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The Question of Scientificity in Translation Studies

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Abstract:

A set of questions arise in translation studies (TS), as it does in humanities, when the question of scientificity is discussed: is it possible at all to establish a scientific study of human phenomena? If so, to what extent can we adapt the rigorous scientific methods to a complex and multidimensional phenomenon like translation? How can we approach translation complexity scientifically? This article explores the different impediments to the recognition of TS scientificity, and sheds light on the new trends in translation research, and how they have served this cause. Given that the aim of science is understanding phenomena, integrating and elaborating appropriate research methods to understand translation can yield significant insights into this human phenomenon regardless of its nature.

Keywords: Translation studies, Scientificity, Research methods, Object of research.

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Introduction

The establishment of TS as an autonomous discipline in the mid-nineties was prompted by the increasing expansion of this field and the upward trend of interest in the translation phenomenon, from scholars and researchers working in various disciplines, including linguistics, linguistic philosophy, and literary studies, and more remote disciplines, such as information theory, logic, and mathematics (Holmes, 1972). In addition to that, technology has opened up new prospects for empirical research in recent years by assisting both practitioners and researchers in their work. TS has equally achieved an institutional authority in academia and many universities are currently conducting a significant number of rigorous translation research projects in their laboratories.

Certainly, within a few years, TS has evolved from an emerging field of research to a well-established discipline "although with remaining doubts about its academic and scientific status" (Gambier & van Doorslaer, 2016, p.3). At first glance, it seems inconceivable that, after all this time and progress, the status of TS, among other sciences, is still questionable. To understand this state of affairs, the question of scientificity in TS should be seen as a part of a bigger picture, that of human sciences' search for an epistemological identity.

With the dominance of the positivist paradigm, scientific communities expressed objections regarding the scientificity of human sciences and cast doubt on the scientific value of their findings. Significantly, these objections, which concerned the object and methodologies of research in human sciences, overlooked the essential differences between human and natural sciences. It is also important to realize that these objections

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concerned human sciences in general, although every single science has its own subject matter and research methods (Waqidi, 1983).

1. The question of scientificity in human sciences

Influenced by the positivist paradigm, dominant in the late 1800s and the early 1900s, humanities deserted the speculative and philosophical discourse, which marked its beginnings, to embrace the empirical methods successfully implemented in natural sciences. Accordingly, the principles and methods of natural sciences were extended to the study of people and society. Since then, human sciences have been subjected to objection and criticism, from scientific communities inside and outside the field of humanities, for their failure to comply with scientific methods. Clearly, the issue of scientificity in human sciences is not only generated by their research methodologies but also by the nature of the objects investigated by these sciences (Waqidi, 1983).

Wilhelm Dilthey (1972) pointed at a major difference between human and natural sciences by stating that humanities have "the advantage over the natural sciences that their object is not sensory appearance as such, no mere reflection of reality within consciousness, but is rather first and foremost an inner reality, a coherence experienced from within" (p.231). For this very reason, the object in human sciences eludes rigorous scientific scrutiny. Unlike natural phenomena, human phenomena transcend scientific knowledge because they are characterized by uniqueness, novelty, complexity and historical relativity (Waqidi, 1983).

It follows that owing to the substantial difference between natural and human sciences, applying the research process of the former to the latter would be counter-productive. This fact emphasizes the need for

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new research methodologies appropriate to the nature and aims of human sciences. In contrast to natural sciences, which examine physical reality and aim at explaining and predicting natural phenomena, human sciences aim at investigating and understanding unique and constantly changing phenomena, and therefore require different research methods.

Nevertheless, generalizing these objections to cover all human sciences would mean ignoring the disparity between these sciences, in terms of their objects' liability to empirical investigation and scientific measurements (Waqidi, 1983, p.104). As some human phenomena yield themselves to scientific investigation more than others, some human sciences were able to establish a solid scientific ground for their research and they consequently made significant strides in achieving scientificity. Among these, we can mention sociology, economics and geography, which implement empirical methods to approach their subject matter quantitatively and qualitatively, and provide a causal explanation of events.

As far as translation is concerned, research has been initially dominated by prescriptivism and speculative theorization for centuries. Efforts were generally oriented toward what translators must do to produce good translations instead of investigating what translators actually do when translating. Although the field has known lots of development lately, "its scientific autonomy is (…) not yet fully accepted, and it is perhaps not uninteresting to trace the difficulties confronting TS in formulating a theoretically and methodically sound concept for its scientific undertakings" (Wilss, 1996, p.3). In light of this insightful suggestion, the following section will tackle the impediments hindering the establishment of TS as an autonomous scientific discipline.

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2. The question of scientificity in TS

2-1 Obstacles to the scientificity of TS

While established sciences enjoy general credit, young disciplines tend to face opposition in the beginning, for one reason or another. One of the major stumbling blocks to the recognition of TS as a scientific discipline is the well-established misconception of translation as a secondary activity, and an underpaid profession (Munday, 2010, p.419).

In fact, a quick look at the terminology and metaphors related to the concept reveals a persistent denigration of translation. Bassnet (1992) noted that the old binary view of translation that considers "original and translated texts as two poles" (p.66) implies a hierarchy and conceives of translation as a derivative activity that is less deserving than the original act of writing. Similarly, metaphors referring to translations as 'mirrors' or 'copies', explains Bassnet (1992), emphasize dependence on a perfect original, according to which a translation is formulated and assessed. Another, rather persistent, disparaging metaphor mentioned by Bassnet (1992) is that of les belles infidels, which absurdly survived time and evolution.

Echoes of this deprecating view of translation can be found in academia as well. For years, translation has been conceived of as a means to facilitate classical or foreign language learning in schools and universities (Munday, 2010). It was only after the establishment of TS as a discipline, that has been given its academic foundations. Yet, this change was far from being peaceful as the value of translation research, and the benefits it can bring to translation practice, were not immediately perceived.

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In this regard, tracing the difficulties hindering the formulation of a sound theoretical and methodological concept of TS scientific undertakings, Wilss stresses that the need for a scientific investigation of translation products and processes is not normally evident to readers and practitioners of translation (Wilss, 1996). After all, translation had been practiced long before the emergence of TS, and translators were trained by professionals with no recourse to theory for centuries. No wonder, then, that the debate on whether translation is an art or a science has historically occupied scholars for years (Alwazna, 2013)

In addition to the above-mentioned impediments, Holmes (1972) points to three issues that impede the development of TS: a) the lack of shared communication channels between scholars in the field, b) the lack of a generally accepted name for the discipline and c) The lack of consensus as to the scope and structure of the discipline. (Holmes, 1972, pp. 173-176)

TS emerged and flourished in inter-disciplinarity. Accordingly, it is expected that countless difficulties will be encountered in establishing a common ground for communication among researchers and scholars from different disciplines and countries. Holmes (1972) notes that the disparate perspectives from which translation is approached constitute an impediment in the way of TS development. Therefore, he stresses the urgent need for shared "communication channels, cutting across the traditional disciplines to reach all scholars working in the field, from whatever background" (p.173).

This lack of communication, explains Holmes, resulted in a methodologically heterogeneous body or research that relies on different norms, models, methods, and terminologies. In fact, the lack of appropriate

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communication channels was not only due to the diversity of approaches and their underlying conceptions of translation, but also to the poor communication between scholars from different parts of the world. Holmes pictured this issue as follows:

Since I do not know Russian, I have read only that small tip of the vast Soviet translation-theory iceberg that juts above the surface of Western thinking by having been translated. Far too little has been translated, far too much has not, and hence the work of a great many theorists, from Cukovskij via Revzin and Rozencveig to Koptilov and Kommisarov (to mention but a few), remains for me little more than hearsay. (Holmes 1988; as cited in Snell-Hornby, 2006, p.45)

Though considered trivial by Holmes, the disagreement about the name of the discipline, points out Snell-Hornby (2006), is equally significant at many levels. After rejecting other terms, such as art, craft, and science, Holmes finally opted for 'Translation Studies' as a standard term for the discipline to avoid any misunderstanding. Significantly, the other terms are still used to refer to the same discipline, which proves that there is still "little general agreement as to what this new discipline should be called" (Holmes, 1972; as cited in Munday, 2010, p.421).

Similarly, Colina (2015) drew attention to the fact that, in recent years, the use of the term is still confusing. The recent growing interest in translation and interpreting, explains Colina, was followed by the creation of many translation teaching/ training programs in universities, which were all referred to as 'translation studies' programs. In other words, this applies equally to programs "whose primary concern is the training and education of translators and interpreters (i.e., the practice of translating and/or interpreting), with little or no reference to the scholarly field itself" (p. 3).

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The lack of consent over the name of the discipline, suggested Munday (2009), reflects two levels of difficulty related to a) the absence of a unified definition of translation, and b) the demarcation of the scope of the discipline, that is to say, "what constitutes the field of translation studies" (p.5). In Munday's view, reaching a general consent on what makes the object of TS presupposes an agreement on what 'translation' is (p.5). To put it simply, defining the boundaries of TS relies on the way we define translation itself. A task that is getting more and more complicated given the expansion of the field and the complexity of the phenomenon under investigation.

In this respect, Wilss (1996) considered 'dimensional complexity' as a distinctive characteristic of the field of TS, which justifies the difficulty of demarcating 'a homogeneous field of research' for the discipline. This demarcation is hindered by the following facts (Wilss,1996):

- The diversity of translation goals (translations are performed for philosophical, technological, linguistic… goals) hampers the development of a 'unified theory' of translation.
- As the early translation theories were based on speculation and chance ideas, the development of a sound descriptive and explanatory theoretical framework for TS has been marked by uncertainty.
- Owing to the fact that TS overlaps with other disciplines, its boundaries can hardly be clearly demarcated.

In fact, the scope of the discipline has got even broader recently. Nowadays, influenced by the technological development in the field of communication, research in translation has taken new pathways. This

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expansion has accentuated the need to expand the concept of translation itself. The new concept should "accommodate not only the nonverbal channels present in much modern communication but also the types of communication not involving language in a traditional sense", as well as "the myriad types of "multi-channel" texts so typical of contemporary society" (Gottlieb,2018, p.46).

Given the above facts, developing a general concept of translation, and thus delineating the field of work of TS and defining its object of research, seem to be far-fetched goals given the complex nature of the translation phenomenon.

2-2 Notes on the object of TS

Defining the object of research is a fundamental part of any discipline. However, definitions are not always easy to formulate. In their Dictionary, Shuttleworth and Cowie (2014) introduced translation as "an incredibly broad notion which can be understood in many different ways" (p.181). In fact, an overview of the existing definitions of the term reveals that some proposed definitions are too broad while others are very restricted, or prescriptive in nature. However, what constitutes a common ground between recent definitions and their background theories is "the conceptualization of "translation" as a process, a product, a socio-cultural event or a network of agents" (Gambier & van Doorslaer, 2016, p. 2). Yet, such definitions do not set clear boundaries of translation, nor do they distinguish between translation, adaptation, version, and trans-creation (Munday, 2009).

In addition to the complexity of the concept itself, the object of study is defined in a variety of ways. Koller (1995) clarifies how this variety of points of view, ranging from a narrow linguistic approach to a broader cultural perspective, makes the delimitation of the object of TS harder:

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For the subject of translation research, the question of how the object is to be determined is put most succinctly by asking what preconditions must be satisfied for a text to be classified as a translation and to qualify as the object of translation studies? Considering the multiplicity of theoretical approaches and objectives, a single clear answer can hardly be expected, and the legitimate field of concern will be marked out in different ways depending on which factors and conditions … are taken as the basis of abstraction. (Koller, 1995, p.195)

It is worth noting that besides translating different kinds of texts including promotional texts, novels and poems, translators do other tasks, such as summarizing, commenting, and adapting original texts (Koller, 1995). In other words, should we consider all these as translation products and on what basis can we determine what is, and what is not, a translation? The answer to this question, if it exists at all, is the only way to clearly determine what does and what does not make an object of study in translation research.

Until recently, in product, process and function-oriented studies, texts were the direct object of investigation. Texts can be analyzed to investigate the translation of a specific linguistic aspect of the ST, to assess cultural equivalence, to analyze the use of translation strategies or to make inferences about the translation process. As a human product, translation is not a mere reproduction of a source text, it implies an individual experience that entails interactions involving all the background factors that affected or contributed to the production of the text. As some of these factors are objective and others are subjective, it is hard, if not impossible, to delimit all the variables influencing the process and product under investigation, i.e., the text, represents only a part of a more complex phenomenon.

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The complexity of translation, Tymoczko (2019) pointed out, springs from its relatedness to language. In this sense, investigating translation by studying the different multivariate parameters and aspects of translation cannot lead to a complete understanding of the whole phenomenon:

Indeed, to pretend that the phenomenon of translation can be understood without acknowledging a vast array of parameters and in turn the vast array of variations in each parameter is to give up the goal of understanding one of the most important skills humans have developed related to language in their evolutionary history, now hundreds of thousands of years old. It is always possible to focus on a small segment of the whole phenomenon of translation in research or pedagogy, but it is impossible to theorize translation on such a basis. (Tymoczko, 2019, p.246)

To handle the complexity of its object, TS has made recourse to a multitude of methodologies from different adjacent fields. In the following section, we are going to discuss some of the pitfalls and potentials of some of these research methodologies.

2-3 Notes on methodology in descriptive TS:

To reach their research goals without compromising the theoretical framework they adhere to, translation scholars and researchers have adopted methodologies from other disciplines to serve research in translation. As a matter of fact, methodologies borrowed from comparative linguistics, comparative literature, psychology and sociology, soon failed to respond to the needs of TS due to the interconnectedness between these methodologies and the phenomenon they were initially conceived for. Flynn and Gambier (2011) commented on this methodological pitfall as follows:

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Among other things, outsourcing the problem of methodology to other disciplines may cause us to lose track of the intricate links between (translation) phenomena and methods. This would further involve our forsaking the rigour required to adapt and fine-tune a method in order to increase its explanatory power with regard to a particular set of data under scrutiny, in our case translation data in whichever form. (p.89)

An example of these methodological limitations can be seen in the implementation of methods from contrastive linguistics and comparative literature. As mentioned before, for a long time, translation research was based on data from texts. Accordingly, a significant amount of research implemented methods from contrastive linguistics and comparative literature. Methodologically, Toury (2012) questions the validity of using texts as data in comparative studies and the application of the comparative analysis for the following reasons:

- Studies of external data, in which "existence precedes or follows" the act of translation, through analysis and comparison, do not yield congruent results even when applied on the same texts. The reason is that "comparisons do not allow replicability in the true sense of the word" (Toury, 2012, p. 214).
- A major weakness in the comparative analysis, especially when investigating translation processes, is that by relying only on the source and target text, we get no indication as to other people who were actually involved in translation.
- Similarly, the analysis of the final product does not reveal the different kinds of activities that took place within the process, nor the time, space and the agents responsible for these activities.

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According to Toury (2012), these shortcomings have no value when the comparison is done for descriptive purposes, whereby comparisons of source and target text aim at investigating the relationships between the two. However, when we seek explanations, information about the factors influencing target text production is highly significant, especially when investigating the process itself (Toury, 2012).

To observe the translation process in real-time and shed light on the factors involved in translation , it was necessary to introduce experimentation to the field of TS. Systematic experimentation and data collection are key elements in the scientific method. In its general sense, experimentation allows the identification of natural processes and the control of the different variables influencing them. The aim is to get unbiased results and provide an understanding and explanation of world phenomena through objective experimentation.

Nevertheless, the reliance on the experimental method in TS has not been without obstacles. The problem in implementing an empirical method to investigate translation is that the translation process, like any other mental activity, does not allow direct observation. Strategies and mental processes are only reconstructed and indirectly observed by means of introspective and retrospective studies, interviews, questionnaires, and think-aloud protocols (TAPs). As an instrument of data collection, TAPs, for instance, provided significant data on translation strategies used by translators. Nevertheless, its validity and reliability as a research instrument is questioned for many reasons.

One of these reasons is the possible interference of two modes of translation when conducting TAPs, the written and the spoken modes

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(Toury, 2012). In other words, during the TAPs, the subject is forced not only to produce a mental translation but also a spoken one before the required written one, bearing in mind that the two may not involve the same strategies. This is equally true for questionnaires.

When used to investigate subjects' reactions to texts, questionnaires may have many shortcomings related to the objective they were designed for, the representativeness of the sample, and the consideration of every variable that may influence the results. Since there are many factors that may intervene with the recalling and reconstruction of internal processes, the reliability and validity of verbal reports as a source of data remain questionable, too.

House (2019) goes further to cast doubt on the assumptions behind retrospective and introspective methods. When implemented in translation research, she points out, these methods fail to answer questions related to a) the degree of identicalness between what is reported and the actual cognitive process, b) The kind of cognitive processes that are accessible to verbalization, c) the observer's paradox, d) the expert translators' routinized or automatized behavior, which is not subject to reflection, and e) the limited access to translation processes due to working memory constraints and the pressure experienced by subjects. She similarly questions the validity, reliability and insightfulness of behavioral experiments on the translation process (House, 2019, p. 5).

Behavioral experiments are more controllable as they are designed to track the translation process phases systematically, by means of computer technologies (keyloggers, eye trackers, screen recordings…). Accordingly, they can yield detailed information about the translator's "temporal

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progress or delay, types and numbers of revisions …, the (measurable) effort expended, the nature and number of attention foci and attention shifts as well as the frequency and kind of emotional stress responses shown by the translator" (House, 2019, p. 6). However, it is not certain if the measurement of observable behavior can a) give information about the cognitive processes at work, b) shed light on the nature of the cognitive representations, meta-linguistic and the linguistic-contrastive knowledge the translator has of the two languages involved in translation, or c) clarify the comprehension-transfer-reconstruction processes taking place in translation. According to House, these questions cannot be answered affirmatively now because "What such experiments CAN and DO measure, is exactly what they set out to measure: observable behavior, no more and no less" (House, 2019, p. 6).

In fact, several problems marked the introduction of empirical methods into TS. In addition to the issue of validity, empirical methods needed to be adapted to the objectives of the discipline and the nature of its object. Moreover, as research was mostly general rather than focused, the application of empirical methods was characterized by uncertainty as to what they are supposed to do (Toury, 2012, p.274).

2-4 New trends in translation research

To overcome these methodological pitfalls, TS needed to establish a sound methodological framework that responds to the criteria of scientificity. In this respect, the study of translation has recently known new trends. To build on the development in text-based descriptive studies, interest has been directed toward the study of larger corpora. The aim of corpus-based studies is to discover 'laws' or 'universals' that govern the

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translator's behavior. In the same way, to elaborate on the previous findings of empirical research, methods from cognitive sciences and neurosciences were implemented to examine aspects of the translation process.

Mona Baker (1993) conceives of translation universals as features that characterize translated texts regardless of their origins. When translating, translators face certain constraints that limit and determine their linguistic choices; as a result, specific recurring linguistic behavior patterns emerge. Within the framework of a corpus-linguistic descriptive approach, quantitative data is studied through analytical evaluative methods to identify the linguistic features distinguishing translated texts from source texts. These shared patterns of translational behavior are called 'translation universals'.

The notion of 'universals' of translation was not widely accepted. Nevertheless, Mona Baker succeeded in expanding the boundaries of descriptive TS outside the Eurocentric context to embrace internationalism. In addition to that, research on translation universals endowed TS with methodological benefits and strengthened its empirical grounding (Chesterman, 2011). Furthermore, the aim of investigating universals should not be limited to finding out whether they exist or not in a corpus. Research should rather move on to investigate the cognitive or cultural factors underlying the existence of universals (Chesterman, 2011).

This increasing curiosity towards the cognitive aspects of translation soon led to the flourishing of cognitive TS in the last ten years. Along with a growing interest from cognitive scientists and neuroscientists in the translator's mind, the increasing interest in data-based empirical research methods has triggered new trends in translation process research.

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In its development, process-oriented research has largely benefited from evolutions in neuroscience technologies. Defeng Li et al.(2019) summarizes the recent advances in the field as follows:

> Translation process research as a research field has come a long way over the last 40 years, from the initial use of think-aloud protocols as the main research instrument to the subsequent adoption of Translog combined with screen recording techniques and technologies, to the ensuing enthusiasm about experimenting with eye trackers, to the application of neurological and neuroimaging tools such as the electroencephalography (EEG), the positron emission tomography (PET), the functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS), and the functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). (Defeng Li et al., 2019, v)

The investigation of "translation cognition in situ" is another new trend in research. It stipulates the transfer of research from laboratories to the workplace so as to study and understand "what is known as translation cognition in situ)". Examples of such studies are Ehrensberger-Dow (2014) and Risku et al, (2017). In this type of research, researchers implement an ethnographic method and an experiential approach relying on "psycholinguistic, behavioral, corpus-textual, cognitive-neurological, situational, and integrated approaches, depending on the research questions raised, the tools used, and the methods adopted for the research" (Defeng Li et al., 2019, vi).

Yet, the question remains: how can the investigation of the cognitive aspects of translation serve translation as a communicative, cross-cultural phenomenon? According to Tymoczko (2014), studying the neurological mechanisms and the brain activities involved in the reception and

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production of translations is undoubtedly one of the major advances in the field of TS. Nonetheless, it is necessary to realize the implications of this kind of brain-focused research for the macro-level of translation "as texts, as mediations between cultures, and as ideological interventions, as well as the implications for many other macro-level topics that have flourished in translation studies" (Tymoczko, 2012, p.99). This implies that investigating one aspect of a complex phenomenon like translation will not help understand the phenomenon in its wholeness. Therefore, as long as there is no comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, "understanding the neuroscience of bilingualism and translation, which are even more complex than mastery of a single language, will also remain opaque" (Tymoczko, 2019, p. 242).

2-5 Scientificity in the human sciences culture.

To do justice to TS, it is necessary to clarify its status with regard to the common scientific paradigms. In fact, much of the debate on TS scientificity is due to the conflicting views on this matter. On the one hand, in terms of the positivist paradigm, TS may fail to respond to some scientific criteria. On the other hand, from an interpretivist point of view, TS has the scientific foundations to be recognized as a science.

In this context, Gile (2013) clarifies that since the issue of scientificity was raised, two major paradigms have been shaped, namely the "natural science paradigm" and the "liberal arts paradigm", with their adherent scholars exchanging criticism and misunderstanding. The author maintains that in order to solve these misunderstandings, it is necessary to "acknowledge the legitimacy of different approaches within science, and try to understand the norms of each so that individual studies could be viewed in the applicable framework" (Gile, 2013, p.149).

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Gile differentiates between fundamental norms shared by all scientific investigations and the operational norms, which can be discipline-specific. While natural sciences rely essentially on empirical research, some disciplines in the family of human and social sciences are empirical and others are more theoretical. Accordingly, the operational norms of each family of sciences differ considerably, especially in relation to data collection tools, inferencing and theory.

Within human sciences, disciplines use different operational norms. For instance, experimental psychology follows the rigorous scientific norms of natural sciences while literary analysis tends to be much more theorizing. Conversely, in natural sciences, operational norms show less dispersion.

This state of affairs reflects the conflict between the positivist and interpretivist paradigms and identifies two scientific cultures; namely, the canonical sciences culture (CSC) and the human sciences culture (HSC). Both cultures share the same fundamental norms about science and the conception of scientificity, but typical differences emerge with regard to operational norms. Although some HSC endeavors are not necessarily acknowledged as science, this is not the case of TS, where both cultures meet (Gile, 2013, p.151).

Despite having roots in the field of comparative literature and hence of humanities, translation research has shifted from speculative theorizing to systematic and rigorous empirical investigation. As for the difference in the operational norms of CSC and HSC, Gile (2013) recommended that the legitimacy of both cultures should be acknowledged. This may enable the researcher to get the best results in their particular paradigms "with a possibility of cross-fertilization" (p.154).

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It follows that delimiting and investigating the object of TS, the way this is done in natural sciences, is impossible given the nature of the translation phenomena. At this point, it is important to realize that although data from texts was not taken seriously in many fields of research, researchers from disciplines, including sociology, psychology, education sciences, cultural studies and media studies, rely on discourse as data. It is therefore the way we approach data in relation to research aims and question that matters most. In other words, although methodological weaknesses are still frequent in translation research, it is important to understand that "the problem lies in the quality of the scientific endeavors being conducted, not in their scientificity per se" (Gile, 2013, p.154). Hence, TS needs to improve the quality of research in the field through constructive criticism and assessment of research compliance with the fundamental and operational norms of the discipline (Gile, 2013).

However, the translation activity itself as an object of study is inescapably embedded in human experience, and translation relies on the relativity of the meaning a translator makes out of a text. In this respect, House (2018) argues against the idea that the meaning of a text is created through the subjective interpretation the reader makes out of it. She maintains that "the linguistic analysis of the original text as a first step in translation needs to show in detail how a text is what it is, that it is what it is rather than being obsessed with what that text might or should mean to a reader" (p.4). To face this emphasis on the subjective dimension of translation, stresses House, researchers should concentrate on the linguistic and cognitive aspects of translation without neglecting the socio-cultural.

Therefore, the study of large corpora benefits TS more than focusing on individual translations as such. Corpus-based studies reveal recurring

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patterns and regularities governing the translator's behavior, thus allowing generalization and predictability:

> as one increases one's knowledge, or expands the field one takes into account, certain phenomena start repeating themselves and gradually become more predictable than others. Any further expansion of the object of study, especially if it is done systematically (…) would contribute towards undermining the (evidently erroneous) first impression of uniqueness, until it is finally reversed. (Toury, 2004, p.16)

Similarly, if we conceive of translation as a mental process taking place within a socio-cultural context, research should consider the various layers of translation as constituents of one complex human phenomenon. This can only be done by calling on different disciplines and by triangulating a variety of research methods. In this manner, TS can embrace and account for the complexity of its object.

In applied translation research, triangulating methods is a key feature prompted by the interdisciplinarity of the subject matter ((Davier et al., 2018). An example of this trend is "progression analysis" (p.160), a multi-method approach that combines textual analysis with process research and involves collecting data before, during and after writing by means of interviewing, participant observation, and keystroke logging. Other promising research avenues include, audience analysis, historiography, in which scholars "are careful to complement text comparison with a thorough analysis of the socio-cultural contexts of production and reception" (Davier et al., 2018, p.161).

In the same way, Flynn and Gambier (2011) point to the importance of triangulating quantitative and qualitative methods. The authors explain

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that quantitative methods can be used to collect large data on a variety of subjects, whereas qualitative methods can be used to reveal information about power relations, ideologies and political standpoints, which quantitative tools cannot reach. Therefore, these two methods complement each other to make an efficient methodological framework:

triangulation can be used both within and across quantitative and qualitative research methods to reduce bias and heighten explanatory power. This would involve, among other things, using various methods to gather data, having the same phenomenon investigated by multiple researchers or using various theories to explain the findings gleaned from a study. (Flynn & Gambier, 2011, p.95)

Clearly, with the development of TS and the emergence of different approaches, more translation-related factors and parameters were added to enlarge the scope of research and call for the integration of new methodologies. However, it is argued that splitting a complex phenomenon into manageable units or elements for research does not necessarily help when we seek to understand a complex human phenomenon like translation. Alternatively, "instead of eliminating complexity, we should conceptualize it. […] we need to supplement it with an epistemology of complexity" (Marais & Meylaerts, 2019, p.3)

Conclusions:

As pointed out earlier in this article, the nature of translation, as a complex human phenomenon, eludes strict scientific verification, which impedes the recognition of TS scientificity. All the same, when talking about TS' scientificity, we "must not forget that TS, at least in its cognitive manifestation, is still a fairly young and methodologically somewhat unstable field of research" (Wilss, 1996, p.2).

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Undoubtedly, methodology "can be considered as the hallmark or defining feature of a discipline" (Flynn & Gambier, 2011, p.88), yet this is not the case for emerging disciplines. While established sciences seem to have developed their special methodologies, young disciplines generally rely on methodologies and concepts borrowed from adjacent fields of research. TS was no exception to this rule. The field has so far hosted a number of significant contributions, which, due their soundness and scientific value, proved that translation phenomena can make a good object of systematic and empirical research.

Thanks to these new trends in research, TS has been able to forsake speculative theorization for the sake of a more scientific discourse. Consequently, the traditional normative approaches were replaced by more understanding-oriented approaches grounded on experimental, qualitative and quantitative methods. The goal of research has equally moved from prescription to the description, understanding and explanation of translation phenomena.

This was a natural result of the recent technological advances in the field of research and the expansion of the scope of translation and the elements involved in the translation activity. In the same way, our definition of translation has been broadened so as to free translation from reductionist views and extend the scope of TS beyond linguistic concerns.

The incorporation of more elements involved in the translation process, such as the target culture, the function of the translation, the situational circumstances and the participants, stresses the need to work out a multi-methodological framework that can account for the complexity of translation as cross- cultural transfer.

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Recommendations:

Methodological triangulation constitutes an ideal framework for translation research. The implementation of a multi-methodological approach is a way to handle this complexity and extend the field of TS "beyond itself, into regions like cognitive psychology, psycho- and neurolinguistics, and neuroscience, where the interest in what goes on in our heads is also very strong" (Jakobsen, 2014, p.65). As a complex object of study, translation can only be approached and understood through methodological diversity. Nonetheless, these methodologies have to be carefully adapted to serve TS assumptions, concerns, research criteria, research questions, and above all, the form of data under scrutiny.

In addition to the methodological insights that can be drawn from outside disciplines, keeping abreast of the latest discoveries and technologies used in other fields, such as linguistics, psychology, sociology, cultural studies, neurosciences and cognitive sciences, is scientifically imperative for the discipline to address the wide variety of translation issues.

Interdisciplinarity does by no means weaken the status of the discipline. It rather gives it more credibility as a science, given that sciences do not exist as independent entities, science is rather a collective and accumulative endeavor where new findings in a discipline can inspire and trigger research in another.

Finally, since sciences aim at systematically investigating phenomena, as they exist in the world and with no interference with the object, it can be argued that TS has fulfilled the conditions of scientificity using its methodologies rather than by means of its object. Not in the general sense of the term, but in the sense of Berman's scientificité propre, which is not

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strictly "modeled on the exact sciences, but proper to a human science" (Brownlie, 2003, 104). Only a methodological framework of this kind, that combines two scientific cultures, can deal with the complexity of translation and cater to the needs and questions of the discipline, at least for the present time.

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مسألة العلمية في دراسات الترجمة

حبيبة نخلي[1]

ملخص البحث:

تُطرح العديد من التساؤلات حول الوضع العلمي لدراسات الترجمة، شأنها في ذلك شأن غيرها من العلوم الإنسانية. هل من الممكن إجراء دراسة علمية للظواهر الإنسانية؟ وإذا كان الأمر كذلك، فإلى أي حدٍّ يمكن تكييف الأساليب العلمية الصارمة مع ظاهرة معقدة ومتعددة الأبعاد مثل الترجمة؟ وكيف يمكن التعامل مع تعقيد الترجمة من منظور علمي؟

تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى رصد العوائق التي تمنع دراسات الترجمة من تحقيق شروط عِلْمِيَّتِها، وتلقي الضوء على الاتجاهات الجديدة في البحث العلمي، وإسهام هذه الأخيرة في ترسيخ المكانة العلمية لدراسات الترجمة. وبما أن غاية العلم هي فهم الظواهر، فإن دمج وتطوير طرق البحث المناسبة لفهم الترجمة يمكن أن يؤدي إلى فهم هذه الظاهرة الإنسانية بشكل كبير بغض النظر عن طبيعتها المعقدة

الكلمات الدالة: دراسات الترجمة، العلمية، موضوع البحث، منهجية البحث.

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