

Malpas 1989; Söll 1971; Turk 1989, 1991, 1994.

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## Translation studies

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' (Nida 1969, Wilss 1977/1982), others as 'translatology' – or 'traductologie' in French (Goffin 1971), 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' (1972/1988: 70) and other scholars have since followed suit. At one time, 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 practical 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. The terms 'translation' and 'translators' are used in this generic sense throughout this entry. 'Translation studies' is also understood to cover the whole spectrum of research and pedagogical activities, from developing theoretical frameworks to conducting individual case studies to engaging in practical matters such as training translators and developing criteria for translation assessment.

Interest in translation is practically 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 (see LATIN TRADITION). However, as an academic discipline, 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.

### Translation studies: a map of the territory

The mapping of the field of translation studies is an ongoing activity. James Holmes is credited with the first attempt to chart the territory of translation studies as an academic pursuit. His map of the discipline (see Figure 9) is now widely accepted as a solid framework for organizing academic activities within this domain (see Holmes 1972a).

Holmes divides the discipline into two major areas: **pure translation studies** and **applied translation studies**. Pure translation studies has the dual objective of describing translation phenomena as they occur and developing principles for describing and explaining such phenomena. The first objective falls within the remit of **descriptive translation studies**, and the second within the remit of **translation theory**, both being subdivisions of pure translation studies.

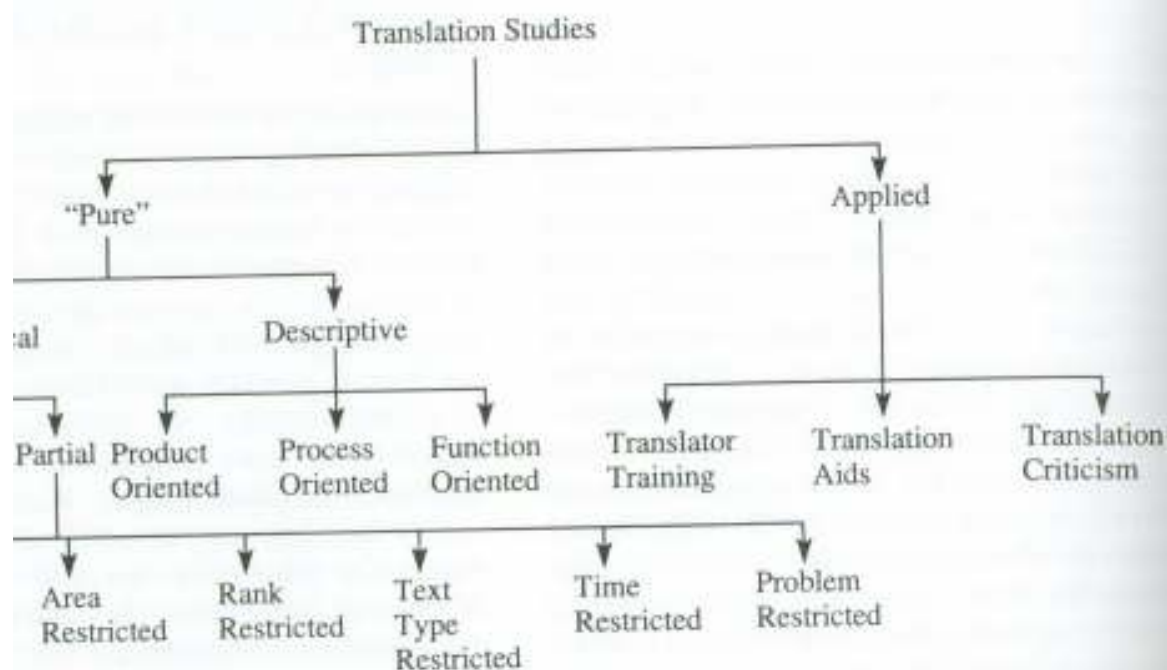
Within descriptive translation studies, Holmes distinguishes between **product-oriented DTS** (text-focused studies which attempt to describe existing translations), **process-oriented DTS** (studies which attempt to investigate the mental processes that take place in translation), and **function-oriented DTS** (studies which attempt to describe the function of translations in the recipient sociocultural context). Under the theoretical branch, or translation theory, he distinguishes between **general translation theory** and **partial translation theories**; the latter may be **medium restricted** (for example theories of human as opposed to machine translation or written translation as opposed to oral interpreting), **area-restricted** (i.e. restricted to specific linguistic or cultural groups), **rank-restricted** (dealing with specific linguistic ranks or levels), **text-type restricted** (for example theories of literary translation or Bible translation), **time-restricted** (dealing with translation

an older period as opposed to contexts), or **problem-restricted** (for theories dealing with the translation of specific words or idioms).

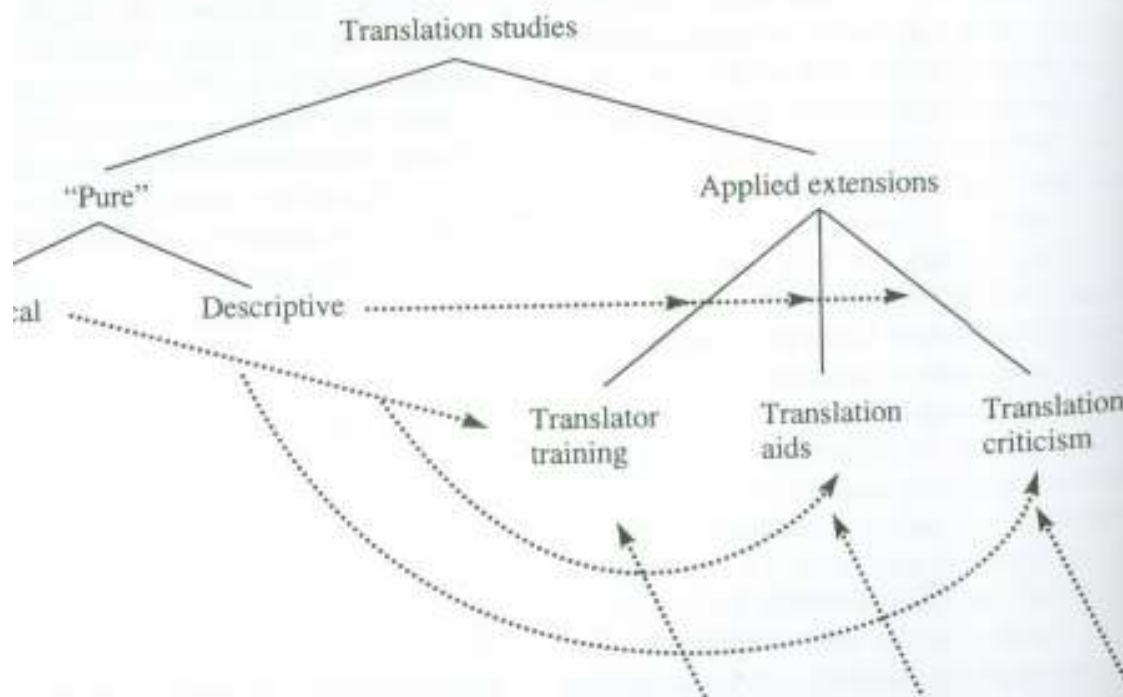
**translation studies**, the second

major division proposed by Holmes, covers activities which address specific practical applications, most notably translator training, translation aids such as dictionaries and term banks, translation policy (which involves

Holmes' map of translation studies



Toury's map of the relation between translation studies and its applied extensions





giving advice to the community on such issues as the role of translators and translations), and translation criticism.

In addition to these basic divisions, Holmes also makes a brief mention of two important types of research: the study of translation studies itself (for example the history of translation theory and the history of translator training) and the study of the methods and models which are best suited to particular types of research in the discipline. Both these areas of study have been receiving more attention in recent years.

And finally, Holmes stresses that the relationship between theoretical, descriptive and applied translation studies is dialectical rather than unidirectional, with each branch both providing insights for and using insights from the other two. Holmes therefore concludes that 'though the needs of a given moment may vary, attention to all three branches is required if the discipline is to grow and flourish' (1972/1988: 78-9). It is interesting to compare this position with that of Toury (1995), where it is clear that applied activities such as translator training and translation criticism are not seen as a central component of translation studies but rather as 'extensions' of the discipline (see Figure 10). Moreover, by contrast to Holmes' insistence on the dialectical relationship between all three areas, Toury seems to see the relationship between theoretical and descriptive translation studies on the one hand and what he calls the 'Applied Extensions' of the discipline on the other as strictly unidirectional (1995: 18).

### Translation studies and other disciplines

In the early 1950s and throughout the 1960s, translation studies was largely treated as a branch of applied linguistics, and indeed linguistics in general was seen as the main discipline which is capable of informing the study of translation. In the 1970s, and particularly during the 1980s, translation scholars began to draw more heavily on theoretical frameworks and methodologies borrowed from other disciplines, including psychology, communication theory, literary theory, anthropology, philosophy and, more recently, cultural studies.

There are now a number of distinct theo-

retical perspectives from which translation can be studied (see for instance COMMUNICATIVE/FUNCTIONAL APPROACHES, LINGUISTIC APPROACHES, POLYSYSTEM THEORY and PSYCHOLINGUISTIC/COGNITIVE APPROACHES). The study of translation has gone far beyond the confines of any one discipline and it has become clear that research requirements in this area cannot be catered for by any existing field of study. 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. Indeed, the various methodologies and theoretical frameworks borrowed from different disciplines are increasingly being adapted and reassessed to meet the specific needs of translation scholars (see, for instance, CORPORA IN TRANSLATION STUDIES).

In the course of attempting to find its place among other academic disciplines and to synthesize the insights it has gained from other fields of knowledge, translation studies has occasionally experienced periods of fragmentation: of approaches, schools, methodologies, and even sub-fields within the discipline. At a conference held in Dublin in May 1995 for instance, some delegates called for establishing an independent discipline of interpreting studies, because theoretical models in translation studies by and large ignore interpreting and are therefore irrelevant to those interested in this field. This is true to a large extent, just as it is true that within interpreting studies itself far more attention has traditionally been paid to simultaneous CONFERENCE INTERPRETING than to other areas such as COMMUNITY INTERPRETING and liaison interpreting. However, the answer in both cases cannot lie in splitting the discipline into smaller factions, since fragmentation can only weaken the position of both translation and interpreting in the academy. The answer must surely lie in working towards greater unity and a more balanced representation of all areas of the discipline in research activities and in theoretical discussions.

Similarly, the threat of fragmentation sometimes looms high in the kind of literature which deliberately sets different theoretical approaches or research programmes in opposi-



tion. This is particularly evident in the case of approaches informed by cultural studies and those informed by the well-established but by no means flawless models derived from linguistics (see Baker 1996). In recent years, a number of scholars began to talk about 'the cultural turn in translation studies' (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990) and to argue that an approach derived from cultural studies and stressing the role of ideology must *replace* the traditional linguistically derived models. Such discussions often misrepresent and caricature the paradigms they attack in a way that is not necessarily in the interest of the discipline as a whole:

linguists have moved from word to text as a unit, but not beyond. . . . The overall position of the linguist in translation studies would be rather analogous to that of an intrepid explorer who refuses to take any notice of the trees in the new region he has discovered until he has made sure he has painstakingly arrived at a description of all the plants that grow there.

(Bassnett and Lefevere 1990: 4)

Translation scholars must recognize that no approach, however sophisticated, can provide the answer to all the questions raised in the discipline nor the tools and methodology required for conducting research in all areas of translation studies. There can be no benefit in setting various approaches in opposition to each other nor in resisting the integration of insights achieved through the application of various tools of research, whatever their origin. Fortunately, more and more scholars are beginning to celebrate rather than resist the plurality of perspectives that characterizes the discipline. While critical of certain aspects of specific approaches, such scholars are still able to see the various frameworks available as essentially complementary rather than mutually exclusive (Baker 1996a; Venuti 1996).

Translation studies can and will hopefully continue to draw on a variety of discourses and disciplines and to encourage pluralism and heterogeneity. Fragmentation and the compartmentalization of approaches can only weaken

and obscure opportunities for further progress in the field.

### Further reading

Baker 1996; Holmes 1972/1988; Toury 1995; Venuti 1996.

MONA BAKER

## Translator-training institutions

Translators and interpreters have long been trained informally, basically through trial and error, unstructured apprenticeship arrangements, or any of the various translating activities that accompany the study of a foreign language and culture within the Liberal Arts tradition. Translator-training institutions, however, can be understood as organizational structures designed specifically for this task, with a certain permanence and internal power relationships. Most such institutions are now university departments, faculties or relatively independent university institutes, although others are run by government bodies, international organizations, professional associations, large employers or private schools. Most of these institutions depend on wider structures within the one society (state or private education system) and thus vary in accordance with local contexts. Some structures, however, cross several societies and thus allow a certain typology to be based on various 'generations' of institutions.

The following survey adopts an international perspective, focusing on the generations of translator-training institutions and analysing the dramatic rise in their number since the mid-twentieth century. Brief consideration will also be given to the institutional location of certain pedagogical translation theories.

### Historical background

The institutional training of translators and interpreters is a relatively new phenomenon, and talk of historical 'schools' of translation