

Text Translation: Before Discipline, During Discipline, Between Disciplines, and After Discipline

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Abstract

Translation Studies has emerged as a relatively new but dynamic field in the Western world. The establishment of the academic discipline of translation studies as a distinct topic in the Low Countries (namely, Belgium and the Netherlands) occurred in the early 1970s. Certain current theorists argue that the field of translation studies disproportionately prioritizes translated texts while neglecting a substantial body of translation data from other academic disciplines, including media studies, psychology, philosophy, theater, art, and architecture.

This article is organized into four distinct sections. The first section, titled "Pre-Discipline," examines the period from the aftermath of World War II until the 1970s. The second section, "Discipline," explores the early years of translation studies during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The third section, "Interdiscipline," delves into the expansion of the field and its numerous collaborations with external disciplines throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Lastly, the fourth section, "Post-Discipline," represents a new phase that further expands the boundaries and definitions of the field. The introductory section of the recently published magazine translation encompasses a discussion of my prior scholarly contributions, specifically a publication in 2008 titled "Translation and Identity in the Americas." Additionally, it delves into the concept of "post-translation studies," initially introduced by Siri Nergaard and Stephano Arduini in their scholarly article entitled "Translation: A New Paradigm" in 2011.

Keywords: Text Translation, Before Discipline, During Discipline, Between Disciplines, and After Discipline

Introduction

The field of translation studies in the Western world has a very brief yet eventful history. In contrast to the longstanding academic disciplines taught in European institutions with centuries of history, Translation Studies emerged as a relatively recent academic field during the early 1970s in the Low Countries, encompassing Holland and Belgium. Despite its status as the oldest institution in Europe, the Bologna institution was formed relatively recently in the 1990s, rendering it around two decades old. Notwithstanding its establishment dating back to the year 1088.

Despite its establishment in 1425, the University of Leuven did not commence the study of translation in its contemporary manifestation until 1976. The University of Leuven holds the distinction of being the oldest Catholic university globally. Despite the inherent difficulties and potential conflicts over territory, the establishment of a novel academic discipline in Western societies has the potential to be a highly invigorating endeavor.

This statement does not imply that the field of translation or the educational programs for translators are in their early stages of development. Translation has a long and extensive historical lineage that spans several millennia. Mashad, situated in close proximity to the Silk Road, boasts a rich historical tradition in the field of translation. The Silk Road has served as a conduit connecting various imperial powers, including Rome, Parthia, Kushan, and China, in addition to facilitating interactions between the Persian, Arabic, and Ottoman empires. Mashad has acquired the moniker as the "City of Translation."

The origins of translation as a "discipline" can be traced back to the earliest translated papers, which mostly consisted of price lists and product catalogs. These documents were primarily associated with international trade. Translations into Chinese, Persian, Turkish, Greek, Roman, and Indian languages were purportedly conducted within the geographical boundaries of Iran. Sogdian, a Middle Iranian language, was among the most commonly translated languages along the ancient trade routes. Additional languages that underwent translation encompass Chinese, Persian, Turkish, Greek, Roman, and Indian.

According to Xuanzang, a renowned Chinese Buddhist monk, esteemed traveler, and accomplished translator, his observations during his travels in India served as a source of inspiration for the widely recognized Chinese literary work, *Journey to the West*. Xuanzang noted that Sogdian boys were instructed in the arts of reading and writing from a tender age of five, so establishing their position as one of the most ancient and distinguished literary cultures. The Sogdians can be classified as one of the oldest significant literate cultures. The discovery of this phenomenon occurred during the seventh century. During that particular era, it is quite probable that the acquisition of literacy skills in additional languages, particularly Chinese and Indian, played a crucial role in ensuring one's survival. Consequently, it is plausible that the early educational institutions mostly comprised of apprenticeships rather than traditional classroom settings.

Being extended an invitation to deliver a lecture at Mashad, a renowned hub for the field of translation studies, is an exceptional privilege bestowed upon me as a scholar specializing in translation research and comparative analysis. The present presentation is structured into four distinct sections: "Pre-Discipline," which examines the period

following World War II and the 1960s; "Discipline," which delves into the initial years of Translation Studies during the late 1970s and early 1980s; "Interdiscipline," which explores the expansion of the field in the 1990s and 2000s through collaborations with organizations from diverse disciplines; and finally, "Post-Discipline," a nascent phase that is presently broadening the boundaries and definitions of the field.

Preceding the Exercise Session

The origins of translation in the Western world can be traced back to the period of ancient Rome. During this period, the Romans initiated the translation of Greek cultural works with the aim of expanding and enhancing their comprehension of history and culture, while also refining their talents in oratory. Prior to the advent of the printing press, the predominant mode of translation used the oral transmission of information. George Steiner, in his seminal work titled "After Babel" released in 1975, classifies all translation theory predating Roman Jakobson as having originated prior to the occurrence of World War II. The primary focus of his attention was the discourse surrounding loyalty vs freedom, a topic that was predominantly present in the introductory sections of published literary translations.

The historical lineage of Western scholars can be predominantly attributed to Cicero, who, for instance, expounded upon his translations of Greek orators Demosthenes and Aeschines in his work *De optimo genere oratorum* [On the Best Kind of Orators]. In this context, Cicero emphasized the significance of preserving the essence and nature of the original language, rather than engaging in a mere verbatim replication (Cicero, 1949). Western scholars commonly attribute the historical origins to Cicero as well. The renowned theologian and translator, Saint Jerome, is widely recognized for his significant contribution of translating

the Bible into Latin. In his work, he posited that the literal translation approach, as exemplified by Cicero, may present greater challenges compared to a sense-for-sense translation method (Saint Jerome, 1976). Jerome is widely recognized for his notable accomplishment of translating the Bible into the Latin language. The examination of translation techniques discussed here has been widely observed in the Western translation history spanning two millennia.

Consequently, it is recognized as a precursor to the area of translation studies. Professional translators often offer suggestions on translation, often referring to their own study and methods, and consistently presenting their arguments in the context of disputes between sense-for-sense and word-for-word translation approaches. The initial phase of the field was primarily concerned with the establishment of norms or criteria for guiding translation practices, rather than engaging in empirical investigations of actual translation work. Around the same period, the concept of "prescriptive and pre-disciplinary translation" was initially formulated.

The International Journal of Society, Culture, and Language, with the ISSN 2329-2210, was published in 2014 by I. E. Gentzler. It is Volume 2, Number 2, and may be found on page 15 of Volume 15. During the pre-disciplinary era in Europe, the fields of linguistics, philology, and language studies emerged as the dominant areas of scholarly inquiry. Historically, the field of language and literature was referred to as philology, with its central objective being the identification of original literary works and the provision of precise translations for such materials.

Translation played a crucial role in philological investigations, notably in the acquisition of knowledge pertaining to ancient languages

that have ceased to exist, such as Egyptian, Sumerian, Assyrian, and Hittite. Conversely, with the growing significance attributed to source material analysis, the role of translation has diminished in contemporary languages. Linguistics research also tends to focus on the structure and grammar of a given language. Nevertheless, translation theory sometimes receives little attention, and much less attention is devoted to its practical application, resulting in the relegation of translation to the domain of a practical discipline.

Within the realm of literary studies, the act of translation was traditionally regarded as lacking in creativity and originality. Instead, it was perceived as a secondary endeavor, one that derived from pre-existing works and was even deemed forbidden. The historical trajectory of the United States has notable similarities. The discipline of translation was primarily confined to the domain of applied linguistics, a science that focused on practical aspects like as pragmatics and troubleshooting, rather than delving into theoretical and cognitive investigations. Although the practice of philology was not widespread in the country, linguistic programs in the country substantially resembled those offered by European institutions.

Chomsky expressed his doubts regarding the suitability of generative grammar for the domain of translation from its initial introduction in the United States. According to his statement, despite the theoretical proposition of deep structures and universal grammars, there lacks a straightforward means of establishing a connection between these two notions. It is worth noting that the field of applied linguistics is currently experiencing an increase in research focused on social and pragmatic translation. This trend can be attributed to the prevalence of multilingualism, increased mobility, and migration, which need the

bridging of cultural and behavioral gaps through translation. In contemporary society, numerous transformations have occurred, leading to a notable increase in the field of applied linguistics.

However, it is noteworthy that only a limited number of language departments in the United States provide translation programs. Two notable examples are Kent State University and the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Despite the absence of formal instruction on translation within university curricula, there existed a notable degree of enthusiasm and engagement with both literary and non-literary translation beyond the confines of educational establishments. The study entitled "Translation, Counter-culture, and the Fifties in the United States," published in 1996, examined the surge in literary translation that occurred in the United States during the 1950s, prior to the establishment of a formal disciplinary framework.

The literary periodical, titled "The Fifties," which was created by Robert Bly in Minnesota, was commonly referred to as "The Fifties" by its readers. Numerous creative writers throughout the aforementioned era expressed discontentment with the nation's isolationist policies and the exclusive focus on English-language publications. Consequently, they resorted to the practice of translation as a means to introduce fresh ideas and literary structures. In the year 1956, Bly was granted a prestigious Fulbright award, facilitating his relocation to Norway with the purpose of engaging in the scholarly pursuit of studying and translating Norwegian poetry. During his time there, he acquainted himself with the works of emerging and innovative Latin American, Spanish, French, and German poets, including Federico Garcia Lorca, Pablo Neruda, and Antonio Machado.

The focus of his scholarly inquiry was directed towards the examination of the poetic works authored by these individuals. Without delay, he promptly commenced the translation of the literary compositions authored by these poets into the English language. Upon his arrival back in the United States, he initiated the establishment of a literary journal known as "The Fifties." This publication was primarily dedicated to the dissemination of both original poetry and translated works authored by American writers. In the immediate aftermath, a multitude of other poets commenced the task of translating literary works authored by their peers, subsequently presenting these renditions to the aforementioned journal, as well as various minor publishing houses within the United States.

During the transition from the 1950s to the 1960s, there was a significant surge in the field of translation. During the same period, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Jack Kerouac engaged in the translation and production of Mexican poetry. Gary Snyder traveled to Japan with the purpose of providing interpretation for Japanese poetry. Langston Hughes had already undertaken the translation of the works of Federico García Lorca. W.S. Merwin was engaged in the act of translating poetry originally composed in the Spanish and Provençal languages.

The manuscripts of Pasternak were not smuggled out of Russia, translated, and published in the West until the late 1950s, a significant event that finally resulted in his reception of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1958. The English translations of Jorge Luis Borges' literary works were not made available until the latter half of the 1950s. During this particular historical era, a considerable body of literary works authored by numerous Eastern European poets who had resettled in the United States subsequent to the conclusion of World War II underwent the

process of translation into the English language. Among the notable authors in this category are Zbigniew Herbert, Tadeusz Rozsewicz, and János Pilinszky. The inception of Modern Poetry in Translation may be traced back to its establishment in 1965 by Danny Weissbort and Ted Hughes.

These authors, along with their counterparts, have garnered recognition for their significant contributions to the field of poetry through their participation in several international festivals. The year 1959 marked the establishment of the ATA, a prominent professional organization. In the year 1959, the PEN American Center also founded the Translation Committee. Beyond the realm of academia, the surge in translation activities was predominantly propelled by the endeavors of imaginative authors and autonomous media outlets. The decades of the 1970s and 1980s represent a significant juncture in historical events.

My 1993 publication, titled "Contemporary Translation Theories," delved into the Western foundations of Translation Studies. This study examines the apparent concurrent emergence of the field in multiple geographical locations. Comparative literary and historical studies originated in Belgium and the Netherlands, while cultural and systems theory emerged in Israel. France witnessed the development of literary stylistics, which subsequently incorporated influences from poststructural and semiotic paradigms. In the United States, a more literary approach emerged through the establishment of the Creative Writing Workshop. In 1970, Anton Popović's publication titled "The Nature of Translation" presented the outcomes of a symposium that took place in Bratislava in 1968.

The publication of the Dutch version of "Name and Nature of Translation Studies" authored by American scholar James Holmes

occurred in the year 1972. The study in question is widely recognized as a major contribution to the field, and its name and methodologies have likely gained significant recognition in numerous countries globally. Henri Meschonnic's "Propositions pour une poétique de la traduction" was published in 1973 in France. The compilation provided a comprehensive overview of the fundamental principles of effective translation. In 1976, a seminal meeting was place in Leuven, Belgium, whereby numerous pioneering scholars in the field delivered presentations. The researchers involved in this study comprised José Lambert, André Lefevere, and Itamar Even-Zohar. One of the presentations delivered during the conference was titled "The Position of Translated Literature in the Literary Polysystem" by Itamar Even-Zohar. This particular lecture was published in 1978 as a contribution to a compilation of conference papers.

The publication of Wolfram Wilss's *Translationswissenschaft: Problema und Methode* in its German edition occurred in 1977. The book titled "Translation: The Focus of Growth of Literary Knowledge" was initially released in Belgium in 1978 and authored by André Lefevere. Both Gideon Toury's seminal work, *In Search of a Theory of Translation*, and Susan Bassnett's influential publication, *Translation Studies*, were published in the esteemed Methuen series in the year 1980.

These concurrent advancements are frequently the result of intellectual revolutions inside academia and the emergence of a new cohort of critical researchers who have been educated in preceding eras. During this period, there was a notable development and implementation of novel academic projects, rendering it a highly stimulating era for researchers. In the chapter titled "The Invisible College" within the publication "Translation in Systems" (1999), Theo Hermans examines the

clandestine gatherings, nocturnal dialogues, inaugural conferences, and scholarly publications that transpired amongst a select cohort of international academics. These individuals engaged in lively discussions, fostered personal connections, and exhibited remarkable ingenuity and perspicacity while exploring novel concepts.

Moreover, a profound sense of camaraderie and collective ambition permeated this exclusive community. The aforementioned pioneers of the sector established the foundational principles of the field's theoretical framework, organized conferences, engaged in the recruitment of emerging professionals, and initiated the education of subsequent cohorts. In an unexpected turn of events, I found myself among the pioneering academics who sought to foster unity among individuals by emphasizing common experiences and values, rather than focusing on disparities. I have delivered lectures on a range of subjects during the course of my research. However, if I were to engage in a discourse on descriptive translation studies in the Low Countries, it is likely that literary translators in the United States would take offense if I were to propose that this alternative method to translation research possesses any value.

Nonetheless, it is highly likely that professors of descriptive studies, who prioritize empirical research and perceive a translated work as an unchanging entity, would express amusement if I were to offer my findings on translation and deconstruction in the context of Holland. A vigorous discourse emerged regarding the optimal approach to the study of translation, as proponents of diverse linguistic and literary paradigms, target methodologies and transfer approaches, structural and post-structural researchers, and scholars focusing on structure and post-structure all expressed their respective viewpoints. The title of my work is "Contemporary Translation Theories," which reflects my endorsement of

a multi-theoretical approach. However, I encountered recurring criticism for not adequately emphasizing any particular theory.

The critique persists, but in a modified manifestation. My lack of speculation and excessive focus on a single topic have been subject to criticism by others. Is there a lack of hypotheses among individuals in Finland? Who are the Slavs, a group of people characterized by their enigmatic nature? Is there a specific rationale for the absence of a translation theory in both Arabic and Chinese languages? What about the news and film industry? Could you please provide information regarding the topic of human sexual reproduction? The number provided by the user is 18. The topic of discussion is to the migration of scholars from the field of Translation Studies, encompassing the periods preceding, during, and subsequent to their transition across other academic disciplines.

In my perspective, there is a need for more emphasis on cross-disciplinary study, as these persist as significant issues need resolution. The topic of concern pertains to challenges related to maintaining discipline. In the early 1990s, a trend emerged within the subject of translation studies, wherein there was a notable shift towards embracing multidisciplinary study. This research can be categorized as either intradisciplinary translation studies or multidisciplinary studies within the several subfields of translation studies. For a duration of almost two decades, a significant degree of hostility existed between the literary and linguistic departments.

However, a shift occurred within the field of translation studies, wherein scholars began collaborating and embracing novel methodologies. Mary Snell-Hornby's book, "Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach" published in 1988, and the anthology "Translation Studies: An Interdiscipline" co-edited by Snell-Hornby, Franz

Pöchhacker, and Klaus Kaindl in 1994, employ a combination of literary, linguistic, and cultural studies methodologies. These works provide a comprehensive framework for approaching translation, offering diverse possibilities for translating a given text. In comparison, a scientific study typically allows for less flexibility and creativity in translation as compared to a literary work.

However, it has been observed by José Lambert that despite the calls for increased interdisciplinarity, there has been minimal influence on institutions or the discipline as a whole, except for a limited number of specific initiatives in the fields of Media Studies and Biblical Studies (Lambert, 2012, p. 81). The universities in Germany and Leuven strongly uphold the functional and descriptive methods, respectively, while my own institution, the University of Massachusetts, remains unwavering in its commitment to the comparative literature paradigm.

Nevertheless, contemporary research on translation is increasingly placing emphasis on multidisciplinary investigation beyond its traditional boundaries. The disciplines of Media Studies and Film Studies have started to make contributions to the subject of Translation Studies by means of research and educational programs focused on translation. The exploration of interdisciplinary studies, the utilization of unified methodologies, and the transcendence of traditional disciplinary boundaries have been the focal points of several conferences, compilations of scholarly essays, and published works.

In her seminal work published in 1996, titled "Gender in Translation," Sherry Simon skillfully integrated principles derived from the field of Translation Studies with the tenets of Quebec feminist. In collaboration with St. Jerome and Luise von Flotow, Peter Fawcett contributed to the production of the series titled "Translation Theories

Explored." Subsequently, in the year following, they published a work entitled "Translation and Language" in 1997. The book "Translation and Empire" (1997) was authored by Douglas Robinson. A significant coordinating conjunction is the term "and" within the nomenclature. During this era of multidisciplinary research, significant importance was given to the occurrence of simultaneous advancements in various subjects.

Some of the later books are "Translation and Minorities" edited by Larry Venuti (1998), "Postcolonial Translation" edited by Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (1999), "Deconstruction and Translation" edited by Kathleen Davis (2001), and "Translation and Religion" edited by Lynne Long (2005). Subsequently, a collection of scholarly works emerged encompassing several subjects like translation ethics, psychology, philosophy, and media studies. Due to the remarkable expansion witnessed in the field during the 1990s and early 2000s, it became financially unfeasible for any single researcher or academic institution to investigate every conceivable location where translation activities occurred. During this moment, translation proved to be quite efficient as it unexpectedly garnered significant collaboration from numerous individuals. The field of translation studies has experienced additional development due to the use of an interdisciplinary approach by its scholars. Through the incorporation of ideas and concepts from several disciplines, these practitioners have successfully illuminated previously examined transnational phenomena.

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