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## Changing Translation Practices and Moving Boundaries in Translation Studies

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### ***Abstract***

This article aims at describing the changes in translation, by referring to practices such as localization, amateur translation, translating in the media. The changes are enhanced by the computing, information and communication technologies. In three decades, a new work environment has shaken up the translator's world. New types of translators are emerging, with a new hierarchy between them, in parallel with a multiplication of labels created for "translation". The concept of translation has therefore become ambiguous and, relating to it, other concepts, such as text, need to be revisited.

### ***Résumé***

Notre article a pour objectif de saisir les changements liés à certaines pratiques de traduction comme la localisation, la traduction par des non-professionnels et la traduction dans les médias. De tels changements sont induits par les technologies de l'information et de la communication. En trois décennies, un nouvel environnement de travail est en effet apparu, secouant le monde des traducteurs et imposant de nouvelles hiérarchies. Dans cette évolution rapide, le concept de traduction et d'autres concepts afférents comme celui de texte nécessitent d'être réinterrogés.

### ***Keywords***

Translation, types of translators, localization, crowdsourcing, ICTs, digital, users  
Traduction, types de traducteurs, localisation, traduction collaborative, TIC, numérique, utilisateurs

## 1. Introduction

Understood in its traditional sense, translation is an activity that has been eschewed for centuries – in terms of its need, the effort it requires, and its professional status. Nevertheless, the experience is not uniform, languages and societies have neither borne the silence in the same way or to the same degree, nor at the same time. However, most of the time, history remembers translation as serving the powers, the established authorities, hidden away as if non-existent all kinds of routine exchanges – commercial, scientific, and philosophical, to name but a few. Indeed, today, many sponsors, amateurs, self-translators and engineers within the language industry continue to consider translation as a mechanical process, a faithful, accurate and neutral word-by-word substitution, or simply an activity that accrues no apparent prestige and which can be handed off at any moment to a bilingual relative or colleague.

In this article, we endeavor to put into perspective the most recent practices and research in translation. Two paradigms<sup>1</sup> are evolving: they explain to some degree the current multiplication of labels created for “translation” and justify the different views on “translation”.

On one hand, the more conventional conceptualization of translation that has endured for centuries through the paradigm of equivalence has evolved into one more oriented toward the public or audience targeted, i.e. the paradigm of the ‘cultural turn’, in relation to identity, ideology, power, asymmetry between cultures and languages. It exists concurrently with another changing paradigm, one which reflects the platforms and mediums through which the activity of translation is now carried out. In this sense, the paradigm of the book (upon which the paradigm of equivalence is based) transforms into one of the digital and Web (where the text to translate becomes multimodal). The clash of paradigms is happening now. To better understand the second paradigm change, we still need a media history of translation, related to the channels of production, distribution, circulation and reception of translations. Practices of writing and reading have changed according to the material forms (wood, stone, human body, tablet, roll, codex, book and computer) available at a given time for the storage and retrieval of data and information. The physical supports (voice, clay, wax, silk, papyrus, parchment, paper and screen) make a difference to our practices of writing, reading — and translating. We know how Martin Luther (mid-16<sup>th</sup> century) combined printing and translation and how Google uses the power of computer memory and calculation to develop machine translation.

Cultural history has easily traced the influence of technical tools, for instance in the evolution of printing, but our attention has not yet been drawn to this influence in translation (Cronin 2003; Littau 2011). From Cicero to today, translations have always been marked by the technical environment. Their existence is inseparable from the material medium which embodies them. However, there is no clear-cut correspondence between a medium and a given period of time: different media co-exist in a culture at a certain moment. Today, as in the past, we have several types of culture in relation to media: paper and screen, one being, temporarily, in a dominant position in certain spheres of activities (journalism, administration) until a balance between the two is found or paper is completely replaced by computer — just as individualistic and collaborative approaches overlap to a certain degree in different types of translation. A systematic knowledge of media history of translation should not only cope with Western countries but also include China, the Arabic world, etc. – the materiality of translation being important everywhere in the conceptualization of translation and in the historiography of translation studies (TS).

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<sup>1</sup> Paradigm here is understood as a way of considering things, facts, events within a certain framework, mindset. A change of paradigm means that a new perspective is replacing an older one, not necessarily at once according to a simplistic linear “progress”. Two paradigms can co-exist for a more or less long period of time, with tensions and contradictions. A turn is a shift within the same paradigm.

## 2. Multiple roles and positions of translation

Recipients and users of translated material are many and diverse, ranging from professional users to ordinary consumers. The amount, the frequency and the types at which an ordinary user is exposed to translated material are limitless, from descriptions of products of foreign goods, including foods, drinks, cosmetics, perfumes, tools, to instructions and manuals, as well as news, TV programmes, comics, games, Internet websites, entertainment (cinema, theatre, video games, songs, etc.), contracts, regulations, non-fiction books (cookery books, arts, technical text-books, etc).

In many cases, the user may not even be made manifest that what they are exposed to is a translation. Covert translation, a term coined by House (1981) to refer to any type of translation that hides the source and is oriented toward the target audience in the same way as its source text is oriented toward the source audience, may not be recognized by ordinary users as a translation at all, as it has been permeated through a culture filter, for example, advertisements or tourism booklets. Many types of texts tend to neglect national textual norms in favor of Anglo-American norms in the process of translation (Baumgarten et al. 2004). According to some research studies, half of advertising campaigns (Horbačauskienė & Kasperavičienė 2018) and slogans (Rumsiene 2012) use source-oriented and/or non-translation techniques. The status of English as a *lingua franca* has to a great extent made translation non-urgent for the non-professional needs of ordinary users. Although there are regulations to descriptions of products on labels (especially those meant for human consumption like medicines, cosmetics, food, etc.) in many countries, there is no difficulty for many to buy products online with no translated material at hand. For this reason, non-translation has spread, especially in some spheres.

Between 90 and 95% of the translations are non-literary translations. Therefore, to consider translation mainly, if not exclusively, from a literary standpoint (and often from a canonical perspective) is misleading. With the goal of putting the changes more clearly into focus, we need to recall that translation and interpreting are but one possible solution among many implemented in international, multilingual communications and relations. The language of the Other can be recognized and learned – a long-term investment which may ultimately yield results that are less risky and less costly than translation/interpreting and ultimately favour linguistic and cultural diversity. Languages can co-exist, with speakers alternating between languages or practicing a passive bilingualism (each one speaking his/her own language, without having to pass through any type of mediation whatsoever). A *lingua franca* can be used and can be either an imposed one (for ex. Russian in the former eastern European countries), or an artificial one (ex. Esperanto), or a third language (for ex., French in certain African countries, or English as in Belgium or in Switzerland....so as not to have to choose one of the local languages). Today, English fulfils this function in the domains of science and business and commerce, as Latin once did for the world of letters. A *lingua franca* can also act as a pivot language, to the detriment of direct bilateral contacts: as such, some of the Japanese literature now familiar to Finnish readers is known only after the works have been filtered through Anglo-Saxon publishers. One can refer to machine translation; yet, translation automation already satisfies a not insignificant volume of translation, of a more or less urgent nature, without using a translator or post-editor.

From this perspective, how and up to what point do these possibilities challenge the place, indeed, even the role, of translation? And above all, how do they transform the perception we have of them?

## 3. Traditional and new translation practices: beyond a mechanical view of translation

The popular assumption that a text to be translated is nothing more than a linear sequence of words or phrases no doubt explains why translation has long been considered as inferior, subordinate to

the original. It testifies to the somewhat archaic perceptions of “translation” and “translator” by many who have inherited and continue to propagate common archetypes, perceiving language as static rather than dynamic, envisaging communication as a mere sequence of information packets rather than as interactions. Metaphors of translation and images of the translator in the collective imagination are regularly reproduced in fiction, novels, films, and even in the media (Gambier, 2012). They verge on the stereotypical and on clichés, with the translator viewed more often as a hardworking hermit and on the margins, as an impostor rather than a mediator.

The word “translation” seems to suffer from a bad reputation and can be dismissed as a transparent rewording of the original and not as a constant interpretation, shaping the experience of new audiences. Thus, it is often replaced today by or competes with other terms, such as *localization*, *adaptation*, *versioning*, *transediting*, *language mediation*, *transcreation*. According to a popular ideology, “translation” suggests a labour of formal word-for-word transfer, a type of communication transpiring in a unidirectional conduit, an ethics of neutrality, evoking the image of the translator as a subservient worker. TS has succeeded in deconstructing both the conventional definition and the image, and now embraces creativity, voice, interpretation, commitment and an ethics of responsible subjectivity (Sun, 2014). The hesitation to denominate what we do when we translate, or transcreate, transedit, or localize, is palpable.

So, in what ways is the current clash of paradigms manifest? Very often, the lay person will think of translation in the equivalence paradigm, or the quest to convey identical meanings, a straightforward transfer of meaning between languages (Torres-Simón 2019). The implied aim is to achieve a text in the target language that is “of equal value” (Pym 2009, p.82). There are strong assumptions underlying such an approach of an implicit framework of the communication model where a message is transferred from one language to another and the tropes of border and bridge work powerfully. It assumes, for instance, that two languages “do or can express the same values” (Pym 2009, p. 82). But a word or a concept may connote different meanings in another language or may be absent altogether, so the relationship between the two languages is not necessarily symmetrical. Two words may also refer to the same object, and this would not necessarily convey the intended meaning of the original text. Loyalty to the source text may result in a text that is not easily comprehensible in the target language. The view of translation as a transparent non-entity, the implicit assumptions of the equivalence paradigm usually compel people to stigmatize, criticize a translation because certain words have not been replaced.

Within translation academic studies, however, the equivalence paradigm (starting from the source text and comparing it with the target text) has been contested. Since the 1980s, translation theories and conceptual frameworks have shifted to a target perspective; they include and prioritize a more contextualized and socio-culturally oriented conception of the translation process. Translation has been reframed as a form of intercultural interaction. It is not languages that are translated, but rather texts that are socially and culturally situated. Within this “cultural turn” in TS, several perspectives in particular have contributed to the critique of the long standing equivalence paradigm – Descriptive Translation Studies (Toury 2012); the *Skopos* theory (Reiss & Vermeer 2013); cultural politics (Venuti 2018)<sup>2</sup>; and the dialogic interactionism approach in interpreting (Wadensjö 1998), among others. Translation is thus viewed as a process of re-contextualization, as a purposeful action. Translators consider and balance diverse factors during the translation process in order to achieve a communicative purpose and their translations materialize as functionally adequate in the target culture. The entire decision-making process is bound to considerations that involve the client end-receiver. Meaning is no longer considered as a mere invariant in the source text, but rather as culturally embedded, with a need to be interpreted. Translation becomes not just a lexical hurdle to overcome, but the result of connections between text, context, and myriad agents.

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<sup>2</sup> See also the two models drafted by Venuti since many years, opposing the instrumental model to the hermeneutic model (Venuti 1995, 2019).

## 4. Digitalization, translation and translators

### 4a. Translation and localization

As computer, information and communication technologies (ICT) have gradually transformed the translation environment, the term “localization” has made its way into popular use, creating some tension within the conventional purview of translation practice and research.

Localization has become a popular concept in both translation practice and theory. Four main historical phases (that now overlap) are generally designated: software, websites (Jiménez Crespo 2013), mobile phones, and video games (O’Hagan & Mangiron 2013) – including those digitally distributed. As desktop personal computers became more prevalent throughout the 1980s, software engineers and programmers were coding content in their respective local languages around the world. Indeed, the quest for a more seamless communication process by computer across diverse protocols, interfaces, and platforms in multiple languages was not confined to business transactions; it became a social experience as well.

Localization service providers quickly developed into large organizations, until the emergence of “multiple language vendors (MLV)s” in addition to the usual “single language vendors” (SLVs). The array of services associated with producing multilingual translations expanded to include project management, software engineering, graphics engineering, desktop publishing, and eventually sophisticated content management system development and maintenance. As part of a highly competitive market, software and hardware products with short shelf-lives needed to be regularly and quickly updated and launch at the same time in several languages. Software programs designed to deal specifically with the new and diverse translation and localization environments have been consistently improved over time, leading to the now common use of translation memory and terminology management systems. Machine translation (MT) and post-editing services now supplement these traditional ones (Folaron 2012).

Localization refers not only to the professional procedure of adapting content linguistically, culturally, and technically; it likewise is used more loosely to refer to the entire industry that has emerged around localization. It is also highly context-bound (Folaron 2006). The acronym GILT (*Globalization Internationalization Localization Translation*) refers to the four correlated and interdependent activities that now comprise this industry. While the order of the activities referred to in the acronym indicate the current sequence of processes that should ideally take place, the actual emergence of the terms historically is exactly the reverse. Overlapping practices, histories, and theorizations of the practices yield different readings in the TS domain.

Globalization in general, acquires more specific meaning in the practice of professional localization. Penned as *GIIN* for short, globalization is synonymous with a certain mind-set that includes a series of corporate tasks. This lends support to Fry who noted early on that globalization is “[t]he process of making all the necessary technical, financial, managerial, personnel, marketing and other enterprise decisions to facilitate localization” (Fry 2003, p. 42). Internationalization, abbreviated as *IIN* in the professional domain, refers most generally to two approaches, the first technical and the second linguistic/cultural. It advocates separating the code from content. Internationalization also includes use of controlled language. Localization (*LION*), in terms of professional procedure, is most closely linked to translation. In its broadest sense it “revolves around combining language and technology to produce a product that can cross cultural and language barriers-no more, no less” (Esselink 2003) and implies “the full provision of services and technologies for the management of multilingualism across the digital information flow” (Schäler in Folaron 2006; see also Dunne 2006, p. 4). Translation, the last component of the GILT acronym, can be viewed from two main perspectives in relation to localization. When analyzed from the perspective of professional workflow models, translation is a part of localization. When conceptualized from the perspective of translation history and the academic discipline, localization

is a part of translation. If we assume that localization is about adapting a text so that it accounts for the local (i.e. target culture's) linguistic and cultural norms and conventions, then it seems that the idea is well-established in both translation studies and practice (see Nida's dynamic equivalence, Nord's instrumental translation, House's covert translation or Venuti's domestication). Adding a new term (i.e. localization) would therefore seem unnecessary, except that we are clearly moving away from the traditional sense of translation within the equivalence paradigm.

As a last remark, according to some scholars, globalization (in the general sense) is believed to promote (cultural) homogeneity and impose sameness, whereas others tend to think of it more in terms of cultural heterogeneity (e.g. Appadurai 1990). The two opposing approaches to globalization have been partially reconciled, at least to some extent, within the concept of *glocalization* introduced by Robertson (1994 [2003]). On the one hand, we witness some homogenizing processes in the form of product *globalization* and *internationalization* that would seem to impose sameness, and on the other, there are localizing processes in the form of product *localization*, whereby the products are adapted both linguistically (*translation*) and culturally so that they have the 'look and feel' of a locally made product.

#### **4b. Going Digital: different modes of working and myriad types of users**

ICTs have introduced certain changes in attitudes and representation with regards to translation. These changes may well induce a significant break not only in translation practice but also in the discourses about translation. The computerized components of the work environment have proliferated. Software is used for creating translation memories, aligning texts, managing terminology, checking spelling and grammar, accessing and searching electronic corpuses, and carrying out machine translation. Differently combined technologies also exist, such as those integrating translation memories, terminology bases and proposed machine translation results, all of which allow bidding for free translation to transpire and circulate on the Web. Equally important are the changing social relations. Experiences are shared thanks to discussion lists and forums, blogs and various social media and networking sites like LinkedIn and YouTube.

From the use of micro-computers that exponentially facilitate data-sharing and the creation of local networks, we have now moved to a kind of dematerialized computing (cloud computing), which lifts all the worries and burdens of management, maintenance and reconfiguration of work tools from the translator's shoulders. This rapid evolution is not inconsequential for the practice of translation, nor on the organization of its practice and surely not on its supply (Mossop 2006; Perrino 2009). Shared resources accessible in real time are now dynamic; costs are reduced; management is shortened; work is shared. Dematerialization favours simplification and productivity. On the other hand, it also creates a certain dependence on Internet connections and poses problems concerning security and confidentiality breaches, consumption of energy and always at risk for breaking down.

The ongoing changes in translation practice in the digital world are not confined to professional translation and localization activities. The recurring distinctions made in reference to translation often focus on the qualifications of the participants opposing professionals to natural translators, amateurs, or non-professionals (Antonini 2011, Antonini et al. 2017). In fact, publications in TS have lingered for some time on weak dichotomies such as novice/ professional, non-professional/volunteer, natural translators/trained translators, amateurs/experts, etc., particularly in studies on translation processes.

Notwithstanding, myriad types of users have in fact emerged. Technologies could offer new opportunities and niches that did not exist before, in addition to the new problems they raise.

One prominent example is the use of **machine translation by general users** everywhere. Programs available on the Web for free allow users to upload content and to obtain a 'gist', with no

overriding concern for quality. Human intervention can be limited, even non-existent. A second kind of general user<sup>3</sup> with more specific attributes includes those who may have no professional training but who manage or are fluent in languages other than their mother tongue. They carry out such activities as **fan translation**, fan subbing, fan dubbing, and scan-trans on deliberately chosen mangas, animated films, and video games. These fans are not translation professionals – hence, they transgress certain conventions and respected norms of the profession. Neither are they all ‘pirates’, as some of them do respect the copyright holders. A third type of user-translator participates in projects that are less “fan”-motivated but clearly project-centred. Often referred to as **participatory or collective translation** (with implied crowdsourcing), they translate and/or localize software, websites, articles, reports, literary texts and interviews. For this collective, unpaid effort, volunteer and anonymous (or sometimes not) participants rely on their linguistic competence and translate and revise whatever and whenever they feel motivated to do so, until the entire project is complete. They can translate thanks to such tools as Traduwiki, Wikitranslate and Google Translate. Social media or socio-digital networks (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) take advantage of this collective will to translate in order to become more accessible to sectors of the population they may never have envisioned originally. Finally, there continues to be much **collaborative translation work (as a team)** carried out by a mix of professional working and professionally trained (but not necessarily working) translators. They share resources, can work on the same document or content from diverse locations, and share activities of translation, research, terminology management, revision, and proofreading. Translation jobs or projects may be bid on and qualifications and requirements posted (*Proz* and *Translator’s Café* are two examples). **Volunteer networked translation** can also be carried out by professionals, for example, through networks such as Babel, Translators without Borders, the Rosetta Foundation, etc. (Gambier 2007). These activist or altruist translators work for a specific cause, and respond to the needs expressed by NGOs and other associations.

Collaborative translations challenge a certain ideology which claims that a translation is always an individual act, focused on a written text, and considers the translator as a substitute for the author. How, and to what extent, these new practices might disqualify, or de-professionalize, full-time translators who are trained and experienced? Productivity, accessibility, quality, and collaborative networking have all become more tightly intertwined. It would seem more urgent and opportune to organize a dialogue among translators and technology providers than discussing again and again the so-called opposition between professionals and non-professionals. Indeed, some tools seem to resonate regressively, implying a return to the old concept of translation that is a word-based and a formal, mechanical, countable transfer, which reverts to why translation has been denied for such a long time. The line-by-line translations of European Union directives, produced with the constrained aid of translation memories, the practice of subtitling in direct, or the subtitles of fans, all tend to stick to the source and become verbatim. These changes in the conditions and pace of work can ultimately demotivate translators, who become dispossessed of all power, forced to always be online and beholden to the tool imposed by the client.

## 5. Translating in the media

A relatively recent and growing area of research in TS is that of translation and the news (Davier and Conway 2019). From news agencies to live editorial newsrooms, the news is continuously being filtered through languages; indeed, this seems to have been the case since the birth of journalism (Valdeón 2012b). From local reporters to national and international news agencies, from special correspondents to different newspapers and TV channels, from web loggers to on-line

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<sup>3</sup> The terminology used in English for amateur translation is redundant and vague: community /crowdsourcing /collaborative /citizen /paraprofessional /user-generated /volunteer translations, in addition to the 3CT proposed by Common Sense Advisory, to wit: community, crowdsourced and collaborative translation. See Hebenstreit 2019.

editors, the information switches between oral and written forms, from regional languages to a *lingua franca* and again to national languages. The integration of foreign language sources in news reports, and inter-media agenda settings in the multilingual mediascape, as well as the emergence of new values in linguistically and culturally diverse newsrooms are all potential areas of research.

News translation is a unique form of communication production. In many cases, it is hardly feasible to reconstruct the exact text production process, including the translation process, as journalistic environments are characteristically complex, multi-source situations. The question of whether or not “translation” appropriately and adequately describes the processes involved is a relevant one. Trying to establish clear source text-target text boundaries is a hazardous endeavor, as the production of news is never clearly differentiating from its translation. Moreover, journalists deny translating. Observations in newsrooms and interviews with journalists show how uneasy they feel with “translation”: they generally do not know languages well, and they do not render foreign news as word-for-word translation. Translation is not considered to be the task of a journalist, and so they accommodate, adapt, and localize information according to different sets of audience expectations. They cannot help but rewrite, reframe, summarize, cut, clarify, reformulate the news: they “transedit” the foreign extracts and quotes embedded in news stories. Journalists reject the term translation because they assume that translation implies equivalence, linguistic correspondence, fidelity to the source text, and no re-contextualization.

Studying and discussing the production and consumption of translation-mediated news across linguistic and cultural spaces needs the use of a clear and consensual terminology and careful methodology. This is also valid for broadcasted news (see Conway 2011) and periodicals (Hernández Guerrero 2009). Internationally distributed magazines such as *Elle*, *Newsweek*, *Cosmopolitan*, *American Science*, *National Geographic* or *Times* are also examples of adaptation and localization, as both the linguistic and extra-linguistic features of the products are modified so that they best appeal to the local readers of the magazines. Basic TS questions remain: Who selects the information to be translated? What are the translation strategies? Who revises, accepts, and legitimizes or validates the final output? How does reception influence decision-making? Selecting, translating, and editing the news entails much more than carrying out a linguistic process; rather, it is “a complex mixture of power relationships (continental, national, linguistic, political and ideological)” (van Doorslaer 2010: 180) where journalists are part of a larger social system (Bielsa 2007; Schäffner & Bassnett 2010; Valdéron 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2012a).

Finally, since we deal here with translation and the media, it is appropriate to mention one of the latest terms being investigated from within TS: *transcreation*. The number of so-called specialized transcreation providers (Ray & Kelly, 2010) has grown significantly over the past few years. Is transcreation more than translation or a kind of translation or in opposition to translation? (Merkherjee 2004; Pedersen 2014; Katan 2015). The concept borders on adaptation and localization (the translation is done with a particular audience or local market in mind and makes use of technologies). Do different text-types need different labels? Would software, mobile devices, and videogames correlate more appropriately with localization, and marketing material, brochures, advertising with transcreation, while websites straddle the two terms? We can notice that in advertising, for example, transcreation seems to combine translation, creation and copywriting: on the one hand, translators (or transcreators?) are taking an active and creative part in the communication process, and on the other hand, they are involved with various semiotic resources. Thus, we can see a strong convergence between localization, adaptation, transediting, versioning, and transcreation. They all distance themselves in similar ways, from the source text and from the field of translation, conferring a more responsible and positive role to the translators. While it is perhaps too early to dismiss all the labels as having no value in TS and to retain “translation” only, the paradigmatic changes are ostensibly in process.

All the aforementioned changes require revisiting certain concepts that are well-established in TS, particularly when considering their application in audiovisual translation (AVT), e.g., the

concepts of *text, authorship, sense-meaning, translation unit, translation strategy, translation norms, written and oral, accessibility*, etc. (Gambier, forthcoming). The hierarchical relationship between original and translation, between production and reproduction, between initial broadcasting and a rerun is damaged in an audiovisual product, knowing that a film can be edited for different purposes and in different ways, for TV, DVDs, flights or specific audiences (politically correct projections, bowdlerized versions of swearwords, etc.). The globalization of the film industry cannot be equated with the standardization of meanings, narratives and public feedback.

## 6. A future to build

The internationalization of the practices in translation and the research in TS, partly because of the technology, has long-run implications.

Firstly, transformations today demand more and more a transversal approach. As examples, we could mention climate change, sustainable development, cognitive sciences, artificial intelligence, public health care, bioethics, gerontology, human-machine interactions, etc. Obviously, the rapid changes in technology open new priorities, new specializations, new communications which blur quite a number of borders. In such a perspective, do we have to maintain separated *Translation Studies, Adaptations Studies, Intercultural Studies, Transfer Studies, Media Studies, Knowledge Management, Internet Studies, Web Science, Globalization Studies*, just to name a few research domains? This does not mean that TS should or would swallow up neighbouring disciplines (Gambier and van Doorslaer 2016). All of them acknowledge the complexity of communications and behaviours and deal with them but, truly, they still tend to ignore translation, as if information, data, knowledge, documents could be delivered in seconds around the globe, in spite of the language diversity, without translations!

Secondly, how to define “translation” while practices are changing and the TS debates are more and more international, opening up to other cultures (Tymoczko 2005, 2007)? To the concepts used in the past in Western Europe (*mimesis, appropriation, imitation, commentaire*) are added many more used in other cultural spaces in the contemporary world: Indian, Chinese, Arabic, Turkish, Malaysian, etc. (*reversal, transmigration, metamorphosis, substitution*, etc.) (Gambier and Stecconi 2019). Translation is a polymorphous concept which needs always to be negotiated and requires to question the epistemological and social relevance of the studies – in the ways data and research methods are selected, in the ways the scholars take a stand towards practices. As long as translation was limited to conventional genres (contracts, patents, articles, instructions, fiction), in well-defined domains (economics, sciences, military, agriculture, energy, etc.), for well-defined needs, analytical and interpretative grids were always possible from one’s own experience. Nowadays plate-forms, technical procedures, media, sociotechnical contexts and digital world in which the different practices of translation are organized mirror the convergence of structured and structuring dynamics, which motivate production, distribution and consumption of multimedia, and multimodal contents (Pym 2004). However, with the hegemony of English<sup>4</sup>, import/export of concepts and methods are far from being equal (between cultural systems, disciplines, languages).<sup>5</sup>

Finally, in this global evolution, there are still unknowns:

- Will “translation” in the future be a generic term or a specific term? Will it be considered as a global activity with different forms? Will it be defined by its functions and not in an

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<sup>4</sup> For instance, despite the low percentage of texts that are translated into English, one can wonder why so much is written, published in English about translation as a practice.

<sup>5</sup> The TS community is aware of those disturbing changes, at least within the EST (European Society for TS). Its congress, held in Aarhus (Denmark) in 2016, is a proof of it – entitled *Moving (disciplinary, conceptual, methodological, professional) boundaries in Translation Studies* (Dam et al. 2018).

essentialist way: What does translation in a given society at a given period of time rather than what is translation?

- Will “translation” be fully automated, processed sometimes by hyper-specialists, sometimes by amateurs?
- Will TS be able to cope with paradoxes (diversity of practices vs interlingual translation; growing volumes of translations vs reporting mainly in English; diversity of approaches and methods vs hyper-specialization of the scholars; relevance of research projects vs uncertainty of the object of investigation)?
- Will TS be more fragmented, with more sub-disciplines, trends, schools, or will it share common assumptions and common objectives? (Chesterman 2007)
- Will TS (whatever will be its name<sup>6</sup>) be able to expand outwards, have dialogue with other neighboring disciplines (their borders being more institutional than conceptual)?

Last but not least, this article was written during the pandemic of Covid-19. It is too early to predict how the translation industry will become after the long lockdown and the possible global recession, what scenario will apply to the business: Will the big companies be consolidated? Will there be new strategies in automation? Will the rates be cut in such a way that freelancers will have difficulties to survive? However, we believe the trends, as described here, will still impact the markets, the practices and reflections in TS.

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<sup>6</sup> TS could be replaced by a new trans-discipline coping with the ways how groups, individuals, cultures manage, negotiate “differences” and also make connections.

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