

Mapping the Gulfs of translation studies

Salah Basalamah*

Hamad Bin Khalifa University,
Translation and Interpreting Institute,
Doha, Qatar
*Email: sbasalamah@qf.org.qa

ABSTRACT

This paper is concerned with an evaluative overview of Translation Studies (TS) as a rapidly growing interdisciplinary through the different attempts to map it. Its main preoccupation is first to examine the trends of some contemporary research in Translation Studies and describe the growing fragmentation it is undergoing. Second and as a matter of consequence, it will also overview some teaching trends by looking at some of the most favored streams of specializations at the postgraduate levels using examples from universities in North America and the Gulf. This will finally allow the author to assess the extent and impact of the mutual distances and ignorance these subfields may encounter within the same discipline, namely through a comparison with sociology, and the way it has established the subfield of metasociology and how this experience could extend to TS.

Keywords: mapping, translation studies, research, postgraduate studies, graduate teaching, academic politics, methodologies, paradigm, crisis, metasociology, metatheory, philosophy of translation

[http://dx.doi.org/
10.5339/connect.2016.tii.5](http://dx.doi.org/10.5339/connect.2016.tii.5)

Submitted: 09 July 2015
Accepted: 15 December 2015
© 2016 Basalamah, licensee HBKU Press. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution license CC BY 4.0, which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

INTRODUCTION

Translation studies (TS) is a fairly recently institutionalized discipline. If we regard James Holmes' lecture in 1972 as its inception, it would not be a stretch to consider the chaotic development and uncountable fragmentation that it is presently going through as a "mid-life crisis." Although it is not our intention to measure the life or longevity of TS, it is, however, remarkable that the problems of ever-growing specialization and constant branching out may sooner or later bring up the question of the discipline's cohesion. If not moving toward a continuous creation of sub-specialties, in the second half of the 20th century sociology encountered a similar trend, but toward conflicting schools of thought, theories, and methodologies, especially in the United States. So in order to have a better view of what was going on in that almost multi-secular discipline, sociologists such as Paul Furfey (1953), Goudlner (1965 & 1970), Bourdieu (1971 & 1984), Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992) and George Ritzer (1975 & 1988) started to work on what they have come to conceive of as "metasociology" or the "metatheory of sociology". As a consequence and by analogy, the question I would like to reflect upon in this paper is then: should this type of effort be conducted in our discipline as well?

Following the pioneering paper of Holmes (1972/2004) and the map Toury has made of it (Snell-Hornby, 2006), over 35 years later van Doorslaer (2007) has demonstrated how varied and numerous the branches of translation studies have become. Taking stock of this most recent mapping effort, the question then begs as to whether this diversity is a sign of good health, or rather the beginning of an irrecoverable fragmentation into different new disciplines to come. Could there still be a common ground in TS to teach graduate students interested in fields as remote as, say, postcolonial TS and translation technologies (TT)? In light of the diverging trends, how would a comprehensive training be conceived of in order to bring up the next generation of competent TS scholars?

MAPPING TRANSLATION STUDIES

The first attempt at mapping TS, as it was conceived of by James Holmes¹, was mainly intended to show how a new disciplinary space is created out of "tensions between researchers investigating the new problem and colleagues in their former fields" (2004, p. 172). As Holmes was foreseeing things, these tensions would lead to "new channels of communication" and ultimately "a disciplinary utopia" (172). This means that like in the circumstance of any birth, TS came into being in a context of crisis and intellectual turmoil as a consequence of disagreements that occurred between scholars about a new problem, the ways it may be approached, or the limitations of an emerging object of study, such as translation. To map was then a visionary projection of what that utopia would look like as a properly independent field of research in the decades to come and as the different perspectives on translation were gathered from the former disciplines—applied linguistics and comparative literature to say the least.

Since then, another attempt was made by van Doorslaer (2007) from the Translation Studies Bibliography (TSB) project. Contrary to the overly prospective orientation Holmes has taken with his mapping, van Doorslaer's perspective was more of a retrospective account. To build the online TSB, a "newly developed and detailed conceptual tree of the discipline" was used to structure the keyword-based TSB (Figure 1), which consists of published works on translation since much before the inception of TS as a discipline (Gambier & van Doorslaer, 2004). In fact, this annotated bibliography is not an *a priori* projection of what TS has started to be and could become down the road, as it was the case for Holmes, but what it has evolved into 35 years later. For the purposes of this dynamic and yearly-updated database, the empirical and inductive method so dear to Holmes was for that matter implemented: "The TSB provides *descriptive*, non-evaluative abstracts for almost all publications included (except reviews)" (Gambier & van Doorslaer, 2004). Consequently, the map is not only the basis upon which the bibliography was established, but it is at the same time and dialectically the very product of the accumulated works that are constitutive of the bibliography:

This tree reflects the bibliography's understanding of the concept and field of Translation & Interpreting. It offers a conceptual guideline for the abstracts in the TSB and imposes a certain degree of uniformity on them. And above all, the conceptual tree structures and homogenizes the extensive list of *key words* and the *thesaurus*, both important tools for the TSB user. (Gambier & van Doorslaer, 2004)

¹Toury has presented Holmes' conceptual tree in *Descriptive Translation Studies – And Beyond* (1995, p. 10).

Paradoxically, though, maps are also “a systematizing, organizational and structuring, sometimes even a structural principle” (van Doorslaer, 2007, p. 219) which by its very nature gives direction and imposes a reading logic on its components. Although considering that TSB maps are descriptive and “explicitly designed as open maps to be complemented, changed and corrected” (p. 231), van Doorslaer admits along with Pym that they can be “peculiar instruments of power. They tend to make you look in certain directions; they make you overlook other directions” (Pym, 1998, p. 3).

Hence, when observing the two main attempts at mapping the discipline so far, it shows that power relations are at play. Even if maps are not meant to be prescriptive and orienting, they nonetheless become sources of authority and power. When Holmes speaks about “tensions” between researchers and “impediments to the development of a disciplinary Utopia” (1972/2004, p. 173), it is power that is at play. The same goes for Pym who more explicitly considers that maps are “instruments of power” because “they name and control” (Pym, 1998, p. 4). Just like translation supposes theoretically the distinction between cultures—although it is becoming increasingly difficult to draw a clear line between them—maps show differences, divergences, and even oppositions by marking territories and placing centers and peripheries.

In fact, like many if not all disciplines, TS has its own sets of binaries and dualities against which postmodern and poststructuralist scholars are pitted: literal/free; source/target; theory/practice; descriptive/prescriptive; process/product; diachronic/synchronic; empirical/conceptual; prospective/retrospective; proper/metaphor; studies/logos; etc. There are not only gaps and gulfs between the proponents of the *Belles infidèles* (target-oriented) and the literalists (source-oriented), but also between the defenders of the prescriptivist approach—who want theory to serve the purposes of professional translation and the advocates of a more descriptive methodology to explain and understand the translation phenomenon (Wagner & Chesterman, 2002)—and those who conceive of translation either as an actual linguistic transfer or as a metaphor that helps understand transformation occurrences beyond language (Guldin, 2015). There are even divergences among those who teach translation. However, these disagreements do not necessarily stem from the biases of the trainers themselves and their vested interests in promoting their respective fields of specialization within their institutionalized programs, but it is rather the far reaching extent of the discipline as it has been mapped that makes it exceedingly difficult to think of comprehensive teaching programs without falling into gigantism. Knowing the great variety of the discipline’s subfields (from translation history to machine translation via the different sociologies of translation), it would be legitimate to raise the following questions: 1) What common ground knowledge should TS graduate students cover during their training? 2) What does a comprehensive graduate training in TS involve? 3) What is the disciplinary profile of the next generation of TS scholars?

In order to address these questions, I propose to ponder on *two examples* of TS graduate programs as they have been experienced directly and from within. The first example is the PhD program at the School of Translation and Interpretation at the University of Ottawa (STI-UO). The first edition of this PhD was launched in the Fall of 2008. It is roughly made of two main specialties: on the one hand, a section in “Translation Technologies”, where terminology, terminometrics, corpus studies, machine translation, CAT tools, and all research pertaining to technologies and translation are tackled, on the other hand, a section called “TS-Humanities and Social Sciences” which encompasses all other subfields of TS that do not include technologies. Of course, this bipartition does not cover the whole of the Holmes/Toury map, but the attempt here is to represent—albeit partially—both branches of TS: “pure” and “applied.” It is commonly known that translation technologies (TT) are situated in the central branch named “translation aids”. However, the title usually used to refer to the other section of the program dealing with “non-applied research” is never the branch that is symmetrical to the “applied” one, i.e. “pure”, but oddly enough to its superordinate, i.e. “translation studies”. That is probably the reason why at STI-UO the broad categories of the humanities and social sciences were added to the acronym of the discipline to give it some sort of specificity and probably oppose it to the IT-oriented character of TT. Nevertheless, as the TS section is covering most of Holmes’ map—except for the one branch of “translation aids”—it is no surprise to find that an overwhelming majority of the students register in that section to the extent that the teaching staff exceeds the students in number and that some classes at the MA level are constantly threatened to be cancelled for lack of registrations.

While the apparent purpose is to cover the greatest span of research varieties in TS by having two distinct sub-programs in a PhD, experience has shown that the disparity between both sections’

content and nature is such that the great majority of the students who register in either of the sub-programs express their lack of interest in attending its alter ego's mandatory seminar. The dysphoric disposition they seem to have toward each other is such that both parties have agreed to call it "the two-headed-monster", indicating their distance and irremediable incompatibility despite their bonded fate. A general explanation is that TS is a wide horizontal discipline that is expanding at the rate of its intersections with other fields, so much so that some points of its wide-ranging surface are barely being reciprocally acknowledged as parts of the same disciplinary and institutional ensemble. A more specific explanation in the case of STI-UO is the fact that the structural balance that was established in the new PhD program between TT and all the other TS research subfields is reflected in the number of faculty members (a quarter), hence giving TT a critical mass within the institution. There is no doubt that TT is a booming subfield of TS (Sin-Wai, 2015) and that it is growing at a pace comparable to that of the technological tools at the heart of the specialty. It is also believed that translation in the age of machine translation and information technologies is becoming the main source and means of the profession as texts and information are mostly located in and transit through IT (Pym, 2007). However, in the framework of a graduate TS curriculum, TT would hardly be a legitimate counter-balance to all the remaining sub-specialties of TS. Although put on a par at the institutional level, the distance in terms of included content and acquired competences between each branch of the STI-UO PhD is such that the *de facto* symmetry cannot compensate for the disciplinary imbalance as the maps have shown. Surprisingly enough, though, the latest of the two maps does not even show the branch of "translation aids" under the "applied translation studies" superordinate where TT used to be in Holmes/Toury's map nor in any other of its branches:

Figure 1 (van Doorslaer, 2007, p. 229).²

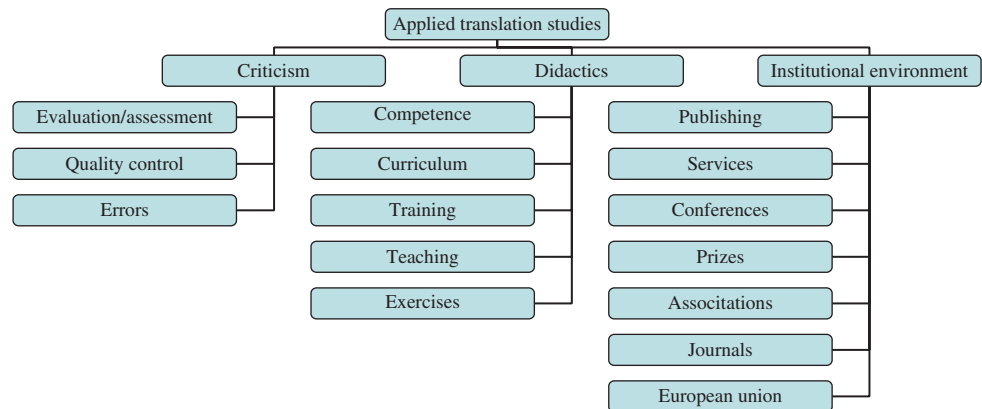


Figure 1. Details of applied translation studies.

The second example of a graduate program I would like to refer to is the postgraduate programs of the Translation and Interpreting Institute (TII) at Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) in Doha, Qatar. In 2012, TII launched the first of its MA programs in TS. With only three regular professors and other visiting professors, the program managed to have two full cohorts of students graduate from a program accredited by the Faculty of Translation and Interpretation (FTI) at the University of Geneva. In the fall of 2014, TII was able to launch a second MA, the specialization this time in audiovisual translation (AVT). Although still in its first year, this program is getting a good deal of attention since it started, as it is the only one of its kind in the whole Middle Eastern region. Like its predecessor, it is in the process of being accredited by the FTI in Geneva.

The outcomes of both MA programs are built around the same internal structure. Students in TS and AVT can choose to go either for a research thesis or for a practical translation with commentary thesis. Both programs have an equal amount of theoretical and practical components in order to balance the double objective of training students to be at the same time ready for the professional translation market or for an academic career by preparing them to pursue their studies at the PhD level, if they so choose.

² This chart was inserted thanks to the kind cooperation and permission from John Benjamins Publishing Co. <https://benjamins.com/#catalog/books/bct.20.03doo/details>

Similarly to the dual options of the PhD at STI-UO, the postgraduate department at TII-HBKU has also (for now, at least) a binary structure with two MA programs. But what they also have in common, and which is not less surprising, is that both institutions (TII and STI) seem to put the more general superordinate category (TS) and the more specific (TT/AVT) on the same level. Although it could be understandable to brand the latter program as it is, it is, however, more difficult to justify its status as a full-fledged program that would literally parallel its superordinate. Maybe the error is not to be found in the subfield itself—knowing that a graduate degree is by definition a specialization—as much as in the way the superordinate was named. For TS to become a specialization among other sub-domains of TS is similar to equating a diploma in comparative politics with one in political science. In effect, entitling the MA program that is in charge of training students to become either professional translators or potential PhD candidates in—theoretically—any subfield of TS actually as “translation studies” is perhaps misleading because of the methodological problem of the relationship between the general (TS) and the particular (subfields). If the TT/AVT programs can be considered “particular” it is because they are deducted from the more “general” category of TS. The latter, because of its generality, does in turn induce all of its particular subcategories. The point here is that the general cannot be a label for everything it induces and at the same time become their equivalent by gathering all the subfields that it isn’t encompassing when more specific graduate programs are created next to it. If “TS” is the general banner that gathers together all the branches of the discipline’s map, then the MA program that parallels the TT/AVT programs should rather be labeled with a more specific descriptor that would be of the same level of particularity or at least not be confused with its superordinate.³

Another confusion that could emanate from the leveling of TS and its sub-fields is the impression that TS as an MA program may seem like an exclusively research-oriented program whereas it has been proven after two cohorts of graduates—at least in TII—that the majority of the students choose to go for the translation and commentary than for the research thesis. This conceptual illusion is of importance as it shows that the very reason for which it was called “translation studies” goes back to Holmes’ refusal to reduce it, on the one hand, to an *Übersetzungswissenschaft* (science of translation) or to “translation theory”, or, on the other hand, to merely the “subject matter of the discipline” as all these are distinct from TS as a “field of research” (1972/2004, pp. 174–176). In fact, Holmes goes as far as further supporting this with what he considers—without much prudence—as the overarching methodology of the emerging discipline, i.e. the empirical approach. When looking at the trend of his own works, it therefore appears that what is meant by translation *studies* is basically the observation and description of the process, the function or the product of translation, and not so much the mere combination of translation practice and the reflection that it would entail or their necessary interdependence. Hence, if by the frequency of its practice in some academic institutions TS becomes the discipline where most students venture into the critical observation of a textual transfer, its theoretical scope would consequently be considerably restricted and TS confined—strangely enough—into one of its own applied subfields.

However, in order not to fall prey to this disciplinary distortion, TII was able to foresee the possible undesired outcome and went on creating a dynamic that would ensure that their graduate students be introduced to TS as the actual superordinate category of the discipline through a semester of three common core courses whereby all students of all MA programs would be indiscriminately gathered in the same group and equally introduced to the broadest overview of the domain. As the general umbrella of all the subfields of the discipline, among them those for which the students signed up, TS would then be tackled as the unified entry point of their respective specializations downstream. This dynamic of conjunction at that early stage of the pedagogical unfolding of the program can be understood not only as a demonstration of cohesiveness and consistency in the general learning outcomes of all the postgraduate programs—whether already in place or to come—but also as a reassertion of the position of TS as the superordinate all-encompassing category that labels the discipline at the most general level.

Despite this apparent harmony, it also should be acknowledged that sub-disciplinary territories are still very much being protected. In effect, after deciding the common base starting point, the question with which TII faculty members were confronted was: if the common core courses were meant to cater to a practical and theoretical overview of TS for all the students beginning their MA programs, who will be able to provide the general introductory course, a “TS” or an “AVT” professor? Should they both

³ For example, linguistic or textual translation could be viable alternatives.

share the course? Or anyone could teach it as long as any specialist of the subfields would logically be equally eligible to teach the general category of TS? But how would the students be introduced to the variety of TS subfields by a specialist of only one or two of the latter?

Beyond the apparently practical issues that are raised here, there is, however, a more critical one at stake. What is seemingly a matter of task distribution and competition over sub-disciplinary territories leads ultimately to the sensitive question of the methodological approaches of TS. As a matter of fact, if the politics of TS has to be located somewhere in the lifeworld of the discipline, I would situate it in the methodologies because of the obvious power relations that are occurring between at least two major methodological trends. My hypothesis is that there is an imbalance between empirical and conceptual research in TS, and this is in fact distorting the way TS scholars are mapping the discipline, not only at a metatheoretical level, but also in the very curricula they will be teaching.

THE POLITICS OF TRANSLATION STUDIES

In order to corroborate my hypothesis stating an imbalance between empirical and conceptual research in TS that would influence curriculum mapping, I would like to undertake a quick survey of the publications of the discipline and show what I would term as one of the political biases of TS.

Despite the impression of some TS scholars that the volume of conceptual research dwarfs its empirical counterpart (Gile, 1998; Chesterman, 1998 & 1999), the number of case studies that are found in conferences and collected publications show rather the contrary (Susam-Sarajeva 2001 & 2009; Munday 2009). In effect, after conducting a keyword-based search in the above-mentioned TSB database that has collected over 20,000 titles in the field of TS and related, I was able to draw a few charts and observe at least three interesting facts.

The first fact is no surprise as it only reminds us of an established given (Venuti, 1998; Görlach, 2002; Campbell, 2005), i.e. English is the most used and translated language—not only in the world—but also in the realm of international academic research. This is confirmed by the fact that most of the published works in TS research are written in English (Snell-Hornby, 2009). For example, it was found in the TSB survey that the term “théorie” in French and “theorie” in German only have 213 occurrences, that “teoria” which is similarly spelled in Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese only have 124 occurrences, whereas “theory” in English has 2,893 records. Another example with the very core descriptor of the discipline’s object of study, the result was 24 occurrences for “traducción”, 275 for “Übersetzung”, 280 for “traduzione”, 749 for “traduçaõ”, 2,297 for “traduction” and finally 16,679 occurrences for “translation.”

The second fact is related to what could generally be termed “empirical research.” Under this category, a selection of relevant key terms have been searched and similar ones were grouped by theoretical derivatives: “empirical”; “empiricist”; “empiricism”; “experiment”; “experimental”; “case study/ies”; “case(s)”; “evidence”; “findings”; “data”; “corpus/ora”; “applied”; “application”; “descriptive/ion”; “DTS”; “polysystem”; “functional”; “skopos”; and “quantitative” (Figure 2). Here again, the observation was that all the occurrences relevant to the empirical approach in the TSB

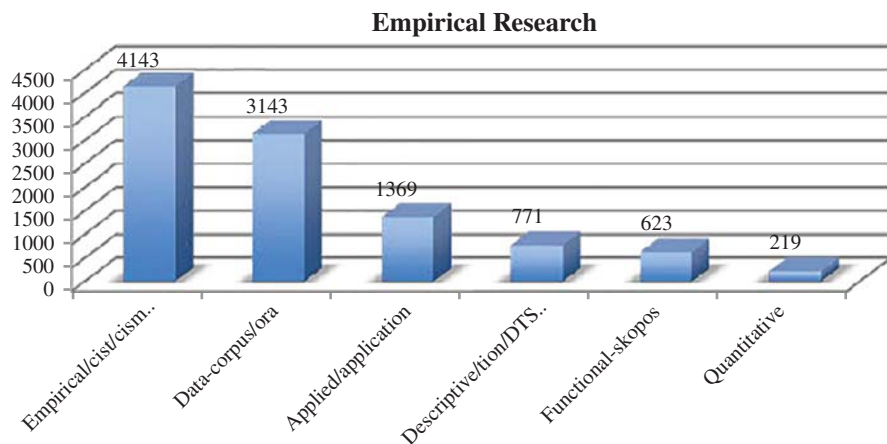


Figure 2. Number of empirical papers in TS according to the TSB.

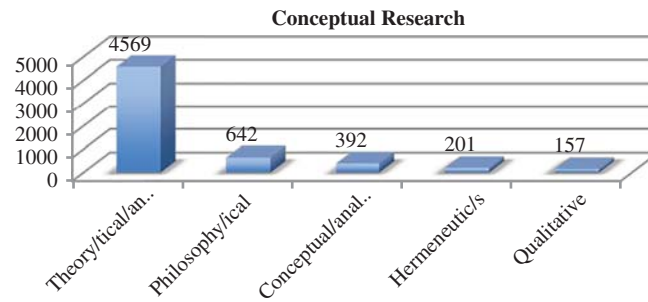


Figure 3. Number of research papers in conceptual research according to the TSB.

database exceed ten thousand iterations (10,268), i.e. over half of the overall number of the actual TSB records. Nevertheless, it is to be noted that in all these occurrences it has been impossible to exclude the repetitions of the keywords in one and the same summary or, more scarcely, in a same title.

The *third* fact is drawn from the observation that was focused on “conceptual” or “theoretical” research. In this category, we have included the following terms and expressions: “theory”, “theoretical/analysis”, “philosophy”, “philosophical”, “conceptual/analysis”, “hermeneutic/s” and “qualitative” (Figure 3). While it is impossible to integrate the terms that were found under the first group (theory) in this category as they were totally separate from empirical research—which is of course far from being devoid of theory—it is, however, understandable to find a rather high number, with 4,569 occurrences. This means on the one hand that the high frequency of the term “theory” is shared by both empirical and conceptual research, and on the other hand that theory is not the exclusivity of the latter type of research, although it is its constituent part and major identifier. Furthermore, the occurrences of “philosophy”, “conceptual analysis”, “hermeneutics” and “qualitative research” are clearly less frequent than most of the terminological groups of the previous chart. Even with the very relative number of 4,569, the overall occurrences of the terms pertaining to conceptual research (5,961) barely reach half of the empirical research occurrences (10,268).

Hence, by relying on TSB’s database, it can be stated that of the two major categories of research methodologies that are commonly used in TS (Williams & Chesterman, 2002, p. 58), the quantitative account of the terms indicates that most of the accumulated published scholarly literature in the discipline and its neighboring fields tend to be situated in a rather empirical research approach. This means that besides the different turns of TS, “the most important trend has been the shift from philosophical conceptual analysis towards empirical research” (Chesterman, 1998, p. 201), but most particularly it means that the conditions of evaluating the discipline have changed notably since recent developments in translation technologies research (Bowker, 2002), in localization (Pym, 2011), and in TAP (Jääskeläinen, 2001 & 2002), among other subfields.

While this demonstration does not claim to provide an exhaustive explanation to this phenomenon, it is, however, possible to suggest some avenues for reflection in order to understand some of its possible causes. I believe that there are at least three plausible and complementary justifications for the results that were found—which, moreover, have all in common power relations at their base: historical, communicational, and institutional.

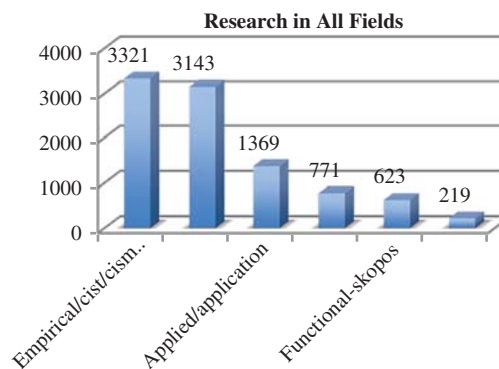


Figure 4. Number of research papers in all fields of TS according to the TSB.

As for the *historical* attempt at explaining the findings, it is well known that the empirical method is historically inscribed in the Anglo-Saxon philosophical tradition. Therefore, insofar as TS literature is overwhelmingly written and published in English, as academic institutions training researchers are English speakers and as international scholarly events always include English as the predominant language of use or even *lingua franca*, it would be very likely that one of the implications of this state of affairs might be the diffused reproduction of a conditioning *methodological unconscious*. This may suggest that one of the possible origins of valuing the empirical model—in contrast to the conceptual—lies also in the cultural philosophy as well as in the transmission channel that bears some influence over the content—in fact, over the thinking patterns of the concerned learners. While English could be considered by some as the imperial instrument of a country or a group, it is nonetheless the necessary space of diffusion of structures and recurring values contained in the speech it is made of and perpetuates it.

The second attempt at explaining the findings relies on a *social-communicational* process in which the domination of the empirical approach falls under a cultural type of transmission coming from cognitive science. Inspired by Richard Dawkins' genetic meme concept as duplicator of ideas (1976/1989), Chesterman considers experimental research as one of TS' memes and that the discipline is geared toward a methodology that favors observation and experience (1997). That is, observing the development of scholarly culture in TS explains the increasing popularity of the empirical method by the fact that it is basically a methodological meme. This is occurring thanks to the selective reproduction of imitation units that change along the cultural evolution (Chesterman, 1997, p. 6). Additionally, what could further explain the diffusion of the empirical model could be found in another theory of cognitive science that reinforces the social-communicational argument. Dan Sperber's *Explaining Culture. A Naturalistic Approach* (1996) proposes an epidemiology of public representations where ideas not only spread individually, but are also constructed through a process of "transformations [that] tend to be biased in the direction of attractor positions in the space of possibilities" (108). In the case of the empirical approach's success, it could be explained through cognitive psychology and the persistence of content similarities that are transmitted, transformed, and consequently translated in a communicational chain in the researchers community.

The third explanation (*institutional*) stems from the former. Insofar as ideas more likely to be spread among the TS researchers' community are transmitted memes by means of representational contagions, an insider's outlook on the way student research as well as peer-reviewed works are being evaluated allows to observe that the reproduction of normative consensuses about "scholarly criteria" (Gile & Hansen, 2001, p. 304) are as much epidemiological phenomena as indisputable power relations. It is the well-known experts of the field who both evaluate their students and their peers, and give orientation to methodological preferences that are generally accepted as "scientific." Once these publications are themselves the sources that will eventually feed the discipline's researchers and constitute their training materials and references for further publications, there are chances that in this circular configuration schemes of attraction oriented toward TS memes would be reproduced, among which the methodological meme. The famous academic mantra "publish or perish" is obviously not a legend, which means that it would be more beneficial to conform with the more widespread and institutionalized criteria if one hopes to be part of the "tribe."

All in all, what lies at the heart of these apparently territorial, and in some ways more acute, methodological divergences within a discipline is the political interest in keeping the reins of power at its most sensitive points of articulation. Dualities are pervasive and cannot be considered exactly as indications of a crisis, but some debates around those fault lines can be very political. As a matter of fact, when observing some of the interpretations of Thomas Kuhn's notion of paradigm in his *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970), one realizes how political theorists and theories could be:

The emergence of a new paradigm is seen by Kuhn, at least in the first edition of his work, as a distinctly political phenomenon. One paradigm wins out over another because its supporters have more *power* than those who support competing paradigms and *not* necessarily because their paradigm is "better" than its competitors. (Ritzer, 1975, p. 156)

This power relationship between the agents of TS scholarship is not in and of itself the demonstration of the existence of a crisis in TS as a whole, but the increasing awareness of it, the multiple accounts of the phenomena—especially from the peripheries of the sites of power—and the spread of its realization among the emerging scholars could ultimately feed a resentment about the medium- or longer-term

consequences of such a hegemony. In short, what should TS be learning from previous experiences that have occurred in other humanities and social sciences?

LESSONS FROM SOCIOLOGY

Although at about the same time when the very first attempts at systemizing a theoretical model for translation were made (e.g. Nida, 1964), an earlier disciplinary reflection has been taking place in sociology. While metasociological beginnings could be traced back to the 1950s with Furfey (1953/1965), the century-old discipline preoccupied by the first-order study of the social world began to question its most dominant paradigm, i.e. Parsonian functionalism, especially in the American context, which led to a surge of revisitations of sociology as a whole:

The emergence of a multiparadigmatic structure in sociology in the late 1960s reflected the growing disunity of the discipline and increasingly fragmented sociological research. There emerged a widespread feeling that sociology was facing a profound crisis. It was this sense of imminent disciplinary crisis that helped to invigorate meta-analyses of all types. (Ritzer, 2007, p. 2965)

Hence, this form of disciplinary introspection was triggered by a pressing need to bring up the reflection at a second-order level of study, i.e. the reflexive examination by researchers of the first-order social study of the theoretical work they are involved in and carried out by them (Ritzer, 1991 & 1992; Ritzer et al., 2006). Interestingly enough, this new trend of reflexive thinking has emerged from “a major eruption of discipline-wide meta-theorizing in sociology [which] began with an outburst of interest in methodology of theory construction” (Zhao, 2001, p.389). This means that a second-order reflection necessarily entails considering the various methodological approaches theories are adopting, the different ways research is being conducted so far, as well as a vantage point allowing for a critical distance to assess the discrepancies it would observe in the mapped territory of the discipline.

The creation of a metasociology—also called “sociology of sociology” by Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992)—has provided the discipline with a system of checks and balances in which the field and its agents would be empowered to rethink the conditions and consequences of their performance and directions. According to Furfey, metasociology “furnishes the methodological presuppositions necessary for carrying out sociological research, constructing sociological systems, and criticizing such research and such systems after they have been completed” (1953/1965, p. 8). It is a sort of disciplinary higher consciousness folding over the intellectual and social practices of researchers allowing for a self-evaluation within the context of their respective sociological and theoretical environments. This is notably Gouldner (1970) and Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992) “reflexive sociology” which was “meant to deal with what sociologists wish to do and with what they actually do in the world and in society, in other words with the relationship between thought and experience” (Villa, 2005). Because sociology is embedded in the social world, it has to be aware of the power relations at play, which determine and give direction to sociological activities beyond the object of study itself. That is why Bourdieu has considered what is to become a sub-field of sociology as a safeguard to preserve the sociologist’s critical thinking: “It continually turns back onto itself the scientific weapons it produces. It is fundamentally reflexive in that it uses the knowledge it gains of the social determinations that may bear upon it . . . in an attempt to master and neutralize their effects” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1996, pp. 226–227).

One of the most prominent American sociologists who has extensively written about and ultimately contributed to the creation of this subfield is George Ritzer, the author of an influential article (1988) “delineating for the first time the parameters of Metatheory as a sub-field in sociology” (Zhao, 2001, p. 389). For Ritzer, the aim is to make sense of sociological theorizing and the multiple competing paradigms that emerged in sociology in the late 1960s, which “destroyed the unity of the discipline and fragmented sociological research” (Ritzer et al., p. 115). At a time when there was a sense of a forthcoming disciplinary crisis (Gouldner, 1970), the task was then for Ritzer to build a typology of the extant sociological theories under three main paradigms:

The social facts paradigm focuses on large social structures and external social constraints such as norms and values. The social definition paradigm focuses on the way in which actors define their social situation. The social behavior paradigm focuses on the social causes and effects of the unthinking behavior of individuals. (Goodman, 2005, p. 650)

In the footsteps of Gouldner who happened to “be curious about social theorists, as part of a sociology of social science” (1965, p. 171), Ritzer undertook an intertextual analysis of these paradigms searching

for commonalities and differences among the major social theorists and theoretical schools in order to reveal the paradigmatic structure of sociology:

In getting at the architectonic that undergirds the work of a group of theorists, the metatheorist is similarly getting at the idea that there is a hidden but essential commonality that helps to unify their contributions and to account for similarities in their substantive work. (Ritzer et al., 2006, p. 122)

This means that an overarching viewpoint on the discipline contributes to the unveiling of convergences and affinities that would otherwise be concealed or imperceptible. Although the mapping of theoretical territories entails the distinction between different paradigms, the overview is in and of itself an all-encompassing picture that unifies a vision despite the disparities it encapsulates.

METATHEORIZING TRANSLATION STUDIES

Now that the longstanding experience of sociology has been acknowledged, this section will be dedicated to the lessons learned from reflexive sociology and to attempt adapting them to the field of TS. Although sociology is not an obvious choice for comparison with TS among disciplines of the humanities and the social sciences—i.e. like the interdisciplines of cultural or postcolonial studies—there are nonetheless at least two striking parallels to be made between these two disciplines: the fragmentation of their subfields and their multiparadigmatic characteristic, all of which appeal to a meta-analytical level that TS has not yet formally developed or recognized as a subfield in its own right.

As it has been clearly documented by metasociologists (Gouldner, 1970; Friedrichs, 1970; Ritzer, 1975, 1981, 1998 & 2007), what has triggered the recourse to a reflexive work on sociology—including its theories and methodologies, as well as the academic actors that were producing them—is the observation that the discipline is increasingly breaking up into a multiplicity of directions: “The ground for the possibility of metatheory is the multiplicity of theorization in sociology, which permits a second-level theorization about the process of constituting and the form of the theoretical object” (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1992, p. 140). This means that metatheory is born out of theoretical pluralism.

A similar trend can be observed in TS with regard to the numerous branches it has developed into. Looking back at the most recent mapping of the discipline (van Doorslaer, 2007), it becomes clear that Holmes/Toury’s logic tree has by far been supplanted in terms of the breadth of its scope. As opposed to its former version, Van Doorslaer’s map now encompasses dozens of subfields and specializations. In fact, not only TS is mapped, but all recognized translation practices as well, which raises the question as to whether TS should be interested in the growth of translation practice varieties as potential avenues for TS research.

This said, it follows that the more subfields that are mapped, the more difficult it will be to overcome the disparities of the discipline when thinking of higher education training programs. As a matter of fact, increasingly specialized scholars in narrow sectors of TS are taking positions in academia such that TS trainees are becoming increasingly as specialized as their mentors, or even more so. This is not so much a matter of choice as a systemic phenomenon, especially knowing that the empirical case studies approach is dominating research in the field. It seems like the more TS is evolving, the more it is branching out toward even more diverse and at the same time narrower conceptions of translation and, consequently, of TS itself. When proceeding into further specialization, the reflection on the wider frame of the discipline weakens and becomes the privilege of only those who—instead of all the scholars of the field—are almost exclusively dedicated to thinking about it. Except for the earlier generation of scholars who have demonstrated their ability to tackle almost any subfield of TS—especially that it was not as disparate as it has become—the trend is moving toward the formation and the acknowledgment of a new specialization, although apparently general in substance, i.e. reflexive TS or the metatheorization of translation.

From this it follows that TS—similarly to sociology—is a multiparadigm discipline in which different coexisting sets of theories constitute its architectonics. While an intertextual analysis still needs to be done to identify the major theoretical clusters and map them out as paradigms, it is worth mentioning at this stage that the mapping of the diverse branches of the discipline is not to be confused with the typology of its paradigms. Whereas specializations are specific knowledge activities occupying the field of TS in a hierarchical duo-dimensional space (logic tree), paradigm mapping, on the other hand, is about the reorganization of these branches according to their theoretical affinities and in a

diachronic perspective that takes into account the simultaneous clusters of theories and their overlappings.

Although some landmark works in TS have already undertaken a bird's-eye view of the discipline's subfields (Chesterman, 1997, 2005, 2006 & 2009; Tymoczko, 2005 & 2007; Snell-Hornby, 2006; Pym, 2010; etc.), they did not consider their own mapping effort as a legitimate subfield to be accounted for. Even if we look back to the first map of the discipline, Holmes' "pure-theoretical-general" branch of TS did not get its rightful place in the discipline. In fact, the scarce interest for metatheory and conceptual research in TS—as it was shown above—does not predict much in the immediate future knowing that it has not changed much since Holmes. Unless a crisis or a deeply entrenched conflict occurs that would finally bring TS researchers' attention to the necessity of establishing a recognized subfield in order to monitor the state and development of the whole system, such a development will not take place. Such a system would include not only the different approaches to translation as the central object of study, but also the social agents that would be revealed from their research, teaching, and academic expertise, more generally, the political factor that has been discretely or unwillingly disregarded. Beyond the "TranslaTOR studies" that Chesterman (2009) is suggesting to undertake, a metatheoretical effort would also include a sociological study of TS scholars themselves. Such a reflexive work—similar to Bourdieu's (1971; in Wacquant 1996) and Ritzer's (1975)—would entail identifying the socially and politically-based intertextual underpinnings of their works and further perform an anthropological study of their workplace, processes, and research methods by using Latour's Actor Network Theory (1987 & 1993). However, it is worth emphasizing that the metasociological awareness is only but one part of a broader "epistemological vigilance" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. xiii) that involves "a reflective return to the foundation of science and the making explicit of the hypotheses and operation which make it possible" (Bourdieu, 1971, p. 194). This means that metatheory is an encompassing task that includes not only the socio-anthropological study of TS scholars and science in the making, but also the epistemological reflection overseeing the paradigmatic structuration of its theories and methodologies as well as its direction and continuing development.

However, there is a growing impression that this metatheoretical positioning doesn't have much press in TS as it would entail the reinvigoration of "conceptual research" (Williams & Chesterman, 2002) and compensate for its weak representation in the reality of the field despite its uncontested place on the map. In fact, metatheory is such a minor activity in TS research that one could even ask: "Can metatheory speak?" From this starting point, if we look again at the metatheoretical experience of sociology, Ritzer has applied the unlikely concept of McDonaldization to sociology (1998) in an attempt to test the Weberian rationalization concept and show how processes of standardization are making their way to the discipline through various degrees of "efficiency... predictability... calculability... and control" (Ritzer, 1998, p. 5). While it would be an exaggeration to rigorously apply this concept to TS, there are undoubtedly, at least to a certain degree, some similar characteristics which have developed in the field that abide by the same sociological determinisms and can be unveiled by the sociology of sociology: "By developing reflexivity, it can teach people always to be aware that when they say or think something, they can be moved by causes of some as well as by reasons (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 181–2). This general Bourdieusian principle explaining the dialectics occurring between the habitus and the field, the agent and her context, could apply to any field. And TS is no exception.

In the same vein and in addition to what was shown in a previous section of the present paper about the *historical*, *socio-communicational*, and *institutional* explanations of the dominant bias toward English language and its corollary empiricism in TS, the McDonaldization of the discipline could also be identified and summed up through a more adapted concept, that is of *globishization*. What I mean by this portmanteau word is to describe the hegemonic rationalization of TS through the global standardization of its operational language, its means of communication, and even its scholarly tradition, i.e. what has become Global English or *Globish* (McCrum, 2006 & 2010). Indeed, the predictable and controlling norms that are structuring TS constitute a form of its rationalization by the general tendency of the field and its actors—even away from the UK and North America—to speak English and do research using historically situated methodologies.

To give just one example in terms of TS predictability—which also implies the controlling effect—it is increasingly expected nowadays to conform to the general norms of research article publication, which tend to have predictable length, structure, format, methodology, etc. TS reviewers know exactly what kind of work they will receive, where to find its sections, and every one of its ingredients:

Reviewers tend to be leading contributors to the area with which the submission is concerned; in fact, they are often chosen because their own work is cited in the article under consideration. Reviewers tend to have a clear sense that a new submission should build upon their work as well as the “intellectual” tradition of which they are part. Works that do not flow out of that tradition, that do not add a slight increment to what is already known about a subject, are likely to be seen as being “off the wall” and rejected out of hand. Truly original pieces of work, those that are “unpredictable,” have a hard time to finding their way into the journals. (Ritzer, 1998, p. 40)

Although any process of review would be fairly selective and rightly so, it remains that in a globalized world, and more so in a discipline like TS where multilingualism and multiculturalism ought not to be simply tolerated, the controlling boundaries that are being set by the English-speaking scholars and institutions—whether publishing houses or academia—are hardly being objective and in tune with the extant array of scholarly traditions of the world. At the time where Susam-Sarajeva (2002) and Tymoczko (2006 & 2007) have been calling for the internationalization of TS and opening its theories to Non-Western traditions, this observed inconsistency with the very understanding of translation does not only summon a call to keep differences between cultures alive, but also to keep a reflexive eye on TS. In sum, if TS is undergoing rationalization, this means it is being globishized, which in turn means that metatheory is by default the scholarly vantage point that needs to establish it.

CONCLUSION

The preoccupation of TS scholars with their respective growing specializations has turned them away from being concerned with other TS subfields. We are reaching a point where the very capability of understanding the developments of what is going on within the boundaries of our discipline becomes an almost interdisciplinary exercise. However, the future of interdisciplinary research will be through TS researchers’ capacity to engage other disciplines with their own object of study. As Berman would probably say about the relationship between TS and other disciplines using the concept of *Bildung* (1992), it is through the detour of the Other that one may be lead to one-Self. Just as the experience of sociology—in its attempt to make sense of its own constitution and development by establishing a metatheoretical stream of scholarship as a legitimate part of the discipline—can help TS to recollect its multiple fragmented branches and introduce a disciplinary self-consciousness, the effort that was put in this present paper in mapping the gulfs of TS may also entail bridging the gaps with other disciplines that articulate the concept of translation as well—albeit in a metaphorical form.

In effect, beyond reflecting on and reorganizing the subfields of TS, one future direction or trajectory is to think of the concept of translation as a paradigm in its own right. A paradigm in the sense of a lens through which we can view our globalized and confused world in dire need for “remedy” (Ricoeur, 2007, p. 28) and translation, in a very broad sense (Ost, 2008). The aim would be—in addition to the metatheoretical task—to institute a philosophy of translation in its own right within TS (as many disciplines do) that would uphold the rethinking and the reimagination of TS and its vocation in a time of conflicts and global media, beyond its mere scholarly tasks and objectives. A philosophy that could also be called “An Interdisciplinary Metaphor-based Heuristics,” (forthcoming) of which the primary task would be *to understand the workings of the various dimensions of the social through the prism of translation.*

REFERENCES

- Berman A. *The Experience of the Foreign: Culture and Translation in Romantic Germany*. Transl. by A. Hayward. Albany: SUNY Press; 1992.
- Bourdieu P, Wacquant L. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press; 1992.
- Bourdieu P. Intellectual field and creative project. In: Young MFD, ed. *Knowledge and control. New directions for the sociology of education*. London: Collier-Macmillan; 1971:189–207.
- Bourdieu P. *Homo Academicus*. (Peter Collier, Trans.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; 1984.
- Bowker L. *Computer-aided translation technology: A practical introduction*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press; 2002.
- Campbell S. English translation and linguistic hegemony in the global era. In: Anderman G, Rogers M, eds. *In and out of English: For better or worse?* Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters; 2005:27–38.
- Chesterman A. *The memes of translation. The spread of ideas in translation theory*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins; 1997.
- Chesterman A. Causes, translations, effects. *Target*. 1998;10(2):201–230.
- Chesterman A. The empirical status of prescriptivism. *Folia Translatologica*. 1999;6:9–19.
- Chesterman A. Consilience and Translation Studies. *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*. 2005;51:19–32.
- Chesterman A. Interpreting the Meaning of Translation Studies. In: Mickael Suominen et al. eds. *A Man of Measure. Festschrift in Honour of Fred Karlsson on his 60th Birthday*. Turku: Linguistic Association of Finland; 2006: 3–11.

- Chesterman A. The name and nature of translator studies. *Hermes – Journal of Language and Communication Studies*. 2009;42:13–22.
- Dawkins R. *The selfish gene*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 1976/1989.
- van Doorslaer L. Risking conceptual maps. Mapping as a keywords-related tool underlying the online *Translation Studies Bibliography*. *Target*. 2007;19(2):217–233.
- Friedrichs RW. *A sociology of sociology*. New York: Free Press; 1970.
- Furfey PH. *The scope and method of sociology. A metasociological treatise*. New York: Cooper Square Publishers; (Original work published 1953) 1965.
- Gambier Y, van Doorslaer L. Introduction. *Translation studies bibliography*. Amsterdam: Benjamins; 2004. Retrieved June 2015 from <https://benjamins.com/online/tsb/>
- Gile D. Observational studies and experimental studies in the investigation of conference interpreting. *Target*. 1998;1998:69–93.
- Gile D, Hansen G. The editorial process through the looking glass. In: Gyde Hansen, Kisten Malmkær, eds. *Claims, Changes and Challenges in Translation Studies*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins; 2001:297–306.
- Goodman D. George Ritzer. In: Ritzer G, ed. *Encyclopedia of social theory*. Vol. II. London: Sage Publications; 2005:650–651.
- Görlach M, ed. *English in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2002.
- Gouldner A. *Enter Plato: Classical Greece and the origins of social theory*. New York: Basic Books; 1965.
- Gouldner A. *The coming crisis of Western sociology*. New York: Basic Books; 1970.
- Guldin R. *Translation and Metaphor*. London: Routledge; 2015.
- Holmes J. The name and nature of translation studies. In: Venuti L, ed. *The translation studies reader*. London: Routledge; 1972/2004:172–200.
- Jääskeläinen R. Think-aloud protocols. In: Baker M, ed. *The Routledge Encyclopedia of translation studies*. London: Routledge; 2001:265–269.
- Jääskeläinen R. Think-aloud protocol studies into translation. *Target*. 2002;14(1):107–136.
- Latour B. *Science in action: How to follow scientists and engineers through society*. Harvard: Harvard University Press; 1987.
- Latour B. *We have never been modern*. Harvard: Harvard University Press; 1993.
- McCrum R. So, what's this Globish revolution? *The Observer*. 2006, December 3:6. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/2006/dec/03/features.review37>
- McCrum R. *Globish. How English language became the world's language*. Toronto: Doubleday Canada; 2010.
- Munday J, ed. *The Routledge companion to translation studies*. London: Routledge; 2009.
- Nida, E. *Toward a Science of Translating*, Leiden, E. J. Brill; 1964.
- Ost F. *Traduire. Défense et illustration du multilinguisme*. Paris: Fayard; 2008.
- Pym A. *Method in translation history*. Manchester: St Jerome; 1998.
- Pym A. Translation technology and training for intercultural dialogue: What to do when your translation memory won't talk with you; 2007. Retrieved from http://usuaris.tinet.cat/apym/on-line/training/2007_tm_talk_to_me.pdf
- Pym A. *Exploring Translation Theories*. London: Routledge; 2010.
- Pym A. *The Moving Text. Localization, Translation and Distribution*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins; 2011.
- Ricœur P. *Reflections on the just*. (D. Pellauer, Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 2007.
- Ritzer G. *Sociology: A multiple paradigm science*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon; 1975.
- Ritzer G. *Toward an integrated sociological paradigm: The search for an exemplar and an image of the subject matter*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon; 1981.
- Ritzer, G. Sociological Metatheory: A Defense of a Subfield by a Delineation of Its Parameters. *Sociological Theory, Autumn*, 1988;6(2):187–200.
- Ritzer G. *Metatheorizing in sociology*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books; 1991.
- Ritzer G, ed. *Metatheorizing*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage; 1992.
- Ritzer G. *The McDonaldization thesis. Explorations and extensions*. London: Sage Publications; 1998.
- Ritzer G, Zhao S, Murphy J. Metatheorizing in sociology. In: Turner J, ed. *The handbook of sociological theory*. New York: Springer; 2006:113–131.
- Ritzer G. Metatheory. In: Ritzer G, ed. *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of sociology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing; 2007:2964–2967.
- Sin-Wai C, ed. *The Routledge Encyclopedia of translation technology*. London: Routledge; 2015.
- Snell-Hornby M. *The Turns of Translation Studies*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins; 2006.
- Snell-Hornby M. Globish or multilingual: Translation studies *quo vadis?*. Paper presented at the CETRA international conference "Known Unknowns of Translation Studies", K.U. Leuven; 2009, August.
- Susam-Sarajeva S. Is one case always enough? *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*. 2001;9(3):167–176.
- Susam-Sarajeva S. A 'multilingual' and 'international' translation studies? In: Hermans T, ed. *Crosscultural transgressions*. Manchester: St Jerome; 2002:193–205.
- Susam-Sarayeva S. The case study research method in translation studies. In: Mason I, ed. *The interpreter and the translator trainer*. Manchester: St Jerome; 2009:37–56.
- Tymoczko M. Trajectories of Research in Translation Studies. *META*. 2005;50(4):1082–1097.
- Tymoczko M. Reconceptualizing western translation theory. Integrating non-western thought about translation. In: Hermans T, ed. *Translating others*. Vol. 1. Manchester: St Jerome Publishing; 2006.
- Tymoczko M. *Enlarging translation, empowering translators*. Manchester: St Jerome; 2007.
- Venuti L. *The scandals of translation. For an ethics of difference*. London: Routledge; 1998.
- Sperber D. *Explaining culture: A naturalistic approach*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers; 1996.
- Toury G. *Descriptive translation studies – and beyond*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins; 1995.
- Villa F. Sociology and metasociology: A journey of over half a century. In: Misztal B, Villa F, Williams ES, eds. *Paul Hanly Furfey's quest for a good society (Ch. 3)*. Washington, D.C: Dept. of Sociology and Life Cycle Institute, Catholic

- University of America: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy; 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.crvp.org/book/Series01/1-32/chapter-3.htm>
- Wacquant LJD. Toward a reflexive sociology: A workshop with Pierre Bourdieu. In: Turner SP, ed. *Social theory and sociology: The classics and beyond*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell; 1996:213–228.
- Wagner E, Chesterman A. *Can Theory Help Translators: A Dialogue between the Ivory Tower and the Wordface*. London: Routledge; 2002.
- Weinstein D, Weinstein MA. The postmodern discourse of metatheory. In: Ritzer G, ed. *Metatheorizing*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage; 1992:135–150.
- Williams J, Chesterman A. *The map. A beginner's guide to doing research in translation studies*. Manchester: St Jerome; 2002.
- Zhao S. Metatheorizing in sociology. In: Ritzer G, Smart B, eds. *Handbook of social theory*. London: Sage Publications; 2001:386–394.