

Translation Studies and the fascination and illusion of multidisciplinary

Ritva Hartama-Heinonen
University of Helsinki

Abstract

Within the field of Translation Studies, *multi/pluri-, inter-, and trans/crossdisciplinarity* are long-standing and often proudly presented attributes to describe the versatile theoretical and methodological vantage points and choices. This article investigates the explicit visibility of this *-disciplinarity* terminology in translation-theoretical contributions and seminar presentations and also discusses the noticeable and more or less ambivalent attitude towards the impulses brought from other disciplines, as manifested in translation research. In addition, the discussion endeavours to address closely related questions, such as what is presented or regarded as an interdisciplinary study; what is the core, and the margins, as well as the role of the distinction centre–periphery in the emergence and evolution of translation-theoretical paradigms; and finally, whether interdisciplinarity, in the end, means integration, fragmentation, or diversification.

Keywords: translation studies, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity, KäTu

1 Introduction

This article deals with studies on translation, but what is more, it is an investigation into the field of Translation Studies and therefore is a study of meta-nature and self-reflection. The starting point for the primarily theoretical discussion below can be found in the theme of the IX Symposium on Translation and Interpreting Studies, KäTu2011 – **multidisciplinary in translation studies**. The focus in the present article is provided by two claims and epithets, **fascination** and **illusion**, chosen to describe the two-sidedness of the possible approaches to multidisciplinary in the field of knowledge referred to as translation research. After offering a background to the present study in Section 2, this article concentrates in Section 3 on how multidisciplinary manifests itself in translation studies. Thereafter in Section 4, this question is approached from vantage points of a more dynamic, interpretative, and evolutionary nature, inspired by Gideon Toury and Yuri Lotman, among others, and these offer solutions. Section 5 summarises the previous sections in some general implications, and thereafter features multidisciplinary as a potential incentive for a more profound disciplinary change. And finally, anticipating the tenth anniversary of these symposia in 2012, the Epilogue section drafts the importance of the nowadays international KäTu symposia as manifestations of multidisciplinary translation research conducted in Finland.

2 To provoke and to become provoked

One criterion for good research is, in my opinion, that a scientific contribution encompasses an attempt to provoke, or even better, is characterised by provocativeness or pro-

vocability. To be useful (here not in the sense of making profit or having social weight and significance), a study has to be able to goad: to awake, to surprise and perhaps even to annoy and irritate, to make one interested, to make one ponder and take a stand, and to evoke an urgent need to participate in the scholarly discussion, by continuing the research from the point where another researcher had left it. What, on the one hand, entails provocation, leads, on the other hand, to becoming provoked, maybe unintentionally.

Becoming provoked may be a too provocative choice of expression. In any case, that expression describes well that kind of a situation which no single study should ever create.¹ A researcher is supposed to be able to produce something so unique and definitive (also referred to as truth) that there would be nothing for others to comment on or to continue from. Of course, this only describes an ideal situation; in reality, all research-related thinking and argumentation tend to leave some room for scholarly speculation as well as gaps for researchers to fill in or opportunities to broaden the earlier evidence.

Now what has offered me an opportunity to become surprised and theoretically provoked and thereby, filled me with enthusiasm, is how the linkage between Translation Studies and multidisciplinary has been approached in the Finnish version of the KäTu2011 circular and call for papers. In the following, my aim is **not** to criticise the description cited below, even though one might get that impression.² The description in the circular is namely in accordance with the prevalent attitudes and views within our discipline, and reads in its English version as follows:

As a field of research, translation studies has developed from investigations concentrating on literary and Bible translations into a[n independent] multidisciplinary subject area in which translation, interpreting and other related phenomena are often examined, described and explicated with the help of methods and theories from other fields of research. In addition to literary studies and theology, which have traditionally offered means for translation studies, the neighbouring disciplines include at least linguistics, cultural studies, cognitive sciences, information and computer sciences, psychology, sociology, and history. Even an individual study can be multidisciplinary in various ways.

With *Multidisciplinary* as the theme of the ninth KäTu symposium, we cordially invite translators, interpreters, and translator and interpreter trainers and researchers to give presentations [particularly] on studies and projects of multidisciplinary nature. (KäTu2011b; my additions in square brackets)³

A possible incentive for my becoming provoked could be provided by the above list of the disciplines (and their varying means, methods, and theories) that translation scholars are encouraged to employ: literary studies, theology, linguistics, cultural studies, cognitive sciences, information and computer sciences, psychology, sociology, and history. This view concerning the neighbouring disciplines prompts me to ask: Where is semiotics, that field of research which studies all forms of communication and signification? Why is it not included in the list? In fact, this observation left me, for a while, in a state of ambivalence, since it is an observation that once again attests to the fact that one of the starting points and basic questions I delved into in my doctoral dissertation is still

current – Why does the connection between translation and semiotics not receive due attention and appreciation (and as we can see here, not even in Finland in the 2010s)?⁴

I am, however, quite used to this kind of a negligent attitude towards my own field of study and research interests (or a narrowing of perspectives and orientations within Translation Studies), so this hardly has a provocative effect. The biblical dictum “No new thing under the sun” seems to apply even to how the local KäTu organisers see the sources of multidisciplinary impulses and paradigmatic turns in our field – this despite the fact that the circular and call for papers has a clear reservation in its formulation: the neighbouring disciplines “include **at least**” the listed disciplines.

Instead, the inspiring provocation comes from the contradiction that can be noticed between the beginning and the end of the quotation above. To start with, Translation Studies is said to have evolved, as a field of research, into an independent and multidisciplinary field. If this field is conceived of inherently including multidisciplinary, one may wonder what kind of translation research is then, in a way, excluded, when the focus of the KäTu invitation is aimed *particularly* at those speakers who represent *multidisciplinary* studies and projects. In other words, what is that part of multidisciplinary translation studies which does not *often* draw on other disciplines? What is this self-sufficient intradisciplinary multidisciplinary? Is it rather monodisciplinary, a feature which we should actively strive for and even enhance because it is definitely a prerequisite of becoming and being *independent*? These interdependent questions, despite their being intriguing, will, however, receive no further discussion in the present article.

3 Close-reading of approaches to the phenomenon of multidisciplinary

The theme of the KäTu2011 symposium might be interpreted to express, contrary to expectations, the ambivalent identity of Translation Studies, maybe of translation scholars as well. On the one hand, we exist and do it emphatically: we are representatives of a young, yet independent field of knowledge and we are proud of our wide multi/pluridisciplinary, interdisciplinary, or trans/crossdisciplinary variety of ideas, theories, and methods. But on the other hand, we gather in a symposium to discuss the nature and essence of our multidisciplinary orientation. And we do this as if we want to strengthen our common belief, yet simultaneously we are challenging this very belief by testifying to our ambivalent state and to our vacillating scholarly life and to the role between disciplines. Some expressions of this ambivalence will be examined below.

To obtain an idea of how what I refer to in the following as *-disciplinarity* manifests itself and is approached within Translation Studies, a brief glance at the online *Translation Studies Bibliography (TSB)* (see www.benjamins.com/online/tsb) might reveal something that can help us to at least position ourselves and our studies theoreticologically by determining how often multidisciplinary in its various terminological disguises is mentioned in the over 20,000 annotated *TSB* entries. Here no attention is paid to how individual studies are described, that is to say, what is actually meant by multidisciplinary. The only criterion is that the term *multidisciplinary(it)y* or its varying forms and degrees (for the distinctions between *multi-*, *pluri-*, *inter-*, *trans-*, and

crossdisciplinarity, see, for instance, Mikkeli & Pakkasvirta 2007, particularly Chapter 2)⁵ is employed in the bibliographic entries. The instantiations found demonstrate that this multilayered phenomenon is recognised within translation research, even though the actual reasons for the use of a term may be varied. The results from the term search are summarised in Table 1:

Table 1. Designations for *-disciplinarity* in *Translation Studies Bibliography*.
(Source: www.benjamins.com/online/tsb; retrieved in Spring 2011)

Term	Hits
<i>multi(-)disciplinary</i>	225
<i>multi(-)disciplinarity</i>	11
<i>pluri(-)disciplinary</i>	1
<i>pluri(-)disciplinarity</i>	1
<i>inter(-)disciplinary</i>	260
<i>inter(-)disciplinarity</i>	245
<i>trans(-)disciplinary</i>	5
<i>trans(-)disciplinarity</i>	1
<i>cross(-)disciplinary</i>	10
<i>cross(-)disciplinarity</i>	2
Total	761

Whereas Table 1 shows the distribution of the 761 internet hits in total, very little can be inferred from the outcome. Multidisciplinarity (which I adopt here as an umbrella term, see endnote 5 below) exists in five term pairs, that is, the phenomenon is identified and registered and thereby, certainly recognised. But that is practically more or less all that can be concluded, except for the fact that *interdisciplinar(it)y* seems to be far more frequent than the other designations (505 out of 761 hits, or 66%).

One overall conclusion could nonetheless be proposed, that according to this *TSB* data, multidisciplinary and its variants are **very rare**, because they can be found in less than 5% of the entries. However, we could also conclude the opposite, that this theoretic-methodological vantage point is so common and inherent, **self-evident**, almost a truism within translation studies, that there is no reason to mention it. And both these explanations support the invisibility observed above and might produce an illusion. What must be remembered here is that my database search concentrated on terminology employed which might necessarily reveal nothing about the phenomenon itself. Furthermore, while the *TSB* offers one kind of intersection of the discipline, the results must be approached with some reservation for several reasons.

The first reason is that the data which the *TSB* provides is, as research material, not covering but filtered; the material reveals less about the reality as it does about the scholars' interest in informing others of their research through a certain database. Moreover, some of the data has obviously been submitted long afterwards, such that we can assume that a part of the characterisations of the contributions is done based on current views and designations and therefore, reflecting the classifier's up-to-date awareness. The second reason is that it is not always clear who has actually made these characterisations and

why a certain hit is included in the search results. In addition, different terms can be employed in an entry which has not been indicated in Table 1. As for the third reason, the keyword was often expressed by *interdisciplinarity=multi-=trans-=pluri-*, obviously to create consistency in the database,⁶ which has also influenced the number of hits. And as for the fourth reason, *-disciplinar(it)y* rarely occurred in the title of the contributions, which may suggest that this phenomenon is less interesting, perhaps a minor point in a study.

The starting point above (based on the KäTu circular text) was that multidisciplinary is something that exists and therefore can be taken as given. The situation is not, however, that straightforward and therefore, I will continue my close-reading below by referring to other translation-theoretical discourses.

Almost fifteen years ago, Christina Schäffner (1997) characterised Translation Studies in the following way; this extract, with my emphases, is from the conclusion section of her article in the *Handbook of Pragmatics Online* where she addresses the question of interdisciplinarity:

Translation studies is not a homogeneous discipline. Different approaches exist side by side, using specific concepts and methodologies. Each approach contributes valuable insights to the complex phenomenon of translation, but **in future more and more** research in translation studies will **in all probability** be characterised by interdisciplinary approaches.

What is noteworthy is that Schäffner appears to continue to insist upon her prognostication. In the updated version of her article, published ten years after the first version, there is namely only one addition to the above-cited passage, the one in parentheses:

Translation studies is not a homogeneous discipline. Different approaches exist side by side, using specific concepts and methodologies (cf. the debate on ‘shared ground’, Chesterman and Arrojo 2000 and responses in the subsequent issues of the journal *Target*). Each approach contributes valuable insights to the complex phenomenon of translation, but in future more and more research in translation studies will in all probability be characterised by interdisciplinary approaches. (Schäffner 2007)

The validity of Schäffner’s unchanged prediction is observed in Table 2, where the 761 *TSB* hits are presented in five-year periods according to the year of publication:

Table 2. Designations for *-disciplinarity* in *Translation Studies Bibliography* presented in five-year periods. (Source: www.benjamins.com/online/tsb; retrieved in Spring 2011)

Term	-1985	1986–90	1991–95	1996–2000	2001–05	2006–	Hits in total
<i>multi(-)disciplinary</i>			4	26	96	99	225
<i>multi(-)disciplinarity</i>			1	7	2	1	11
<i>pluri(-)disciplinary</i>					1		1
<i>pluri(-)disciplinarity</i>				1			1
<i>inter(-)disciplinary</i>	1	3	41	47	62	106	260
<i>inter(-)disciplinarity</i>	2	2	41	75	80	45	245
<i>trans(-)disciplinary</i>				1	1	3	5
<i>trans(-)disciplinarity</i>				1			1
<i>cross(-)disciplinary</i>			1	1	1	7	10
<i>cross(-)disciplinarity</i>				1		1	2
Total	3	5	88	160	243	262	761

Table 2 illustrates a conspicuous tendency: the use of terms ending with *-disciplinar(it)y* is indeed constantly increasing. Nonetheless, whereas the results ought to be presented in proportion to something, at present this could not have been done. Yet this question of proportionality is essential, since the number of studies on translation has increased at such a rapid rate that a survey of mere figures may result in only an illusion of there being multidisciplinary, and in addition, even result in an illusion of growing multidisciplinary.

Table 3 includes a corresponding survey of terms in all the abstract booklets of the annual Finnish KäTu Symposia of Translation and Interpreting Studies, this time from a shorter period, that is, from 2003 to 2011:

Table 3. Designations for *-disciplinarity* employed in Finnish and English. (Source: Abstract booklets of KäTu2003–KäTu2011)

Term	KäTu 2003	KäTu 2004	KäTu 2005	KäTu 2006	KäTu 2007	KäTu 2008	KäTu 2009	KäTu 2010	KäTu 2011	
<i>monitieteinen/monitieteisyys</i> <i>multidisciplinary/multidisciplinarity</i>	1						1	2	8	16
<i>tieteidenvälinen/tieteidenvälisyys</i> <i>interdisciplinary/interdisciplinarity</i>	1		1		1		1	2	2	8
<i>poikkitieteellinen/poikkitieteellisyys</i> <i>crossdisciplinary</i> <i>transdisciplinarity</i>			1	1				1	1	5
Abstracts in total	2	–	2	1	1	–	2	6	15	29

Even the figures found in Table 3 indicate some growth, but this tendency is not as conspicuous as it is in Table 2, if it is conspicuous at all. The exceptional increase in the figures of KäTu2011 is certainly due to the theme of the symposium, multidisciplinary, and involves no sign of a sudden surge in multidisciplinaryisation of research (and correspondingly, the theme of KäTu2010, methodology, might have had some impact on the 2010 figures). What is important to note is that even though abstracts that men-

tion multidisciplinary or other corresponding terms are frequent in the 2011 symposium abstract booklet, only one section was explicitly dedicated to the theme of multidisciplinary.

As demonstrated above, it is not easy to determine the kind of status (and a quantitatively measurable and/or an explicitly stated role) multidisciplinary, all in all, has at present. And furthermore, it is difficult to foretell future development. In the following, I address some other estimations of how multidisciplinary has developed and how it might develop within translation studies.

The first estimation is Andrew Chesterman's who (2005: 19) has argued – pointing out a pronounced milestone – that the status of Translation Studies as an interdiscipline “is now widely recognized, at least since Snell-Hornby et al. (1994)”. The second one is an extract from a call to contribute to Issue 4 of the journal *MonTI* (January 2012), on “Multidisciplinary in Audiovisual Translation”. Whereas Schäffner predicted a substantial change to occur in the future, here we can recognise that a change has already happened, but quite recently, and this change does not concern the entire field of Translation Studies, at least according to the guest editors of *MonTI*:

Multidisciplinary is without any doubt a reality, although not always acknowledged. It has increasingly come to the fore in the last five or six years in Translation Studies, whereas it has not yet been developed within the specific field of Audiovisual Translation Studies. (*MonTI* CFP)

We can find support for the above claim for multidisciplinary being a reality, yet not always acknowledged. For instance, the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (ed. by Baker 1998a; second edition ed. by Baker & Saldanha 2009) has neither an entry on *-disciplinarity*, nor is it mentioned in the index. In the first edition, however, the following critical view is put forward: “Although some scholars see translation studies as interdisciplinary by nature (Snell-Hornby 1988), this does not mean that the discipline is not developing or cannot develop a coherent research methodology of its own” (Baker 1998b: 279). But in the editorial introduction to the second edition of this encyclopedia, we can read a summary of the present state of affairs, this time a reference to “growing multidisciplinary” (p. xxii). Moreover, the first volume of the *Handbook of Translation Studies* (Gambier & van Doorslaer, eds, 2010) has no overview article on interdisciplinarity but according to the index (p. 453), the subject *interdisciplinarity* is dealt with in articles on audiovisual translation, interpreting, political translation, the development (or turns) of Translation Studies, as well as translation and the Web. But when we examine these entries, interdisciplinarity is a word used more or less in passing. One interesting fact is that the first international interdisciplinary congress on interpreting was held as early as in 1977 (p. 160).

To summarise, one might now claim that *-disciplinarity* in its different forms, as these manifest themselves in my short and admittedly restricted and biased survey, is something that may already exist, but even more, it is something that will exist more extensively in the future. In short, *-disciplinarity* is something that either is not necessarily explicit, or it hardly exists in any complete form, in the present methodological and

theoretical repertoire of Translation Studies. This may be due to the constant intradisciplinary redefining of this phenomenon and the subsequent boundary-clearing between what can be considered as self-evident and what as new. In other words, we are, more or less, still waiting for multidisciplinary to enter our field of research. And here perhaps lies the fascination for *-disciplinarity*: in the possibility of witnessing and contributing to the gradual evolution of Translation Studies through adopting influences from other disciplines.

4 To be regarded as multidisciplinary research: Centre and periphery

Thus far, multidisciplinary appears to be permanently on the agenda. Multidisciplinarity is fascinating but it also creates an illusion, since it is, to an increasing extent, in the eye of the given beholder, supported by vague arguments. To define the present status of multidisciplinary is problematic, because multidisciplinary, as argued above, not only either exists or not, but probably exists in all degrees between the farthest ends of the existence–non-existence continuum. That is why it might be best to approach this question through another and, in this very context, even natural definition and solution: by pondering whether the way in which Toury defined translation in 1982 ([1982: 27] 1985: 20) is applicable even when we define other translation-related phenomena, *mutatis mutandis*. From this perspective, multidisciplinary research is any scientific study which **is presented or regarded as such** within the scientific community, on whatever grounds.

One of my research interests concerns the semiotic approaches to translation. My interpretation is that this research is, to a high degree, interdisciplinary in nature and consequently, I have **presented** my studies as interdisciplinary. But as stated above with reference to the KäTu circular, semiotic translation studies does not elicit particular consideration and receives no explicit mention. Hence, one might conclude that if this semiotic type of multidisciplinary approaches to translation exists at all, it is, for some reason and despite the persevering promoting of semiotics, **not regarded as** multidisciplinary.⁷

This is not, however, a real problem, since it can be solved by reducing it to a question of choosing a viewpoint and a discipline. When a semiotician chooses translation and translating as an object of research, he or she can operate freely within his or her own discipline, that is, semiotics. This is possible, since semiotics has no need to collaborate with Translation Studies, not even when translational matters and particularly interlingual translation constitute the object. This is because semiotics is, as is known, methodologically remarkably self-sufficient, and the researchers possibly bring, in addition, their own individual methods. However, Translation Studies and translation scholars, in turn, need other disciplines. The other disciplines have, in fact, meant (and will of course mean) a vital prerequisite, which has made multi- etc. disciplinarity one group of keywords within the field. And this not to suggest this in any negative or challenging sense, but as something required by the object of research. All in all, translation researchers inevitably have to cross disciplinary boundaries and to operate at least in two different domains or fields which they probably master to a varying extent.

Based on my *TSB* term survey, the relationship between Translation Studies and *-disciplinarity* is often understood in the way it was understood in the KäTu circular text and can be translated into a list of borrowing or neighbouring disciplines. This is to say that ‘multi’ can refer to such disciplines as social sciences, law, biology, philosophy, sociology, cognitive psychology, and cultural studies – in any case something other than linguistics (which was actually on the KäTu list), or the traditional fields of languages and literature. These kinds of lists reminds one of how Translation Studies has developed chronologically: from being considered as a part of other disciplines (applied linguistics, comparative literature, or cultural studies) or from drawing on other disciplines (giving rise to such semi-paradigmatic landmarks as linguistic, textlinguistic, functionalist, or psycholinguistic approaches, descriptive translation studies, corpus studies, or studies on machine-assisted or media translation) up to being independent (Schäffner 2007; see also, the overall outline of the first volume of the Encyclopedia of Translation Studies in the series *HSK*).

Multidisciplinary has also received other, expanded meanings in the *TSB* material, such as the remark that researchers other than translation scholars are interested in the translational matters; in other words, there are also translation scholars within disciplines other than the humanities. Translator training can involve multidisciplinary teams, because all students will not work as translators in the future and therefore, they need other skills and knowledge. And finally, multidisciplinary has been linked to the practice of translation and to the special fields of trade, economy, science, and technology, which are all important in translatorial practice. As we can see, multidisciplinary has, if needed, diverse contents in diverse studies on translation.

We should also speculate more extensively about a possible prototypology, namely, the question of both the core and the margins. Discussing the nature of interdisciplines, Chesterman (2005: 19) alleges that their usefulness arises from representing a force of anti-stagnation: knowledge grows when new areas are opened up “on the borders of existing ones”. This being situated on a border is reminiscent of the well-known dichotomy of *centre* and *periphery* as well as *boundary*, as put forward in his cultural semiotics by Yuri Lotman, the co-founder of what is referred to as the Tartu–Moscow School of Semiotics.

According to Lotman’s prophetic proposal of centre and periphery (1990: 141), there is a force of opposing currents in culture that contributes to a changeover: the emphasis and focus can change such that the periphery “moves ... into the centre, and the centre is pushed out to the periphery”. Changes are inevitable, that is to say, conceptions are to evolve eventually, and this applies to Translation Studies as well. In other words, even when we think that we could stake out the disciplinary territory for good, the boundaries will continue to move, for better or for worse, since the changes have a mechanism of their own. So if we accept a certain view, interdisciplinary or not, albeit located on a borderland and thus, in the periphery, it is possible that this view sooner or later conquers or exerts some kind of influence on the centre.

According to Lotman (ibid., 141–142), while the centre becomes gradually neutral, structured, and institutionalised (this must be what was meant by the *shared ground in translation studies* in the lively debate that was published in issues 1/2000–1/2002 of the journal *Target*), the periphery remains marked, unorganised, and dynamic. There is, thus, a **possibility** for periphery issues to become centre ones, such that ‘not regarded’ can evolve into ‘regarded’. The boundary cannot, however, be settled, it remains “ambivalent and one of its sides is always turned to the outside”.

No one can predict how the boundaries move or how the emphasis between the centre and the periphery changes, nor how strong the disciplinary gatekeepers will be. That a study or an approach is presented – in a Touryan vein – as something, does not mean that the target community automatically accepts this determination and adheres to it, not to mention that this study or approach would be accepted as a core orientation in translation research. A multidisciplinary approach might, in any case, be one of the present criteria for acceptance and entrance. But one cannot assume that any proposal that is multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, or transdisciplinary will be accepted; there are so many defenders of the present boundaries. Semiotics is a good example of this tendency, since while semiotics is gradually gaining some visibility, neither any approach to semiotics nor any semiotic-oriented study seems to be highly appreciated within translation studies.

5 Multidisciplinarity and discipline-internal evolution

In Sections 2 to 4 above, I have approached the question of multidisciplinary within translation studies from several vantage points and with diverse data. For the first, this phenomenon has been approached quantitatively, based on a terminology survey of a large translation-theoretical database and of call for papers of Finnish translation studies symposia. For the second, multidisciplinary has received a qualitative discussion, based on definitions given to multidisciplinary, on actual manifestations of multidisciplinary, and on descriptions and estimations concerning the role of multidisciplinary in modern translation research. Furthermore, the recurrent question in my article has been what constitutes the possibly fuzzy limit of being proposed and accepted as a multidisciplinary study, and what makes one entitled to call a study multidisciplinary or to regard it as being one; in short, how much (or little) is needed for multidisciplinary.

To conclude, the answers that I have obtained to my research questions imply that *-disciplinarity*, all things considered, might actually be a matter of degree, ranging from merely borrowing single concepts, to a wide spectrum of interdisciplinary manifestations up to the diversification of a domain or a field and, finally, to the emergence of a whole new discipline. In addition, the findings seem to indicate ambivalence, as if multidisciplinary were a somewhat evanescent or volatile conception in our field at the moment, and something that still waits for being constructed and firmly established.

As any phenomenon, multidisciplinary has its shortcomings (for the advantages and disadvantages, see Chesterman 2005: 19–20 and the references mentioned therein). For instance, it has been argued concerning new research areas in general (see Chesterman

2005: 19–20) and Translation Studies in particular (see Baker 1998b: 279–280) that the evolution of a discipline occasionally proceeds, due to its interdisciplinary nature, towards a more separated and fragmented future which can endanger disciplinary unity. If this holds true, we can ask whether our discipline has already experienced such a parallel course of development which has been argued to characterise the development of the humanities as well as social and behavioural sciences (*ihmistieteet*) in general. This is to say (Arminen 2011), what is general and theoretical has yielded to what is special and applied, or to scientific specialties; and this has led, in turn, to a situation in which theoretical research has become its own specialty, a specialisation in what is general.

What should be remembered is that sciences have their own evolutionary process, and the emergence of a new field can take different paths. According to Ilkka Niiniluoto (1995), this formation of a scientific speciality can follow six diverse models: separation; branching; emergence; integration of related areas under one umbrella; theoretical integration of unrelated disciplines; and scientification of an art. While these models of scientific development and proliferation are conceptually distinct, in practice they can co-exist. Translation Studies could be given (and has actually been given by Niiniluoto) as an example of how professional experience has been made scientific and a new professional discipline has emerged. But we can think that, in the long run, interdisciplinarity may lead further: to diversification through fragmentation, branching, or separation. Yet interdisciplinarity means integration – all these being, as it seems, natural alternatives in the chain of changes in the life of disciplines.

With reference to the diverse kinds of specialisation, the other side of the coin, or a price to be paid, so to speak, is the inevitable and ongoing narrowing of expertise. This is a situation in which we have to ask ourselves if we can any longer honestly say that we are experts in our field, Translation Studies. Or, is it that the specialties, paradigms, and approaches other than our own are gradually becoming strange to us with respect to their theoretical starting points and frames of reference, to their specific insights and methods and, in the end, to their researchers and scholars.

Epilogue: KäTu, or keeping up the unity

The KäTu2011 theme invited the participants to discuss not what multidisciplinary **could be** or **should be**, but what multidisciplinary **is**. One answer to this question is provided by the KäTu2011 symposium itself: KäTu. This symposium, the preceding symposia, and hopefully, even the future symposia will all attest to multidisciplinary. Those who participate contribute together to our overall conception of this phenomenon, and rewrite it. And participants from Finland together reflect the multidisciplinary of research conducted here, they are the contributors to Finnish multidisciplinary.

And essentially **multidisciplinary**, the KäTu symposia are however, thus far, in one sense **monodisciplinary**, since they gather and unite the scientific community, not separate it. In her e-mail message to the members of the fifth section of the Finnish Association of Translators and Interpreters which is the co-arranger of these symposia, Kaisa Koskinen (2011; my translation) described the role which the KäTu has for translation

scholars and teachers in Finland and did it very concisely: “As a permanent forum for Translation Studies in Finland, the KäTu is very important for the universities, that is to say, to us.”

An explanatory reflection of this importance can be read in how Charles S. Peirce (CP 1.99, 1903) defined the interdependence of disciplinary boundaries and researchers: “The men who pursue a given branch herd together. They understand one another; they live in the same world, while those who pursue another branch are for them foreigners.” We might reverse this definition and state that we do not represent the same discipline when we **no longer** herd together, understand each other, live in the same world and share that world. Multidisciplinary has its own fascination but scientific gatherings, as the KäTu, have their own role and task in promoting disciplinary unity.

Research material

Abstract booklets of the Symposia on Translation and Interpreting Studies KäTu2003–KäTu2011.

KäTu2011a = IX Kääntämisen ja tulkkauksen tutkimuksen symposiumi: Monitieteisyys – mitä se on? Itä-Suomen yliopisto, Joensuu 15.–16.4.2011. Toinen kiertokirje ja esitelmöntikutsu. Available at: <http://katu2011jns.wordpress.com> [accessed in March 2011].

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¹ This is actually another way to express what Charles S. Peirce (*W3*: 247–8, 1877) described as being a real and living doubt which “stimulates us to action until it is destroyed. [...] The irritation of doubt causes a struggle to attain a state of belief. I shall term this struggle *inquiry* [...]. With the doubt, therefore, the struggle begins, and with the cessation of doubt it ends. Hence, the sole object of inquiry is the settlement of opinion.” But moreover, this can be, according to Peirce, approached as an issue of observed discontinuity in our beliefs and habits, caused by something that surprises and puzzles us and breaches our expectations, thereby prompting inquiry and thinking. This is also a phenomenon that Peirce elsewhere (see *CP* 7.189–7.195, 1901) discussed with the starting point in a breach of an existing regularity caused by surprise as well as the overall role of surprise as an impulse for search and inquiry.

² As a member of the organising committee of the annual KäTu symposia, I have no need to comment on this very description; in fact, I can be considered disqualified to do so. Furthermore, the local organisation committee has been invested with the right to make its own choices and decisions on the thematic emphases, an action that guarantees that the symposium meets the expectations and goals of the local organisers.

³ For some reason, the English version does not follow the Finnish one in all respects. For instance, it lacks the word *independent*, ‘itsenäinen’, as well as the very central word *particularly*, ‘erityisesti’; cf. the Finnish wording in *KäTu2011: Toinen kiertokirje ja esitelmöintikutsu* (KäTu2011a): “Käännöstiede on kehittynyt [...] **itsenäiseksi** monitieteiseksi tieteenalaksi [...]. KäTu-symposiumin teema *Monitieteisyys* kutsuu **erityisesti** käännöstieteen monitieteisiä tutkimuksia ja tutkimushankkeita esittämään.”

⁴ The confluence of translation and semiotics is actually an issue which I discussed in my presentation at the first KäTu symposium in 2003 entitled “Semioottista käännteoriaa etsimässä” [In search of a semiotic theory of translation]. Here it seems apt to refer to the view of Henri Broms (2004: 103) that Finnish semioticians are private thinkers, Schopenhauerian *Selbstdenkers*, for whom semiotic writings hardly bring anything good. So what these semioticians settle for, Broms argues, is to be able to smuggle semiotic thoughts into other disciplines. See also, footnote 7 below.

⁵ I am fully aware of the fact that all these terms can be used to denote different things, but moreover, they can be used and have certainly been used, without any further consideration, as some sort of synonyms. For the sake of simplicity, I prefer to employ here only one term, *multidisciplinarity* and sometimes, *-disciplinarity*.

⁶ According to the General information / Introduction of the *TSB* (www.benjamins.com/online/tsb [accessed 10.8.2011]), the database strives for conceptual consistency, with the homogenisation of keywords as an example.

⁷ To avoid any misunderstanding concerning my aim, I want to emphasise that the field of semiotics is given here merely as an example to shed light on how complex the issue of both multidisciplinary and disciplinary borders is after all. For a profound discussion, see Chapters 1–3 in my monograph *Abductive Translation Studies. The Art of Marshalling Signs*. 2008. Acta Semiotica Fennica XXVIII. Imatra: International Semiotics Institute.