation of welfare benefits, for the good of the vulnerable. Rather than remaining faithful to the system, she is loyal to her client (and her husband). Despite the fact that Joanne is willing to bend the rules on behalf of X's husband, X maintains her stance, saying 'he won't understand much'. Joanne compromises, or at least makes a show concession (Antaki and Wetherell 1999) of doing so, saying 'we will add it in at the end but not here'. X's point will not be lost, but it will be relegated to the end of the form (whether this is 'the end' in time or in space is not clear). The position carefully negotiated by Joanne allows both parties to have their way. Potential conflict averted, X returns to the narrative about her husband's inability to converse in more than short, simple sentences. In *Example 2.9* X elaborates on her narrative.

Example 2.9

- X 就是这样的
所以他很喜欢我们跟朋友们一起出去玩的
他喜欢听别人说话
虽然他听不懂我们说的 是什么
别人笑他也跟着笑
(15) 他分不出来对错的
就像那一天
医生想把血压计绑到他身上
给他量血压的时候
他还以为医生要害他
< just like that
so he likes it very much if we go out together socially with our friends
he enjoys listening to others
but he doesn't understand much of our talk
other people laugh and he joins in
(15) he can't tell right from wrong
like the other day
when the doctor tried to fasten the monitor on him
to measure his blood pressure
he thought the doctor was trying to hurt him >
- J 他 bumingbai
< he didn't understand >
- X 他不明白的，然后就大喊大叫起来
< he didn't understand and started yelling >
- J 他以为医生要害他
< he thought the doctor was going to harm him >
- X 他以为医生要害他
所以从房间里冲出来
把我吓死了我还以为他要打医生
后来我给他解释是怎么回事
我告诉他如果不乖就不给他去西班牙
第二天又去的时候医生叫他进去
他就知道坐着不动，让医生给他绑血压计
< he thought he was going to harm him
so he charged out of the office
I was so scared that he was going to hit the doctor that day
later on I explained the whole thing to him
and told him he would not be allowed to go to Spain if he behaved like that
the next day when the doctor asked him in again
he knew to sit still and let the doctor fasten the monitor on him >
- J 所以你跟他讲话的时候他也是那样嗯，嗯，嗯的
< so when you talk to him he has the same response as well like um um >

- X 是这样的
 < just like that
 就像昨天我差点被车撞了
 我一回身，看他不在我身后
 他知道自己往后退，也不知道告诉我一声，
 他分不清的
 所以我昨天骂他一顿
 just like yesterday I was almost hit by a car
 I turned back and he's not there
 he knew to go back but he didn't know to warn me about it
 he can't tell
 so I told him off yesterday >
- J 他不知道什么是危险
 < he doesn't have a sense of danger >
- X 他不是到危险是什么
 < he doesn't know what danger is >
- J 如果有什么危险情况，他也不知道该怎么说
 < he doesn't know how to express if there's a dangerous situation >
- X 他不知道的
 这也就是为什么他差点被车撞了
 他不识交通信号的
 他记不住也分不清
 < no he doesn't
 that's why he was almost hit by a car
 he can't read traffic lights
 he doesn't remember and he can't tell
 过马路的时候我得牵着他的手
 那天我忘记了
 我们去荣业行买东西
 他就跑到路中间去了
 有一辆车在他后面冲上来
 那个司机得那么狠的刹车
 就差那么一米就撞上他了
 那司机吧我们骂的哟
 后来我就训他
 为什么过马路不看红绿灯？
 他就学我说话
 是走的灯来着！
 他根本分不清的
 我就是过马路的时候忘牵他的手了
 < I have to hold his hand when we cross roads
 and I didn't the other day
 when we went shopping at Win Yip

he got himself in the middle of the road
 and there was a car racing from behind him
 the driver had to brake so hard
 and only managed to stop one metre in front of him
 the driver swore at us
 so I told him off later
 why do you have to go across the road when there's a red light?
 he said
 [mimics husband in Cantonese and then Mandarin] it's the light to go
 he can't tell
 I just forgot to hold his hand when we crossed the road >

Narratives are powerful tools in the negotiation of everyday arguments thanks to their ability to function as evidence based on personal experience, their potential for audience involvement and their semblance of objectivity provided by the fact that claims made by narrators in the present social context can be removed from it and connected to characters and events unrelated to the situation of interaction (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012). Narratives may be deployed to exemplify and prove an argument. In *Example 2.9* X tells three stories, each independent of the other, to illustrate the argument that her husband has a communication-related disability. The first story refers to her husband's ability to interact socially. The second is an exemplum, apparently (or structurally, at least) to prove the argument 'he can't tell right from wrong'. The narrative does not convincingly establish this argument, as it becomes a story about X's husband's fear of doctors. However, Joanne signals her involvement in the narrative by participating in its co-construction. She volunteers that when X visited the doctor 'he didn't understand'. X repeats the same phrase, and adds 'and started yelling'. Joanne adds to the narrative, 'he thought the doctor was going to harm him', itself a repetition of X's earlier account that 'he thought the doctor was trying to hurt him'. X once more repeats Joanne's intervention, before adding 'so he charged out of the office'. Mutual repetition provides ratification of the narrative, as the narrators run side by side in their co-operative narration. X concludes the narrative about her husband's fear of the doctor, the tale reaching a gentle finale following the issue of a bribe.

Joanne's next rewording is relatively general, but again it prompts a narrative exemplum. This time the illustrative tale is a story in which X and her husband were almost involved in a road traffic accident. Joanne characteristically rewords the story, 'he doesn't have a sense of danger'. X rewords the summary version of her own story, 'he doesn't know what danger is', and Joanne rewords X's rewording of her own rewording of X's original narrative, 'he doesn't know how to express if there's a dangerous situation'. X ends the story with an extended account of the previous day's close call. She narrates the episode as a mini-drama, deploying direct quotation of the characters of herself and her husband, and the generalized indirect voice of the driver of the car. The constructed voices of the protagonists bring an immediacy and animation to the action, which is played out in two temporal frames – the traffic incident itself, and X's conversation with her husband later. Despite her frustration with her husband's road sense, X's conclusion is that the dangerous situation was caused because she forgot to hold his hand when crossing the road.

The exemplification of X's argument through brief narrative accounts provides a colourful translation of experience. No coherent narrative can be elaborated by attempting to incorporate every detail experienced by or available to the narrator. Inevitably some elements of experience are excluded and others privileged. This process of selective appropriation is inherent in all storytelling, and is guided by evaluative criteria that reflect the narrative location of the individual, group or institution elaborating the narrative (Baker 2014). The co-constructed narratives of X and Joanne constitute the evidence that will be submitted in support of X's husband's claim for Personal Independence Payment. The narratives are not essential for the official claim form. But stories are discourse engagements that engender specific social moments and integrally connect with what gets done on particular occasions and in particular settings (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 117). The small stories (Bamberg 2004; Georgakopoulou 2007) both back up, and elaborate on, Joanne and X's argument that X's husband should be entitled to welfare benefits.

Intersemioticity

In *Example 2.10* Joanne asks X whether there is anything further she would like to add to this section of the form.

Example 2.10

J 那没什么可加得了?
 这部分是关于沟通的
 还有什么你想加的?
 我把你刚才说的都写下来了
 你刚才说的那件事
 可以留到下一个部分再写
 这部分是关于沟通的
 还有什么你想加的?
 就是我不知道怎么和人说话聊天
 别人笑我就跟着笑
 别人跟我说的时候
 我只知道发出一些声音像嗯嗯嗯嗯
 还有什么你想加的?
 < so there's nothing more to add
 in this section on communication
 anything else you want to add?
 I've written down everything you just told me
 the incident you just mentioned
 we could leave till the following section
 for this section on communication
 do you have anything to add?
 it's just

- I don't know how to start a conversation with others
 if others laugh I copy
 but I don't know what is going on
 and when others talk to me
 I only know to make noises like um um um
 anything else to add? >
- X 还有像他要是感到别人在讯他
 或者在背后说他的坏话
 他就这样死死的盯着你看
 < things like whenever he senses others are telling him off
 or saying bad things about him
 he just stares at you very closely with hatred (xxx) >
- J 我要是这样写
 就还是说明他能明白别人在说什么
 我的意思是你还有什么事情
 是可以证明他不明白别人的地方
 < if I write this
 it still indicates that
 he can understand what people are talking about
 what I meant is anything you can think of
 to show that he doesn't understand? >

Jakobson's concept of 'intersemioticity' (Jakobson 1971: 261), originally referring to the translation of one language into another, can be extended to include translations that occur between different semiotic systems and their materialities. These translations are intersemiotic insofar as one semiotics comes to stand for or represent another (Iedema 2001). In organizations agreements reached in and through embodied talk are conventionally 'resemiotized' into alternative and less negotiable semioses such as written summaries, courses of action, or more durable materialities. It is often thanks to their resemiotization that particular understandings and agreements attain organizational status, explicitness, and relevance. With each step the process shifts its focal point towards increasingly durable semiotic manifestations, while at the same time increasingly distancing itself from the social interaction that created it. This process stabilizes the meanings at stake, in that it distances itself from here-and-now, face-to-face talk, and re-invents itself in the shape of specialized and authoritative discourses, expert practices and technological equipment, and spatial structures.

In *Example 2.10* Joanne asks X whether she wants to add anything to this section of the form. She reassures X that she has written in English everything that X has told her. Also she tells X that the narrative about the near miss at the traffic lights would be left until the following section, presumably because it is not centrally related to her husband's problems with communication. At this point Joanne reads to X what she has entered in this section of the form. She reads aloud in Mandarin what she has typed in English. In the translation space Joanne:

- (i) translates X's narrative from Mandarin to English
- (ii) translates X's extended narratives into abbreviated, summary versions

- (iii) resemiotizes the spoken narratives into the format required by the computer-based form
- (iv) translates the requirements of the form, and by extension the requirements of the welfare benefits system
- (v) translates the resemiotized English version of X's narratives into Mandarin

Joanne renders X's narratives into the computer-based form as evidence. In doing so she resemiotizes them, changing them to a format that is relevant and legitimate. Meanings presented in printed text are generally harder to challenge than spoken versions, not only because the writer is often not present to answer questions, change formulations or accept additions, but also because written registers are generally more abstract and generalizing than spoken ones (Iedema 2003a). Transposition between different semiotics inevitably introduces a discrepancy that goes or points beyond the original (that is, is metaphorical). Such transposition is not just a matter of finding semiotic equivalents for specific discourse participants in the other semiotic. Such equivalence is tenuous, since rematerialization requires new resource investments; restructuring derives from different expertises and literacies, and resemiotization opens up different modalities of human experience. The narrative told by X is not the same as that entered on the form. Its materiality changes with each iteration. So seamless is this process of multiple translation and resemiotization that Joanne hardly appears to 'translate' from one language to another at all. Multilingualism is translation's mother but also its definitive other: the multilingual person is not someone who translates constantly from one language (or cultural system) into another. But to be multilingual is, above all, to be one for whom translation is unnecessary because one lives in more than one language (Pratt 2010).

X takes up Joanne's repeated invitation to add something to what has already been recorded in this section of the form. She volunteers an addition, 'things like whenever he senses others are telling him off or saying bad things about him he just stares at you very closely with hatred (xxx)'. However, Joanne is again wary of introducing any evidence that X's husband is able to understand others' speech, and in another act of democratic betrayal of the truth governing the welfare system, explains that it would be better not to include this. She rewords her own question to elicit an answer she can use as good evidence.

Resemiotization is about how meaning making shifts from context to context, from practice to practice, or from one stage of practice to the next (Iedema 2003a). Finally Joanne is able to move on from the section of the form which asks about communication. She skips quickly past the section that refers to 'Reading', to Question 11, which requests evidence related to 'Mixing With Other People'.

Example 2.11

J 这部分是关于他的社会交往的
 怎么说呢
 就是和别人相处
 刚才那个是和别人交流
 这个是和别人相处

他知道怎么处理这些事情吗？
< this section is about being social with others
how to say it
mixing with others
the one we just did is about communication
this one is to mix with other people
does he know how to handle these things? >

X 他不会的
他也不知道危险是什么
有一次我给他买了一个新电视
一千多磅呢
结果不到一个月就坏了
你知道他把电视怎么样了
他胡弄那个插头
电视都着火了
整个东西全都烧坏了
把我女儿吓的直哭
< he doesn't
also he doesn't know what danger is
once I bought him a new tele
which cost about a thousand pounds
and he broke it within a month
do you know what he did to the tele
he messed about with the plug
and the tele was on fire
the whole thing was completely ruined
my daughter was crying so badly about it >

J 这个不能算这部分的
比如说
有个陌生人要伤害他
要害他
他知道害怕吗
这部分是看他会不会和别人交往
比如说有个他认识的人
或者有个他不认识的人
要是这个人要绑架他
然后就跟他说我带你去个好玩儿的地方
他会知道这样很危险吗？
< this one can't be counted as (4)
for example
let's say if a stranger tries to harm him
to harm him
will he feel scared?
this is about socialising with other people

- if it's someone he knows about
or no matter if he knows
or doesn't know the person
say if someone wants to abduct him by saying
come with me and I will take you to a fun place
will he know it could be dangerous? >
- X 肯定不会
 有一次
 他让一伙而陌生人进到我们的房子里来
 他们要什么他就给什么
 < definitely not
 one time (xxx)
 he let some strangers into our home
 and gave them whatever they asked for >

Translation involves a constant cross-cultural juxtaposition of text types, communication patterns, and values, as well as decision strategies by individuals, adjudicating and resolving such cultural disjuncts. The result is the continual possibility of inventing new translation strategies and reinventing old solutions that transcend the boundaries of locally dominant definitions and practices of translation. For these reasons, the best research is conducted within the broadest possible conception of translation (Tymoczko 2014).

Joanne moves on to the next questions on the form, segueing from one section to the other through metadiscourse. She explains how this section may be distinguished from the section on

Q11 – Mixing with other people

① Use **page 10** of the **Information Booklet** to help answer these questions.

Tell us about whether you have difficulties mixing with other people.
This means how well you are able to:

- get on with other people face-to-face, either individually or as part of a group
- understand how they're behaving towards you, and
- behave appropriately towards them

It includes both people you know well and people you don't know.

Tick the boxes that apply to you then provide more information in the Extra information box.

Q11a – Do you need another person to help you to mix with other people?

By this we mean:

- do they encourage you to mix with other people?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Sometimes

communication, and asks whether X's husband is able to handle mixing with other people. X replies that he doesn't handle mixing with other people. However, once again she appears to depart from the focus of the question, and introduces her own anxieties, saying 'he doesn't know what danger is'. She proceeds with another exemplum about her husband's hazardous day-to-day life, this time a narrative in respect of a domestic television fire. Joanne patiently explains that this example cannot be counted as evidence about her husband's difficulties mixing with other people. She pauses to work out a strategy to refocus the interaction so that it meets the requirements of the form, and

takes a different tack. Joanne appears to understand that X's priority is her anxiety that her husband does not recognize danger, and therefore often finds himself in hazardous situations. Joanne shifts her focus so that she inhabits the territory of her interlocutor, asking whether X's husband would feel scared if threatened by a stranger, and whether he would recognize the danger if someone tried to abduct him. Joanne finds a way to ask a question about X's husband's difficulties mixing with other people while accommodating X's concerns about her husband's personal safety. She makes a point of communicative overlap (Rymes 2014), creating a space in which X's concerns may be articulated, and the requirements of the claim form may be satisfied.

In order to do so she translates (and resemitotizes) the PiP2 form, bending it until it fits her client's key point of anxiety. Translation is an activity where discourses meet and compete, negotiating power relations, shifting in complex ways to meet the imperatives of specific historical and material moments (Tymoczko 2014).

Legitimacy

In *Example 2.12* Joanne continues to read aloud a version in Mandarin of what she has typed into the computer-based form.

Example 2.12

- J 我通常就呆在家里看电视
我出去就和 X 一起出去
不如说出门买东西，活到公园散步
这是他唯一有的一些活动是吗？
他没有其他什么活动了
他可以自己做的？
< normally I just stay at home watching tele
when I go out I have to go with X
like going shopping or taking a walk in the park
I never go out on my own
and are these are the only activities he's engaged in?
he doesn't have any other activities
that he does by himself? >
- X 没什么，所有的活动我都得陪着他
或者有别的朋友带他
< no any social activities I have to keep him company
or with other friends >
- J 那就只写你吧
我不会提到其他朋友
为什么这样？
< it should be you
I wouldn't mention other friends
why is this?>
- X 他不知道怎么乘巴士的
他也不认识回家的路
你知道吧
他不识字的所以也不知道路名
所有的交通工具要么是火车要么是飞机
我得和他在一起
所以我很难的
他要是听我的话还好

可他最大的问题就是不听我的话
 < he doesn't know how to take buses
 he doesn't know how to get back home
 you understand?
 he can't read so he doesn't know the road names
 so all his transportation
 either by train or flying
 I have to be with him
 that's why it's so hard for me
 if he listened to me
 his main problem is he doesn't listen to me >
 J 咱们没有地方再写了
 所以就像你刚说的
 我不认识路
 我不辨路标和路名
 我不分好人还是坏人
 所以一切都得靠你
 他不会和别人聊天
 他也不和别人说话
 就写这些吧
 < we are running out of space again hehe
 so just like you said
 I don't know the route
 and I don't recognise the road signs or names
 and I can't tell bad people from good ones
 and everything I do has to go through you
 he doesn't know how to talk
 he can't talk (14)
 so this is it >

Again the translation process is layered, or clustered. Just as in *Example 2.10*, translation is multiple. Reconceptualizing the cross-linguistic, cross-cultural, and cross-temporal notion of translation as a cluster concept enlarges translation itself. This expanded understanding highlights the agency of translators. An appreciation of the capacious nature of translation highlights the potential and power of translators (Tymoczko 2014). Joanne 'reads' in Mandarin what she has entered into the computer-based form in English. The version of X's narrative is, as before, a recontextualised version of the original. Moreover, because it is now in written (typed) form, *and* in English, it becomes the authorized version. Once the narrative attains the status of a literate artefact, inscribed in the language of the system, it gains legitimacy, and is privileged above other versions. It is through resemiotization, then, that organizationally relevant meanings are relegated from the relatively volatile sphere of embodied semiosis, into the naturalizing contexts of spatio-material semiosis (Iedema 2001). Due to their technologization and abstraction away from dynamic interaction, artefacts may accrue a validity and an authority, while at the same time, thanks to their material stability, simulating a naturalness and an

unobtrusiveness. The form-filling process stabilizes specific meanings and in doing so resemiotizes those meanings into more durable manifestations.

Joanne asks X whether her husband engages in any other activities. X replies that when her husband goes out either she or other friends have to keep him company. This prompts another act of democratic betrayal from Joanne, ‘it should be you, I wouldn’t mention other friends’. To say that X’s husband goes out with friends might imply that he is capable of mixing with other people without difficulty. Joanne is determined to ignore those parts of X’s narrative that might threaten the achievement of a high score on the assessment. Here is grandeur of translation, risk of translation: creative betrayal of the original, equally creative appropriation by the reception language; construction of the comparable (Ricouer 2006). In the name of democracy (Buden and Nowotny 2009), or at least in the name of advocacy, Joanne is willing to creatively betray the original in making her translation.

X emphasizes that her husband is unable to travel without her help. She also complains that this level of care is hard for her, and that her husband does not listen to her. Joanne briefly digresses into metadiscourse, commenting that ‘we are running out of space again’, and then after typing a further entry into the computer-based form she reads in Mandarin what she has typed in English. She is not concerned about the fidelity to X’s original of the version she has produced for the official form. It is more important to her that the resemiotized narrative is fit for the purpose of meeting the criteria of the government department. It makes little sense to argue about whether the text that has been produced is a translation, version, imitation, adaptation, summary, and so forth (Tymoczko 2014). The process in which Joanne is engaged is as much advocacy as it is translation. Yet it is translation, at multiple levels, in complex clusters. It is a sophisticated process that is highly skilled, and largely hidden from the world.

Summary

In this single interaction with one client we see many of the recurrent features of Joanne’s translation practice. In the remaining chapters of the report we will pick up and expand upon these features. We see Joanne translating interlingually as she moves without pause or hesitation between Mandarin, English, and Cantonese. Her translation practice is revealed as flexible, pragmatic, fit for purpose. She is rarely anxious about the concept of equivalence, such as a semantic correspondence based on dictionary definitions, or a concept of style, a distinctive lexicon and syntax related to a genre or discourse (Venuti, 2012). Scholars have proposed all sorts of proliferating terminologies to distinguish between types of translation: word for word, sense for sense, literal and free, formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence, adequate and acceptable, foreignizing and domesticating, contingent translations, coeval translations (Tymoczko 2014). Joanne is unconcerned by scholarship, and gets on with advocacy. Clients come through her door with myriad questions, invariably in need of support, often in crisis. They cannot comprehend the extreme complexity of the welfare benefits system, or their house insurance claim, or their application for Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK. This inability to understand is only partly due to the client’s proficiency in, and comprehension of, English. The system is too complex for them, too opaque. Joanne is a cultural mediator, picking a path through the dense bureaucratic landscape.

We also see translation as narrative, and narrative as translation. Each client has a story to tell. These are often narratives of disaster and tragedy, narrow escapes and near misses, life stories and small tales. Joanne listens to each of them and re-tells them, co-constructs them, translates them, rewords them, abbreviates them, reshapes them. She makes the narratives suitable to meet the criteria of the system. We also see Joanne engage in ethical translation. She is frequently an advocate for her client. To this end she is prepared to bend the rules, changing narratives slightly to delete that which harms the prospects of the client, sometimes adding detail that will benefit the client's claim. Joanne betrays the requirement, if there be such, for absolute truth and loyalty in translation, in the name of democratic action. We also see translation as resemiotization, as Joanne reformulates the needs and narratives of her clients into a format that will enable her to support them. It is through this process of resemiotization that the community transposes and reifies its knowledges, techniques and technologies, as well as its interpersonal, social and cultural practices and positionings (Iedema 2001). Joanne's resemiotization renders her clients' stories legitimate. We will return to this theme in Chapter 5.

It is in the nature of ethnographic observation that observed practice is patterned and repetitive. The client arrives, has her hour or half-hour, and leaves a little better informed, or equipped with a benefit claim. But we never step in the same river twice; no two interactions are the same. It is in the differences between encounters that we see their originality, and their meanings shine through. The city's translation zones are thus revealed as productive territories of the imagination (Simon 2012).



Chapter 3

State

Joanne's translation practice is invariably a dialogue between herself and her client. Often the encounter also includes a telephone conversation with someone in the office of the Department for Work and Pensions, or Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, or the like. However, in a spoken dialogue the interlocutors are not alone. In addition to the speaker's conception of the immediate audience she or he is addressing, the particular person she or he talks to, there is always the speaker's concept of a "superaddressee", *nadadresat* (Bakhtin 1986). A specific addressee, no matter how intimate or sympathetic, is always capable of misunderstanding. What makes communication possible at all, insists Bakhtin (1986), is the speaker's conviction that she or he will be understood: everyone speaks and writes as if they were heard not only by their immediate audience, but as if they were heard as well by an addressee who will understand better than any actual addressee can ever understand, the fullest meaning, the furthest implications and deepest subtleties of what is said. Communication is an act of faith, and what serves to sustain the certainty that our words will be understood is not the frequently miscarried experience of actually trying to convey a meaning to someone else. Rather, it is the conviction that beyond any specific act of communication, there is somewhere, somehow the possibility of being understood (Holquist 1984).

Bakhtin articulated the notion of the superaddressee as follows:

The author of the utterance, with a greater or lesser awareness, always presupposes a higher *superaddressee*, whose absolutely just responsive understanding is presumed, either in some metaphysical distance or in distant historical time (the loophole addressee). In various ages and with various understandings of the world, the superaddressee and his ideally true responsive understanding assume various ideological expressions (God, absolute truth, the court of dispassionate human conscience, the people, the court of history, science, and so forth)
(Bakhtin 1986: 126)

The relationship of addressing is constituted in a way which both presupposes and enacts a third party in addition to the addresser and the direct addressee. The superaddressee becomes a privileged site of ideology and ideological battles, for as every utterance, conceived of as a form of address, interpellates and enacts its superaddressee, it expresses the superaddressee more or less consciously. Therefore, the third party which is the superaddressee can be understood as the very point of contact or intertwinement of representation and practice: it is a representation of a structural moment founded in the relationship of address itself, but at same time it generates a particular practice of addressing, an ideological form of expression, which enacts the representation or ideological saturation of this very moment (Buden and Nowotny 2009). Each party involved in an exchange appeals to an ultimate listener standing above the dialogue, not necessarily physically, delimiting responses and understandings. The superaddressee is very

much a part of a dialogue and is in flux itself, for it is in the process of emergence and development as it contributes to the exchange (Sánchez 2016).

Bakhtin understood the superaddressee generously. In different cultures and eras it can be God, history, personal conscience, the consensus of a community – in short, any consciousness competent to hear an utterance in its intended spirit and enter into some sort of dialogue with it. To orient a message toward a superaddressee is to presume it will be heard attentively, grasped whole, held not to its past but to its future potentials, expanded upon, and valued as an internally persuasive communicative act rather than an authoritative recitation by rote. The superaddressee is a receptive category, seen from the perspective of a needy speaker. It does not presume authority or require obedience (Emerson 2013). Speakers can point to different superaddressees, who can be different from each other by degree, or at times entirely. For authors the superaddressee may be a future reader, able to grasp the message of the text over the centuries; or the superaddressee may be the ideal representative of a social class, for example the proletariat to whom Marx and Engels addressed *The Communist Manifesto*. For others, the superaddressee is God (Baron 2004; Tull 2005). For yet others it is biomedical science (Swinglehurst 2014); or a judge and jury (Johnson 2008); or a student's mentor (Bryzzheva 2006).

The speaker can never turn over her or his whole self to the complete and final will of addressees who are on hand or nearby, and always presuppose some higher instance of responsive understanding that can distance itself in various directions. Each dialogue takes place as if against the background of an invisibly present third party who stands above the partners in the dialogue. The superaddressee is not a mystical or metaphysical being, but is a constitutive aspect of the whole utterance. An interlocutor indirectly dialogues with a superaddressee to the extent that her or his utterances reflect the responsive understanding of the superaddressee, and anticipate future responses (Bryzzheva 2006). Kytölä and Westinen (2015) associate the superaddressee with the notion of polycentricity. Whenever we communicate with one another, we orient towards various norms, which can be individuals (teachers, parents, idols), collectives (peer groups, subcultural groups) or abstract entities (the nation state, the church, consumer culture). In addition to our most immediate interlocutors, there is always a superaddressee present in the interaction. This centre, or superaddressee, provides the norms and the level of appropriateness in a given context. There is never a single centre in communication, but rather multiple norm-providing centres, hence the term 'polycentricity' (Kytölä and Westinen 2015).

The superaddressee constitutes that someone or other place to whom the speaker is answerable (Farmer 1994). The construction of an utterance is not only determined by how the speaker anticipates being received by the visibly present listener, but also by the superaddressee, who, although not capable of an immediate response, is nonetheless manifested in the utterance by virtue of the need to posit an ultimate understanding beyond the present situation. It is dialogue with the superaddressee that draws us into understanding. Because the superaddressee always evades any attempt to locate it or to pin it down, this dialogue is infinite, and constantly challenges us to see our prejudices and provisional conceptualization as if from the outside (Wegerif 2011). In her detailed study of police interviews, Johnson (2008) demonstrated the relevance of the notion of the superaddressee in the analysis of everyday encounters. Police interviewers evaluate the legal point of suspects' stories: actions and their results, states of mind and behaviour, intent, cause and effect. Stories are recontextualised and transformed for an

audience who are not present, but only encountered in the future, if the case goes to trial. The talk in the interview is performed for a higher authority, a judge and jury, although these are only represented by the audio-recording device, with the interviewing officers standing in as servants of the justice system. The need for a particular kind of narrative, one that is evidentially meaningful and valuable, is therefore part of the wider context that can only be partially understood by the suspect. Particular words are used for particular reasons, invoking a more powerful ‘superaddressee’ whose presence adds a higher order judgment of the facts. We saw in Chapter 2 how Joanne was concerned to ensure that the words of her clients were represented in ways that accorded with requirements of the PiP2 form, and therefore of the Department for Work and Pensions. Their words would be reviewed at another time and in another place, by a higher order. These cases make plain what is also evident in other contexts: that everyday talk is shaped not only by the addressees, but also by the superaddressee.

Farmer (2001) summarises the superaddressee as a sort of hovering figure, a constituent aspect of every utterance, an invisibly present third party who is embodied in the person of the immediate addressee. This third party is an inevitability of speaking, because speakers require of their words an “absolutely just responsive understanding” (Bakhtin 1986: 126) and realise that, if present circumstances are unlikely to provide such an understanding, other dialogic contexts must be invoked in the act of utterance. One of the key functions of a superaddressee is to provide speakers with a “loophole” through which the oppressions of immediacy might be relieved or avoided. Authoring an utterance, however innocuous such an activity might seem, is always a hazardous undertaking. From the speaker’s perspective, uttering is fraught with the potential for misunderstanding. Because this is so, we invoke a third party, who will listen to us, and understand what we have to say. We do so because we realise that we cannot depend upon our immediate interlocutors for the understanding we desire.

Worse than not being understood is the possibility of not being heard at all. For Bakhtin “there is nothing more terrible than a lack of response,” and there is no hell as absolute as the hell of not being heard (Bakhtin 1986: 126). The act of uttering demands that we face not only the possibility of being misheard, but also the possibility of having access to no available hearing. Utterances are acts which invoke a more perfect hearer—or, rather, a more perfect context for hearing—than the one available to us in our immediate circumstances. The superaddressee responds to a common need to forward our utterances to a context where they may receive a just hearing (Farmer 2001). The superaddressee is required precisely because inequalities habitually obtain between interlocutors, because dialogue is always constrained by the power interests that impinge upon it. The superaddressee, in other words, may signify the asymmetric relationships of power that shape the manner and direction in which any given dialogue is to proceed. When our utterances are constrained, silenced, misunderstood, interrupted, or otherwise unacknowledged, we invoke a better context for their hearing than the one in which we speak.

Being heard is already a dialogical relation. The word wants to be heard, understood, responded to, and again to respond to the response (Bakhtin 2006). The superaddressee offers hope of a hearing. Outside the tyranny of the present, of the here and now, there is a possible addressee who will understand (Holquist 1990). The function of the superaddressee is to provide the necessity of hope – of a response, of justice, of dialogue (Morson and Emerson 1990). The following example is a transcript of the opening scene of the film of ‘I, Daniel Blake’ (writer

Paul Laverty, director Ken Loach). An assessor goes through an assessment with the eponymous hero, a claimant for Employment Support Allowance (ESA).

ASSESSOR

Can you walk more than 50 metres unassisted by another person?

DAN

Yes.

ASSESSOR

Can you raise either arm as if to put something in the top pocket of a coat?

DAN

Filled this out already on your 52-page form!

ASSESSOR

I am having some difficulty with your eligibility...Can you raise either arm to the top of your head as if to put on a hat?

DAN

Told you...there is nothing wrong with my arms or my legs...You have medical records...can we talk about my heart?

ASSESSOR

Can you press a button, such as a telephone keypad?

DAN

Nothing wrong with my fingers either...listen you're getting further and further away from my heart

ASSESSOR

Can you use a pencil to make a meaningful mark?

DAN

Yes.

ASSESSOR

Have you significant difficulty conveying a simple message to strangers?

DAN

Yes...it's my fucking heart I keep telling
you...but you won't listen.

ASSESSOR

Mr Blake, if you swear one more time I will
terminate this assessment [Pause, silence] Do
you ever experience loss of control leading to
extensive evacuation of the bowel?

DAN

Do you mean shit myself?

ASSESSOR

Yes.

DAN

No, but I can't guarantee this won't be a first
unless we get to the point

ASSESSOR

Can you complete a simple task such as setting
an alarm clock?

DAN

Ah Jesus Christ...Yes.

ASSESSOR

Do you ever have uncontrollable episodes
of aggressive behaviour that would be
unreasonable in any workplace?

DAN

Only if the radio is on and I am listening to
the news

ASSESSOR

Mr Blake!

DAN

...Never had any problem with my
workmates...

ASSESSOR

Do you have any pets?

DAN

You mean like a hamster? Is that on the form?

ASSESSOR

I am trying to build up a picture of your capacity to mobilise...

DAN

Is it on the form?

ASSESSOR

If you refuse to answer my questions I will terminate this assessment

DAN

No, I don't have a pet! [Frustration spilling over] Can I ask what medical qualification you have?

ASSESSOR

I am a health care professional appointed by The Department of Work and Pensions to carry out assessments for Employment and Support Allowance and I will not answer personal questions...

DAN

Someone in the waiting room just told me you worked for an American company...is that a personal question too?

ASSESSOR

Our company has been appointed by the Government...do you want to proceed with the assessment?

DAN

I have a serious heart condition and I just want to make sure you have the medical qualifications to understand what's wrong... are you a nurse or a doctor?

ASSESSOR

I am a health care professional...

DAN
Do you know what ACS stands for?

ASSESSOR
I do not have to answer your questions...

DAN
Acute coronary syndrome...do you know
what 'atheroma' means?

ASSESSOR
I am not obliged to answer your questions...

DAN
Listen...I've had a major heart attack and
nearly fell off a scaffolding...I want to get
back to work too...now, will you please ask
me about my heart and forget about my arse
which works like a dream

Dan wants to be heard, understood, responded to, and again to respond to the response. He addresses the Assessor, who falls back on her established script to fend off Dan's frustration. But we might ask whether it is the Assessor Dan addresses, or is it a third party, a superaddressee that lurks close to hand, the powerful and incomprehensible welfare benefits system. The Assessor is the face of the system. Behind her (or embodied within her) a third party is a representation of a structural moment in time and space, an ideological orientation to compassion. But this is not an ideal version of Bakhtin's superaddressee, with its true responsive understanding, in the court of human conscience. This is a superaddressee for the late modern age, masquerading as absolute truth, uncompromising, cruel, inflexible. This is the same superaddressee that presides over the translation zones of the city.

In this chapter we examine another typical encounter between Joanne and a client, C. The client has come to ask advice about demands for payment made by the city council, and an unsuccessful application for housing benefit. Joanne has spoken briefly to the client about his application. As we join the interaction Joanne has telephoned the city council on the client's behalf, and is speaking to an operative (O).

Example 3.1

J right (1) he received the letter
 dated the twenty-ninth of March
 regarding his housing benefit application
 it says unsuccessful
 and he's been written to
 to ask to provide for more information
 to be dealt with the claim

but as far as he's concerned
 he got nothing from Birmingham City Council
 apart from presenting
 all the evidence on the day
 the claim was dealt with
 that was twenty-sixth of February
 at Newtown Neighbourhood Office
 and there's nothing between twenty-sixth
 until the date he got the letter
 mm mm
 that's why he said he didn't receive any letters
 that's why he couldn't produce anything
 you are requesting (3)
 um proof of residency
 [to C:] 他说他们三月二号给你写过信
 要求你提供你的国籍
 你是马来籍的是吧?
 所以你确定
 一定没有收到过这封信, 对吗?
 [to C:] < he said they wrote to you on the second of March
 asking you to provide information about your nationality
 aren't you from Malaysia?
 so you are sure
 you definitely didn't receive the letter, right? >
 [to O:] no he's shaking his head
 that's easy he can produce the passport (4)
 send it in now (3)
 to the neighbourhood office?
 is that OK?
 oh my god council house benefit
 is the same form for housing benefit?
 (10) um-huh OK (5) that's OK that's the only one OK
 I think I can get it over to the neighbourhood office
 after leaving the office
 as for the council tax
 can you because he also brought me the reminder notice
 can you check for me please
 he got two
 the overdue amount
 one is over one thousand
 the other one is over five pounds
 which one is the right one he needs to pay?
 (3) OK OK

[1p3]

Every utterance spoken by Joanne here is shaped by the superaddressee of state regulation. There are two actual addressees – the benefits officer on the other end of the phone, and the immediately present client. Speaker phone is switched off most of the time, so we do not have direct access to the discourse of the benefits officer, except as reported in translation by Joanne. We can identify several layers of addressivity here. Joanne addresses the benefits officer on her client's behalf, speaking both as 'herself' in her professional role and as her client. She also addresses the client, both as 'herself' in her professional role and on behalf of the benefits officer, translating both the word and the world of the benefits system. She further addresses the client on behalf of the benefits officer unprompted ('so you are sure you definitely didn't receive the letter, right?'). This not a direct translation of the benefits officer's discourse but a positing of a question that the benefits officer *might* have asked. And she addresses the superaddressee, the powerful presence of the benefits system, whose "absolutely just responsive understanding" (Bakhtin 1986: 126) ought to be presumed, and is perhaps presumed in law, but in austere times may no longer be taken for granted.

We can look at these layers of addressivity more closely. Following a somewhat protracted episode in which the benefits officer had elicited C's consent for Joanne to act on her behalf, Joanne establishes a state of talk (Goffman 1967), with the emphatic 'right'. She then summarises the current situation as she understands it, an act of translation in which she seeks consensus as a basis on which the interaction can continue. Included in Joanne's digest is a report of the judgement of the state ('it says unsuccessful'), and of the state's request for more evidence ('asking for further information'). Joanne's summary on the face of it is little more than background context to ensure that the benefits officer, the advice and advocacy worker, and her client are on the same page. However, the passive voice is revealing: 'he's been written to' not by the benefits officer, but by an anonymous, generalised monolith. When 'it says unsuccessful' the pronoun stands in not merely for the letter, and not for the benefits officer who is the (virtually) present addressee, but for the state. Shaping the interaction almost before it is underway is the superaddressee.

Having established the background to the case, and in the absence of contestation from the benefits officer, Joanne presents her client's story. She speaks on his behalf, representing his argument in both interlingual and intralingual translation. She advocates for the client, but at the same time manages to keep her distance from her advocacy. The mitigating 'as far as he's concerned' may suggest that she is not entirely convinced by the client's claim that he did not receive letters from the benefits office between 26th February and 29th March. Joanne carefully walks a line between advocacy and scepticism. She listens to the benefits officer's response, and translates, again through 'proper translation' and rewording. She says the benefits officer contradicts the client's story, arguing that a letter was sent on 2nd March. Joanne now acts on behalf of the state, asking her client again, 'so you are sure you definitely didn't receive the letter, right?'. Joanne moves seamlessly between the position of the advocate, acting on behalf of the client, and the state prosecutor, cross-examining the client on behalf of the government. Both perspectives are evident in Joanne's dialogic question.

In what follows Joanne engages in several translation strategies on behalf of the client. First she translates the client's response to the benefits officer ('he said he's not received such a letter'). However, this is not a translation of speech. The metacommentary that follows ('he's shaking his

head') indicates that this is intersemiotic translation (Jakobson 1971), resemiotization (Iedema 2001) of the head-shake in the modality of speech. Then Joanne speaks on behalf of the client ('as that's easy for him to provide his passport') in a translation that departs from the notion of translation as the representation of one thing as another. Moving beyond the representation of the client's own words or other semiotic signs, Joanne gives an account which seeks to explain that the client could not have received a letter asking him for information about his nationality, as he would of course have dealt with such a straightforward request. There is no evidence that Joanne is translating in the usual sense. But in speaking on behalf of the client she translates what she believes he may have wanted to say. Joanne makes a comment, to herself as much as to the benefits officer, surprised that she had not realised that the same application form is used for different benefits. Now she slightly repositions herself once more, more explicitly taking the role of the advocate, saying 'I think I can get it to the neighbourhood office after leaving the office'. At this moment Joanne's voice is so closely aligned with her client's voice that it is not clear whether she is speaking on his behalf, or suggesting that she will take the form to the neighbourhood office herself. The former is more likely, but her translation of the presupposed voice of the client could be taken for her own voice. At times the discourse of advocacy becomes very closely aligned with the client.

Joanne translates the world of the welfare benefits system as she translates the word. Her work goes far beyond translation of the word. The world is too complex to require only translation from one 'language' to another. It also requires translation within the same 'linguistic community'. Like Ricouer (2006) Joanne finds the enigma of the same, of meaning itself, the identical meaning which cannot be found, and which is supposed to make the two versions of the same intention equivalent. She is able to throw a bridge between (what Ricouer calls) internal translation and external translation. She sees that even within the same 'community', understanding requires at least two interlocutors, one or both of them the everyday other, *der Fremde*, the foreigner. There is something foreign in every other. It is as several people that we define, that we reformulate, that we explain, that we try to say the same thing in another way. In the interaction here, as elsewhere, Joanne is able to be at the same time 'several people'. And governing the whole interaction is the invisibly present third party of the superaddressee, offering hope that all will be resolved, that the represented voice of the client will finally be heard.

After a short digression during which the benefits officer confirms security details relating to C, Joanne continues to pursue C's case on the telephone.

Example 3.2

J OK (6)
 that's why the housing benefit
 has been suspended you know
 on and off
 that's why maybe he lost the only support
 and that's why he's not even ignoring
 he's thinking that he could be put back on track
 that's why he's been waiting and waiting

(4) oh so both of them need to be paid?
 他说目前来看这两笔钱都得先退还
 [to C:] < he said both of these have to be paid for the time being >
 [to O:] hold on
 the one the one thousand twenty six and sixty
 is it for the previous year?
 so what's the amount for this year?
 (6) has he has he been sent with the bill?
 [to C:] < have you received the council tax bill for this year? >
 [laughs] nooo hehehe
 他说今年要退陪的
 有一千零二十九镑
 < this year's he said
 is one thousand and twenty nine pounds >
 [to O:] OK in that case can you resend
 a tax council tax demand er bill
 for this year please
 he's not receiving, he doesn't know
 and I will apply for council tax support
 based on that figure
 (3) oh, he's
 你现在的周薪是多少
 [to C:] < how much is your weekly income? >
 呃，六百镑左右
 C < um (.) about six hundred >

Any act of translation arises from a relationship that preceded it. Translation is a metaphor for characterising the transactions, the appropriations, negotiations, migrations, mediations that give rise to it. Also relevant here is the power (not the task) of the translator, as the one who knows both the codes; the one who has the power to do justice, be faithful, yet also to capture, deceive, betray one side to the other, or betray both to a third (Pratt 2010). Joanne takes up her client's case again, her act of translation not a translation between languages, but a characterization of the system against the individual. She first listens to the benefits officer on the other end of the phone, then responds by arguing on behalf of C in rhythmic, patterned speech characterized by repetition:

that's why housing benefit has been suspended you know
 that's why, um, maybe he lost the only support
 and then why not even he's thinking that he could be put back on track
 that's why he's been waiting and waiting

The repetition of the 'why' construction creates an artistic pattern based on equivalence. When we pay attention to repetition and 'sameness' in a text (including an oral text) we are able to make comprehensible its poetic structure (Jakobson 1960). Repetitions such as parallelisms, whether based on sound, or on grammatical categories, or on lexical categories, are a result of

the raising of equivalence to the constitutive device of the sequence. Hymes (2003) proposed that artistic patterns in narrative such as parallel structures, rhythmic repetitions and lexical oppositions indicate a high level of formal skills and sophistication. Tannen (2007: 101) argues that Jakobson's observations of pervasive parallelism in poetry "apply as well to conversation". She points out that repetition is a limitless resource for individual creativity and interpersonal involvement, and claims that it is "the central linguistic meaning-making strategy" (2007: 101). Attending to the 'ethnopoetics' of speech enables us to view (and reconstruct) languages as ordered complexes of genres, styles, registers, and forms of use: languages as repertoires or sociolinguistic systems (Blommaert 2009: 269). The reiteration, four times, of the 'why' construction is not simply Joanne speaking on behalf of her client. It is Joanne deploying rhythm, repetition, and artistic pattern to persuade the disembodied voice on the other end of the phone of the justice of her client's case.

The benefits officer answers, and Joanne seeks clarification about the requirement for the client to pay her council tax bills, 'so both of them need to be paid?'. She then speaks to C, confirming what the benefits officer has told her, 'he said both of these have to be paid for the time being'. The client does not respond. Joanne seeks further clarification about the amount owed, and about whether a bill has been issued, 'has he been sent the bill for this year?'. She asks Joanne (in Mandarin) 'have you received the council tax bill for this year?'. We can assume that the client indicates with a head-shake or other semiotic means that he has not received his bill, because Joanne now responds in a laughing voice, exaggerating the word 'no', and laughing out loud. This is of course more than intersemiotic translation. The cause of Joanne's amusement appears to be that her client had already said that he had not received letters (allegedly) sent by the benefits office. Now he says that he has not received his tax bills. Again Joanne argues on behalf of her client that as he has not received his bill, he has been unable to pay it. As before, in returning to an advocacy role Joanne not only speaks on behalf of her client, but adopts the first person voice, saying 'that's how I can't pay the council tax bill based on that figure'. Once again Joanne takes up a position, and a discourse strategy, which enables her to align closely with her client.

The construction of 'facts' involves their transposition into increasingly durable and propagative semiotics, such as printed matter (Iedema 2001). In the benefits system the lost letters, and lost tax bills, assume the status of significant artefacts. They are the means by which the system communicates with the people. If letters are not delivered the system breaks down, and the state and the people are no longer in correspondence. But a letter or tax bill delivered in English to someone who is not able to read English may appear to its recipient not to have the significance it has for the state, and which it accrues in the discourse of the advice worker and the benefits officer. The letters and bills are apparently sent by no particular person, but are nonetheless fundamental to the working of the state. They are the scattered artefacts which anthropologists may in future reveal as the history and culture of the superaddressee.

The interaction continues, as Joanne tries to negotiate a way out of a difficult situation for her client.

Example 3.3

J can you see when his benefits were suspended

could you see there from your screen?
(3) OK last year uh-huh
(8) OK so in that case
what to do with this
one thousand twenty six
because it says you need to pay within seven days
should he pay or should as you tell me
we put in a backdating claim?
(13) OK hold on a second cause I need to explain to him
[to C:] < this council tax is for the whole year last year
and this is why they didn't pay you council tax allowance
for the whole year last year
for this year he asked me to make a fresh application for you
for last year's payment he said (xxxx) >
[to O:] one second no no no no one second no
他让我问你要你的 P60
还说会重新考虑你的情况
你得先退赔多得的款项
如果你不能一次还清
可以跟他们设立分期付款协议
所以最好你先把这第一个月的付了
先给他们一些赔款让他们满意
这样行吗?
你要是同意, 他就帮咱们转接到另一个部门
所以最好先给他们退赔一些欠款
你看行吗?
[to C:] < asked me to provide him your P60
and they will reconsider it
before the reconsideration
you will have to pay for it first
if you can't pay the whole lot in one go
you will have to set up an instalment
so you'd better pay for one month
so they have something to satisfy them
is this OK?
if you agree he might transfer us to another department
so to give them something for the time being
is that OK? >
[to O:] OK in that case to set up the council tax payment plan
do I need to be transferred to another department?
(3) so er he needs to set up a plan first
and then I will make the backdating claim
to see what is going to move afterwards
(5) yea yea he's getting a card
你身上有没有带你的银行卡?

[to C:] < have you got your bank card with you? >
[1p4]

The only audible voice in this section of the interaction is that of Joanne. Yet, as in a one-woman play of several characters, the voices of the benefits officer and the client are clearly evident in Joanne's discourse. Furthermore, the 'voice' of state regulation, of the superaddressee, informs all else in the encounter. We have already suggested that the shape of an utterance is not only determined by how the speaker anticipates it being received by the listener, but also by the superaddressee. If the superaddressee is not immediately or explicitly present, it still constructs the utterance because it offers the possibility of an ultimate understanding beyond the present situation.

Joanne asks the benefits officer a factual question. She does not directly address the state as superaddressee. As before, the passive voice ('can you see when his benefit has been suspended?') constructs a distance between the benefits officer and the state as superaddressee. The client's benefits have been suspended, but not by the benefits officer as an individual. There are greater forces at work. Receiving an answer, Joanne sets out to determine how her client can deal with the urgent requirement to make payment. Although she does not have the power to make a decision, she offers the benefits officer two options: that her client pays within seven days, or that the bill be added to a back-dated payment. Joanne constructs the benefits officer as one with whom negotiations may be held. He may be an officer of the state, but he is not the state. We have a sense of the benefits officer's response when Joanne translates (the word and the world) for the client. Joanne is interrupted by the benefits officer as she translates, but is not thrown off course, and completes her summary of the benefits officer's points. The news is that the client will be required to make a new application, and 'they will reconsider it'. The generalized 'they' refers to the state, to the superaddressee, who will make (what appears to be) the final judgment.

The superaddressee is the eternally deferred supreme judge who views the social world from without. The juridical world remains an interaction of juridical persons, with rights and responsibilities, but whose actions are not subject to causality (Brandist 2002). But this reconsideration will have to be earned. A fresh application form must be completed. And beyond this, 'before the reconsideration you will have to pay for it first'. Debts must be paid before progress can be made. In Joanne's discourse the voice of the benefits officer ('if you can't pay the whole lot in one go you will have to set up an instalment') merges into her voice as advisor ('so you'd better pay for one month so they have something to satisfy them'). Joanne repeats the advice that it is better 'to give them something for the time being', and having gained at least the tacit agreement of her client, returns to speak to the benefits officer. A way forward is charted, and it seems that further penalty may be avoided.

Joanne helps the client to set up regular payments to clear his debt. However, the client's bank card turns out not to be suitable.

Example 3.4

J [to O:] but it's a credit card
 it's not his account

you know the current account or savings account
 something it's not
 O OK so we can't set anything up if we
 don't have an account number
 J (xxx) OK call back when he got hold of another card?
 O yes please
 J all right in the meantime because that letter
 is very er not pleasant to read
 ask him to pay within seven days
 could you please uphold that one
 and will not proceed to the court?
 when he gets the card he will come back
 and we set up a payment plan
 O we can't hold it for seven days (xxx)
 J what's the deadline
 let me see
 the deadline is
 it's over already actually
 O I can't
 J you cannot?
 So 他说你得在七天之内付款
 [to C:] < so he says you will have to pay for it within seven days >
 O he's got up to five o'clock today (xxx)
 J [to C:] five o'clock hehehe
 他说你得打款
 在今天五点钟前
 不付的话就得上法庭
 出庭费你得交六十九镑
 是法庭的手续费
 所以我问他可不可以多给你几天
 缴清赔款
 但是仔细想一下他说的也不对
 因为信上的日期是三十号
 可今天都已经是十四号了
 早就超过最迟期限两个多星期了
 可他又说今天必须交清赔款
 < he says you have to pay for it
 by five o'clock today
 if you don't you will have to go to court
 which will cost you extra sixty-nine pounds
 for the administration fee
 so I asked him if he can give you extra days
 to clear the payment
 but on second thoughts what he said wasn't right either
 because the letter is dated on the thirtieth

while today is the fourteenth
 which is more than two weeks overdue
 then he said you will have to pay for it today >
 C 缴清所有的欠款?
 < to clear all the payment? >
 J 不是缴清退款而是开始退赔
 就给他你的银行卡信息就行了
 那他就可以给你办一个付款计划
 所以就可以找他负责就行了
 这样可以吗?
 < not to clear but to start a payment
 just give him the card details
 and he will set up the payment plan
 so to hold him to it
 is this OK? >
 [to O:] er if any other choices?
 let me see whether he got any other
 let me see let me see
 C 我的卡在家里
 我可以让她发给我
 把银行卡的照片发到我手机上
 < my card is at home
 I can get her to send it over to me
 here on my phone >
 J [to O:] all right his card is left at home
 the debit card
 he's getting someone at home
 to send it over
 are you OK to hold the line for another minute or two?
 O I have only five minutes after that I have (xxx)
 J only a minute all right
 could we just do one minute please?
 O all right
 J 他只有一分钟的时间给你所以。。。

 < he only gives you one minute so (xxx) >
 C [makes a phone call]
 J 如果你能缴清两千九百镑
 十个月之内付清
 为什么你的住址总是接不到你的信
 去年一整年
 你一封信都没有收到过?
 所以这封信是从去年来的
 < if you pay two thousand nine hundred pounds
 within ten months you will then (xxx)

- why did you keep missing your letters at your addresses?
for the whole year last year
you didn't receive anything?
(xxx) so this one is for last year >
- C 他们什么都没寄给我
只收到这一封
< they didn't send anything
and the only thing I got is this one >
- J 那你有没有收到过信?
什么信都没有收到过?
< have you received any letters?
you didn't receive any at all? >
- C 没有, 什么都没有, 他们是每个月都寄给我吗?
< no nothing (2) did they post it every month? >
- J 不是每个月, 那去年四月五号
你接到过你的地税账单吗?
< not monthly (.) the fifth of April last year
did you receive a council tax bill that day? >
- C 没有的, 要是有人那给你的
< no (.) if there's anything I will bring it to you >
- J 这就是为什么你的福利发发停停的
一会儿停一会发的
有没有传过来?
< that's why your benefit is on and off
on and off repeatedly
is it sent over? >
[to O:] it's almost here just one second
one more second please
(15) oh yea yea yea yea he's ready
- [1p6]

As in previous instances, Joanne adopts the first person to represent the voice of her client ('can I use another card?'). Apparently frustrated by the rigidity of the system, Joanne argues on behalf of the client that some flexibility should be allowed, given that her client has not been treated well. She makes the case that 'that letter is not really pleasant to read um ask him to pay within seven days'. Joanne appeals to the compassion of the benefits officer, and argues that the payment should be accepted as a way to keep her client out of court. However, the benefits officer stands by the regulations, saying simply 'I can't'. Joanne tells her client that he will have to pay within seven days, but the position of the benefits officer seems to harden, saying that the deadline for payment is 'five o'clock today'. Joanne explains to her client, 'you have to pay for it by five o'clock today, if you don't you will have to go to court'. In Bakhtin's (1986: 126) brief list of conceptualisations of the superaddressee, which includes 'God', 'absolute truth', 'the people', and 'science', the courts are referenced twice, as 'the court of dispassionate human conscience', and 'the court of history'. If the county court that makes judgments on cases of debt has less grandiose cachet than the court of dispassionate human conscience, and the court of

history, here it nevertheless acts as the superaddressee. The law presumes that the court is, like Bakhtin's superaddressee, one of "ideally true responsive understanding" (Bakhtin 1986: 126). The accused man, anxious to clear his name, can do so only if he has his day in court. When all the evidence is presented, when the court *hears* the case, all will be satisfactorily resolved. But can the absolutely just responsive understanding of the court be presumed?

If the superaddressee speaks to a common need to forward utterances to a context where they may receive a just hearing (Farmer 2001), the role of the court here is not so much to weigh one argument against another as to insist on certain action. The court is conceptualized less as a compassionate listener than as a threat, a means of coercion which requires that payment must be made, and made today. Joanne tries to argue for more time, but the requirement of the law will not be shifted. The client has the wrong card to make the payment, and the right card is at home. Joanne pleads with the benefits officer to give her client time to get hold of his card information. He phones home and eventually a member of his family sends through the details of the card. The threat of the court is averted for now. The superaddressee may offer ultimate understanding beyond the present situation, but it is not necessarily an understanding which benefits the client here. The superaddressee assumes various ideological expressions (Bakhtin 1986:126), and in this case the ideological voice of the state insists that payment must be made, and made today. The superaddressee finally offers no loophole through which the oppressions of immediacy might be relieved or avoided.

The superaddressee is the eternally deferred supreme judge who views the social world from without. The juridical world remains an interaction of juridical persons, with rights and responsibilities, but whose actions are not subject to causality (Brandist 2002). The supreme judge in his (usually, still, *his*) court requires one thing above all. Beyond argument, beyond evidence, the judge requires proof. Joanne explains to her client what is demanded by the judge.

Example 3.5

- C 所以我得给他我过去三年的 P60 吗?
 < so I need to give him the P60 for the last three years? >
- J 他是这么说的
 如果他取消你的地税补贴
 去年的
 那你是需要前一年的 P60 的
 所以你只要给我过去两年的 P60 就好了
 你把这些拿来我就可以照着给你填表
 他会寄一份新表给你
 然后你要把你的护照交去
 你们全家五口人的
 交到你们临近的 neighbourhood office
 但是看起来你已经交了
 只是他们没有留底作为你的身份证明
 这个叫做身份证明
 是要有带你本人照片的证明你是谁的身份证明

公民身份证明是能证明你移民身份的文件
然后他们现在要的是能证明你的移民身份的证件
因为他们要求的你没有及时提供
因此他们就没有
啊看起来他们把事情搞乱了
他们说你提供了一些证明，啊
所以他现在说的是
那你今天身上带你的护照了吗？
< that's what he said
if they didn't give you council tax allowance
for the last year
you won't need the one for the year before
so if you could give me your P60s for the last two years
bring them to me and I will fill in a new form for you
they will send you a new form
and you will need to send in your passports
for the five of you
to the neighbourhood office
but it looks like you took them
and they didn't record it as proof of residency
it's called identity
it's to prove who you are with your photo ID
residency is to prove your immigration status
and they were looking for evidence of status
but said you didn't provide them with it
and because of this they didn't
ahh they messed things up
they ticked some columns ahh
so what he says now
have you got it on you today? >

[1p8]

Throughout the interaction physical artefacts are endowed with crucial significance, as Joanne seeks to navigate perilous waters on behalf of her client. Letters, apparently sent, fail to reach their destination; tax bills are unaccounted for; credit cards are of the wrong sort. Misplaced items are not without consequence. Artefacts are required as proof of identity, and as proof of status. Not merely status in social life, or socio-economic status, but legal status, status under the law. Citizenship status. Right to remain status. Passports are required as proof of identity, proof that you are who you claim to be. Beyond the passport itself, a photograph is needed as proof. The embodied person himself will not suffice. A photograph is also required. A P60 certificate is demanded as proof that tax has been paid (in the UK and Ireland, a P60 is a statement issued to taxpayers at the end of a tax year). If the superaddressee is capable of sympathy, it is also capable of misunderstanding. It takes nothing on trust, and requires proof.

In the court of dispassionate human conscience, the court of history, things do not always proceed as they should. In the real world (rather than the mystical or metaphysical realm, which Bakhtin insisted was not always the domain of the superaddressee) the judge can only come to judgement if all the evidence is presented. And the judge can only come to judgement if the evidence proves the case. Joanne protests (if only to her client) that when C took his family's passports to be presented as evidence the officers concerned 'didn't record it as proof of residency'. She aligns with her client, further arguing that 'they were looking for evidence of status but said you didn't provide them with it'. Joanne questions the competence of the officers of the state, who 'messed things up, they ticked some columns ahh'. For a human being there is nothing more terrible than a lack of response (Bakhtin 1986: 127). The word wants to be heard and responded to, and to respond to the response. But for C there is no dialogue with the court. Evidence has not been heard. Proof has not been registered. The superaddressee does not offer a loophole after all. The superaddressee will not always hear because the tyranny of the present, of the here and now, may prevent the final proof from reaching its destination. The court is not, in the end, all-seeing and all-knowing. It offers hope of a fair hearing, but that hope may be dashed on the rocks of bureaucratic half-heartedness. Absolute justice may not be handed down if proof is not presented to the court. Faith in the possibility of being understood is not always rewarded.

In the existential spaces where documents are undocumented, and proof goes unheeded, Joanne intervenes with advice and advocacy. This is her role, more than translating the word. They messed things up, the proof was not presented. But giving up is not an option. The only way forward is persistence. Go again. Take the documents again. Write letters. Fill in forms. Fail again. Fail better. Go again. Persist.

Joanne helps C to write a letter to the benefits office.

Example 3.6

- J 我会帮你写一封信
他需要这封信标注为三月二号这一天写的
(xxx) 这信是为了申请政府屋福利的
< I will need to help you to write a letter
he needs the letter dated on second of March to prove this
(xxx) and this is for the housing benefit >
- C 那我要什么时候交给他们呢
< when shall I hand them in? >
- J 越快越好。现在已经快中午了
< the sooner the better. it's almost noon so you >
- C 他们为什么要我们的护照呢?
< why do they need passports? >
- J 就是看你一下你们一家的移民身份
< just to prove your status >
- C 我得把这个交上去?
< do I have to hand this in? >
- J 所以你下次来的时候我们得要这个

这样我就可以帮你填写地税补贴的申请表

(120) 希望这次他们不会再骗咱们

这封信说是上次的申请没有成功

所以咱们得申诉

刚才跟咱们说话的那人说

那个叫 H 什么的，咱们还得去申诉

咱们就权当他刚才告诉我们的都是真的

我们就按要求补齐所有需要的材料

然后看他们怎么反应

如果他们还不接受我们补交的材料

那我们再看看还有其他什么办法申诉

< no we need this when you come back next time

so I can help you with the council tax allowances application

(120) I hope this time they don't try to cheat us

this letter says it's unsuccessful

so we need to appeal

and according to the person we just spoke to

the one called H___ we still have to appeal

so we believe what he says

and hand in all the documents requested

and then wait and see how they respond

if they don't accept it we will have to see

what else we can do to appeal >

C 所以只要护照就行了？

< so only the passport is needed >

J yea 你们五个人的

(1.5 mins)

[NAME] OK 简单地说

我给那个在福利部的叫 H 什么的打电话

他告诉我我上次的申请没成功

他说他给我的地址寄过信

是今年的三月二号寄的

要我提供身份证明

但因为我没有收到那封信(xxx)

他们要我今天就把护照交进去

yea < for all five of you >

(1.5 mins)

[NAME] OK < very briefly put

I rang H___ in the benefits department

I was told my application was unsuccessful

he said they sent me a letter to my home address

on the second of March this year

asking me for residency proof

but since I didn't receive that letter (xxx)

I was advised to send in my residency proof today
 这里我额外加了几句话
 告诉他们你们这段时间很困难
 你还有你的三个孩子
 自从你们的福利被停了之后的这几个月
 而且你不想你们全家被房东从住处赶出来
 所以我请求他们
 加快对你的申诉的处理速度
 对你的申请
 你看这样行吗? (30)
 啊怎么办呀
 你总丢信?
 你为什么总是收不到寄给你的信呀?
 here I've added an extra note
 saying that it has been very difficult
 for you and your three kids
 these few months since your benefit was stopped
 and that you don't want to end up being kicked out
 by your landlord so I pleaded with them
 to speed up the process
 of dealing with your case
 is this OK? (30)
 ahh what to do with you
 always losing your letters?
 how come you kept missing them? >
 C 我都不知道他们到底有没有给我寄信出来
 < I'm not sure if they really posted the letters >
 J 他们肯定寄过, 他们为什么不寄呢
 < they will definitely have (.) why wouldn't they >
 C 我换了住址也许是因为这个吧
 < I've changed my address maybe that's why >
 J 是这样呀? oh la la la
 我就觉得你总丢信
 你应当收得到的
 这样他们很容易就停掉你的福利的
 即使他们真的是故意这样做的那损失的也是你自己
 我真是不知道这到底是谁的错
 如果你的申请延迟一星期批准
 你就少拿一个星期的钱
 好了写好了你这儿签个字
 这封信要和护照
 一起交进去
 < is it because of this? oh la la la

I always had the feeling that you lose letters
you should have received
this way it's easy for them to drag you down
even if they did it on purpose it's your own loss
I really don't know whose fault it is
if you are one week late
to be approved for your application
you will be one week short of payment
just sign it here and it's done
this letter goes with your passports
when you hand them in >

The function of the superaddressee is to provide hope – of a response, of justice, of dialogue. The commoner waits with infinite patience at the medieval court for an audience with the king. If only the case can be heard, if only the argument can be made, if only the proof can be presented, without constraint or confusion, the good king will make a wise and just judgement. Joanne advises her client to take his family's passports again. He is not sure why they are required. To prove your status, Joanne tells him. She says the benefits officer told her it is possible to appeal against the decision that her client's application for housing benefit is unsuccessful. 'We believe what he says'. In saying so Joanne allows the possibility that benefits officers might not be believed. Her statement is deeply dialogical, at one and the same time saying she believes what the benefits officer says, and also that benefits officers are not necessarily to be trusted. Joanne says they will abide by the available systems and processes. They will 'hand in all the documents requested, and then wait and see how they respond'. If the case is unsuccessful, 'we will have to see what else we can do to appeal'. Joanne aligns with her client, deploying the collective pronoun to insist that she would appeal on his behalf:

so we need to appeal
we still have to appeal
we will have to see
what else we can do to appeal

Joanne types away on her computer, writing on behalf of the client, but not referring to him as she composes the letter. She knows best what should be given in evidence to the court (of compassion, of history, of the king). Eventually she reads the letter (which she has of course typed in English) to her client (in Mandarin). For a moment she seems to be in cahoots, or at least in collaboration, with the benefits officer. The date of the interaction in Joanne's office is 14th April. She tells her client that the benefits officer 'needs the letter dated second of March to prove this'. The presentation of proof to the court can take many twists and turns. The letter itself is a ventriloquation, a version, a translation, of the client's voice, or at least of his case. Twice the brief letter refers to 'residency proof'. Joanne understands too well that what is required to win the case is proof. She moves into her own voice to report that she has added a note (in her client's voice) to plead his particularly difficult circumstances, and to ask that the decision be expedited.

Joanne completes the letter. The business finished, she once again raises the question of the missing letters, which appear to be at the heart of the problem. Finally the client says, 'I've changed my address, maybe that's why'. After having asked repeatedly whether C was certain that he had not received any letters from the benefits office, Joanne is a little astonished by his admission. She admonishes him lightly, but adds that failing to inform the state system of his change of address has great potential to disadvantage him, saying 'this way it's easy for them to drag you down'. She seems to position the benefits office less as a structure to support those in financial need, and more as a coercive system which deliberately seeks to avoid making payments. Joanne emphasizes this point, telling C, 'even if they did it on purpose it's your loss'. Even more clearly Joanne opens up the possibility that the benefits system may be guilty of deliberate miscommunication with its clients. She seems to believe that there is blame to be apportioned on both sides, saying, 'I really don't know whose fault it is'. Joanne seems ready to grant absolution to C. She warns him that delays are likely to disadvantage him, as he could end up 'one week short of payment'.

Joanne hands the letter to C, and tells him to take it to the benefits office with his family's passports.

Example 3.7

J 是的然后一定要记住
递交护照的时候记着问他们要一个收据
千万别忘了不然更麻烦
万一要是又有什么差错的话
这样好吗?
再跟我约一个时间
这样我们可以填
你的政府屋补贴的申请表
他们说会给你寄一份新表
如果你不介意等一阵子的话
我猜不管怎样
你下周四前应该收得到的
因为你今年还没有拿到任何减免呢
< yea and then do remember
to ask for a receipt when you hand in your passports
don't forget or it will be even more trouble
if something goes wrong again.
is that all right?
and book another time with me
so we can do your
council house allowance application again
they said they will send you a new form
if you don't mind waiting please wait
I guess that you should have it
no later than Thursday next week

no matter what
as you haven't received any reduction for this year >

C 那我要订一个下周的时间见你吗
周四好吗?
< so shall I book an appointment for next week
on Thursday? >

J 就试试, (.)赌一下
他们要是给了就给了(.)至少你尝试过了
他让我们试一下的(.)
那下周什么时候
现在马上十一点了
那就从十一点开始定一个小时的时间
因为那个表很长的
跟那个申请政府屋的表一样长
好吧咱们试一下
< just give it a go (.) just gamble once
if they do they do (.) if not at least you've tried
he told us to give it a try (.)
so what time next week?
now it's almost eleven o'clock
is eleven o'clock OK
so eleven a.m. for an hour
because the form is too long
the same as the housing benefit one
OK let's give it a try >

C 好那要带什么材料来呢?
< OK so what kind of documents shall I bring? >

J 过去两年的(.)还有新的表
他们马上要寄给你的
如果到时还没有收到
您可以等到周二
我就想看看是到底怎么回事儿(xxx)
好吗? 要是他们寄什么新的东西给你
拿给我我帮你看
好了, 都办好了, 再见
记得今天一天要去
把护照都交进去
< the last two years (.) and the new one
they are going to send you soon
bring them all to me
if you still haven't received it
you can wait until after Tuesday
I just want to see how the (xxx)
OK? and then if they send you something new

bring it to me so I can have a look at it for you
all is done (.) all right bye bye
make sure you go there today
and hand in those documents >

(1p9)

More artefacts are introduced. Ask for a receipt when you hand in your passports, says Joanne. Bring documents for the last two years. They will send you a new form (if the benefits office now has the correct address). Joanne will fill in the new form on behalf of the client. Joanne characterizes the appeal system as a 'gamble', saying, 'just give it a go, just gamble once. If they do they do, if not at least you've tried.' They make another appointment for the following week, and she says once more, 'let's give it a try'. In Joanne's discourse the benefits system offers the hope that somewhere, somehow there is the possibility of being understood (Holquist 1984). The superaddressee provides the necessity of hope – of a response, of justice, of dialogue. But if an application to the benefits system is made in hope, it is more in hope than expectation. This is not faith in God, absolute truth, the court of dispassionate human conscience, the people, the court of history, or science. It is the hope of the roulette player in the casino, the midnight gambler holding a pair of queens. As C departs Joanne reminds him to go to the benefits office today 'and hand in those documents'. If he has a ticket for the lottery there is the possibility that he can win. Joanne will see him next week to resume the game of chance.

Summary

In any encounter, in addition to the immediate addressee, there is always the speaker's concept of a superaddressee (Bakhtin (1986). When we speak our discourse is shaped not only by the immediate audience, but also by powerful ideologies. The superaddressee is a privileged site of ideology and ideological battles, as every utterance both expresses the superaddressee, and is shaped by the superaddressee. The nature of the superaddressee is of course contingent on the context of the interaction. In the case of the encounter between Joanne and her client, C, just as in thousands of other similar encounters, the interaction is profoundly shaped by an ideological tension, a dynamic equilibrium which holds that the welfare benefits system is the means by which absolute poverty is prevented, yet in practice the system withholds economic support wherever possible. In every utterance in the encounter between Joanne and the welfare benefits officer, and between Joanne and her client, we experience the push and pull of opposing forces: one the 'centripetal' force which keeps funds at the centre and is loath to disperse them, and the other the 'centrifugal' force which hands out resources where needed. The opposing pull of centrifugal and centripetal forces is a central trope for Bakhtin (1981). Whereas the centripetal force constitutes the pull towards homogeneity, standardization and the state, the centrifugal force pulls towards decentralization. These forces are rarely free of each other, however, as the centripetal forces operate in the midst of and alongside centrifugal forces.

The encounter in which Joanne navigates the regulations of the welfare benefits system is determined by the superaddressee as state, court, and judge. A decision has been made: C will not receive the welfare benefits for which he has applied. The application was 'unsuccessful'. But Joanne believes that the state, the court, the judge, was not in possession of all the material

evidence; was not presented with the *proof* that would have swung the judgement the other way. The process has been flawed. Letters have gone astray; documents have not been correctly registered; the status and identity of the plaintiff have not been adequately acknowledged. The next stage is the appeal. Like Dan in *I, Daniel Blake*, C wants to be heard, understood, responded to, and again to respond to the response. He will appeal with the hope of a response, of justice, of dialogue. But the twists and turns of the system, with its several layers of address, may mean that the proof will never reach the court, and will never be seen by the judge. Application templates will be filled in, documents collected, passports presented at the right time and in the right place, P60 forms handed in, everything done by the book. But Joanne appears to have little faith in the appeal system, characterizing it as a 'gamble'. Like Dostoyevsky's Alexei Ivanovich, C will gamble to survive. The stakes are high: up to £400 a week if he wins. But if he loses, the "torture chamber or hell" (Bakhtin 1986: 126) of once again not being heard. Let's give it a try, urges Joanne.



Chapter 4

Narrative

Institutions and individuals, the powerful as well as the less powerful, configure and circulate the narratives that make up the social world. Narratives are stories that unfold in time, with a perceived beginning and a projected end. They are populated by participants, real or imaginary, human or non-human, in a configured relationship to each other in the unfolding story (Baker 2016). Key players in the circulation of narratives are translators. Every translation operates within a specific, local environment, but it also contributes to the stock of narratives circulating within and beyond that environment (Baker 2014). We can investigate the elaboration and recontextualisation of a particular narrative in a translation zone, as well as across several encounters in translation zones. In so doing we can identify the stakes involved in any encounter, and the narrative means by which these stakes are fought over and negotiated. In this chapter we examine how narrative facilitates access to resources for the relatively less powerful in encounters in the translation zone. We will look at how mediators, brokers, or – in the term applied to everyday translators and interpreters in multilingual settings in South Africa, *transpreters* (Harding & Ralarala 2017) – intervene in this process.

Narrative theory assumes that the unit of analysis is ultimately an entire narrative, understood as a concrete story of some aspect of the world, complete with characters, settings, outcomes or projected outcomes and plot. Taking ‘narrative’ as the unit of analysis moves beyond comparison of original and translated texts and evaluation of their relative accuracy or inaccuracy in terms of semantic equivalence. A focus on the narratives being elaborated within and across texts allows us to look into the political and social context of interaction (Baker 2010). As we suggested in Chapter 2, to elaborate a coherent narrative, some elements of experience are excluded and others privileged. In narratives certain events are selected from the vast array of open-ended and overlapping events that constitute experience. The notion of selective appropriation also covers ways of identifying protagonists rather than just the foregrounding of events or parts of events. The selective foregrounding and backgrounding of individuals, groups and features attributed to them is part of the elaboration of characters that play particular roles in a larger narrative under construction. Narratives also have distinct patterns of causal emplotment. Causal emplotment gives significance to independent instances; it is only when events are emplotted that they take on narrative meaning. Emplotment thus allows us to weight and explain events rather than just list them.

As we suggested in Chapter 2, narratives are also characterised by their temporality, meaning that they are embedded in time and space and derive much of their meaning from the temporal moment and physical site of the narration. Temporality concerns the temporal and spatial ordering of the elements that constitute the narrative. Events are rarely recounted in the order in which they took place, and the way in which time, sequence and spatial setting are used to

construct a narrative is therefore meaningful in its own right. Finally, relationality, another characteristic of narrative, means that individual events (and elements within an event) cannot make sense on their own but only insofar as they constitute elements of an overall narrative (Baker 2010). The concept of ‘frame’ demonstrates how the ‘same’ narrative can be framed in very different ways by different narrators. Advocacy groups as well as individual translators and interpreters can exploit features of narrativity (temporality, relationality, selective appropriation and causal emplotment) to frame or reframe a text or utterance for a set of addressees. But effective narratives also rely on subtle processes of (re)framing which can draw on practically any linguistic or non-linguistic resource to set up an interpretive context for the reader or hearer.

In the interactional example that follows Joanne engages with a family of three after they arrive in her office for an appointment. The family requests help in dealing with the benefits claim of R, a 41-year-old man who has a diagnosis of schizophrenia. His parents attend the appointment with him. R’s main spoken language appears to be English. His parents’ main spoken language appears to be Cantonese. Rachel wrote the following field note as they arrived:

R, a very tall and bulky man, walks in. He is followed by his mum and dad, both tall and slim. They look as though they are in their seventies. Mum and Dad sit in the chairs in front of Joanne, next to each other, while R sits in a chair at the side of her desk, his head bent down in front of his chest. R’s mum starts to tell Joanne in Cantonese that this is their first time at the centre, and they need her help, as R has lost his Employment and Support Allowance. R keeps silent while his mother is talking, looking out of the window as if he’s admiring a picture.

The meeting lasted for more than 90 minutes, and was observed and audio-recorded by Rachel. In the selected transcripts that follow five speakers are represented: Joanne (J), R (R), R’s father (F), and R’s mother (M), and a benefits officer. The benefits officer is not physically present at the interview, but speaks to Joanne on the telephone. *Example 4.1* is from the beginning of the interaction, and is (largely) in Cantonese. Joanne speaks to R’s parents in Cantonese, and to R and the benefits officer in English.

Example 4.1 Translating the system

J 你哋預約嗰陣
 同事係寫 JSA
 JSA 係失業金黎架
 如果你話有啲唔妥
 嗰啲唔應該係失業金,係
 你自己住架嘛
 Income Support
 [when you booked this appointment
 it was put down as JSA

JSA is unemployment benefit
 you said he has some kind of health condition
 that should be Income Support]
 [to R:] if you don't have that Income Support
 you will be no longer qualifying for housing benefit
 have they traced you (3)
 oh that's from years ago
 oh Income Support OK
 R I've got this one here
 J oh that's last year's OK
 [to M:] 個仔有冇醫生 佢係咩情形?
 [what is his condition?]
 F mental
 M 精神
 mental mental
 J mental
 有冇一個病嘅名?
 [have you got an official name?]
 M 精神分裂
 [schizophrenia]
 J 有醫生證明冇?
 [have you got a diagnosis from the doctor?]
 M what about that doctor letter before
 有醫生嘅證明
 [yes]
 J 咁點解 Income Support 會停咗呢一個錢
 如果有呢一個呢都可以申請
 唔係叫失業金,可以申請 ESA
 你話醫生有紙架嘛,ESA
 都係好似失業金
 但係唔需要兩個星期報到
 因為有呢個病做唔到工
 所以申請呢個 ESA
 啱啱開始個 13 個禮拜一個星期八十幾鎊嘅
 過咗 13 個星期加多 25 鎊
 你有冇啲嘢叫做 DLA 或者 PIP 啲嘢呀?
 [then why has your Income Support been stopped
 you can claim this not JSA
 you can claim ESA
 you said you have a doctor's diagnosis
 ESA is similar to JSA

- but you don't need to sign in every two weeks
 you can't work because of illness
 for the first thirteen weeks you get eighty pounds
 twenty-five pounds more after thirteen weeks]
 have you got DLA Disability Living Allowance or PIP?
- R I was on I was on SDA
 Severe Disablement Allowance
 I was on that
- J PIP? you don't but anyway
 do you have a bank statement
 to show me what benefits
 you are receiving altogether?
 bank statement
 do you have any?
- M bank statement
- R what's a bank statement?

In these opening skirmishes in the translation zone Joanne tries to establish the nature of the clients' problem. When they arrived R's mother had presented Joanne with a letter from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), which stated that R was no longer eligible for Income Support, and that the benefit would be stopped. He had previously been in receipt of Income Support due to his medical condition, but the DWP had now determined that he was fit to work, and so he was no longer entitled to the benefit. JSA and ESA (Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance respectively) were benefits which could not be claimed together with Income Support.

Joanne translates the complex regulations of the benefits system as best she can, steering a path for her clients through JSA, ESA, DLA, PIP, Housing Benefit, and Income Support. The interaction moves seamlessly between Cantonese and English. The challenge here is not interlingual translation. It is rather the translation of an array of terms and acronyms, unfamiliar to most, and difficult to retain. Joanne indexes herself as one who knows about the benefits system, establishing her credentials through her apparent ease with complexity. Translators are reliable when their work gives the client the sense that as professionals they are competent in the field concerned, and capable of doing their job efficiently (Esteves-Ferreira 2013). The need for a thorough understanding of all the nuances of the system is a requirement common to any specialist field of translation, but is particularly acute in the field of legal and quasi-legal translation. Translators may be faced with a complex web of textual elements, thus creating the need to establish a conceptual system into which they can incorporate the specialized terms and formulae characteristic of welfare rights discourse (Borja Albi 2013). The language of the welfare benefits system bears "an ascertainable terminology and style" (Glanert 2014: 257). Not only does its language behave like other specialised languages in the way in which it is characterised by particular epistemological features but, as is the case with other disciplinary vocabularies, the language of the welfare system displays an important measure of cultural embeddedness. The quasi-legal discourse of welfare regulation fulfils unique normative and performative roles, as they purport to regulate behaviour and impose sanctions for non-compliance. It moves beyond descriptions of the world to accomplish concrete and consequential acts within it. Most translators working in legal and quasi-legal settings are not lawyers (Chromá 2014). Joanne is

not a lawyer, and she has no legal training. However, she regularly updates her knowledge of the benefits system by attending courses run by the city council. R appears to have some knowledge of the often-changing benefits system. But when asked to produce a bank statement he seems nonplussed, saying ‘what’s a bank statement?’.

The assessment that R was now fit for work was based on a work capability assessment interview with a health professional appointed by the DWP, while R’s parents were away in Hong Kong. ESA had recently replaced Incapacity Benefit. The criteria for ESA were more stringent than for Incapacity Benefit, meaning that fewer people could successfully claim. Joanne asks R about the interview in *Example 4.2*.

Example 4.2 Contextualisation

J did you attend the interview by yourself?

R yeah

J [to M:] 佢自己去

你哋冇跟住去?

[he went on his own?

didn’t you go with him?]

M 嗰時我哋喺香港

[we were in Hong Kong]

J is this the first time you attended an interview?

OK 呢個 ESA 係新嘅福利

而家擺嘅人政府叫佢哋去面試

以後先至批准俾唔俾,咁個仔自己去

問題嚴重嘅佢都唔肯講

所以最後冇俾佢任何分數

呢啲好似考試打分咁樣你考到 50 分嗰個錢就俾啦

你話全部都得,就俾你零分囉

所以唔俾你個錢,睇返佢答案

佢全部話自己 normal 嘅,乜問題都冇

[OK this ESA is a new benefit

the claimant has to attend an interview

to decide if it is approved

your son attended alone

he was denying anything serious

so he’s got no score

for example if you get fifty you will be approved

if you did not score any they stop the payment

according to his answers

he said he is normal

- no problem at all]
- M 冇問題點解食藥成日食咗幾十年呀?
[if he has no problem why he is on medication for so many years?]
- J 有冇打人呀?
[does he hit anyone?]
- M 攞
[angry]
- J 攞憎 ?
[is he angry?]
- M 係啦,大大聲,講粗口
[yes shouting (.) swearing]
- J 如果呢度我睇返我都唔會俾錢嘅
因為你咩問題都冇嗎
[looking at this I would not have agreed to pay you
because you have no problem]
- M 冇問題即係叫佢申請 Job Seeker 囉
[no problem so they tell him to claim Job Seeker]
- J 我同你打個電話試吓
睇吓有冇得補救,如果佢話對唔住真係超過一個月
咁我哋申請左失業金先
過咗六個月重新再填呢份表格,好唔好?
[I'll try to phone and see if we can fix it
if they say sorry it has been over one month
then we claim JSA and then fill in this form after six months
is that all right?]

Joanne summarises the current situation based on the evidence she has seen. Her summary is initially an explanation, or translation, of a change to the ever-shifting regulations of the welfare benefits system. She explains that ESA is a new benefit, and because of this R had been required to attend an interview. Joanne translates what she has seen and heard so far and recontextualises it as a summary which falls into two parts: (i) a generic explanation of the changes to the benefits system, and (ii) a narrative which tells the particular story of R's work capability assessment interview. The generic explanation itself is in two parts, as is the narrative relating R's experience. The story of R interrupts the generic story, and also returns after it. Translated into English, the story runs:

your son attended alone
he was denying anything serious
so he's got no score
according to his answers
he said he is normal

no problem at all

Joanne's account is that R presented as 'normal' in the work capability assessment interview, so did not score the points which would have proved he was unfit for work, and would therefore have earned him Employment and Support Allowance. R's mother is scathing of the assessment.

At this point Joanne seems to recognise that more evidence is needed to prove R's eligibility for ESA, and to persuade the DWP decision maker to reconsider. In order to elicit the evidence she begins to co-construct a narrative about R's behaviour. Textual travel concerns the way that texts move through and around institutional processes and are shaped, altered, and appropriated during their journeys. In legal processes, various actors give texts context-specific linguistic lives and send them on particular journeys. In the common law litigation process, legal-lay communication can be seen in terms of fluid and ever-changing forms travelling through time and space (Rock, Heffer, and Conley 2013). Rock (2013) examines a police interview as text production, and demonstrates how recontextualization and intertextuality operate in the interview, as a witness's talk is transformed into evidence. Johnson (2013) analyses how police interview texts travel from the interview room to the audio-recording to the court and how, through re-enactment, objectification in transcribed bundles of documents, shared reading between the judge and jury, and narration in monologue, they are institutionally evaluated and transformed. They travel across time and place and are ventriloquized, summarized in monologue, read, and enacted as they are embedded in the prosecution case, and taken up by the judge in his or her summing up. On their travels, the interview narratives are fragmented and coloured with new meaning as they are embedded and seen through the layers of prosecution courtroom activity.

Harding and Ralarala (2017) analysed police interviews conducted in isiXhosa in the Western Cape, South Africa, and also examined the corresponding written statements composed in English by the interviewing police officer. Their narrative analysis noted the omission or de-selection of paralinguistic, extra-linguistic and situational factors, and of key narrative elements and story aspects, including events, actions, actors, description, characterisation and weighting. These omissions skewed the focus of the written statements so that potential witnesses, and the degree and nature of the violence reported, were lost from the record. These examples remind us that a widespread strategy to negotiate the interpretation of a narrative is recontextualization: the creation of a new context of interpretation of aspects of the story that is being told (Blackledge 2005).

In legal and quasi-legal systems, lawyers and other practitioners exert power through access to linguistic and interactional resources in relation to defendants and witnesses. Given their greater power in the institutional structure, and their knowledge of the potential role of stories as evidence, they can push storytelling in certain directions by instructing witnesses and defendants on how to produce stories before the trial, and by managing the telling of narratives through question-answer formats, interruptions and reformulations (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012). In effect, narratives may be co-constructed by police officers and witnesses, lawyers and defendants, advisers and clients. In *Example 4.2*, Joanne, recognising a need for more material to put before the decision maker if the DWP is to reconsider R's claim, asks R's mother questions (in Cantonese): 'does he hit anyone?', 'is he angry?'. The questions Joanne asks will determine

the type of narrative she elicits. This is not a neutral process. Joanne is advocate for her client, and seeks the narrative that will leave R best-placed before the DWP decision maker. Contextualisation is the process through which the context relevant to interpreting a speech event is established (Wortham and Reyes 2015). It involves an active process of negotiation in which participants reflexively examine discourse as it is emerging, embedding assessments of its structure and significance in the speech itself (Bauman and Briggs 1990). Joanne makes just such an assessment, telling her client that the evidence presented is unconvincing, ‘looking at this I would not have agreed to pay you because you have no problem’. Contextualisation is always a negotiated and ongoing process so that meanings are constructed and reconstructed as the interaction unfolds. The narrative changes as it is co-constructed.

Joanne telephones the benefits office and explains that R’s parents were out of the country when he attended his work capability assessment interview. While remaining on the phone she turns to M and informs her of the initial response from the DWP. As we rejoin the interaction the benefits officer (B) is typing into her computer, and Joanne is waiting on the phone. She continues to speak to M in Cantonese.

Example 4.3 Entextualisation

- J [to M:] 佢話可能會重新考慮
 交界佢同事去睇下
 我哋係唔同意佢呢度嘅答案
 頭先你話佢好攞憎
 大概係幾耐一次啊?
 [they said they can reconsider
 if we do not agree with the answer
 you just said he gets agitated
 how often?]
- M 睇你點樣同佢講野囉
 日日都可以攞架
 大聲同佢講,咁佢就會攞啦
 有時唔啱佢心水嘅都會攞
 [depends on how you talk to him
 it can be every day if you speak loud
 or say something he doesn’t like
 he will get agitated]
- J 佢攞會做乜嘢?
 [then what will he do?]
- M 講粗口啦,打頭啦,大大聲鬧囉
 [swears (.) hits his head (.) shouts]

J 佢呢個最大嘅問題係乜嘢?
[what's his biggest problem?]

M 係發脾氣啦,有時吐下口水囉
[bad temper, spitting]

J 冇傷人,打人?
[does he hurt people (.) is he violent?]

M 打人就好耐以前打過我
有時窗都打爛
佢唔鍾意都會 send 啲 text
俾佢家姐,好 nasty 啲啲 text
有少少恐嚇性咁囉
我個女啲仔啊
下次嚟我會殺你
咁啲恐嚇性囉
[he beat me a long time ago
breaks windows
when he's not feeling right (2)
he sent a text to his sister (.) a nasty text
threatening to kill her children
when they come]

J 佢冇嘢做就亂搞呢啲嘢?
[he has nothing to do so he does this?]

M 佢冇嘢做返嚟喺屋企睇吓電視
坐得唔係好安定
[he sits around the house watching TV
but he can't keep still]

J 坐唔定架?
[he moves around?]

M 行上行落咁囉
[he walks up and down]

J [to B:] yea mm mm
right while you were typing
maybe you already heard
I was speaking to the parents
and the mum was giving me back the answers
you got Mr S's condition
it's schizophrenia
that's his main health condition
he can yes yes sorry

and obsessive compulsive disorder
mum saying the biggest problem is
he's angry almost every day
and get upset even by himself
if you talk to him not the way he likes
he may just get heated off
some time ago even hit back the mother
it's very (.) hit physically
and verbally attacked the mother
that's very violent
sometimes he would hit the wall and hurt himself

A relevant part of the context here (Silverstein 1993) is Joanne's understanding that R failed to relate the narrative about his condition when he attended the work capability assessment interview. Joanne initially informs her clients of the benefits officer's answer that there is a possibility for reconsideration of the original decision. Perhaps spurred on and encouraged by this, Joanne continues to co-construct the narrative with M. She asks (in Cantonese) 'you just said he gets agitated - how often?'. This is only one of a series of questions aimed at co-constructing the narrative which will make evident R's eligibility for benefits. The narrative emerges piece by piece, prompted by Joanne, but no less authentic for that. Joanne's line of questioning is not prescriptive. Her questions are initially open, allowing M space to elaborate: 'then what will he do?', 'what's his biggest problem?'. However, Joanne has a purpose, and the questions are far from random. Her aim is to create an evidence base. She shifts her strategy from open questions to an agenda which will be more likely to generate the kind of evidence that will produce the result she is looking for: 'does he hurt people?', 'is he violent?'. M's responses are not confined to 'yes / no' answers. Unprompted, she narrates a brief tale about the time R sent a text to his sister, threatening to kill her children. Finally the benefits officer returns to the telephone and we move from contextualisation to the realms of recontextualisation and, in particular, entextualisation.

Entextualization involves lifting a piece of discourse out of its context of production and inserting it into new contexts in which it receives a new interpretation (Bauman and Briggs 1990). The discursive process is central to negotiations over story content, format and interpretation in institutional practices. Stories are formulated, reformulated, lifted from their occasions of production and inserted into new contexts. The original story told by a defendant, for example, is transformed not only through its negotiation between teller and legal practitioner, but also through its transformation into a written record, its reformulation across documents and contexts, its reproduction within quotes and references by parties who may not have listened to its original production. Recontextualization in general and entextualization in particular are therefore significant processes in the configuration of the genre and scope of narratives, and are important tools in the transformation of everyday narratives into other kinds of texts (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012).

Joanne indexes her role as someone who has access to the authorized version of the narrative. She has it not only from the horse's mouth, but she has it in a version narrated in the here and

now, ‘while you were typing maybe you already heard I was speaking to the parents and the mum was giving me back the answers’. Indexing her role as one who has privileged access to the narrator, Joanne claims authority for her narrative. Rather than beginning with translation of the detail of R’s behaviour, Joanne states the name of his condition. Apparently prompted by a whisper from a member of the family, she adds ‘sorry, and obsessive compulsive disorder’. In response to Joanne’s questions, ‘does he hurt people?’, ‘is he violent?’, M had said (in Cantonese) ‘he beat me a long time ago’. In Joanne’s recontextualisation (which is both an interlingual and intralingual translation) to the benefits officer, this becomes

some time ago even hit back the mother
it’s very - hit physically
and verbally attacked the mother
that’s very violent

‘A long time ago’ is recontextualised as ‘some time ago’. The repetition of ‘hit’, the intensified ‘very hit’, and the addition of ‘that’s very violent’ are recontextualisations which have new meanings in the narrative presented to the benefits officer. Joanne’s comment that ‘that’s very violent’ is of a different order. Directly evaluative, this intervention indexes Joanne’s authority to advise the benefits officer, to comment on M’s narrative, and highlight a key point. The narrative thus entextualises R as very violent, and the implication is that he is therefore unfit for work, and eligible for ESA. This discourse, now freed from its original context, translated into English, reported to the benefits officer, and (we assume) typed into the DWP database which holds information about R, becomes available as evidence about the case. The entextualisation is “a contingent interactional accomplishment” (Wortham and Reyes 2015: 13). Before Joanne’s questions ‘does he hurt people?’, and ‘is he violent?’, the issue of R’s aggressive behaviour had not arisen. Through a process of entextualisation M’s narrative is transformed into a written record of R’s violent tendencies, now entered in the state system.

The interaction continues in *Example 4.4*. Joanne is still connected to the benefits office by telephone, but is speaking to M. The benefits officer, B, appears to be typing details into the computer.

Example 4.4 Metapragmatic commentary

- J 而家仲打你冇?
 [does he still hit you?]
- M 而家冇,佢搬開去住嗎
 [not now, he moved to his own place]
- J 搬左幾耐?
 [for how long?]
- M 十七八年到啦
 [about seventeen, eighteen years]
- J [to B:] mum just added

because they used to be living together
now R is living in his own council house
so when they were living together
just because of some words mum said he doesn't like
he just physically attacked her
now he is living in his own property
he doesn't have the opportunity
to hit the mum physically now
but he will be hurting himself
by hitting against the wall
and break the windows and the doors and the glasses

[to M:] 我講英文你明啲
如果你唔同意你話俾我知
以前住嗰度會打人
而家自己住,傷到自己
冇人打啦嘛,打門窗

[you may understand this
tell me if you don't agree
with what I say]

M 發洩囉

[let go of stress]

J it's kind of letting out his inner anger
佢劈野係咪見到乜嘢都劈

[does he throw things, anything?]

M 佢唔鍾意啲嘢就劈架

[whatever he doesn't like]

J it's like those things whatever he doesn't like
he will break or smash them
erm sorry I need to wait until you finish am I
for example just when he was texting the sister
who lives in Scotland he was er
texting texting his sister
who's living in Scotland
he would say
when your children come to me
I will kill them next time
very threatening
and that sounds very scary to me
in the answers sent from the health professional
saying he is denying any episode of violence
this is not true
on that day when he attends the er the interview
as I said he went there by himself
if he be accompanied by his parents

I am sure the answer wouldn't be the same
 he's denying anything
 yes if yep (5)
 let me and
 he doesn't stay still
 you know he's always pacing
 or just not in his chair (5)
 kind of he cannot control himself you know
 unlike us when we are doing something
 we need to be still and quiet for that time
 not for him
 [to M:] 身體方面有問題?
 [what about his health in general?]
 M 都有問題,應該健康嘅
 [no problem (.) quite healthy]
 J 頭先我講咗幾個,仲有冇野補充?
 話佢唔可以坐定嘅
 不停行來行去
 控制唔到自己
 [I just mentioned a few things
 anything else?
 he cannot keep still
 walks around
 cannot control himself]
 M 佢成日話我地俾壓力佢囉
 [he says we give him pressure]
 J 你認為佢講嘅係唔合理嘅,唔講道理嘅?
 [you think he is unreasonable?]
 M 聽唔入耳架
 [he won't listen]
 J 有冇同你 argue?
 [do you argue?]
 M 我唔敢同佢 argue 架
 佢開口都粗口嘅
 [we get frightened when we argue
 he swears]
 J 佢食肉嘅,係咪?
 如果發脾氣嗰陣
 無人控制
 [he eats meat, doesn't he?

- if he is in a bad temper
nobody can control him
he is on medication]
- M 冇架,等佢發到自己停
[no (.) we have to leave it until it subsides]
- J [to B:] if the medication cannot get it under control
they have to leave it
until the anger dies down by himself
they cannot control that
and then when the parents talk to him
the parents feel what R says
is very unreasonable
but they don't dare you know kind of argue with him
because he would be verbally very aggressive
and the swearing and shouting
and anger could be getting even more out of control
so just the parents listen to whatever you say
R says parents keep giving him pressure
for parents they don't know
what kind of pressure that is at all
[to M:] 仲有冇補充?
[anything to add?]
- M 都係咁,差唔多
你唔能夠同佢傾到計
佢一講親野就好攞
你唔能夠同佢溝通
[you cannot have
a meaningful talk with him
he gets angry
hard to communicate with]

Joanne continues with the theme of domestic violence, no doubt confident that this evidence will strengthen R's case. She asks M (in Cantonese), 'does he still hit you?'. M replies that R no longer does so, as he no longer lives with her. She reports that R moved into his own place seventeen or eighteen years ago. Joanne immediately speaks to the benefits officer on the telephone, and reports, 'when they were living together, just because of some words mum said he doesn't like, he just physically attacked her'. In Joanne's recontextualisation the period of time R has been living away from his parents, and therefore the period since he had been violent towards his mother, is backgrounded. Joanne's translation does not aim for perfect equivalence. Rather, she is concerned to present evidence in a way that will give her client the best possible opportunity to win the case. She more-or-less faithfully reports M's narrative that her son 'will be hurting himself by hitting against the wall'. But she adds 'and break the windows and the doors and the glasses', taking M's (Cantonese) narrative 'breaks windows when he's not feeling right' and recontextualising, embellishing to build R's case. The addition of the items which did

not appear in M's narrative ('doors and the glasses') may be entextualised as narrative elements in their own right to be lifted out of context as evidence.

Joanne continues to engage in two interactions simultaneously, or at least she faces two ways in the same interaction. Now she turns to M again, inviting her to continue her narrative as it is translated and re-narrated by Joanne to the benefits officer. In doing so Joanne indexes herself as collaborative, as a listener, and on the side of the claimant, 'you may understand this, tell me if you don't agree with what I say'. M's response (as usual, in Cantonese) appears to be a commentary on her son's reported behaviour, mitigating the offence if not entirely excusing it, 'let go of stress'. Joanne recontextualises this (in English, and therefore probably intended as a translation for the benefits officer) as 'it's kind of letting out his inner anger'. She immediately follows up with another direct question (in Cantonese) to invite further co-construction of the narrative about R's behaviour, 'does he throw things, anything?'. Receiving an answer from M ('whatever he doesn't like'), Joanne returns to the telephone and speaks to the benefits officer, 'it's like those things whatever he doesn't like he will break or smash them'. Joanne's recontextualisation adds to M's original narrative the powerful 'break' and 'smash', and the signs which index R as violent, and therefore unfit for work, begin to accumulate.

Joanne now offers what she characterizes as an 'example'. This turns out to be an example of R's tendency towards threatening behaviour rather than an example of how he breaks or smashes whatever he doesn't like. Joanne re-narrates M's story of R's text message to his sister, threatening to kill her children. Joanne's recontextualisation introduces reported speech into the narrative. M's narrative had stated (in Cantonese)

he sent a text to his sister, nasty text
threatening to kill her children
when they come

Joanne's re-narration (in English) ventriloquates the 'voice' of R's text(s) directly:

when he was texting the sister
who lives in Scotland he was er
texting texting his sister
who's living in Scotland
he would say
when your children come to me
I will kill them next time

Although she has had no access to R's text messages, Joanne quotes directly, 'when your children come to me I will kill them next time'. Describing someone else's speech or action provides an opportunity to voice or characterize them in the narrated event. This is often done in narrative in ways that have implications for evaluation, positioning and social action in the narrating event (Wortham and Reyes 2015). Deictics play a powerful role here. The shift from 'he' in M's account, and in Joanne's account initially, to 'I' places the listener (the benefits officer) close to the narrated action. Direct reported speech allows Joanne to characterise R in a particular way. No example of reported speech straightforwardly replicates the original. Here,

though, reported speech shifts the perspective of the narrative. Having re-narrated the story about the text messages, Joanne makes a metapragmatic evaluation of the narrative, ‘very threatening, and that sounds very scary to me’. Metapragmatics refers to the signs and processes that describe how language performs action (Silverstein 1993; Wortham and Reyes 2015). In saying that R’s (presupposed, ventriloquated) text message is ‘very threatening’, and that it ‘sounds very scary’, Joanne draws attention to how the text message functions, in an explicitly metapragmatic commentary. That is, Joanne directs the benefits adviser’s attention to the link between the text and possible social action, indexing (pointing to) an evaluative stance in relation to R’s (reported) behaviour. The link between the narrated event (the story of R sending the text message to his sister) and the narrating event in which Joanne points to the significance of the story, is clear. The ‘voice’ of the text messages indexes R as a particular person-type in the narrative – one she represents as unfit for work, and therefore eligible for benefits.

Now Joanne makes an evaluative comment about the work capability assessment interview which R had attended on his own, and which led to the withdrawal of his benefits.

in the answers sent from the health professional
saying he is denying any episode of violence
this is not true

We can assume that Joanne is referring to the letter M had presented to her, which stated that R’s application for benefits had been unsuccessful. Joanne focuses on the health professional’s account (we assume that this is represented in the letter) that R ‘is denying any episode of violence’. This no doubt accounts for Joanne’s pursuit of evidence that R was indeed capable of violence. Joanne does not mince her words, making her point with a forthright modality, ‘this is not true’. In her role as advocate she directly challenges the account provided by the health professional. Joanne continues, saying that if R’s parents had accompanied him to the interview the outcome would have been quite different, and that ‘he’s denying anything’. Joanne’s hypothetical account is a counter-narrative to that provided as evidence by the health professional. Again she challenges the assessment resulting from the work capability assessment interview.

Joanne goes on to translate the segment of M’s narrative in which she had said (in Cantonese) R ‘can’t keep still’, and ‘walks up and down’.

he cannot control himself you know
unlike us when we are doing something
we need to be still and quiet for that time
not for him

Joanne’s narrative recontextualises M’s narrative, re-narrating the story for the benefits officer, adding to M’s version, ‘he cannot control himself’. Now Joanne shifts her footing (Goffman 1981) so that she at least temporarily aligns herself with the benefits officer, and, by implication, with the majority of people who are ‘like us’. She does this by deixis, including herself and the benefits officer in the group collectively defined as ‘us’, and referred to inclusively as ‘we’. R,

referred to as ‘he’, and ‘him’, is different from ‘us’. He is non-normative, and, implicitly, should be treated as an exception.

Joanne continues to ask questions of M while she is on the telephone to B. She also tells M what she has been saying to the benefits officer, and asks whether there is anything more to add. In doing so Joanne elicits tacit consent from M for the narrative (so far only related by Joanne) that R ‘cannot control himself’. Invited to add further detail to the narrative presented so far, M reports (in Cantonese) ‘he says we give him pressure’. Joanne immediately responds by asking ‘you think he is unreasonable?’. The co-construction of the narrative continues, Joanne asking ‘do you argue?’, and M responding ‘we get frightened when we argue, he swears’. Joanne says to M (in Cantonese), ‘nobody can control him’. She returns to the telephone interaction and says to the benefits officer, ‘if the medication cannot get it under control they have to leave it until the anger dies down by himself, they cannot control that’. A moment later she adds ‘anger could be getting even more out of control’. The notion of (being out of) control, never explicitly mentioned by M, becomes a key motif in Joanne’s narrative. Joanne has now argued that:

- he cannot control himself
- nobody can control him
- the medication cannot get it under control
- they cannot control that
- anger could be getting even more out of control

The notion that R is ‘out of control’ becomes entextualised in Joanne’s discourse, and in her narrative the character R is laminated as one who is out of control and therefore unfit for work. The social action accomplished in the narrating event, that R is unfit for work and therefore eligible for benefits, becomes more firmly established. This social action is established as a pattern of indexical signs which comes to presuppose relevant context (Wortham and Reyes 2015).

Joanne now deploys reported speech as evidence again. As we have seen, reported speech connects narrated and narrating events, reproducing and characterizing something from the narrated event to accomplish action in the narrating event. In this case the action to be accomplished through the reproduction of speech is for the benefits officer to recommend a reconsideration of the decision on R’s application. The reported speech is layered: Joanne reports to the benefits officer what R’s parents report R says, ‘R says parents keep giving him pressure, for parents they don’t know what kind of pressure that is at all’. Joanne again asks M whether she has anything further to add, and she says (in Cantonese), ‘you cannot have a meaningful talk with him, he gets angry, hard to communicate with’. Wortham and Reyes (2015) rely on the distinction between the narrated event (what is being talked about) and the narrating event (the activity of talking about it). In the case here the narrating event is also a translating event at more than one level. It is an event in which M’s narrative is translated from Cantonese to English by Joanne for the benefits officer. It is also a narrating event in which Joanne recontextualises and entextualises M’s story, adding new content, substituting lexical items, deleting details, and rearranging the narrative. Furthermore, it is an ongoing co-construction of M’s narrative, structured through Joanne’s questions and M’s responses to those questions. The narrating event is dynamic, active, negotiated, and live. And Joanne’s careful construction and re-narration of

the narrative is entirely a means to give her client the best possible opportunity to succeed in his application for benefit support.

Joanne continues to co-construct the narrative about R's particular needs in *Example 4.5*.

Example 4.5 Reported speech

- J 我哋咁樣講
佢係咪有意見?
[if he heard us talking about him
what would he think?]
- M 而家暫時可能冇乜意見
如果有咩事
佢就挖出呢啲舊事
話我地架啦
[it's all right for now
but if things are not good
he will dig up things
from the past and blame us]
- J 佢會唔會鬧我?
[will he curse me?]
- M 唔會
[no]
- J [to B:] mother just said virtually
they have no communication
they cannot because he is not reasonable
like we are talking now
because R himself understands English
mum said when they go home he may just
dig out from what we have been talking about
he would start being abusive towards her
maybe if something he doesn't like
now he is quiet he's not saying anything
when they go home they could be having (2)
because I'm here er the first time he saw me (2)
he can talk to me
I couldn't see that he is violent or abusive
because I am new to him
but when they go home
some people he know
could be different mm hm mm hm
let me just confirm with mum
宋太,如果佢第一次見我

- 佢可以同我傾,好似冇事咁樣
返咗屋企佢就搵你地你來.
[Mrs S he can talk to me normally
because I am new to him
but at home he will have a go at you]
- M 當唔啱佢心水
就挖出啲舊事嚟
[if things are not well
he will dig up things from the past]
- J 都係搵你地你嚟
[always go at you]
- M 最親嘅人
[parents]
- J she said I knew he can pretend
nothing is wrong with himself
he only let out towards people
who are closest and dearest to him
whom he knows

Joanne's discourse here is focused on proving that the outcome of the work capability assessment interview is flawed. She does this by constructing a new narrative about R, which tells a story that it is difficult for anyone meeting R for the first time to assess him as violent or abusive. Joanne co-constructs this narrative by asking M (in Cantonese), 'if he heard us talking about him, what would he think?'. R has of course been present throughout the appointment. M responds by saying 'it's all right for now, but if things are not good he will dig up things from the past and blame us'. Joanne follows up with another question, 'will he curse me?' The negative answer provides Joanne with the fragment of evidence she needs to continue to construct her narrative. She returns to the benefits officer, immediately repeating for the third time that R is not reasonable. Joanne had asked M whether she found R 'unreasonable', and M had given an equivocal answer, 'he won't listen'. M did not at any point explicitly volunteer that her son was unreasonable. Despite this, Joanne says to the benefits officer, in a "creative betrayal of the original" (Ricoeur 2006: 37), 'the parents felt what R says was very unreasonable'. As with the entextualisation of the notion that R is 'out of control', this third iteration of the argument that R is unreasonable becomes laminated through repetition. Hardly a translation in the conventional sense, Joanne constructs a narrative out of the bits and pieces of information with which she has been provided by the clients. Her approach to translation is once again less oriented to equivalence than to advocacy.

Joanne constructs the outcome of the work capability assessment interview as flawed and unsafe by implying that the health professional misread R. M's narrative was that R 'gets angry, hard to communicate', and that 'if things are not good he will dig up things from the past and blame us'. Joanne offers this evidence as reported speech. Between the reported speech and the reporting context, dynamic relations of high complexity and tension are in force, and "a failure to take these into account makes it impossible to understand any form of reported speech" (Voloshinov

1973: 119). The reported speech and the reporting context are integral to each other here, as the context of the reported speech is almost synchronous with the reporting context. There are several layers of temporality in play – at minimum the context of the speech reported, the context in which the speech is reported, and the (more generalised) context of the social action which the reported speech narrates, are all relevant:

mum said when they go home he may just
dig out from what we have been talking about
he would start being abusive towards her

Also in play are several layers of spatiality. The space of Joanne's office is the nexus of the encounter. But also evident in the discourse of the interaction is a narrative about 'home'. And not the least of the layers of spatiality is the disembodied space occupied by the voice / person of the benefits officer on the telephone. Joanne's report of M's narrative both translates her story faithfully and embellishes it. As we have seen, M had said a moment earlier, R 'will dig up things from the past and blame us'. Joanne's account, living in the dynamic space between the reported speech and the reporting context, substitutes 'the past' with the more immediate 'what we have been talking about'. Her re-narration also substitutes 'blame us' with 'start being abusive towards her'. Joanne's version of M's narrative is powerful in its entextualisation of R as quick-tempered, responding to immediate events rather than 'the past'. Joanne's narrative also entextualises R as abusive. In this example of reported speech Joanne moves between direct discourse and indirect discourse, incongruously (but perhaps revealingly) incorporating the inclusive 'we' in the otherwise indirectly reported speech. It may be that the grammatical slip offers insight into Joanne's commitment to her client.

Joanne then offers a small narrative from her own experience of meeting R. She does not make it explicit that the narrative refers to the present appointment, which was the first time Joanne had met the client:

the first time he saw me (2)
he can talk to me
I couldn't see that he is violent or abusive
because I am new to him

Joanne's narrative implicitly proposes that if she was unable to see that R is violent and abusive, the health professional who conducted the work capability assessment may have similarly misjudged him. Joanne's narrative suggests that anyone and everyone would have had the same experience. It was, she implies, almost inevitable that the health professional assessed R's needs incorrectly. In pursuit of a clinching confirmation, Joanne says 'let me just confirm with mum'. She asks M (in Cantonese) to ratify her summary of the case, 'he can talk to me normally because I am new to him, but at home he will have a go at you'. However, the confirmation does not arrive, not straightforwardly anyway, as M merely repeats her earlier point, 'if things are not well he will dig out things from the past'. Joanne asks one more question, which again elicits an ambiguous response, before returning to the benefits officer to summarise her main argument, again ostensibly based on reported speech:

she said I knew he can pretend
nothing is wrong with himself
he only let out towards people
who are closest and dearest to him
whom he knows

There is no evidence in the audio-recording or field notes related to the interaction that M said that R was prone to pretend that he did not have a serious health condition. Authority can be encoded in narrative through constructed dialogue or reported speech, as a means of backing up claims to provide evidence for a particular interpretation of events, and for narrators to present themselves as morally authoritative (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012). Joanne apparently quotes M directly, with the quotation preceded by the reporting verb, and the first-person pronoun indicating direct speech. This discursive strategy increases the authority of the evidence. Joanne is able to put words in the mouth of M. The benefits officer, unlikely to be able to comprehend Cantonese, is none the wiser. She knows only that Joanne digressed to ‘confirm with mum’. Joanne is in a privileged position. M is not equipped with the technical language which gives her access to the discourse of the welfare rights system, and so relies on Joanne to translate. The benefits officer, B, is not able to comprehend Cantonese, and so relies on Joanne to translate. Joanne is able to manoeuvre between them, shaping the interaction.

Reported speech normally describes speech that is framed as occurring at some other time, and typically as having occurred in the past (Wortham and Reyes 2015). This instance is a particular example of reported speech, in two senses. First, the purported speech being reported is supposed to have occurred only a few seconds ago (still in the past, of course). Second, the speech being reported did not in fact occur. Normally the speaker who is reporting the speech is located in the narrating event, while the speaker whose speech is being reported is located in a narrated event. The distinction between the narrated event and the narrating event becomes a little less clear-cut here, as the (supposed) speaker of the reported speech is also a participant in the reporting event. The role of Joanne as interpreter as well as advocate – as someone who acts and speaks on behalf of M – adds to the sense that the reporting and reported worlds (in the terms of Wortham and Reyes, 2015, the narrating and narrated worlds) are in close contact. In a similar vein to the way lawyers and other legal practitioners prepare defendants and witnesses for court by managing their narratives, Joanne presents powerful evidence, apparently based on the directly reported words of the key witness. According to Joanne’s narrative, there now seems to be little doubt that the health professional made an erroneous evaluation of R in the work capability assessment interview.

Summary

It is increasingly well-documented that the co-construction and reformulation of narrative is a feature of interactions characterized by unequal relations of power. Examples include police interviews (Johnson 2008, 2013; Rock 2013), assessment of asylum seekers (Blommaert 2001; Maryns and Blommaert 2001), refugees’ registration interviews (Jacquemet 2005, 2009), sexual assault trials (Ehrlich 2002), and truth and reconciliation hearings (Blommaert 2005; Slembrouck 2003). In such examples those with greater power often shape the narrative in particular ways by

asking certain types of questions, and by reshaping responses to questions. Through the creation of a new context of interpretation of aspects of the story the interpretation of the narrative is negotiated, or perhaps imposed. In many such cases the storytelling is pushed in particular ways to disadvantage the relatively disempowered narrator. The interaction examined in this chapter, despite bearing many of the linguistic features of coercive interactions, is of a different order. Joanne certainly co-constructs M's narrative about her son. In doing so she not only engages interlingual and intralingual translation, but also (*inter alia*) re-narration, contextualization, recontextualisation, entextualisation, ventriloquation, metapragmatic commentary, deixis, and direct and indirect reported speech. These are not unusual linguistic features in the reformulation of narrative in situations of unequal relations of power. The difference here is that rather than deploying these features for coercive means, Joanne deploys them as an advocate for the narrator, M, and her son. She reformulates the narrative for the purpose of supporting R's claim for Employment and Support Allowance, which he has been (in Joanne's view) wrongly denied. She is more concerned with social justice than she is with correctness or equivalence in her translation of M's narrative. At the end of the appointment, speaking directly to R now, Joanne says 'I am just letting them know the truth, the answers you gave them are not up to what mum has been describing'. She adds, however, that she is not over-confident that the decision will be overturned by the DWP decision-maker, saying, 'it's very difficult to appeal unless you think the government did something wrong, very wrong'. Joanne has done all she can linguistically to shape the narrative in a way that gives her client the best possible chance of receiving the benefits to which he is entitled. Now they must wait.



Chapter 5

Artefact

Artefacts occupy a different position in human communication compared to that of embodied meaning making (Iedema 2001). Resemiotization is a sometimes neglected dimension of translation. Through its resemiotization as artefact, communicative action is transposed into increasingly durable and sedimented semiotics. Examples include the resemiotization of speech as printed matter. The social process of ‘fact-construction’ extends from face-to-face talk to the ways in which we produce material artefacts, often records of face-to-face talk which accrue greater legitimacy and authority. In everyday institutional practice such materiality may appear natural and inconspicuous. However, apparently innocuous materiality may exert power, and may also be a site of contestation. Communicative practice resemiotised in a new semiotic mode may accrue new meanings. Each resemiotization transposes meanings from one semiotic mode into one which is different. Each semiotic will have its own specific constraints and affordances. A semiotic mode is hard pressed to provide an unproblematic, transparent, and accurate translation for the meanings from another mode. Transposition between different semiotics inevitably introduces discrepancy, and resemiotization is necessarily a process which produces inexact likenesses. Nevertheless, new materiality is capable of endowing a text with new legitimacy and power.

Multimodality provides the means to describe a practice or representation in all its semiotic complexity and richness. Resemiotization provides the analytical means for tracing how semiotics are translated from one into the other as social processes unfold, as well as for asking why these semiotics are mobilized to do certain things at certain times (Iedema 2003a). Resemiotization focuses on how some meaning makings offer a general accessibility and negotiability, while others require and embody considerable investments of resources. Resemiotization is crucially interested in how materiality serves to realise social, cultural and historical structures, investments and circumstances. In the way that multimodality re-

emphasizes the multi-semiotic nature of representation, resemiotization seeks to underscore the material and historicized dimensions of representation. In particular, resemiotization is equipped to examine how some modes and materialities come to have greater legitimacy and authority than others in certain social contexts. It also asks how interactive practices unfold in ways that are crucially linked to the resemiotization of meaning. In this chapter we consider, among other questions, the significance of the humble doctor's sick note as an artefact of power and contestation.

Translation can be understood in both a specific and a general sense. In the specific sense it signals the work of translating the meanings of one particular language into another. In the more generic sense, it indicates the everyday act of speaking as a way not only of translating oneself to oneself (inner to outer, private to public, unconscious to conscious) but also and more explicitly of translating oneself to others (Kearney 2006). Both in its normal role as a transfer of meaning from one language to another and in its more specific role as a transfer of understanding between different members of the same linguistic community, translation entails an exposure to strangeness. Every subject is a tapestry of stories heard and told. In this sense we are all authors and readers of our own lives, and therefore translators of our own lives. Life stories and life histories are always parts of larger stories and histories in which we find ourselves interwoven or entwined. This is where the paradigm of translation as transference to and fro, forward and backward, reveals its everyday power. And each client who comes through the door of Joanne's office unfolds her or his life story and life history.

Translation goes beyond the question of how to transfer a message from one language to another, and takes on a general significance that applies to all sorts of linguistic exchanges. In other words, what holds true for interlingual translation becomes a model for other types of exchanges as well, including encounters with other sets of practices, other people, and even with ourselves. In the practical dialectic of fidelity and betrayal that defines the task of translation, something is preserved but something lost, something is transferred but something blocked, something is understood but something misunderstood. There is a need for translation even in the everyday interactions between people who use the same language. This can arise when speakers of the same language—due to the diversity of their age, race, gender, social status, or life experiences—are unable to communicate with one another in spite of a shared language. The activity of translation that takes place within a language is the same operation as the one that takes place from one language to another. External and internal translation alike render one word in terms of another one; they substitute one sign for another in order to say something in a different way (Davidson 2012). Thus the paradigm of translation can extend beyond the actual practice of translation in order to become a model for other exchanges between what is our own and what is unfamiliar or strange. The translator meets with resistance at different stages of her enterprise. Ricouer (2006) asks how the translator gets over the obstacle of the impossibility of mechanically reproducing something in another language to make meaning. There is the assumption of non-translatability, and the anguish of beginning, as the foreign text “towers up like a lifeless block of resistance to translation” (Ricouer 2006: 5). For Joanne, surely, and particularly for her clients, the welfare benefits system must seem like a lifeless block of resistance. Yet they press on.

The everyday life of today's cities unfolds through the continuous negotiation of linguistic, historical and cultural heterogeneity, carried on through the human meaning machine's prodigious powers of comprehension, improvisation and adaptation. Because it sustains difference, a translation paradigm is too blunt an instrument to grasp the diverse subjectivities and interfaces that come out of encounters sustained over time (Pratt 2010). Acts of translation and interpreting are never a mere matter of textual production (oral or written), but are consciously and unconsciously involved in the production and reproduction of 'cultured' meanings. Translators and interpreters are, like all social agents, positioned within this process in certain ways (Inghilleri 2003). As with translation in the interlingual, intertextual, sense, cultural translation starts from a quest for understanding – of some form of source material and in the sense that some cultural, political, or social stimulus in the world sets in motion the interpretive work of translation led by a human actor. If the practice of human communication involves the continual interpretation of stimuli in the social sphere, cultural translation delineates a model for *all* meaningful exchanges in the world and is therefore not a subset of interlingual communication (Maitland 2017).

The welfare benefits system, as we have already seen, can be an *inhospitable* environment, particularly for benefits claimants. They advance upon it warily, stealthily, as if approaching the dragon's lair. They seek the experience and expertise of one who knows the passage through the mountains to the safety of the plains where they may find, if not gold, survival at least. They depend on the knowledge of the one who can guide them well. In spite of the agonistics that make a drama of the translator's task, she can find her happiness in linguistic hospitality – the recognition of the impassable status of the dialogicality of the act of translating as the reasonable horizon of the desire to translate and be translated (Ricoeur 2006).

In the example in this chapter we encounter a typical interaction in Joanne's office. Rachel's field note records the clients' arrival, 'Joanne's first appointment is for a couple and they are running late. The husband walks in supported by a pair of crutches'. The couple ask for support with their application for benefits related to absence from work through sickness or injury. Joanne explains the bureaucratic process of the application. In the transcript the voices of Joanne (J) and the male (M) and female (W) clients are represented.

Example 5.1 'it takes months'

J 这个我们得等等了。
 他们会寄给你一个类似的表格
 是白色的。会问很多问题
 像你能不能自己冲凉
 自己做饭吃
 自己买东西等等。
 怎么说呢
 尽管你告诉他们你的情况可是他们还是要你提供证据
 他们在寄表之前需要查验你的公民身份
 你接到表
 填好后再寄给他们

所以等的时间会更长。
表格寄出之后
他们可能会约见你们面谈
也可能到家里家访。
所以在申请批准之前可能会有好几个月的时间。
有人说到他们的申请批准前他们都已经痊愈了。
一般来说这样的福利不会是终生的
一开始都是只给一两年
然后再逐年审核。
< and for this one we will have to wait on it
they will send you something like this
a white one
it will ask a lot of questions such as
can you have a shower yourself
cook for yourself
and go shopping by yourself
and things like that
how to say it
although you told them this
they still need to see the evidence for themselves
they will need to confirm
that you have residence status here first
before they send you the form
and then you need to send it back to them
so further waiting time
after that they will either ask you in for an interview
or they will come to your place for it
so it takes months before a decision is made
some even say that they've already fully recovered
by the time their application is granted
normally they won't give you a lifelong one
so they might only give you this for a few years
in the first instance
then reassess it afterwards >

Joanne takes time and trouble to translate the system for her new clients. She is not translating a specific text here, but it is translation nonetheless. It is translation with a particular ideological orientation. Joanne achieves this ideological orientation in her translation of the benefits system in three ways: through a list of required social actions that points to unwieldy bureaucracy; through explicit commentary on temporality; and through an artistic representation of the institutional voice of the welfare benefits system. By these means Joanne represents an orientation to government bureaucracy which is critical of the state. She moves between narrative about process, commentary on that process, and the incorporation of the discourse of the benefits system for her own (critical) intentions.

Her narrative about process does not directly make use of the institutional voice of the state, but in its structure, listing (in Mandarin) the social action of the bureaucratic system, it makes its critical point:

they will send you something like this

it will ask a lot of questions

they send you the form

you need to send it back to them

ask you in for an interview

come to your place

they won't give you a lifelong one

only give you this for a few years

then reassess it afterwards

Joanne's list sets out the administrative process the couple will be required to go through in making a claim for the welfare benefits to which they are entitled. Discourse here is directed towards its referential object, without changing its meaning or tone, in Bakhtin's terms like the person who goes about his business unaware that he is being watched (Bakhtin 1984: 189). However, these parts of Joanne's utterance are inevitably framed by the rest of the utterance, in which commentary is more explicit, and we are able to identify an artistic representation of the institutional voice. In this light, the list of social actions required to claim benefits is structured in a way that divides it in two. The utterance has a dialogical relationship with itself – on the one hand Joanne performs her role as advisor to her clients, informing them of the administrative process in place. On the other hand the list of actions indexes a critical orientation to an overly-bureaucratic benefits system. The list of actions presupposes the context as one in which the clients will be subject to the entanglements of the system.

In the same utterance Joanne comments on the time these social actions will take to complete:

for this one we will have to wait on it

further waiting time

it takes months before a decision is made

These parts of the utterance act as evaluative indexicals which characterise the system as slow and interminable. This sense is developed through Joanne's example, deploying reported speech, in which a generalized set of characters are given voice:

some even say that they've already fully recovered
by the time their application is granted

The generalized reported speech metonymically introduces the possibility of a host of sick patients waiting for their case to be resolved, but finding that the extended bureaucratic process has been without purpose. In Ken Loach and Paul Laverty's film *I, Daniel Blake*, Dan does not recover while waiting for the outcome of his claim for Employment and Support Allowance, but collapses and dies in the toilet of the DWP building. Joanne's small narrative gives voice to those who wait so long that they recover before the outcome of their claim is known. These are characters akin to the plaintiffs in the case of *Jarndyce v Jarndyce* in Charles Dickens' *Bleak House*:

The little plaintiff or defendant who was promised a new rocking-horse when Jarndyce and Jarndyce should be settled has grown up, possessed himself of a real horse, and trotted away into the other world. Fair wards of court have faded into mothers and grandmothers; a long procession of Chancellors has come in and gone out; the legion of bills in the suit have been transformed into mere bills of mortality; there are not three Jarndyces left upon the earth perhaps since old Tom Jarndyce in despair blew his brains out at a coffee-house in Chancery Lane; but Jarndyce and Jarndyce still drags its dreary length before the court, perennially hopeless.

Joanne's characterization of benefits claimants waiting so long for the outcome of their application that it becomes irrelevant links them to the perennially hopeless world of Chancery Court.

A third way in which Joanne's discourse contextualizes the world of the welfare benefits system is through discourse that is intensely dialogic. As we saw in Chapter 2, benefit claimants may be required to earn points by answering questions about their capacity to complete everyday tasks. They may be asked, says Joanne,

can you have a shower yourself
cook for yourself
and go shopping by yourself
and things like that

Joanne introduces the questions not so that the clients will answer them, but as an artistic representation of the kind of questions they may be asked. Joanne makes use of the discourse of the benefits claim form to take her discourse in the direction of her own aspirations. If this is not quite stylization – which stylizes another's style in the direction of that style's own particular tasks – it has the taste of stylization. If it is not quite parody – which introduces into discourse a semantic intention that is directly opposed to the original one – it has the flavour of parody. Rachel's field notes do not detail Joanne rolling her eyes as she recites the questions of the claim form, but we can imagine just such an action. Bakhtin points out that someone else's words introduced into our own speech “inevitably assume a new (our own) interpretation and become subject to our evaluation of them; that is, they become double-voiced” (1984: 195). This is

translation that bears the traces of the bureaucratic ‘voice’ of the welfare benefits system. It also represents Joanne’s evaluation of that voice. It is double-voiced discourse, directed both towards its referential object and towards the institutional discourse of the welfare benefits system,

although you told them this
they still need to see the evidence for themselves
they will need to confirm
that you have residence status here first

Joanne aligns with the clients, explicitly empathizing with the fact that they will be required to repeat themselves, and to provide further documentation to confirm their status. Throughout Joanne’s interactions with her clients the question of documents as evidence was a constant. At the end of *Bleak House*, with the never-ending court case finally concluded to no-one’s satisfaction, ‘great bundles of paper began to be carried out—bundles in bags, bundles too large to be got into any bags, immense masses of papers of all shapes and no shapes’ (Dickens 1853: Ch 65). In Joanne’s discourse the welfare benefits system, with its myriad regulations and requirement for paper evidence, is reminiscent of the Dickensian court.

Example 5.2 ‘you can’t just say it’

One of the crucial documents required for claimants applying for Employment and Support Allowance is a ‘sick note’ from a doctor to confirm that the applicant is currently, or has been, unfit for work. Joanne explains this to her clients.

- J 那你有没有给我看过你家庭医生开的病假单？
< did you ever show me a sick note from your doctor? >
- M 没有，我还没有开过
< no I haven’t asked for one >
- J 你的医生还没有给过你？
< you haven’t got one from the doctor? >
- M 我还没有
< no I haven’t >
- J 没有病假单怎么申请 ESA 呢？
< how are you going to apply for ESA without a sick note? >
- M 我可以给你看医院的信
< I can show you letters from the hospital >
- J 让我看一看这些信。
ESA 的申请表可以从网上下载
我可以从这里打印给你。
接下来如果你过去两年有交税
他们会根据你交税的情况来决定你是不是可以申请。
如果他们觉得你交的税太少
他们会参考你们两个人的年收入
所以你老婆的收入也会被计算在内。

所有这些资料都包括在一张表内
我会帮你们填好。
因为我不太清楚你们的税后总收入
我最好把你们所有的收入信息都如实填写
但是没有病假单的话
这些材料都没有用。
病假单英语叫做 sick note
这个可以从家庭医生那里开
从我的经验来看你的病假单至少得管三个月。
医生得说明是从哪个月到哪个月你 unfit to work 然后
< let me see them
the ESA form can be downloaded
from the internet so I can print it out here
next if you have paid your tax for the last two years
they will make a decision on
how much you are entitled to if you qualify
if they feel that the tax you have paid is too little
they will consider the total annual income of both of you
[to W:] so your income will be counted as well
but everything will be included in one form
and I will fill it in accordingly
since I'm not sure if your taxable income
will qualify you for the allowance
I'd better include your income details
but without your sick note it will all be invalid
(3) it's called a sick note you can get it from your GP
in my experience the sick note
will need to cover at least three months
he will state from which month to which month
you were unfit to work >

M 所以我得问医生要病假单
< so I need a sick note from the doctor? >

J 没错
没有病假单根本申请不到 ESA。
你光说不行
他们得亲眼看到证据。
病假单得和申请表一起寄出去
说明从哪一天到哪一天
((Joanne writes on a piece of paper))
sick note
< that's right
without a sick note you can't apply for ESA
you can't just say it
they will need to see the evidence themselves

because once you fill in the form the sick note
needs to be sent out together with the form
to show from which date to which date
you are not fit to work
then they decide if you are qualified
and how much they should grant you
((Joanne writes on a piece of paper))
sick note >

M 是的，帮我写下来
< yea right write it down for me >

J 医生都知道的
所有的诊所都用的一样的表
是打印出来的一个表格
医生会填上日期
注明是从哪个月的哪一天起
你因为什么病不能工作
还有医生的签名
拿到病假单后就带来给我然后咱们可以
< the doctor will know
it's the universal one
it's printed out like a form
and it will have dates on it
from which day of which month
you can't work and because of what
and the doctor's signature
bring me this note and then we can >

Joanne's first three questions here establish as relevant the salience of the 'sick note'. The 'sick note' is a medical statement issued by a doctor to someone who is ill or injured. On 6 April 2010 the government renamed and amended the 'sick note', and it became the 'fit note', or Statement of Fitness for Work. The 'fit note' provided more information about the effects of the patient's illness or injury than the sick note, and was thus a more complex document. The 'fit note' could provide the Department for Work and Pensions with evidence about the illness or injury of a claimant for benefits. In 2016 the 'fit note' was still commonly known as the 'sick note'. Joanne refers to the document as a 'sick note', and we will adopt this term.

Joanne's third question to M, 'how are you going to apply for ESA without a sick note?', seems to indicate a slight exasperation that the client has no understanding of what is required to make a claim. Joanne's question indexes the gap between her expertise and M's lack of knowledge of the system. In response M's proposal appears to be quite logical, 'I can show you letters from the hospital'. Joanne says 'let me see them', but moves into a well-rehearsed script, in which she summarises the process of applying for ESA. She can print the claim form in her office, she will fill it out, there are thresholds relating to tax paid, and income earned, which will determine the benefit awarded. Everything seems relatively straightforward. But, says Joanne, 'without your sick note it will all be invalid'. In saying so Joanne rejects the suggestion that letters from the

hospital may be produced as an alternative to the sick note. Letters from the doctor at the hospital, no doubt at least as informative as a sick note from a general practitioner, will not do. M has letters from the hospital in his possession, but he does not have a sick note. Joanne pauses, as does M. Joanne continues:

it's called a sick note you can get it from your GP
in my experience the sick note
will need to cover at least three months
he will state from which month to which month
you were unfit to work

Only the sick note will suffice. The facts evidenced in the letters from the hospital may be the same facts as those evidenced in the (putative) sick note, but that will cut no ice with the DWP. The sick note is required. Joanne indicates that there is no wiggle room here, no flexibility or space for negotiation. Without the sick note all will be invalid. It is less a question of producing the facts than of producing the relevant artefact. Artefacts accrue a validity and an authority, while at the same time, thanks to their material stability, simulating a naturalness and an unobtrusiveness (Iedema 2001). Nothing could be more innocent than the sick note.

'Facts' are achieved not merely as stabilized, reified, or externalized linguistic meanings. The construction of facts also involves their transposition into increasingly durable and propagative semiotics, such as written or printed matter (Iedema 2001). The sick note is a durable sign of authenticity. The patient with a sick note is not considered to be swinging the lead, is not a skiver, not a benefits cheat. At the threshold of the health service and the welfare benefits system, the sick note is evidence of probity and propriety. It is evidence of the unimpeachable facts. The social process of fact-construction extends from face-to-face talk to the ways in which we produce the structures that constitute and produce our social space. Salient meanings' realisations are rendered increasingly difficult to renegotiate and change. The transformation of the medical consultation into the printed, signed, and dated sick note stabilises specific meanings and in so doing resemiotises those meanings into a more durable manifestation. Resemiotisations from talk into print mark near-irrevocable steps, semiotically and practically (Iedema 2001). Material '(arte)facts' are evidence of what transpired. These (arte)facts create a new reality by transcending the parameters of the original event. Every time we produce a new tool (report, list, design, database, sick note) we construe new truths, realities, and pathways (Iedema 2003a). Written, printed, and computer-based records are the information bank of the modern state and of the modern organisation. They are both the means and result of continuous notation, summary, re-documentation, and information dissemination. Embedded in the ordinariness of everyday documents such as the sick note is a 'facticity' (Iedema 2003a).

The sick note is the *sine qua non* of the process of claiming ESA. This requirement is so familiar to Joanne that she almost takes it for granted that others also know. But her client, M, does not know, 'so I need a sick note from the doctor?'. Joanne confirms, 'that's right, without a sick note you can't apply for ESA'. Joanne continues,

you can't just say it
they will need to see the evidence themselves

You can't just say it. Speech is open to doubt, may be inauthentic, lacks authority. The interaction in the doctor's consulting room, primarily an oral event, may not be reported in speech. It must be recontextualised and resemiotised as a text. It must be translated as a text. And as the text travels it becomes decontextualized. With each step the process reconfigures the situation which it posited as its origin: an increasing number of people become involved; relevant meanings are committed to reports and files; letters and other forms of correspondence summarize and thereby 'authorize' those meanings, and so on. Thanks to the increasing distance from its origin, each recontextualization adds to the weight, the institutional importance, the authority, the 'facticity', of what is written (Iedema 2003b). The process develops from situated and local kinds of talk, via more formal and ritualized forms of interaction involving different and perhaps more people, towards increasingly durable – because written, multiplied and filed – forms of language use. As we have seen, however, it is not the resemiotisation of the medical consultation into a textual artefact alone that is the criterion for its evidential authority. Letters from the hospital are not legitimate artefacts in this context. It must be the sick note. They will need to see the evidence for themselves. But it is not 'the evidence' that is really required. The letters from the hospital are no doubt evidential and authoritative. But in this context they are not legitimate.

Joanne explains to M the salience of the sick note in the process of applying for ESA. The sick note needs to be sent out together with the claim form. The function of the sick note is not merely to confirm that M suffered from a condition which prevented him from working, but to specify the period during which he was unfit for work. They decide if you are qualified and how much to grant you. Noting M's uncertainty, Joanne herself creates a new text, a translation, a resemiotisation. She takes a piece of note paper and writes, in English, 'sick note'. When he goes to his GP he can show the text to the doctor, and 'the doctor will know'. The sick note must include the dates 'from which day of which month' M was unable to work. It must also include the doctor's signature. Bring me this note, she says, and then we can. Only with the signed, dated sick note may we begin.

Documents that record what people do and decide do not only serve those doing the work, but also those at one or more remove from the work. They serve those who have a bird's eye view of a particular work domain. Written documents about work are intimately implicated in relationships of scrutiny and accountability; they are both intermediaries in the accountability process and evidence of it. They are often a means of administering power, a modality for the exercise of power through "an indefinitely generalizable mechanism of panopticism" (Foucault 1977: 216). Written records open up the work space to monitoring, surveillance and influence by outsiders, non-professionals, or the organization (Iedema 2003). The same may be said of written records which relate to absence from work.

Joanne begins to fill in the form, typing into her computer. The sick note is still the focus of her attention.

Example 5.3 'the hospital papers'

J 你当前的工作是什么时候辞掉的?
 < when did you quit your current job? >

M 上个星期
< it was last week >

J 哪一天呢？
你可以让你的医生填这个月的十三号
所以要是他们给你的话
就可以从那一天开始算钱
也就是你病假单填的起始日期
那今天除了这个病假单的事情
你还有其他什么事情需要帮忙的没有？
要是没有我就把这个表尽量填好给你
这样等你拿到了病假单就过来给我
当然最好
就是我们把这表从头到尾填好
以免漏掉什么
但今天既然你都来了
又定了一个小时的时间
那咱们就别浪费时间了
至少今天能把可以填的都填了
< so which date?
you can ask the doctor to write thirteenth of the month
so if they decide to grant you
it will be counted from that day on
starting from the date on your sick note
so today apart from this application
do you have any other business you need help with?
if not I can fill the form in as much as I can for you
and you can bring in the sick note once you get it
of course it would be better
if we could fill in the form from start to end
in case anything is missed out
but since you are here already
and have booked a long appointment
let's not waste it
all right at least we can fill in all the parts we can today >

M 好的。我还以为有医院的文书就够了
< good (.) I thought it would be enough if I had the hospital papers >

J 关于医院的证明
我只要他们的诊断书就行了
这一页就可以了
其它医院的资料
比如说像是你哪天入院
或者类似的东西
我们就不需要了

咱们需要医生的诊断证明
 待会儿我在你这些文件里来找
 就是那个关于你髋部受伤的诊断
 你刚才给我看过的那个
 < for the hospital report
 I only need the one with the diagnosis
 that page will do
 as for the other papers
 such as one which says when you were admitted

or things like that
 we won't need them
 we need the doctor's diagnosis report
 I will look for it myself in a minute
 regarding your hip
 the one you have shown me before >

Statement of fitness for work
For social security or Statutory Sick Pay

Patient's name

I assessed your case on:

and, because of the following condition(s):

I advise you that: ☐ you are not fit for work.
☐ you may be fit for work taking account of the following advice:

If available, and with your employer's agreement, you may benefit from:
☐ a phased return to work ☐ amended duties
☐ altered hours ☐ workplace adaptations

Comments, including functional effects of your condition(s):

Sample

This will be the case for or from to

I will/will not need to assess your fitness for work again at the end of this period.
 (Please delete as applicable)

Doctor's signature

Date of statement

Doctor's address

Med3 04/10

We already know that the sick note must include the dates which indicate the period during which the claimant / patient was unfit for work. In Joanne's discourse, however, the apparently immutable artefact turns out to be negotiable. Her client seems uncertain of the date he finished work, and Joanne indicates that he can tell the doctor a specific date which may or may not be true, 'you can ask the doctor to write thirteenth of the month'. In Joanne's account the apparently random date (the thirteenth) quickly becomes sedimented in the process of the ESA claim. Once the date is entered into the sick note by the doctor, it becomes the date from which benefit payments begin. Joanne reiterates that it is not possible to complete the claim form without the

key document, and she tells M to 'bring in the sick note once you get it'. M repeats his previous point, saying he 'thought it would be enough if I had the hospital papers'. This is double-voiced discourse. On the one hand M confesses his naiveté, implying that he should have known better, and that he has much to learn about the welfare benefits system. On the other hand he presses home the implication that the hospital papers contain all the necessary facts about his condition. They have been written by doctors who have already examined him and arrived at a diagnosis. The still-to-be-produced sick note will be completed by a GP who may not examine him, but may base her or his certification on the hospital records, or on the same letters from the hospital. M's statement quietly takes a sideward glance (Bakhtin 1984) at the illogical discourse of the welfare benefits system. However, there is nothing to be done. Joanne betrays little sympathy for her client's implied complaint. The documents from the hospital are largely irrelevant to the completion of the ESA claim form. They are not completely outside of the scope of the application, however, as Joanne says, 'we need the doctor's diagnosis report'.

Joanne spends some time trying to ascertain the level of income of her clients, and the tax they have paid, as this is relevant to the claim. However, she then returns to the subject of the sick note, and articulates the contested nature of the crucial artefact.

Example 5.4 'some get beaten up'

- J 问哪一个家庭医生都可以，然后让医生开一个病假单给你
你一说他们就知道是什么的
就像我刚才告诉过你的
所有的诊所病假单是一样的表格
不是手写的
是医生可以打印出来然后具体情况具体填写的
< talk to any GP about it and ask for a sick note
they will know what you are talking about
as I've said before
there's a universal template for sick notes
it's not handwritten
it's a form they can fill in and print out >
- M 那我就打电话
看他们可不可以给我定一个时间看医生
这个得一大早打电话进去
要是想要预约看医生的话
< I will make a phone call now
to see if they can book me in to see my doctor
you have to ring quite early in the morning
to book an appointment with the GP >
- J 你的医生好说话吗
讲人情吗
有的会被病人打
因为不按要求给开病假单
那你到底是怎么(2) 那
< is your doctor easy to talk to
or reasonable
some get beaten up
for not issuing a sick note when requested
I'm sick already so can't work
how on earth do you still (2) so >
- M 他们去告医生？
< they sue the doctor? >
- J 有的医生不愿意给开病假单的
他们会想
你看着好好的
又没什么要紧的病
让你真的没法正常工作的

有的还会问你收钱
医生都知道你拿到它有什么用
((laughs)) 他们从病假单上可以看的出来的
这个应该不是给你的雇主看的
因为一张病假单通常只管两个星期
所以你两个星期到了就再来找他开一张新的
所以你要告诉医生
你要这个病假单
管至少几个月的
你这样一说他们就会猜到你为什么要这个
而且我在这里写明了是为了申请 ESA
所以他们都明白的
很有可能政府都已经提醒过他们
更有可能的是
政府禁止他们太容易给病人开类似的病假单
以便病人有资格申请 ESA
< some will be reluctant to give you a sick note
they think
you look fine
and nothing's wrong with you
to stop you working as normal
some will even charge you
as they know what you can do with it
((laughs)) because they can tell that the sick note
is not for your employer
as they normally cover two weeks
and you come in for a new one at the end of the two weeks
so if you ask for a sick note
to cover several months
they most likely know why you need it
furthermore I've written ESA here
and all doctors know what they are for
they all know it
probably they have been warned
by the government about this stuff
or even more likely
they are told not to issue them too easily
otherwise everyone will come to them for a sick note
which can qualify them for ESA >

M 很有可能(.)很有可能

< quite possibly (.) quite possibly >

W 医生告诉我们至少得休息半年

< the doctor told us it takes at least half a year >

J 要是医生这样说

那他们不应该有什么问题给你出具病假单
你为什么 not 申请带薪病假呢
从一开始生病的时候
< if the doctor said that
you shouldn't have any trouble getting the sick note
why didn't you apply for sick pay
in the first place? >

M 一开始没有申请带薪病假是因为
我们（和我的老板）是亲戚嘛
< the reason why we didn't do it in the first place
is because we are relatives >

Joanne makes a distinction between a 'handwritten' document and the 'universal template', the 'form they can fill in and print out'. The latter perhaps has more legitimacy, the newer technology superseding the old in the hierarchy of organisational documents. But Joanne's point is more that it should be no problem to 'any GP' to complete the sick note form. M immediately says that he will phone his GP for an appointment. Now, however, Joanne introduces a sinister tone to the discussion of the sick note. She asks whether M's GP is reasonable, and relates a short narrative in which doctors are cast as the potential victims of violent patients if they do not issue sick notes when asked:

some get beaten up
for not issuing a sick note when requested

Joanne's narrative does not necessarily refer to a specific incident or to a series of actual incidents. It nevertheless significantly changes the context of the interaction. The benign world of a health service in which sick and injured patients visit their doctor to be 'signed on the sick' is replaced by a hostile, tension-filled environment in which doctors are physically assaulted for refusing to comply with their patients' demands. At this time ESA was worth between £57.90 a week and £109.65 a week for recipients of the benefit. The sick note therefore represented considerable capital for would-be beneficiaries, whether they were genuinely incapacitated or not. Joanne takes her clients deeper into her narrated world through reported speech, 'I'm sick already so can't work'. The ventriloquated utterance is not attributed to a particular individual but to a stereotype of the benefits cheat, the swindler playing the system. As we have seen, reporting someone else's speech provides a powerful opportunity to voice or characterise them in the narrated event (Wortham and Reyes 2015). There is no metapragmatic verb of saying here to point us towards Joanne's evaluation of the anonymous claimant. Indeed there is nothing in the constructed utterance itself that indicates that the speaker is anything other than a genuine patient. But the context ('some get beaten up...') situates this character as one who exemplifies the violent benefits cheat. It is not clear who is speaking in the next line, 'how on earth do you still?'. This may be the doctor refusing the patient's demands. M apparently is not certain what Joanne means and tries to clarify ('they sue the doctor?'). Joanne elaborates,

some will be reluctant to give you a sick note
they think
you look fine
and nothing's wrong with you

to stop you working as normal

The scene is still the doctor's surgery. The narrative continues to be generalized, not narrating a specific incident, but a type of incident. Again it is through reported speech, or at least reported thought, that Joanne creates her character(s). Now we are with the thoughts of the doctors as they view certain patients as dishonest scroungers. Both examples of reported speech / thought bear the stamp of the other. They are in opposition and in conflict. In Joanne's account they are also the site of violence. I'm sick so I can't work. There's nothing wrong with you. The stand-off sometimes ends in assault, as doctors who will not bend to their patients' demands 'get beaten up'.

Joanne adds a further ingredient into the tensions between doctor and patient in her narrative, saying, 'some will even charge you' for issuing a sick note. In fact in legal terms there should not have been a charge from a doctor for providing a sick note if a patient was absent from work for more than seven days; and a sick note was not normally required for absence of less than seven days. Joanne's narrative suggests that doctors did not charge for regular two-week sick notes which were for the purpose of claiming statutory sick pay from employers, but (in her account) they charged the patient who asked for a sick note to cover several months. In her narrative the sick note makes a scale jump from an innocuous administrative process to the symbolic manifestation of government attempts to control public spending on benefits by putting pressure on doctors to take certain actions:

probably they have been warned
by the government about this stuff
or even more likely
they are told not to issue them too easily
otherwise everyone will come to them for a sick note
which can qualify them for ESA

Joanne's narrative moves from Kafkaesque bureaucracy to Orwellian government interference in medical decision-making. Now the sick note is not only the site of violence between doctor and patient, but also the nexus of potential tension between the autonomy of the medical profession and government intervention. In Joanne's account the welfare system is not limited to claims for benefits, but extends into other domains of society. Her narrative acknowledges its speculative status, but the modality of her speculation is not weak ('probably', 'even more likely'). Joanne's narrated world is one in which everyone is subject to corruption, government issues warnings to doctors, patients are prone to violence in their local surgery, and doctors in cahoots with (or under pressure from) government charge patients to deter them from claiming their rights.

M responds to Joanne's narrative with the neutral 'quite possibly quite possibly', and it is left to W to get the interaction back on track, as she says 'the doctor told us it takes at least half a year' to recover from the hip operation for which her husband is waiting. Joanne is encouraging in her response, and is curious to know why M had not applied for statutory sick pay in the first instance. His reply, 'because we are relatives', indexes his employment situation, and the situation of many others in the city. He did not claim sick pay because he worked for his relative, and statutory sick pay was a cost to the employer. The lengthy section of the interaction (not

transcribed here) in which Joanne tried to pinpoint M's earnings and tax paid over the previous year similarly indicated that he was employed in the black economy, working in the catering trade with limited employment rights.

The interaction between Joanne and her clients M and W continues, as Joanne tries to fill in some parts of the claim form, which she has downloaded from the internet to her computer. M is now on the phone to the doctor's surgery, trying to make an appointment to see his GP. Joanne asks W when the current problem related to M's health condition manifested itself.

Example 5.5 'loads of medical terms'

- W 呃 那你问他咯
 应该是去年了
 然后越来越糟。
 < eh you will have to ask him then
 it was last year
 and it's gradually getting worse >
- J 那咱们就只能先大概填个日期
 但是需要你的家庭医生开的病假单
 你可以先填一个大概的日期
 这个日期就是和病假单上的不一样也没关系
 因为可以是他刚开始生病的时间
 以我的经验
 很少有人会从这个日期起开始付钱
 除非家庭医生病假单上也是这个日期
 但是很多医生会从最开始的时间算起。
 < we can put a date in
 but it will need to be evidenced
 by a sick note from your doctor
 but you can put a rough date in
 it doesn't matter if it's earlier than that
 on the sick note
 because it's when he first had it
 and I always say it's much less likely
 that people will get paid from that date
 unless it's the same date your doctor fills in as well
 but not many doctors will include
 a date that has gone past >
- W 是这样的
 < that's right >
- J 是在一五年吗 ?
 < is it year fifteen? >
- W 是的, 是在一五年
 但我记不得是哪个月了

我得问问他
 < yea it's year fifteen
 but I can't really remember which month
 I will have to ask him >

J 大概的时间
 < roughly >

M 可能是五月吧
 [probably May]

J 五月几号呢
 < which date? >

M 哪一天呀？ 呃真的记不得了
 就随便填个日期吧
 < which date? eh can't really remember
 just fill in a random one >

W 那就五月一号好了
 < first of May then >

J 那就五月一号
 所以是你的 hip 髋部
 把医生的那个信给我
 我需要一个对你病情的简要的介绍
 <so first of May
 and it's your hip hip
 eh give me that from your doctor
 I need to give a brief description of your condition here >

M 我不知道哪一个是耶
 可能是这个
 所有的书信都在这里了
 < I don't know which one it might be
 could be this one
 I just put all these together >

J 不是这个
 是医生的那个诊断书
 < not this one
 it's not the one from the doctor (40) >

M 让我看是不是这个
 这个信是让定手术日期的
 < let me see if this is the one
 this one is for arranging the date of the operation >

J 这个是找到了
 这个以后要留好
 要和这个申请表一起寄出去的
 < this one here get it
 for the future please keep it to hand
 we will need to send it in with the form OK >

M 好的
 < right >
 J 好多的医疗术语呀
 我都不知道是什么意思
 我得一个字一个字的抄下啦
 得和医生写的一模一样
 ((typing)) < there are loads of medical terms
 which I haven't heard of
 I don't know what they are
 I will have to copy them down letter by letter
 exactly the same ((laughs))
 M ((laughs))
 J 我都不知道这些词在讲什么
 就是有汉语写我都不明白
 除了髋部这个词
 < I wouldn't know what they are talking about
 even if they were in Chinese
 apart from the word hip >
 M 这个可以理解
 都是些医学术语
 < that's understandable (.)
 medical jargon >

Joanne reminds W that they can put a date on the form, but that it would need to be evidenced by a sick note from the doctor. The sick note can be back-dated as long as the doctor conducted an assessment of the patient on the date indicated. Joanne is prepared to enter a working date into the form for now, until the sick note is produced. She makes every attempt to render the inhospitable social security system hospitable for her clients. In doing so she offers an explanation which may be more likely to muddy the waters than to clarify them, but W, trusting Joanne's expertise, agrees with the explanation ('that's right'). Joanne asks W for a date on which M's condition began to cause him problems, and they negotiate a rough date. M, still on the phone, intervenes to say 'just fill in a random one'. Both sides are willing to settle for an approximate date, knowing that the task in hand is more about completing the form than telling the precise truth.

Now the ESA claim form calls for a brief description of M's condition, and in another Dickensian moment M gathers together a sheaf of documents, saying 'I don't know which one it might be'. Joanne sorts through the documents and manages to find the one she needs. After looking at it for a moment she says,

there are loads of medical terms
 which I haven't heard of
 I don't know what they are
 I will have to copy them down letter by letter
 exactly the same ((laughs))

I wouldn't know what they are talking about
even if they were in Chinese
apart from the word hip

We have seen that Joanne confidently translates between Cantonese, Mandarin, and English. She also translates the complex and technically opaque language of the welfare benefits system, breathing life into its lifeless block of resistance. She understands that what holds true for interlingual translation is true of other types of exchanges. She brings the author to the reader, and the reader to the author. Joanne is a mediator of activities of exchange far beyond mere translation. Yet suddenly she finds herself in the realms of the untranslatable. She encounters the impossibility of mechanically reproducing something in another language (Ricouer 2006), of reproducing in *her* English the medical terminology of the hospital document. She says 'I don't know what they are, I will have to copy them down letter by letter', and in saying so she indexes her orientation to translation. Her practice is not normally to copy letter by letter, but to reword, rendering the opaque transparent, the incomprehensible comprehensible. She does not normally copy letter by letter because she knows, in Ricouer's (2006: 5) terms, that the original will not be duplicated by another original. It is always possible to say the same thing in another way. Confronted not by a foreign language which she cannot translate, but by 'loads of medical terms which I haven't heard of', she seems both perplexed and amused. She is forced to resort to copying 'letter by letter', to produce a translation without meaning; "the *meaning* is extracted from the unity it shares with the flesh of words" (Ricouer 2006: 38). Translating the isolated meaning means repudiating meaning. The meaning of the text is complete only in the act of conferring meaning. Translation without meaning remains in the realm of the untranslatable.

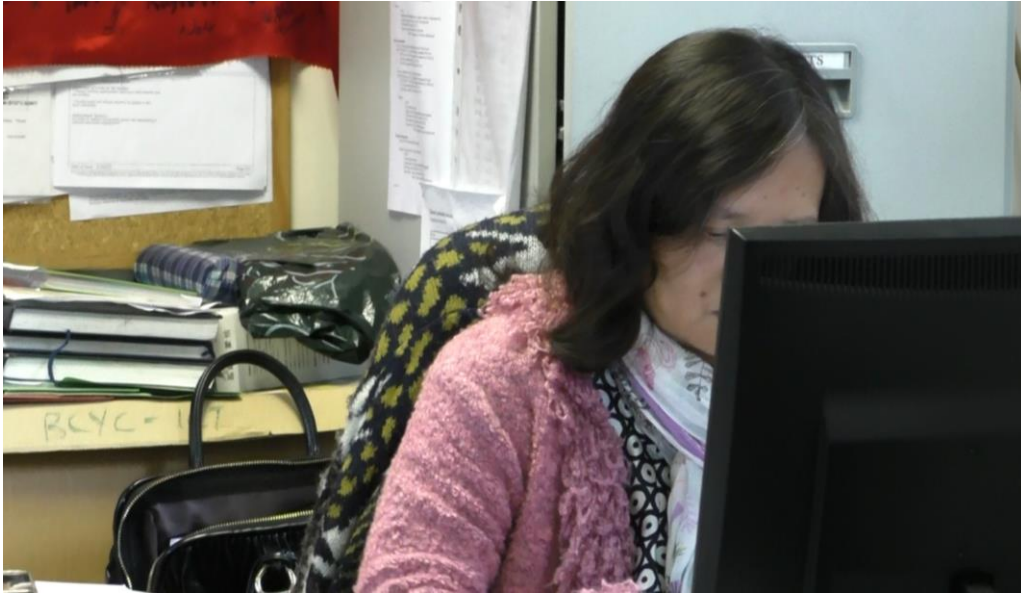
Derrida (1999) argues that nothing is ever untranslatable. So Joanne finds a way, laughing at herself as she does so, constructing a relevant translation, "whose economy is the best possible, the most appropriating and the most appropriate possible" (Derrida 1999 / 2012: 369). She comments (in Mandarin) on the process of rendering the untranslatable (unrewordable) text from the hospital notes to the ESA claim form, saying 'I wouldn't know what they are talking about even if they were in Chinese, apart from the word hip'. The metapragmatic commentary indexes her orientation to translation – normally everything can be translated, everything can be reworded. Normally the inhospitable can be rendered hospitable. If translation begins in failure because it cannot succeed in carrying over all that a text may say (Foran 2015), Joanne nevertheless usually finds a way. In her relation with others she translates, appropriates, offers them welcome, understands them. But she is unable to reword the medical terminology which describes M's condition, and understands only the word 'hip'. She has failed in her role as translator and mediator, if not as scribe. But M is ready to forgive, and to absolve her of her sins. That's understandable, he says, 'medical jargon'. No more needs to be said. It may be that some things remain in the realm of the untranslatable.

Summary

In the interaction discussed in this chapter a client needs help with his application for Employment and Support Allowance, as he is due for an operation on his hip. Joanne translates

the massive complexity of the welfare benefits system for the client and his wife. She aligns with her client, through an approach to translation which reveals an ideological orientation to government bureaucracy that is critical of the state. She moves between narrative about process, commentary on that process, and the incorporation of the discourse of the benefits system for her own intentions. Joanne's translation bears the traces of the bureaucratic 'voice' of the welfare benefits system, and her evaluation of that voice. This is double-voiced discourse (Bakhtin 1981), which makes use of the discourse of the benefits claim form to take her discourse in the direction of her own intentions. At the heart of the interaction between Joanne and her clients, M and W, is Joanne's point that in order to apply for ESA, M must provide a sick note from the doctor which states the dates on which M was unfit for work. The sick note is putative, as M was not aware that he was required to present it with his claim form. Nevertheless, the artefact takes centre stage in Joanne's discourse in the interaction with her clients. The sick note becomes contested and fought over. It is the object of violence between doctor and patient. The sick note as artefact is the focus of tension between the medical profession and government. In Joanne's narrative the sick note is tainted with everyday duplicity, violence, and injustice. Through ventriloquation and constructed dialogue Joanne creates a vivid world of tension and corruption.

Joanne is undoubtedly a skilled and confident translator, both through interlingual translation for her clients, and through intralingual translation of social security discourse which clarifies and unpicks complex systems. These acts of mediation are not language transfer in the conventional sense of translation, but are more broadly practices that take place in the quotidian spaces of the translation zone. In the everyday life of the city translators put to work their considerable powers of comprehension, improvisation and adaptation. Joanne does so with aplomb. So when she comes across discourse which for once she finds untranslatable, unrewordable, she is a little startled, and somewhat amused. Medical jargon will not reveal itself to her as the obscure discourse of the welfare benefits world does. She takes an *ad hoc* decision to go the way of the forger, copying the required document 'letter by letter'. In doing so she demonstrates her talent for improvisation and adaptation. The text may remain untranslated and untranslatable, but it will suffice. Joanne will copy the original 'exactly the same', and no-one will know the difference.



Chapter 6

Ethics

Ethics is a set of philosophical beliefs and practices concerned with distinctions between right and wrong; with values, human rights, dignity, and freedom; and with duties to others and to society (Constantino 2007). A code of ethics is a contract between professionals where individuals share moral ideals regarding their contribution to the common good (Chase 2015). But there are no universal standards of ethics in translation. Ethics in translation is problematic in many respects. The elements that intervene in the process of translation make it hard to find common ground to allow for an open debate on ethics, starting with clear, unambiguous definitions where the terms are easily identified (El Amari 2016).

Rock (2017) points to a distinction between an ethical and moral approach to actions and activities in the social world. An ethical approach is concerned with the individual. Therefore, ultimately, 'ethics' serves to apportion blame for professional and political decisions to individual social actors. A moral approach, on the other hand, is concerned with matters of right

and wrong in the form of values and social respect. Codes of ethics may displace moral judgement and prevent professionals from acting morally – from acting, not in their professional capacity, but as a moral agent (Brecher 2010). It may be difficult for interpreters to reach a moral conclusion to problems because of ethical requirements. In their study of interpreters assisting migrant women, Norma and Garcia-Caro (2016) question the necessity for interpreters to adopt a neutral stance in professional interactions, and suggest that adherence to a superficial notion of impartiality constrains interpreters' responsiveness to the reality of male violence. The translator's integrity is ethically put to the test in relation to the translator's supposed neutrality, where orienting the text purposefully may become unethical (El Amari 2016).

Interpreters and translators can be active participants, activists, or co-participants who exercise agency. In community interpreting noting the interpreter may co-construct social interaction and agency in the interpreted encounter: rather than the traditional location of the interpreter 'between' service provider and service user, a position 'within' the encounter then becomes possible (Drugan 2017). There has been a lack of attention to social responsibility in relation to interpreting and translation. Social responsibility may be understood as individuals' responsibility to the wider society in which they live; that is, interpreters' and translators' responsibility to the broader social context beyond the immediate translated encounter (Drugan 2017). The provision (or absence) of translation, and its quality, have wide-reaching effects. Interpreters and translators manifest virtues and vices, respect obligations, and produce consequences within the translated encounter, but the impact of their choices can also be apparent far beyond the encounter itself.

Hlavac (2017) notes that there has been a re-appraisal and acknowledgement of social and power relations, advocacy and activism in socially mediated situations. Social responsibility is re-emerging as a notion that can be located in many forms of linguistic mediation. Mediated interaction does not take place in a vacuum, and the performed and assumed roles enacted by interlocutors index notions of occupational representations, duties, status and capabilities. Nor are debates about the ethics of translation limited to community interpreting settings. Morrison et al (2016) outline the value of recognising translation in health care contexts as an ethically significant phenomenon in itself, as something that transcends particular fields, cases and issues as it transforms them, and that has wide-ranging implications for the responsible practice of the life sciences.

Translation does not stand in a neutral space: this is true whether we consider translation agents, processes, or products. All are positioned politically, ideologically, and ethically (Tymoczko 2014). The nature of translation makes the translators' production a biased one. In other words, all translations are subjective since translators try to capture the intent of the writer or speaker to overcome the inherent difficulties of the language and the culture (El Amari 2016). In legal contexts, impartiality means that legal translators must avoid taking sides with one or the other party, and will adopt a register and style as close as possible to the original. If they are unsure that they can do so, they should decline the mandate and find some means of advising the commissioning party without setting out the reasons for their decision, thus safeguarding their duty of discretion (Esteves-Ferreira 2013). A translator's ideological empowerment begins with the necessity to make decisions and choices in translation. The translator's agency is notable and powerful because of ethical and

ideological textual choices. The translator's choices reflect his or her affiliations. Not all empowered translators are activist in an overtly political way. A translator does not have to be engaged in political activism or to be a political translator in order to exercise agency related to ethical and ideological issues at the translation and cultural interface (Tymoczko 2014). Cultural translation emerges as an area that is central to the ethical, ideological, and political agency of the translator and to the creation of empowered and empowering translations. Translators serve the important function of protecting the social, linguistic, political, economic, and legal rights of individuals and communities, particularly where a clear bias, injustice, or imbalance of power reveals itself. In these instances, translators are called upon not only to clarify linguistic or cultural issues, but to help ensure that all parties' interests and points of view are adequately understood. It is through translation that people demonstrate different degrees of linguistic hospitality (Inghilleri 2017).

Translation is an important means of entry into the dominant discourses in society or alternative voices in society. Translators can become key players in influencing the degree to which linguistic hospitality is extended. In the liminal moments of transition and transformation, when individuals are precariously positioned between their departure from one place and their arrival at another, language becomes heightened in a significant way (Inghilleri 2017). Previously taken-for-granted intralingual communication becomes a vital stabilising resource, interlingual interactions provide migrants a voice within small-scale encounters or become sites for the realisation of system-wide exclusionary practices. A translator will always have to decide whether more allegiance is owed to the source, or the audience, or the law, or any of the other elements involved. This will affect the way the translation is done (Boase-Beier 2011). Translators may exercise agency in various ways, sometimes within a single translation event. The multiple, overlapping communities of practice in which a translator participates offer various modes of ownership of meanings. And individual decisions may serve the interests of none, some, or all of the stakeholders involved. To overlook the evidence of translators' actual decisions, as instantiated in their texts, may, paradoxically, *disempower* translators – through the implicit notion that the actual decisions they make somehow do not matter (Mason 2014).

The 'power turn' in translation studies has focused on issues of agency, the ways translation can effect cultural change, and the relation of translation to dominance, cultural assertion, cultural resistance, and activism. Translation scholars have examined many facets of the relationship between translation and power, including political control and subversion, the power of translation to construct political discourses, and the power of translators as agents, as well as ideological aspects of culture governing translation such as discourse structures and censorship (Tymoczko 2014). In translating texts translators must make choices, and emphasis on the translator's choices and decision making is one of the first steps in exploring the agency of the translator. A translator cannot resist or oppose everything objectionable in either the source culture or the target culture. Translators make choices about what values and institutions to support and oppose, determining activist strategies and picking their fights even as they are also making choices about what to transpose from a source text and what to construct in a receptor text. Resistance in translation is a complex act, albeit a seemingly reactive one, and it involves complex social positioning and textual constructions. Cultural translation is a compelling and complex topic related to the agency of translators. Cultural translation emerges as an area that is central to the ethical, ideological, and political agency of the translator and to the creation of empowered and empowering translations. It is ethically empowering for translators to think about their circles of affiliation and responsibility (Tymoczko 2014).

Rachel recorded in her field notes the arrival in Joanne's office of a man who was requesting support in applying for housing benefit and Pension Credit.

Joanne's first appointment arrives. He is a Cantonese speaker in his 60s. He wants to find out when and how he can apply for Pension Credit and housing benefit. Joanne tells him that he can apply for Pension Credit once he's 65, but he will have to wait if he wants to apply for a council house in Edgbaston. Joanne tells the man that he can go to the office next door, an office of 幸福居 [Xingfu Ju], a Chinese care home based at the north wing of the same L shaped building of CCC-B. CCC-B and 幸福居 have been sharing this building for at least twenty years, and quite a few of the residents of 幸福居 have become loyal members of CCC-B, who run regular luncheon clubs and many other activities for elders. Joanne starts to fill in a printed form which the man has brought with him, and explains to the man what each column means, asking him how he wants to fill in the form.

The client is interested in applying for council housing. As we join the interaction Joanne (J) is suggesting a strategy which may enable the client, B, to move up the council housing list.

Example 6.1 'claim you are homeless'

- J 你同阿伯一齊住
 你而家去申請
 當你係無家可歸
 話同朋友暫住
 咁阿伯要趕你走
 你要出一個證明
 [you live with your uncle
 so put in your application
 claiming you are homeless
 say you live with your friend
 and you have been evicted
 you need to prove it]
- B 咁佢又冇趕我走
 [I have not been evicted]
- J 咁講囉
 如果唔趕你走你點搵到嗰啲
 因為要申請政府屋又好房屋津貼又好
 佢要你出一個之前嘅房屋合同
 [just claim that you have
 otherwise why are you looking for (.)
 for applying for a council house or housing benefit
 they will ask for your previous rental agreement]

- B 我都住人哋嗰度又邊有合同
[I am living in someone's house so I have no agreement]
- J 所以囉如果冇呢個合同都要阿伯講一聲
我幫你寫好佢簽名,咁當你冇屋住
所以咪自己搵屋租囉
啲錢唔夠交租政府補助啲囉
好合理咁樣講出嚟
係咪,明冇?
你想點?
[if you don't have an agreement talk to your uncle
I'll help you to write one for him to sign
you are homeless so you have to look for housing
you can't afford the rent so apply for government subsidy
it sounds reasonable doesn't it (.)
understand?
what do you want to do?]
- B 申請屋
[apply for housing]

We are immediately in the thick of an ethics of translation, in a moral debate about the social world. As we have seen, Joanne is not averse to taking a flexible approach to translation, to the “creative betrayal of the original” (Ricouer 2006: 37), when she believes it will benefit her client. Here she goes beyond this, proposing to the client that he takes a flexible approach to the truth in making his application for council housing. To be made homeless will be a sure way of jumping the housing queue. Joanne is at the borderline that separates an authentic compliance with the social security regulations, and her commitment to meeting the needs of her client. A translator is confronted with the necessity to make decisions and choices in translation. Here Joanne's agency is notable and powerful as she makes an ethical and ideological choice. The translator's choices reflect her affiliations. In a loyal, or faithful, translation she would say to the client apply by all means, but you will be placed at the end of the line because you already have a roof over your head. Rules are rules, and it would not be fair to those who have been waiting for a house all these months and years if you were to jump the queue. But Joanne's translation of the regulations, her translation of the system, is not loyal or faithful to state regulation. Translators make choices about what values and institutions to support and oppose, and Joanne chooses the individual over the state. Her allegiance is to her client. Claim you are homeless, she urges. Say you have been evicted. If you are out on the streets the council must find you a home. Joanne's translation does not stand in a neutral space. It is ideological, political advocacy, even activist. You need to prove it, she says, you need to prove that you have been evicted, and that you are homeless. But, says her client, I have not been evicted. More cautious (and perhaps more honest) than his advocate, the client is unwilling to avail himself of the opportunity to transgress.

Just claim that you have, replies Joanne. She persists with the strategy, maintaining her active allegiance in the face of his lack of enthusiasm. If her discursive action (in proposing her client's

social action) is not overtly political, it at least stands against the hegemonic structures of the social security system, and for the principle that a man or woman should have a home. Joanne continues almost as if the client had agreed to follow his advisor's proposal, 'they will ask for your previous rental agreement'. 'They', often invoked by Joanne in interviews with her clients, are the faceless social security system. If the client decides to pursue his application, she tells him, 'they' will need to see documentation. With no apparent advance in his eagerness to comply with Joanne's strategy, he replies that he has no rental agreement because he is living in someone's house. But Joanne has a second proposition. I'll help you to write a rental agreement for your 'uncle' to sign, she says. The translator of the system is ready to buck the system. Elsewhere she may be characterised as gamekeeper. Here she has turned poacher.

Now Joanne voices the arguments her client needs to make to the government. Her ventriloquation aligns her own voice with that of the client, to the extent that they run in the same direction. She speaks for him, rehearsing his claim.

you are homeless so you have to look for housing
you can't afford the rent so apply for government subsidy

Joanne's discourse constructs a scenario in which the client has taken her advice, and become homeless. You are homeless, she says, despite the fact that in the present state of things this is not technically true. It sounds reasonable doesn't it, she says. There is no sense that a negative response to her question is possible. Understand?, she asks. What do you want to do? Apply for housing, he says, in a response that is ambiguous and perhaps uncertain. He wants to apply for housing, but this does not mean that he agrees to be made homeless, or to claim to have been made homeless. He wants to apply for housing, but this does not mean that he wants to be economical with the truth. Mediated interaction does not take place in a vacuum, and the roles enacted by Joanne and her client index ideological and political orientations. Joanne suggests that the client go next door to look at 幸福居 [Xingfu Ju], the flats for older Chinese people adjacent to the community centre. With some reluctance he does so, and we catch up with him when he returns. At this time Joanne is filling in a housing application form on his behalf.

Example 6.2 'I'll say you were evicted'

- J 呢度佢問你個房東叫乜名
 你都冇房東嘅,你冇交租俾佢
 佢係你個朋友嗎
 我寫住佢而家叫我搬囉好唔好
 [they ask for your landlord's name
 you have no landlord
 you don't pay rent (.) he is your friend right?
 I'll write that he asked you to move out OK?]
- B 佢冇叫我搬嘅
 [he hasn't asked me to move out]

- J 我寫囉如果你話可以喺度住嘅點解可以申請第二間
你個度住幾多間房?
[I'll write it as such
if you can live there why are you applying for another house?
how many bedrooms are there?]
- B 我得一間房
我依家瞓客廳
[only one
I sleep in the sitting room]
- J 一路瞓客廳?
你住好多年?
[you've been sleeping in the sitting room all along?
have you lived there for many years?]
- B 係呀
[yes]
- J 你係英籍係咪?
[are you British?]
- B 係
[yes]
- J 你今日有拎嚟
護照,你去樓下影印一張,放住呢度
如果你搬嘅話一間房囉
[have you brought your passport
you can get it photocopied at reception and keep it here
you are looking for one bedroom]
- B 係呀,我要個啲 flat
[yes I would like a flat]
- J 你唔鍾意 bungalow
[you don't want a bungalow]
- B 唔鍾意費事俾人打爛玻璃
[no I don't want the window to be broken by someone]
- J 佢問點解要搬我都話人哋要我走 eviction
冇養寵物係咪
[they ask why you moved out (.) I'll say you were evicted (.) eviction (.)
no pets?]
- B 冇
[no]

Joanne maintains her line of attack. Adherence to a superficial notion of impartiality may constrains interpreters' responsiveness to the reality of the social world. But Joanne makes no pretence of impartiality. She is on her client's side whether he likes it or not. Again she invokes

‘They’, this time referring to the question on the application form, but still the same They. I’ll write that he asked you to move out OK? The framing of the question does not invite contradiction. Nevertheless, the client counters that he hasn’t been asked to move out. Joanne’s determination is deaf to the client’s response, and she says ‘I’ll write it as such’. Resistance in translation is a complex act, involving complex social positioning and complex textual constructions, and is related to the agency of the translator. At this moment Joanne’s agency overwhelms that of her client. She knows better than him what is good for him. Cultural translation emerges as an area that is central to the ethical, ideological, and political agency of the translator and to the creation of empowered and empowering translations. She will empower her client whether he likes it or not. Once again Joanne rehearses the argument her client must make in his application, ‘if you can live there why are you applying for another house?’ You must be homeless, she argues, or why do you need to move? Again Joanne’s argument aligns with the argument she proposes her client should make. She gives him the words, and she only needs him to speak them.

Joanne discovers from her client that he sleeps in the sitting room of his uncle’s flat, as he has done for many years. Now the client volunteers a positive statement about finding somewhere to live, ‘I would like a flat’. Joanne returns to the questions on the form. The same They ask why you moved out. I’ll say you were evicted, says Joanne, with no interrogative intonation. This is not a question, but a statement, a *fait accompli*. Before her client can pull himself together to answer the non-question, Joanne has skipped on to the next item on the form, ‘no pets?’. She has her own way. The translator’s integrity is ethically put to the test in relation to her supposed neutrality. Orienting the text purposefully becomes unethical. Joanne makes no claims to neutrality here. But she does appear to hold on to her integrity, fighting tooth and nail for her client’s best advantage. At this moment the balance of translator–advocate shifts to advocate–translator. She knows what is best, and acts accordingly. A translator’s ideological empowerment begins with the necessity to make decisions and choices in translation. The translator’s agency is notable and powerful because of ethical and ideological textual choices. The translator’s choices reflect his or her affiliations (Tymoczko 2014). Joanne makes ethical choices about what she hears and what she does not hear from her client.

As the interview continues, Joanne’s client, B, is considering applying for housing benefit which will enable him to live at Victoria House. However, he has concerns about his eligibility for housing benefit, as he is sometimes away from the UK for extended periods.

Example 6.3 ‘just let it lie’

- B 問題呢就係我有時走咗去香港咁咩嘢呀
[the point is I may go to Hong Kong from time to time]
- J 通知政府囉,通知幾多號返左香港,你唔好超過嗰個限制囉
你去 Victoria House 都係一樣咋
冇乜分別架
如果你出國三個月四個月都冇比佢捉到你好彩囉
如果捉到邊度都一樣除非屋係自己嘅

冇領政府一分錢,就點樣都得
有時佢寄一封信要你簽名填左返嚟
你一唔覆佢就停咗所有啲嘢
等你一返嚟咁就慘啦
你領政府嘅錢就係咁樣架啦
離開兩個禮拜三個禮拜

通知佢

[inform the government
tell them when you leave for Hong Kong
don't go beyond the limit
it is the same if you are at Victoria House (.) no difference
you are lucky if you left the country for three or four months
without being caught
unless you own your own house
and you don't claim any benefit
then you can do whatever you want
they may send you a letter
and ask for your signature or something
if you don't respond they will stop your payment
you'll get nothing when you return
that is usually the case if you get benefits
if you leave for two or three weeks (.) inform them]

B 要通知佢嘅咩?

[inform them?]

J 通知佢

[inform them]

B 我冇喎

[I have not]

J 你攞緊 pension credit 出過國啊?
出過幾耐?

[you have been away while you were receiving pension credit?
for how long?]

B 成三四個月架

[three or four months]

J 佢未知道啊

超過三個月係唔可以攞個錢架

[they didn't find out?
you can't claim payment if you leave for more than three months]

B 係咁而家點呀?我出過嚟個喎

[what now? I have been away]

J 當唔知囉等佢查到至算囉

B [pretend that you don't know (.) unless they find out]
 詐唔知呀?
 [pretend that I don't know?]
 J 詐唔知
 你好彩冇查到你
 幾多次呀?
 [pretend
 you are lucky they didn't find out
 how many times?]
 B 一次囉
 [once]
 J 究竟幾多個月?
 [for how many months?]
 B 四個月
 [four months]
 J 舊年呀?
 [last year?]
 B 係囉
 [yes]
 J 過咗算數囉
 [just let it be]
 B 會唔會抽後腳架?
 [what if they come back and challenge me?]
 J 到時話有乜要緊事
 如果佢唔搵就算囉
 其實係冇野架
 佢個三個月嘅錢俾你
 一個月唔俾之嘛
 都過咗囉
 唔好擔心呢啲野
 [then you say you had important matters to attend to
 just let it lie if they don't challenge you (.)
 you should still get three months' payment
 only one month without pay
 it's all in the past
 don't worry]
 B 我本來想返嘅
 最衰呢個個腳痛
 就喺度醫左一排
 [I would have returned

- I stayed to care
for the pain in my leg]
- J 如果過咗一年兩年冇事都唔代表以後
除非出入 immigration 嗰度,英國出入嗰度無人嘅
下次唔好啦,下次出去兩個禮拜
都要你通知佢
旅遊都得嘅
冇問題,退休啦嘛
唔超過 13 個禮拜
嗰錢一分都唔會少
[if nothing happens after one or two years (.)
apart from immigration
there is no control on leaving the UK
don't do it again
inform them next time you leave for two weeks
if you are retired you can go on holiday
just don't go over thirteen weeks
you won't lose a penny]
- B 要講佢知嘅咩?出國
[I need to inform them if I leave the country?]
- J 係
應該係要講
如果啱啱咁橋佢寄封信俾你
叫你回覆俾佢
你冇回覆佢當你搬走囉
離開英國
你唔使呢個國家補助囉
停晒你所有嗰啲嘢嘅
[yes you should (.)
if they send you a letter
and you don't respond they'll think you have moved out
or left the country
that you no longer need government support
they will stop all your payments]

A new ingredient appears in the mix. The client has been claiming housing benefit and pension credit while in Hong Kong. At the time of the client's interview with Joanne it was permitted for claimants to leave the UK while continuing to claim welfare benefits, provided that the claimant returned to the UK within thirteen weeks. This regulation changed three months after Joanne's interview with her client (in July 2016), so that the permitted period abroad was reduced to four

weeks (HMSO 2016). In either case the claimant was required to inform the office that paid the benefit that he or she was going abroad. Failure to do so constituted the offence of benefit fraud, which could result in a fine of up to £5000. Joanne responds with urgent directives to her client – inform the government, don't go beyond the limit. You are lucky you didn't get caught, she says.

An ethical approach is concerned with the individual. A moral approach is concerned with matters of right and wrong in the form of values and social respect. Joanne does not appear to adopt a stance in relation to the moral rights and wrongs of claiming benefits while abroad. She is concerned with the individual, with her client's well-being. As an aside she makes a distinction between benefits claimants and those more fortunate. People in receipt of social security payments are subject to the surveillance of the state, and have to inform the authorities if they leave the country. As a benefits claimant you are subject to the close scrutiny of the state. Unless you own your own house and you don't claim any benefit, then you can do whatever you want. A moral approach is concerned with matters of right and wrong in the form of values and social respect. Here is Joanne's moral stance. Her concern may appear to be solely with the welfare of her client as an individual, but now she widens the argument. The poor are subject to the surveillance and supervision of the state. The wealthy can do whatever they want.

In the same utterance Joanne returns immediately to her ethical concern for her client as an individual. She creates a scenario in which her client has travelled abroad for an extended period without informing the benefits office.

they may send you a letter
and ask for your signature or something
if you don't respond they will stop your payment
you'll get nothing when you return

Now Joanne suggests no subversive strategies or transgressive means for her client to circumnavigate the social security regulations. She presents him with a picture of the imagined past and the possible future, in which he is caught by the Department for Work and Pensions, out of the country without permission, and no longer eligible for benefits. Like the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come presenting a vision of the future to Ebenezer Scrooge, Joanne provides an image of a world in which her client's payments will be stopped, and he will 'get nothing'. This is the way it is, she says. This is the way it always is. Inform them. Inform them.

Joanne makes her point clearly. You can't claim payment if you leave for more than three months. Throughout the interaction she shifts the stance she takes up in relation to the client and his social actions. Now she is not directly oppositional to the discourse of the system, but speaks with the voice of the government. She inhabits the DWP's regulatory discourse. She does so to impress upon the client that in this case the rules must be obeyed. But the client has transgressed, and is worried about future consequences. What now, he says. A change in footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and to others present, as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance (Goffman 1981: 128). Change in footing is a persistent feature of natural talk. Joanne changes footing again, no longer voicing the government line, and no longer encouraging her client to be directly transgressive, but inhabiting a third stance, somewhere between the two. Pretend that you don't know, she says, unless they

find out. Not for the first time the client responds by echoing Joanne's utterance interrogatively. Pretend, she repeats. And she reiterates her earlier point, 'you are lucky they didn't find out'. The advocate translator adapts to every situation, to every new story that presents itself. She translates government regulations at the same time as advising her client and advocating on his behalf. Now her advice is to just let it be, just let it lie. But the client's fears are not allayed. He is anxious, 'what if they come back and challenge me?'. Joanne offers him a script, a kind of shibboleth. Say these words correctly and you may avoid persecution. Say you had important matters to attend to. And she shifts her footing once again to offer a word of reassurance and comfort. It's all in the past, don't worry.

In a Goffmanian move of his own, the client offers an account which explains his delinquency in overstaying, 'I would have returned, I stayed to care for the pain in my leg'. The more an actor can argue mitigating circumstances successfully, the more he can establish that the offensive act is not to be taken as an expression of his moral character (Goffman 1971: 112). B's excuse partially diminishes the blame for his offence. He is not a morally bad person, he had a pain in his leg, and stayed to have it treated. However, the remedial interaction move seems to go more or less unheeded by Joanne. It may be that her absolution has already been given ('It's all in the past, don't worry'), and that it was her forgiveness that enabled B to finally account for his sins. But Joanne brushes the account aside, and moves on to practical matters. In fact what neither the client nor Joanne has recognised is that B has inadvertently come up with an alibi, a loophole in the system. Although the maximum period of stay abroad for benefits claimants was 13 weeks, this extended to 26 weeks where the absence was in connection with the claimant or the claimant's partner or child receiving medical treatment. The client's bad leg, an excuse for him and irrelevant for Joanne, may have got him off the hook.

Joanne advises her client to wait one or two years. Implicitly, if he hears nothing from the authorities all will be well. Don't do it again, she urges. Inform them next time. She is back in the territory of government discourse. There is no way round this one – if you are going overseas for more than two weeks, inform the authorities. Her stance has shifted again to uphold the regulations. Just don't go over thirteen weeks, and you won't lose a penny. B still needs confirmation of Joanne's main point, 'I need to inform them if I leave the country?'. Yes you should, she says, and to drive home the point she revisits Christmas Yet to Come, painting the same portrait of an unhappy future if B does not change his ways,

if they send you a letter
and you don't respond they'll think you have moved out
or left the country
that you no longer need government support
they will stop all your payments

Stancetaking — taking up a position with respect to the form or the content of one's utterance — is a fundamental dimension of communication (Jaffe 2009). Just as there is no such thing as a neutral or impartial translation, there is no such thing as a completely neutral position vis-à-vis linguistic production, because neutrality is itself a stance. Stance is concerned with how speakers are engaged in positioning themselves in relation to their words and texts, their interlocutors and

audiences, and with respect to a context that they simultaneously respond to and construct linguistically. Analysis of stance explores how the taking up of particular kinds of stances is associated with particular subject positions, and interpersonal and social relationships more broadly.

As we have suggested, Joanne takes up a range of stances in this short sequence. She advises her client to introduce a falsehood in his application for council housing. She acts on behalf of her client, in his best interests, apparently without his consent. She inhabits and voices the regulatory discourse of government. She directs him to act in particular ways. She advises a passive approach, to let the dust settle on past misdeeds. She projects an image of a future which is the consequence of the sins of the present. She offers the words with which to navigate a way forward. She reassures her client, but she does not take up the invitation to forgive him. These are not *separate* stances, in the sense that each stance takes up a different and new position in relation to the interaction. All of the stances taken up by Joanne (and by her client) are present throughout the dialogue, in Goffman's terms "keeping different circles in play" (1981: 156). Joanne takes up multiple stances throughout the exchange, and they index her role as an adaptable, flexible, committed, advocate-translator who has the best interests of her client at heart.

Joanne asks B whether he still wants to apply for a council house, or is he considering the flats next door to the community centre.

Example 6.4 'get the eviction letter'

- B 兩樣一齊睇吓邊個快呀嘛
[see which one is quicker]
- J 政府屋條件冇咁好
同埋嗰啲係,你去邊度搵幫手?
[living conditions in council houses are not so good
where do you ask for help?]
- B 睇吓邊度快呀嘛
[just see which is quicker]
- J 梗係呢個快啦
[this is quicker]
- B 政府屋多啲
[there are more council houses]
- J 睇你做嗰封信嘛,趕你走呀
跟住填個表你唔介意嘅我可以幫你
叫個亞伯寫封信趕你走
因為你提供唔到房屋合同
我同你填個表申請政府屋
跟住你交去房屋署
自己交去 city council 嗰啲房屋署

跟住嗰屋呢,你點揀呀

你有冇電腦呀?

[get the eviction letter

fill out a form

I can help you if you want

ask your uncle to write an eviction letter

because you don't have a lease agreement

I'll complete the council house application for you

submit it to the city council

the one in the city centre

and then how will you choose a house (.)

do you have a computer?]

B 冇

[no]

J 你又冇電腦

自己去揀,佢比你個分數

假如 50 分可以投標

投嗰啲屋

每個星期三出新屋

[you have no computer

you have to choose

they will give you a score

for example if you score fifty

then you can choose and bid for a house

they release the houses every Wednesday]

B 唔可以自己揀 area 嘅咩?

[can I not choose the area?]

J area 喺網上面囉,所有可以揀嘅係網上面

你睇中邊個可以揀

投標,嗰個有排排啊,好慢 呀

除非嗰個阿叔趕你今日走

你揸住個行李出嚟

去嗰房屋處,話我今日都冇定住囉

佢可能搵個細嘅酒店你住住先

咁點煮飯呀?盡快比一個 council house 俾你

要你搬入去,咁你選擇嘅空間好細嘅

如果你個阿叔唔係今日要你搬走你仲有排等

有啲一年兩年,你仲有個屋頂可以住架嘛

同埋你話佢係攞緊政府嗰啲嘅

佢唔應該俾你咁樣住架

你話係俾你咁樣住嘅,冇俾錢

點證明呀?

你又唔係佢子女,親戚,完全係出面嘅人

[all area information is online
you pick what you like and bid for it
there will be a long queue
very slow
unless you are evicted today with nowhere to stay
go to the housing department
and tell them you are homeless
they may temporarily find you a small hotel
but how can you cook
they will find a council house vacancy
and you have to move in
you have little choice
if you are not evicted today you will have to wait
maybe one year two years
because you have got a roof
and you said he is getting government benefits
you are not allowed to stay with him
you are staying there for free
but how can you prove it?
you are not his son or relative]

B 我攞 pension credit 嗰陣係報佢個地址
[that is my home address where I claim pension credit]

J 你係冇定住,暫時借住人嘅
但係阿伯攞個 housing benefit
Birmingham City Council 係唔知架嘛?
[you were homeless and stayed there temporarily
he is getting housing benefit
but Birmingham City Council is not aware?]

B 知,佢收尾有人來查佢啲
[they know (.) they have somebody visiting him]

J 查,跟住最後點講?
[they visit?]

B 最後咪話我暫時喺嗰度住
[they said I live there temporarily]

J 如果佢知道,就講真俾佢知囉
[if they know then tell the truth]

B 佢派個人來查

- 上去睇過來
佢而家知道我喺度住
[they visited the home
they know I am staying there]
J 如果趕你出嚟阿伯要寫封信啦
申請呢個好啲快啲, 嗰度有空位
好過 council house
同埋你想申請嗰啲 flat
你鍾意啦
[you need an eviction letter
it's quicker to apply for this
they have a vacancy
it's better than a council house
and also you prefer a flat
what do you want]
B 我想去返而家阿伯附近呢度
[I want to live near to where I live now]

B's priority now appears to be to apply for the housing with the earliest availability, as he twice asks Joanne to 'see which is quicker'. As he does so he ignores her comment that 'living conditions in council houses are not so good', and her question, 'where do you ask for help?'. Joanne's comment seems to be intended as a means of dissuading B from applying for council housing. At this point the exchange is characterised by tension. Despite all of Joanne's advice and support, her client is not persuaded either that he should apply for accommodation in the flats next door to the community centre, or that he should take a transgressive route to the front of the council housing list. For a moment at least the two protagonists engage in an exchange of miscommunication, hardly listening to each other, on parallel tracks but not converging. To reorient the encounter, Joanne adopts strategy on two fronts, on the one hand reverting to direct instruction of her client, while at the same time making the offer of 'free goods'. Get the eviction letter, she says, ask your uncle to write an eviction letter. She refers back to her earlier argument that B should say that he has been evicted from his home, and that he has to prove it. The 'eviction letter' from B's uncle will serve this purpose. As before Joanne urges her client to take an action that contravenes the social security rules. As he has not been evicted, the letter may be viewed as fraudulent. Joanne's stance in relation to the putative letter is very different from her stance towards B staying in Hong Kong beyond the permitted period. Her stance both advocates illegitimate behaviour and upholds the law at one and the same time. In respect of both, however, she orients towards the best possible outcome for her client. She issues further instructions: fill out a form, submit it to the city council. Translators serve the important function of protecting the rights of individuals and communities (Inghilleri 2017). In her directives to her client Joanne is acting in his best interests, finding a way to overcome his hesitation and uncertainty.

In the same utterance Joanne says 'I can help you if you want', 'I'll complete the council house application for you'. Joanne's offer of help acts as an offer of free goods, providing a "source of

social solidarity” (Goffman 1997: 198). The supportive ritual seeks to stabilise the encounter as it threatens to capsize into miscommunication. When exchanges threaten to fall apart all that remain are the brief rituals one individual performs for and to another, attesting to civility and good will on the performer’s part, and to the recipient’s possession of a small patrimony of sacredness. What remain, suggests Goffman (1997: 115), are “interpersonal rituals”. In a supportive ritual such as this the giving statement tends to be followed immediately by a show of gratitude, and taken together the moves form a supportive interchange. However, the client does not respond to the offers of help. Joanne continues to take a positive stance to the exchange, asking the client ‘and then how will you choose a house, do you have a computer?’. Joanne’s question presupposes that the client will shortly be in a position to choose a house. Her strategy is to discursively create a context in which his housing application is successful:

you have no computer
you have to choose
they will give you a score
for example if you score fifty
then you can choose and bid for a house
they release the houses every Wednesday

Joanne constructs a scenario in which B has registered for the social housing scheme, and has successfully negotiated the criteria which qualify him for an allocation of accommodation. The most likely route by which he would achieve this would be to declare himself homeless. If you qualify, she proposes, you can choose and bid for a house. Joanne dangles the prize before B’s eyes. Tempted, he asks whether he can choose the area of the city in which his new home will be situated.

In an extended utterance Joanne attempts to summarise the current situation. She moves between positive and negative stances to her client’s situation. All the area information is online, you pick what you like and bid for it. The notion of choice again points to a successful application to the housing register. However, ‘there will be a long queue, very slow’. Between the positive and negative scenarios is still the unresolved possibility of her client being evicted forthwith, or saying that he has been evicted, and telling the housing department that he is homeless. Even in this scenario, however, things will not be ideal for Joanne’s client. As in other instances, Joanne details an image of the future:

they may temporarily find you a small hotel
but how can you cook
they will find a council house vacancy
and you have to move in
you have little choice

Having declared himself homeless, the city council will be obliged to find him accommodation, temporarily at least. This is the course of action which Joanne had been pressing B to pursue, but now that she paints the picture of the outcome of such a course of action the scenario seems less inviting. In the picture of the future B finds himself either in a small hotel with no cooking facilities, or in a house chosen for him by the council (B would probably be made two offers of

homes, one of which he would be able to reject). The optimism and affordance of ‘you can choose’ has rapidly shrivelled to ‘you have little choice’. Joanne immediately presents another scenario, saying ‘if you are not evicted today you will have to wait maybe one year two years, because you have got a roof’. And finally she comments on a further scenario, that of B staying where he is. This, Joanne considers, is not possible because B’s uncle is getting government benefits, so B is not allowed to stay with him. The picture Joanne paints is a bleak one. The options for her client are limited. He cannot stay where he is. He can wait one or two years on the housing list. Or he can declare himself homeless and end up in unsatisfactory accommodation.

B argues against Joanne’s point that he cannot stay with his uncle. He says the council is aware that he lives there, and that this is his address for claiming pension credit. Joanne does not appear to believe that the DWP is in full possession of the facts, saying ‘if they know then tell the truth’. She returns once again to her point that if he wants to apply for council housing he will need an eviction letter. But when she says ‘it’s quicker to apply for this, they have a vacancy, it’s better than a council house, and also you prefer a flat’, she is referring to 幸福居 [Xingfu Ju], the flats next door to the community centre, which provide affordable accommodation to Chinese older people. The client, unconvinced, says he wants to live near to where he lives now. It may also be that he does not yet see himself living in accommodation for older people. Either way, the issue is unresolved at the end of the exchange, and when Joanne suggests that B goes away and thinks about his options, he agrees to do so.

Summary

The ethics of translation are complex. The morals of translation (if they are different from ethics) are complex. There is no such thing as a neutral translation. This is true in contexts of literary translation. It is certainly true of contexts in which relatively disempowered people seek help to gain access to government support. A translator makes multiple decisions in the course of a single exchange. Joanne translates the Byzantine social security system for her client. In doing so she takes up a particular stance, or particular stances, in relation to the discourse of the social security system and the housing system, in relation to the discourse of her client, and in relation to her own discourse. These are not neutral stances. Nor are they unchanging or necessarily consistent stances. Rather, they are emergent.

In an emergence perspective social positions are produced through interaction, and are always open to change. Social interactions are shaped by the complex interrelationship between the historical and contemporary context of the interlocutors, and the larger societies in which they are embedded (Blackledge and Creese 2018). Interaction is where different beliefs, commitments, and ideologies come into contact and confront each other through the intersecting voices of participants. It is also the site at which categorization takes place and where the establishment, negotiation and rejection of categories happens (Blommaert et al 2017). The contexts in which people communicate are partly local and emergent, continuously readjusted to the contingencies of action unfolding from one moment to the next, but they are also infused with information, resources, expectations and experiences that originate in, circulate through, and/or are destined for networks and processes that can be very different in their reach and

duration, as well as in their capacity to bestow or deny privilege and power (Blommaert and Rampton 2011).

Joanne's multiple stances in her exchange with B are not fixed, or presupposed, but are emergent. Her agency, and her orientation to her client, unfold in the interaction. She shifts her footing, and she changes her stance. Recognising that the encounter is beginning to list, she deploys supportive ritual. She moves between transgression of the rules and insistence on the rules. She appropriates the discourse of the state, and subverts the state. At all times, however, what emerges in the interaction is ethical translation. At all times, sometimes against his preference, she acts for the good of her client. For Joanne this is the bottom line. In this particular exchange she makes little progress, and advises him finally to go away and consider his options. But at all points in the encounter she translates the world of the social security and housing systems in the city to make it possible that B will no longer have to sleep on his uncle's sofa. In the emergent exchange this is her ambition.

Chapter 7

Mediation

Mediators are involved in exchanges which exceed mere translation – they are often active in a variety of intercultural and inter-artistic networks, often migrants, who develop transfer activities in several geo-cultural spaces. We have suggested that mediators are the architects of common repertoires and frames of reference (Cronin and Simon 2014). They are active across linguistic, artistic and geographical borders – without necessarily annulling them. They shape their own intercultural activities and identities in relation with linguistic, cultural and political history – developing a variety of discursive transfer techniques and institutional mediating roles, blurring the boundaries between writing and translating, obscuring the relations between original and derivative products. The complex transfer practices that make up past and present cultures can no longer be fully apprehended (if they ever could) in terms of traditional concepts of author and

translator, original and translation. We need to examine how these traditional concepts routinely obscure complex practices of cultural mediation (Meylaerts and Gonne 2014).

New forms of translation emerge within multilingual cultures, from relations of proximity instead of distance, from contact zones instead of isolation. They create expanded definitions of translation as practices inspired by the encounter with other discourses (Simon 2006). Mediators transgress the traditional translational metalanguage based on inadequate, reductive, binary distinctions, in particular the familiar distinctions between source and target, or between import and export. Originality and creativity are no longer to be located exclusively at the author's side but are interwoven with multilingual writing and self-translating and thus also with translating. Translation studies can therefore contribute to a new and flexible conceptualization of agent roles within a continuum of overlapping practices between author, multilingual writer, self-translator, translator (Meylaerts and Gonne 2014).

Multilingual contexts put pressure on the traditional vocabulary of transfer and its concepts of source and destination. Communities which have had a longstanding relationship inhabit the same landscape and follow similar rhythms of daily life. *Micro-cosmopolitanism* is a cosmopolitanism not from above but from below. It attempts to show that 'elsewhere' is next door, in one's immediate environment, no matter how infinitely small or infinitely large the scale of investigation. If there is a place that offers itself quite readily to the micro-cosmopolitan approach, it is the city. But it is not the unique preserve of the urban. In its unwillingness to be wholly subject to any fixed, permanent, all-encompassing notion of being or belonging, cosmopolitanism is by definition anti-essentialist, an important consideration for translation. And cosmopolitanism leaves room for complex repertoires of allegiance – crucial in accounting for the multiplicity of factors which can affect translation and translators in any one situation (Cronin 2006).

The translator emerges as a full participant in the stories of modernity that are enacted across urban space – modernity understood as an awareness of the plurality of codes, a thinking with and through translation, a continual testing of the limits of expression. Translators are flâneurs of a special sort, adding language as another layer of dissonance to the clash of histories and narratives on offer in the city's streets and passageways. Their trajectories across the city become the material of cultural history (Simon 2012). What constitutes resilience for societies in the contemporary world is the availability of a large repertoire of cultural responses and different world views that feeds into a creativity of imagination and an inventiveness of action. It is the translation zone of the city that acts as the hub of this resilience. Translation as the clearing house of possibility reveals the immensity of the resources that a city can draw on to manage unpredictable and uncertain futures (Cronin and Simon 2014). Translation is not a substitutive, metaphorical process of wholesale replacement of one language or culture by another, but is rather a metonymic process of contiguity and connection. It is the subtle metamorphosis of the metonymic rather than the absolutist expropriation of the metaphorical which will give rise to a different idiom, with its multiple translation traces where the overlapping and partially corresponding will tilt the language in new directions (Cronin 2006).

Approaches to cultural translation must be developed that fully validate and attend to underlying systemic disparities of culture as well as differences in particulars and that consider problems of perception on the part of the translating agent. There is a need for a holistic mode of conceptualizing cultural translation that moves beyond current paradigms. In a holistic approach to translating cultural difference, instead of focusing primarily on the surface aspects or customs of a culture as they occur in a localized and linear fashion, a translator begins by considering the entire scope of cultural underpinnings that come into play in the text being translated. A holistic approach to culture models a large range of cultural differences. It moves well beyond material culture and it accommodates views of culture that are dynamic and heterogeneous rather than unitary or essentialist. Such an approach allows for the incorporation of varied subject positions to cultural translation (Tymozcko 2014). A holistic approach aims not so much to translate a source culture ‘fully’ or ‘accurately’, as to empower the translator in deciding how to translate culture. It prepares a translator conceptually to develop a heuristic that guides translation choices, allowing the translator to decide which cultural differences to convey and which to adapt to target norms or even which to suppress. Translation is a metastatement, a statement about the source text and its content that constitutes an interpretation of the source text. If translators, like ethnographers, are constructors of culture, they play a powerful role in cultural interface and cultural mediation (Tymozcko 2014).

In the interaction reported in this chapter a man arrives for his appointment with Joanne. This was the client’s second appointment. He had been to see Joanne the week before, for help with claiming housing benefit, and he had also asked her for support as he had missed his required ‘signing on’ at the Job Centre. Rachel’s field notes describe his as follows:

V, an asylum seeker in his mid-30s suffering from severe depression, walks in. He greets me and Joanne. Did you go to the Job Centre? asks Joanne before he can open his mouth. He was here to see Joanne last week, and we both remember him very well. He seemed to be at a low point in his life, with his wife and children having left him, and his shop having been set on fire about six months ago. He sits and speaks in a low, emotionless voice, as if telling the story of a stranger.

The transcript below represents sections of the audio-recorded interaction between Joanne and V. As we join the exchange in *Example 7.1*, Joanne has been on the telephone to the insurance company which is dealing with V’s claim for compensation, following the fire at his business premises.

Example 7.1

- J 首先，她刚才说的
 他们已经联络 Staffordshire 警方了
 现在正在等警察的回复。
 < first what she just said
 they’ve contacted Staffordshire Police
 and are waiting for their response >
 V um

J 同时呢
这个叫做 disclosure
的文件需要你来填
看你有没有以往的犯罪记录。
< and then at the same time
there's this form
called disclosure
to see if you've ever committed a crime >
V um
J 这个表格你要填好后寄回给他们
这样他们就可以查出看你有没有以往的犯罪记录
这个手续费是 25 磅
可以在网上填写
她告诉我需要两个星期的时间才能得到结果
所以这个就是 disclosure 表格
除此之外，还要有另外一个表格
她刚重新发送给你了
你看看有没有新的邮件进来？
< and then you will need to fill in this form
once it is sent back they can see if
you have a criminal record
as the form can track it
if you have the application fee it is twenty-five pounds
she says apply online
and she told me that it will take
at least fourteen days
before you get the result
so this is the disclosure form
after this there's another form
the one she just resent you
have you got an email coming in? >
V 让我看看哈
< let me have a look >
J 你有这样的记录吗
< do you have a record? >
V 什么记录？
< what record? >
J 就是叫做 conviction
包括任何的违法记录
刑事的，民事的
或是经济类的
这个是你必须如实回答提供相关信息的。
< it's called a conviction
it includes everything

whether it's criminal law
civil law or economic
this is compulsory
you have to be honest
in disclosing this information >

V 我为什么要告诉他么？
< why should I tell them? >

J 这是他么处理这些事情的程序
如果你不配合
会影响你将来的索赔
他们这样要求
你就得这样执行
不然他们就不会处理你的案子。
< this is their procedure of dealing with these things
if you don't comply it might affect
your claim for compensation
you will have to do as they request
or they won't continue to process your case >

V 所以我得犯罪才行？
< so I have to commit a crime?>

J 不是要你去犯罪
这个是叫做 disclosure
就是你必须如实填写
如果你有这样的案底
这样他们可以查的到
或者你没有任何犯罪记录
他么也可以差的到
比如说我
如果我要申请某些工作
那我申请的公司可能会要求我填写这样的一份表格
声明我没有类似的记录
这是声明我清白的一种手续
或者你有类似的记录他们也都可以在有关的数据库查到你的相关记录。
< you don't have to commit a crime
this is called disclosure once you fill it in
they can track down any criminal record
if you have one
or they can see if you have a clean record
for me if I apply for certain jobs
it's possible that the company may ask me
to fill in the form to prove that I don't have a record
this is proof of my innocence
or if you have done such things
they can see the record in their system.>

V um [murmurs] 我也不太确定
 < I'm not sure >

Joanne translates for V what the woman in the insurance office told her on the phone, 'she just said they've contacted Staffordshire Police, and are waiting for their response'. Although we do not have access to the original text spoken by the insurance clerk, Joanne probably selects a section of what she has been told, and translates it into Mandarin. Almost immediately she comes to the main point raised by the insurance company. Joanne says that as part of their standard procedure for processing an insurance claim they require V to complete a disclosure form. A 'disclosure' is a Basic Criminal Records Check sometimes known as a Basic Police Check or Basic CRB. It checks the Police National Computer for details of all current criminal convictions. Joanne translates 'disclosure' in English, without turning to Mandarin, retaining the original form.

Instead of providing a 'literal' translation of 'disclosure' Joanne offers an alternative type of translation, an explanation (in Mandarin) of the concept, 'to see if you've ever committed a crime'. The client's virtual non-response does not indicate comprehension, so Joanne provides a more detailed translation, elaborating on her explanation of the concept of disclosure, 'they can see if you have a criminal record, as the form can track it if you have'. Once again Joanne retains the original (English) form of 'disclosure' in her metasegmental explanation. V now appears to take some interest ('let me have a look'), and Joanne asks him bluntly whether he has a record. V seems not to understand what Joanne is asking him ('what record?'), and in her further explanation she introduces another technical term, 'conviction', this too in its English form. The metasegmental explanation, as before, is in Mandarin. In both cases Joanne treats the legal term ('disclosure', 'conviction') as an artefact, saying (in Mandarin) the concept is 'called' disclosure, and 'called' conviction. The legal terms, and the legal concepts, are indexical, separated off from the remainder of Joanne's discourse. They are entextualised (Silverstein 1993), becoming stable and identified as social action. Each of the indexical signs explicitly signals its object by pointing to it. The (more-or-less) technical, legal terms are translated from English to English, from legalese to legalese, signalling their status as untranslatable.

Like most legal and quasi-legal translators, Joanne is not a lawyer. At the time we observed her she was attending a course on legal translation. However, she had no qualifications in law. She had attended many courses on welfare benefits rules and regulations, but these were confined to the fundamentals of the welfare system. In many respects, legal translation is akin to acts of translation pertaining to other specialized fields, such as translation of scientific or sacred texts. The language of law, like that of science or religion, comprises a characteristic conceptualism and technicity, an identifiable unfolding of intralingual and phenomenological pathways, an ascertainable terminology and style. We have seen that Joanne occasionally found herself outside her comfort zone when faced with the technical language of the doctor's records from the hospital. Legal language is potentially specialised in the same way. Not only does legal language behave like other specialised languages in the way in which it harbours a singular array of epistemological features but, as is the case with other disciplinary vocabularies, the language of law displays an important measure of cultural embeddedness (Glanert 2014). But Joanne is not thrown by the language of the law; she is at home here, comfortable with the terms 'disclosure' and 'conviction'. Her task is to communicate their meaning to her client.

A heteroglossic perspective enables us to identify the “languages of social groups, ‘professional’ and ‘generic’ languages, languages of generations and so forth” (Bakhtin 1981: 271). Both heteroglossia and indexicality rely on notions of intertextuality, in which meanings of forms depend on past usages and associations of those forms rather than on arbitrary referential meaning inherent in the form (Bailey 2012). The relationship between the indexical form and meaning is brought into being through historical association. Signs acquire recognisable pragmatic values that come to be viewed as enduring social facts, and become means of indexing roles and relationships (Agha 2007). In Joanne’s discourse ‘disclosure’, and ‘conviction’ are stubbornly English, and stubbornly enregistered as belonging to the law rather than to the common man. Registers are reproduced and transmitted in a diverse range of settings, including in certain professions: “one cannot become a doctor or lawyer, for example, without acquiring the forms of speech appropriate to the practices of medicine or law, or without an understanding of the values linked to their use” (Agha 2007: 156). Speakers use labels to describe linguistic repertoires (sets of linguistic resources) which are associated with certain social practices and types of persons. ‘Disclosure’ and ‘conviction’ are associated with the law.

In the process of indexicality a semiotic register, a repertoire of performable signs, is linked to stereotypic pragmatic effects by a sociohistorical process of ‘enregisterment’, which makes usable facts of semiotic value associated with signs (Agha 2007). The register becomes ‘enregistered’ because it recurs over time, repeatedly, and comes to index certain social practices, and social positions. In the process of enregisterment, performable signs are recognised as belonging to distinct semiotic registers differentially valorized by a population. Encounters with registers are not merely encounters with voices, but encounters in which individuals establish alignment with voices indexed by speech and thus with types of persons, real or imagined, whose voices they take them to be. Registers are not neutral. Rather, they create and reproduce social boundaries, “partitioning off language users into groups distinguished by differential access to particular registers and the social practices they mediate, and by asymmetries of power, privilege and rank that depend on access to such registers and practices” (Agha 2007:157). Attitudes to, and beliefs about, certain registers play an important role in creating systems of distinction between categories of persons. Registers constitute a significant dimension of the social diversity of speech. ‘Disclosure’, and ‘conviction’ recognisably belong to a register which is associated with power, privilege, rank, and regulation. Joanne does not translate the terms into Mandarin. As English terms, and legal terms, they explicitly reproduce social boundaries and partition off language users. But Joanne explains the concepts in Mandarin, as she does so shoring up their indexical status as lexical items associated with power and regulation, ‘this is compulsory’; ‘you have to be honest in disclosing this information’; ‘if you don’t comply it might affect your claim for compensation’; ‘you will have to do as they request or they won’t continue to process your case’. Each metasemantic explanation carries a threat of a consequence if certain social action is not accomplished.

Legal or quasi-legal discourse is situated in the political environment of the society or community to which it applies. The reason for such specificity lies in its function – to govern the conduct of members of a particular community or society, thus being geographically, culturally and/or linguistically confined to that community or society. The language of law through which the law is communicated to those bound by it, is determined by, and often limited to, the legal

culture developed within that society. Law fulfils unique normative and performative roles. Typically, legal texts purport to regulate behaviour and impose sanctions for non-compliance. In other words, law does not content itself with descriptions of the world but regularly accomplishes concrete and consequential acts within it (Glanert 2014). Even within the legal community, there exist many different occupational groups, each with its own version of legal language. The language of the law is unfamiliar to V. It is difficult to tell whether he is commenting on what he sees as the absurdity of the requirement for disclosure, or is simply confused, when he asks Joanne, ‘so I have to commit a crime?’. His question prompts her to offer more or less the same explanation as previously, before elaborating by offering her own case as exemplification. She returns to V’s situation to say, ‘if you have done such things they can see the record in their system’. Joanne mediates the legal system for V. In response, however, he speaks very quietly, saying ‘I’m not sure’.

V goes on to demonstrate that he has little faith in the insurance system. When Joanne reiterates that the request for a disclosure statement is part of the insurance company’s procedure, he said ‘they are just playing tricks’. He also told Joanne, ‘they are all the same, playing games’, and ‘he’s playing games with me, how can I trust him?’. We rejoin the interaction at *Example 7.2*.

Example 7.2

- J 就让他们玩游戏好了
 咱们给他们一次机会所以只要他们要求的时间你都随时有空。
 < just let them play games
 let’s give them the opportunity so be there as they ask >
- V 我现在都彻底放弃了
 我看我还是早死早好！
 < now I’ve totally given up
 I just see myself (.) the sooner I die the better! >
- J 啊呀，不要这么悲观
 度过眼前的难关一切都会好起来的
 这就是你眼下的任务。
 你又不需要付任何费用
 就等着看他们到底会陪多少钱给你
 就要 5 月 18 号去见他们
 看他们怎么说
 要是你还是觉得他们再和你有意推脱
 你就立刻来找我
 我一定给你查清楚
 他们上一次给你的邮件都已经过去两个月了
 < ohh don’t be so pessimistic
 overcome this current obstacle and everything will be fine
 this is your next task
 you don’t need to pay any fees
 just see what they say

regarding the compensation
 just go and see them on 18th May to find out
 if you still feel that they are playing tricks
 come back to me immediately
 so I can follow up with you on it
 as their last email was about two months ago >
 V 我尽力吧
 但你知道的
 很多时候事情并不是朝着你所希望的方向发展
 你明白的。
 那个生活低保
 那么一点点钱
 谁想要呀！
 只是我目前的精神状况不允许我工作。
 < I will try my best
 but sometimes you know
 not everything how to say (.) is as you wish
 things don't happen as you wish you know
 that living allowance
 so little money
 who wants it
 it's just that my mental health issue doesn't allow me to work >

Joanne does not contest V's account that the insurance company is playing games with her client, but rather aligns with him by echoing his discourse, 'just let them play games'. In a communicative overlap (Rymes 2012), Joanne positions herself on her client's side. However, Joanne's discursive strategy is a means to an end. Having established that she is in her client's corner, Joanne follows up with 'let's give them the opportunity, so be there as they ask'. V has been offered an appointment at the insurance company's office, and Joanne is not confident that he will attend. She does not miss the opportunity to encourage him to keep the appointment. But V's response is dramatic in its register of despair, as he says, 'I've totally given up', and 'the sooner I die the better'. Joanne is not a qualified counsellor. However, it is not unusual for her clients to present themselves as people in urgent need of counselling support. She frequently draws on her repertoire of cultural responses and different world views as she supports her clients with their diverse issues (Cronin and Simon 2014). Now she reacts to V's negative response with an impromptu pep talk, telling him, 'don't be so pessimistic', and suggesting that he overcomes one obstacle at a time, and takes on one task at a time. She reiterates her encouragement for him to attend the appointment at the insurance office. Again she inhabits the territory of the client, saying 'if you still feel that they are playing tricks come back to me immediately'. Still discursively aligned with her client, and brushing aside his despair, she offers practical action as a possible solution. V says he will try his best, but his outlook continues to be gloomy, as he says 'sometimes things don't happen as you wish'. He is anxious because he feels that his welfare benefits are inadequate, and in another note of despair complains that 'my mental health issue doesn't allow me to work'.

The condition of the migrant is the condition of the translated being. He or she moves from a source language and culture to a target language and culture so that translation takes place both in the physical sense of movement of displacement, and in the symbolic sense of the shift from one way of speaking, writing about and interpreting the world to another. Translation is a question of real, immediate and urgent seriousness (Cronin 2006). We do not know the detailed history of V's medical condition, nor of his family circumstances. His stance appears to be characterised by a lack of trust of institutions, and of authority. Joanne, too, has little to go on. She responds to her client and develops impromptu strategy which unfolds and emerges in the interaction. She translates the world with real, immediate and urgent seriousness. As mediators translators engage in multiple roles within a continuum of overlapping practices (Meylaerts and Gonne 2014).

Joanne continues to impress upon her client the importance of attending his appointment, telling him three more times to 'show up on 18th May'. However, V appears to find the responsibility of this overwhelming.

Example 7.3

- V 我怎么能一下子记住这么多事情
出了这么多事我根本应付不来嘛
我还有一件事就是我想看我的小孩儿。
< how can I manage to remember these things
so many things happened and I just can't cope
another thing is I want to see my kids >
- J 好的，这个听起来真的挺复杂的
你有很多事情要帮忙处理
课很多事情你又没有详细的资料给我
我真的不清楚你具体都经历了那些事情
在我们的数据记录里没有什么太多你的资料。
< OK this sounds really complicated
you have so many things to deal with
and many of them I haven't had much information about until now
I really don't know your full story
what I can see is some brief notes in the database in our system >
- V 简单说
所有不行的事情都发生在我身上了
你明白吧。
< in short
the saddest things all happened on me
you know >
- J 请稍等。(3)
你有几个小孩儿呀？
他们是和你前妻在一起吗？
< bear with me a moment (3)
how many children do you have?

are they with your ex-wife? >

V 三个。我根本不知道他们在哪儿和谁在一起。
< three (.) I have no clue where they are or who they are with >

J 那你上一次见他们是什么时候?
上一次见到你的小孩儿的时候他们是和谁在一起。
< so when was the last time you saw them
who were your kids with last time you saw them? >

J 上一次见他们的时候他们和他们的妈妈在一起
那应该至少是半年前的事情了
我有太久没有见到他们了
根本不及得有多久没有见了。
< they were staying with their mum last time I saw them
which is at least half a year ago
I can't really remember how long I haven't seen them for
it was such a long time ago >

J 有人阻止你见你的小孩儿吗?
< is somebody stopping you seeing your children? >

V 她说我有 domestic violence
然后把我告上法庭
起诉离婚
但我从来没打过她。
< she she accused me of domestic violence
and she sued me in court and filed for divorce
but I never beat her >

J um

V 我请了一个律师
他办公室就在街对面
虽然是我有一次见他迟到
但是是他最后一次约见他的时候都没有来
< and I hired the solicitor from across the street
although I was late for a previous meeting
he just didn't show up last time for our appointment >

J 那警察介入了吗?
她要是告你家暴
警察不会到你们住的地方调查吗?
< so did the police get involved
if she sued you for domestic violence
did the police come to your place to investigate? >

V 警察啥都没干
他们来过一次
然后案子就移交法庭了
让我提供一些材料
就这样

就在没什么了。
 < the police didn't do anything
 they came once and passed our case to the court
 they asked me to hand in some documents
 and that's it
 nothing much >

J 那你去法庭了吗?
 < so did you go to court then? >

V 去了。然后她撤诉了。
 但因为我去晚了
 而且我的律师也没去所以
 < I did (.) and she was going to withdraw her accusation
 but I was running late
 and my solicitor didn't show up at all so >

J 所以你开庭去晚了
 你的律师也没有去
 所以她撤回起诉了
 然后你就有了缺席的记录
 是这样吗?
 < so you didn't go to court on time
 and neither did your solicitor
 so she didn't withdraw the accusation
 so you have the absence on your record
 is that correct? >

V 可能是吧
 我真不知道到底是怎么回事。
 < probably
 I really don't know how this happened >

J 所以这个 disclosure 就会显示法庭这个记录
 因为这样的记录也会算作 conviction (xxx)
 那你也没有到其他机构寻求法律援助?
 因为这个领域我也不熟悉
 我真的不太懂
 你有没有咨询过其他的人去帮你探视小孩儿?
 < so this is something that will show up in your record with the disclosure
 as it counts as a conviction (xxx)
 so have you ever sought help from another organisation
 this is not my field so I don't really know much about it
 have you consulted other people
 to see how you can see your children? >

V 这么多事情让我碰上了
 一件又一件
 我哪里顾得过来?
 < so many things happened to me

one after another
how am I going to cope with it >
J 我只可以试一试因为这种事我真的不懂。
< I can only try to help as I'm not an expert on this >

V says that he is unable to cope with the things that have happened to him. He also declares that he wants to see his children. Joanne acknowledges the complexity and difficulty of V's situation, saying 'you have so many things to deal with'. In the same utterance she takes up a particular stance in relation to the complex matters her client has to deal with, saying 'many of them I haven't had much information about until now, I really don't know your full story'. In a Goffmanian remedial move that is perhaps both an account and a request, Joanne begs sufferance of V. The remedial ritual makes possible forgiveness for Joanne's virtual offence of being ill-equipped to solve V's problems. The function of remedial work in the slop of social life is to change the meaning that otherwise might be given to an act, transforming what could be seen as offensive to what can be seen as acceptable (Goffman 1971). Joanne pleads mitigating circumstances: she only has access to brief notes about V, and is not familiar with his case. V responds not with ceremonial forgiveness, but with a concise summary of his situation, 'in short the saddest things all happened to me, you know'.

What constitutes resilience for societies is the availability of a large repertoire of cultural responses and different world views. The translation zone of the city acts as the hub of this resilience. Translation as the clearing house of possibility reveals the immensity of the resources that a city can draw on to manage unpredictable and uncertain futures (Cronin and Simon 2014). Joanne is usually able to draw on a large repertoire of responses to the difficult and complex problems presented by her clients. For a moment here, however, she seems uncertain. Translation is as much about recognising the limits of our own understanding as it is about overcoming them. Implied in the translational gesture of reaching outwards is the simultaneous recognition of the fallibility of our knowledge and our need to reach outwards anyway. Translation is the social practice of embracing the existence of the other. We understand the world from the self outwards, one self among many others in interaction with myriad selves across borders of difference. In the sense that it is both essential and prior to the communication of meaning, translation is primary to that effort – it is what we do in social life and it is in translation, in other words, that we live (Maitland 2017).

Joanne pauses and says to V, 'bear with me a moment', typing details at the computer. Then she responds to her client's earlier point that he wants to see his children. As she does so she falls back on her strategy of introducing questions to prompt narrative, 'how many children do you have?', 'are they with your ex-wife?'. In answers to Joanne's series of questions V reports that he has not had recent contact with his children, and that he believes that they live with their mother. It is Joanne's question, 'is somebody stopping you seeing your children?' that elicits a more extended narrative. V's story begins as follows (the story is narrated in Mandarin):

she accused me of domestic violence
and she sued me in court and filed for divorce
but I never beat her

The phrase ‘domestic violence’, like Joanne’s reference to ‘disclosure’ and ‘conviction’, is narrated in English. The phrase is an evaluative indexical, pointing to relevant context in a way that potentially evaluates the narrated character of V (in the narrative) as a person accused of domestic violence. The phrase ‘domestic violence’ is recognisable in an everyday register, in common parlance. However, any utterance may be understood as belonging to several different registers, and linguistic signs associated with different registers at one level may be associated with a single register at another level (Møller and Jørgensen, 2012). ‘Domestic violence’ is also in a specialised legal register, a legal term defined by the UK Home Office as:

any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour,
violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners
or family members regardless of gender or sexuality
(Home Office, 2013)

This is almost certainly the sense in which V uses the term – as a legal term which refers to a criminal offence. Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 criminalised patterns of coercive or controlling behaviour where they are perpetrated against an intimate partner or family member. In V’s narrative he says ‘I never beat her’, defending himself against (the character of) his wife in the narrated event, and also against Joanne as a participant in the narrating event.

Now V introduces another character to the narrative, ‘I hired the solicitor from across the street’. V confesses his sin of having arrived late for a previous meeting with the solicitor, but at the same time blames the solicitor for failing to arrive on time for a second appointment, ‘he just didn’t show up last time for our appointment’. Now Joanne asks another question, ‘did the police come to your place to investigate?’. V replies,

the police didn’t do anything
they came once and passed our case to the court
they asked me to hand in some documents
and that’s it
nothing much

V’s narrative backgrounds the seriousness of the police action (or, in V’s account, inaction). His contradictory narrative tells how the police ‘didn’t do anything’, and also that they ‘they came once and passed our case to the court’. Nothing much, he says. Joanne asks V whether he went to court to answer the charges. V says his wife was going to drop the charges, but he was late for his court appearance. V partly blames his solicitor, who he says ‘didn’t show up at all’. V’s failure to arrive on time for his court case is now placed squarely on the solicitor’s shoulders. V distances himself from his failure to attend court punctually. Whatever the truth of the matter, in the narrated events of the story the solicitor acts as an unwitting alibi for the defendant. As we have suggested, we can examine the stance speakers take up toward themselves and others by managing the production or the reception of an utterance (Jaffe 2009). Speaker stance is a crucial component of interactional processes and practices, including issues of alignment / disalignment and the negotiation of power, as well as with the subtle ways in which speakers position themselves in relation to narrated or co-present social others. Through his narration of events V takes up a stance in which he is not culpable for his actions in missing his court appearance.

At this point Joanne summarises (rewords, translates) V's narrative, and adds, 'so you have the absence on your record, is that correct?'. V's earlier uncertainty about the disclosure of a criminal record reappears now, as he says, 'I really don't know how this happened'. Joanne clarifies the point, saying the failure to appear in court at the appointed time will show up in the disclosure report. Joanne betrays her own uncertainty now, saying this is not her field, and she has little knowledge of this (she is referring to family law, and child custody and access arrangements). V reverts to his discourse of despair, saying 'so many things happened to me one after another, how am I going to cope with it'. Joanne reiterates her lack of expertise, saying 'I can only try to help as I'm not an expert on this'. When confronted with V's despair Joanne appears to lose confidence. Sabin (1975) found that while translation can be a useful means of gathering life histories of patients with mental health conditions, the translation process may selectively mute recognition of the patient's despair. This can leave a picture of a person afflicted with an illness but not with the more accurate perception of a hopeless person, hating life, and moving toward choosing to end it by suicide. Joanne, neither a mental health clinician nor a professional translator, nevertheless finds herself in both roles. Her translation is not merely linguistic. Indeed she speaks the same languages as her client. But she finds herself translating despair (Sabin 1975), trying to make sense of a moment in time when a man appears before her with a complex condition, and with a downward life trajectory.

For Joanne the world of her client is one she struggles to imagine. In order to do so she must not only translate the signs she encounters in interaction with V, but she must translate herself. Translation recognises and articulates difference. It is the importation of this difference, the articulation of it from one's own perspective. Translation subsumes the difference of the alien into the own. With this comes the possibility of failure. The articulation of another's experience in one's own words requires the importation of other ideas, other viewpoints, other worldviews. But we always transform irrevocably that which we perceive, because we must necessarily reframe it from our own point of view. Through translation we exchange memories and confront traditions different from our own and so imagine the other with empathy for their story. Difference is what refuses translation, but it is also that which makes translation possible (Maitland 2017). Translation can no longer be configured only as a link between a familiar and a foreign culture, between a local original and a distant destination, between one monolingual community and another. The 'other' remains within constant earshot. The shared understandings of this coexistence change the meaning of translation from a gesture of benevolence to a process through which a common civility is negotiated (Simon 2012). For Joanne, as for anyone engaged in translation, the unfamiliar and foreign can be disorienting.

V tells Joanne emphatically that he is not guilty of domestic violence, and says more than once that he was 'set up by them'. Joanne says she will do some research in her own time to identify organisations that may be able to offer him help with his family matters.

Example 7.4

- J 是。嗯 你知道你的孩子们在哪里吗？
 < yea um do you know where your kids are? >
 V 我知道他们在伯明翰所以我才在这里

J < I know they are in Birmingham that's why I chose to be here as well >
 哎 (.) 我不是心理医生，我真不知道该怎么劝你。
 < ahh I'm not a psychologist myself
 so I don't know how to console you >
 V 他们让我去别的国家
 还保证我能拿到国籍
 但是如果看不到我的孩子
 我要国籍有什么用呢
 < they asked me to go to other countries
 promising that I can take nationality there
 but what's the use of nationality
 if I can't see my kids >
 J 我真不知道你目前的状况该给你什么样的建议
 什么事情都是知易行难
 我要是你我的境况可能比你还糟糕呢。
 < I really don't know what advice is best in your situation
 it's easier said than done
 if I were you I might be worse than you are >
 V 我的病医生治不好的。
 < doctors can't cure me >
 J 我的意思是我要是你我可能还不如你呢
 我肯定还不如你现在做得好呢
 所以你应该为自己做的这么好感到满意。
 < I'm just saying if I were you I might have done worse
 I can't even do as well as you've done so far
 so you should be pleased that you are managing so well still >
 V ((laughs))
 J 我是说人一辈子就像一场旅行
 只有一直往前走。
 < I'm just saying life is a long journey
 and we have to move on >
 V 就是你遇到的每一个人都欢迎你
 < it's just everybody you meet makes you feel unwelcome >
 J 哎，这是你的错觉。
 你来的时候我没有不欢迎你吧？
 < ah this is your misinterpretation
 I didn't hate you when you came to us >
 V 我不是说你
 只不过我遇到的大多数人他们是这样的。
 现在说这些都太晚了
 < I'm not saying that you did
 it's just most people I meet do
 and it's too late >
 J 这只是你个人的感觉

- 你只是因为身上发生了这么多事你就觉得别人会算计你
全世界都和你作对
你要是这么想就错了。
< this is just how you feel
you are just thinking that all these things happened to you
so you feel you were set up and that the whole world is against you
it would be wrong to take this as your starting point >
- V 算计一个人太容易了
< it won't take much to set up someone >
- J 你要是老这么想就很难从现在的心态里走出来
呃 很多人 (.) 很多人都会碰到不幸的事情
但还是得再爬起来。
< if you keep thinking like this it will be really hard for you
to get away from this mood
ohh many people so many people have come across
many unfortunate things but they can still stand on their own two feet >
- V 就像政府 我们都是被政府算计了 呵呵哈哈
< like our government we are all set up by the government hhhaaaa>
- J 我真不知道该说什么了
如果你能从自己的小圈子里走出来
多和其他的人聊聊天
多点乐趣，我敢肯定你会很快好起来的。
这不过是我个人的观点
也许你会觉得对你没什么帮助。
< I really don't know what to say
if you can walk out of your own little world
and come to talk to other people
and have some fun I'm sure you will get better
this is my personal opinion
you might not like it and you might think it's unhelpful >

Joanne is faced with interpreting that which she does not understand. She is exposed to difference – to areas of knowledge, expertise, and experience which are outside of her comfort zone (Maitland 2017). Rather than hiding from difference Joanne engages with it. She is not qualified in, or confident with, family law, but she pursues the question of V's access to his children, saying, 'do you know where your kids are?'. Once again she explicitly distances herself from any perception that she has expertise in this area of work, with a metapragmatic comment which acts as a request for understanding, and a remedial ritual, 'I'm not a psychologist myself, so I don't know how to console you'. She asks V's forgiveness for the offence of not being a psychologist, and for the failing of being ill-equipped for consolation. As before V does not complete the ceremonial ritual by offering forgiveness or absolution, but instead adds to his narrative, saying 'they' asked him to live in another country and to take nationality in the new territory. However, he says 'what's the use of nationality if I can't see my kids'. Joanne listens to his tale, but again takes up a stance in which she positions herself as lacking expertise in this area, 'I really don't know what advice is best in your situation'. Stance focuses on the reflexive,

metapragmatic, and metasociolinguistic dimension of human communication (Jaffe 2009). Joanne takes up a position in which she almost helplessly comments on her inability to provide the most appropriate discursive means of supporting her client.

As she has done on previous occasions in the same interaction, Joanne refers to herself as an example to encourage V, saying 'if I were you I might be worse than you are'. Her client responds to this encouragement with a determined pessimism, 'doctors can't cure me'. Joanne, however, pushes on, repeating her point, 'I'm just saying if I were you I might have done worse, I can't even do as well as you've done so far'. Joanne extends the strategy of situating herself in the discourse of encouragement, as far as she is able translating the experience of her client as her own imagined experience. She repeats the metapragmatic 'I'm just saying', this time to point to the homespun philosophy which she deploys as an additional strategy, 'life is a long journey, and we have to move on'. But V will not be won over by well-meaning positivity, and insists that 'everybody you meet makes you feel unwelcome'. Joanne walks a tightrope now, on the one hand steering away from direct contradiction of her client, on the other hand pulling him back from the abyss of despair. She tells him he misinterprets people, and 'I didn't hate you when you came to us', once again introducing the character of herself into narrated events. However, V stands by his point, albeit mitigating 'everybody' to 'most people'.

Joanne provides a summary, a rewording, a translation of her client's view of the pernicious, abject world, together with an evaluative comment on the same,

this is just how you feel
you are just thinking that all these things happened to you
so you feel you were set up and that the whole world is against you
it would be wrong to take this as your starting point

The first line here ('this is just how you feel') frames Joanne's account of her client's view of the world, implying that his feelings are no more than feelings, and a rational view would be contrary. Joanne represents her client's perspective through ventriloquation (Bakhtin 1981), speaking his words (as thoughts and feelings), and in so doing establishing a stance for herself in relation to those words, and in relation to the character of the client. Ventriloquation is the process through which a narrator adopts a social position in the storytelling event with respect to the types of voices he or she has indexed while describing the narrated event (Wortham 2001). The metapragmatic descriptors 'you are just thinking' and 'you feel' evaluatively frame the ventriloquated text, creating distance between Joanne as narrator and her client as a narrated character. By the time Joanne delivers her explicit evaluation of V's perspective on the world ('it would be wrong to take this as your starting point') it is hardly necessary, so clearly has it been ushered in by ventriloquation.

However, Joanne's client appears not to hear, or at least not to listen, as he maintains his stance in relation to the world. It won't take much to set up someone, he says. We are all set up by the government. Meanwhile Joanne tells him that if he doesn't snap out of his gloomy mind-set soon his depression will be irreversible. Other people have problems, she says, 'but they can still stand on their own two feet'. But her direct approach makes little progress, and finally she concedes, 'I really don't know what to say'. She attempts one more version (translation) of her 'pull yourself

together and snap out of it' strategy, but apparently to no avail. For the moment Joanne seems defeated. She deploys a remedial interaction ritual, 'this is my personal opinion, you might not like it', acknowledging that her directness may not be welcomed. In her attempts to support V she is pushed to translate his debilitating illness, and in so doing to translate herself. A skilled communicator, light on her feet, adaptable, she concedes that for once she does not know what to say. The act of translation means living with difference, and living with failure. It means acknowledging what separates us. But because it also enables us to envisage and embrace that which we did not previously imagine, translation is about self-transformation. This does not mean that foreign practices, ideas, beliefs, traditions and ideologies can always be integrated successfully into the familiar (Maitland 2017). Joanne is faced with difference which is not a difference of 'culture', or 'language', but which is difference nonetheless.

Joanne is not one to give up in the face of a minor setback in support of her client. Her next strategy is to narrate at length the tale (not transcribed here) of a friend of hers who found himself in a very similar situation to V, lost his business, his family, and his home. He bounced back, and, she says, 'if he can, you can as well'. However, V is unimpressed, saying Joanne's friend is 'dumb', and he returns to his main theme, complaining, 'since I was little everything has been set up'. Having failed to make progress through the narrative about her friend, she reverts to telling V to pull himself together. The sense that she is casting about for a way to reach him – to bridge difference, to translate – is reinforced when Joanne says, 'if you win the lottery', 'if you have money your ex will come back to you'. She ends by suggesting that it is usual for the insurance company to conduct a detailed investigation of a large claim, but he responds by saying 'they are just dragging out the case while playing a game'. Just co-operate, says Joanne. Let's call it a day. See you, OK. See you.

Summary

In the superdiverse city difference is everywhere. Elsewhere is next door, the other is within earshot. However, difference is not limited to categorisations based on culture, race, ethnicity, or language. Difference appears in many guises. Joanne encounters difference whenever a client crosses the threshold of her office. Normally the client is 'Chinese', and a speaker of Cantonese and / or Mandarin, and sometimes other languages. In order to support her clients Joanne enters their world as best she can, translating herself and translating them. She translates systems of law, welfare, housing, insurance, and so on, to the best of her ability making them meaningful. She is adaptable, knowledgeable, and determined to improve the lives of her clients. She is a mediator, deploying a variety of discursive transfer techniques and mediating roles, obscuring the relations between the original and the translation, bridging difference, entering the world of the other. Occasionally, though, despite her efforts, the world of the client seems out of reach, untranslatable.

In this chapter we have examined a lengthy exchange between Joanne and a client with the troubles of the world on his shoulders. He suffers with depression, is separated from his wife, has not seen his children for months, lost his business in a fire, and feels the world is against him. Joanne needs all her resources to penetrate the client's despair. She deals with practicalities, asking him whether he has completed a disclosure form, required for the insurance claim, and

whether he has a record of convictions. Joanne moves between registers, translating across social boundaries, explaining the legal concepts for a client who does not really want to know. Adopting a heteroglossic analysis we can recognize the complexity of the interaction, as Joanne represents a legal register associated with power, privilege, rank, and regulation, and translates legal concepts for her client in Mandarin.

Prompted by Joanne's questions, the client narrates a story in which he is the victim of false accusation, and finally let down by a tardy solicitor. Joanne needs to translate the client's narrative, to interpret the stance he takes in the narrating event, and the stance his character takes in the narrated events. For Joanne the world of her client is one she struggles to imagine. In order to do so she must not only translate the signs she encounters in interaction with V, but she must translate herself. Translation recognises and articulates difference. Joanne draws on her cultural repertoire to translate her client's world. She positions herself as a character in his position, and translates his experience as her own imagined experience. Through ventriloquation she represents and evaluates his thoughts and feelings, entering and translating his world as she does so. Ultimately, though, his world may not be entered, and may not be understood. To think, to speak is always to translate, even when one speaks to oneself, when one discovers the traces of the other in oneself (Ricoeur 2006). I don't know what to say, says the advisor / advocate who rarely finds herself at a loss. Occasionally the other is too far off to be readily translatable.



Chapter 8

The Translator in the City

Translators, interpreters, advocates, agents, mediators, are essential figures in the city and elsewhere, and “it is necessary to draw the portraits of the significant individuals who play this role” (Simon 2012: 6). It is necessary to better understand the communicative practices with which translators render the world more meaningful and more just. It is necessary to peer into the hidden spaces where, day after day, translation enables those with limited resources to gain access to meanings which are otherwise elusive. It is also necessary to understand the contexts in which translation fails, when the other remains out of reach. As much can be learned from unsuccessful exchanges as from successful. In this report we have looked in some detail at the translation practice of an untrained translator, Joanne, as she goes about the business of supporting people who make appointments with the Advice and Advocacy service of the Chinese Community Centre – Birmingham. The challenges her clients face are myriad. They range from a need for support with completing a claim form for Employment Support Allowance, to lack of confidence in completing an application for British citizenship, to anxiety that their welfare benefits have been cancelled, to confusion about the pensions system, and so on and so forth. For many clients such challenges are not discrete, but overlap, as they struggle to comprehend systems and processes of government support, and the demands of the state.

What we have seen is that translation is not restricted to transfer from one ‘language’ to another. Indeed when meaning remains out of reach it is often not because text is ‘in English’, but because bureaucratic systems and processes are unwieldy, and lack transparency, in any

language. Far from rendering the translator redundant, this situation multiplies her work load, and her work roles. She must become counsellor, advocate, gatekeeper, poacher, gamekeeper, subversive, empathizer, expert, improviser, mediator, lawyer, judge, teacher, clinician, broker, and more. In all of these roles she translates the world, translates the other, and translates herself. In this report we chose to examine just six of the many exchanges with clients Rachel observed, and which we analysed together. This option may have limited the scope of the report, but it added considerably to its depth. We were able to look inside exchanges as they unfolded, observing the trajectory and shape of the relationship between translator and client.

We will briefly summarise what we learned from the detailed analysis of these six interactions. In the first interaction the client, X, needed help applying on her husband's behalf for Personal Independence Payment. In order to apply she had to provide medical evidence of her husband's disability, and complete a PiP2 form. Here we saw Joanne engaged in interlingual translation, as she moved easily between Mandarin, English, and Cantonese. In her translation practice she was adaptable, and light on her feet. In this exchange, as elsewhere, she was less concerned with equivalence or correctness, and more concerned with ensuring the best possible outcome for her client. In this particular exchange Joanne did little more than engage in the mundane task of completing an online benefits application form on behalf of the client. But she did do much more than this. In a sophisticated discursive practice, she moved back and forth between languages, living in languages that could not be prised apart. She translated (interlingually) the client's story, and reworded it, summarised it, within the constraints of the online form. She selected the parts of the client's story that would earn points in the benefits system, backgrounded those that would not. By such processes of recontextualisation and resemiotisation she acted on the client's behalf. She co-constructed a narrative that threatened to veer away from the required criteria, but she always brought it back, re-focused the client on the agenda, kept the purpose of the task in view. She negotiated a path between the truth as it was told by the client and the criteria of the DWP. In this single interaction with one client we saw many of the features of Joanne's translation practice. These would recur, and emerge as interactional patterns across the wider set of exchanges with clients. In this interaction as in so many others we saw the translation zone as a transformative space in which meanings were mediated, and lives improved.

In Chapter 3 we considered an encounter between Joanne and a client who was looking for advice about demands for payment made by the city council, and an unsuccessful application for housing benefit. He has missed his council tax payments and if he fails to pay by five o'clock today he will be summoned to court. There are consequences for failing to abide by the rules. Joanne mediates on her client's behalf, asking for more for time, and for understanding. She brings her client into the presence, albeit virtually, of the court of dispassionate human conscience, the court of history. The court offers hope of a more just hearing, hope of an imagined future where a sense of what a good life entails may be redeemed (Farmer 2001). Joanne pleads before the good and just king on behalf of her client. The client's only hope is that his case may be heard, that there will be a response. But documents have gone missing. Not all the evidence will be presented before the court. The superaddressee, the people, and their absolutely just responsive understanding, will not wait for ever. Joanne negotiates a way through for her client. Payment is made; there is a plan for the future. Pragmatic translation restores order, and the client can go on with his life, escaping the purview of the courts for now.

In some of Joanne's exchanges with clients the complexity of the challenges faced by Joanne reveals itself. A client in his forties arrives with his parents. He is unfit for work because he suffers from schizophrenia and obsessive compulsive disorder. However, following a work capability assessment interview, his welfare benefits have been withdrawn. Joanne explains the complexity of the benefits system to the family. The task here is not interlingual translation. It is rather the translation of a welter of unfamiliar terms and acronyms, a web of rules and regulations. Joanne indexes herself as one who knows about the benefits system, establishing her credentials through her apparent ease with complexity. She opens out the folds (Ricouer 2006) of the benefits system gradually and patiently. But translation here is not unidirectional. After initial reticence the client's mother begins to narrates her world, and the world of her son. Joanne's questions prompt and co-construct the narrative. The challenge now is to reformulate the narrative so that it meets the criteria for the client's claim for Employment and Support Allowance. She does so with more attention to social justice for her client than with respect for notions of equivalence in translation. She is not afraid to add to her clients' account to ensure that social justice is served. In short, Joanne does whatever can be done to recontextualise the narrative to give her client a chance of receiving the benefits to which he is entitled.

We have seen that translation extends far beyond the transfer of meanings from one language to another. An aspect of translation which has increasing relevance in the contemporary world is resemiotization. Able to examine how some modes and materialities come to have greater legitimacy and authority than others in certain social contexts, resemiotization asks how interactive practices emerge in ways that are linked to the translation of meaning across modes. In Chapter 5 we observed a couple who had come to Joanne's office asking for support with their application for benefits related to absence from work because the husband required a hip operation. Joanne explains the bureaucratic process of the application, leading them by the hand, negotiating a way through unfamiliar terrain. In order to make a claim for benefits a sick note from the doctor would be required. Available letters from the hospital would not do. Only the sick note would suffice. Without the sick note all would be invalid. It was not enough to produce the facts, without the relevant artefact. Contextualised at the threshold of the medical service and the welfare benefits system, the sick note accrued a validity and an authority. It was also invested with economic capital, a prized artefact as it was a ticket to government benefits. In Joanne's account it was a site of contestation and, at times, violence. In this interaction Joanne encounters an artefact which appears untranslatable. Requiring the client's diagnosis for the online form, she consults the hospital notes, and is defeated by medical jargon. She is unable to do as she usually would, and reword the notes. Pragmatic as ever, she copies the notes letter by letter, once more demonstrating her flexible approach to translation.

When a client arrives asking for support with an application for housing, the question of an ethics of translation comes to the fore. The client has been sleeping on a couch in his uncle's flat for some time. He does not qualify for council / social housing, so Joanne proposes that he tells the council that he has been evicted, and declare himself homeless. This would move him to the front of the housing queue. As a translator she is confronted with the necessity to make decisions and choices in translation. Here she makes an ethical and ideological choice based on what she perceives as the most beneficial outcome for her client. Of secondary importance are questions of adherence to the letter of the law, or loyalty to the neutrality of the translation process. Joanne moves in a space between transgression of the rules and insistence on the rules. She both

appropriates the discourse of the state, and subverts the state. What motivates her social action, however, is social justice. At all times, sometimes in the face of his disagreement, she acts for the good of her client. She acts not so much according to his wishes as to for his benefit, as she judges it. The client is not certain, and he goes away to consider his options. Joanne's determination to create a better world for her clients does not always fall on fertile ground.

In her role as advice and advocacy worker Joanne would sometimes encounter clients in crisis. A client arrived who had come for his second appointment, having attended the previous week. He has asked for help with claiming housing benefit, and he had also asked her for support as he had missed his required 'signing on' at the Job Centre. In the second interview it emerged that his current problems were greater than these. He suffered from depression, his wife had left him, he had not seen his children for a long time, he had lost his business to a fire, and the insurance company had not paid out on his claim. Joanne needs all her skills to support the client through his despair. She takes a pragmatic approach, dealing with what can be dealt with. Central to the exchange is another (putative) artefact, the disclosure of criminal convictions form, which is required for the insurance claim. Joanne moves skilfully between registers, translating across boundaries, explaining legal concepts for the client. She empathises with him and aligns discursively, placing herself as a comparative character in the discourse. The client narrates a story of false accusation and victimization, of the world conspiring against him. Joanne deploys all she knows to shake him out of his despair, but his darkness will not be shifted by her, not on this occasion. Finally she does not know what to say. Translation sometimes encounters the untranslatable, and the client leaves without optimism or resolution.

We have seen that Joanne is one of the essential figures who keep the city moving. She is one of the mediators, intermediaries, shifters, connecting agents, and dispatchers, one of the translators who are the "anonymous heroes of communication" (Simon 2012: 6). Beyond making social space more habitable, translators make social life more just. In our detailed observation of Joanne's practice, more than anything we see a translator concerned to improve the lives of her clients. In order to do so she deploys a wide semiotic repertoire in which she rewords, translates, explains, invents, creates, contests, resemiotizes, recontextualises, ventriloquates, and much besides. In most cases Joanne is able to advocate successfully on behalf of her clients, changing their life trajectories, often in small ways, sometimes more profoundly. But at times her efforts are to no avail, and the gap between herself and the other is found to be beyond translation, out of reach. But translators like Joanne, in the nooks and crannies of social life, keep the superdiverse city moving. It is hard to see how human life could thrive without them (Tymozcko 2014).



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ⁱ Transcription conventions:

- (xxxx) unclear speech
- (.) a brief interval within an utterance
- (2) a brief interval within an utterance, in seconds
- [word] paralinguistic features and situational descriptions
- < > English translation of Mandarin speech
- [] English translation of Cantonese speech