

# Introduction

 <https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.32.01int>

Pages ix–xiii of

**Investigating Translation: Selected papers from the 4th  
International Congress on Translation, Barcelona, 1998**

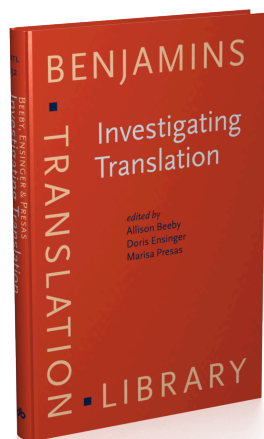
**Edited by Allison Beeby, Doris Ensinger and Marisa Presas**

[Benjamins Translation Library, 32] 2000. xiii, 294 pp.

© John Benjamins Publishing Company

This electronic file may not be altered in any way. For any reuse of this material written permission should be obtained from the publishers or through the Copyright Clearance Center (for USA: [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com)).

For further information, please contact [rights@benjamins.nl](mailto:rights@benjamins.nl) or consult our website at [benjamins.com/rights](http://benjamins.com/rights)



# Introduction

The growth of translation in the last 25 years has led to significant changes in theory and practice. There seems to be a common goal amongst translation scholars to achieve recognition for Translation Studies as an independent discipline in its own right. Efforts are being made to find more objective and scientific research methods. However, as translation is such a complex phenomenon, different studies choose to focus on very diverse aspects, for very different reasons and using a wide variety of paradigms. Despite these differences, there is much common ground and in this volume, *Investigating Translation*, we hope to illustrate the unity in the variety.

For a long time translation research was based on the translated text, on the product, and of course, many scholars still take the translation as the object of their research. Translations are studied as a social artefact and studied synchronically or diachronically. The purpose of this research may be to apply different paradigms to find the most fruitful tools for analysing translation. This may lead to a critical revision of existing paradigms and the development of new ones. Alternately, the purpose may be to describe norms prospectively, or, in the case of minority languages, a prescriptive approach may be taken to find rules for linguistic normalisation. The paradigms used may include more traditional approaches, such as literary criticism, contrastive linguistics, discourse analysis and descriptive translation studies, as well as sociological paradigms, amongst which one may find postcolonial criticism and gender studies.

Translation process studies are a relatively new phenomenon. They take the mental processes of the translator as the object of their study, concentrating on the skills, knowledge and strategies needed to carry out this process, or they may focus on the process in which these skills, knowledge and strategies are acquired. A key question in this approach is the methodology used in the research, so an immediate aim may be to find appropriate tools for empirical research. The ultimate goal is to throw light on the translator's "black box", so as to define models for translation competence and acquiring translation competence. The main paradigms used in this research are cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics

and experimental psychology. However, in describing translation strategies concepts are drawn from discourse analysis and descriptive translation studies.

There is a growing awareness of the ideological influence of translation, particularly through the mass media. Scholars who are concerned about this “invisible” influence look at language models and translation norms through translation products, both written and audio-visual. Their purpose is to determine retrospectively the translation’s underlying ideology (capitalist, fascist, racist, sexist). Paradigms are taken from socio-linguistics, for example, critical discourse analysis. The tension between the two languages in contact requires concepts such as foreignising, domesticating, hegemonic and minority discourses.

As translating becomes more and more professional, with far reaching effects on international relationships and world markets, attention is being paid to translation receivers and initiators, as well as the priorities and restrictions within which the translator has to work. The purpose of these studies is awareness raising in relation to these restrictions, to produce more functionally appropriate translations, to educate the client, or initiator and to provide tools for quality control. The paradigms used for these studies vary from functional translation theories, pragmatics, and discourse analysis to terminology.

Many of these developments in Translation Studies have taken place in the last 25 years, the lifetime of the *Facultat de Traducció i d'Interpretació* at the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona*. The growing importance of translation and Translation Studies in Spain is reflected in the number of translation centres created over the last 25 years. Some of the research carried out in these centres is reflected in this volume, with contributions from Barcelona, Castellón, Granada, Las Palmas, Vic and Vigo. We have been made even more aware of the changes by the papers chosen for this publication and first presented at the *IV Congrés Internacional de Traducció*. The papers were selected bearing in mind this criteria of change and to stimulate communication amongst translation scholars all over the world, from Brazil to China. The book is divided into four sections, following the four major lines of research outlined above: (1) Investigating Translation Paradigms; (2) Investigating the Translation Process; (3) Investigating Translation and Ideology; (4) Investigating Translation Receivers.

In Section I, “Investigating Translation Paradigms”, the contributions are all concerned with the search for suitable paradigms. The first two are privileged visions of the evolution in translation studies by experts in the field. Eugene Nida charts the transition from a linguistic paradigm to a socio-linguistic one. Albrecht Neubert traces the effect of this paradigm change on training translators, and stresses the difficulties new translation faculties faced in order to be recognised as academic institutions. The other contributors to this section focus

on different aspects of this paradigm shift.

Zinaida Lvóvskaya, from a background in the Russian Translation Studies tradition, focuses on the capacity of a communicative theory of translation to describe, explain and predict the functioning of translating. Pilar Godayol Nogué applies deconstructionism and gender studies to the work of feminine subjects in translation, which she sees as a borderline experience involving dynamic procedures and tactics in a continuous process of negotiation. Chu Chi Yu summarises an ancient debate on translation paradigms that ran through the history of Chinese translations of canonical Buddhist texts: “simple translation” versus “sophisticated translation”. He shows how this debate covered concepts that are still crucial today, such as, the role of the translator, reader and text type. Helena Tanqueiro brings new light to the old dichotomy between the creative author and the imitative translator in her study of self-translation. In this framework, concepts such as faithfulness and freedom acquire fresh significance. Isabel García Izquierdo and Josep Marco Borrillo consider the grammatical complexity of literary texts as a relevant marker of the stylistic intentions of the author that is often neutralised by the translator. Using systemic-functional linguistics, they have devised an instrument to measure this complexity in source and target texts.

Section II, “Investigating the Translation Process”, begins with Daniel Gile’s review of empirical research in conference interpreting. As one of the major figures in the struggle for a more rigorous approach to research in translation and interpreting, he points out the strengths and the weaknesses of work to date. He also outlines areas and problems still pending, categorising them according to the methodological difficulties involved and encouraging young researchers to contribute.

Wilhelm Neunzig’s main concern is to assure the environmental validity of experimental research in translation. From this point of view he offers a critical review of the most commonly used methods and instruments and shows how the computer can be used as a reliable data collection instrument in a normal working environment. The PACTE group report on their research into Translation Competence and Acquiring Translation Competence. They are interested in applying standard procedures in experimental psychology to research in mental processes in translation. They present their theoretical and working hypotheses and discuss some of the methodological problems involved in this kind of research. Christopher Scott-Tennent, María González Davis and Fernanda Rodríguez Torras have carried out a pilot study to observe the effects of a specific training programme to teach explicit translation strategies. Comparisons between the experimental and the control group showed the effectiveness of the

teaching method and provide a basis for future experiments. Patrick Zabalbeascoa reviews and studies the development of apparently established concepts, such as, process, technique, method and strategy, defending a more coherent use of terminology. He suggests how these concepts may be useful to describe certain phenomena, how they may be used as categories and tools for description and to make the learning process more efficient. Ricardo Muñoz Martín focuses on complex problem-solving strategies. He has designed a binary decision tree to help students to focus on certain textual and contextual constraints and develop potentially optimal solutions.

In Section III, “Investigating Translation and Ideology”, the authors are interested in the influence of ideology on translation. Joaquim Mallafré, one of the most prestigious Catalan translators, describes the process by which each translator develops his own language model within a social context. He analyses two collections of Catalan translations of canonical texts of world literature, published in the eighties, and relates the translation norms observed to the official language model in force. Natalia Izard describes the use of “acceptable” translations when dubbing programmes for Catalan television (TVC). Cultural and linguistic adaptations are recommended by TVC’s style-book so that TV programmes should seem to have been conceived in Catalan. This domestication is a defensive reaction from a minority language and is one aspect of the Catalan government’s linguistic policy.

Victor González Ruiz studies the translation of film titles in Franco’s Spain (1939–75) and shows how censorship can be explicit and implicit under a dictatorship. The film industry used self-imposed censorship in line with the official Catholic morality to please the State Censorship Boards. John Milton describes the characteristics of the translation of mass fiction for the *Clube do Livro* in Brazil. Commercial interests were responsible for many of these characteristics, but others may be due to the dominant ideology of the military dictatorship (1964–89), when the *Clube do Livro* thrived. Sexual, scatological, religious and “socialist” references were neutralised in the translations. Ana María Clark’s study of Brazilian translations of fairy tales for children shows a tendency by the translators to idealise the child’s universe. Over-simplification and a moralising tone indicate the adult’s image of the child reader, very different from today’s children.

Section IV, “Investigating Translation Receivers”, is dedicated to the growing field of research into translation readers. Christiane Nord, one of the leading figures in functional translation studies, opens this section by making a distinction between the receiver and the addressee, the abstract notion the translator has of the receiver. The results of the studies she presents suggest that

the sender-audience relationship is much more emphasised in Spanish and French texts than in German.

Rosemary Mackenzie presents the results of a questionnaire given to users of translation and interpreting (T/I) services in Finland. She draws didactic conclusions from how the users assessed the quality of these services, their assessment of T/I training and their suggestions for how training could be improved. Beverley Adab offers a series of guidelines for translating advertising within the parameters of globalization and localization. Her work is based on a study of a corpus of translated texts in English and French. Adrián Fuentes and Dorothy Kelly are also interested in the translator as mediator in international advertising. They have analysed a corpus of texts advertising Spanish products in English-speaking markets, focusing on questions of national stereotypes. Joan Parra argues that translation as a component of the software localization industry has specific characteristics that require special attention from theoretical and applied translation studies. He stresses the need for co-operation between professionals and translator training centres and suggests that a first step in this direction is to collect data on the industry.

The last two papers take a functional approach to terminology in specialised translation. Carlos Garrido proposes strategies for overcoming problems arising from the translation of common names in scientific publications. This is a particular problem when translating from English to Spanish, given the long-standing English amateur tradition of studying fauna. Maribel Tercedor-Sánchez addresses the problem of terminological variation in Oncology due to wide public interest in cancer and the different social situations in which the terminology is used. She has built up a corpus of comparable Spanish and English oncological texts and has classified them according to communicative situations, to facilitate the selection of the appropriate terminology for each professional context.

In conclusion, we hope *Investigating Translation* will contribute to a better understanding of what is going on in translation research today. Translation scholars, particularly young researchers, need a clear idea of the different aspects of translation that are the objects of investigation, the different motivations behind the research and the different paradigms used. This should help us to see which paradigms are complementary, clarify terminology and develop more objective research methodologies.

*Allison Beeby, Doris Ensinger and Marisa Presas*