

Translation Studies in Tertiary Education: The Map-Matrix Meta-Model of the Field

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Abstract

The paper deals with the way of presenting theory in contemporary translation-related university education. James Holmes is known to distinguish between ‘theoretical translation studies or translation theory’ and teaching as a ‘technique in foreign-language instruction’ and as ‘translator training’ (1988). In our present-day tertiary education establishments for future translators and interpreters, the emphasis is mostly on the practical side of the matter. The requirement to produce MA theses, however, calls for a theoretical course of sorts, and the contents of such a course are expected to include both an overview of the field and presentation of its basic theoretical and methodological luggage. Based on Holmes’ ideas, the paper offers a hypothetical method of describing Translation Studies in a way that both covers the whole field and allows one to ‘magnify’ its various sectors or ‘spaces’ for further in-depth consideration.

1 Introduction

Translation Studies scholars (e.g. Holmes, Lambert & Van Gorp, Hatim) have suggested several meta-models for outlining the ‘territory’ of the discipline. As any theoretical construct, a meta-model is meant “to bring to the surface what is hidden” (Katan 2004: 127). There are, however, problems here since “in order to be useful, it [a meta-model] inevitably generalizes, distorts and deletes what is real” (ibid.: 126). Another major problem, as with all models and maps, is that in an attempt to embrace as many elements and to account for as many variations as possible the elaborators eventually make their models extremely detailed and thus cumbersome. To avoid both pitfalls, a meta-description should be simple enough, and built on a limited number of concepts.

The best way to start will be with the meta-model that has remained popular for several decades, although its author himself never presented it schematically. For space considerations, the discussion below will be limited to graphic meta-models only.

2 Holmes’ Map

Holmes’ paper “The Name and Nature of Translation Studies” was reported at the Third International Congress of Applied Linguistics in Copenhagen in 1972, published as proceedings in 1978, and as a book in 1988, posthumously. Holmes’ meta-model, known as Holmes’ Map, is built on the idea of types of research: he classified Translation Studies

(TS) into the three interrelated branches of research: **Theoretical TS** (ThTS), **Descriptive TS** (DTS), and **Applied TS** (ATS) (1988: 71):

ThTS ↔ ↔ DTS ↔ ↔ ATS

To each of the designated branches Holmes added two ‘dimensions’: HistoRical (HR) and MethoDological (MD) (ibid.: 79):

(HR/MD)-**ThTS** ↔ ↔ (HR/MD)-**DTS** ↔ ↔ (HR/MD)-**ATS**

The Descriptive branch of Translation Studies (DTS) is divided by Holmes into three major kinds of research, “distinguished by their focus”: ProduCT-oriented (PT), FunctioN-oriented (FN), and ProcesS-oriented (PS)” (ibid.: 72).

ThTS ↔ ↔ DTS ↔ ↔ ATS

|
PS
|
FN
|
PT

The Theoretical branch of Translation Studies (ThTS) is sectioned into two types of theory, General Theoretical TS (GThTS) and Partial Theoretical TS (PThTS) (ibid.: 77):

ThTS ↔ ↔ DTS ↔ ↔ ATS

	PS
	FN
GThTS (PThTS)	PT

The third TS branch, Applied Translation Studies (ATS) is subdivided by Holmes into four areas (ibid.: 77): TeachinG (TG), where Holmes distinguishes two types: translating as a technique in Foreign-Language Teaching (FLT) and the situation of TranslatoR Training (TRT); Translation Aids (TA), which has considerably expanded since 1972; Translation Criticism (TC); and TRAnslation Policy (TRP), defined by Holmes in not exact terms which might be interpreted as ‘ethical duty’ or ‘functional relevance’.

Scheme 1: Holmes’ Map of Translation Studies

(HR/MD)-**ThTS** ↔ (HR/MD)-**DTS** ↔ (HR/MD)- **ATS**

	PS	TA
	FN	TP, TG (FLT, TRT)
	PT	TC
GThTS (PThTS)		

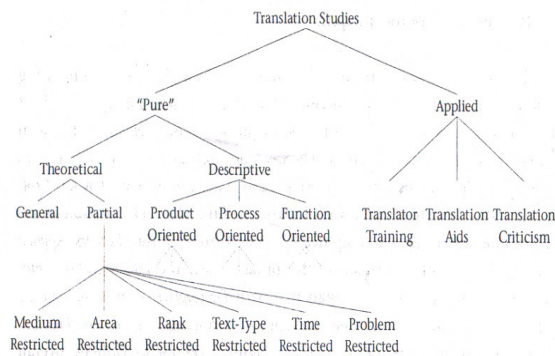
The complete, in terms of Holmes’ subdivisions, scheme of the Map is seen to contain sixteen blocks: the three branches of research (in bold): Descriptive Translation Studies (**DTS**), Theoretical Translation Studies (**ThTS**), and Applied Translation Studies (**ATS**), with each branch modified with two ‘dimensions’ – HistoRical (HR) and Me-

thoDological (MD) – as well as the eleven subdivisions (two in ThTS, three in DTS, and six in ATS).

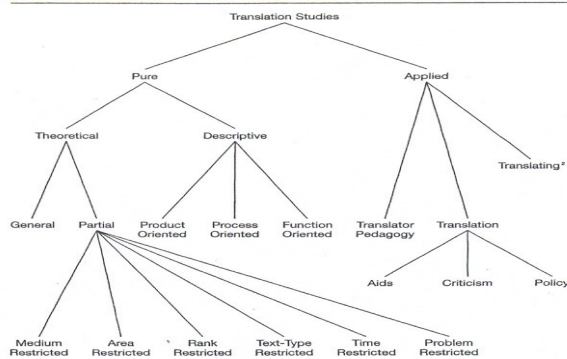
3 Holmes' Map in Graphics

The Map has been much criticized (e.g. Pym 1998, Vandepitter 2008) but it still keeps inspiring TS scholars. As might be supposed, it is the internal logic of this text that has been repeatedly suggesting itself for a sketch version. Here are some schematic representations of the Map.

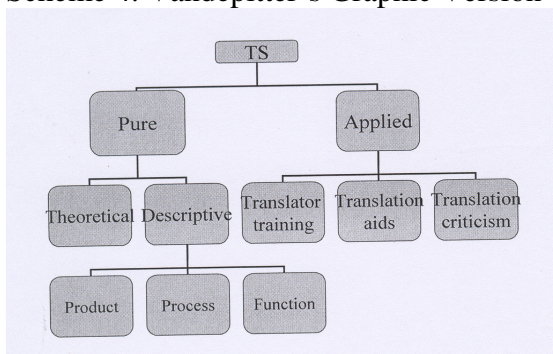
Scheme 2. Toury's Graphic Version of Holmes' Map (1995: 10)



Scheme 3. Malmkjaer's Version of Holmes' Map (2005: 19)



Scheme 4. Vandepitter's Graphic Version of Holmes' Map (2008: in print)



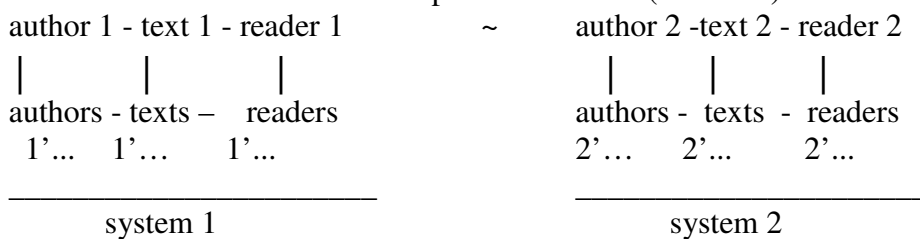
As can be seen, none of these schemes allows for either the Historical (HR) or Methodological (MD) dimensions, and only Malmkjaer's scheme includes the block of Translation Policy (TP).

Snell-Hornby (2006: 21) reports that in 1987 the "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies" was reprinted with a diagram in the magazine *Indian Journal of Applied Linguistics*. Snell-Hornby, however, neither specifies if Holmes was the author of the sketch nor describes the scheme itself.

4 Other Schematic Meta-Models

Since Holmes' Map became known, there have been several other attempts to describe the field in a concise schematic form. For instance, the 'contextual' model suggested by Lambert and Van Gorp is built as a communication scheme:

Scheme 5. Lambert and Van Gorp's Meta-Model (1985: 43)

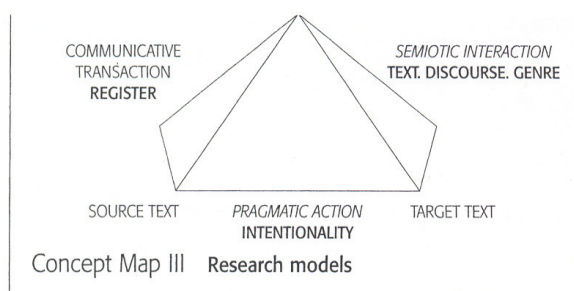


In the scheme above, 'system 1' refers to the source culture or one of its subdivisions, 'system 2' to the target culture. The communication chain 'author-text-reader' in the source culture has its counterpart in the target culture in the case of translation, while the 'author 2' slot identifies the translator. The relation between the two communication chains, indicated here by the symbol '~', is supposed to stand for a correlation, the exact nature of which cannot be predicted but has to be established as part of the analysis. The vertical lines that link each element in the top row ('author 1', 'text 1', etc.) with corresponding elements in the second row ('authors 1', 'texts 1', etc.) suggest that in each case a particular author is to be seen in relation to other authors, each text in rela-

tion to other texts, and each reader in relation to other readers. The scheme is alleged to “comprise all functionally relevant aspects of a given translational activity in its historical context, including the process of translation, its textual features, its reception, and even sociological aspects like distribution and translation criticism” (ibid.: 44). The authors insist that each relation in the scheme can be examined separately, which makes it possible to cover any kind of research in the whole field.

One more attempt to delineate the field graphically was suggested by Basil Hatim (2001). In the introduction, Hatim writes that his book is an answer to the question: “[i]f we had paid more attention to pragmatic concerns and not focused almost exclusively on abstract models of translation, would the conceptual map of translation studies have looked different?” (2001: xv). In search for an answer, Hatim schematizes a number of TS branches. For instance, the totality of the research in the field is represented as a complex three-faceted pyramid:

Scheme 6. Hatim’s Graphic View of Research Models in TS (2001: 88)



Since, unlike Holmes and Lambert & Van Gorp, Hatim suggests his scheme without clarifying the logic of its construction, the pedagogical value of this version seems to be quite limited.

5 The Map-Matrix Meta-Model

The meta-model suggested in this paper is just another hypothetical conjecture based on Holmes’ idea of structuring the DTS branch into PS-, FN-, and PT-oriented kinds of research. In fact, this division was also a conjecture, since Holmes wrote “there **would seem to be** three major kinds of research in DTS” (1988: 72, emphasis added). Elsewhere (Tarvi 2006), I made an attempt, using the findings from philosophy, linguistics, literary studies, psychology, etc. to prove that Holmes’ conjecture can be rightfully converted into the declarative sentence. The division, however, is commonsensical and hardly requires any proof. Indeed, ProcesSes (Holmes also referred to this branch as ‘translation psychology’) are about ‘How **can** people translate?’; FunctioNs (‘translation sociology’) cover the domain of socio-cultural norms, answering the question ‘How **should** people translate?’; while ProductTs (‘translation description’) pertain to the problems of equivalence, or ‘How **have** people actually translated?’ This division indeed covers all possible research areas in TS:

Scheme 7. The Map-Matrix Meta-Model: the Map
 ProcesSes (PS, translation psychology)

FuncioNs (FN, translation sociology)

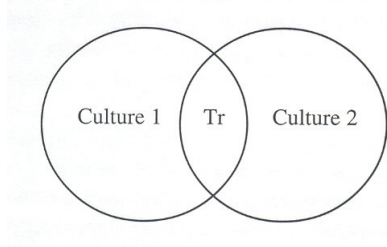
PruducTs (PT, translation description)

In his narrative of the evolution in the field, Lawrence Venuti goes along similar lines:

“The history of translation theory can in fact be imagined as a set of changing relationships between the relative autonomy of the translated text, or the **translator’s actions**, and two other concepts: *equivalence* and **function**. ... Function is a variable notion of how the translated text is connected to the receiving language and culture. In some periods, such as the 1960s and 1970s, the autonomy of translation is limited by the dominance of thinking about equivalence, and functionalism becomes a solution to a theoretical impasse; in other periods, such as the 1980s and 1990s, autonomy is limited by the dominance of functionalisms, and equivalence is rethought to embrace what were previously treated as shifts or deviations from the foreign text” (2000: 5, emphasis original).

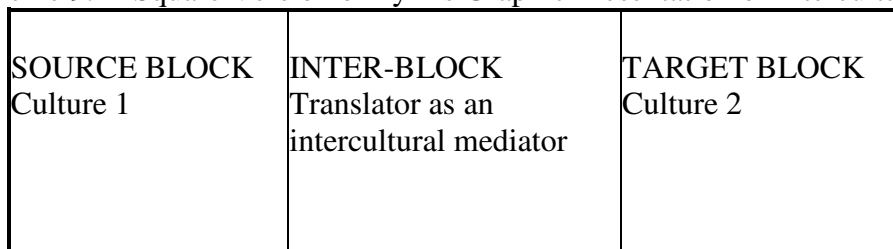
To recap, Holmes’ tripartite division of the descriptive branch will constitute the horizontal division of the schematic meta-model under construction. For the vertical frame of the Matrix, use will be made of Anthony Pym’s idea of structuring the intercultural space: “The basic idea of interculturality can be represented graphically as follows, where an interculture is assumed to be operative in the overlap of Culture 1 and Culture 2” (1998: 177).

Scheme 8. Pym’s Graphic Version of Intercultural Interaction (ibid.)



In square graphics, the scheme assumes slightly different but essentially the same shape, with the intercultural block located within the overlap of two cultures. The resulting scheme below will be used as a vertical frame for the meta-model under consideration.

Scheme 9. A Square Version of Pym’s Graphic Presentation of Intercultural Interaction



When the horizontal frame (Scheme 7) is superimposed with the vertical one (Scheme 9), the resulting matrix framework incorporates nine spaces: Spaces 1-2-3 pertain to Culture 1, Spaces 7-8-9 to Culture 2, Spaces 4-5-6 to the intercultural space, with each of these vertical structures represented at the level of ProcesSes (PS, Spaces 1-4-7), FunctioNs (FN, Spaces 2-5-8) and ProducTs (PT, Spaces 3-6-9).

Scheme 10. The Map-Matrix Meta-Model: the Matrix

1	4	7
2	5	8
3	6	9

If now one mentally places Holmes' Map with its 16 blocks (Scheme 1) into each of the nine squares of the Matrix, the broad Matrix framework will combine the depth of the Map with the width of the field, and it now could rightfully be called the Map-Matrix.

Scheme 11. The Map-Matrix Meta-Model

ThTS ↔ ↔ ↔ DTS ↔ ↔ ATS PS TA FN TP,TG GThTS (PThTS) PT TC	ThTS ↔ ↔ ↔ DTS ↔ ↔ ATS PS TA FN TP,TG GThTS (PThTS) PT TC	ThTS ↔ ↔ ↔ DTS ↔ ↔ ATS PS TA FN TP,TG GThTS (PThTS) PT TC
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ThTS ↔ ↔ ↔ DTS ↔ ↔ ATS PS TA FN TP,TG GThTS (PThTS) PT TC	ThTS ↔ ↔ ↔ DTS ↔ ↔ ATS PS TA FN TP,TG GThTS (PThTS) PT TC	ThTS ↔ ↔ ↔ DTS ↔ ↔ ATS PS TA FN TP,TG GThTS (PThTS) PT TC

TS can undoubtedly be described as a mature interdisciplinary, sharing its paradigms and concepts with a number of other branches of human knowledge. In Scheme 10, the horizontal layer of the ProcesS-oriented branch of research (Spaces 1-4-7) is, viewed globally, the space of 'human agents', such as source language writers (Space 1), translators (Space 4), and target language readers (Space 7). This is the space TS is sharing

with psychology, cognitive studies, hermeneutics (interpretation), phenomenology (reception theory), existentialist philosophy of personal reflections, etc.

The Function-oriented horizontal layer (Spaces 2-5-7) is the centerpiece of the Matrix model, the context and the ‘playground’ of interrelation between human agents of the Process-layer and texts of the Product-layer. As the cultural, social, political, and economic context of human-textual interaction, this layer is complexly structured and embraces all kinds of state institutions and controlling bodies. This is also the space where critical theory, a descriptive branch of philology going back to Aristotle’s *Poetics*, is executed. Critical theory mostly deals with defining and shaping the literary and translation norms existing in a certain society at a certain period of time and is, in its turn, defined and shaped by them. This is the space TS is sharing with all kinds of socio-cultural studies, for instance, Literary Studies, Social Studies, Cultural Studies, etc.

Finally, the horizontal layer of ProductTs (Spaces 3-6-9) implies textual products, whether printed or digital. This is the space TS is sharing with, among others, Linguistics and Literary Studies.

The Map-Matrix framework (Scheme 10) makes it possible to describe the field in terms of its evolution. If, for instance, the logic of Venuti’s quotation after Scheme 8 is followed, then his quote might be rephrased in terms of the Matrix as follows: “The history of translation studies can in fact be imagined as a set of changing relationships between ... the translator’s actions (Space 4), and the two other concepts: equivalence (Space 6) and function (Space 8)”. In fact, the Matrix can be viewed as comprising much more research details of the field, all operating within Venuti’s terms of ‘actions’ (PS), ‘functions’ (FN), and ‘equivalence’ (PT). For instance, Spaces 3-6-9 are all about linguistic research methods characteristic of the early days of TS as a science: from comparative methods (Space 6) to corpus linguistics (Space 9). The ‘pragmatic’ turn in TS is about the users and the uses of language (Spaces 7-8). By widening the number of the target contextual factors brought about by the systemic turn and the polysystem theory, the focus of attention is shifted to Space 8, the function space of the receiving culture. Cognitive research models are roughly located in Space 4 (translators, publishers, etc.), Space 1 (writers), and Space 7 (readers, critics, etc.). The socio-cultural turn activates the whole scheme, bringing all the ‘turns’ and ‘memes’ into action, with emphasis on globalization processes (Space 5).

The broad Map-Matrix approach can also be used as a yardstick to measure the scope of the material suggested in various textbooks. Let us, for instance, consider the contents of one of the popular textbooks created for pedagogical purposes in the field lately, *The Map. A Beginner’s Guide to Doing Research in Translation Studies* (2002) by Jenny Williams and Andrew Chesterman. In terms of the Map, methodologically presented are the DTS, ThTS, and practically the whole of the ATS, with the exception of Teaching in the situation of Foreign Language Teaching (ATS: TG), which is marginal in TS, and the ‘historical dimension’, which is implied anyway. In terms of the Matrix, the areas discussed are basically operating in all its spaces, with the exception of Space 5, where

all kinds of international norms come into play, and Space 4 which deals with various human agents in translation activities. To conclude, despite its sketchy character, and it is next to impossible not to be sketchy within 150 pages, the book is a valuable aid to TS graduate students in terms of the width of the covered research topics.

By contrast, Jeremy Munday's *Introducing Translation Studies. Theories and Methods* (2001) covers less spaces but much more deeply. One chapter is devoted to an overview of historical translation theories, one to "philosophical theories", and one to TS as an interdiscipline and the problem of the translator's visibility. Two chapters focus on the topic of equivalence (Spaces 3-6-9), while five chapters pertain to the functional theories of translation, discourse and register analysis approaches, "system theories" and "Varieties of Cultural Studies" (Spaces 7-8). The book can be an excellent help for those interested in the enumerated kinds of research.

Mary Snell-Hornby's *The Turns of Translation Studies* (2006) also starts with a historic overview, from Goethe to Holmes, and then goes over to the major developments during what became known as the "cultural turn" of the 1980s. In terms of the Map, the book broadly deals with all three branches of research. In terms of the Matrix, however, the focus of attention is limited to the triangle of Spaces 4-7-8. Hence, the book can be highly useful for those who are interested in cognitive, functional, and cultural areas of research.

By way of concluding this paper, I would like to reiterate that both the sketch of Holmes' Map and the hypothetical Matrix suggested here can be viewed as helpful, in terms of instruction, constructs. There can undoubtedly be found other ways of converting Holmes' fruitful ideas into a schematic form while preserving his basic concept – division of the field according to the kind of research. The Matrix might be viewed as a useful pedagogical addition to the Map since it broadens the Map's context by outlining the environment where the chosen objects of research function.

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