

Introduction

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Doubts and Directions in Translation Studies: Selected contributions from the EST Congress, Lisbon 2004

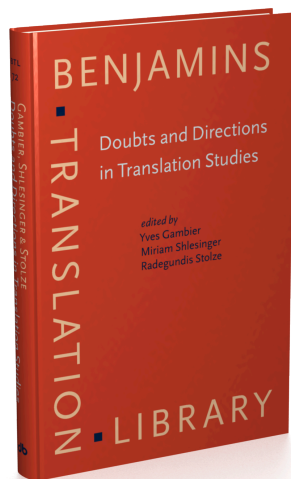
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Introduction

On September 29–30, 2004, more than two hundred participants assembled in Lisbon, to take a fresh look at current orientations in Translation Studies (TS). In their Call for Papers, the organizers of the Fourth Congress of the European Society for Translation Studies (EST) had acknowledged that “perhaps the time has come to challenge some of the widely held assumptions, biases, and other presuppositions borrowed from other disciplines or based on beliefs and claims that are taken for granted.” Hence, the “Doubts and Directions” in the title of the Congress. Obviously, the contributions (more than 140 papers, 40 posters and six panels) did not all cover the same concerns, the same questions, the same concepts or the same methods. Diversity is a precious asset at a scientific meeting of this kind.

About fifty speakers submitted their contributions. Ultimately, thanks to the invaluable help of almost forty referees, we selected twenty-six texts. Our explicit criteria centered on quality of approach; originality of topic, argument and/or analyzed data; and clear composition. The process of grouping the texts was one that we undertook with care and trepidation, leading eventually to the five broad categories presented here.

All of the papers in Part One deal with theoretical aspects. While **A. Chesterman** offers a critical analysis of the so-called unique item hypothesis and raises a number of methodological issues concerning research on the topic, **U. Stecconi** and **S. Göpferich** explain how TS can benefit by opening up towards Semiotics, on the one hand, and Transfer Studies, on the other. Both authors justify the expansion they propose, and take issue with the current scope of TS, while posing the fundamental question: What do we mean by translation? In their papers, they deal with concepts such as translation events, equivalence, text transformation and quality assessment. The fourth paper, by **F. Alves** and **J. Gonçalves**, endeavors to model translational competence, building on Relevance Theory and Connectionism. All of these aspects – unique item, translation universals, scope of TS, multidisciplinary, competence, cognitive model – have been on our agenda for some time, and seem to imply a more extensive conceptual and methodological analysis.

In Part Two, we have four texts, rather different but all concerned with how to improve our tools of investigation. A Portuguese team, under the leadership of **T. Seruya**, deals with the cartography of Literary Translation Studies in Portugal: Who are the agents and the architects of this history? What kinds of material do they need? Again, interdisciplinarity and different conceptions of translation make the landscape

even more complex. **P. Grant** and **K. Mezei**, concerned over the dissemination of information about Canadian Literary Translation Studies, outline their web-based bibliography and the challenges they are facing, such as organization of keywords, the multilingual character of the references collected, updating the database, etc., as sharing ideas and solutions is a good way to avoid having to reinvent the wheel. **H. Risku**, aware of the key role played by technologies in our working environments, seeks to determine when, to what extent and with what consequences the available tools can best be used in translating. Efficiency, creativity and quality have been keywords for translators for quite a long time now. The last paper, by **A. Hild**, highlights four ways of promoting rigour in the experimental study of simultaneous interpreting: triangulation, assessing task representativeness, sampling and data management. Each of the four papers grouped here underlines the importance of a precise and systematic definition of the object of study, adequacy of procedures to be used, contextualisation of the results, and relevant consequences of the research.

Part Three, with seven texts, focuses on empirical research. **A. Künzli** presents the changes introduced by ten professional translators who revised a legal text translated from French into German and an expert's assessment of the quality of the final output. **C. Alvstad** suggests that a close reading of translations and their source texts, in a learning context, can enhance university students' awareness of literary reading as a dynamic process. Both cases shed light on two important but often neglected phases in the overall process of producing translations. The two following papers, by **D. Chiaro** and **R. Antonini**, report on how Italian audiences perceive cultural references and verbally expressed humour when watching dubbed programmes. A t-test and an e-questionnaire are the two means applied to carry out these perception studies. **M. Mateo**, also working in the subfield of audiovisual translation but with opera surtitles, describes the marked differences between surtitles in the same language as a function of the translation strategies adopted by certain opera houses. She also examines alternative ways of implementing operational norms and negotiating the constraints imposed both by the transmission channel and by reception factors. **H. Dam** aims at identifying features of efficiency and inefficiency in interpreters' notes for consecutive interpretation. Her hypotheses are tested on the target texts and in notes produced by five interpreters working from Spanish into Danish. Finally, **D. Sanchez** emphasizes the role played by scientific discourses and their translation in the transmission of dominant gendered representations. The reproduction of ideology is analyzed through a specific example (French-Spanish). The diversity of procedures – including think-aloud protocol, statistics, use of metatextual information, analysis of macrostructural elements, semantic network analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis – reveal yet again the different sources of methodology in TS.

The seven articles in Part Four are linguistically oriented. They give a rich overview of the unfolding relationship between Linguistics and TS. The respective studies deal with ideology through the frequency, functions and effects of the evaluative pre-modified noun phrases in English and Finnish newspapers (**T. Puurtinen**); inferenc-

ing and transfer of semantic relations – with explicitations in the target texts from Spanish into Danish (**L. Denver**); the interface between Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), corpus-based research and contrastive analysis – illustrated in the “modality-necessity” field, from English into Spanish (**R. Rabadán**); and the focus-ground structure of texts as expressed by cleft sentences from Portuguese into German (**T. Reichmann**); by the use of prepositions and locative adverbs to construe spatial relations in Danish and Italian (**H. Jansen**); by the transfer of anthropomorphic phraseologies in German, Spanish and Catalan, thanks also to DTS, corpus-based studies and cognitive linguistics (**H. van Lawick**); and by the use of the cognitive approach, as developed by A. Culioli, for a better understanding of language activity and translation (**S. Grammenidis and T. Nenopoulou**). In one way or another, all seven of these papers process methodological and conceptual problems, making clear that translators use manipulative strategies and complex decision-making, and can always identify problems related to their language pair.

Part Five deals mainly with literary works and here too one finds a diversity of themes and procedures. **M. Charron** wonders about the readability of French (re)translations of *Don Quijote*. **M. Mulligan** considers how some British women travellers in the post-colonial period represented the Other in their texts. Their techniques are not without rhetorical and ideological effects on the reader. Searching for a kind of balance between individual agency and collective norms, **O. Paloposki** studies the extent to which a Finnish translator at the end of the 19th century was able to negotiate the conditions of his work (from the selection of books to be translated and the use of source texts to translation strategies, lay-out design and fees). The last paper in the volume, by **A. Mannekens**, defines translation as practised and thought of by French writer A. Artaud. She uses the concept of mimesis, and questions concepts such as imitation and appropriation.

The topics, approaches and methodologies underlying these Proceedings force us to take a fresh look at many of the seemingly well established paradigms and familiar notions, and open up new directions of research, reminding us that our object(s) of study is forever situated at a fluid and shifting interface with many other disciplines.

We are very grateful to the organizers of the conference, who provided the setting out of which this volume emerged, and to all those authors and referees who gave generously of their time and skills and offered us their reliable cooperation in the process of assembling this volume. We also wish to express our appreciation to Andrew Chesterman for his painstaking proofreading of the final manuscript.

The editors

