

On Trend-Restricted Theoretical Translation Studies: A Missing Link in Holmes' Map

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Abstract

Several systematic classifications have been made within the realm of Translation Studies (henceforth TS) up to the present day. Each of these issues tries to provide the ones working in the field with different aspects of translation. Regarded as the first classification of different aspects in TS, Holmes' (1988) map of TS has gone under several revisions by a number of scholars (e.g., Gutt 2000, Pym 1998, Toury 1995, Zwart&Naaijkens1991, etc.). The present problem-restricted study aimed to investigate a branch which seemed to be dismissed within the Holmes' map of TS, namely 'trend-restricted theories'. The paper argues that this could be regarded as a missing branch in Holmes' (ibid.) map of TS, distinguishing it from 'time-restricted' theories of translation. To do so, the map was introduced in a detailed way and further discussed. In order to prevent any clumsiness, the later-developed sub-branches pointed out by Toury (1995) were put into consideration, too. Finally, the paper argued the need for such sub-branch in the map.

Keywords

Translation Studies, Trends, Theoretical Translation Studies, Translation History, Trend-Restricted Theories

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1. Introduction

Like any other academic field of science, Translation Studies has been the center of attention of many scholars during the history. This leads into generating several models, frameworks, theories, etc. The very first systematic classification made in the realm of TS was proposed in the original paper given by Holmes in 1972 in the translation section of the Third International Congress of Applied Linguistics in Copenhagen. That was when Holmes (ibid.) stressed the need to forge "other communication channels, cutting across the traditional disciplines to reach all scholars working in the field, from whatever background" (as cited in Munday, 2008, p.10). However, the paper was not widely publicized until 1988.

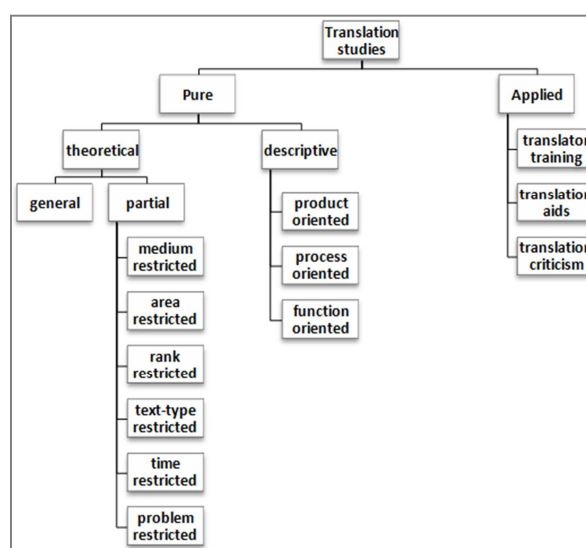


Figure 1. Holmes' 'Map' of Translation Studies

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The 'map' of TS introduced by Holmes (1988) finally ended most of the ambiguities through putting forward a schematic overview of what the term TS covers. In other words, there were no systematic classifications made within the realm of TS to such extent. Figure 1 illustrates what the main branches and sub-branches of TS refer to in Holmes' (1988) explanation:

Functionally, the act of research can be divided into basic (i.e., pure) on one hand, and applied research on the other. These two types of research differ in terms of purpose, context, and validity (Gaber, 2010). Applied research is for increasing "what is known about a problem with the goal of creating a better solution", while pure research is for "expand on what is known, i.e., knowledge, with little significant connections to contemporary problems"(ibid., p. 35). As Perry(2005) believes, pure and applied research are the two ends of a continuum and as time passes, basic research eventually results in application. Holmes (1988) suggested that pure research in TS has two main objectives as follows:

1. The description of the phenomena of translation (*descriptive translation theory*).
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 (1988) refers to those writings that seek to describe or account for every type of translation. However, the partial branch is restricted according to the parameters below:

- a *Medium-restricted theories*: whether the translation is being done by humans or machines, or if by machine, whether it is working alone or as an aid to the humans as translators and also, whether the human translation is written or spoken.
- b *Area-restricted theories*: are restricted to specific languages or groups of languages and/or cultures.
- c *Rank-restricted theories*: are linguistic theories that have been restricted to a specific level of (normally) the word and sentence.
- d *Text-type restricted theories*: look at specific discourse types or genres; e.g. literary, business and technical translation.
- e *Time-restricted theories*: refers to theories and translations limited according to specific time frames and periods. The history of translation falls into this category.
- f *Problem-restricted theories*: can refer to specific problems such as equivalence- a key issue of the 1960s and 1970s - or to a wider question of whether universals of translated language exist.

The other branch of 'pure' research in Holmes' (1988) map is descriptive. Descriptive Translation Studies (henceforth DTS) has three possible foci which include examination of (1) the product, (2) the function, and (3) the process of translation:

1. *Product-oriented DTS*: examines existing translations. According to Holmes, "one of the eventual goals of product-oriented DTS might possibly be a general history of translation" (p.11).
2. *Function-oriented DTS*: is the study of context rather than the text. It examines which books were translated when and where, and what influences they exerted.
3. *Process oriented DTS*: is concerned with the psychology of translation, i.e. to find out what happens in the mind of a translator.

Holmes probably derived the term descriptive from descriptive linguistics, which investigates "the structure of a language through the collection of primary language data gathered through interaction with native-speaking consultants" (Chelliah & Reuse, 2010, p. 7).

As Toury (1995) believes, the main merit of the divisions is that "they allow a clarification and a division of labor between the various areas of TS which in the past, have often been confused" (p.5). He (ibid.) then points out that the 'Applied' branch has some divisions in itself, presented in Figure 2, as follows:

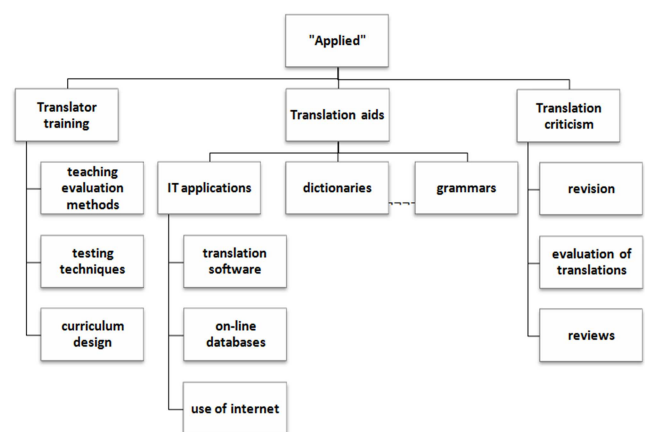


Figure 2. The Applied Branch of Translation Studies

2. Review of the Related Literature

Although the map was for the first time given in 1972, it still is a guideline to what the different areas in TS are, and what sub-categories they have. In Munday's (2008) opinion

The crucial role played by Holmes's paper is the delineation of the potential of the Translation Studies. The map is still often employed as a point of departure, even if subsequent

theoretical discussions (e.g., Snell-Hornby, 1991, Pym, 1998) have attempted to review parts of it... 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 (p.13).

By the time Holmes published his map of translation studies in 1988, a new paradigm was manifested within the realm of TS. Holmes disciplinary map for TS distinguished ‘pure’ research-oriented areas of translation description and theory from ‘applied’ areas like translator training and translation criticism. In Venuti’s (2004) opinion

The distinction between ‘pure’ and ‘applied’ shows that TS is taking over the scientific model from linguistics. And indeed the claim of scientific objectivity, coupled with the call for empirical data and the search for probabilistic clues of translation, recurs in target-oriented theorists like Even-Zohar (1990) and Toury (1995), for whom Russian Formalism is more useful than functional linguistics. Nonetheless, translation theory remains a heterogeneous field throughout this period. It encompasses both linguists like Catford (1965), whose study is underwritten by Hallidayan analytical concepts, and the eclectic Levý (1967), who synthesizes psycholinguistics, semantics, structural anthropology, literary criticism, and game theory (p. 124).

The map has for sure been commented on by several scholars working in the field. For instance, Toury (1995) problematized the apparent autonomy of Holmes’ major division of descriptive research into different orientations of process, product and function of translation and also the relation between ‘theoretical’ and ‘descriptive’ studies. Toury (ibid.) then argued that theoretical, descriptive and applied areas of TS influence one another. Still, Holmes’ divisions represent a flexible separation of the various areas of TS which had very often been confused, pointing to the great potential of the discipline.

Another argument as related to the Holmes’ (1988) map of TS was made by Holz-Mänttari (1986), claiming that social networks and working practices have somehow been neglected in the map. Through this, Holz-Mänttari meant to point to whom are the players in the translation process or the translatorial activity, which formed the basic foundation of the translational action theory (ibid.).

As Chesterman (2009, p.15) points out, the map is more weighted towards the theoretical and descriptive branches. Zwart and Naaijken (1991, p.37) argued that the map should have given more of its weight to contextual and pragmatic factors. Pym (1998) points to the absence of historical research on the map. He also argued that translators should be included among the map’s research objects. This is especially the case considering the increasing discussions

about translators’ agency, subjectivity and status in this discipline. Gutt (2000) discussed on the lack of a part under theoretical TS, namely relevance-restricted theories of translation.

Vandepitte (2008) presented a translation studies thesaurus in which all concepts from the multitude of different translation studies areas listed in Baker (1998), the “*Bibliography of Translation Studies*” (1998), Williams and Chesterman (2002) and the “EST-Directory 2003” were brought together on a single map. Through this, Vandepitte (ibid.) tended to revise Holmes’ (1988) map of TS. Additional practical advantages for the study of TS were also pointed out. The new map presents its categories according to a rigid set of criteria, placing all kinds of TS into a coherent visualized survey. The new map distinguished the following three typologies of TS:

- 1) TS typology based on the purpose aimed at, in other words the research question that is formulated involves at least three different stages: description, explanation and prediction. DTS (Toury, 1995) can therefore be distinguished from explanatory translation studies (e.g., Gutt, 2000) and from predictive translation studies (e.g., Olohan, 1998). Note that Toury (1995) actually includes the three types within his DTS. Although the best theoretical studies indeed include these three types (Vandepitte, 2008), those focusing on just one research stage may also be worthwhile and contribute to a translation theory.
- 2) TS typology based on the method employed: to a large extent, each investigation method is determined by the purpose and the subject. The map distinguishes four main types, namely deductive TS, experimental approaches, speculative ones and inductive translation studies with its qualitative, quantitative and hermeneutic approaches.
- 3) TS typology based on the subject covered groups studies according to the subject under investigation. This may vary from a very specific aspect to a broader subject and even a whole field or domain. For practical purposes, the investigations studying a single item of the translation process will be referred to as the single-subject studies, the studies covering more than one single focus as multi-focus studies, and those that cover all foci will be called ‘umbrella’ studies.

3. Key Publications on TS Trends

Recent key publications on research methods and trends in TS include “*Unity in Diversity*” edited by Bowker, Cronin, Kenny and Pearson (1998), and also “*The Map*” by Williams and Chesterman (2002). While the former publication

questions the claim of interdisciplinary characteristics as the essence of TS in view of its theoretical diversity and also disputes the existence of a general theory of translation, the latter one focuses on description of research and research methods in TS. In fact, the latter one lists twelve key areas of translation and suggests possible research directions for each area, roughly corresponding to Holmes' map of TS. According to Williams and Chesterman (2002, pp.6-27), these main areas include:

1. Text Analysis and Translation
2. Translation Quality Assessment
3. Genre Translation
4. Multimedia Translation
5. Translation and Technology
6. Translation History
7. Translation Ethics
8. Terminology and Glossaries
9. Interpreting
10. The Translation Process
11. Translator Training
12. The Translation Profession

In his "Teaching and researching translation", Hatim (2001) offered a complete overview of research topics and methods in TS. However, he does not show the interdisciplinary nature of TS compared to the areas of research and research methods listed in 'The map'.

4. Some Empirical Work on Trend-Restricted Theories

Searching for the key areas of research in TS seems to be a global issue. In their paper "A metrological analysis of translation studies during 2001-2006 in China", Yuan and Tang (2007) conducted a frequency analysis of the titles of 1610 articles in three different journals including "Shanghai Journal of Translation", "Chinese Translation Journal" and "Chinese Science and Technology Translation Journal". The results of their analysis showed that in order of popularity, translation trends in china focused on the issues of "translation", "English", "research", "English translation", "culture", "theory", "translation studies", "interpretation", and "technology" between the years of 2001 and 2006. The paper also pointed out the trends in certain areas.

In another research conducted by Lan, Dong and Chin (2009), they compared research results in journals and theses published between the years 2002 and 2008 from Taiwan and

abroad with the aim of extracting the similarities and differences of the foci and the methods of research between Taiwan and abroad. The results of their work revealed that the research methods employed in these areas are similar and that translation theories were used to analyze and solve the phenomena and problems in translation. Also, a great number of theses in translation are "translation with commentary". While the authors of foreign publications have more spirit and confidence to challenge existing theories and they are more willing to use the results of other scientific research to describe and explain translation phenomena and even to solve the problems. The results also suggested that the "multimedia translation", "translation and technology", "translation history", "translation ethics" and "translation profession" are the areas to be worked in future based on the classifications made in *The map* (Williams & Chesterman, 2002).

Naudé (2002, p.47-55) puts the developments of TS since 1983 under this classification:

- 1) Linguistic-based theories of translation: where the dominating concept was "equivalence". In this regard, Nida and Taber (1969, p.12) view translation as reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language.
- 2) Process-oriented research: as equivalent is not a perfect mirror in order to call a translated text a "good", "weak" or an "indifferent" one, Krings (1986, pp.263-75) concerns himself with the process of translation. The starting point is a question within the field of psycholinguistics as to what exactly takes place in the little black box of the translator's mind. In the 1990s attention is paid increasingly to the mental activity of translation. To begin with, Lörcher (1991) and Fraser (1996) collected empirical data through think-aloud protocols as well as interviews and questionnaires in order to find out what happens in the mind of a translator during the process of translation. Bell's (1993) process model is another famous work in this time period. In short, this era is the time for replacing the way of judging a translation to be "good" from the traditional subjective and arbitrary judgments into a new subjective orientations in TS which is towards the objective specification of the steps and stages through which the translator works as the source text in the original language is transformed into the target text as well as the strategies followed.
- 3) Descriptive system -and reception-oriented approaches: this area includes the emergence of the "manipulation school" where a group of scholars try to describe the relation between the translations and their originals in terms of shifts or manipulations occurred during the

process of translation.

- 4) Functionalist approaches to translation: these approaches seek to liberate translators from any adherence to the source text, looking at translation as a new act of communication that must be purposeful with respect to the translator's client and readership. Reiss and Vermeer's (1984, as cited in Munday, 2008) Skopos theory and Nida's (1991) model of translation are just some examples of the theories formulated in favor of functionalist approaches to translation.

Nouraey and Karimnia (2012) investigated the TS trends in Iran, conducting a meta-study reviewing the theses worked on between 2007 and 2012 at six out of eleven universities holding TS at M.A level of education. The results indicated that there were statistically significant differences among the frequencies of the twenty-one branches of the map. The results also pointed out that the most frequent branches of TS worked on by Iranian researcher between 2007 and 2012 were 'descriptive' TS with the sub-branches of 'process-oriented' and 'product-oriented' along with 'evaluation of translations' with the frequencies of 48, 44 and 12 respectively.

Nouraey and Karimnia (2013) also investigated the orientations and trends of TS in Iran between 2002 and 2012 based on the key words used within articles' abstracts. A data bank of four-hundred abstracts from six universities out of eleven was established. Using Customer Magnetism software, the most frequently used key words and their lemma were extracted out of 2750 key words and then converted into a more compact list of key words through human processing. The results indicated that there were twelve main key word categories with the highest frequency among the others. The results also pointed out that out of twelve key areas in TS presented by Williams & Chesterman (2002), six areas still remained more or less untouched in Iran, highly corresponding to the results of the similar studies in Asian countries such as China and Taiwan. Some suggestions were also made on future TS trends to be worked on in Iran.

5. Discussion

As mentioned before, Holmes' (1988) map of TS provided the researchers working in the field with the first systematic classification in translation. Several aspects of this map were then elaborated under the introduction section. However, it seems that the presence of a specific problem in TS has been neglected by Holmes (ibid.). This goes back to the orientations of the researchers, students, professors and other people conducting researches on different aspects of TS. In other words, the 'trend' they form towards the introduced aspects of TS seems to have been neglected within the map of TS.

One might argue that 'time-restricted' theories of translation would cover that. Quite the contrary, time-restricted theories could possibly relate to "the theories and translations limited according to specific time frames and periods" (as cited in Munday, 2008, p.10-3). This does not necessarily cover the trend-restricted issues in TS. In fact, this segment of theoretical TS mostly deals with those pieces of translated texts, translation theories, frameworks, etc., rooting back to a specific era. However, it is important to note that a certain issue might relate to several branches of theoretical TS at the same time. As Munady (ibid.) believes

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

The theoretical work carried out by Naudé (2002) is one of the most tangible instances of trend-restricted theoretical TS. Naudé (ibid.) put the developments of TS since 1983 under four main classifications. That is how one would work in favor of trends several translation students, professors and researchers have faced during the time gradually.

6. Conclusion

As it was discussed before, the history of translation falls into the time-restricted theoretical TS, while the trends in a specific field of science usually refer to other issues. In other words, the extent to which the researchers would adhere to and/or be oriented towards a specific issue would form the trends within that field of study. It is important for any field of science to provide its readers and adherents with the local or global trends. Only through this, the researchers would be able to take ideas on working in the more nascent branches and sub-branches of a field. Otherwise, the researchers would face some difficulties in choosing the area to work in case of the absence of any area of interest.

Some other examples of trend-restricted studies are those carried out by Nouraey and Karimnia (2012/2013, see also Karimnia & Nouraey 2013 for a detailed overview on TS global trends). The researchers (ibid.) tended to investigate the TS trends in their own country, Iran, to see whether they were in line with the global trends of TS or not. As the results of their work revealed, Iranian researchers had been mostly in line with the global trends in terms of topic selections. However, some fundamental changes in terms of TS trends were discussed, accompanied with the outcome of the several interviews with TS scholars (e.g., Munday, Chesterman, Larson, Schaeffner, Nord, etc.) all around the world.

Thus, it could be claimed that the TS trends hold the potentialities of preventing the authors from conducting research programs within the merely similar areas repeatedly. In other words, one would be able to find out what has taken place within the realm of TS during the time by taking the results of a trend-restricted study into consideration.

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