

Introduction

Ref: Munday, Jeremy: *Introducing Translation Studies*

Baker, Mona: *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation*

I.1. What is Translation:

Oral translation: Interpreting or Interpretation

Written Translation: or simply Translation will be the main focus of this course.

The term **translation** has several meanings:

It can refer to the **general subject field**

The product: the text that has been translated

The process: the act of producing the translation (translating)

The process of translation between two written languages involves the translator **changing** an original written text (the **source text ST**) in the original verbal language (the **source language or SL**) into a written text (the **target text TT**) in a different verbal language (the **target language TL**)

In his paper “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation”, Roman Jakobson defines three types of translation:

Intralingual translation: rewording or interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language.

Interlingual translation: an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language.

Intersemiotic translation: an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non verbal systems.

I.2. What is Translation Studies:

Translation Studies is a relatively new academic research area that has expanded explosively in recent years. The academic discipline which concerns itself with the study of translation has been known by different names at different times. Some scholars have proposed to refer to it as the ‘science of translation’, others as ‘translatology’ or ‘traductologie’ in French, but the most widely used designation today is ‘translation studies’. In his seminal article ‘The Name and Nature of Translation Studies’, James Holmes argued for the adoption of ‘translation studies’ as the standard term for the discipline as a whole.

At the beginning, the term ‘translation studies’ implied more emphasis on literary translation and less on other forms of translation, including interpreting, as well as a lack of interest in particular issues such as pedagogy, but this is no longer the case. ‘Translation studies’ is now understood to refer to the academic discipline concerned with the study of translation at large, including literary and non-literary translation, various forms of oral interpreting, as well as dubbing and subtitling. ‘Translation studies’ covers the whole spectrum of research and pedagogical activities, from developing theoretical frameworks to conducting individual case studies to engaging in particular matters such as training translators and developing criteria for translation assessment.

Interest in translation is particularly as old as human civilization, and there is a vast body of literature on the subject which dates back at least to Cicero in the first century BC. However, as an academic field, translation studies is relatively young, no more than a few decades old. Although translation has been used and studied in the academy for much longer, mainly under the rubric of comparative literature or contrastive linguistics, it was not until the second half of the twentieth century that scholars began to discuss the need to conduct systematic research on translation and to develop coherent theories of translation.

I.3. Holmes Map:

A seminal paper in the development of the field as a distinct discipline was Holmes’ ‘The Name and Nature of Translation Studies’. Holmes draws attention to the limitations imposed at the time by the fact that translation research was dispersed across older disciplines.

Holmes puts forward an overall framework, describing what translation studies covers. Holmes divides the discipline of translation studies into ‘**pure**’ and ‘**applied**’. The objectives of the ‘pure’ areas are:

1. The description of the phenomenon of translation (descriptive translation theory DTS).
2. The establishment of general principles to explain and predict such phenomena (translation theory).i

The ‘**theoretical**’ branch is divided into **general** and **partial** theories. By ‘general’, Holmes is referring to those writings that seek to describe or account for every type of translation, and to make generalisations that will be relevant for translation as a whole. ‘Partial’ theoretical studies are restricted according to the following parameters: medium, area, rank, text-type, time, and problem.

The other branch of ‘pure’ research in Holmes map is descriptive. **Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS)** has three possible foci: examination of (1) the **product**, (2) the **function** and (3) the **process**.

The ‘**applied**’ branch of Holmes framework concerns:

1. **Translator training:** teaching methods, testing techniques, curriculum design.
2. **Translation aids:** such as dictionaries and information technology.
3. **Translation criticism:** the evaluation of translations, including the marking of student translations and the reviews of published translations.

I.4. Translation in EFL Classroom:

Despite the widespread popular assumption that translation is necessary for the study of a foreign language, twentieth-century theories of language teaching and learning have at best ignored the role of translation, and at worst vilified it. From the turn of the century onwards almost all influential theoretical works on language teaching have assumed that a new language (L2) should be taught without reference to the student's first language (L1).

In the mid-nineteenth century, the grammar translation method, a language teaching method based on translation, was widely spread. At the turn of the century, however, grammar translation method came under attack. It was criticised because it reinforces the reliance on processing via the L1 among other reasons.

Opposition to the use of translation has led to the replacement of grammar translation method by the direct method: the teaching of an L2 using that language (and only that language) as a means of instruction.

Further opposition to translation in language teaching has been fuelled by successive theories of second language acquisition (SLA) which in turn derive from theories of children's first language acquisition (FLA), in which, by definition, translation has no role to play.

Recent years have seen the beginnings of a reappraisal of the role of translation in language learning. The extremism of its earlier rejection was recognized, and the use of translation is being readmitted, not only as a matter of expediency (in that translation is often the quickest and most efficient way to explain the meaning of a new word), but also as a theoretically justified activity aiding acquisition. It is acknowledged that the good practice of translation is an end in itself for many students rather than simply a means to greater proficiency in the target language. There is also a growing awareness of the formal inaccuracy which can result from an exclusive focus on communication, and a realization that translation can develop accuracy.

I.4. Translation and Comparative Literature:

Comparative Literature is dedicated to the examination of literature and other texts from an international perspective. The understanding of the processes and theories of translation is in many ways at its very heart. Literature, art, culture, and ideas do not develop in isolation but draw upon, for example, other works of art, historical movements, political views, religious beliefs, and cultural concepts from near and far. Translation makes these examinations possible. While Comparative Literature encourages the study of texts in their original languages, most researchers and students of Comparative Literature rely upon translated texts. Comparative Literature examines translation as an interpretive act central to the history and practice of literary study.

Since the 1980s, translation as practice and as theory has become central to Comparative Literature. Traditionally, this was not the case: the discipline, founded largely in the United States by post-war European émigrés, devoted itself almost exclusively to the European languages and demanded that all texts be read in the original language. But as the canon has expanded to include many non-European literatures, scholars have acknowledged the necessity of using translations in research as well as in teaching. Along with the practical turn to translation in Comparative Literature has come, not surprisingly, the critical and theoretical assessment of translation in the context of globalization, multiculturalism, cultural hybridity, post-colonial theory, and an emphasis on interdisciplinarity. With its interest in crossing the borders between languages, cultures, and national literatures, Comparative Literature is implicitly committed to performing and also to assessing theoretically the function and value of “translation” in the widest sense of the term.