

Translation as an Interdisciplinary Subject in Humanity

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As a discipline, translation has relevance to other disciplines. By its nature, translation studies is multilingual, and also interdisciplinary. This study aims to explain the integration between translational studies and various disciplines. This is a qualitative study with a descriptive approach. The data were collected from various books and articles related with the topic of translation in interdisciplinary subjects. This study will outline the relationship between translational studies and linguistics, literature, philosophy and cultural studies.

Key words: *Translation, Translation studies, Interdisciplinary Subjects.*

Introduction

Translation is the transfer of meaning from the Source Language (SL) text to Target Language (TL) text (Ajunwa, 1990; Steiner, 1978 in Kolawole, 2013). According to Mayoral (2001, in Toro, 2008), there is a diversity in translation, due to the fact that translation is a multifaceted term. Translation can refer to: a) the general subject field; b) the product (the text that has been translated; and c) the process (the act of carrying out a translation, otherwise known as translating) (Munday, 2001, in Toro, 2008). As a discipline, translation has relevance with other subjects. To understand the interrelationships of translation with other subjects, we must first understand what is meant by translation studies.

Translation studies is an academic interdisciplinary subject dealing with systematic study of the theory, description and application of translation, interpreting and localisation ("Translation Studies", n. d). The term *translation studies* was coined by the Amsterdam-based American scholar James S. Holmes in his paper "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies", which is considered a foundational statement for the discipline. Translation studies

can also be described as interdisciplinary which touches on other diverse fields of knowledge, including comparative literature, cultural studies, gender studies, computer science, history, linguistics, philosophy and semiotics (“What is Translation Studies?”, 2018). By its nature, translation studies is multilingual, and also interdisciplinary. It encompasses any language combinations, various branches of linguistics, comparative literature, philosophy and also various types of cultural studies (Munday, 2008; Akkuzova et al, 2018).

The word “interdisciplinary” is defined in Merriam-Webster dictionary as “involving two or more academic, scientific or artistic disciplines” (Poole, 2012). Interdisciplinarity or interdisciplinary studies involves the combining of two or more academic disciplines into one activity (Nissani, 1995). It refers to the general phenomenon of combining or integrating disciplinary perspectives (“What is Interdisciplinarity?”, n. d.). It takes knowledge from several other fields like sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, etc. The first move toward interdisciplinarity in translation occurred within the field during the early 1990s, what might be called intradisciplinary translation studies, or interdisciplinary studies within varying disciplines of translation studies. In 1988, Mary Snell-Hornby published *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach*, which presents an integration of approaches, methods, and concepts grounded in linguistics, which are relevant for theory, practice and analysis of literary translation. This study will try to explain the integration between translational studies and various disciplines, in this case linguistics, literature, philosophy and cultural studies.

Research Method

This is a qualitative study with a descriptive approach. The data were collected from various books and articles related with the topic of translation in interdisciplinary subjects. This study will outline the relationship between translational studies and linguistics, literature, philosophy and cultural studies.

Findings and Discussion

Translation and Linguistics

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. It involves analysing language form, language meaning, and language in context (Martinet, 1960). Language is a non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols (Sapir, 1921). Traditionally, linguistics is related with writing grammars and dictionaries for natural language and with describing phonetics. It is a communication of thoughts and feelings through a system of arbitrary signals, such as voice sounds, gesture or written symbols. According to Chapman (1984, p.4), “the study of linguistics is concerned

with language as an observable phenomenon of human activity, both in general principles and in the particular realisation which we call language e.g. French, English, Arabic languages”.

The study of linguistics is essentially the study of human language. It can be broken down into several sub-categories:

- Grammar: the study of language structure and the system of rules it uses;
- Morphology: the study of formation of words;
- Syntax: the study of composition of words into phrases and sentences;
- Phonology: the study of sound systems;
- Historical linguistics: the study of language evolution;
- Sociolinguistics: the study of how language is used in society;
- Psycholinguistics: the study of how language is processed within the mind;
- Neurolinguistics: the study of the actual encoding of language in the brain; and,
- Computational linguistics: the study of natural linguistics by using the techniques of computer science (Matandare, 2018).

Linguistics and translation are related to each other. It is related to the major function of translation in transferring meaning and messages of textual materials from one language into another in order to enhance interlingual communication and interaction. Accurate translation of one language to another requires addressing all the functions of linguistics. Translators must consider the grammar being used in source text and target text, the meaning of the words as individual components, as well as the phrases and sentences of the text, and so forth. Since all word in one language may or may not have a corresponding word in another language, linguistic study becomes crucial for the purpose of translation. Linguistic approach to translation focuses on the issues of meaning and equivalence, to discover what the language actually means.

Even in the era of machine translation, linguistics still has important meaning for translation. A machine cannot be programmed to do the translators’ job unless one has given it a great deal of information. The machine needs to be manually programmed about the structure of the source language and target language and told how to go about finding the equivalences which exist between the two languages. Translation also plays a vital role in the transfer of information from one linguistic code or language variety into another, which is often called code-switching. Code-switching occurs when a speaker alternate between two languages or more. Some examples of code switching are as follows:

- a. Intra-sentential switching, which occurs outside the sentence or clause level.
For example: “*Ani wideili*. What happened?” (Those, I did them. What happened?”).
- b. Intra-sentential switching, which occurs within a sentence or clause.



For example: In Spanish-English switching “*La onda* is to fight *y jambar*.” (The latest fad is to fight and steal.”

c. Intra word switching, which occurs within a word.

For example: In the sentence “*Traducierst du das mal bitte?*” which alternates Spanish and German, the Spanish verb *to translate* (*traducir*) is used, but is conjugated according to German rules.

Translation and Literature

In the interaction between translation and literature, there is the term literary translation, which can be described as a genre of literary creativity in which a work written in one language is re-created in another (“Literary Translation”, n. d.). Literary translation includes activities that deal not only with poetry or fiction and non-fiction stories, but also with popular science essays, newspaper articles, diaries, memoirs, etc (Kazakova, 2015). The main principle of literary translation is the dominance of poetic communicative function (“Literary Translation”, n. d.). Literary translation is important, because it allows literature to be enjoyed by more people worldwide. In literary translation, language is not only used for communicative purposes, but also has aesthetic functions. Since artistic image in literary works will certainly have impact on the reader, literary translator should take into account the specific features of the text, for example the culture in which a literary work takes place.

In literary translation, a translator should translate messages, not meanings (Bazzuro, 2015). The translator should not only translate the language itself, but also the culture in which the story or novel is taking place. The translator should have broad knowledge of the source and target languages. A literary translator has to take into account the beauty of the text, its style and the lexical, grammatical and phonological features. For example, in translating from Arabic into English, and vice versa. The two countries have different culture and sometimes opposite views on important matters. This has an impact on the difficulty of finding the words with equivalent meanings. When this happens, the translator find their own words that express almost the same meaning (Mohammad et al., 2018).

Translation and Philosophy

The various disciplines in the field of humanities are basically related by chains of authority, without exception between philosophy and translation. The discourses of philosophy might be related to translation studies in three ways (Pym, 2002):

- a. Philosophers of various kinds have used translation as a case study or metaphor for issues of more general application;
- b. Translation theorists and practitioners have referred to philosophical discourses for support and authority for their ideas;

- c. Philosophers, scholars and translators have commented on the translation of philosophical discourses.

In translating philosophical text, a translator should consider that philosophical texts do not always have strict technical translation rules (Parks, n. d.). Although philosophical do use a kind of technical terminology, they cannot be classed together with strictly technical such as those of medicine, law or engineering. Philosophers frequently use their own terms, or assign new meanings to old terms, or use ordinary words in a new, technical sense, etc. They sometimes use words in a way that may not be natural by the reader. By considering those things mentioned earlier, the translator has to pay very close attention to the author's words, comparing and contrasting the different uses of words and the same word in different contexts (Parks, 2004).

To be able to face the challenges in translating philosophical texts, especially those related to terminologies, the translator can do some strategies as follows (Bednárová-Gibová and Zákutná, 2018): the translator has to contextualise and decode the precise meaning of the term depending on its philosophical interpretation; denotative term meanings are to be used with caution; it is essential for the same philosophical term to be used consistently so as not to confuse the reader and distort the message; and the translator should not add any semantic dimensions to terms so as to approximate to the reader.

Translation and Cultural Studies

There are three areas where cultural studies has influenced translation studies: translation and rewriting, translation and gender and translation and postcolonialism (Munday, 2001).

Translation and Rewriting

Translation is not an isolated activity. As argued by some scholars, translation has always served a special purpose and has been shaped by a certain force. The choice of the works to be translated, the guideline and goals of the translation activity are set by certain forces (Shuping, 2013). Therefore, translation takes the form of rewriting, in which the original text is chosen for a certain purpose and the guidelines of translation are defined by the translator to serve this purpose. The concept "translation as rewriting" was first put forward by Lefevere in 1981, in his essay entitled *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. In his essay, Lefevere introduced the concept of "refracted text", or "text that has been processed for certain audience" (Gentzler, 2004).

According to Bassnet and Lefevere (2004), all rewritings reflect a certain ideology which manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Therefore, translation is

not a pure, simple and transparent linguistic matter but involves factors such as power, ideology, poetics, patronage, etc. An example of rewriting is the rewriting of the translation of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* by Münif Pasha in 1860 into Turkish as a newspaper serial. Action is the essential element in this translation, where the readers are held in suspense for the next episode not only to boost the circulation of the newspaper, but also to entertain the readers and to create a positive atmosphere for the printing of newspapers and the development of journalism in the Reformation Period (the 19th century) of the Ottoman Empire.

Translation and Gender

Translation was the means through which women, beginning in European Middle Ages, were able to get access to the world of letters (Simon, 1996). During this period, women were not allowed to write books, so the only way to gain access to writing activities was to become a translator. Women at that time turned to translation as a permissible form of public expression. Translation continued to serve as a kind of writer's apprenticeship for women into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Translation was an important part of the social movements in which women participated, such as the fight against slavery.

Translator's gender identity also gives influence on the adequacy of translation. Translation theorist L. Von Flotow defines such basic feminist translation strategies as supplementing, prefacing and footnoting, as well as hijacking, that is the direct interference of translators into the text (von Flotow, 1991, pp.74-84). L. Von Flotow's translation strategies are defined as the most productive for the analysis of rendering of gender components in a work of fiction. For example, At the lexical level, there are noticeable gender differences in the reproduction of texts by male and female translators. The French writers often resort to colloquial and obscene vocabulary. The female translators in the overwhelming majority are trying to replace it with stylistically more neutral vocabulary, significantly mitigating the expression of the original and softening clearly strong character traits of heroes and heroines. The male translators, in turn, often transform the source text towards hyperbolisation of negative characters' traits, first of all those of the heroines, thus revealing their gender – their "masculine" essence.

Translation and Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism can be described as the historical period or state of affairs representing the aftermath of Western colonialism. As a field of study, postcolonialism is the academic study of the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism, focusing on the human consequences of the control and exploitation of colonised people and their lands ("Postcolonialism", n. d.). Decolonised people develop a postcolonial identity that is based on cultural interactions



between different identities (cultural, national, and ethnic as well as gender and class), which then leads to intercultural transfer. Meanwhile, according to Bassnett and Trivedi (2002), translation is a non-isolated act which is part of an ongoing process of intercultural transfer.

At present, translation is often used by cultural studies theorists figuratively to describe the increasing internationalisation of cultural production and the fate of those who struggle between two worlds and two languages (Simon, 1997). Along with globalisation, population movements between countries have become a common thing, and transnational communication often occur along with the meeting of people with different national backgrounds. Somehow, the moving boundaries of culture and cultural identity affect the way translation is practiced and conceptualised. The concept of translation as a linguistic transaction which involves a negotiation between cultures has been the core of postcolonial theory (Orsini & Srivastava, 2013).

Conclusion

Translation studies have been viewed in strong relation with other disciplines such as linguistics, philosophy, literature, cultural studies, and so on. This is due to the nature of the notion of translation itself.

Translation studies is first interrelated with linguistics and language studies, as translation is the interpretation of meaning from one language to another; with cultural studies, since meanings expressed by means of language are embedded into a certain culture and require equivalent unravelment into another culture; literature, since language is not only used for communicative purposes, but also has aesthetic functions; and philosophy, in which translation is not only an activity carried out on philosophical texts, but also becomes a field of study within philosophy itself, namely the philosophy of translation, which the concept is study of translation not merely in terms of what is normally called “translation” but also a broader conception of this process which takes into consideration the whole culture or cultures involved along with all possible means of expression.



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