



# HAEGEUM: Different Forms of Communication for Inclusion

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## Introduction

The welfare state is grounded in universality and the idea of equality. But what does this type of state, in which we live and to which societies seem to aspire, silently encompass? In principle, equality refers to a modulation of behaviors to comply with the norm and implies a gradation in the forms of inclusion. So, how should we or could we include without degrading and labeling? There are many ways to approach inclusion, and perhaps one of the most interesting is related to communication, because communication refers not only to words but also to things [1], in short: to the visible and the invisible, in a field where all individuals embrace fragility, in a world where exclusion does not solely belong to disadvantaged groups.

Communication is the key word that defines what we are interested in presenting in this work. It is about advancing the framework and the initial results of research that focuses on trying to provide answers and proposals regarding the needs of a society that, in the era of communications, seems to be increasingly distancing itself from them. Thus, the summarized lines of a theoretical and fieldwork project are presented here, connecting certain vulnerable groups with art strict sensu and with the art of the possible—not so much used as therapy, a well-explored resource not discarded here, but as a context from which new ways of relating can be built and established. Sign language, Braille [2] are referential systems for communicating (ergo relating) with individuals who exist differently in the world; therefore, working on new, “freer” translations and new appropriations is the ultimate goal of a larger project developed at the Social Entrepreneurship Laboratory of the University of Valladolid, Spain.

## Discussion

This is not the place to delve into a review of what communication may mean, but it is the space to state that communication not only refers to words, texts, speeches—in short, to everything that language allows us to express or transmit orally or in writing—but also points to a plurality of uses and, therefore, practices, many of which involve devices aimed at controlling the circulation of ideas and the transmission of emotions.

In the field of translation, it is argued that in the 21st-century society, where images, technologies, the internet, and AI take center stage, and where new voices cease to be invisible, communication increasingly takes place through multimodal texts. Consequently, there is a need for a new definition that can encompass all these semiotic systems and do so ethically. These new texts can be images, sounds, colors, movement, buildings, etc.

Building upon theories and concepts already developed and subsequently crystallized in terms such as E. Gentzler’s “posttranslation” [3] and S. Bassnett and D. Johnston’s “outward turn” [4], this discipline aims to evolve and adapt to the needs of the current world. The concept of “posttranslational” entails an approach that takes into account the complex, hybrid, and fragmented reality in which we live, making room for this plurality of voices. “Outward turn” advocates for collaboration and dialogue between disciplines as a strategy to gain new tools and perspectives. In connection with this, it links the concept of power (in this case, understood on a microscopic level as M. Foucault does) and what Campbell and Vidal [5] refer to as “the translator’s gaze,” defined

as “intense looking [...], which includes the full immersion of the translator in the text, with eyes, ears, skin, nose, limbs, and heart.” Every time we look, we translate, because we do so from our own perspective. The gaze is, in reality, many gazes, as many as perspectives. Furthermore, as Vidal Claramonte [6] explains, the gaze is capable of detecting and revealing the invisible worlds hidden behind texts, what is said without being explicitly stated. Since there is no single valid translation of reality, the author adds that it should be the responsibility of the translator to offer new, multiple, diverse versions to new generations so that they can choose. This is nothing other than “allowing” the appropriation of discourses [7], to give them meaning in personalized but also community contexts, understanding them as constructions that go beyond texts and connect with other forms of expression or communicative practices.

At this point, it is evident that art is one of the most compelling avenues for approaching, with a Foucauldian genealogical perspective, what is proposed here. In this sense, art has much to contribute to translation: “Not giving a voice is one of the most dangerous forms of symbolic violence. [...] let us make translations that are canvases open to plurality and diversity. Let us transform our translations into pentimento’s, where all voices, colors, sounds, and noises are welcome” [6]. For instance, dance can convey aspects that would otherwise remain hidden; there are things that can only be communicated through choreography, gestures, and the human body. Humans always attempt to grasp the infinite from the finite, as depicted by writers during the Romantic era. There are colors we do not see because they are imperceptible to our eyes, and “the sweetest melodies are those unheard,” as expressed by J. Keats. Despite seeming impossible, translation has long suggested that we can open our minds and understand that communication is expansive and dynamic. There are no original or finished works; rather, the intriguing aspect lies in this continuous process of creation, enrichment, and complementation through many hands, senses, perspectives, media, times, and it is also important to identify the discontinuities. Dance consistently takes the lead in breaking with established norms and expressing the reality of the moment through sophisticated and diverse resources. Moreover, it aptly reflects the idea that there is no single, univocal, static vision, thanks to its ephemeral nature. Additionally, dance is a highly multimodal and transdisciplinary art form that communicates through various types of texts (movement, sound, bodies, lights, spaces, clothing, etc.) and numerous voices (choreographers, dancers, costume artists, etc.).

The translator can act as an expert mediator between all these layers of construction and diverse modes. An example of this can be seen by applying the concept of “posttranslational” to the rewritings undertaken by choreographers and dancers M. Bourne and D. Masilo of the ballet *Swan Lake* [8]. Both manage to bring this classical work into a contemporary context from their personal perspectives. They question not only gender and concepts within dance but also those in the broader world, transcending heteronormative, sexist, Eurocentric, and racist discourses.

In the case of Bourne’s *Swan Lake*, the British artist delves much deeper into mental and emotional levels, translating fantasy

into psychology. Through intertextuality with contemporary elements, he succeeds in making the present-day spectator relate to the story in a much more immediate way. This was a revolutionary approach that generated both criticism and fascination, with the balance ultimately tipping towards considering Bourne’s *Swan Lake* a masterpiece. Furthermore, Masilo tackles the theme of homosexuality and delves into a deeper psychology, but she transports her *Swan Lake* to her own culture and context. The South African artist also addresses other issues such as gender, geographical origin, or AIDS. One of the unique aspects being her distinctive posttranslational of the classical ballet genre, fusing it with African dance, steering it toward a hybrid genre—something highly innovative and a clear reflection of the contemporary world we inhabit, where boundaries between cultures, identities, and concepts blur.

## Conclusions

We are currently facing a world that often appears dystopian. It is urgent to grow to meet the existing needs; therefore, as we have seen translation do, it is crucial to consider concepts such as transdisciplinary collaboration and multimodality now more than ever. Einstein said that we cannot solve problems from the same level of thinking that we had when we created them. Most of the time, the answers are already before us, but we still need to make that mental shift. We need to break out of our limited mindset, and to achieve that, it is fundamental to cultivate key skills such as creativity, intuition, artistic sensitivity, empathy, cooperation—and to create spaces where all voices are heard, especially those of the collectives that are often excluded.

From UVA-LES, various proposed projects are currently underway in this direction ([https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnPNs\\_yBBioHGT6gYH59p0g](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnPNs_yBBioHGT6gYH59p0g)), and one of them pertains to the promotion of mental well-being. The aim is to co-create immersive experiences (utilizing drones and virtual reality glasses) with individuals experiencing pain and diagnosed with conditions such as anxiety, psychosis, depression, among others. The objective is to provide spaces for expression, identification, solace, support, and refuge, in environments distant from clinical settings. At times, inspiration may be concealed in choreographies or songs that have existed for years, but new appropriations authorize them in a different manner, breaking norms and expressing profound feelings that, while personal, connect with others. In this context, the goal is to describe mental states that may go unnoticed (or not) by control devices, thereby contributing not so much to formulating new treatments but to establishing new approaches for designing alternative ways of being in the world. A paradigmatic case is represented by the South Korean rapper and composer SUGA-Agust D, who masterfully describes and translates emotions leading to psychological distress that must be learned to manage, perhaps in a path of return and recovery, appropriation, and return to society, reminiscent of the Trieste approach. His work intertwines music, dance, and “translates” emotions, and that is why this work is titled “Haegeum.” The haegeum is a vertical violin with two strings used in traditional Korean music. However, it is also a song that conveys messages such as “each one is free to interpret” or “the flood of information inhibits the freedom of imagination” [9]. Additionally,

it serves as a Korean saying that means “lifting the ban and allowing something that was once forbidden”.

In summary, the combination of genealogy and archaeology (as per Foucault’s work) allows for replacing the so-called equalities (which are nothing more than totalizing assumptions) with differentiated analyses. It enables the description of how the episteme of an era is not the sum of its knowledge but the deviation, distances, oppositions, differences, and relationships among its multiple discourses. It is a space of dispersion, an open field, and undoubtedly indefinitely describable space of relations that need to be translated into open and free access to continue working on other models of communication [10,11].

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### Conflict of interest

No conflict of interest.

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