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Translation Studies: In search for vigour and relevance

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The discipline of Translation Studies emerged from the needs of society, and has tried to respond to its challenges. This article contains an overview of the development of Translation Studies, ranging from the normative, linguistic translation theories of the 1950s to descriptive studies and communicative and pragmatic branches, e.g. the Skopos Theory and the Manipulation School, and also some totally non-linguistic branches of Translation Studies: the Ethics and Sociology of Translation. The article also deals with the relationship of Translation Studies with other fields of study, especially Contrastive and Applied Linguistics. It comes to the conclusion that Translation Studies constitutes a discipline in its own right – with theories and methods of its own and an object of study of its own. This includes the process of translation and interpretation, the products of this process, and the interrelations of translators and translations with society and culture.

Keywords: communicative translation theories, equivalence, adequacy, skopos, manipulation, relevance

1 Introduction

At a time when translator and interpreter training in Finland is to a greater or lesser extent being integrated into philology departments, it is important to ponder the character of Translation Studies, one of the main pillars on which translator and interpreter training stands or falls. Perhaps it is time to have a look at their past and present, perhaps also their future – even though no amount of mental exertion has any chance of influencing the administrative decisions already taken or being taken in the near future at Finnish universities, including the University of Helsinki. What is Translation Studies? How has it responded to the challenges of society? Does it have relevance in today's society, and does it have sufficient vigour to survive and prosper?

Translation Studies as a field of research with scientific methods is a new phenomenon. Even though translation has been discussed by translators and scholars for more than 2000 years, it was only after the 2nd World War that this field of study metamorphosed into something scientific. This development was due to the unprecedented scope of international contacts in the post-war world and the urgent need of translations of factual prose texts, i.e. texts such as commercial correspondence. There was a need to start training translators and interpreters, but in order to teach how to translate it was important first to do research in translation. I use the word *important*, not the word *necessary*, because I, for example, have extensive personal experience in teaching translation without any scientific basis in Translation Studies to build upon.

Practically the only people that had been interested in studying translation up to the 2nd World War had been either Bible translators or people involved in literary studies. Their results had no relevance for the new political and economic situation where factual prose was in demand. Consequently, the 1950s and 1960s saw the emergence of several linguistic translation theories in various parts of the world.

It is obvious that linguistic theories had considerable relevance at that time. It is equally obvious that the linguistic path was too narrow. During the five decades that have passed since the beginning of the scientific study of translations, Translation Studies has developed in other directions also. The first few decades of Translation Studies were rather slow. My personal experience of the beginning of the 1980s, when I first became interested in translation theory, was rather desolate. It was difficult to find *anything* interesting or useful to read about this subject. But since the 1980s, Translation Studies has developed at a pace that leaves one breathless.

Today, Translation Studies is a complicated and many-faceted field of study. Many schools and orientations coexist, sometimes being diametrically opposed to each other. Here, I will first deal with linguistic translation theories (chapter 2), then with communicative translation theories (chapters 3–6). Chapter 3 will be dedicated to the first communicative translation theories, i.e. to Nida's theory of dynamic equivalence and various theories of functional equivalence. Chapter 4, 'Liberation from equivalence', will deal with the Skopos Theory, chapter 5 with the Relevance Theory and chapter 6 with the Manipulation School. Chapter 8 will discuss Translation Studies as a discipline, especially focusing on its relationship to linguistics. In chapter 9, I will give a short overview of the methods of empirical Translation Studies. In the last chapter, I will first make some conclusive remarks about the general tendencies of the development of Translation Studies over the past half a century and then mention certain typical features of this field of study today, paying special attention to the question of its vigour and relevance.

2 Linguistic translation theories

The first linguistic books on translation theory emerged during the 1950s in the Soviet Union (*Vvedenie v teoriju perevoda* by A. V. Fëdorov in 1953), and in Canada (*Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais* by Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet, published in Paris in 1958). Linguistic translation theories were based on the principle of free translation, i.e. on semantic equivalence and compliance with the linguistic norms of the target language. Linguistic translation theories distanced themselves from literary studies. Instead, the aim was to shed light on the linguistic regularities of translation, especially as regards equivalence of target language and source language linguistic means. It meant looking for "regular equivalents" (*zakonomernye sootvetstviâ*; see e.g. Recker 2004: 10–20) or probabilities of different equivalents (see Catford 1965: 29–30). Only if such words or expressions were not available was it necessary to find other solutions. Scholars were aware of the differences of languages and of the fact that these "regular equivalents" often differed from the literal, word-to-word equivalents of the source language linguistic means. The theories suggested various lexical and grammatical replacements of source text means in translations. These replacements were called "translation shifts" (Catford 1965: 73–82), "adequate replacements" (*adekvatnye zameny*; see Švejcer 1973: 17–27) or – in Russian literature – transformations (*transformacii*).

As a matter of fact, linguistic translation theories were little more than contrastive linguistics, and especially J. C. Catford's book *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* (1965) was used particularly as the basis of contrastive studies. In Translation Studies, its application was more or less restricted to machine translation, because a machine can function only on the basis of an algorithm containing explicit rules about every decision that has to be made. It seems to me that Catford's theory has been more harmful than useful to Translation Studies, because it has contributed to creating the false notion that translating is a series of purely linguistic operations and that its biggest problem is to find substitutes for source language words and structures. Such a notion has been and still is very common not only among the general public but also among those linguists who have not had much contact with translations. In reality, a human translator with a good command of both languages in question usually deals with purely linguistic problems without even noticing them. The *real* translation problems are mostly pragmatic.

Linguistic translation theories showed how one *should* translate. In other words, they were normative in nature, created to be used as the basis of translation teaching or translation criticism. Secondly, they were expressly theories. Even the term *Translation Studies* was not commonly used before the 1980s, though, according to Snell-Hornby (2006: 41), this term was first used by James S. Holmes as early as 1972. Earlier the term *theory of translation* was all that was needed.

The attraction of linguistic theories of translation lay in their concrete nature. The possibility of getting objective results based on comparisons and calculations made the field seem more scientific. Indeed, many of the observations about the lexical and syntactic changes that take place in translating are useful in translator training, at least in the early stages. On the other hand, translation is far too complicated to be treated as a purely linguistic phenomenon. Linguistic translation theories tend to be concerned with details instead of whole texts. That is why literary Translation Studies – in spite of its vagueness – has its merits. It has been more general, more interested in the text as a whole, and also in the effect of the text on the reader (Garbovskij 2004: 176–177).

A major turn in translation theory took place in the 1960s when it was realised that translation is a form of communication. Translation Studies ceased to be mere comparison of translations and source texts. Pragmatic factors, i.e. the character and needs of the target language audience, came into view.

The best-known representative of communicative translation theories, Eugene A. Nida (see Nida 1964; Nida & Taber 1969), had come across misunderstandings caused by cultural differences when working at the American Bible Society. He became convinced that these had to be taken into consideration and that in order to avoid miscomprehension, it was often necessary in a translation not only to deviate from the linguistic form of the source text but also from its semantic contents. It was necessary to make pragmatic adaptations. For example, it may be necessary to replace *south wind* in a poem translation by a wind from some other direction, if in the minds of the recipients of the translation south wind is not associated with pleasant warmth but scorching heat and sand storms. Instead of semantic equivalence, translations strive at dynamic equivalence, i.e. they have the aim of achieving an equivalent effect. For example, the translation in example 1 follows the principle of dynamic equivalence. The text discusses the difficulties encountered by Russian emigrants trying to make themselves understood in a foreign language. In the Finnish translation, the numeral five was replaced by the numeral ten, because the important point is that five is the highest possible school grade in Russia, whereas the highest grade in Finland is ten. The English translations given in brackets are made word-for-word in order to illustrate the means used in Russian and Finnish sentences:

(1) Source text: Иностранный их сданный на пять с плюсом язык не понимали. (The foreign language that they had got the grade 5+ for was not understood.)

Translation: Ulkomaalaiset eivät ymmärtäneet heidän täyden kympin kieltään. (Foreigners did not understand the language they were speaking, although they had got the grade ten for it at school.)

Dynamic equivalence brought about a revolution in translation theory. It broadened the scope of interests of scholars: for the first time, it became important to pay attention to the non-linguistic factors influencing the translation and the translation process. The Dynamic Translation Theory is probably still the best-known translation theory in the world. It served, for example, as the basis of the latest Finnish Bible translation, which was adopted in Finnish churches in 1992.

Dynamic equivalence was followed by some functional equivalence theories. They were formulated by scholars such as Katharina Reiss (e.g. 1976) and by the Russian theorists Aleksandr Švejcer (1973, 1988), Lev Latyšev (1981) and Zinaida L'vovskaâ (1985; see also Vehmas-Lehto 1990). The leading principle of functional equivalence theories is that every text is used for one or more purposes, or functions, e.g. for informative or expressive functions, and these functions need to be retained in translation. The means of realisation of these functions in a translation, on the other hand, may be very different from those of the source text. Translating includes both linguistic and pragmatic changes.

Nida's theory as well as the functional equivalence theories and communicative theories in general have greatly influenced translations by helping people to realise factors connected with the comprehensibility and readability of texts. This has increased the relevance of Translation Studies for society and the relevance of translations for their readers. Who wants to read a translation that one cannot understand?

4 Liberation from equivalence: The Skopos Theory

Translation scholars realised the existence of cultural differences and the necessity of pragmatic changes in translation. However, there was still a gap between the theory of translation and the real world. If equivalence was expected, no major changes could be made in translations, even though such changes might be necessary. In the real world, there were also various kinds of adaptations and abridged versions written on the basis of source texts that were not regarded as translations and were therefore considered less valuable than actual translations. Some people felt that these adaptations and versions ought to be included one way or another in Translation Studies, but there was no theory to back up this idea until the emergence of the Skopos Theory. This theory was first created by Hans Vermeer (1978), who was then joined by Katharina Reiss (Reiss & Vermeer 1986).

The Skopos Theory is a functional communicative theory, but not an equivalence theory. The skopos, i.e. the function, the purpose of the translation is the key factor in translation, but it may be different from the function of the source text. In other words, the translation may be made for a radically different purpose and audience than the source text. For example, a translation of a political text may have a mere informative function: it may only present facts without trying to persuade the reader. In such cases, there cannot be equivalence between the translation and the source text, nor is there any need for it. The primary objective is that the translation achieves its purpose, whatever this may be. In fact, the skopos usually consists of several functions which form a hierarchy. The translator either receives the skopos from the commissioner or sets one on the basis of his or her experience and expertise. The next step is to consider which global translation strategies would be appropriate for the realisation of the skopos, i.e. what general principles ought to be followed when constructing the target text. The strategies are chosen according to the skopos. In other words, "the purpose sanctifies the means" (Reiss & Vermeer 1986: 58). This usually implies that the translation needs to be written according to the expectations of the recipients. Equivalence is not required, but equivalence is one of the possible relations between the source text and the translation. However, according to the notion of loyalty, which was later introduced by Christiane Nord (e.g. 1994), the reader of the translation has to be informed – one way or the other – if the translation was not made in compliance with the prevailing norms of translation.

To my mind, the Skopos Theory is the best translation theory both for descriptive studies and translation criticism. It is general in nature, very realistic and flexible, applicable to all kinds of texts and situations. It has mostly been applied to the translation of factual prose, but there is no reason why it could not be used in literary Translation Studies as well.

The following extract is from a draft for a thesis by Suvi Sarlo, an undergraduate student of mine. The thesis is based on the Skopos Theory, but any communicative translation theory could be applied here.

> (2) When rendering culturally specific lexical items into a translation the target audience of which consists of children, one cannot translate the same way as for adults. The item may be known to a grown-up person, but still unknown to a child. For example, in a book for adults the Russian word *boršč* would probably be rendered into Finnish by the words *borssi* or *borssikeitto* (borsch soup), because one would suppose that this dish is known to adults at least to some extent. But children would probably not have the necessary knowledge. Consequently, the translator would need to make changes. A translator of children's books could, for example, use the less specific word *keitto* (soup) or replace the word by the word *hernekeitto* (peasoup).

It will be interesting to see whether Russian scholars end up with anything like the Skopos Theory. Earlier they excelled at producing functional equivalence theories (Švejcer 1973, 1988; Latyšev 1981; L'vovskaâ 1985). All I have ever found was a mention of adequacy called "desiderative" (*deziderativnaâ adekvatnost'*) in an article by Ûrij Vannikov (1988). However, the Russian theories of functional equivalence are very flexible as regards the functions of a text and the extent of the changes of these functions in translation that do not undermine functional equivalence. Consequently, they are actually not very far from the Skopos Theory.

5 Relevance Theory

A translation may be difficult or even impossible to understand even though it might be written according to the norms of the target language. The following example is a translation of a Russian joke which I heard from Elena Titova, a colleague of mine.

> (3) There was a Russian traffic policeman who died and came to the cross-roads where St. Peter was directing people either to Heaven or to Hell. St. Peter said to the policeman: "Your situation is about fifty-fifty. You can decide yourself, which of these two alternatives you choose." "Thank you very much", the policeman said. "But couldn't I stay at the cross-roads?"

The problem is not linguistic, it is cultural. I heard the joke in Russian, my "professional language", but nevertheless did not understand it. It is true, I laughed at the right moment, but just by chance. Fortunately Elena – used to conversing with foreigners – explained the joke. It turned out that in the brain of a Russian person, this joke automatically and in a hundredth part of a second recalls the scene where a traffic policeman is collecting fines and putting them into his own pocket. In the following hundredth part of the second they imagine the policeman taking St. Peter's place in directing people to Heaven or Hell, each according to the amount of money they are ready to pay. I will leave it to you to figure out what a translator or interpreter could do to help the recipient of the translation of this joke.

One of the theories that could help solve this translation problem is the Relevance Theory introduced by Ernst-August Gutt (1992, 2000a; see also Vehmas-Lehto 2006). Gutt's theory is an application of Dan Sperber's and Deirdre Wilson's (1986) General Cognitive Theory of Communication. The Relevance Theory strives to figure out what might be going on in the minds of the participants of the communicative situation. According to this theory, a successful translation resembles the source text in those respects which are relevant for the recipients in their "cognitive environment". The cognitive environment consists of all the facts that a person "is capable of representing in his mind and of accepting as true, or probably true" (Gutt 1992: 22). He also suggests that the sources of this information can be perception (seeing, hearing etc.), memory, or inference. This resemblance in relevant respects frees the translator from the obligation to preserve the other semantic properties, but only if it is impossible to render them along with the relevant properties (Gutt 2000b: 385). Communication is based not only on explicit but also on implicit information and inferences made by the recipients on the basis of background knowledge. If the background knowledge of the readers of a translation does not allow them to make the necessary inferences, explicitation of implicit information may be necessary (see e.g. Gutt 2000a: 83–84, 100–101). In other words, foreign or strange elements need to be replaced by more familiar elements or something needs to be added in order to give the reader a better chance to make the necessary inferences. The problem with a joke is that if it needs explicitation, the comical element may vanish. The source text in example 4 contains the implicit element that the name of the street *Litejnij* refers to the State Security Agency, i.e. the intelligence services of Leningrad and the Leningrad Region. In the minds of Russian readers, the name of the street is immediately associated with the appropriate cognitive frame, but Finnish readers hardly have the necessary background knowledge. This is why the translation helps the reader with an explicitation.

(4) Source text: С Литейного звонят в отдел кадров завода «Серп и молот». (There is a phone-call from Liteinij to the personnel department of the factory Hammer and Sickle.)

Translation: *Leningradista*, Liteinin *kadun turvallisuuspalvelusta* soitettiin Sirppi ja vasara -tehtaan henkilöstöosastolle. (There was a phone-call from *Leningrad*, *the Security Agency* in the Liteiny *Street* to the personnel department of the factory Hammer and Sickle.)

Gutt had the aim of creating a universal translation theory, or rather of applying Sperber's and Wilson's General Theory of Communication to translation in a way that would make all translation theories unnecessary (see Gutt 2000b: 390–391). The idea of explicitation of implicit information in translation is indeed very important for understanding translation and for teaching it. However, the relevance theory is not as universal and as clear and easy to apply as the Skopos Theory.

6 The Manipulation School

Ever since the emergence of the linguistic theories, one can see a general tendency in the development of Translation Studies: it is the growth of the importance of the "target" pole, i.e. the target audience and target culture, on one hand, and the weakening of the status of the source text, on the other hand. When the Manipulation School came into being, the weakening reached the point where the source text was not even necessary. According to the Israeli scholar Gideon Toury (1985: 19), any text could be counted as a translation if it was accepted as such in the target culture. Translations are facts of one system only, the target system (Toury 1995: 23–39). Toury looks at translations entirely from the point of view of the target culture: what kinds of texts are regarded as translations in the target culture? What kinds of texts are actually translated into the target culture and why?

If one holds such views about translating, there is naturally no point in speaking about equivalence or translation criticism. The task of a translation scholar is not to set norms but to focus on finding out what actual translations are like. How do they differ from their source texts and why? Consequently, there was a shift towards Descriptive Translation Studies in the 1980s, first in the Manipulation School, and then as a general tendency of Translation Studies. Nowadays, most western scholars share the view that the aim of translation theory and Translation Studies in general is to learn to understand the process of translation, not to lay down the rules of how to make a perfect translation (see e.g. Bassnett 1995: 55).

The Manipulation School was created in Israel and the Low Countries as early as the 1970s. However, due to the language barrier, its breakthrough came only in 1985 with the publication of the volume of essays *The manipulation of literature* edited by Theo Hermans (1985, see Snell-Hornby 2006: 48). The Manipulation School consists of several non-linguistic translation theories sharing certain features such as the orientation towards the "target-pole", and the focus on Descriptive Studies. The Manipulation School consists of literary, cultural theories that are also interested in the position of translation in society.

One of the theories constituting the Manipulation School is the Polysystem Theory. Its "father" was Itamar Even-Zohar from Israel. According to this theory, culture is a megapolysystem, a network of systems-of-systems or polysystems. Literature is one of them. Diverse genres, schools and tendencies compete with each other for readership, prestige and power (Holmes 1988: 107). The position and status of different texts vary. Some texts are canonized and situated in the centre of the polysystem, whereas others may be at the periphery. The status of translated literature also varies. It may have a central position, for example when the literature in question is young. It may be peripheral, as in American literature. From the point of view of translation, the most important issue is that in such a dynamic world full of interaction and competition translators cannot be objective lookerson, and their views have an impact on translation. In fact, all translation implies a certain degree of manipulation.

The emergence of the Manipulation School indicated the ideologisation of translating and Translation Studies. Some translation scholars and translators started promoting ideological causes, for example the status of national literatures in relation to more prestigious literatures or the status of women in society. One of the themes has been the so-called cultural colonialisation which manifests itself in the "domestication" of the cultural features of the source text and thus in the denial of "the validity of its Otherness" (see Niranjana 1992).

An extreme case of manipulation is feminist translation introduced at the end of the 1970s by a few Canadian feminist writers. In feminist translations texts are re-written from the female point of view. This means, for example, that a woman is given a more active role in the translation than in the source text. The following example is from an undergraduate thesis written at the University of Tampere (Koivunen 2006):

(5) Source text: He had already slept with five of the women.
Translation: Viisi naista oli jo maannut hänen kanssaan.
Back-translation: Five women had already slept with him.

Manipulation Theories are usually not as radical as this: feminist translation was an extreme case. As a whole, Manipulation Theories follow more or less the same lines as the Skopos Theory. Thus, the most important criterion in translation is to achieve a purpose, and this purpose is not dictated by the source text. The main difference between Manipulation Theories and the Skopos Theory is, in fact, external. Manipulation Theories were created for and have mostly been applied to translations of fiction while the Skopos Theory is usually applied to factual prose. It is also worth mentioning that Manipulation Theories are more popular in the English-speaking countries whereas the Skopos Theory is perhaps more prevalent in the German-speaking countries.

7 Liberation from language

All the translation theories discussed thus far – even the literary ones – depend on language in various degrees. This is why, for example, all the subjects taught at our Department are always called "linguistic subjects" by people working in the administration of the Faculty of Humanities. They very often use the expression "translation subjects and other linguistic subjects". However, there are Translation Studies that have nothing to do with language. Justa Holz-Mänttäri's (1984) model of translatorial action is one such theory. She sees translation primarily as a social activity. The translator does not operate in isolation. On the contrary, he or she cooperates with many people, including the person who commissions the translation and all the necessary specialists in the fields of knowledge that the translation is linked with. The translator also seeks information about the future readers of the translation, and, if the text to be translated contains, say, instructions about how to use a machine, about possible marketing restrictions or legal implications concerning the guarantee. On the basis of all the necessary information, he or she produces a text, for example an instruction, which the readers can understand so that they can really use the machine. Holz-Mänttäri's model is sociological. It is applicable to all kinds of translatorial action, be it working with factual prose or literary translations. The "spirit" of the theory is similar to that of the Skopos Theory: the form or even the contents of the source text are not important; the alpha and omega of translation is to fulfill its purpose. Justa Holz-Mänttäri worked at the Universities of Tampere and Turku, and her ideas have had a great impact on the research in the field of Translation Studies performed at these universities.

Holz-Mänttäri's book was written in the 1980s. Actually, she was ahead of her time: the Sociology of Translation has only become a popular field in Translation Studies in the past few years. Two international conferences dedicated to this subject were organised in recent years, one in Lisbon in 2002 and the other in Graz in 2005. The sociology of translation is "in the air". One of the prominent scholars doing research in this field is Andrew Chesterman (e.g. 2006), who is also active in Translation Ethics. Translation Ethics deals, for example, with the responsibility of the translator. This new field is represented, for example, by Kaisa Koskinen (2000), working at the University of Tampere. These two fields of Translation Studies have no doubt great relevance for society.

8 Translation Studies as a discipline

Is Translation Studies then a Discipline in its own right or is it a branch of some other discipline? According to

Andrew Chesterman (2002: 7), translation scholars have situated their work with refererence to a variety of more general fields of study, for instance Literary Studies, Hermeneutics, Applied Linguistics, Semiotics and Cultural Studies. In addition, there are scholars such as Ernst-August Gutt who do not even think that a special translation theory is necessary because all translation phenomena can be explained in terms of the general theory of communication.

Since the emergence of linguistic translation theories, many branches of Translation Studies have had a close relationship with linguistics. One could say that every time there has been a prominent new linguistic theory, it has soon been applied to translation in the form of a new translation theory. Indeed, according to Garbovskij (2004: 181), semantic translation theories were based on componential analysis of meaning and generative semantics. He also claims that Nida's theory as regards his model of grammatical analysis and synthesis was based on generative grammar and communicative translation theories on Communicative Linguistics. The most important fact in linguistics from the point of view of Translation Studies was the pragmatic turn in linguistics, the realisation of the importance of studying language in its social context, not as a system but as it is used in varying situations for varying purposes.

It is no wonder that linguists generally regard Translation Studies as belonging to either Contrastive or Applied Linguistics. However, as became obvious above, there are totally non-linguistic branches of Translation Studies, such as Sociology and Ethics of Translation, and branches that need language but whose interests mostly lie elsewhere, such as Literary Translation Studies. Consequently, it does not seem sensible to regard Translation Studies as a branch of linguistics, be it contrastive or applied. Translation scholars consider Translation Studies a discipline in its own right. This discipline has theories of its own – even though these may be related to theories of other disciplines. It has an object of study of its own, which includes the process of translation and interpretation, the products of this process and the interrelations between translators and translations with society and culture. It also has methods of its own, which sometimes may be quite innovative (see Vehmas-Lehto 1999: 122–132 and chapter 9 below). Translation Studies can be called an inter-discipline, because it shares interests and methods with many other disciplines. In any case, it can be asserted that Translation Studies emerged as an independent discipline in the 1980s, at the latest, with the emergence of Descriptive Translation Studies. The growth of Translation Studies as a separate discipline has been characterized as a success story of the 1980s (see Snell-Hornby 2006: 47).

The field of linguistics closest to (linguistically oriented) Translation Studies is Contrastive Linguistics. This is because Contrastive Linguistics has often used translations as research material. In other words, translations have been studied with the purpose of determining the characteristics of a language. Translation Studies, for example those based on the corpus of translations into Finnish at the University of Joensuu

(Savonlinna School of Translation Studies), however, show that translated language has special features of its own (see e.g. Jantunen & Eskola 2002). Therefore, it may give a somewhat distorted picture of the language in question.

The aims of Translation Studies differ from those of Contrastive Linguistics. I have personal experience of these differences: when starting to work on my doctoral thesis on Finnish translations of Russian journalistic texts, I was advised to pick an additional corpus of translations made in the opposite direction, i.e. from Finnish into Russian, in order to make my study more “objective”. It took me a long while to work out why this piece of advice coming from a linguist with great authority could not be followed. The translations I was studying – and criticising – were written according to the grammatical rules of the Finnish language, but not according to the expectations of the Finnish readers, they were difficult to understand and they sounded so ridiculous that not very many readers could be expected to read them. It was necessary to adjust them, at least to a certain degree, to the quantitative characteristics of Finnish journalistic texts, for example by replacing verbal nouns by verbs. What could be gained by introducing Finnish-Russian translations? They could not be compared with my material. I came to the conclusion that, first, translation is a one-way street, i.e. translations cannot be studied in two directions, and, second, the aim of a translation scholar is not to find differences and similarities between the languages as systems, but to discover the characteristics of translations as texts, as manifestations of languages as used in certain situations (see Vehmas-Lehto 1989: 37–39).

Translation Studies welcomes the *results* of many fields of linguistics, as for example, Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics and various contrastive fields, including Contrastive Stylistics, Contrastive Rhetoric, and Contrastive Discourse Analysis. Sometimes, it is true, translation scholars also may do research in these fields (e.g. Garbovskij 1988; Švejcer 1993). Contrastive stylistics is especially close to Translation Studies. The aforementioned work by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), a classic in translation theory, was even called "Contrastive Stylistics" (*Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais*). However, Contrastive Stylistics is mainly interested in the various means of expressing analogous meanings (Garbovskij 2004: 195). Translations are not necessary here because it is possible to have language-independent semantic categories as a starting point. On the other hand, when contrasting genres or functional styles across language borders, it is possible to use authentic (non-translated) parallel texts in both languages. Such research can also be included in a translation study. For example, in my doctoral thesis (Vehmas-Lehto 1989), Russian and Finnish journalistic texts were compared with each other from the point of view of sentence and clause length, frequency of certain parts of speech and other quantitative characteristics of the texts. Contrastive methods yield quite important information about the similarities and differences of languages to be used in "specialised translation theories" (*častnye teorii perevoda*), for example for the translation theories specialising on certain languages for special purposes (Garbovskij 2004: 4, 201). However, I would regard contrastive methods just as auxiliary methods, not as methods of Translation Studies proper.

The status of Translation Studies has been a cause of controversy between linguists and translation scholars in many countries, including Finland. It manifested itself, for example, in the fact that the word *käännöstiede*, meaning "translation science", but not being restricted to exact or natural sciences, was not accepted by the Faculty of Humanities as part of the title for the professorship of general Translation Studies. When the professorship was being founded at Kouvola in 1987, we suggested the title *professor of translation science*, but according to the faculty, "no such science exists". Instead, the title *professor of linguistic theory and translation* was adopted. The same suggestion and the same rejection were then repeated at the University of Joensuu. Later on, the field of Translation Studies was duly recognized at the University of Tampere as manifested in the fact that the translator training department was renamed as *Käännöstieteen laitos* 'Department of Translation Science/Studies'. The University of Helsinki followed suit in 1998. At the University of Helsinki, the word *käännöstiede* is going to live as the name of the subject concentrating on the theoretic aspects of translation and interpreting – it is true, at the Department of General Linguistics.

Translation Studies can be divided into various branches. According to Holmes (1988, see Toury 1995: 10), there are two main branches: "pure" and applied Translation Studies. The former one has two sub-branches: theoretical and descriptive, and these in turn sub-branches of their own. Applied Translation Studies, on the other hand, are divided into studies connected with translation criticism, translator training and translation aids. I would divide "pure" Translation Studies into theoretical and empirical studies. Most research has been theoretical while empirical translation research was rare before the 1990s.

9 Empirical methods of Translation Studies

The methods of Translation Studies vary according to the object of study, the point of view and the theoretical basis. Studying the products of translation from the point of view of equivalence has consisted of just comparing the translation with the source text or also its back-translation. Product-oriented studies focusing on the adequacy of the translation may also involve comparison with authentic target language texts of the same text sort or functional style (see e.g. Vehmas-Lehto 1989), interviews, questionnaires, or experimental methods, such as reading comprehension or identification tests (see Vehmas-Lehto 1989: 69–79, 126–130; 1999: 122–132).

During the past 20 years, there has also been research oriented to the cognitive process of translation, i.e. to what goes on in a translator's head. Twenty years ago, this was practically an unknown territory (see Vehmas-Lehto 1987). The only substantial study was *Was in den Köpfen von Übersetzern vorgeht* by Hans P. Krings (1986). Savonlinna School of Translation Studies has special merits in this field: Sonja Tirkkonen-Condit's articles (1991, 2000) and Riitta Jääskeläinen's publications including her doctoral thesis *Tapping the Process. An Explorative Study of the Cognitive and Affective Factors Involved in Translating* (1999) have been of a trail-blazing nature.

During the past few years, it has been the Institute for Interpretation and Translation Studies at Stockholm University which has produced most doctoral theses in this field (Englund Dimitrova 2006). This kind of research has become possible thanks to modern equipment. At first, a simple tape-recorder was used to record the comments of the translator performing a translation assignment. This method is known as the Think-Aloud Protocol method. Nowadays, there is also the Script Log computer program, which records everything that the translator types, even though it may be deleted later.

There are rather few empirical studies on interpretation, and on the whole the field has been largely neglected. One of the outstanding scholars today is Daniel Gile (e.g. 1997, 1998) with his cognitive and experimental studies. In Finland, two doctoral theses related to this field have been published during the past few years. Anna-Riitta Vuorikoski (2003) studied speeches made at the EU parliament as well as their interpretations. In her thesis, she concentrates on the influence of the rhetoric features of the ST on the semantic equivalence of the target text. Gun-Viol Vik-Tuovinen (2006) discusses the process of interpreting and the strategies used by interpreters on various levels of competence. Her method is retrospective: the interpreters describe their strategies after the interpreting process. The scarcity of interpretation research can, at least partly, be explained by the difficulties in collecting the research material. These are caused by the facts that recording can be disturbing to the participants in the interpretation situation. Furthermore, people are not eager to pass their material to researchers either because it may contain business secrets or the interpreter may be reluctant to be exposed to criticism or both.

As regards the translation process as approached from the point of view of its social role, there are very few empirical studies as yet. Cecilia Wadensjö's (e.g. 1998) studies on interpretation, however, are concerned with the interplay of the participants of interpretation situations and the role of the interpreter. The material is collected at hospitals, police departments etc. in community interpretation situations. The method could be characterised as discourse analysis. When studying the role of translation and translators (or interpretation and interpreters) in society, sociological or even ethnographic methods can be used (see Koskinen 2008).

10 Conclusion

To begin my conclusions, I shall present a list of typical characteristics of Translation Studies today. The following features should be mentioned:

- interdisciplinarity
- weak position of equivalence in the list of priorities
- stress laid on adequacy, instead
- pragmatic nature of translated discourse, its dependence on the recipients and the communicative situation
- stress on intercultural communication
- stress on the interplay of textual and cultural factors

- widening of interests from literary texts to factual prose
- scarcity of interpretation studies
- shift from normative to descriptive studies
- shift from theoretical to empirical studies
- widening of studies to include also the cognitive process of translation
- inclusion of sociological aspects, for example the social status of translators and translations
- inclusion of ethical aspects, for example the norms of translation – no longer with the purpose of creating norms but with the aim of studying them.

Translation Studies emerged from the needs of society, and has tried to respond to the challenges and needs of society. In particular, communicative translation theories have had a great influence on translations and translating because they have made people conscious of the importance of the naturalness and readability of translations. This has improved the quality of translations. Translation Studies has progressed by leaps and bounds, and consequently, translator training has also reached a high level. In fact, Translation Studies is full of vigour and relevance.

There is one area, however, where Translation Studies has failed. It has failed to make itself understood among the general public. Because of this failure, we have not been able to help to improve the social position of translators and interpreters. It is true that there was an improvement when we joined the European Union, but it was not our doing.

As shown by the recent administrative decisions concerning the integration of translation subjects into language departments of Finnish universities, we have failed to make ourselves understood among university people, as well. And this has happened in spite of the fact that Finland is among the most advanced countries in Translation Studies today with quite a number of internationally renowned scholars.

One of the reasons for the communication gap is certainly the terminological confusion in Translation Studies. The same terms may refer to different concepts, or the same concepts may be called by different names in different schools and orientations. International cooperation would be welcomed in order to define the concepts and perhaps even try to harmonise the concepts and terms. But this seems a utopia.

The low status of translators and Translation Studies seems to be universal. Mary Snell-Hornby (2006: 174–175) laments it in the following way:

> […] what has remained unchanged is the status of translators in society and the standing of the discipline of Translation Studies among the general public – and it is in my opinion the foremost task of translation scholars over the next few years to try and remedy this situation. It is not the quantity of publications and conferences that is decisive, but their innovative quality and their degree of relevance for our society. In a time dominated by media and publicity, it seems strange that the vital significance of translation and its inherent complexities

> still remain a message that has not got across – either to the public as a whole or to those responsible for funding and promoting it.

All the same, Translation Studies around the world seems to be full of vigour. Its future in Finland remains to be seen. In any case, we must go on studying and teaching so that our students can perhaps make themselves better understood and raise the status of translators and Translation Studies in society. Both of them are worth it.

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