The professional backgrounds of translation scholars.
Report on a survey

Esther Torres-Simón and Anthony Pym

Intercultural Studies Group
Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Spain

Draft 3.2. January 2015

A survey of 305 translation scholars shows that some 96 per cent of them have translated or interpreted "on a regular basis," with translation/interpreting being or having been a main or secondary activity for 43 percent of the scholars. Translation scholars would also seem to be particularly mobile (71 per cent have spent more than one year in a country other than their own) and come from diverse academic and professional backgrounds (33 percent were not engaged in translation and interpreting in their mid 20s). These figures indicate that translation scholars not only have considerable practical experience of translation but also come from a wide range of occupational and cultural backgrounds. Asked about desirable relations between scholarly work and professional practice, respondents indicated benefits for both sides (although a slight majority stressed a unidirectional relationship where scholarly work benefits from professional practice), and teaching is often indicated as the link between the two. However, about a quarter of the scholars indicated that there *need not* be a relationship between scholarship and professional practice.

Keywords: translation scholars, research-industry relations, translation profession, sociology of research

1. Introduction

Practicing translators and interpreters tend to have remarkably little regard for those who carry out research on their activities. In Chris Durban's booklet *Translation. Getting it Right, A Guide to Buying Translation* (revised edition 2011, 15) we find a huge warning sign: "Teachers, academics & students: at your own risk," which not only assumes that academics and teachers are in the same boat as their students, but that none of the three groups really knows how to translate. Only slightly less acerbic are presuppositions like Peter Newmark's quip, adapted from Shaw's libel against teachers: "Those who can, write; those who cannot, translate; those who cannot translate, write about translation" (Newmark 1988, 2). A few less trenchant asides can be found in the dialogue between Andrew Chesterman and Emma Wagner (2002), remarkable because the two authors write as if they had completely different occupations, one as an academic, the other an translator, with scant room for anything like the "practisearcher", the practitioner who also researches, identified by Gile (1994, 150) some 20 years ago. The underlying *mésentente* is still mostly couched in terms of "practice" versus "theory," as if the institutionalization of Translation Studies had not been based on two further activities, namely research and training, which

should serve to complicate the traditional dichotomy. And even when those middle terms are recognized, the mantras then occasionally become that research is on unrealistic issues and trainees are not prepared for market realities, such that the underlying charge remains that those who investigate and teach have not sufficiently worked as real translators or real interpreters.

One remarkable aspect of the general loggerheads is the way practitioners are prepared to vociferate the divisions, and theorists leap to theorize them, without any actual data on which to base myriad assumptions. In order to provide at least some numbers on the issue, in 2014 the European Society for Translation Studies undertook an online questionnaire that was answered by 305 of its members, all of whom were translation scholars of one kind or another. Here we report on the results of that questionnaire. Our main question is very simple: Do scholars of translation and interpreting have personal experience of actual translation and interpreting? Here is what we found.

2. Methodology

Between 22 January and 24 February 2014, invitations to participate in an online survey were sent to paying members of the European Society for Translation Studies and paying participants in the 7th EST Congress in Germersheim (these two groups overlap considerably). These groups were targeted since in both cases the participants were presumably committed to Translation Studies enough to pay a fee (for the membership, the congress, or both). Snowballing was excluded. The population was estimated at some 683 translation scholars, most of whom work in Europe. A total of 305 responses were received. Since the return rate was less than 50 percent, one could assume a weighting in favor of scholars who had some translation experience to talk about.

The questionnaire comprised just 10 questions, most of which we have analyzed in terms of simple descriptive statistics (see Appendix). There was also one question inviting free responses, which will be analyzed here in terms of the main arguments relating research, professional practice, and teaching.

3. Profile of the questionnaire sample

3.1. Sex, country, and age

Seventy per cent of the 305 respondents were women, which is roughly in tune with the translation profession itself, where it is estimated that the number of women is "70 percent or above" (Pym et al. 2012, 3). They were located in 51 countries, principally in Europe: the countries most represented were Germany, Finland, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Italy, in that order, which roughly follows the order of countries best represented in the EST membership (Finland is nevertheless over-represented in the survey). The ages ranged from 22 to 80, with most respondents in their thirties and forties (see Figure 1).
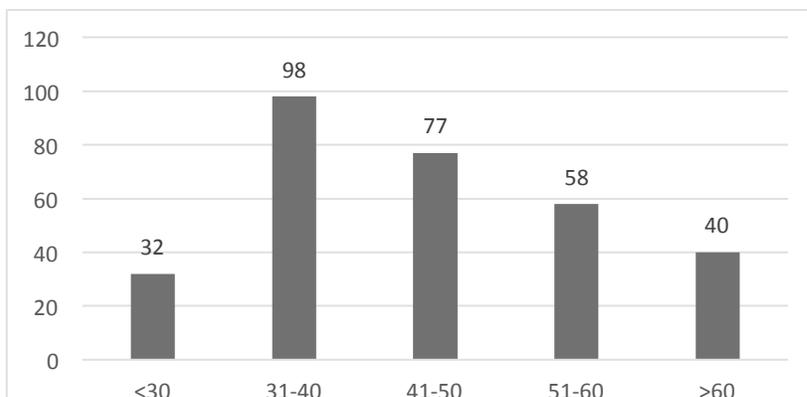
Figure 1. Distribution of respondents by age (212 women and 93 men, aged 22 to 80)

3.2. International mobility

When asked to count the countries where they have lived for "more than one year," only 29 per cent of the scholars gave just one country, 40 percent had lived in two, another 22 per cent in three, and the rest in more. So 71 percent could be called "internationally mobile" in this sense. This would indicate a relatively high propensity to mobility, although we have no data that would enable exact comparison with non-academic translators and interpreters. The degree of mobility would nevertheless appear to be higher than that of researchers in general: a European Commission report indicates that only 56 percent of the researchers in Higher Education Institutions in Europe are "internationally mobile," where "mobile" is defined as having "worked for at least 3 months in a country other than the country where they attained their highest educational degree" (European Commission 2010, 72), which sets the bar considerably lower than we did.

3.3. Academic training

The last section of the survey, on the respondents' academic training, was completed by only 274 of the total 305 respondents. Although we have no indication of why 31 people decided not to reply here, the resulting sample indicates a professional group that is highly educated: of those holding a degree in translation and who specified their highest academic qualification (185 respondents), 50 percent had a PhD, 3.5 percent had a PhD in progress, and a further 34 percent had a Master's degree.

Only 68 percent of the 274 scholars who answered this section reported having a "formal degree in translation or interpreting," which might be considered surprisingly low. That number is nevertheless higher than a comparable figure for professional translators: the Société Française des Traducteurs, surveying 1,377 of its members, reports that only 61 percent have a higher degree in translation or interpreting (SFT 2010, 10). That said, the number of scholars with formal training in translation is particularly high among those who are under 40 (Table 1). In most cases this relationship can be attributed to a lack of translator-training programs in the years when the scholars were at university: there were only some 108 university-level programs in translation and/or interpreting in 1980 (Caminade and Pym 1998), as compared with over 500 in 2015 (EST 2015). This means

that the spectacular rise in the number of programs is still working through the scholarly community: the older you are, the less likely you are to have had formal training in translation or interpreting.

Table 1. "Do you have a formal degree in Translation or Interpreting?" Percentages of 274 responses by reported age, with raw numbers of responses in parentheses

	< 30	30 -39	40 -49	50 - 59	≥60
Yes	95 (21)	86 (72)	63 (45)	50 (30)	53 (19)
No	5 (1)	14 (12)	38 (27)	50 (30)	47 (17)

This relative lack of training might also partly explain why only 67 percent of the 274 respondents to this question reported "working in Translation Studies or with translation or interpreting" when they were in their mid-twenties. That is, 33 percent were doing other things – a number that is actually quite similar to the data from the Société Française des Traducteurs, where 38 percent of the translators also began their career doing something other than translation (SFT 2010, 11). So what were these 91 scholars doing? The breakdown is instructive of the kinds of activities that can feed into an interest in translation: 29 percent of them were doing Language and Linguistics, 20 percent were teaching, 14 percent were students (presumably at doctoral level), eight percent were in "business and finance," a further eight percent indicate "literature," and then there is a long list of less frequent activities, including "art," journalism, "animals," tourism, anthropology, archaeology, construction, engineering, film production, and the military.

4. Nature of the translation work

Here we look at the general features of the translation work done by the scholars, and then at each activity type in turn.

4.1. Translation activities in general

We asked the scholars if they had "ever translated on a regular basis?" and gave them five options: *Never, Unpaid work, Part of another paid activity, Secondary paid activity, Primary activity (your livelihood)*, and *Other*. No restriction was placed on the phrase "regular basis," and respondents were allowed to select up to three options, since many of them had engaged in different kinds of translation at different stages of their careers. The number of respondents who answered this question was 296. Since only 13 respondents (4%) selected *Never* and this option logically excludes the others, we deduce that 283 scholars, that is 96% of the respondents to this question, had translated on a regular basis.

The numbers of replies are indicated in Figure 2. Translation (henceforth taken to include interpreting) had been a *Secondary paid activity* for 168 of the 296 scholars who responded to this question (57 percent), which is perhaps not surprising, since translation is an activity that is fairly easily combined with academic work in some situations. What is more intriguing, though, is that translation had been a paid *Primary activity* for 127 of the respondents (around 43% of respondents to this question), which means that a large number of scholars have at some stage shifted from professional translation to academic work.
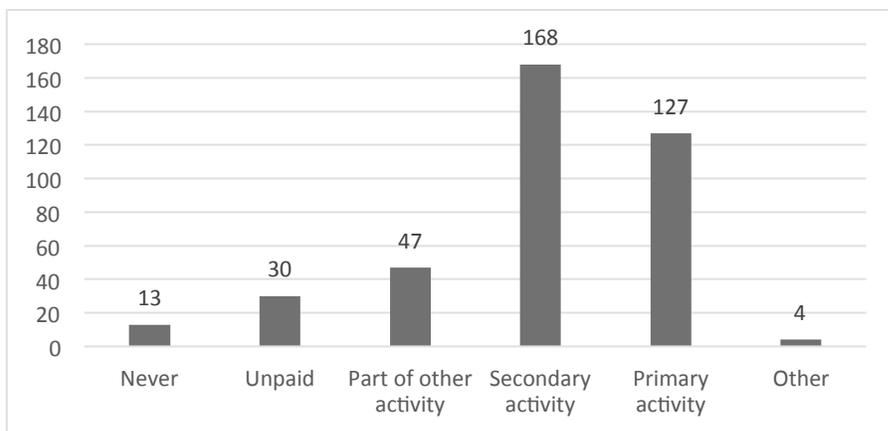
Figure 2. "Have you ever translated (or interpreted) on a regular basis? Choose up to three options." Numbers of mentions of each activity type by 296 respondents, who collectively gave 389 responses

We were interested in how the tendency to translate was related to the scholars' career paths. We had two possible indices for this: number of academic articles published (Table 2) and reported age (Table 3). In neither case was it possible to establish a clear pattern for the *Never* option, due to the low number of replies for that value. There was a certain pattern, however, for the *Primary* and *Secondary activity* options, where the scholars with *less* published research report being significantly *more* engaged in those translation activity types (see figures in bold in Table 2). This requires interpretation. The more experienced scholars were reporting on all their previous activities, so in theory they had had *more* opportunities to engage in translation, and yet they still report less translation. We thus assume that the relation is not an age-graded phenomenon (i.e., translating is *not* something people do when they are young and less when they are older). This is partly confirmed by the analysis by age (see Table 3), where the scholars aged 30 and above exhibit a clear pattern: the older the respondent, the less they report having translated. That is, as a working hypothesis, the combination of scholarship with translation as a *Primary* and *Secondary activity* would seem to be a growing trend, led by younger scholars.

Table 2. "Have you ever translated on a regular basis?" Percentages of responses by number of academic articles published, for Primary activity (127 responses) and Secondary activity (168 responses), with raw numbers of responses in parentheses

	0-5	6 -10	11 -20	21 - 30	>30
Primary activity	**43 (55)**	17 (21)	15 (19)	10 (13)	15 (19)
Secondary activity	**32 (53)**	**22 (37)**	17 (29)	12 (20)	17 (29)

Table 3. "Have you ever translated on a regular basis?" Percentages of responses by reported age, for Primary activity (127 responses) and Secondary activity (168 responses), with raw numbers of responses in parentheses

	< 30	30 -39	40 -49	50 - 59	≥60
Primary activity	8 (11)	**31 (40)**	**27 (33)**	22 (29)	12 (14)
Secondary activity	9 (13)	**31 (53)**	**26 (45)**	23 (38)	11 (20)

The data from the questionnaire also allow us to look at the various translation sectors in which the scholars were active within each kind of employment. Here we calculate the frequency with which the sectors were named within each activity type (Table 4), bearing in mind that the respondents could select more than one activity (and indeed more than one translation sector). The numbers suggest a special status for *Unpaid work*, which is the only case where *literary translation* is mentioned more frequently than *technical-scientific translation* (see numbers in bold in Table 4). Further observations on these numbers will be made below, as we consider each kind of activity separately.

Table 4. Percentages of individual mentions of translation sectors within each activity type (out of 669 mentions), with raw numbers of mentions in parentheses

	Primary	Secondary	Part of main	Unpaid
Conference interpreting	16 (38)	12 (34)	4 (4)	14 (6)
Dialogue interpreting	9 (22)	11 (32)	10 (9)	14 (6)
Technical-scientific translation	**36 (81)**	**36 (105)**	**38 (36)**	23 (10)
Literary translation	10 (24)	16 (49)	13 (11)	**28 (12)**
Audiovisual translation	5 (11)	6 (17)	9 (8)	2 (1)
Localization (L10n)	8 (19)	4 (15)	7 (8)	2 (1)
Other	16 (38)	15 (45)	19 (20)	17 (7)

With respect to the numbers of years spent on each activity type, Table 5 indicates that the weaker the dependence on translation for livelihood (moving right in the table), the fewer the number of years the activity is engaged in. In other words, the longest periods are for translation as a *Primary* or *Secondary activity* (constituting 31 and 33 percent of the responses in each category, respectively).

Table 5. Years spent on translation activity, as percentage within each activity type (out of 344 mentions), with raw numbers of mentions in parentheses

	Primary	Secondary	Part of main	Unpaid
0 - 1	4 (5)	8 (13)	2 (1)	**22 (6)**
2-5	39 (47)	32 (49)	**51 (21)**	**37 (10)**
6-10	26 (31)	27 (41)	20 (8)	15 (4)
>10	**31 (37)**	**33 (51)**	27 (11)	26 (7)

We were also interested in the different translation sectors that were combined by the scholars. For this, we took the sectors that were selected as *Primary activities*, then we calculated the percentage of scholars who combined each of them with other activities. For example, 38 scholars indicated that *conference interpreting* had been their *Primary activity*, but 61 percent of these (23) also did *technical-scientific translation* at the same time, 45 percent did *dialogue interpreting*, 18 percent did *literary translation*, 13 percent did *audiovisual translation* (AVT), and 8 percent did *localization* (L10n) (see Table 6 – since most scholars combined activities, the percentages add up to more than 100). In fact, only 23 percent (8) of those 38 conference interpreters did conference interpreting alone, a finding that is compatible with Brown's (2002) report that just under 70 per cent of 374

AIIC members had also produced written translations professionally. The general take-away messages are that there are very few academic translators who work in just one sector, and that virtually everyone has done technical-scientific translation at one stage or another. We also observe an understandable co-occurrence of *conference* and *dialogue interpreting*, and an apparent incompatibility of *localization* with *dialogue interpreting*, *literary* or *audiovisual translation* (although only 19 scholars selected *localization* as their *Primary activity*).

Table 6. "What type of translation did you do, when translation was part of your primary activity?" Percentages of scholars in each primary sector who also worked in other translation sectors at the same time, with raw numbers of respondents in parentheses

	Conf. int	Dialogue	Technical	Literary	AVT	L10n	None
Conference interpreting (38)	[100]	**45 (17)**	**61 (23)**	18 (7)	13 (5)	8 (3)	**23 (8)**
Dialogue interpreting (22)	**77 (17)**	[100]	**77 (17)**	32 (7)	18 (4)	0	0
Technical-scientific (81)	28 (23)	21 (17)	[100]	17 (14)	6 (5)	17 (14)	21 (17)
Literary translation (24)	29 (7)	29 (7)	**58 (14)**	[100]	21 (5)	0	17 (4)
Audiovisual (AVT) (11)	45 (5)	36 (4)	45 (5)	45 (5)	[100]	0	9 (1)
Localization (L10n) (19)	16 (3)	0	**74 (14)**	0	0	[100]	21 (4)

We will now look at each activity type separately.

4.2. Translation as a primary activity

The respondents who reported that translation was or had been their *Primary activity* were asked what type of translation they had done and for how long. A total of 127 scholars selected this response, and they were able to select as many types of translation as they liked. They gave a total of 233 responses.

With respect to the types of translation, the most frequently mentioned was *Technical-scientific translation* (36 percent), followed by *Conference interpreting* (16), *Literary translation* (10), *Dialogue interpreting* (9), *Localization* (8), and *Audiovisual* (5). The *Other* category elicited mentions of legal translation, art, education, finance, marketing, and religion.

Perhaps more surprising is the length of time for which these activities were *Primary*: the shortest time span dedicated to translation was six months, the longest was 40 years, but 57 percent of the responses (68 scholars) indicated periods of more than six years, including 31 percent at more than ten years. We note that the group of scholars who have had translation as a *Primary activity* for more than ten years includes a markedly lower percentage of women (54 percent, compared with 70 percent for the sample as a whole).

Professional engagement in translation and interpreting appears not to have a strongly negative effect on academic production: 15 percent of the entire group who had translation as a *Primary activity* (127 respondents) had published more than 30 articles, as compared with 12 percent for our sample as a whole (274 respondents). Then again, this is an older group (since it takes years to publish articles). To compensate for that effect, if we just take the 159 scholars aged 40 or above, we find that 31 percent of them have individually published more than 30 articles. Within those 159 older scholars, of the 69 who have translation as a *Primary activity*, 26 percent have more than 30 articles. So

engagement in translation as a *Primary activity* could be associated with a 5 percentage point drop in academic production, which is understandable enough.

4.3. Translation as a Secondary paid activity

A total of 168 respondents indicated that translation was or had been a *Secondary paid activity* for them, and this was indeed the most frequent response (see Figure 2). The types of translation are comparable to those of the *Primary activity* (see Table 4), although there are slight declines in *conference interpreting* and *localization* (by 4 mentions in each case), which are presumably activities that one does not walk in and out of so easily. There is also a significant rise in *literary translation* (by 25 mentions), which is also understandable enough: if your main income is from your university job, you can afford to translate literature. We note that a survey by the Conseil Européen des Associations de Traducteurs Littéraires found that the income of literary translators in Europe is only between 40 and 67 percent of what an industrial worker earns (Fock et al. 2008, 69).

The numbers of years spent on translation as a *Secondary activity* are remarkably similar to those for the *Primary activity* (see Table 5), with a marked predominance of long-term engagement of more than 10 years (33 and 31 percent within the two categories, respectively). Those have not been transitory activities.

4.4. Translation as part of a main activity

Only 44 of the 47 respondents who reported that translation was "part of a main activity" indicated what the activity was. Those 44 respondents stated that most of this work (59 percent of the mentions) was in the education field (see Table 7). That is, these scholars translate as part of their university work, either for themselves or for other university personnel. There were, however, a number of other sectors involved: business and finance (20 percent), "art" (6 percent), administration (5 percent), "human resources" (5 percent), and "heavy industry" (5 percent). Since these descriptors were given by the respondents themselves, it is difficult to categorize them with any certainty. One might suspect, though, that "administration" and "human resources" could also be within the university system, and thus increase the percentage of "education."

This could in turn explain why the percentage of "technical-scientific" translation is actually greater here than for translation as a *Primary* or *Secondary activity* (38 percent as compared to 36 percent, see Table 4), since it is presumably mainly educational or research material.

Table 7. "What field(s) was your main activity in?" Percentages of 44 respondents for whom translation was part of the main activity and who stated what the main activity was, with raw mentions in parentheses

Education	Business	Art	Administration	Human Resources	Heavy industry	Total
59 (26)	20 (9)	6 (3)	5 (2)	5 (2)	5 (2)	100 (44)

With respect to the number of years involved, the time spent on this activity type is predominantly in the two-to-five year range (51 percent), which is significantly shorter than

in the case for translation as a *Primary* or *Secondary activity* (39 and 32 percent for the two-to-five year range). We nevertheless note that 27 percent of the respondents here indicated an engagement of more than ten years.

4.5. Translation as unpaid work only

The 30 respondents who reported that they had only ever done unpaid translation work indicated that most of that work was *Literary translation* (28 percent), followed by *Scientific-technical translation* (23 percent), as can be seen in Table 4. All other sectors were nevertheless mentioned: 14 percent for dialogue interpreting, 14 percent for conference interpreting, and 2 percent for audiovisual translation and localization respectively, and the highest number of responses was actually for the *Other* category (17 percent), which elicited mentions of music translation, brochures, and so on.

The years of engagement were lower for this activity type than all others, with 22 percent at less than one year, and a further 37 percent at between two and five years (Table 5). This would indicate that unpaid work is a more transitory phenomenon, and most of the responses here further indicate that it is or was done "occasionally." Nevertheless, seven respondents indicated *Unpaid activities* for more than 10 years, which is a significant undertaking. There are some signs of community engagement here, as in the mention of NGOS and working for a "small village in Hungary who could not afford regular translation."

4.6. Other activity types

Only four respondents reported activity types that were markedly different from our categories. These were self-translation (2 cases), proofreading translations (1) and "interpreting for the family" (1). When specified, all of these activities had been carried out for more than ten years.

5. Reported relations between translation and scholarly work

The respondents were invited to give free responses to two questions: "Is there any major relation between your scholarly work and your translation activity? Should there be one?" A total of 252 replies were received. They have been analyzed on the basis of the main values expressed.

Even though these responses were free, with no pre-set options to choose from, most respondents spontaneously began their comments with "Yes" or "No," and did so in the case of both questions. The initial categorization of the replies was thus relatively unproblematic. For 74 percent of the 252 respondents here, there was indeed a major relation between their scholarly work and their translation activity, although 19 percent said there was not, and the remainder indicated a relationship was not strong.

The types of connections and modes of reasoning found in the free responses were quite varied. For example, some respondents made a distinction between possible reality and personal desire: "They might nurture each other, but I still regard them as entirely separate activities"; and similarly, "I rather try to keep separate, to safeguard as it as a haven of doing 'something else'." Others saw the relation not as a flow of knowledge or skills from one activity to the other, but more banally as researchers studying what

translators do: "Yes, there is [a relation] (workplace research, cognitive translation processes, translation competence and expertise (acquisition)." Another straightforward reply was that there was a relation because the scholar translated academic texts.

In between those extreme and/or banal positions, there were some arguments that were repeated with some frequency by different respondents, both for and against a general relationship. Those are the ones that we report on first.

5.1. Positive relations between scholarly work and translation activities

We have tried to categorize the numerous replies that see a beneficial (and thus "positive") relationship between scholarly work and practice. We do this in terms of the implied flows between three terms: "practice," "scholarly work" (many respondents said "theory"), and "teaching," which is the third term that emerged from the replies themselves. The way these flows are described can be analyzed as the "argument types" listed in Table 8.

Table 8. Percentages of most frequent argument types among respondents who say there is a major *positive* relation between translation and scholarly work (110 respondents), with raw numbers of respondents in parentheses

Number	Argument type
51 (56)	Practice informs scholarly work.
23 (25)	Practice and scholarly work are connected through teaching.
14 (16)	Practice informs scholarly work, and scholarly work informs practice.
12 (13)	Scholarly work informs practice.

Here we give representative statements for each of these relationships.

5.1.1 Practice informs scholarly work.

In most cases, the scholarly work (which might involve both teaching and research) is seen as drawing on translation practice. There is no presumed flow in the *other* direction, from scholarship to practice. The flow of information or influence is seen in a number of ways:

 Translation practice provides an adequate framework for analysis.
 "Working as a practitioner helps to give a correct interpretation of theoretical data."
"A translation scholar should be familiar with the practice/market of translation."
"It is desirable that scholarly work does not lose relationship with professional reality."
"[…] seeing translation as something sociocultural rather than something purely linguistic; seeing TQA [translation quality analysis] as problematic."

 Translation practice provides topics and data for research.
"It helps to understand in which field research is needed."
"My research is based on questions generated in my translation activity."
"Many of my articles have been prompted by something that happens while I'm working."
"I use my own translations as data."

. Translation practice provides case studies.
"Practice is a good source of case studies."
"My voluntary interpreting activity is the case study for my PhD dissertation."
"I occasionally write about poems I translate."

. Translation practice helps with networking.
"I work as an interpreter and many of my colleagues have been informants in my projects."
"In my research I also draw on my experience as a professional translator, e.g. finding new research areas, recruiting participants, networking."
"My experience as an audiovisual translator and the contacts in the professional field greatly help me in my research."

. Translation practice motivates research.
"[…] it might be a motivational driver"

Translation practice gives credibility to research.
"The translation activity also seems to contribute to my credibility with research participants such as professional translators and LSPs [language-service providers]."

5.1.2. Practice and scholarly work are connected through teaching.

The second main argument type concerns the role of teaching as a mediating activity:

"I believe there is a relation in terms of my ability to credibly teach my students and inform them about the realities of professional life! ;)"
"My teaching gains credibility due to the many examples I can draw from my personal experience as a translator."
"I wouldn't want to be teaching something I'm not doing myself."
"It also helps the researcher on a psychological level if his/her working and researching identities overlap, possibly makes him/her more secure and 'whole'."

5.1.3. Practice informs scholarly work, and scholarly work informs practice.

In a number of arguments the relation is seen as a two-way street:

"No gap whatsoever between theory and practice."
"Practice benefits from suitable theories; theory is sterile without supporting practical examples (texts, situations, strategies) and scholarship investigates the relation between the two fields."
"Even the most philosophical theories of translation that might seem to have nothing in common with 'real life' help translators in grasping the difficult task of translation or interpreting. It helps you analyze problems and consider various aspects of your work. Every translation theory is somehow connected to practical aspects of translation. So the question if there should there be any relation between practice and theory is rather restricted as in my opinion the relation is always there."

5.1.4. Scholarly work informs practice

There were slightly fewer arguments in which scholarly work alone is accorded an active role with respect to translation activities:

"I always try to apply the results of translation research to my translation activity, to make it better, more efficient, etc."
"[Theory] helps to verbalize the processes and thoughts as well as to understand the act of translating in itself."
"You cannot seriously pursue an activity without reflecting on its processes, background, framing ideologies, etc."

5.2. Impediments to relations between scholarly work and translation activities

Some of the replies, by both those who saw a relationship and those who didn't, included reasons that would explain why there is not *more* interaction between scholarly work and translation activities. There were around seven replies along these lines, certainly not enough for a quantitative distribution to be meaningful. The arguments can be categorized as follows.

5.2.1. University employment works against translation activities.

There were indications that scholarly work impedes engagement with translation because of lack of time, legal prohibition, and/or a lack of recognition for translations as scholarly work. These arguments are important because they imply that the scholars would like to do more translating than they are able to:

"The UK REF [Research Excellence Framework] system undervalues translation work."
"Yes until recently, when I've been translating less (university duties keeping me from it)."
"I was not allowed to combine a paid translator job with my academic function. And I had no time actually to do that."
"A full-time position at university means no time to translate."
"Real translation activity informs my academic work and the other way round. Yet it is very difficult (impossible?) to maintain a balance, given the trend to specialization and professionalization of both translation (and interpreting) and academia."

5.2.2. There is not enough time and/or money.

In the same vein, we find a few responses that indicate other kinds of restrictions on time and money, which can become the main factors either for or against combining activities:

"As for myself, I stopped my interpreting activity in order to combine scholarly work with having children."
 "You cannot earn a living from pure research in my country."

5.2.3. Translation offers an escape from "real work."

On the other hand, some arguments indicate why a few respondents sometimes *want* there to be no relationship between their scholarly work and their translating, since each ideally provides an alternative to the other:

"While I'm careful to adhere to professional standards and ethics, for example by not dumping prices, translation is a refreshing change to my regular work."
"I am pleased to be able to apply my analytical mind to other questions."

5.3. Desirable (non-)relations between scholarly work and translation activities

As noted, the respondents were also asked whether there *should* be a major relation between scholarly work and translation activities. Of the 205 responses that can be seen as addressing this question, only 51 percent indicated that there "should be" such a relationship, while 26 percent said this was not the case. This is surprising, given that 74 percent said there *was* a major relation between their own scholarly work and their translation activity. That is, many scholars seem to be saying that there *is* a beneficial relationship (in their personal cases) but that there *need not* be one – even though our questionnaire used the modal "*should* (not)," the logic of the replies appears to be along the lines of "*need* (not)": the relationship *can* be beneficial but is not a *sine qua non*.

If we take the question of whether there "should be a major relationship between scholarly work and translation activity" and now broadly divide the replies between *Yes*, *No* (understood as "Need not"), and *Maybe*, the distribution differs significantly according to the number of articles the scholar has published (see Figure 3). As many as 16 of the 22 scholars who reported having published more than 30 articles (73 percent) do *not* see the need for any binding relationship, even though 9 scholars (56 percent) in that same group reported having had translation as a *Primary activity*, and 6 (38 percent) described it as a *Secondary activity*. So we have a sizeable group of scholars who have done a lot of translating and yet see no necessary or desirable relationship between their translation experience and their scholarly work on translation. Why this apparent paradox? One might suspect a knee-jerk reaction against the very suggestion of obligation or general desirability. That would be in keeping with an age of over-reaction against the prescriptive studies that used to tell translators how to translate (although such prescriptivism was not mentioned by any of the respondents, strangely enough).

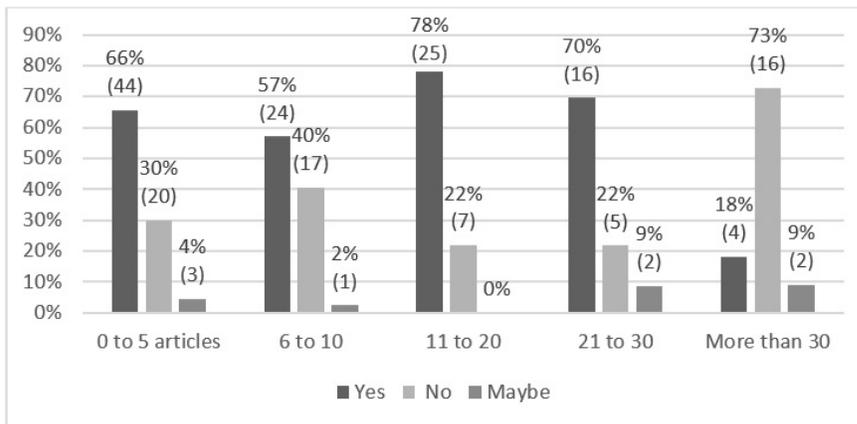The actual arguments are nevertheless rather more subtle and can be categorized as follows.

Figure 3. "Should there be a major relationship between scholarly work and translation activity?" 186 respondents). Percentage of Yes, No ("*need* not"), and Maybe responses, by number of articles published, with raw numbers of respondents in parentheses

5.3.1 Practice and theory are different things.

One general position seeks to affirm the independence and thus presumed objectivity of research. The theorists of Descriptive Translation Studies were once reported as saying, perhaps apocryphally, that to study marine biology you don't need to be a mollusk, but now the main analogies appear to be with medicine:

"Medical research does not focus on healing oneself either."
"Does a psychiatrist need to be a psychopath? However, a translation scholar should be informed about the factors of translation practice that concern his field of study."
"A cancer researcher does not need to be a cancer patient."
"A comparison: musicologists/literary scholars/ art critics may dabble in music/creative writing/ painting, but this does seem a necessary qualification."

5.3.2. Theory is theory.

A variant on this is the argument that "theory" (less frequently "research") is independent by its very nature:

"My interest is purely theoretical and not so much practical."
"Since science is a way of meta-reflection on object of the study, science does not teach how to translate."
"My research is theoretical, without immediate relation to practice."
"I could apply some of my findings/research ideas to my translation practice – though I could feel the gap between theory and practice in some clients' and colleagues' reactions."

5.3.3. Relations are only in certain fields.

A compatibilist position claims that there are particular kinds of research that should be related to practice:

"In general, there should be a relation between the two (in particular as regards specialised translation, to understand market requirements and constraints). On the other hand, I can imagine translation research projects done by scholars with no professional background.
For very practice-oriented studies or experiments, the scholar should definitely know what the real situation in the respective field is like."

5.3.4. Practice needs scholarly work.

Moving into the realm of desirable relations, we find arguments that translation practice requires both research and theoretical reflection, apparently for the sake of ethics:

"Translation is not an ethically neutral activity in any of its forms."
"Even technical translation has profound ethical implications."
"I think we need more contributions/research efforts that create a link between the methodological, theoretical/descriptive and applied branches of Translation Studies to their mutual benefit."

The answers give no indication as to *why* ethical behavior might require scholarship, nor what actual benefits should come from the links.

5.3.5. Research should be practical.

Just as some argue that practice needs scholarly work, others maintain that scholarly work should be made to address practical issues:

"Translation Studies is an applied discipline. It cannot exist without direct link with and feedback from the translation activity per se."
"I believe that in this way, the scholarly work is more reflective of the translation reality and it can have a better impact."
"Translation studies theorises the activity of translation. I am a translator."
"Yes, as a sort of empirical evidence."

5.3.6. Why ask?

Occasionally there are replies that see the question itself as manifesting the problem to be solved. For example:

"The question itself is revealing of the alarming chasm still prevailing between the twain. My practice has always been the mother lode of my theoretical outlook, and the latter has always fed back and helped develop the former."

The relation that is both obvious and desirable for this respondent is clearly not so for many other scholars – and even less so for non-academic practitioners—, which indeed is the main reason why our fundamental question might have been worth asking.

6. Conclusions

Our principle conclusion, for the headlines, is that 96 percent of the scholars in our sample (actually of the 296 who answered that question) have translated or interpreted regularly. One might thus claim, *contra* Durban and Newmark, that the vast majority of scholars do indeed know something about what it means to translate. Beyond that very practical mode of interaction, however, the relation between scholarship and professional practice is rather more complicated. Our various questions and analyses have led to the following tentative conclusions.

Since some 43 percent of our sample indicated that translation had been a paid *Primary* activity in the past, a large number of the scholars have at some stage shifted from professional translation to academic work. This does not mean, of course, that there have been no other activities involved. About a third of the sample was *not* engaged in translation or interpreting when they were in their mid-twenties – they came from a wide range of professional activities – and this diverse background has possibly enriched Translation Studies with a productive mix of epistemologies and research skills. Younger scholars are nevertheless far more likely to have had formal training in translation and report a higher tendency to combine translation activities with scholarly work. This could mean that Translation Studies is actually building a *stronger* relation with the translation professions, albeit at the cost of reducing the pool of non-translatorial experience.

At the same time, there is no strong indication that engagement in translation activities *need* impede scholarly productivity, and there are cases of scholars at all stages of their careers finding ways to combine the two. There are nevertheless indications that scholarly work can make engagement with translation difficult because of factors like lack of time, legal prohibition, and/or a lack of recognition for translations as scholarly production. In general, the scholars who made these points implied that they would like to do *more* translating than they are able to do.

Virtually all the scholars who have worked in the translation professions have combined more than one sector, except for nine scholars who have worked only as conference interpreters as their primary activity. Unfortunately we lack any comparable study of multi-sector employment among translators who are not scholars, but the few partial surveys (summarized in Pym et al. 2012, 87-88) suggest that the diversity of employment might be similar.

In their free responses to our questions about the relationship between scholarship and translation activities, some 26 percent of 254 scholars intimated that there *need* not be a relationship, even when they declared that there was a beneficial relationship in their personal cases.

Finally, our questionnaire has only tracked the passage of scholars from other professional activities *into* Translation Studies, not the other way: we have no data on those who move from Translation Studies to other concerns, perhaps to translation but also to wider fields of scholarly inquiry. Further research, as they always say, is needed to test not just the way professional translation feeds into scholarship, but also the possible influence that Translation Studies could be having on professional translation.

Appendix: Survey questions

Personal Details
*2. Year of birth
*3. Sex: Male, Female
*4. Which country do you live in for most of the year?

Background
*5. What countries have you lived in for more than one year, including your country of normal residence?
*6. Have you ever translated (or interpreted) on a regular basis? You can choose up to three options.
Never
Only unpaid work
As part of a main activity (secretarial, marketing, academic)
As a secondary paid activity
As a primary activity (your livelihood)
Other (Please specify)
       * In what field(s) did you do unpaid translation work?
- o   Conference interpreting
- o   Dialogue interpreting
- o   Technical-scientific translation
- o   Literary translation
- o   Audiovisual translation
- o   Localization
- o   Other (please specify)

       * For how many years did you do unpaid translation work?
       * What field(s) was your main activity in?
       * What type of translation did you do, when translation was part of a main activity? (you can select more than one)
- o   Conference interpreting
- o   Dialogue interpreting
- o   Technical-scientific translation
- o   Literary translation
- o   Audiovisual translation
- o   Localization
- o   Other (please specify)

       * For how many years did you translate as part of a main activity?
       * What field(s) of translation did you work in most when translation was a secondary activity?
- o   Conference interpreting
- o   Dialogue interpreting
- o   Technical-scientific translation
- o   Literary translation
- o   Audiovisual translation
- o   Localization
- o   Other (please specify)

       * For how long was translation a secondary activity?
       * What field(s) of translation did you work in most when translation was your primary activity?
- o   Conference interpreting

- o Dialogue interpreting
- o Technical-scientific translation
- o Literary translation
- o Audiovisual translation
- o Localization
- o Other (please specify)

* For how long was translation your primary activity?

* If you ticked "Other", please specify in what field(s) the translation activity was carried out.

- o Conference interpreting
- o Dialogue interpreting
- o Technical-scientific translation
- o Literary translation
- o Audiovisual translation
- o Localization
- o Other (please specify)

* If you ticked "Other", please specify for how many years.

Translation Studies

*7. Do you have a formal degree in Translation or Interpreting? Yes, No

* Which degree(s) in translation and interpreting do you have?

Bachelors

Masters

PhD

Other (please specify)

*8. Were/are you working in Translation Studies or with translation or interpreting in your mid-20s? If not, please specify the general field you were working in. Yes No

* Please explain what field you were working in when you were 24 or so.

*9. How many scholarly articles or books have you published on translation or interpreting?

0 – 5   6 – 10   11- 20   21-30   More than 30.

10. Is there any major relation between your scholarly work and your translation activity? Should there be?

References

Brown, Sally. 2002. *Do interpreters translate? Results of an e-mail survey of AIIC members to determine if interpreters also work as translators*. Consortium for Training Translation Teachers. http://goo.gl/kIinas. Accessed October 2015.

Caminade, Monique, and Anthony Pym. 1998. "Translator-training institutions." In *Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, ed. by Mona Baker, 280-285. London & New York: Routledge.

Chesterman, Andrew, and Emma Wagner. 2002. *Can Theory Help Translators? A Dialogue Between the Ivory Tower and the Wordface*. Manchester: St. Jerome.

Durban, Chris. 2011. *Translation. Getting it Right, A Guide to Buying Translation*. Alexandria VA: American Translators Association. http://goo.gl/gQNvXr. Accessed October 2015.

EST (European Society for Translation Studies). 2015. *Translator Training Observatory*. http://goo.gl/ZjAPYQ. Accessed October 2015.

European Commission. 2010. *Study on mobility patterns and career paths of EU researchers. Final Report*. http://goo.gl/d2IV0D. Accessed October 2015.

Fock, Holger, Martin de Haan, and Alena Lhotová. 2008. *Comparative Income of Literary Translators in Europe*. Brussels: Conseil Européen des Associations de Traducteurs Littéraires. http://goo.gl/7LRLtM. Accessed October 2015.

Gile, Daniel. 1994. "Opening up in interpretation studies." In *Translation Studies: An Interdiscipline*, ed. by Mary Snell-Hornby, Franz Pöchhacker, and Klaus Kaindl, 149-158. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Newmark, Peter. 1988. *Approaches to Translation*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Pym, Anthony, François Grin, Claudio Sfreddo, Andy L. J. Chan. 2012. *The status of the translation profession in the European Union*. Luxembourg: European Commission.

SFT (Société Française des Traducteurs). 2010. *Enquête tarifs traducteurs 2009*. http://goo.gl/p7b2Mt. Accessed October 2015.