Translator Education Programs & the Translation Labour Market: linear career progression or a touch of chaos?

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This paper explores the links between translator education programs and the translation labour market. These links contribute to portraying graduate career development as being linear and progressing through stages. However, careers these days are impacted by chance, opportunity and changes in circumstance; they follow a chaotic rather than linear progression. My larger project drew on sociology of education and translation studies, and involved ethnographies of one university translator education program in Spain and two in Australia. This paper draws on eighteen months of fieldwork at all three sites, which included observations, informal chats, semi-structured interviews, a questionnaire, and consideration of curriculum documents. The study revealed that a minority of learners expect to enter the translation labour market, and that there are minimal prospects of full-time translation work. These findings highlight the need for translator education programs to include employability skills that are flexible and relevant to varied labour markets, which will prepare learners for chaotic careers. Offering translator education programs concurrently with, or as an added qualification to programs from other fields could be one way of achieving this.

Keywords : employability, chaos, career progression, translator education, ethnography

1. Introduction

Employability is increasingly becoming a significant element of higher education. Universities are under pressure from governments to contribute to the economy by producing graduates who are workplace-ready (Huang 2013; Tomlinson 2012). There is debate over how exactly to define employability, with definitions representing different

stakeholder positions (Pool and Sewell 2007; Sumanasiri, Yajid, and Khatibi 2015: 85); however, there remain common themes among them. Skills development, career progression and the labour market are three that are central to a variety of definitions. Hillage and Pollard's (1998) simple description of employability highlights these themes well when they claim that for the individual:

> *...employability depends on the knowledge, skills and attributes they possess, the way they use those assets and present them to employers and the context (e. g. personal circumstances and labour market environment) within which they seek work.*

Skills development is generally discussed in isolation and is not commonly intersected with the other two themes. In contrast, career progression and the labour market are often discussed in relation to each other. This paper explores the links between translator education programs and the translation labour market, and how these links contribute to portraying career development of translation graduates as being linear and progressing through stages.

2. Career Progression and the Labour Market:
Learner Perceptions and Expectations

Studies concerned with career progression and the labour market often deal with learner perceptions and expectations surrounding how their career will progress over time. Tomlinson (2007: 293-300) explores the way learners and graduates understand and manage their employability, identifying two dominant learner types, which he terms 'careerists' and 'ritualists'. Careerists place higher value on their careers than other areas of life and it is a central part of their future aspirations. Ritualists on the other hand, take a passive approach to career progression and tend to scale down their work aspirations; work is a means to an end and is not central to organising their future goals (293-300). Tomlinson concludes that the transition from higher education to the labour market involves an active process for all learners, irrespective of whether they are careerists or ritualists. Huang's (2013) study, which delves into the motivations of learners to study abroad and how these decisions interact with future career aspirations, similarly found that learners were heterogeneous in how they approached employability. She examined future career planning and approaches to managing employability of

Chinese learners at a university in the UK. A key finding was that while learners recognise employability as a crucial individual responsibility, their approaches to managing it differed. Tomlinson's (2007) study focuses on how learners perceive the graduate labour market, and the extent to which the issue of employability informs their understanding of how they will participate in the market in the future. Mann, Massey, Glover, Kashefpadkel, and Dawkins (2013) develop this link between young people's career aspirations and the labour market. Supporting Tomlinson's call for active career management, they conclude that learners' aspirations are disconnected from the market. All of the abovementioned studies deal with learner perceptions and expectations surrounding employability. They highlight the valuable insights that can be gained from understanding learners' perceptions of the labour market and their future career development. The present study has drawn on this use of learner perception to explore links between translator education programs and the translation labour market.

3. Program Development and Market Demands in Translator Education

Employability is discussed in relation to translator education within the context of program development. Similar to work in the higher education arena, there is a focus on how translator education programs can be developed so that they are in line with market demands and can therefore increase graduates' prospects of gaining employment in the translation industry. Jääskeläinen, Kujamäki and Mäkisalo, Schäffner (2012), Gaspari, Almaghout, and Doherty (2015), Flanagan and Christensen (2014), Torres-Hostench (2012) and Youlan (2012) all use the translation labour market as a reference point for discussing how translator education programs can be developed to produce employable graduates. Jääskeläinen, Kujamäki, and Mäkisalo (2011: 152 emphasis added)) sum up the common belief that Translation Studies learners are preparing themselves to become professional translators when they claim that "the aim of translator education is obviously a professional translator⋯ Translator education should prepare graduates to cope with the changes on the *translationmarket*" (152 emphasis added). Torres-Hostench (2012) and Youlan (2012), are among the few that I encountered that recognise the value in developing skills that can be used in various fields. The possibilities of where translation graduates can find employment outside the translation industry have not yet been considered in depth, and as such, literature that includes these possibilities in the context of translator education program development is an area that can be expanded.

Engagement with broader debates around employability and the nature of graduate employment opportunities would benefit translator education research. Translator competence models have provided a firm basis for research that addresses employability within translator education, which may account for the focus on graduates entering the translation market. The models outline the various skills and attitudes required for work in the translation industry and are being increasingly used to guide curriculum design of translator education programs.

3.1. Translator Competence Models

Translator competence models are used as a way to include employability in translator education programs in a structured and systematic way. Curriculum is designed to target technical and generic skill development that is required by practitioners in the translation labour market. Translation agencies, employers and other organisations that contract translation services are vocal about the skills they expect from graduates. Competence models have been developed as an attempt to map out these skills. While the PACTE Group's[1] model, which was validated from an empirical-experimental perspective, is highly regarded (PACTE 2011: 32-33), others have been developed with the explicit intention of being used in curriculum design. Kelly (2005) and the European Master in Translation (EMT) Project have produced two other prominent models. These three models share common core elements, and each claims that translator competence incorporates both technical skills involved in translation, and generic skills that can be transferred to and from other contexts.

European translator education programs are largely influenced by competence models, as competence-based curriculum is promoted by the European Higher Education Area. Przemysław and Magdalena (2009: 333) summarise the purpose of competence-based curriculum well when they claim that it 'is aimed at developing an employee according to the labour market's demand' (333). Following this understanding of program development, competence models have become the basis for curriculum design in an unquestioning manner. Within translator education, translation competence models have been developed with the hope of informing competence-based curriculum.

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[1] The PACTE Group has been researching translator competence through empirical-experimental studies since 1997. Their research covers the translation process and the translation product of six language pairs – English-Catalan, English-Spanish, French-Catalan, French-Spanish, and German-Catalan – and is the basis of their translator competence model.

The EMT project is a good example of how curriculum design is aligned with market requirements through the use of a competence model. The EMT Project provides a framework for competence-based curriculum that institutions belonging to the network can use when developing their curriculum. A large number of universities have signalled their desire to be part of the network, with, at the time of writing, 62 European Masters programs having taken up membership and subsequently using the EMT competence model within their curricula. For undergraduate translation programs that fall outside the scope of the EMT Project, competence-based curriculum design continues to draw on competence models for its execution (Albir 2007). The wide popularity of the EMT project, along with the increasing use of competence-based learning under the Bologna Process[2], highlights the growing perspective that translator education within Europe is preparing graduates for the translation labour market.

3.2. NAATI

Across the globe in Australia, translator education programs include a key requirement of entering the translation market. Many programs are endorsed by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), who provide the entry-level requirement for professional translators: NAATI 'Professional' certification. While this certification is notoriously difficult to attain, there will be few job prospects without it. NAATI does not release official figures pertaining to the pass rate of its certification tests; however, NAATI's Development Manager stated that it typically sits around 20 to 25 per cent across all languages for Professional Translator certification (R Foote 2014, personal communication, 25 June). A method of increasing one's chances of passing the test is to undertake a program of study within which the test is integrated[3]. The integration of the test into a program of study, and that NAATI certification is the entry-level requirement for professional work as a translator, means that a key requirement of the translation labour market is at the forefront of translator education programs in Australia.

Studies concerned with employability in translator education maintain the perspective that learners are preparing themselves for careers as professional translators. This

2) The Bologna Process is a collective of stakeholders involved in higher education in Europe, which aims to harmonise higher education in the region and make it more competitive on a global scale.

3) In the future, NAATI will take over full control of certification testing and education institutions will no longer be able to offer the test within their programs. However, at the time of writing, the NAATI test was still being offered within education programs.

perspective portrays career progression for translation graduates as linear and progressing through stages. The first stage is completing a translator education program, with the next being entering the translation market as a beginning practitioner. However, among career development literature, there is a body of work that considers careers as non-linear. Robert Pryor and Jim Bright's collection of work from 2003 to the present outlines what they term a Chaos Theory of Careers. They argue that by working within a career development framework, their theory captures inter-connection, change and chance, which are at the heart of human existence and other chaos theory applications. Below I outline the fundamentals of their approach and how it applies to career development for learners of translator education programs.

4. Chaotic Careers

Understandings of career development have changed considerably over the decades. What was once understood to be a linear process is now discussed in terms of its chaotic nature. Previously, around the time of the world wars, career development was thought of in terms of matching one's personal characteristics with an occupation. It was thought that an awareness of one's personal characteristics, along with knowledge of various occupations, would inform decision-making around which occupation would be most suitable. Progressing from this, and following the world wars, the idea of an occupation was replaced with an understanding of career. A career was said to have stages and one progressed through from one to the other in a sequential order. A prominent scholar in the area, Super (1953) defined these stages as: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline. Conquering the stages was equal to succeeding in one's career. However, these understandings of careers were not adequate to deal with the impact of globalisation and the instability it brought with it. As the world has become progressively more globalised, career development has "shift[ed] away from stability, order, uniformity, and equilibrium towards a new order of instability, disorder, disequilibrium, and non-linear relationships" (Amundson 2003: 91). Career decision-making has begun to be understood as less rational and uncontrolled, which allows for greater flexibility so that unplanned events can be accounted for. Previous ideas of career development have been questioned for their inability to accommodate instability and change. Careers are now recognised as containing an element of chaos and being far from linear (Bloch 2005; Peake and McDowall 2012; Pryor and Bright 2011).

The idea of chaotic careers provides a realistic picture of the decision-making involved in career development. However, research that addresses career progression in translator education tends to be based on traditional understandings of career development. That is, careers are discussed as a linear process, which are constituted by stages that individuals will progress through once they have acquired the desired skills, or competences. The data I collected during fieldwork revealed that translator education research would benefit from engaging further with literature that deals with chaotic careers, as career pathways of translation learners is likely to be chaotic. Learners' perceptions of the labour market and of their future career progression exposed translator education curriculum as being disconnected from this idea of chaotic careers.

5. Ethnographic Case Study of a Translation Classroom

The present study drew on several methods common in case study research from translation studies and ethnographies from sociology of education research. I integrated the two methodologies into one design so that I could look at employability in translator education in depth, as well as in context. I selected one case in Spain, which I call UniEspaña, and selected two cases in Australia, which I call UniOz 1 and UniOz 2.

Extended observation accompanied by field notes, informal chats and semi-structured interviews were used for data collection. Observations primarily took place in the classroom, but also included times when students were speaking in groups before and after class in the faculty building (UniEspaña) or at the entrance of the classroom (UniOz 1 and UniOz 2). During observations, I recorded field notes of instances when the themes of post-graduation aspirations and job opportunities were discussed. Informal chats with learners informed semi-structured interviews, which centred on their motivations for studying translation and their post-graduation aspirations. Informal chats were recorded in field notes, whereas semi-structured interviews were recorded in field notes and audio recorded where permission was granted[4]. The below table provides further detail of data collection.

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4) One learner requested that interviews only be recorded in field notes.

Table 1: Data Collection Summary

	UniEpsaña	UniOz 1	UniOz 2
Approx. number of students per class	30	70 (specialised class) 30 (NAATI class)	20
Total classes observed	48	18	3
Informal chats	37	3	2
Semi-structured interviews	13	6	2
Classroom observation time	2 semesters of 15 weeks each	7 weeks	3 weeks
Total data collection time	1 year: Sep 2013 – Jun 2014	3 months: Aug – Nov 2014	3 months: May – Aug 2015

Categories were identified during fieldwork, which were developed further throughout initial and subsequent analysis phases. The categories relevant to this paper were employability, curriculum, market demands and skills development. A contradiction between the amount of time and effort spent by educators to prepare learners for the translation labour market and the motivations and post-graduation aspirations of learners was a theme that emerged from the data and informed the categories. Following a multi-theoretical approach (Tavory and Timmermans 2014), data were analysed in relation to current and relevant debate regarding employability in higher education, translator education, and career development. I was positioned as a participant observer with multiple insider/outsider roles.

6. Aligning Curriculum with Market Demands

6.1. Competence-based Education

The translator education programs at UniEspaña, UniOz 1 and UniOz 2 were closely aligned to translation market demands. UniEspaña's program was designed in the context of European-wide educational reforms brought about by the Bologna Process, which emphasise competence-based degrees (Way 2008: 88). It was designed to align with competences identified in translator competence models, whose primary function is to outline the competences required by professional translators. Although the degrees at

UniOz 1 and UniOz 2 were not competence-based, competence models were implicitly present in curriculum design. The programs being endorsed by NAATI to provide learners the opportunity to undertake NAATI certification testing was another way in which key requirements of the translation market were present. As NAATI is the entry-level standard to practice as a professional translator in Australia, the programs were designed with the aim of preparing learners to undertake NAATI testing, which could lead to them becoming NAATI-certified.

At UniEspaña, observations confirmed the use of a competence-based approach. The course reader included a self-assessment activity for learners to complete a competence analysis. The competences included conformed to current understandings of translator competence and included the following areas: communication and textual, cultural, thematic, instrumental, psychophysiological, interpersonal, and strategic (EMT Expert Group 2009; Kelly 2005; PACTE 2011). Group activities conducted throughout the semester were structured so that learners developed these competences within a translation project management model. The lecturer kept a record of which competences had been demonstrated and which required further development. The use of such learning materials, learning activities and assessment tools reinforced links between the curriculum and labour market demands.

Although the programs at UniOz 1 and UniOz 2 were not explicitly competence-based, translator competence models remained implicitly present. Translator competence is understood as incorporating inter-, intra- and extra-textual features (EMT Expert Group 2009; PACTE 2003), which includes technical and generic skills. Technical skills that are commonly shared between various competence models can be categorised as language, culture, research and terminology. In terms of generic skills, they can be broadly grouped as either encompassing strategy, or as concerned with interpersonal skills.

At UniOz 1, these elements of competence models were observed during lectures. In one lecture, an educator commented,

> What we're really pushing is for you to have a process of understanding the source text, building knowledge databases and then tackling the target text. And that you can follow this process for any text type (Educator 1, Site 2).

The translation process was detailed throughout the lecture with the key elements being: understanding the source text fully; filling gaps of knowledge by reading in both languages; terminology management; production of target texts with sensitivity to the

target cultures' systems, procedures, standards, expectations, requirements etc.; reflection and repetition of the process in different areas (technical, business, medical, scientific, legal); and a need for generalist specialist knowledge of the industry. The elements covered were reminiscent of those covered at UniEspaña under their competence-based approach, and of the various translator competence models in existence. The curriculum and classroom activities at UniOz 1 included linguistic, information mining and terminology competence as technical skills, and interpersonal and strategic problem-solving skills as generic skills. UniOz 2's program similarly included these core features of translator competence models. Translation theory and communication courses covered linguistic competence, whereas information mining and terminology competences were covered in the practical courses. Intercultural and strategic competences were integrated into all courses, as assessment tasks often involved collaborative group work and problem-solving exercises.

6.2. Professional Guidance

A link between market demands and translator education was further emphasised by professional guidance and advice given in class. At UniEspaña, the lecturer made numerous comments relating to jobs within translation or translation-related labour markets that learners could apply for upon graduation. Below is a typical example taken from my field notes:

> Editing is something that is well paid⋯ if you put in project management jobs⋯ there are jobs all over the place⋯ not just translation⋯ If you have project management skills you can probably get work in any field⋯ (Educator 1, Site 1).

Profiles of past graduates were also used as examples of potential jobs, and job offers were circulated via an online platform to current and previous learners. While translation and language-related fields were the most common, project management was the only non-translation field that was mentioned.

Educators at UniOz 1 and UniOz 2 similarly gave professional guidance and advice to learners. The programs included practical and theoretical courses, which allowed ample opportunity for practical strategies that were theoretically grounded to be explored within a professional context. Educators at UniOz 1 contextualised any advice given so that learners could see how translation practice would take place in different work environments. Below are some examples taken from field-notes that demonstrate this

contextualised advice:

> *Nowadays agencies ask proof reader to explain their reasons for changes. ⋯ so we do need technical terms to explain our reasons as a translator (Educator 3, Site 2).*
>
> *If it is a real job, you may want to get some more information (Educator 3, Site 2).*
>
> *So in real life you can contact the client (Educator 3, Site 2).*
>
> *But you want to flag this to your client so that they know that you are not happy with it (Educator 3, Site 2).*

Practical learning activities that were used as the basis for class discussions were consistently framed within a professional context. Professional advice and guidance was given with the intention of building professional competence and to prepare learners for the NAATI test.

The fact that the programs at UniOz 1 and UniOz 2 could lead to NAATI certification was another way in which the curriculum was linked to a key requirement of entering the translation market in Australia. The programs at UniOz 1 and UniOz 2 had been endorsed by NAATI to provide learners the opportunity to attain NAATI certification. The presence of NAATI in their programs made an explicit link between the qualification and the translation market.

7. Translators please⋯ step right up!

In spite of the significant amount of time and effort dedicated to enhancing technical translation skills for the translation industry, and generic skills that are advantageous for translation-related professions, the data revealed that few learners at all the three sites were likely to become translators. By speaking with learners during informal chats and semi-structured interviews, and from analysing a short questionnaire, I was given an insight into what their post-graduation aspirations were.

Learners at UniEspaña had a poor view of working as a translator, which impacted their desire to work in the field. They commented that educators warn them of the difficulty of establishing oneself as a translator, and that poor work conditions made it an unattractive profession. Most learners I interviewed had interests in continuing in language-related fields that were not translation, such as being a foreign language aid,

secondary teaching, or simply spending time abroad to improve their languages. From a class of approximately 30 learners, I spoke with 7 in depth about their motivations for studying translation and their post-graduation aspirations. Of these, only one expressed a desire to continue within the field of translation, although this was motivated by an interest in language rather than in translation itself.

Almost all learners (29/32) reported studying translation because they were interested in languages or cross-cultural communication. They opted for translation rather than a degree in philology because they saw their career prospects as being wider. In Spain, philology focuses heavily on literature and the languages' history rather than on language learning per se, with the only viable career option being teaching (Muñoz Raya 2004). A translation degree gave learners more flexibility with the number and variation of languages they could study, as well as providing wider employment options. Learners reported various post-graduation aspirations. Once they finished their degree, more than half wanted to leave Spain to live, work or study abroad, preferably in a country where their L2 or L3 languages are spoken. They reported the economic crisis, rather than a desire to be in another country, as being their main motivation to move. They wanted to improve their languages, gain life and work experience and hopefully be in a better position to look for employment after gaining such experiences. Others wanted to continue onto post-graduate study, although only 2 wanted to pursue Translation Studies at this level. A quarter from the first semester and a third from the second semester expressed a desire to work as translators.

Similar to UniEspaña, only a small portion of learners at UniOz 1 wanted to pursue a career in translation. This was particularly surprising considering that they were enrolled in a NAATI-approved program that was preparing them to gain the certification required to enter the translation labour market in Australia. The Spanish stream at UniOz 1 had only four learners, which is not uncommon for languages other than Chinese in Australian translation programs. The small numbers made it difficult to discover patterns amongst learners as I had at UniEspaña; however, their individual stories provided an insight into their motivations for studying the program.

María[5] was a 35-45 year old international student from the Americas. She had taken a break from her career in medical research to gain further skills and to see another part of the world. She had worked as a translator in the medical field, although this was not the primary purpose of her position. María intended to look for work in Australia once she graduated, provided she passed the NAATI assessment, although she did not have high hopes of finding work. Even in the event that she

5) María, Jorge, Christian and Carmen are aliases.

finds employment as a translator in Australia, she intends to return to her previous job in medical research, as she will earn a higher salary. Her desire to work as a translator was to extend her stay in Australia and to make use of the program she was studying.

Jorge was a domestic student with a well-established language-related career and was studying translation to expand his skills. Jorge wanted to practice as a professional translator, however he saw this as an additional skill rather than as a career change; he did not envisage it being a full-time endeavour due to limited employment options.

Christian was a domestic student who had grown up in Australia. He had successfully passed the NAATI test when he completed a diploma approximately ten years earlier but had never worked in the area. Instead, he had pursued a career as a language teacher and after working in the field for an extended time was looking to diversify and broaden his work options. Although he had studied translation in the past, he felt that he had a higher chance of passing the NAATI test if he completed another education program. Christian intended to work as a translator provided he was able to attain NAATI certification; however was not certain this would be full-time.

Carmen was an international student from the Americas, aged between 25 and 35. She had wanted to study outside of her country of origin and had always been interested in languages. She was not sure what she wanted to do once she graduated and was uncertain whether she would remain in Australia. She was interested in literary translation more than community translation; however was aware that there are very limited opportunities in Australia. The translation market in Australia is almost entirely community translation assignments, which would leave Carmen with little hope of pursuing a literary translation while she was living here.

Not one learner from the Spanish stream at UniOz 1 considered a full-time career in translation as a viable option. Learners reported limited work prospects, unstable and poor working conditions as common reasons. A motivation for choosing the program at UniOz 1 was that it was a NAATI-approved program and could lead to them gaining NAATI Professional certification. However, none were committed to the translation profession and did not have high prospects of entering the labour market in this area. If they were successful in attaining NAATI Professional Translator certification, which NAATI's Development Manager reported as being less than half (R Foote 2014, personal communication, 25 June), they saw it as an additional skill that they could either use in their current profession or to have a second job 'on the side'.

The data collected at UniOz 2 was focussed on classroom interactions and did not provide the same depth of understanding of learner motivations and post-graduation aspirations[6]. However, a short dialogue between the lecturer and a leaner provided an insight into one motivation to study translation and interpreting as an international student in Australia.

> **Educator**: Can you tell me about the reasons why you decided to study translation & interpreting
>
> **Learner**: Because I want to settle in Australia. I want to find a new career path in this country
>
> **Educator**: But why T&I, you could have chosen any course
>
> **Learner**: Because I have a strength in Mandarin
>
> **Educator**: So you want to build your English⋯ What did you do in your undergrad?
>
> **Learner**: Chinese.
>
> **Educator**: So you're interested in language
>
> **Learner**: Yes

The learner appears to have selected translation and interpreting because it matches her interests, and so that she can establish a new life in a new country, rather than necessarily wanting to become a professional translator. Semi-structured interviews with learners at UniOz 1 revealed a similar situation where learners were completing a translator education program to fulfil a desire to migrate to Australia.

8. Translator Education and the Translation Labour Market: A Justified Link?

Links exist between translator education curriculum and the market needs of the translation industry. However, few learners undertaking translator education programs in this study have intentions or prospects to practice as full-time professional translators. In Spain, an education gap exists for learners wishing to pursue studies in modern or applied languages. Learners at UniEspaña selected a translation degree primarily because they were interested in languages and it provided them with flexible language choices

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6) After an initial period of data collection, access to data was denied at UniOz 1. In an unideal solution, UniOz 2 was selected to fill this gap data on classroom interactions.

and increased post-graduation study and employment options, many of which are not in translation-related industries. Only a minority of learners aspired to pursue work or post-graduate study in the translation field.

Learners at UniOz 1 and UniOz 2 similarly had few prospects of continuing in the area of translation, although for different reasons. NAATI certification is notoriously difficult to attain, which significantly reduces the chances of translator education graduates entering the translation labour market in Australia. The learners in this study did not consider working full-time as a professional translator a viable employment option. Their reasons included insecure work opportunities and poor working conditions. Taking into account the limited opportunity or desire to be professional translators that learners at UniEspaña, UniOz 1 and UniOz 2 have, I question the appropriateness of designing curriculum that it is so closely linked to translation market demands.

9. Adding a Bit of Chaos to Translator Education

Career development literature suggests that careers no longer follow a linear progression. The findings of the present study support Peake and McDowall (2012) and Pryor and Bright (2011) in that a linear progression from translator education to the translation labour market is unlikely to occur for graduates of translator education programs.

Learners can be introduced to, and prepared for, the chaotic careers they will embark on upon graduation. Remaining in one occupation, let alone with one employer, is no longer the common working experience. Graduates are more likely to move between various jobs, often working multiple part-time or casual positions rather than securing ongoing full-time employment. Employment pathways are non-linear and flexibility is required if graduates are going to be successful in securing jobs that suit them in a continually changing environment. Extending career advice provided in the classroom beyond a mere promotion of translation, translation-related, or other language-based positions could result in conversations that better represent the reality for graduates. Encouraging learners to be flexible, to take advantage of chance and opportunity, to be aware of their skills, knowledge and experience, and to create diverse networks is more appropriate careers advice in the current employment climate. Such advice could be more beneficial than proposing job ideas that have unrealistic, rigid and linear outcomes.

10. Implications for Further Research

10.1. Ethnographic Case Study: uncovering unexpected complexity

Further research that examines translator education would benefit from taking a multi-disciplinary approach and attempting to look beyond classroom events. Ethnographic case study is well placed to cover such breadth. Ethnography is a well-established methodology for sociology of education research that is based on classroom events; however, translator education research is yet to embrace the approach. By expanding the way case studies are commonly understood within translator education research so that there is a greater capacity to include the context within which the education program and classroom events operate would be a step towards uncovering unexpected areas that a research design had not envisaged. A more widespread use of ethnographic case studies to explore translator education has the potential of opening up new areas of research that have not yet been anticipated.

10.2. Preparing Translation Graduates for Chaotic Careers

Employability was one such unanticipated area that this research uncovered. After considering the impact of employability on learning, I agree with Boden and Nedeva (2010) and Tymon (2013) that it is important that learners gain skills that they can take with them to other professions. In the current employment environment, it is much more likely that graduates will have multiple jobs in various industries. Integrating courses from other disciplines or combining translation and interpreting degrees with others, such as law, criminology, international relations or business, are examples of how translator curriculum could better prepare learners for the current chaotic labour market. Further research that looks at where translation graduates are employed upon graduation will provide insights that can be used to design programs that will produce dynamic and widely employable graduates.

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