

## 20<sup>th</sup> Century Approaches to Translation - A Historiographical Survey

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The main purpose of this paper is to give an interpretative account of the main currents in the field of Translation Studies during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly during the second half, when the most numerous and overwhelming changes took place.

A brief consideration of the reasons for the present neglect of the historiographical dimension in Translation Studies will be followed by a general overview of the main tendencies which have had some bearing on the evolution of the discipline, especially from the fifties onwards

In the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the study of translation has undergone quite different kinds of focus. This is not new in translation history. In fact, the practice, as well as the theory, of translation have from the outset been intimately associated with other disciplines such as rhetoric, grammar, poetics, literature and hermeneutics.

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, philology dominated the reflexion on translation and was later replaced by the philosophy of language, that discovered in translation an excellent illustration of the philosophical issues under debate.

We have to wait until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to witness the most significant changes occurring in the discipline. Not only do we see the study of translation becoming an autonomous, institutionalized discipline,

83

characterized by a changing interdisciplinary approach, but we also follow its development in response to various influences coming from outer stimuli (machine translation) as well as from allied and less related disciplines such as literature and linguistics, mathematics, functionalism cultural studies, and cognitive theory.

For present purposes our chief concern is to track the emergence and evolution of Translation Studies from 1950 onwards by undertaking a close examination of two of its most vigorous traditions, the German-speaking *Übersetzungswissenschaft* and English Translation Studies, bearing in mind their differing epistemological traditions and the impact of this on future development of the discipline. As far as the major problems, research focus and influences of these two branches are concerned we shall look into some of the difficulties encountered during the initial scientific implementation, as well into the main changes within the discipline due to the influence of other scientific fields. This becomes particularly apparent when linguistics gives way to other research areas which succeeded in ruling the study of translation. We will also consider how these turning points in the interdisciplinary approach of the discipline have shaped its object of study, its theorization and its methodology and terminology.

Further, we will examine future perspectives for Translation Studies which fields deserve particular attention, what insights can be improved and which questions remain unsolved.

Finally, we shall attempt a possible characterization of the present Prevailing interdisciplinary approach in Translation Studies, as well as of its present state, considering whether and how it has overcome its legitimization crisis, which are the prevailing paradigms, how the balance between them is to be assessed and their influence in shaping the discipline.

### 1. Translation Studies- A bit of history

Historiographical approaches in Translation Studies are often regarded with a certain suspicion, as being somewhat archaeological and peripheral. This prejudice rests on the assumption that Historiographical research has had only little import on the evolution of Translation Studies, if any. Another reason for the neglect of historiographical surveys can perhaps be found in the high demands imposed by the uneven evolution of the discipline which distracted attention from a diachronical philogenetic perspective.

84

This deficit really needs to be upheld. Indeed, after such a revolutionary phase in the history of this new discipline no general appraisal has been undertaken so far of its complex evolution. The main purpose of this paper therefore is to draw an interpretative account of the state of the art.

Of old, theoretical considerations on translation have been associated with reflexions on poetics, rhetoric, grammar, literature and hermeneutics. The reason for this mixed treatment seems to reflect the subservient acknowledgment of translation as a utilitarian tool, geared towards other purposes- to disseminate religion, to improve the style of the vernacular, to take hold of foreign literary themes, motives and forms, to learn a foreign language, to exercise grammar, to interpret the biblical texts, and so forth.

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, translation was considered an important tool that could give access to the text under study in which the problems of philological research were visible. For the literary critic, translation would provide a particular case of interpretation and also of fixation of older texts, and the comparison of several different translations would shed some light on dubious, corrupt passages.

## **2. Translation and philosophy of language**

During the whole 20<sup>th</sup> century, philosophical enquiry rediscovered the importance of reflecting on the language used to discuss philosophical problems. As a result of this concern, the philosophy of language became an autonomous discipline, in the sequence of the development of logical analysis of linguistic expressions that occurred in analytical philosophy, particularly with Wittgenstein.

As for the meaning of a word, Wittgenstein drew more attention to its use, i.e., its situational context, whereas Bloomfield stressed the response a linguistic form would cause upon the receiver of the message. Along the same line of behaviouristic semantics, Quine defended stimulus meaning, which depended on the assent of the receptor to the stimulus he had received, according to which he inferred about its truth and verosimilitude. For Quine, translation would imply the investigation of the semantic structures of a language, based on the analysed behaviour. Hence the indeterminacy of translation, as the translator can never be sure whether the translated text is interpreted by the addressee in the same way as it was intended by the sender.

The fact that the object to be studied is at the same time its own instrument of analysis has been the cause of many difficulties. In fact, there are two languages involved: an object-language and a metalanguage, the latter being used to explain the former. And that is where translation comes into the debate. In fact, translation becomes a pertinent example of the difficulties encountered by philosophers of language, namely the difficulty of ensuring the comprehension of the expressions of a language by its speakers.

Also in both orientations of analytical philosophy, the problem of translations is raised. In the case of logic empirism, defended by Bertrand Russell and Rudolf Carnap, philosophical language (scientific language in general) is to be translated into an ideal language through a formal construct, whereas the supporters of linguistic phenomenalism (George Edward Moore and Gilbert Ryle) wished to reduce philosophical language to common language. In both cases, the question was how this translation was to be achieved. Seen from this viewpoint, translation differed only in degree from other types of linguistic interaction.

In the sixties, philosophical research on meaning underwent a significant change by becoming eminently pragmatic, i.e., the use of language and the function of expressions in a given context became the main focus of the debate. Therefore, one resorted to translation in order to explain the relationship between language and the world through the concepts of truth and reference, as pragmatics presupposes an underlying semantics, which in turn is based on conditions of truth.

## **3. The growth of a new discipline**

An important conquest in translation studies research in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is unquestionably the move from translation theory to translation science (*Übersetzungswissenschaft*), supported by the progressive institutionalization of Translation Studies as a relatively autonomous discipline at university level. The growth of a scientific community of translation scholars as well as the increasing number of congresses and publications in the field also contributed to the discipline becoming "a success story of the 1980s" (Lefevere 1992).

From the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards, linguistics takes over translation studies, in an attempt to respond to the demands of machine translation, which had pointed out the main morphological and syntactical

problems to be tackled, and had hoped to find a quick and efficient answer to them from linguistics. From the fifties up to the end of the seventies, it seemed only natural to look at translation mainly as an operation between languages. In fact, during this "golden age" of the linguistic approach to translation (Fawcett 1997) – others prefer to call it "imperialism of linguistics over translation" (Octavio Paz 1971) – linguistic investigation has been preoccupied with trying to solve morphological and syntactical problems. Some of these, however, and above all semantic problems, proved resistant to a strict semantic analysis, i.e., it soon became clear that in order to come up with an adequate solution for many translation problems the linguistic approach had to be backed up by extralinguistic information. The situational context of each act of communication at translation represents had to be taken into account, if one was to expect pertinent help from linguistics to Translation Studies.

Not only did certain semantic problems remain unsolved (ambiguity, pronominalization, deitics, grammatical polysemy), but also literary texts were excluded from linguistic research on translation on account of their great variability. Furthermore, the definitions of translation provided so far had also shown their shortcomings, as they were exclusively centred on the linguistic aspect of the translational operation and aimed primarily at equivalence at different levels (Nida 1964, Catford 1965, Jäger 1975, Wilss 1977, Koller 1979).

Equivalence is considered by linguistic-oriented translation as the basic, founding relationship between source and target text, without which it is impossible to speak of translation. This notion of equivalence, however, soon became a stumbling-block for those who viewed translation mainly as a cultural, functional entity rather than a linguistic one, and it finally brought about a radical schism in the field of Translation Studies.

#### **4. Linguistics and beyond**

To do justice to the linguistic approach of translation, we must avoid oversimplifications such as restricting it to a mere contrastive exercise between linguistic systems (as it may have been suggested by some research done for machine translation). After all, a significant change had taken place inside the linguistic approach which often seems to have been underestimated: it concerns the fact of considering translation as a manifestation of parole and not of langue, thus moving away from a static,

87

merely systemic structural comparison between linguistic codes, as it is mistakenly assumed, more often than not.

Beyond this important step, the search for a definition of translation also led to the establishment of the discipline as an autonomous field of enquiry in its own right. Leaning on the reputed status linguistics had by then acquired, Translation Studies fought for a proper place of its own. The institutionalization of the discipline at university level, the formation of a scientific community and a well defined subject-matter made it scientifically eligible as a field of research which could also be financed.

However, although having largely contributed to the initial scientification of Translation Studies, linguistics had to step aside and give way to other disciplines. All of a sudden, what had been taken as the main issue to deal with and settle in the first place -the definition of translation, its main element (equivalence) and the conditions under which this could be attained- ceased to be important, in other words, it became relative.

After reaching this impasse (the legitimation crisis mentioned by Werner Koller), some scholars took a closer view of the conditions which enabled the progress of a scientific field. Influenced by Thomas Kuhn and Karl Popper, two translation scholars - Gideon Toury (1980) and Hans J. Vermeer (1986)- proposed quite different approaches to translation from its outside. First, they considered the definition of translation as no longer essential, advancing that a translation is everything that can be considered as such, including pseudotranslations (Toury 1980) or that one can assume what a translation is and thus proceed to more interesting, pertinent questions (Reiss/Vermeer 1984, Vermeer 1986).

Besides, the linguistic aspect of translation was completely over ridden by the cultural one, which became predominant. Translation was to be seen as an operation of cultural transfer (Vermeer 1986), as a subsystem within each cultural polysystem and a result of historical and cultural conditioning (Toury 1980).

Once the linguistic side of translation had been pulverized in culture, and the question of equivalence dismissed as irrelevant, 'the door laid open for all kinds of assault to translation on the part of other disciplines. And so it happened that functionalism took the reins of Translation Studies, thus intending to banish linguistics from the field. The main point of this shift is the change of focus: away from the source text, its linguistic concretion and its author (disenthronement of the source text is the key word) to the

88

hypostatized reader of the translation, to his communicative situation in the target context, to the cultural transfer as the paramount operation in translational activity and to the translator as its main and almighty agent. The aim (function, *Skopos*) of the translation, as well as the text type, would automatically determine the strategy of translation.

This evolution did not take place all of a sudden. The terrain for Functionalism had previously been prepared by the communicative approach, mainly embodied by what is generally called the Leipzig School. Its main representants –Otto Kade, Gert Jäger and Albrecht Neubert- had advocated that translation should be seen as a special communicative act. Therefore, linguistic investigation was seen as an important part of the process, but it needed to be set up in a larger framework, a communicative one, in order to account for the situational constraints which had immediate repercussions on the textualization of the target text message in its new communicative context. The difference between the Leipzig School and functionalists is that the former still considered linguistics as a pertinent discipline to the study of translation, whereas the latter took the communicative aspect of translation as the only and exclusive one to be dealt with by a general theory of translation.

Functionalism was also welcome as it was in accordance with the spirit of time, dominated by pragmatization and teleological concerns (Wilss 1992). Its impact on translation also brought about a methodological change: a deductive approach was strongly favoured as the only one that could make the discipline advance (Vermeer 1986). Concrete translations were thus banned from research and substituted by highly idealized models which abstracted from annoying variables.

Needless to say, the crash between the linguistic and the functionalistic approach to translation could not be avoided. The monopolization of Translation Studies moved from linguistics to functionalism, therefore opening a new period in the evolution of the discipline.

One might think that the turmoil caused by functionalism within Translation Studies, which almost split it into two separate and irreconcilable camps, has been the only fracture that has hindered the consolidation and the public recognition of this new research area. But by the middle of the eighties, another significant move took place which has brought some considerable shifts in the focussing of translation: the cognitive turn.

For the evolution of the discipline the study of the mental processes that take place in the translator's head when he is translating has had far reaching consequences: the focus turned away from idealized models towards existing translations, and from products to processes; methodologically, it set out an hypothetical-deductive approach in translational research, the initial hypothesis being verified by empirical experiments carried out with several subjects.

The emphasis on empirism was also accompanied by a keen interest in cognitive disciplines, which permitted the development of cognitive linguistics. This evolution has enabled a better understanding of the mental linguistic structures and processes, which could be more adequately described and explained now, particularly as far as the representation and the processing of linguistic knowledge in interaction with other kinds of knowledge is concerned.

Leaving behind it the behaviouristic approach to mental processes, the cognitive turn opened up a new era not only in psychology, but also in Translation Studies, among other fields. The need of researching cognitive phenomena comprehensively brought about the interdisciplinary approach in cognitive linguistics which could draw from psychology, computer science and neurophysiology.

### **5. Translations studies and *Übersetzungswissenschaft***

If one looks at the field of translation research in general, one can trace two main streams which reveal quite different focalizations upon its subject matter, apart from stemming from slightly divergent scientific backgrounds: English Translation Studies and German *Übersetzungswissenschaft*.

The former denomination is ambivalent, as it represents simultaneously the overall English designation of the discipline (every investigation on translation falls within its scope) and in its narrow acception it refers exclusively to a part of this research done in English. This latter branch is almost exclusively centred on literary translation, dealing mainly with cultural and ideological constraints acting upon translated texts and excluding linguistic analysis altogether (Toury, Venuti, Bassnett, Lefevere). The name of the new discipline is in accordance with the epistemological tradition common in English, by which the designation attributed to a specific subject-matter in the humanities only involves the term "studies" (cultural studies literary studies, and so on).

As far as German *Übersetzungswissenschaft* is concerned, it emerges out of a different tradition which goes back to Dilthey, according to which one can differentiate between *Geisteswissenschaften* (humanities) and *Naturwissenschaften* (natural sciences), each one following quite different methods, hermeneutic in the former, explanatory in the latter, although sharing a similar designation.

As early as 1813, Friedrich Schleiermacher coined the word *Übersetzungswissenschaft* (in analogy with *Altertumswissenschaft* for History). This designation was not to be revived until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the Leipzig School, comprehending every scientific study of translation.

That this kind of objective, systematic study was necessary, as Nida (1964) and many others after him pointed out, thus justifying the designation *Übersetzungswissenschaft*, does not necessarily mean that the discipline claims to attain a scientific predicative force like that prevailing in the natural sciences. As Holmes rightly asserts, “not all *Wissenschaften* are sciences” (1972). But this does not mean one has to look with suspicion at a designation like *Übersetzungswissenschaft* either. Gentzler's distorted evaluation of German *Übersetzungswissenschaft* is an example of a biased perspective (1993). In fact, research on translation in German has proved one of the most innovative, productive and diversified contributions to the field which would certainly be better known hadn't it been written in German. One has only to consider the linguistic approach embodied by Werner Koller and Wolfram Wilss, the hermeneutic approach represented by Friedrich Schleiermacher, Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Fritz Paepcke and Radegundis Stolze, the psycholinguistic approach established by Hans Peter Krings, Wolfgang Lörcher and Frank Königs, the communicative approach defended by the Leipzig School, the cultural approach outlined by the research group based in Göttingen and the functionalistic approach set up by Katharina Reiss, Hans J. Vermeer and Christiane Nord.

When comparing both scientific traditions, one rapidly concludes that Translation Studies in English has gone uncompromised, systematic way, focusing exclusively on literary translation, obliterating linguistic research from its scope and focusing its attention on cultural and political constraints which act upon literary translation, adopting the political agenda prevailing in Cultural Studies and thus examining questions of

power like colonialism, feminism and manipulation of literary fame in translated literature.

On the contrary, German *Übersetzungswissenschaft* has developed a highly systematic, exhaustive analysis of the object under investigation – translation- from quite heterogeneous perspectives: as a linguistic operation, as a communicative act, as a semiotic process, as a hermeneutic undertaking, as a cultural transfer, as a function of its goal, as a textual operation and as a mental process. Each of these perspectives has been thoroughly investigated, and the produced literature is amazing, not only in terms of quantity, but also in terms of seriousness and depth of analysis, systematic survey and methodological sophistication. These features have turned it into one of the most powerful branches of contemporary Translation Studies. Unfortunately, its influence is not so widespread as it deserves because of the language barrier -an obstacle which needs to be surmounted.

## 6. Interdisciplinary approach

As far as an interdisciplinary approach in the field of translation is concerned, one has to consider its origins, the disciplines pertinent to the study of translation at different moments of its evolution and the various forms this approach has assumed.

In order to capture the way that originated the concurrence of several disciplines to Translation Studies, one should remember what happened in almost every scientific field of research in the last fifty years, namely a transmigration of the paradigms from natural to human sciences and among disciplines within each group. In the particular case of translation, the increasing and changing interdisciplinary approach that has taken the discipline by assault has been considered a consequence of the initial hegemony of linguistics over the field. But already in the early phases of machine translation, mathematics and cybernetics, together with semiotics, information theory and communication science came to the fore as disciplines that could help linguistics solve some intricate problems. Their contribution can be detected in the formalization and algorithmization mathematics and cybernetics brought about, in the abstraction from linguistic material and also in the methodological inflexion semiotics brought to the Discipline, by implementing a deductive method in order to make Translation Studies advance (Ludskanov 1969). From a semiotic perspective,



communication science and information theory imposed the conception of language as mere code, of interpretation and translation as information exchange (Weaver 1949) and called the attention for the importance of the situational context each act of communication is embedded in (Leipzig School).

Furthermore, functionalism took up Translation Studies, calling for the superiority of culture over language, making the function of translation, its aim and its effect upon the target readers absolute, in an attempt to sweep away the linguistic approach to translation. As a consequence, teleological thinking has become pervasive in Translation Studies, as well as the influence of sociology and action theory (human behaviour is analysed in terms of action, using language in a certain situational context). Hans Vermeer, Justa Holz-Mänttari, Katharina Reiss and Christiane Nord are the defenders of the functionalist approach most in evidence, along with many other followers who combine functionalism with their personal theories.

With the advent of cognitive sciences, psycholinguistic and cognition also enabled a new insight into processing mechanisms, how understanding and textual production take place, which cognitive processes are involved and finally how the translator can cope with translation problems and devise strategies for their solution (Hans Peter Krings, Wolfgang Lörcher, Candace Séguinot, Sonja Tirkkonen-Condit).

Hermeneutic thinking has also had a significant role in Translation Studies as to improve the understanding of a text to be translated. The components of the hermeneutic dialogue between which a dialectical relationship occurs have been equated in different terms: author and reader by Schleiermacher, reader and text with the fusion of both horizons by Gadamer. Heidegger searched in etymology a way of winning back a comprehensive understanding of philosophical keywords by going back to their Greek roots, and more recently Fritz Paepcke attempted to do similarly with literary texts (1986), without much success though.

As the discipline of Cultural Studies began to establish itself, a cultural approach to translation, in particular to literary translation, also gained new contours (Göttingen project). Although some translation scholars had already emphasized the relevance of culture in translation (Snell-Hornby 1988, Pym 1992), no attempt had been made to develop an operationalization of how to handle with cultural problems in translation. The methodology that

was lacking has been developed by a group of scholars in Göttingen, thus opening new perspectives to this kind of cultural approach.

Finally, as the text became more and more the linguistic unit of study, it also became the unit of translation *par excellence*, as every decision at the micro level is taken in accordance with the whole text in which it is embedded. Not only a holistic view of the text imposed itself, but also the feature textuality was analysed in its subcomponents (Neubert/Shreve 1992).

As to the forms the interdisciplinary approach can assume or has assumed in Translation Studies in the last fifty years, there are several models to be considered. Back in 1968, Peter Hartmann made a distinction between a naïve and a calculated interdisciplinary approach, the latter being an intentional combination of several disciplines upon the same subject. Wolfgang Lörcher (1991) differentiated an additive from an integrative kind of interdisciplinary work, postulating the latter. In 1997, Klaus Kaindl devised three different forms of interdisciplinary approach: an imperialistic one, in which a discipline integrates the structuring of another, and which corresponds to the linguistic period of Translation Studies; an importing or instrumentalistic form, in which the results or instruments of analysis of one or more disciplines are imported to improve the results of another discipline, and finally a reciprocal form, in which two or more disciplines cooperate at the same level within the investigation of a certain domain. For Kaindl, Translation Studies is still a bit far away from this third type of approach.

Personally, it seems to me the discipline is still in a state of precarious incipient multidisciplinary work, as no imbrication of the methods and results of the different disciplines involved has been achieved so far. Most approaches would have to step out of themselves and match their views with insights provided by other approaches.

## 7. The evolution of translation studies

Seen from a Kuhnian perspective, the evolution of Translation Studies can perhaps be accounted for in the following terms: first, there is a prescientific, impressionistic age (more or less up to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), the main interest of which seems to have been the question of fidelity. Then the scientific era took its first steps, with linguistics claiming hegemony over the field -a monoparadigmatic situation, centred round the concept of equivalence. As this concept allegedly failed to

convey adequate answers to some ensuing problems, a moment of crisis assailed the discipline and was only superseded by a revolution that set up new paradigms: in stead of equivalence, the new concepts function, culture and cognition covered the field.

The only difference as far as Kuhn's model is concerned is that in Translation Studies the post-paradigmatic situation is not dominated by one single paradigm which contradicts the previous one, but by three different ones, none of which imposing itself upon the other two, and with the linguistic paradigms still active, although in a background position.

The first phase can be called endocentric: it covers the linguistic period of the discipline that makes up its matrix. Its main concern was the definition of the object of research, which brought about the establishment of Translation Studies as an autonomous, scientific discipline. During this phase, the evolution was naïve, taking place more or less haphazardly, although it was already conditioned by outer stimuli, to a certain extent (machine translation). Then, from the eighties on, there followed an exocentric phase that deliberately strove to shed the previous paradigm, linguistics, and was characterized by an explosion of concurrent paradigms-function, culture, cognition- none of which prevailing over the other two. The consequence of having no centre and no integration has thus led to a proliferation of approaches.

When Volker Hansen (1993) points to the “quiet paradigm change in the humanities” mainly based on constructivism, he certainly hit the mark as far as the evolution of Translation Studies is concerned. In fact, what Hans Robert Jauss had already proclaimed back in 1969, namely a change of paradigm in literary studies, is bluntly postulated by Vermeer (1986) by taking constructivism as the only way that allows research to advance in the discipline. According to Vermeer, if you are bound to understand only what you construct mentally, then you have to start with everyday knowledge, you have to use common language (and not scientific terminology) to, present self-evident axioms, to make the basis of a deductive system understandable on the assumption of previous knowledge (which means constructivism works within a hermeneutic circle). By considering all these premises, one can certainly achieve a state in which “science produces its own objects” (Vermeer 1986).

95

## 8. Main tendencies and future perspectives

If one wants to draw a picture of the field of Translation Studies at the moment, there are four tendencies that have dominated it in the last fifty years: internationalization, a new theory-practice relationship, a growing empirism and interdisciplinary work.

As to the first feature, research on translation has gradually overcome national frontiers as well as linguistic barriers, thus becoming a common scientific patrimony. This internationalization enables the contact between researchers of different approaches and languages, thus favouring the interaction between them. Congresses and publications are also open to international debate, making the scientific community come together and discuss the main problems.

As far as the relationship between theory and practice is concerned, several changes have taken place over the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At first, theory was mainly normative, providing instructions on how to practice translation. Examples of this attitude can be found in the principles of translation enunciated by Theodor Savory (1957) and in the rules of translation presented by Peter Newmark (1973). However, with the advent of machine translation, the results of translation theory began being put to the proof. As theoretical investigation advanced and the most serious syntactic and semantic problems were tackled, there was a certain turn away from actual translations, considered either as irrelevant to the constitution and verification of certain theories or carefully selected only in as much as they could fit the demonstration of a certain theory. Still other theories opted for the formulation of their axioms without recurring to any empirical verification whatsoever. As a consequence, a significant methodological turn took place that gave preference to a deductive approach, eliminating a great number of variables, thus allowing pertinent generalizations more frequently.

The pragmatic turn launched by the Leipzig School, and even more meaningfully the psycholinguistic approach as practised by Hans Peter Krings and Wolfgang Lörcher in Germany, Sonja Tirkkonen-Condit in Finland and Candace Séguinot in Canada signal the unquestionable move towards an empirical approach of translational phenomena. The process studies undertaken so far have led to the testing of hypotheses that have been put forward, besides allowing for quantitative analysis of several factors at work in the translation process.

96

Nowadays, whatever the sustained orientation in research may be, translation scholars unanimously require the inclusion of an empirical approach as a way of validating theoretical hypotheses, all the more since descriptive studies are prevailing in Translation Studies.

Also numerous are the examples of translation methodologies which try to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Mona Baker 1992, Sandor Hervey/Ian Higgins/Michael Loughridge 1995, Paul Kussmaul 1995, Cay Dollerup/Vibeke Appel 1995, Wolfram Wilss 1996).

Although many serious efforts have been undertaken to make translation theory and practice come near, a certain distance on the part of translators is still to be felt. This situation raises the question of knowing to what extent the legitimation crisis of Translation Studies has really been overcome.

Besides, several fundamental questions remain to be solved: a clear, consensual definition of the object of study, the specification of a methodology in accordance with the complex object translation represents, the clarification of terminological problems and a stronger, better interwoven interdisciplinary approach.

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99

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