

# Main issues of translation studies

### *Key concepts*

- **Definitions of translating and interpreting.**
- **The practice of translating is long established, but the discipline of translation studies is relatively new.**
- **In academic circles, translation was previously relegated to just a language-learning activity.**
- **A split has persisted between translation practice and theory.**
- **The study of (usually literary) translation began through comparative literature, translation ‘workshops’ and contrastive analysis.**
- **James S. Holmes’s ‘The name and nature of translation studies’ is considered to be the ‘founding statement’ of a new discipline.**
- **Translation studies has expanded hugely, and is now often considered an interdiscipline.**

### **Key texts**

**Holmes, James S.** (1988b/2004) ‘The name and nature of translation studies’, in Lawrence Venuti (ed.) (2004), *The Translation Studies Reader*, 2nd edition, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 180–92.

**Jakobson, Roman** (1959/2012) ‘On linguistic aspects of translation’, in Lawrence Venuti (ed.) (2012), *The Translation Studies Reader*, 3rd edition, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 126–31.

**Snell-Hornby, Mary** (2006) *The Turns of Translation Studies*, Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, [Chapter 1](#).

**van Doorslaer, Luc** (2007) ‘Risking conceptual maps’, in Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer (eds) *The Metalanguage of Translation*, special issue of *Target* 19.2: 217–33.

## 1.1 The concept of translation

Watch the introductory video on the companion website.

The main aim of this book is to introduce the reader to major concepts and models of translation studies. Because the research being undertaken in this field is now so extensive, the material selected is necessarily only representative and illustrative of the major trends. For reasons of space and consistency of approach, the focus is on written translation rather than oral translation (the latter is commonly known as **interpreting** or **interpretation**), although the overlaps make a clear distinction impossible (cf. Gile 2004). More subtly, interpreting is defined, by Otto Kade, as ‘a form of Translation (in the wider sense) in which (a) the source language text is presented only once and thus cannot be reviewed or replayed, and (b) the target language text is produced under time pressure, with little chance for correction and revision’ (Pöchhacker 2009: 133, following Kade 1968).<sup>1</sup>

The English term **translation**, first attested in around 1340,<sup>2</sup> derives either from Old French *translatio* or more directly from the Latin *translatio* (‘transporting’), itself coming from the participle of the verb *transfere* (‘to carry over’). In the field of languages, **translation** today has several meanings:

- (1) the general subject field or phenomenon (‘I studied translation at university’)
- (2) the product – that is, the text that has been translated (‘they published the Arabic translation of the report’)
- (3) the process of producing the translation, otherwise known as translating (‘translation service’).

The **process of translation** between two different written languages involves the changing of an original written text (the **source text** or **ST**) in the original verbal language (the **source language** or **SL**) into a written text (the **target text** or **TT**) in a different verbal language (the **target language** or **TL**):



Thus, when translating a product manual from Chinese into English, the ST is Chinese and the TT is English. However, internationalization and communication practices have meant that this traditional conceptualization of translation needs

to be broadened to include those contexts in which there is no clearly defined source text. This may be because there are multilingual versions of the same text, each of which is deemed to be equally valid (e.g. the Acquis body of European Union law), or because of an ‘unstable’ source text that is subject to constant updating or adaptation, each iteration of which requires a modification of existing target texts rather than a completely new translation (e.g. a multilingual website). The traditional ST-TT configuration is the most prototypical of ‘interlingual translation’, one of the three categories of translation described by the Russo-American structuralist Roman Jakobson (1896–1982) in his seminal paper ‘On linguistic aspects of translation’. Jakobson’s categories are as follows:

- (1) **intralingual** translation, or ‘rewording’ – ‘an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language’
- (2) **interlingual** translation, or ‘translation proper’ – ‘an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language’
- (3) **intersemiotic** translation, or ‘transmutation’ – ‘an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal sign systems’.

(Jakobson 1959/2012: 127)

These definitions draw on **semiotics**, the general science of communication through signs and sign systems, of which language is but one (Cobley 2001, Malmkjær 2011). The use of the term **semiotics** is significant here because translation is not always limited to verbal languages. **Intersemiotic translation**, for example, occurs when a written text is translated into a different mode, such as music, film or painting. Examples would be Jeff Wayne’s famous 1978 musical version of H. G. Wells’s science-fiction novel *The War of the Worlds* (1898), which was then adapted for the stage in 2006, or Gurinder Chadha’s 2004 Bollywood *Bride and Prejudice* adaptation of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*. **Intralingual translation** would occur when we produce a summary or otherwise rewrite a text in the same language, say a children’s version of an encyclopedia. It also occurs when we rephrase an expression in the same language. In the following example, *revenue nearly tripled* is a kind of intralingual translation of the first part of the sentence, a fact that is highlighted by the trigger expression *in other words*.

In the decade before 1989 revenue averaged around [NZ]\$1 billion a year while in the decade after it averaged nearly [NZ]\$3 billion a year – in other words, revenue nearly tripled.<sup>3</sup>

## 10 INTRODUCING TRANSLATION STUDIES

It is **interlingual translation**, between two different verbal sign systems, that has been the traditional focus of translation studies. However, as we shall see as the book progresses, notably in **Chapters 8 to 10**, the very notion of ‘translation proper’ and of the stability of source and target has been challenged. The question of what we mean by ‘translation’, and how it differs from ‘adaptation’, ‘version’, ‘transcreation’ (the creative adaptation of video games and advertising in particular, see **section 11.1.8**), ‘localization’ (the linguistic and cultural adaptation of a text for a new locale, see **section 11.2**) and so on, is a very real one. Sandra Halverson (1999) claims that translation can be better considered as a **prototype** classification, that is, that there are basic core features that we associate with a prototypical translation, and other translational forms which lie on the periphery.

Much of translation theory has until recently also been written from a western perspective and initially derived from the study of Classical Greek and Latin and from Biblical practice (see **Chapter 2**). By contrast, Maria Tymoczko (2005, 2006, 2007: 68–77) discusses the very different words and metaphors for ‘translation’ in other cultures, indicative of a **conceptual orientation** where the goal of close lexical fidelity to an original may not therefore be shared, certainly in the practice of translation of sacred and literary texts. For instance, in India there is the Bengali *rupantar* (= ‘change of form’) and the Hindi *anuvad* (= ‘speaking after’, ‘following’), in the Arab world *tarjama* (= ‘biography’) and in China *fan yi* (= ‘turning over’). Each of these construes the process of translation differently and anticipates that the target text will show a substantial change of form compared to the source.<sup>4</sup> Tymoczko (2007: 107–39) also frames the ‘cross-cultural’ concept of translation as an interface of representation, transmission and transculturation.

### 1.1 Exploration: The term ‘translation’

Which word(s) are used for ‘translation’ in the languages you work with? Explore their origins. What do these terms suggest about the conceptualization of translation?

### 1.2 What is translation studies?

Throughout history, written and spoken translations have played a crucial role in interhuman communication, not least in providing access to important texts for

scholarship and religious purposes. As world trade has grown, so has the importance of translation. By 2015, the global market for outsourced translation, interpreting and related technologies was estimated to exceed US\$38 billion, while international organizations such as the European Union translate between 24 languages and spend some €456 million per year on translation and interpreting services.<sup>5</sup> Yet the study of translation as an academic subject only really began in the second half of the twentieth century. In the English-speaking world, this discipline is now generally known as **'translation studies'**, thanks to the Dutch-based US scholar James S. Holmes (1924–1986). In his key defining paper delivered in 1972, but not widely available until 1988, Holmes describes the then nascent discipline as being concerned with 'the complex of problems clustered round the phenomenon of translating and translations' (Holmes 1988b/2004: 181). By 1995, the time of the second, revised, edition of her *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach*, Mary Snell-Hornby was able to talk in the preface of 'the breathtaking development of translation studies as an independent discipline' and the 'prolific international discussion' on the subject (Snell-Hornby 1995, preface). Little more than a decade later, the editors of the second edition of the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation* comment on 'new concerns in the discipline, its growing multidisciplinary, and its commitment to break away from its exclusively Eurocentric origins, while holding on to the achievements of the past decades' (Baker and Saldanha 2009: xxii).

There are four very visible ways in which translation studies has become more prominent. Unsurprisingly, these reflect a basic tension between the practical side of professional translating and the often more abstract research activity of the field. First, just as the demand for translation has soared, so has there been a vast expansion in **specialized translating and interpreting programmes** at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. These programmes, which attract thousands of students, are mainly oriented towards training future professional commercial translators and interpreters and serve as highly valued entry-level qualifications for the professions. The types of translation covered at each institution vary. These may include MAs in applied translation studies, scientific and technical translation, conference and bilateral interpreting, audiovisual translation, specialized Sign Language and audio description. A smaller number of programmes focus on the practice of literary translation. In Europe, literary translation is also supported by the RECIT network of centres where literary translation is studied, practised and promoted.<sup>6</sup> The first of these was set up in Straelen, West Germany, in 1978.

Second, the past decades have also seen a proliferation of **conferences, books and journals** on translation in many languages. Longer-standing

international translation studies journals such as *Babel* (the Netherlands) and *Meta* (Canada), first published in 1955, were joined by TTR (*Traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, Canada) in 1988, *Target* (the Netherlands) in 1989, *Perspectives* (Denmark) in 1993 and *The Translator* (UK) in 1995.

Online accessibility is increasing the profile of certain publications including open access journals such as *The Journal of Specialised Translation* and *New Voices* (see [www.routledge.com/cw/munday](http://www.routledge.com/cw/munday)). In addition, there is a whole host of other journals devoted to single languages, modern languages, applied linguistics, comparative literature and others where articles on translation are often published.

### 1.2 Exploration: Translation studies journals

The companion website for *Introducing Translation Studies* includes a list of major translation studies journals.

The front and backlists of publishers such as Bloomsbury, John Benjamins, Multilingual Matters, Peter Lang, Palgrave, Rodopi and Routledge (including St Jerome publishing) have significant series in translation studies. There are also various professional publications dedicated to the practice and study of translation. In the UK these include *The Linguist* of the Chartered Institute of Linguists, *The ITI Bulletin* of the Institute of Translating and Interpreting and *In Other Words*, the literary-oriented publication of the Translators Association.

Third, as the number of publications has increased so has the demand for **general and analytical instruments** such as anthologies, databases, encyclopedias, handbooks and introductory texts. Their number is ever-growing. Among these are *Translation Studies* (Bassnett 1980/1991/2002/2013), *Contemporary Translation Theories* (Gentzler 1993/2001), *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (Baker and Malmkjær 1998; Baker and Saldanha 2009), *Dictionary of Translation Studies* (Shuttleworth and Cowie 1997), *Introducing Translation Studies* (Munday 2001/2008/2012), *The Routledge Companion to Translation Studies* (Munday 2009), *Critical Concepts: Translation Studies* (Baker 2009), *Critical Readings in Translation Studies* (Baker 2010), *Exploring Translation Theories* (Pym 2010/2014), the *Handbook of Translation Studies* (Gambier and van Doorslaer 2010 onwards), *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies* (Malmkjær and Windle 2011), *Theories of Translation* (Williams 2013), *The Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies* (Millán and Bartrina 2013) and

*A Companion to Translation Studies* (Bermann and Porter 2014). The best-known searchable online bibliographies are *Translation Studies Bibliography* (John Benjamins/Routledge) and the free-access *BITRA* (University of Alicante).<sup>7</sup>

Fourth, **international organizations** have also prospered. The Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs (International Federation of Translators, FIT) was established in 1953 by the Société française des traducteurs and its president Pierre-François Caillé (1907–79). It brought together national associations of translators. In more recent years, translation studies scholars have banded together nationally and internationally in bodies such as the Canadian Association for Translation Studies/Association canadienne de traductologie (CATS, founded in Ottawa in 1987), the European Society for Translation Studies (EST, Vienna, 1992), the European Association for Studies in Screen Translation (ESIST, Cardiff, 1995), the American Translation and Interpreting Studies Association (ATISA, Kent, OH, 2002), the International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies (IATIS, Seoul, 2004) and the Asia-Pacific Forum on Translation and Intercultural Studies (Hangzhou-Tsinghua, 2011). International conferences on a wide variety of themes are held in an increasing number of countries. From being a relatively quiet backwater in the early 1980s, translation studies has now become one of the most active and dynamic new areas of multidisciplinary research.

### 1.3 An early history of the discipline

Writings on the subject of translating go far back in recorded history. The **practice of translation** was crucial for the early dissemination of key cultural and religious texts and concepts. In the west, the different ways of translating were discussed by, among others, Cicero and Horace (first century @AC) and St Jerome (fourth century AC). As we shall see in [Chapter 2](#), their writings were to exert an important influence up until the twentieth century. In St Jerome's case, his approach to translating the Greek Septuagint Bible into Latin would affect later translations of the Scriptures. Indeed, in western Europe the translation of the Bible was to be the battleground of conflicting ideologies for well over a thousand years and especially during the Reformation in the sixteenth century. In China, it was the translation of the Buddhist sutras that inaugurated a long discussion on translation practice from the first century AC.

While the practice of translation is long established, the study of the field developed into an academic discipline only in the latter part of the twentieth century. Before that, translation had often been relegated to an element of

language learning. In fact, from the late eighteenth century to the 1960s and beyond, language learning in secondary schools in many countries had come to be dominated by what was known as **grammar-translation** (Cook 2010: 9–15). Applied to Classical Latin and Greek and then to modern foreign languages, this centred on the rote study of the grammatical rules and structures of the foreign language. These rules were both practised and tested by the translation of a series of usually unconnected and artificially constructed sentences exemplifying the structure(s) being studied. This is an approach that persists even today in certain contexts. Typical of this is the following rather bizarre and decontextualized collection of sentences to translate into Spanish, for the practice of Spanish tense use. They appear in K. Mason's *Advanced Spanish Course*, still to be found on some secondary school courses in the UK until the 1990s:

- (1) The castle stood out against the cloudless sky.
- (2) The peasants enjoyed their weekly visits to the market.
- (3) She usually dusted the bedrooms after breakfast.
- (4) Mrs Evans taught French at the local grammar school.

(Mason 1969/1974: 92)

The gearing of translation to language teaching and learning may partly explain why academia considered it to be of secondary status. Translation exercises were regarded as a means of learning a new language or of reading a foreign language text until one had the linguistic ability to read the original. Study of a work in translation was generally frowned upon once the student had acquired the necessary skills to read the original. Grammar-translation therefore fell into increasing disrepute, particularly in many English-language countries, with the rise of alternative forms of language teaching such as the **direct method** and the **communicative approach** from the 1960s and 1970s (Cook 2010: 6–9, 22–26). The communicative approach stressed students' natural capacity to learn language and attempts to replicate 'authentic' language-learning conditions in the classroom. It often privileged spoken over written forms, at least initially, and generally avoided use of the students' mother tongue. This led to the abandoning of translation in language learning. As far as teaching was concerned, translation then tended to become restricted to higher-level and university language courses and professional translator training. It is only relatively recently that there has been a move to restore translation to language teaching (see Cook 2010: 125–53, for examples).

In 1960s USA, starting in Iowa and Princeton, literary translation was promoted by the **translation workshop** concept. This was based on the reading and



practical criticism workshops of Cambridge critic I. A. Richards (1893–1979) from the 1920s and on later creative writing workshops. The translation workshops were intended as a platform for the introduction of new translations into the target culture and for the discussion of the finer principles of the translation process and of understanding a text.<sup>8</sup> Running parallel to this approach was that of **comparative literature**, where literature is studied and compared transnationally and transculturally, necessitating the reading of some works in translation.

Another area in which translation became the subject of research was **contrastive linguistics**. This is the study of two languages in contrast in an attempt to identify general and specific differences between them. It developed into a systematic area of research in the USA from the 1930s onwards and came to the fore in the 1960s and 1970s. Translations and translated examples provided much of the data in these studies (e.g. Di Pietro 1971, James 1980 and later Connor 1996). The contrastive approach heavily influenced important linguistic research into translation, such as Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) and Catford (1965), even if it did not incorporate sociocultural and pragmatic factors nor sufficiently the role of translation as a communicative act. The continued application of linguistics-based models has demonstrated their obvious and inherent link with translation. Among the specific models used are those related to generative grammar, functional linguistics and pragmatics (see **Chapters 3 to 6**).

The more systematic, linguistic-oriented, approach to the study of translation began to emerge in the 1950s and 1960s. There are a number of now classic examples:

- Andrei Fedorov's *Osnovy obshchey teorii perevoda* [Foundations of a General Theory of Translation] (1953/1968), described by Mossop (2013) and shown by Pym (2016) to have heavily influenced Vinay and Darbelnet and Loh (below);
- Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet produced their *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais* (1958), a contrastive study of French and English which introduced key terminology for describing translation. It was not translated into English until 1995;
- Alfred Malblanc (1944/1963) did the same for translation between French and German and Loh Dian-yang for Chinese and English (Zhang and Pan Li 2009; Pym 2016);
- Georges Mounin's *Les problèmes théoriques de la traduction* (1963) examined linguistic issues of translation;

- Eugene Nida (1964a) incorporated elements of Chomsky's then fashionable generative grammar as a theoretical underpinning of his books, which were initially designed to be practical manuals for Bible translators.

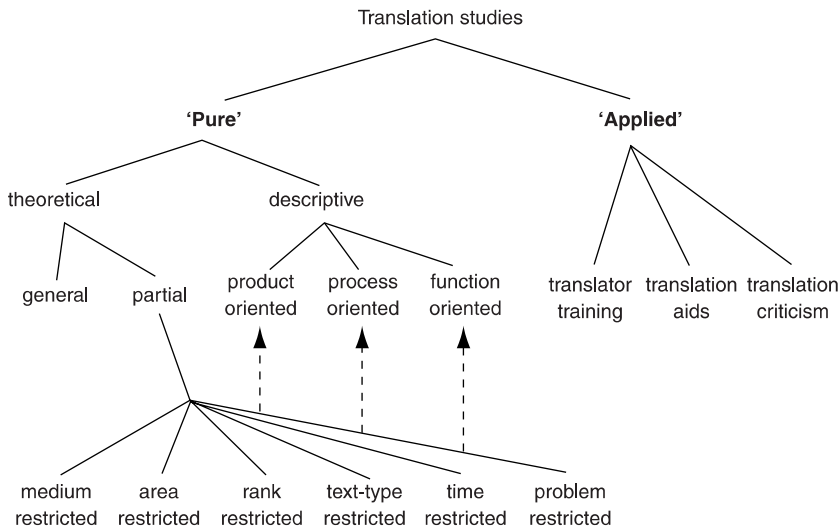
This more systematic approach began to mark out the territory of the 'scientific' investigation of translation. The word **science** was used by Nida in the title of his 1964 book (*Toward a Science of Translating*, 1964a). The German equivalent, *Übersetzungswissenschaft*, was taken up by Wolfram Wilss in his teaching and research at the Universität des Saarlandes at Saarbrücken, by Werner Koller in Heidelberg and by the Leipzig School, where scholars such as Otto Kade and Albrecht Neubert became active (see Snell-Hornby 2006). At that time, even the **name of the emerging discipline** remained to be determined, with other candidates staking their claim, such as *translatology* and its counterparts *Translatologie* in German, *traductologie* in French and *traductología* in Spanish (e.g. Vázquez-Ayora 1977 and the substantial contribution of Hurtado Albir 2001).

#### 1.4 The Holmes/Toury 'map'

A seminal paper in the development of the field as a distinct discipline was James S. Holmes's '**The name and nature of translation studies**' (Holmes 1988b/2004). In his *Contemporary Translation Theories*, Gentzler (2001: 93) describes Holmes's paper as 'generally accepted as the founding statement for the field.' Snell-Hornby (2006: 3) agrees. Interestingly, in view of our discussion above of how the field evolved from other disciplines, the published version was an expanded form of a paper Holmes originally gave in 1972 in the translation section of the Third International Congress of Applied Linguistics in Copenhagen (Holmes 1972). Holmes drew attention to the limitations imposed at the time because translation research, lacking a home of its own, was dispersed across older disciplines (languages, linguistics, etc.). He also stressed the need to forge 'other communication channels, cutting across the traditional disciplines to reach all scholars working in the field, from whatever background' (1988b/2004: 181).

Crucially, Holmes put forward an overall framework, describing what translation studies covers. This framework was subsequently presented by the leading Israeli translation scholar Gideon Toury as in [Figure 1.1](#).

In Holmes's explanations of this framework (Holmes 1988b/2004: 184–90), the objectives of the '**pure**' areas of research are: (1) the description of the



**Figure 1.1** Holmes's 'map' of translation studies (from Toury 1995: 10)

phenomena of translation; and (2) the establishment of general principles to explain and predict such phenomena (**translation theory**). The **'theoretical'** branch is divided into general and partial theories. By 'general', Holmes is referring to those writings that seek to describe or account for every type of translation and to make generalizations that will be relevant for translation as a whole (one example would be Toury's 'laws' of translation; see [Chapter 7](#)). 'Partial' theoretical studies are restricted according to the parameters discussed below (medium, text-type, etc.).

The descriptive branch of 'pure' research in Holmes's map is known as **descriptive translation studies** (DTS, see [Chapter 7](#)). It may examine: (1) the product; (2) the function; and (3) the process.

- (1) **Product-oriented DTS** examines existing translations. This may involve the description or analysis of a single ST–TT pair or a comparative analysis of several TTs of the same ST (into one or more TLs). These smaller-scale studies can build up into a larger body of translation analysis looking at a specific period, language or text/discourse type. Examples would be translation in the twenty-first century, in the English<>Chinese language pair, or of scientific reports. Larger-scale studies can be either diachronic (following development over time) or synchronic (at a single point or period in time). Holmes (*ibid.*: 185) foresees that 'one of the eventual goals of

product-oriented DTS might possibly be a general history of translations – however ambitious such a goal might sound at this time’.

- (2) By **function-oriented DTS**, Holmes (ibid.) means the description of the ‘function [of translations] in the recipient sociocultural situation: it is a study of contexts rather than texts’. Issues that may be researched include which texts were translated when and where, and the influences that were exerted. For example, the study of the translation and reception of Shakespeare into European languages, or the subtitling of contemporary cartoon films into Arabic. Holmes terms this area ‘socio-translation studies’. Nowadays it would probably be called the sociology and historiography of translation. It was less researched at the time of Holmes’s paper but is more popular in current work on translation studies (see [Chapters 8 and 9](#)).
- (3) **Process-oriented DTS** in Holmes’s framework is concerned with the psychology of translation, i.e. it is concerned with trying to find out what happens in the mind of a translator. Work from a cognitive perspective includes think-aloud protocols (where recordings are made of translators’ verbalization of the translation process as they translate). More recent research using new technologies such as eye-tracking shows how this area is now being more systematically analysed (see [section 4.4](#)).

The results of DTS research can be fed into the theoretical branch to evolve either a general theory of translation or, more likely, partial theories of translation ‘restricted’ according to the subdivisions in [Figure 1.1](#).

- **Medium-restricted theories** subdivide according to translation by machine and humans, with further subdivisions according to whether the machine/computer is working alone (automatic machine translation) or as an aid to the human translator (computer-assisted translation), to whether the human translation is written or spoken and to whether spoken translation (interpreting) is consecutive or simultaneous.
- **Area-restricted theories** are restricted to specific languages or groups of languages and/or cultures. Holmes notes that language-restricted theories (e.g. for the Japanese<>English pair) are closely related to work in contrastive linguistics and stylistics.
- **Rank-restricted theories** are linguistic theories that have been restricted to a level of (normally) the word or sentence. At the time Holmes was writing, there was already a trend towards text linguistics, i.e. analysis at the level of the text, which has since become far more popular (see [Chapters 5 and 6](#) of this book).

- **Text-type restricted theories** look at discourse types and genres; e.g. literary, business and technical translation. Text-type approaches came to prominence with the work of Reiss and Vermeer, among others, in the 1970s (see [Chapter 5](#)).
- The term **time-restricted** is self-explanatory, referring to theories and translations limited according to specific time frames and periods. The history of translation falls into this category.
- **Problem-restricted theories** may refer to certain problems such as equivalence (a key issue that came to the fore in the 1960s and 1970s) or to a wider question of whether so-called ‘universals’ of translation exist.

Despite this categorization, Holmes himself is at pains to point out that several different restrictions may apply at any one time. Thus, the study of the prefaces to the new English translations of novels by Marcel Proust, analysed in [Chapter 2](#), would be area restricted (translation from Parisian French into English), text-type restricted (prefaces to a novel) and time restricted (1981 to 2003).

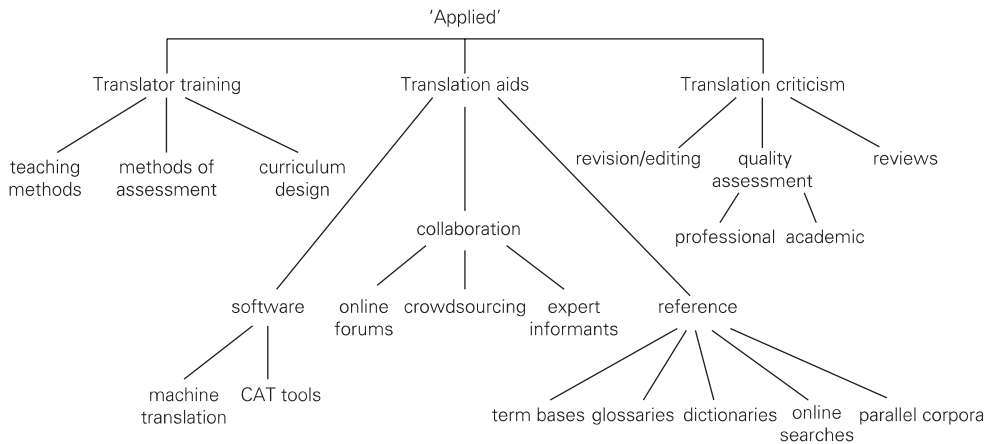
The ‘**applied**’ branch of Holmes’s framework concerns applications to the practice of translation:

- **translator training:** teaching methods, testing techniques, curriculum design;
- **translation aids:** such as dictionaries and grammars;
- **translation criticism:** the evaluation of translations, including the marking of student translations and the reviews of published translations.

Another area Holmes mentions is **translation policy**, where he sees the translation scholar advising on the place of translation in society. This should include what place, if any, it should occupy in the language teaching and learning curriculum.

There are drawbacks to the structure. The divisions in the ‘map’ as a whole are in many ways artificial, and Holmes himself points out that the theoretical, descriptive and applied areas do influence one another. The main merit of the divisions is, as Toury states (1991: 180; 2012: 93), that they allow a clarification and a division of labour between the various areas of translation studies which, in the past, have often been confused. The divisions are still flexible enough to incorporate developments such as the technological advances of recent years (see [Chapter 11](#)).

Even a cursory glance at [Figure 1.1](#) shows the applied side to be underdeveloped. However, it is not difficult to expand it, as in [Figure 1.2](#):



**Figure 1.2** The applied branch of translation studies

While the general categories have been retained, we have filled in the detail, particularly for translation aids with the explosion in the use of computer-assisted translation tools (CAT tools) and in automatic online translation.

Although it may have dated, the crucial role played by Holmes's paper is in the delineation of the potential of translation studies. The map is still often employed as a point of departure, even if subsequent theoretical discussions have attempted to rewrite parts of it (e.g. Pym 1998, Hatim and Munday 2004, Snell-Hornby 2006, van Doorslaer 2007, see below). Also, present-day research has transformed the 1972 perspective. The fact that Holmes devoted two-thirds of his attention to the 'pure' aspects of theory and description surely indicates his research interests rather than a lack of possibilities for the applied side. 'Translation policy' is nowadays far more likely to be related to the ideology, including language policy and hegemony, that determines translation than was the case in Holmes's description. The different restrictions, which Toury identifies as relating to the descriptive as well as the purely theoretical branch in the discontinuous vertical lines in [Figure 1.1](#), might well include a discourse-type as well as a text-type restriction. Inclusion of interpreting as a sub-category of human translation would also be disputed by many scholars. In view of the very different requirements and activities associated with interpreting, and despite inevitable points of overlap, it would probably be best to consider interpreting as a parallel field or 'sub-discipline', under the title of '**interpreting studies**' (see Pöchhacker 2004, 2009). **Audiovisual translation** (see Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007) and **sign language interpreting** might claim similar status. Additionally, as Pym points out (1998: 4), Holmes's map omits any mention of the individuality of the style, decision-making and working practices of human translators

involved in the translation process. Yet it was precisely the split between theory and practice that Holmes, himself both a literary translator and a researcher, sought to overcome.

### 1.3 Exploration: Location in the Holmes/Toury map

Look at a recent issue of widely available online journals such as *Meta* and *JosTrans* (and, where possible, *Target*, *The Translator* and other journals). Try and locate each article within the Holmes/Toury 'map' (Figures 1.1 and 1.2). How easy is it to do so? Where would you locate your own work or studies in this schema?

## 1.5 Developments since Holmes

The surge in translation studies since Holmes has seen different areas of the map come to the fore. **Contrastive linguistics** generally fell by the wayside, but has resurfaced thanks to the advances in **machine translation** and **corpus-based studies** (see Chapter 11). The linguistics-oriented 'science' of translation has continued strongly in Germany, but the concept of **equivalence** associated with it has been questioned and reconceived (see Chapter 3). Germany has seen the rise of theories centred around **text types** and text **purpose** (the skopos theory of Reiss and Vermeer, see Chapter 5). The Hallidayan influence of **discourse analysis** and systemic functional grammar, which views language as a communicative act in a sociocultural context, came to prominence in the early 1990s, especially in Australia and the UK. It was applied to translation in a series of works by scholars such as Bell (1991), Baker (1992/2011), Hatim and Mason (1990, 1997), Calzada Pérez (2007), Munday (2008, 2012) (see Chapter 6). The late 1970s and the 1980s also saw the rise of a **descriptive approach** that had its origins in comparative literature and Russian Formalism (see Chapter 7). A pioneering centre was Tel Aviv, where Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury pursued the idea of the literary **polysystem** in which, among other things, different literatures and genres, including translated and non-translated works, compete for dominance. The polysystemists worked with a Belgium-based group including José Lambert and the late André Lefevere (who subsequently moved to the University of Austin, Texas), and with the UK-based scholars Susan Bassnett and Theo Hermans. A key volume was the collection of essays edited by Hermans, *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation* (Hermans 1985a), which gave rise to the name of the

**‘Manipulation School’.** Bassnett and Lefevere’s volume *Translation, History and Culture* (1990) then introduced the term **‘cultural turn’**. This dynamic, culturally oriented approach held sway for much of the following decade (Chapter 8).

The 1990s saw the incorporation of new approaches and concepts: Canadian-based translation and **gender** research led by Sherry Simon, the Brazilian **Cannibalist** School promoted by Else Vieira, and **postcolonial** translation theory with the prominent figures of the Bengali scholars Tejaswini Niranjana and Gayatri Spivak (Chapter 8). In the USA, the cultural studies-oriented analysis of Lawrence Venuti called for greater visibility and recognition of the translator (Chapter 9). Developments continued at an ever-increasing pace in the new millennium, with special interest devoted to, for example, translation, globalization and resistance (Cronin 2003, Baker 2006, Boéri and Maier 2010, Marais 2014), the sociology and historiography of translation (e.g. Inghilleri 2005a, Wolf and Fukari 2007, Rundle 2014, Vorderobermeier 2014) and process-oriented research (e.g. O’Brien 2011). Research activity, as well as the practice of translation, has also been revolutionized by new technologies. These new areas include machine and automatic translation, audiovisual and multimodal translation, localization and corpus-based translation studies (see Chapter 11). Furthermore, the international reach of the discipline has expanded enormously with research and training in Asia (e.g. Chan 2004, Cheung 2006, 2009, Sato-Rossberg and Wakabayashi 2012) and the Arab world (Selim 2009) in particular.

## 1.6 The van Doorslaer ‘map’

In order to deal with such a breadth of work, a new conceptual tool was developed for the Benjamins *Translation Studies Bibliography*, as explained by van Doorslaer (2007). In the new maps, a distinction is drawn between ‘translation’ and ‘translation studies’, reflecting the different centres of interest of research.<sup>9</sup> **‘Translation’** looks at the act of translating and, in the new map (van Doorslaer 2007: 223), is subdivided into:

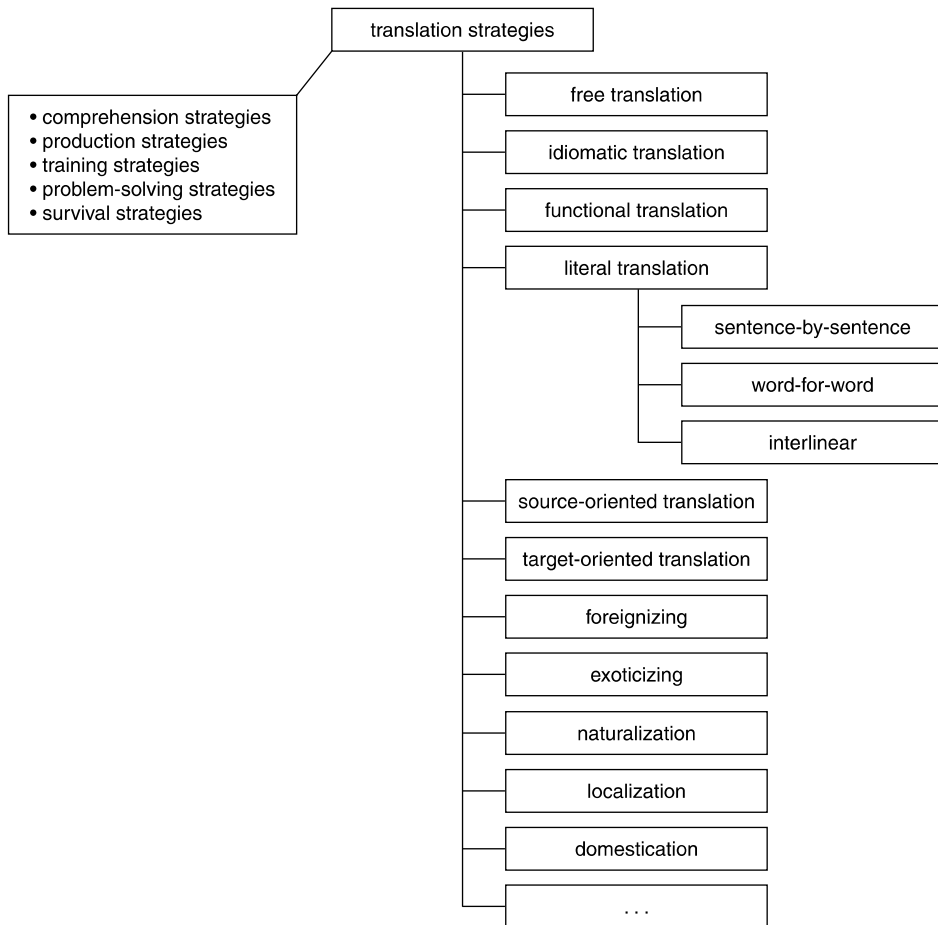
- lingual mode (interlingual, intralingual);
- media (printed, audiovisual, electronic);
- mode (covert/overt translation, direct/indirect translation, mother tongue/other tongue translation, pseudo-translation, retranslation, self-translation, sight translation, etc.);
- field (political, journalistic, technical, literary, religious, scientific, commercial).



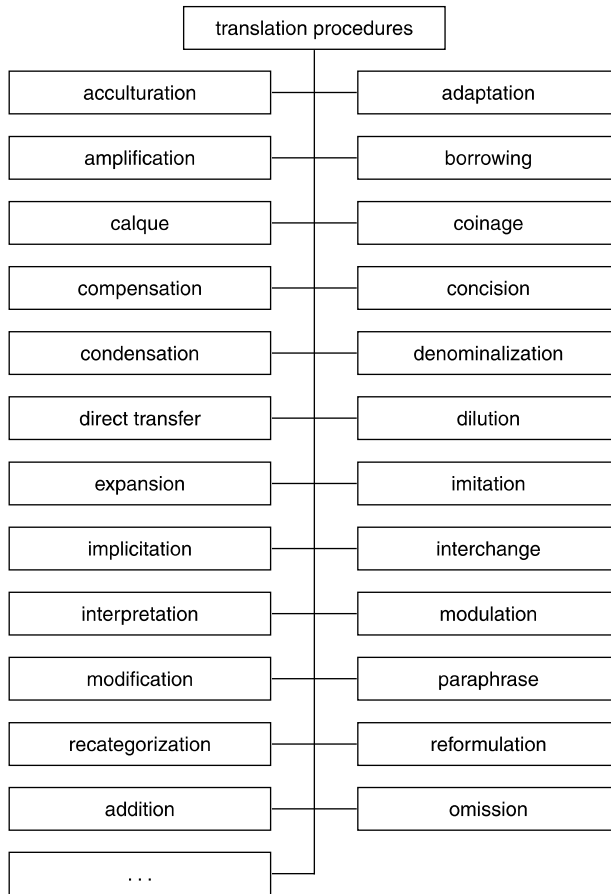
**Translation studies** (ibid.: 228–31) is subdivided into:

- approaches (e.g. cultural approach, linguistic approach);
- theories (e.g. general translation theory, polysystem theory);
- research methods (e.g. descriptive, empirical);
- applied translation studies (criticism, didactics, institutional environment).

Alongside these is a ‘basic transfer map’ (ibid.: 226) of terminology to describe the linguistic manoeuvres that, despite the cultural turn, remain central to the concrete translating process. This consists of strategies, procedures/techniques, ‘errors’, rules/norms/conventions/laws/universals and translation tools. **Figures 1.3** and **1.4** display the taxonomy of ‘strategies’ and ‘procedures’.



**Figure 1.3** Translation strategies (following van Doorslaer 2007: 226)



**Figure 1.4** Translation procedures (following van Doorslaer 2007: 227)

The distinction is an important one, even if it is sometimes blurred in the literature: a **strategy** is the overall orientation of a translated text (e.g. literal translation, see [Chapter 2](#)) while a **procedure** is a specific technique used at a given point in a text (e.g. borrowing, calque, see [Chapter 4](#)).

Linguistic transfer of course still occurs within a sociocultural and historical context and institutional environment that place their own constraints on the process.

## 1.7 Discipline, interdiscipline or multidiscipline?

A notable characteristic of recent research has been its **interdisciplinarity**. In the first edition of this book we ended with a discussion of translation studies as

a discipline, interdiscipline or sub-discipline, and saw the future in interdisciplinarity. We discussed the nature of interdisciplines, referring to Willard McCarty's paper 'Humanities computing as interdiscipline' (1999),<sup>10</sup> which gives the following description of the role of an interdiscipline in academic society:

A true interdiscipline is . . . not easily understood, funded or managed in a world already divided along disciplinary lines, despite the standard pieties . . . Rather it is an entity that exists in the interstices of the existing fields, dealing with some, many or all of them. It is the Phoenician trader among the settled nations. Its existence is enigmatic in such a world; the enigma challenges us to rethink how we organise and institutionalise knowledge.

(McCarty 1999)

An interdiscipline therefore challenges the current conventional way of thinking by promoting and responding to new links between different types of knowledge and technologies. Viewing the hierarchy of disciplines as a systemic order, McCarty sees the 'conventional' disciplines having either a 'primary' or a 'secondary' relationship to a new interdiscipline. For us, translation studies would itself be the Phoenician trader among longer-established disciplines. It has the potential for a primary relationship with disciplines such as:

- linguistics (especially semantics, pragmatics, applied and contrastive linguistics, cognitive linguistics);
- modern languages and language studies;
- comparative literature;
- cultural studies (including gender studies and postcolonial studies);
- philosophy (of language and meaning, including hermeneutics and deconstruction and ethics);

and, in recent years, with sociology, history and creative writing. Some current projects are also **multidisciplinary**, involving the participation of researchers from various disciplines, including translation studies.

It is important to point out that the relationship of translation studies to other disciplines is not fixed. This explains the changes over the years, from a strong link to contrastive linguistics in the 1960s to the present focus on more cultural studies perspectives and even the recent shift towards areas such as computing and multi-media. Other, secondary, relationships come to the fore when dealing with the area of applied translation studies, such as translator training. For instance, specialized translation courses should have an element of

instruction in the disciplines in which the trainees are planning to translate – such as law, politics, medicine, finance, science – as well as an ever-increasing input from information technology to cover computer-assisted translation.

While the discussion has continued on interdisciplinarity (e.g. Ferreira Duarte et al. 2006) and multidisciplinary (House 2014), some, like Daniel Gile, have seen it as a threat:

[P]artnerships established with other disciplines are almost always unbalanced: the status, power, financial means and actual research competence generally lie mostly with the partner discipline. Moreover, interdisciplinarity adds to the spread of paradigms and may, therefore, weaken further the status of [translation research] and [interpreting research] as autonomous disciplines.

(Gile 2004: 29)

It is also true that translation studies has in some places been colonized by language departments driven by the perceived attractiveness of academic teaching programmes centred on the practice of translation but harbouring their own academic prejudices. Ironically, this has also worsened the **artificial gap between practice and theory**. For example, research assessments in the UK (formal external audits and evaluations of individuals' and departments' research output) have valued academic articles higher than translations, even translations of whole books. This ignores the fact that the practice of translation is an invaluable, not to say essential, experience for the translation theorist and trainer.

Yet the most fascinating developments have been the continued emergence of new perspectives, each seeking to establish a new 'paradigm' in translation studies. This provoked debate, highlighted by Chesterman and Arrojo (2000) and pursued in subsequent issues of *Target*, as to what '**shared ground**' there actually was in this potentially fragmenting subject area. The volume *New Tendencies in Translation Studies* (Aijmer and Alvstad 2005), deriving from a workshop at Göteborg University, Sweden in 2003, set out a concerted attempt to bring together and evaluate research methodologies. As the editors, with some understatement, pointed out in the introduction (ibid.: 1), there has been 'a movement away from a prescriptive approach to translation to studying what translation actually looks like. Within this framework the choice of theory and methodology becomes important.' Such choice is crucial and it depends on the goals of the research and the researchers. As we shall see as this book progresses, methodology has evolved and become more sophisticated (see Saldanha and O'Brien 2013). At the same time, there is considerable divergence on methodology, as

translation studies has moved from the study of words to text to sociocultural context to the working practices of the translators themselves. An illustration of the diversity of current research can be gauged by the 19 panels at the 5th IATIS conference held in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, in July 2015.

### 1.4 Exploration: Translator studies

Read the online article by Chesterman (2010) for a discussion of some developments in Holmes' map. See also the bibliometric study by Zanettin et al. (2015), available through the ITS website, for a discussion of sub-fields in translation studies.

Even the object of study, therefore, has shifted over time, from translation as primarily connected to language teaching and learning to the study of the circumstances in which translation and translators operate.

## Summary

Translation studies is an academic research area that has expanded massively over the years. Translation was formerly studied as a language-learning methodology or as part of comparative literature, translation 'workshops' and contrastive linguistics courses. The discipline as we now know it owes much to the work of James S. Holmes, who proposed both a name and a structure for the field, but the context has now advanced. The interrelated branches of theoretical, descriptive and applied translation studies initially structured research. Over time the interdisciplinarity and specialization of the subject have become more evident and theories and models have continued to be imported from other disciplines but also forged from within translation studies itself.

### Discussion and research points

- 1 Investigate the use of other translation-related terms, such as 'adaptation', 'version' and 'transcreation'. In what contexts are they used? How easy is it to define these terms? In the light of your findings, try to write a definition of 'translation'.

- 2 Investigate how research-based translation studies fits into the university system in your country. How many universities offer 'translation studies' (or similar) MA or doctoral programmes? In which university departments/faculties are they housed? What are the 'primary' and 'secondary' relationships to other disciplines? What do you conclude is the status of translation studies in your country?
- 3 As you read each of the following chapters, try and locate each topic or concept within the Holmes/Toury 'map' (Figures 1.1 and 1.2). Carry out the same exercise with the van Doorslaer schema and compare the results.

**The ITS website at [www.routledge.com/cw/munday](http://www.routledge.com/cw/munday) contains:**

- a video summary of the chapter;
- a recap multiple-choice test;
- customizable PowerPoint slides;
- further reading links and extra journal articles;
- more research project questions.