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Development of (Audiovisual) Translation

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TRANSLATION STUDIES: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF (AUDIOVISUAL) TRANSLATION

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RESUMEN: Este artículo pretende hacer un recorrido por la historia de la traducción o traductología, el cual incluye el planteamiento de la teoría de los polisistemas y el concepto de norma propuesto por Gideon Toury. Además, hace referencia a varios modelos teóricos para estudiar la traducción como disciplina, y estudia los cinco enfoques que se originaron de la traductología donde se prestará especial atención a la teoría de los *skopos*. Finalmente, el artículo se centrará en la modalidad de TAV como nuevo campo de estudio.

PALABRAS CLAVE: traductología, traducción literal, adaptación, traducción audiovisual

ABSTRACT: *This paper presents an overview of the history of translation and the birth of translation studies which also introduces the descriptive nature of the polysystem theory, and the concept of norms proposed by Gideon Toury. In addition, it makes reference to several theoretical models for studying translation as a discipline. It alludes to the five approaches which originated from the theory of translation in order to pay special attention to the socio-cultural approach which encompasses, among others, the theory of skopos, to finally focus on the modality of audiovisual translation, a nascent field of study.*

KEY-WORDS: *translation studies, literal translation, adaptation, audiovisual translation*

1. Introduction to Translation Studies

In this paper, I shall begin by presenting an overview of translation and translation studies (TS), before moving on to an exploration of the singularity of audiovisual translation. Accordingly, I shall start by briefly going through the history of translation followed by an introduction to translation studies or *traductologie* and its evolution until the present day. Secondly, I shall try to explain different methods or theories which arose in the field of translation such as the North-American Translation Workshop; the *mot-a-mot* theory by Georges Mounin; the concept of equivalence; James Holmes's theory of translation; the polysystem theory; and the concept of Norm. Subsequently, I shall present the five approaches of the translation studies based on the diagram by Amparo Hurtado (2001). Finally, I shall focus on the communicative and socio-cultural approach

which heavily predicated upon the theory of *skopos*. Finally, I shall end by introducing a section on the field of audiovisual translation.

2. A Brief History and Definition of Translation

The Babel myth, cited in the *Genesis* (xi: 6-9), consists of the idea of having a unique language for the whole of mankind. However, the idea of one language was not acceptable from the religious point of view since that would make humankind stronger, more powerful, which would be intolerable for God. As a result, God gave people different languages. Regrettably, this is only a myth and the origins of languages have a more linguistic explanation.

Eugene Nida (1959-1998:12-23) places the beginning of translation with the production of the *Septuagint* which seems to have been the first translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek. It was carried out by seventy-two translators, and it provides us with the basic categories of the history of this practice. This American scholar states that translation itself was a «science», a theory that was subsequently rejected by others in the second half of the century.

Following Douglas Robinson's definition (1997, 2002), the history of translation goes back to the ancient times with the distinction of «word-for-word» (literal translation or *verbum pro verbo*) and «sense-for-sense» (free translation or *sensum pro sensu*) employed for the first time by Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.E) in his *De optimo genere oratorum* (*The Best Kind of Orator*, 46 B.C.E) and translated by H.M. Hubbell. Cicero pointed out that one should not translate *verbum pro verbo* and opened a debate that has continued for centuries. Long after Cicero made his statement, the same issues were still discussed since, the scholar Peter (1988b) claimed, in the second half of the 20th century, that the main problem of translating a text was «whether to translate literally or freely» (1988b: 45). It is important to cite Horace, Pliny, Quintilian, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, John Dryden, Miguel de Cervantes, Novalis, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Aryeh Newman, Ezra Pound, etc, for being thinkers who dealt with the subject of translation. The etymology of translation, *trans-ducere*, means to «bring across». Nida defines the concept in a more systematic way:

Translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style. But this relatively simple statement requires careful evaluation of several seemingly contradictory elements (1969, 1982: 12).

The scholar Mary Snell-Horby (1988) defines the concept as an interaction process between the author, the translator and the reader; and mentions their complexities in the following quotation:

Translation is a complex act of communication in which the SL–author, the reader as translator and translator as TL–author and the TL–reader interact. The translator starts from a present frame (the text and its linguistic components); this was produced by an author who drew from his own repertoire of partly prototypical scenes. Based on the frame of the text, the translator-reader builds up his own scenes depending on his own level of experience and his internalized knowledge of the material concerned (1988: 81).

Patrick Zabalbeascoa (1996) defines the term as a communication act, and a human and social activity; since they are not perfect, translation is also considered *imperfect*:

La traducción es un acto de comunicación y una actividad humana y social, y como no existe comunicación, ni actividad humana ni social que sean perfectas no es ninguna tragedia admitir que la traducción perfecta tampoco existe (1996: 175).

And finally, Carbonell’s (2006: 48) definition of translation is as follows:

Translation is a form of communication and a means of achieving things. However, in translation the original communicative act is relocated to a different setting, where different actors perform for different purposes: there is a mediation mechanism which qualifies the whole act at different levels.

Next, I shall present a diagram which expresses Newmark’s (1988b: 45-47) view of the evolution of translation from the 19th century and onwards.



Figure 1: 'The Evolution of Translation'

Literal: the syntax is translated as close as possible in the TL.

Word-for-word: the SL word-order is maintained –the translation of cultural words is literally.

Faithful: it implies reproducing the exact meaning of the SL into the TL.

Semantic: it differs from faithful translation in the aesthetic, the *beautiful*, aspect only of the SL.

Free this process consists in paraphrasing the original with longer sentences which is also called «intralingual translation»; Newmark, though, defines it as «pretentious».

Adaptation: it is used for poetry, plays. The main sense is maintained but the cultural words/sense is adapted (re-written) in the TL.

Idiomatic: or natural translation reproduces the original sense but introduces colloquialisms and idiomatic expressions in the TL.

Communicative: this type of translation is the one that tends to reproduce the exact meaning of the SL taking into account not only the language but the content, so that they are closer to the original.

3. The Onset of New Theories: Translation Studies

From the beginning of the 20th century onwards, to learn a foreign language in some countries consisted in doing it through what was called the grammar-translation method, whose origins can be found in the way Latin and Greek used to be approached. This way of studying a language was later applied to modern languages which concentrated on learning the grammatical rules of the target language and then carrying out a literal translation (Munday, 2008: 7). Translation exercises were considered to be a way of learning a foreign language or of reading a foreign language text. Later, the grammar-translation method lost its popularity with the appearance of the communicative approach in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This method focused on the natural ability of students to learn a new language and attempted to represent the daily routine in classrooms focusing on spoken language instead of using sentences that were out of context. As a consequence, this new approach entailed the abandoning of the translation method in its classic form.

In the second half of the 20th century, a new generation of scholars worked on the same target: to establish a more systematic analysis of translation¹. All of them favoured a closer linguistic approach. With the emergence of these new theories, a new discipline arose: the theory of translation or translation studies, also called *traductologie* or *traductología*.

Next, I shall develop in detail the definition of the concept of *translation*. This term refers to two fields: The product –the text that has been translated– and; the process –the act of producing translation–.

¹ Some of these scholars are Roman Jakobson («On Linguistic Aspects of Translation», 1959); A. V. Fedorov (*Vvedenie v teoriyu perevoda*, 1953 (*Introduction to a Theory of Translation*)); J. P. Vinay and J. Darbelnet (*Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais*, 1958) and Georges Mounin (*Les problèmes théoriques de la traduction*, 1963).

The process of translation between two different written languages involves the translator changing an original written text (the ST) in the original language (the SL) into a written text (the TT) in a different language (the TL) (Munday, 2008: 5), such process has as a result, the product, the translated text. Amparo Hurtado's (1996) definition or distinction between 'translation' and 'theory of translation' (*traductologie* or *traductología*) is as follows:

La traducción es una práctica, un saber hacer; la Traductología es una reflexión teórica, un saber. El traductor es un profesional *de* la traducción; el traductólogo ejerce una investigación *sobre* la traducción (1996: 151).

During the 1980s, Newmark (1988a) highlighted the fact that there was not much written about this «theory of translation» or «traductologie» and those new contributions were necessary:

In relation to the volume of translation, little was written about it. The wider aspects were ignored: translation's contribution to the development of national languages, its relation to meaning, thought and the language universals (1988a: 4).

The British scholar stresses that Nida was the first linguist to be concerned about translation itself, and he also highlights his rejection of the proposition that translation was/is a science and insisted on seeing this proposition as a theory of communication (Newmark, 1988a: vii). Newmark's main contribution to the discipline is the distinction he establishes between the concept of communicative and semantic translation: «Translation theory derives from comparative linguistics, and within linguistics, it is mainly an aspect of semantics; all questions of semantics relate to translation theory» (1988a: 5).

Newmark (1988a, 1988b) points out that in order to be able to translate a text, one has to understand it and analyse it first. For this reason, translation theories should have a criteria to be followed by the translator. The intention of a text –the translator has to forget about his/her own views about a subject and translate it following the author's intention and never alter it. The intention of the translator –whether s/he is trying to reproduce the emotiveness of the original, or whether s/he is trying to combine the cultural sense of the SL. The reader and the setting of the text: the translator has to think who the reader is –age, sex, class, education– in order to carry out the translation. And the quality of the writing and the authority of the text –the translator has to take into account if the text is well written and also if the author of the SL is a well-known authority (1988: 20-21).

In addition, in order to situate the discipline of translation, I shall detail in the next section –following Edwin Gentzler’s schema– how this discipline arose. Gentzler (2001: 5-131) attributes the birth of translation theory to structuralism and distinguishes five approaches to translation which began in the 1960s: The North-American translation workshop; the *mot-a-mot* theory by Georges Mounin; the «science» of translation; early translation studies; the Polysystem theory; and deconstruction².

3.1. *The North-American Translation Workshop*

Until both theory and practice were segregated, translation consisted only in a language learning process which began through comparative literature, ‘translation workshops’ and contrastive analysis. The translation workshop concept was a common practice in the universities of the United States during the 1960s. This concept, encouraged mainly in Iowa and Princeton, was based on the ideas of I.A Richards, whose approach, reading workshops and practical criticism, began in the 1920s. Mechanical rather than creative, it did not have much interest to the general public. The Belgian scholar Theo Hermans (2007) talked about the fact that «the role of “translation” moved on from the practical workshop to being redefined» (2007: 81-84). Simultaneously, the comparative literature approach emerged and it consisted of studying and comparing literature in a transnational and transcultural way. This study will culminate in what is known nowadays as *cultural studies*, which I will discuss later in this paper, and whose most representative scholars are André Lefevere, José Lambert, Theo Hermans, Itamar Even-Zohar, Gideon Toury, and Susan Bassnett.

3.2. *Georges Mounin’s mot-a-mot Theory*

Other studies in translation which emerged during the 1950s and 1960s include that of Georges Mounin (1955), who examined linguistic issues of translation. Mounin mentioned that in the 1960s there was no other study on this subject in Europe besides sheer practice: universities such as Geneva, Paris, Naples, Heidelberg, Mainz, Leuven, etc, had their own courses on translation; however, their teaching methods consisted in the practice of the language through translation without dealing with theory itself (Mounin, 1963: 26).

According to Mounin, all arguments against translation are simplified in just one: it is not the original. If we take this as a reference, we will find it

² Gentzler’s deconstruction approach will not be discussed in this paper, for it is not the subject at hand.

impossible to achieve the perfect product and we might conclude that the so-called translation is not possible. Nevertheless, translation performs a vital and arguably necessary role in human culture and interaction, and opens up multiple works of literature to which access would otherwise be denied. Mounin gives us a few insights into how he considers a text should be translated; one of these ideas is *mot à mot* (word-for-word), inherited from 46 B.C. This metaphor is the most faithful translation to the original, it respects the text and it consists in translating words one by one.

3.3. *The ‘Science’ of Translation: The Concept of Equivalence*

The main representatives are the generativists Noam Chomsky and Eugene Nida. Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet³ (1958), Roman Jakobson (1959), Eugene Nida (1959), and J.C. Catford (1965), who were the first scholars to use the word «equivalence». As Hurtado notes (2001: 204), the concept of equivalence has generated controversy and has been studied by many authors, mainly because of its importance in the process of the definition of translation such as Rudolf Walter Jumpelt, Eugene Nida and Charles Taber, J.C. Catford, Otto Kade, Albrecht Neubert, Josef Filipec, Marianne Lederer, Danica Seleskovitch, Wolfram Wilss, J.C. Margot, Aryeh Newman, Juliane House, Katherina Reiß and Hans Vermeer, Mary Snell-Hornby, Basil and Ian Mason, Edwin Gentzler, etc. The theories of these scholars about the concept of equivalence are many and come in several shades, so I shall only explore Jakobson's, concept of equivalence in this section.

The Russian structuralist Roman Jakobson (1959) propounded three interesting categories to interpret the concept of translation: *Intralingual* translation or «rewording»: an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language; *interlingual* translation or «translation proper» is the most traditional way of translating: an interpretation of linguistic signs by means of some other language. This category is considered to be the genuine one since it consists in translating a text into another language; *intersemiotic* translation or «transmutation»: an interpretation of verbal signs by means of non-verbal sign systems (when a text is translated into a non-verbal text such as music, film or painting) (Jakobson, 1959-1966: 233).

Jakobson (1959) approaches the problem of equivalence in different languages stressing the fact that the perfect equivalent between words in

³ Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet were very much influenced by the contrastive analysis and, together with J. C. Catford were the main representatives of the linguistic approach.

languages does not exist: «Likewise, on the level of interlingual translation, there is ordinarily no full equivalence between code-units» (1959: 233). The example given by this scholar was the concept of the English word *cheese* which he says it is different from the concept of cheese in his mother tongue *syr*. His theory is based on the notion that *syr* in Russian does not include the notion of *cottage cheese* since in this language it would be *tvarok*. This scholar argues that: «Equivalence in difference is the cardinal problem of language and the pivotal concern of linguistics» (Jakobson, 1959: 233). Newmark (1988a: 39), on the contrary, thinks that «all translations are based implicitly on a theory of language» and does not entirely agree with Jakobson in this aspect.

3.4. *Early Translation Studies: James Holmes*

In an attempt to find out more about translation procedures as opposed to a theory of translation, translation studies emerged with James Holmes and André Lefevere as its most important precursors.

Based on Russian structuralism, the study of translation as an academic subject began when James Holmes considered it important to study it as a discipline in itself around sixty years ago; the name given to Holmes's discipline was *translation studies* or *traductología* and *traductologie*⁴ in Spanish and French respectively.

Nevertheless, the designation 'translation studies' would seem to be the most appropriate of all those available in English, and its adoption as the standard term for the discipline as a whole would remove a fair amount of confusion and misunderstanding (Holmes, 1975-1994:70).

The main target of translation changed from being a language learning process, to being a field of academic investigation; Holmes gave it the view of a science and propounded the name of *Translation Studies* (henceforth TS) in his article 'The Name and Nature of Translation Studies' (Holmes, 1975-1994) to designate any research focused on the study of translation noting the empirical nature of the discipline. He, then, divided TS into three subcategories: *descriptive*, *theoretical* and *applied* (Holmes, 1975-1994: 71, 73, 77).

In his article, Holmes talks of two fundamental objectives of descriptive and theoretical studies: «to describe the phenomena of translating and

⁴ For a more homogeneous understanding of the concepts being discussed in this paper, I have considered crucial to choose a unique term to define the science or study of translation. Hence, following Holmes's terminology I will use the name 'translation studies' to designate the study or theory of translation.

translation(s) as they manifest themselves in the work of experience» (*Descriptive Translation Studies*, henceforth DTS), and «to establish general principles by means of which these phenomena can be explained and predicted» (Translation Theory, henceforth TTh) (Holmes, 1975-1994:71).

The descriptive subcategory would focus on the study of existing products (textual study), and the result of the specific translation (study of the process) which performs a specific function in the target culture (context study). The second subcategory, *theory of translation*, would aim to establish the general parameters and models that can help explain and predict the translations. The main difference between both is that DTS attempts to describe the phenomena of translation whereas theoretical translation studies aim to establish the general principles to predict and explain such facts in an abstract manner. Finally, the subcategory of *applied translation* will focus on learning, critical and historical goals. At present, thirty years later, the consolidation of the discipline is more evident, since translation studies has its own methodology. Holmes states the necessity of «other communication channels, cutting across the traditional disciplines to reach all scholars working in the field, from whatever background» (1975-1994: 68).

The following schema illustrates Holmes' view on TS: descriptive and theoretical translation studies which he classified as 'pure', and the applied translation studies to which he refers, following Bacon's words, as «of use rather than of light» (1975-1994: 77).

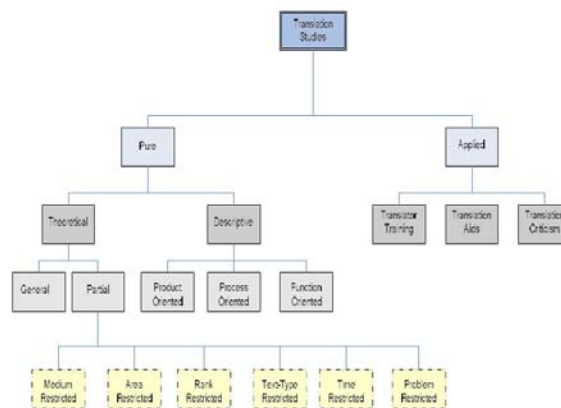


Figure 2: 'Holmes' Map'

Taking Holmes' schema as a reference, it can be said that descriptive translation studies can be divided into three subcategories: Product-oriented descriptive translation studies –where translations are described and compared in a synchronic and a diachronic way–; process-oriented descriptive translation studies –the description of the process or act of translating–; function-oriented descriptive translation studies –the focus of this subcategory is on the socio-cultural situation of translation– (1975-1994: 72-73).

Regarding theoretical translation studies, Holmes distinguishes between *general* and *partial* theories, and then proposes six subcategories of partial theories which are all restricted: Medium-restricted theoretical translation studies –human translation, subdivided into written and oral translation, machine translation and mixed translations; Area-restricted theoretical translation studies –restricted to the linguistic and cultural area–; rank-restricted theoretical translation studies –texts are analysed at sentence or word level–; text-type theoretical translation studies –scientific, literary or theological texts are Time-restricted theoretical translation studies –the differences between contemporary and older texts are analysed–; problem-restricted theoretical translation studies –it deals with problems when translating names or metaphors– (1975-1994: 74-76).

With regard to applied translation studies, Holmes makes a distinction between three subcategories: Translator training –it concentrates on translation as a way to test second language acquisition and translation training–; translation aids –which concerns lexicographical and terminological aids and grammar–; translation policy –the purpose of the scholar is «to render informed advice to others in defining the place and role of translators, translating and translations in society at large»–; and translation criticism –Holmes claims that there was a low level of criticism at the time– (1975-1994:77-78). Thus, Holmes asserts that these three subcategories or sub-branches cannot be isolated from one another for they complement each other.

Hence, TS changed from being a completely unnoticed area of study, which consisted of the mechanical practice of transporting from one to another, to being an object of deep study and a well-known and active science.

3.5. The Polysystem Theory

In the 1970s with the help of a colleague from the Tel-Aviv school – Gideon Toury– Even-Zohar discussed the ideas proposed in previous years and applied them to studies on comparative literature, resulting in what it is known as *the polysystem theory*. The main contribution to the theory was the concept

of system, which was understood as a structure with different levels whose related elements interacted with one another. Even-Zohar (1978) thus states:

The idea of the literary polysystem need not detain us long. I first suggested this concept in 1970 in an attempt to overcome difficulties resulting from the fallacies of the traditional aesthetic approach, which prevented any preoccupation with works judged to be of no artistic value (1978: 22).

Even-Zohar asserts in his paper «Polysystem Theory» (1979) that the term «polysystem» is more than a sheer terminology and expresses that he aims to prove the concept of system as something dynamic and heterogeneous as opposed to the synchronic approach. He defines it as

Polysystem theory is basically a continuation of dynamic functionalism. Its concept of an open, dynamic and heterogeneous system is perhaps more able to encourage the emergence of favourable conditions to allow the discovery power of relational thinking (Even-Zohar, 2005a: 35).

This idea, then, understands literature as a dynamic and heterogeneous complex system constituted by numerous subsystems, where a large number of tendencies co-exist. And where different literary schemes, which come from a different level, are put into groups. The literary polysystem is interrelated with other systems which belong to the socio-economic and ideological structures of each society. Thus, in literary analysis not only does the textual production matter, but also its acceptance in a historical context and its relationship with other literatures. According to them, culture is conceived as the organizing axis of social life, a system of systems. Gentzler (1993: 107) attributes the connection between the discipline of TS and the polysystem theory to a connection ‘between what was being suggested in the Netherlands and what was being postulated in Israel’. Gentzler mentions that the scholars from Israel embody notions on ‘translation equivalence and literary function into a large structure’ (*ibidem*). The most important concepts of this school are: Transfer; interference; and canonized vs. non-canonized. Transfer determines the degree of instability between the systems.

These can adopt a central or peripheral position; Interference refers to the transfer of cultural elements between systems; and finally canonized vs. non-canonized decides the status of the original texts, those conventions considered acceptable, etc.

Moreover, translation has a primary type –which consists of creating new genres and styles– and a secondary type –which involves reasserting existing genres and styles–. The primary type is characteristic of young literatures with weak literary systems and where translation holds an

important place whereas the secondary type is characteristic of literatures with a strong tradition, where translation plays a marginal or peripheral role; in other words, conservative cultures. Toury follows this theory and proposes a translation analysis in which translation is understood as the result of a cultural transfer; he later proposes a concept of norms based on these ideas. In TS, the polysystem theory prepared the ground for the so-called *cultural turn* and resulted in the development of DTS.

3.6. The Concept of Norm

Gideon Toury first introduced this concept at the end of the 1970s with the intention of establishing a list of rules that he named *norms*, and which he defines as

the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate into performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations, specifying what is pre-scribed and forbidden as well as what is tolerated and permitted in a certain behavioural dimension [...]. (Toury, 1955: 55)

Toury takes this theory as a basis for translation, and proposes an analysis in which translation is understood as the product of a cultural transference. He insists on the importance of the descriptive data as the basis of the theory, proposes the concept of norm and divides it into various categories. The following schema is an exposition of Toury's concept or norm which clearly captures his theory.

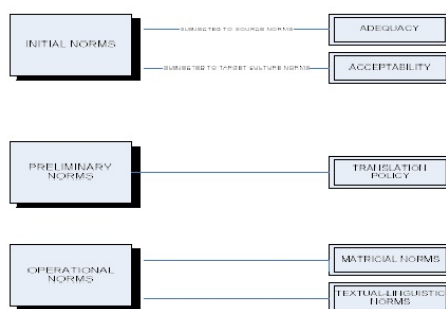


Figura 3: 'The Concept of Norm'

Initial norms refer to the basic choice of the translator: if s/he subjugates himself/herself to the norms of the target culture. As a consequence, two concepts arise: the first is adequacy –which consists in respecting the culture norms of the source text– and the second one is acceptability which consists in embracing the norms of the target text.

Preliminary norms refer to the translation policy which was carried out before the translation process.

Operational norms will regulate the decisions which will be made during the process of translation itself. This represents a series of norms called a) matricial norms: it includes addition of footnotes, and omission or addition of paragraphs, etc; and b) textual –linguistic norms, which chooses the linguistic tools–vocabulary, style and so on (1995: 56-59).

4. Development of Translation Studies: Five Approaches

According to Hurtado (2001: 559), following Hermans, the descriptive and systematic perspectives of translation emerged during the 60s, were developed during the 70s, extended during the 80s, and finally consolidated, expanded and revised during the 90s.

Currently, TS is considered to be a well-consolidated discipline in which many different approaches have emerged over the last three decades. Hurtado (2001: 131) classifies five approaches related to TS: The linguistic approach, whose main representatives are Vinay and Darbelnet, Catford, etc; the textual approach, whose main representatives are Reiß, Neubert, Hatim and Mason, etc.; the cognitive approach, whose main representatives are Bell, Gutt, Sleskovitch, etc; the communicative and sociocultural approach, whose main representatives are Snell-Horby, Hermans, etc; and the philosophical and hermeneutic approach, whose main representatives are Schókel, Ladmira, Paz, Venuti, Robinson, etc.

In order to offer a clearer view of this classification, I have included a diagram below which contains a summary of the five approaches and their main representatives mentioned by Hurtado (2001).

Although there is no doubt that a detailed study of the five approaches would be of enormous interest, it would represent a totally different article. Thus, I have decided to focus only on the communicative and socio-cultural approach –and more specifically on the *skopos*– due to the close connection that it has with audiovisual translation.

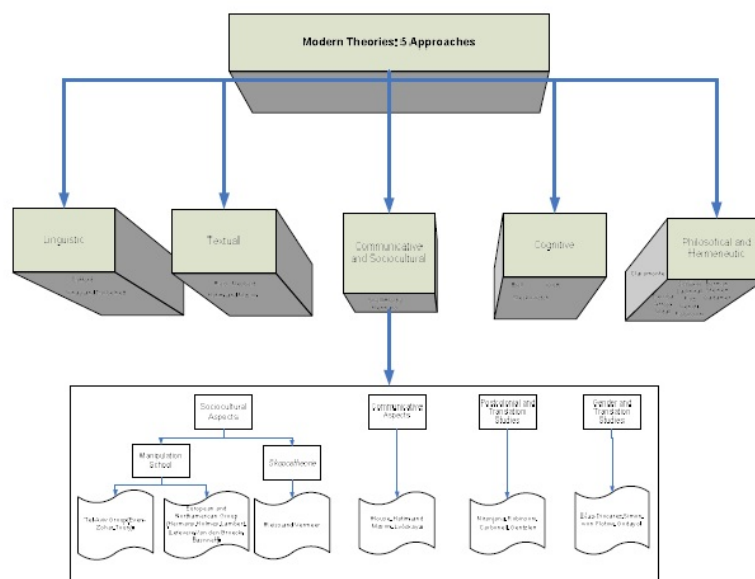


Figura 4: ‘Modern Theories: Five Approaches’

5. The Communicative and Socio-Cultural Approach: *Skopos*theorie

The communicative and socio-cultural approach belongs to the descriptive studies whose main representatives are Mary Snell-Horby, Theo Hermans, Itamar Even-Zohar, Gideon Toury, James Holmes, José Lambert, André Lefevere, and Susan Bassnett. This approach is, at the same time, divided into four subcategories or aspects: those focusing on the sociocultural aspects; those which focus on the communicative aspects; postcolonial and translation studies, and gender and translation studies.

The scholars who follow the socio-cultural and communicative approach focus their study on the cultural elements or contextual aspects in order to carry out their analysis. This can be separated into two groups: those who work from a communicative point of view, focusing on extra textual aspects; and those who deal with translation from a socio-cultural point of view, including translators of Bibles; the manipulation school; the polysystem theory; the *skopos* theory; postcolonial studies; feminine or gender studies and those studies which focus on cultural aspects.

As regards communicative aspects, there are some scholars who deal with the issue of equivalence from a communicative point of view –such as House (1986)–, who insist on the idea of equivalence in translation and claims that the translator has to be necessarily familiar with the cultural issues of the target language.

A new current, based on the concept of equivalence of Nida (1959), the *skopostheory*, was developed by the German functionalism which arises from the idea of the *theory of the skopos*, the Greek term for ‘aim’ or ‘purpose’ as described by Munday (2008: 79), first proposed by Hans J. Vermeer in 1978. This theory is explained in Katharina Reiß & H.J. Vermeer’s *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie*⁵ (1984). In the words of Vermeer, what the theory discusses is

[that] one must translate, consciously and consistently, in accordance with some principle respecting the target text [...]. The *skopos* theory merely states that the translator should be aware that some goal exists and that any given goal is only one among many possible ones (Vermeer, 1989-2004: 234).

The *skopos* is the goal of any translation, which must not coincide necessarily with the aim of the text. The *skopos* theory focuses on the aim of translation and the adequate elements, such as the translation methods and strategies needed, which will ensure a perfect outcome. This outcome is the TT, which Vermeer calls *translatum* (Vermeer, 1989-2004: 229).

According to Christiane Nord (1997: 12), «*skopostheorie* was developed as the foundation for a general theory of translation able to embrace theories dealing with specific languages and cultures». Each translation has a purpose for it is not the same to translate a Coca-cola advert as a hymn in Church.

The German scholar (1997: 1) describes functionalism or functionalist as: «“functionalist” means focusing on the function or functions of texts and translations». She stressed the fact that *skopostheorie* was the premise which played the most important role among all the functionalist approaches, and that it dramatically helped in the development of this approach (1997: 1).

Functional theories were the first to identify substantial changes in the field of translation studies. One of these changes was the shift of the source text to the target text and the consideration of cultural as well as linguistic factors. Their main representatives are Katharina Reiß, Hans J. Vermeer, Mary Snell-Horby, Christiane Nord and Justa Holz-Mänttari and they stress

⁵ *Groundwork for a General Theory of Translation.*

that the translator should choose the appropriate translation method according to the needs of the audience and the nature of the text.

Gentzer, following the principles of functionalism, claims that with this approach the dichotomy «faithful versus free axis» (2001: 71) ends, since both can be combined depending on the purpose of the text. The only condition for this to happen is that the translation has «to be coherent and fluent» as Nida expressed in his «dynamic equivalence» (Gentzler, 2001: 71). According to House (1986: 179), the work of the translator consists of reading the text and writing a new text: «the translator has both a decoding task («reading») and an encoding task («writing») such that his private negotiation/anticipation task is a duel one». It is part of the preparatory exercise before translating a text, the translator has to be aware of the cultural and sociocultural matters: «an important part of this type of preparatory translating exercise is an explicit comparison of sociocultural norms» (1986: 185).

Let me demonstrate through the following diagram what the process of translation implies taking this theory as a reference, in which not only the translation word-for-word is considered, but also the culture of both languages:

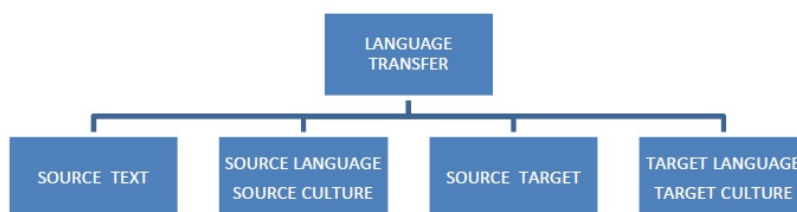


Figure 5: ‘The Translation Process’

This proves that a text cannot be translated literally; there are other factors to take into account. When the *translatum* differs, from the cultural point of view, from the original, then a culture distance occurs (Nord, 1997: 97).

Reiß and Vermeer introduced the following concepts: intratextual consistency or coherence –coherency with the target text–; intertextual

consistency or coherence –existence of any relationship between the original text and the target text–; and the commission of the translation itself and the difference between equivalence and adequacy. They consider that we cannot speak of *equivalence* but, instead, of *adequacy*, which consists in the appropriate choice of signs for the sheer purpose of translation. *Equivalence* has to go beyond the text and should include the word cultural as in *cultural equivalence*. They emphasise the function of the source text and the possibility of changing it in the translated/target text. Therefore, when the translation has its own function, e.g. when the goal of the source text and that of the target text do not meet, we cannot speak of *equivalence* but of *adequacy*:

Adecuación en la traducción de un texto (o elemento textual) de partida se refiere a la relación que existe entre el texto final y el de partida teniendo en cuenta de forma consecuente el objetivo (escopo) que se persigue con el proceso de traducción (Reiß and Vermeer, 1984-1996:124).

Equivalencia es, según nuestra definición, un tipo especial de adecuación, es decir, adecuación cuando la función entre el texto de partida y el final se mantiene constante (*Ibidem*: 125).

Nord points out that «Katherina Reiß knew that real life presents situations where equivalence is not possible» (Nord, 1997: 9). She advocates «adequacy» but not «equivalence» and in the *skopostheorie*, equivalence means «adequacy to the skopos» (*ibidem* 36). Vermeer based his study on the theory of action. Therefore, for those in favour of the *skopostheorie*, the act of translation «means comparing cultures» (*ibidem* 34).

The theory of skopos was intended to be a general theory applicable to all fields, included audiovisual texts. In some occasions, one might be able to translate word-for-word and in some others, one can follow adequacy –or in Dryden`s words, paraphrasing– if necessary. This is a theory that could be applicable to the translation of every text since not only the linguistic aspect, but also the cultural ones would be taken into account.

6. Audiovisual Translation

6.1. Defining the Term

Many terms have been employed to refer to film or TV programme translation. The term *transadaptation* or *film dubbing* was used by István Fodor in 1976; *Film translation* was the term used by Mary Snell-Horby, 1988; Ian Mason used the term *screen translation* in 1989; *traducción cinematográfica* was the term used by Amparo Hurtado in 1994; and Jorge

Díaz Cintas, in 2001, used the term *traducción audiovisual*. *Audiovisual translation*, and *multimedia translation* were first proposed by Gambier in 2003 and he also mentions the term *transadaptation* which Eithne O'Connell used again in 2007. In the end, as time went on, there was a clear tendency towards the use of a preferred term: «audiovisual translation».

Audiovisual translation, then, is a modality of translation which arose in the 1930s and it could be defined as the technical method that made the linguistic transfer of an audiovisual text possible. When talking about audiovisual translation, one must also take into account the technical procedure used in order to carry out the linguistic transfer from an audiovisual language to another (Chaume, 2004: 31). Chaume's concept of audiovisual translation is understood as

una variedad de traducción que se caracteriza por la particularidad de los textos objeto de la transferencia interlingüística. Estos objetos, como su nombre indica, aportan información (traducible) a través de dos canales de comunicación que transmiten significados codificados de manera simultánea: el canal acústico (las vibraciones acústicas a través de las cuales recibimos las palabras, la información paralingüística, la banda sonora y los efectos especiales) y el canal visual (las ondas luminosas a través de las que recibimos imágenes en movimiento (...)) (Chaume 2004: 30).

The origin of the problems of an audiovisual text began with the rise of cinema at the end of the 19th century. During the silent-film era, intertitles had to be translated and/or interpreted and soon after, with the beginning of films with sound, subtitles and (later) dubbing were absolutely necessary.

As Chaume (2004) highlights, cinema or audiovisual texts were considered inferior due to their language deficits and the limitation on space and time which was mistakenly conceived of as an aesthetically inferior product compared to the literary work. Chaume also talks about how audiovisual translation has been excluded as a discipline and how critics, when analyzing a film, emphasise aspects other than the work carried out by the translator, an idea also advanced by Díaz Cintas:

Cuando se analiza una película a través de los ojos del crítico de otra cultura, el énfasis recae fundamentalmente en aspectos fílmicos como el montaje, el desarrollo argumental, las implicaciones socio-culturales, la representación de estereotipos, etc. Rara vez se hace referencia a la transferencia lingüística que ha tenido lugar (Díaz Cintas, 2001: 20).

As Pilar Orero (2009) stresses, research on audiovisual translation started in 1932 but it began to be studied as part of the discipline of TS around the 1980s. Audiovisual translation had not been *truly* considered a part of the discipline of TS until that time. However, new approaches arose

as a consequence of the eager interest that cinematographic texts had caused in recent years, and the need to translate (subtitle and/or dub) these texts. According to Gambier (2003), audiovisual communication conferences gained importance in 1995, probably due to the hundredth anniversary of the birth of cinema and also due to the advances in new technology: «we are now surrounded by screens». (Gambier, 2003: 171).

6.2. *New Approaches to Audiovisual Translation*

As mentioned earlier on, the polysystem theory (see 3.5) arose in the 1970s taking literary studies as a reference. In addition, it was also applied to audiovisual texts during the 1990s when scholars began to explore the field of audiovisual translation as a more serious matter, as stated by Gambier (2003). The pioneer in applying the polysystem theory to audiovisual texts was Patrick Cattrysse who, in 1992, propounded the polysystem theories applied to translation with the peculiarity of introducing audiovisual texts –cinematographic texts– as a reference. On this basis, he quite rightly proposes to use translation techniques as an instrument for the analysis and description of the processes of cinematographic adaptation «[...] translation studies and film adaptation studies are both concerned with the transformation of source into target texts under some condition of “invariance”, or “equivalence”» (Cattrysse 1992: 54). Hence, it was established that the polysystem theory could be applied not only to literature and translation, but also to cinema.

I wish to join a relatively new tendency among a group of translation scholars who believe that there are no grounds for reducing the concept of translation to interlinguistic relationships only and who accept that translation is in fact a semiotic phenomenon of a general nature (Cattrysse, 1992: 54).

In the following section, I shall distinguish between audiovisual translation as a process and audiovisual translation as a product, following Chaume's line of research.

6.3. *Audiovisual Translation as a Process*

When Chaume refers to audiovisual translation as a process, he refers to the previous analysis of the audiovisual text and the «fases que conlleva la translación de un texto audiovisual a otro, las estrategias empleadas, la configuración textual de cada una de ellas, con especial énfasis en el *texto origen*» (2004: 116). According to the scholar, the theoretical contributions

on audiovisual translation cover the following fields: Theoretical studies on the possible location of the audiovisual text; communicative studies; and descriptive studies.

6.3.1 *Theoretical Studies*

In this section, I will go through the main contributions that have been made on audiovisual texts from the translation point of view respecting Chaume's (2004) order.

Reiß suggests a classification of texts according to the discourse function; the discourse dimension; and the text type.

And, although in her basic approach she does not include audiovisual texts as such, she introduces a fourth category that she calls *Audio-mediale Texte* (audio-medial text type) in which audiovisual texts could be included (Reiß, 197; cit. Chaume, 2004: 118).

Other scholars such as Bassnett (1980-1991) and Snell-Horby (1988) treat an audiovisual text as a literary text due to the category of work of art given to films. Bassnett talks about a category called «Translation and Poetics» in which audiovisual translation would be integrated:

Studies may be general or genre-specific, including investigation of particular problems of translating poetry, theatre texts or libretti and the affiliated problem of translation for the cinema, whether dubbing or subtitling (Bassnett, 1980-1991: 7-8).

Both Bassnett and Snell-Horby include this type of translation in the category of literary translation. Bassnett uses a more adventurous name and calls it *translation for the cinema* (1980-1991: 7-8) and Snell-Horby, who also includes this modality within the literary translation, at the same time refers to it as *Stage/Film Translation* (1988: 32). Thereby, he conceives the two categories, theatre and cinema, as one category to be analysed. Chaume (2004) disagrees with this theory, since he considers that audiovisual texts cannot be integrated into the category of literary translation as there are other aspects to take into account, not only the linguistic ones. He also follows the theories of Brano Hochel, who does not include audiovisual texts within the category of literary translation, and explains that there are other factors to consider in addition to the text itself:

The text is to be understood from the standpoint of semiotics, that is to say, as the message in the relevant language (system of signs, code) with its own alphabet (vocabulary) and its own grammar (syntax, rules for linking signs) (Hochel, 1986: 152; cit. Chaume, 2004).

6.3.2. *Communicative Studies*

Rosa Agost claims that an audiovisual text

se caracteriza, desde un punto de vista pragmático, por el tipo de participantes en el acto comunicativo, por las situaciones de comunicación y por la intención comunicativa; desde una perspectiva de la situación comunicativa, por la variedades de uso y de usuario; y desde un punto de vista semiótico, por el género (1999: 24).

Agost (1999: 8) distinguishes four codes when referring to audiovisual translation: The written code –script–; the oral code –the actor’s performance–; and the musical and visual –the image–.

And she classifies audiovisual translation by genres: Dramatic –films, soup operas, animation, sitcoms, etc.–; informative –documentaries, informative programmes, reality-shows, interviews, weather forecast, etc.–; advertising –TV adverts, TV sales, etc.–; entertainment –TV contests, comedy programmes, horoscope, etc– (1999: 29-31).

Agost stresses the fact that synchronism between voices and images is the most important matter to take into account. However, M^a Eugenia Del Águila and Emma Rodero (2005) do not agree with this statement and insist on the fact that the most important thing in dubbing and subtitling is the speed of the words and the pace of the images.

6.3.3. *Descriptive Studies*

It is important to mention István Fodor (1976), and Jan Ivarsson (1992, 1998) within this section when dealing with descriptive studies on audiovisual translation. Fodor (1976) was the pioneer in describing the different types of synchronization and in developing the so-called visual phonetics. Visual phonetics, dealt with the problematic of the adjustment of the movements of the actors’ mouth on screen with the actual phonemes that the translation needed to adjust in order to avoid discrepancy and loss of reality. Ivarsson’s study (1992) relates technical matters with translation, such as the editing of subtitling, the problematics of the synchronization between the subtitle and the image or the sound.

6.3.4. *Audiovisual Translation as a Product*

Chaume (2004: 140-142) establishes a classification system to understand the term translation in the context of audiovisual studies. The first group includes those studies that consider the term *translation* as the process of translating a text from one field to another without this

translation being obligatory to a TL different from the SL. For example, literature to cinema, comic to cinema, theatre to cinema, etc. Here, Chaume accepts Jakobson's (1959) classification in which he distinguished between intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic translation. In this section, he refers to the first classification of Jakobson (*intralingual* translation) in which there is no change of language but a change of medium.

The second group includes those studies which focus on the cultural impact of the translation of audiovisual texts, the acceptance/reception of the translated text, and the required adjustments of those texts in which they get the inspiration from. That is, studies that focus on the translation norms related to audiovisual texts. It is interesting to mention Zabalbeascoa's (1996) argument on Jakobson's classification of translation, since he considers the first two (interlingual and intralingual) incomplete forms of translation for focusing only on the verbal aspect, whilst intersemiotic translation would be more satisfactory.

7. Conclusions

To conclude, translation or translating is a constant dichotomy between being faithful to the original text and being faithful to the target text, which implies not only respecting the culture but also the target language's society and rules. That is why translating an audiovisual text is a difficult task that has no correct or incorrect answers, but different opinions or approaches. One of the difficulties when translating is introducing the culture since it is in such situation when adaptation becomes necessary and when the translator faces the predicament of trying to please the entire audience, a task not easy to achieve.

In summary, there is a vast culture that the translator should take into account in order to undertake linguistic transfer: training in linguistics, literature, history and culture. Moreover, one must not forget that translation exists in order to transmit the original meaning of a text to a different language avoiding cultural prejudices which may lead us to change the text we are translating. Finally, the job of the translator consists in communicating, even though what we are translating belongs to two linguistically and culturally different systems, always respecting the fact that perfect synonymy does not exist in language (Bernal, 2002: 18), and respecting that, as Xianbin He expresses, «the translators obviously have the last say, for they are the only people doing the creative work of translation» (2007: 25).

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