

This article was originally published in Károly, Krisztina and Fóris Ágota (eds). 2005. *New Trends in Translation Studies in Honour of Kinga Klaudy*. Budapest: Adadémiai Kiadó. 75-93

MODELS AND FRAMEWORKS FOR DISCUSSING TRANSLATION STUDIES

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Abstract

Summing up some of the author's thinking over the years, this article posits that many current models in Translation Studies are out-of-date. One reason is that ultimately they are based on an idea that one translator mediates between an identifiable author and identifiable recipients and renders a 'translation' of an identifiable 'source text'. Furthermore, these models often involve sequentiality, obvious chronological and spatial distances, and they tend to be founded on Indo-European language pairs. They often imply that a translator can be omniscient and consequently make a 'perfect' translation. The present article explores these issues in order to show that they easily lead to mistakes and flawed thinking. It therefore argues that Translation Studies needs to rethink these issues. The article proceeds to present a framework that allows for today's multiplicity of translational situations. Such a framework is needed because Translation Studies is moving into a globalised world in which translations take place between linguistically unrelated cultures. The article proceeds to a discussion of how such a framework will allow us to deal with source-texts, translations, originals, and co-existing translations in ways that correspond to translation work – in the past, the present, and the future.

Preliminary models of translation

It can be argued that each mode of inter-linguistic transfer (ranging from, e.g., face-to-face interactive conversation mediated by consecutive interpreting to one-way international communications between a firm and its customers, as with manuals) calls for a theory of its own. However, in this context, I will highlight the common features of these modes, such as references to (a) a message and (b) specific language pairs (for instance – as are staples for most readers of this *Festschrift* to my colleague Kinga Klaudy – Hungarian, English, and Danish).

We can start by approaching translation as an act of communication. Accordingly, a simple model of communication is an appropriate basis for a discussion of why translation is a uniquely complicated phenomenon and why beginners (as well as professionals) are confronted with a bewildering array of approaches, attitudes, views, and suggestions.

A simple model of communication looks as follows:

Sender > message > receiver

When we apply this model to interlingual transfers, we introduce a translator, or a mediator. If we refer to the 'physical and tangible elements', we have the following simple series: ...// 76 ...

A sender > a message > a translator > a message > a recipient.

If we look at the linguistic message alone, we can identify:

A source text > a translation process > a translation.

If we refer to the activities involved, they look as follows:

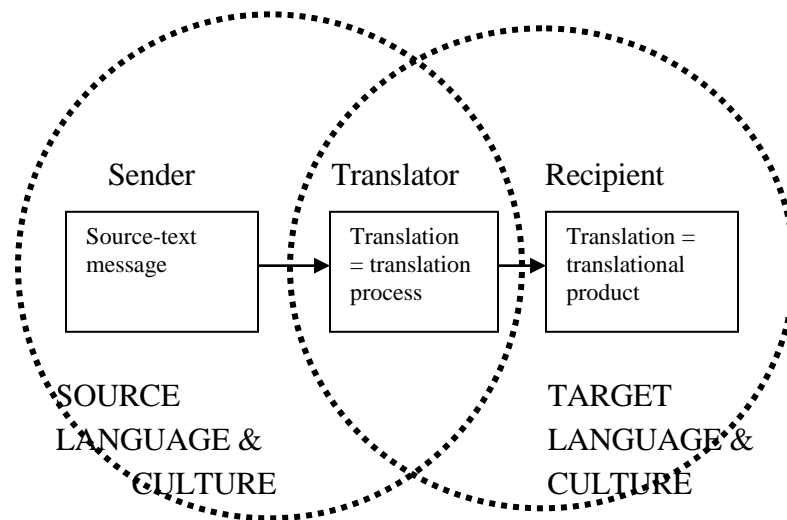
- Encoding (that is, ‘uttering’, ‘writing’ a message)
- Decoding (that is, ‘reading’, ‘understanding’ the message in the same language, either (a) by a native speaker, or (b) by a (future or actual) translator)
- + Mediation (that is, ‘transfer to another language in some (indeterminate) form’)
- + Encoding (that is, ‘expressing the message in specific phrases’ in the target language)
- > Decoding (that is, ‘reading’ or ‘understanding’ by somebody in the target language in the target culture).

Combining some of the key concepts of Translation Studies (in bold), we can describe translation in the following fashion:

1. **A sender in the source culture** >
2. *encodes a message (the **source text**) uttered in the **source language*** >
3. *which is (nearly-)simultaneously received (= decoded) mediated (= encoded), ‘sent’ (in the **translation process**)* >
4. *as a message (the **translation** or the **product of translation**) in the **target language** for*
5. *subsequent decoding by **recipients (the audience)** in the **target culture**.*¹

The translational activity described above, is illustrated in figure 1:

Figure 1:
TRANSLATION: A PRELIMINARY OVERVIEW



This is merely a preliminary model that will serve as a point of departure in this article.²

To sum up, there is a message that was said or written by a sender in the source language. Somebody, somewhere, somehow, for some reason or other, decodes the source-language message and (simultaneously) encodes it in a target language. Translation is normally undertaken in order to fulfil some purpose, as has been emphasised by numerous scholars, notably by Hans Vermeer (e.g. 1983) and Christiane Nord (e.g. 1991). ...//77 ...This purpose may or may not be ‘identical’ with, but usually gives the target-language audience an idea of, what the source text was intended to mean or bring about in the source culture. However, because of the translation process, we are dealing with two separate products, namely that of (a) the source-culture sender, which is intended for recipients in the source culture, and (b) the translator’s work, which is meant for recipients ‘only’ in the target culture.

However, to qualify as a translation, there must be a recognised relation to the source text. With some caution we can liken this to a chain of cause and effect. It presupposes that, somehow or other, the source text exists before the translation. This is usually considered an essential feature of translation and it entails sequentiality and time.

Texts for translation

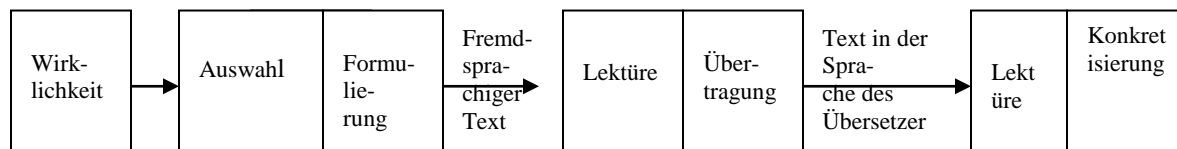
Many of the central concepts and much of the thinking in Translation Studies derive from people who – until well after World War II - were primarily concerned with elitist texts, especially religious and literary s. Translators working with technical, scientific, and legal documents focused on practical translation and took little interest in developing concepts concerning the activity of translation and translational products. Furthermore, the people who translated elitist texts would frequently be literati, who did *con amore* translation, or people undertaking transla-

tion in pursuit of some elevated goal such as the greater glory of their religious beliefs. The latter was, for instance, the case with the Christian Bible and the Buddhist sutras that were translated from Sanskrit into Chinese. ...// 78 ... Thus, they focused on providing ‘a faithful rendition’, that is, on the message embedded in the source text, perhaps even its vocabulary, sentence structure, and style. The discussions thus became source-text oriented, and - because these fields are highly sensitive in terms of ‘values’ - also frequently intensely emotional.

Since they were usually high-status texts, in both the source and the target cultures, these literary and religious texts were often authoritative and usually considered important (Dollerup 2004a). The source texts were older - often much older - than the translation(s). In other words, the derivative nature of the translational product as well as the chronological sequentiality in the chain of translational communication were factors beyond dispute. In European classrooms, students were also asked to do translations of texts, normally on a word-for-word basis, since this served to show that they understood the source texts (until well into the 20th century, frequently in Latin). It also led to a pervasive attitude towards translation as an ancillary service, and to the perceived inferiority of the translation (made by pupils) sanctioned by teachers (clients) on behalf of the authors who might be from classical Antiquity.

In order to illustrate how such ideas pervade models, we can cite Jiří Levý’s model of the “Kommunikationskette” [the chain of translational communication]. It is shown in figure 2:

Figure 2:
JIŘÍ LEVÝ’S “KOMMUNIKATIONSKETTE”



(Levý 1969: 33)

A similar sequentiality is implied in Nida’s model of the translator’s activity (1964: 146), and it is found in numerous other models or sketches, including mine (e.g. above).

I suggest that, on closer inspection, some models of this type implicitly make the innocent reader assume that translation involves one identifiable sender, one identifiable translator, and identifiable recipients.

All these factors contribute to making many teachers and even some translation scholars use words and phrases implying that there is a ‘perfect’ rendition of the sender’s message, even though most serious scholars will stress that this is not the case. There are two points to note, though. The first is that many words and phrases used in discussions of translation indicate that, e.g., equivalence is possible (e.g., “the text has been **altered**”, “this is **lost** in translation”, etc.).

The second point is that - as far as I know - there is no alternative model that is not founded on the assumption that there is a rendition that is the 'best' of a given source text.

It is this undercurrent that I find problematic, indeed, a stumbling block for balanced views of translation. However, the weaknesses have always been there. ...//79 ... Although I do not address these issues directly, I examine how Danish translators have rendered thousands of translations of Grimm tales from German into Danish over 170 years. From this examination, I conclude that "translation is an activity closely connected with the specific circumstances of translational situations in the society and culture in which it takes place. Translation Studies is in need of rethinking" (Dollerup 1999: 324). The weakness is the sole focus on language and culture - it is simply not enough.

It is, however, the present expansion of translational activity, which is - according to the figures I have read - growing by 20 to 30% per year on a global basis, and which is increasingly involving non-Indo-European languages, that calls for a critical examination of what Westerners have taken for granted for so long.

Nevertheless, before I return to how this can be undertaken, I shall revisit the above territory.

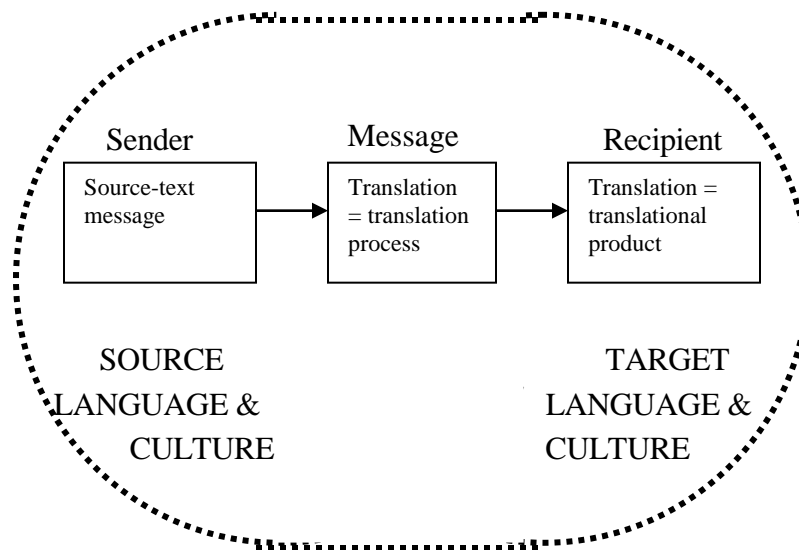
The omniscient translator

There is no reason to deny that an adequate literary translation profits from the translator being comfortable with – indeed liking – the work to be translated. It does become problematic, however, when it is claimed that in order to translate a given book by a specific author, translators have to be familiar with the author's other works, background, and history. And it becomes impossible when it is extended to a demand that the translator should be familiar with all aspects of the source and target cultures.

Such demands were found in the guidelines of the Frenchman Etienne Dolet (1640): "(1) the translator must have a perfect understanding of his author's message and material, (2) he should have complete mastery of both source and target language" (here from Snell-Hornby 1995: 12-13).

The demand that translators should meet these requirements is definitely present when people discuss idioms, puns, metaphors, etc. in source texts and note how they are not realised in translations. Much of the criticism of this kind implies that the translator is incompetent. We can push this a bit farther by examining a model underlying such criticism:

Figure 3:
THE OMNISCIENT TRANSLATOR



.../80 ...

Figure 3 vividly reveals that, in this model, translators are expected to be able to survey and cope with all components of the translational process: thanks to their knowledge of the sender (= the author), translators can ‘correctly’ decode (= fully understand) every single word in the work to be translated, and they are familiar with every feature referred to in the source culture. Thanks to their command of the target language, translators can find perfect matches for the source-language words and expressions and thus ensure perfect communication between the sender and recipient(s). This notion obliges translators to be source-text oriented. The problem is that the demands implied in this model are not entirely unheard of.³

The idea is hovering uneasily above many curricula, albeit with some allowance for imperfect foreign-language proficiency. Consider the following demand for translations made by BA students of English at my own university in Copenhagen:

“It is important that the translation conveys the meaning, style, and tone of the source text as closely as possible ...”

The underlying idea of the ‘perfect’ translation is based on the premise that the message is unambiguous and static, and thus yields only one uncontested meaning for decoding. Once decoded by an omniscient translator, it can be encoded in an equally unambiguous and static message in the target language, where it constitutes an exact replica of the source text. But the notion also implies that there are no barriers between cultures, that cultures are symmetrical, and that there is a free flow between them in terms of language and meaning. However, such symmetrical languages and cultures do not exist.

The 'ideal' translation and teaching

Why does this idea, nevertheless, underlie much translation work? First and foremost because it provides us with an ideal that we can strive for, and, secondly, it is indispensable in teaching as a yardstick that everybody can understand. In that context, the 'ideal' (but not 'perfect') translation should not be slighted. It is, after all, only under classroom conditions that it is possible to control fully and provide feedback on students' understanding of the features, and to inform both teacher and – subsequently – students of successes and failures in their efforts to render the contents of the source text adequately in the target language. The main problems are (a) that many students and some teachers fail to realise that assessments of the products are **descriptive**, as they take place after the event, and not **proactive**, and (b), that there is an unfortunate overlap between foreign-language acquisition and translation training - many translation programmes do not make clear distinctions between the two. ...//81 ... But the essential difference is that in foreign-language acquisition, both students and teachers know that students must be taught and are acquiring knowledge under teacher guidance. In translation teaching, independent work is foregrounded and it is taken for granted that the emphasis will be on translation training. This difference is most pronounced in the material used: in foreign-language acquisition, many texts tend to be isolated fragments, because they are used to check student mastery of specific features (vocabulary, syntax, etc.), whereas texts in translation classes are coherent, run-on texts. It is true that overall classroom assessments over a period of time usually turn out to be good indicators of potential professional performance. Yet, it must be emphasised that specific 'errors' and laudable renditions are specific to the texts used and should not be confused with a student's translational activity in general. The perfect translation does not emerge in class either, for part of this notion is that there can only be one unquestionably perfect 'solution'. The truth is that there may be many adequate translations and some of these adequate translations are 'better' than others under a given set of parameters. But in teaching, we tend to overlook – or at least not pay due attention to - (a) the fact that all translations made for a classroom session are made under a set of nearly identical parameters (namely as an exercise by a group of students for one specific teacher and involving one and the same text), and (b) the asymmetrical character of different languages and cultures.

It would be more in keeping with the facts if, in classrooms, more attention was paid to different layers in a translation. By this I mean that it should be stressed more often that, in degrees that vary from text to text, a long text will have components that combine at different layers. We could then fruitfully, but with caution, distinguish between 'adequate renditions' of different layers, which I have tried to divide into the structural, the linguistic, the content, the intentional, the para-textual, and the chronological layers. This would make discussions much more precise and allow for comprehensive discussions of translation assignments in teaching, in practice, and in criticism. (Dollerup 2003b)⁴ ...//82

The ‘unambiguous’ translation

It must also be kept in mind that in real life there are situations in which professional translators, senders, and recipients all have to behave as if a ‘perfect’ translation is possible: in a court of law, it is taken for granted that everything should be (and is) interpreted and translated ‘exactly’ the way it was in the source utterance or text. Technical texts are supposed to be ‘identical’ in the source and target languages. Many political texts, indeed all the basic European Union legislation (the *Acquis Communautaire*) is also ‘identical’ in the twenty official European Union languages. But usually there are subtle - or not so subtle - differences in meaning in the source and target languages.⁴

And sometimes, of course, there are words that correspond in some senses and some contexts to specific words in other languages. To physicists, ‘an atom’ in English corresponds exactly to ‘un atome’ in French and ‘ein Atom’ in German. This applies to many basic phenomena, notably in the natural sciences and technology. But they are still mostly terms or words, not longer sequences of meaning, and it is longer sequences that should be rendered ‘perfectly’.

As mentioned above, thinking about how translation connects with elitist and religious texts, it is tempting to assume that we are here at the root of extremist views about the ‘perfect’ translation.

Translations as approximations

My point in the present article is that we should accept that, in real life, there is no such thing as a ‘perfect’ translation. This does not make it impossible to discuss translations – on the contrary, it enables us to approach many problems in translation by positing that a translation is a tangible rendition of a given source text. It makes it infinitely easier to avoid exaggerated claims that all errors can be avoided in translation. Nobody is perfect. It also makes it possible to discuss and compare various approximations. ...//83 ...

Adequacy

These approximations to the ‘ideal’ can then be assessed in terms of their relationship to source texts, but also, and most importantly, in terms of their adequacy under the parameters that have determined their specific nature. The translation that convinces the target language audience that it conveys the meaning it was intended to have as a translation, is adequate. It is the users, clients, senders, recipients, the parties communicating, who determine whether this criterion is met or not. But they rarely discuss translation. Those who discuss translation are language teachers and translation scholars who know the languages involved.

But the criteria of the first group mentioned, the users, are completely different from those of the second group, the language professionals. It is my firm conviction that we must keep this in mind when we discuss how we should describe translation.

A translation and the source text

It may have been noticed that I am cautious in defining translation. I believe that we are best served by not setting up rigid models, but rather, we should use frameworks for discussing translation. Moreover, such frameworks must be based on the fact that in everyday life, people who actually use translations do not have the same possibilities that teachers and scholars have for straddling language barriers and being able to compare a translation to the source text (or, in the case of relay, an “intermediate realisation” as the source text). Users of translations can refer to the translations only, and they are the ones who decide whether a translation works or not.

When a recipient uses a translation, it is not because it is a translation, but because this is the only representation of the source text available. No matter whether it is ‘better’ or ‘worse’ than the source text, it is the only text from which an audience speaking another language can get information about what is encoded in the source text. Therefore, the translation is an autonomous entity for the recipient. It is crucial that there is a process of inter-lingual transfer, because this process creates translations and, furthermore, it implies that a given text, simultaneously and without any changes, can be defined as (a) a text in the culture in which it was first formulated, as well as (b) an “original” in relation to a translation in another culture. It is only, as I have put in the process of translation, that “a chain of communication is established: in the mind of the translator the source and the target language texts co-exist. ...//84 ... After the translational activity, they are bi-sected as the target-text is oriented towards the target culture. They then recede into their respective, separate, and simultaneous existences in the source and target cultures.” (Dollerup 1999b: 325. The word ‘bi-sected’ is inspired by Brian Harris.)

I have illustrated this as follows (Dollerup 2004c: 149):

Figure 4:
THE CREATION OF A TRANSLATION AND AN “ORIGINAL”

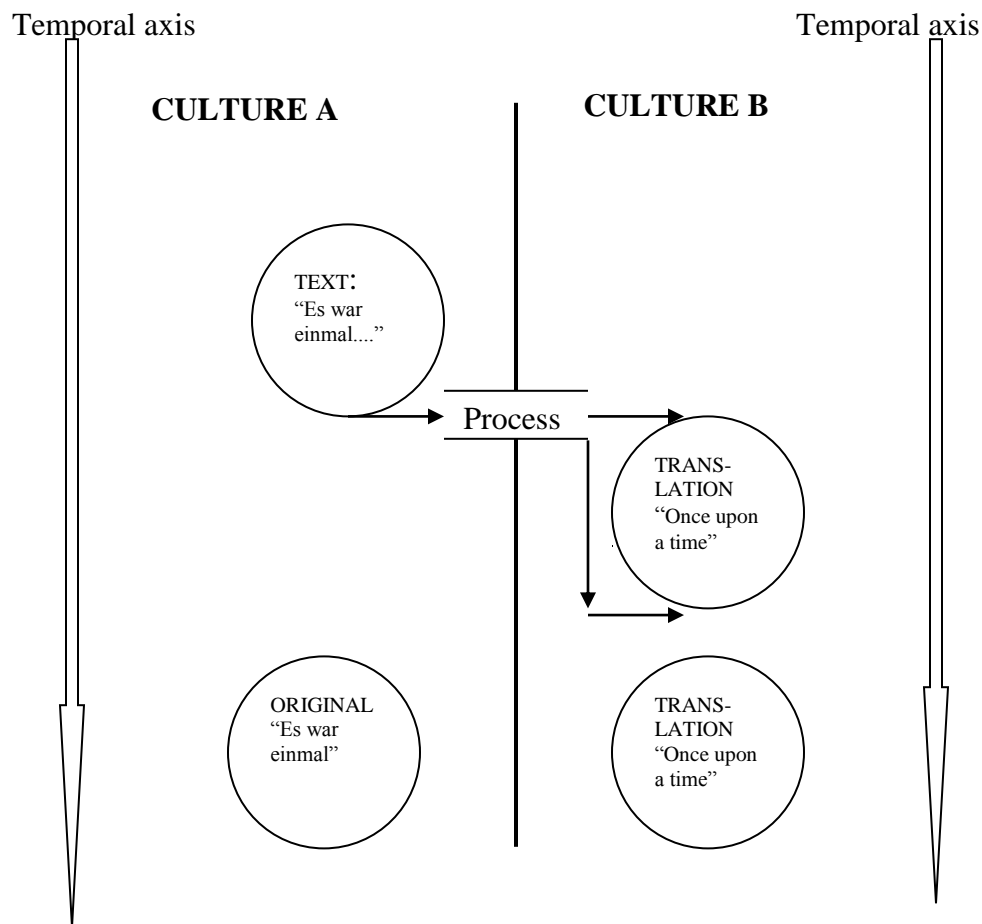


Figure 4 illustrates that once a translation process has taken place, we are dealing with two (or more) different texts. We may discuss these texts in relation to one another (“Translation criticism” in James Holmes’ celebrated map of Translation Studies), on their own terms (e.g., textual analysis of the text in culture A, or linguistic and syntactical criticisms of the text in culture B), or without reference to one another. This allows for more stringent, incisive, and realistic analyses of how, independently of one another, translations and “originals” function in a relativistic manner in two or more dynamic language systems. We do not have to uphold the source text as a rigid yardstick for all discussions in Translation Studies. ...//85 ...

Translations as autonomous texts

In order to illustrate how this approach would work, we can set up a few charts that illustrate different situations:

Figure 5 (on the next page) shows a text that has become an original (A) by being translated into language B. Subsequently, it is translated into culture C and thus becomes the ‘original’ of the translation in culture C.

Let us posit that in Culture B, a publisher decides to put out a new translation because the old one lost favour with the audience, for instance because language changes made it sound old-fashioned. The below figure shows how the new translation, B2, challenges the supremacy of the ‘old’ translation. Translation B2 is legitimised, ‘authorised’, by the fact that the translator of the ‘new’ translation has referred to the source text.

The ‘old’ translation then dies since it has no more readers. Nevertheless, both translations are usually ‘professional work’ - at least if they are made in today’s world where literary translation is rarely left in the hands of unpaid *con amore* translators.

Figure 5:
TRANSLATION INTO TWO (OR MORE LANGUAGES)

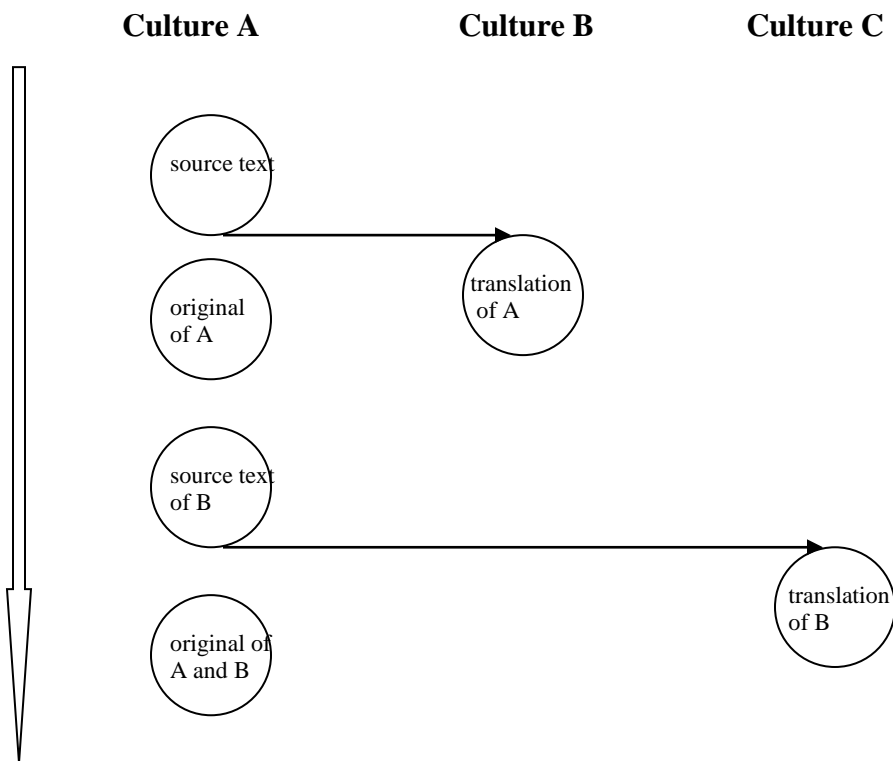
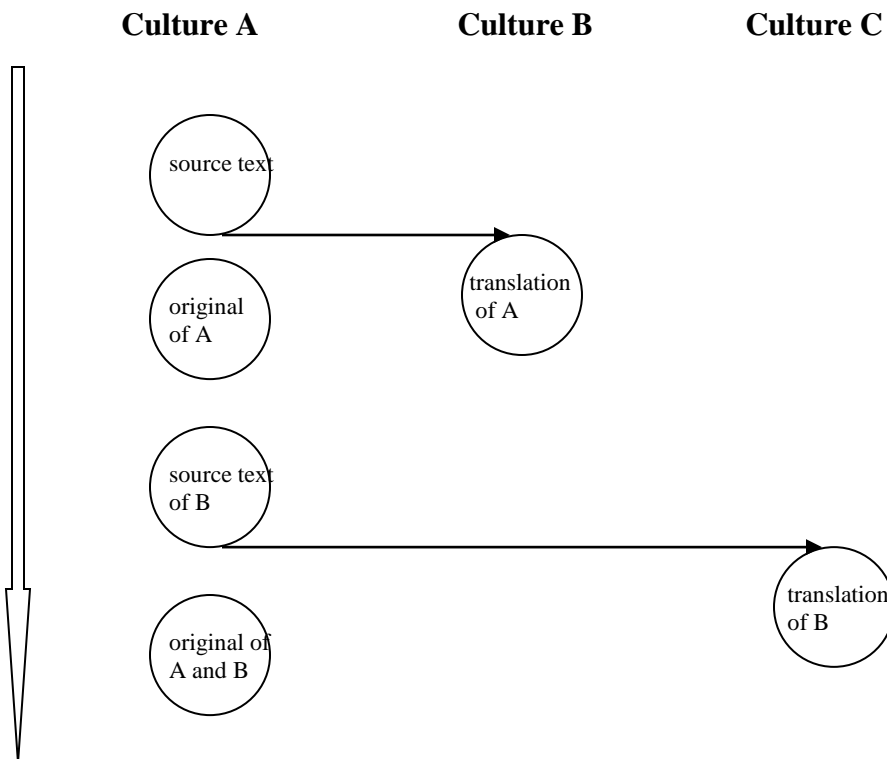


Figure 5. Translations into two (or more) languages

Another situation also can provide insight here: in culture B, the source text is used in a translation class. All the students do the work, and this makes for many co-existing translations that have been created within a training programme. Moreover, they can be compared (as shown in figure 6).

We can illustrate what happens in situations represented by figures 4 and 6 by examining J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. This book appeared in English in 1997, and in subsequent years it was translated into, e. g., Danish (culture B) and Chinese (culture C). These two translations would be represented by B1 and C1. The moment the first translation appeared, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* became an original. But, of course, despite the fact that, for instance, the Danish translation has the magic Olliwander wand contain "enhjørningehår, drage skæl og kimærehorn" ["unicorn hairs, scales of dragons, and horns of chimera"] and the Chinese translation is full of footnotes, nothing was changed in the English source text – the magic wand contains "unicorn hairs, phoenix tail feathers and the heartstring of dragons" and there are no footnotes in the English original.⁵ ...// 87 ... It was not changed in translation either, it is just that the translators introduced features that were not found in the British source text. To illustrate the existence of a B1 and B2, we can turn to the latest Harry Potter book (*Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*)

Figure 5:
TRANSLATION INTO TWO (OR MORE LANGUAGES)



Phoenix (2003)), which Chinese fans translated and placed on the internet (C1) before the publication of the ‘authorised’ (professional) translation (C2).

For figure 7, we posit that a Hungarian teacher of translation asks a class to translate excerpts from the book. This results in twenty-odd different translations that co-exist (by students M, N, O, P and so on). Some of these translations – in the eyes of the teacher – may be better than others: the products or translations can be related to the source text and compared to one another, as well as to the spelling and syntactical rules of the target language, Hungarian.

The framework thus allows for the relativistic nature of translation. ...// 88 ... Furthermore, it illustrates how the process of translation turns a source text into an ‘original’ and that this process in no way affects the text in the source culture (except, perhaps, by exalting its status in both source and target cultures). Furthermore, these models do not imply that the source text is necessarily better or more authoritative than translations: bang goes the idea of “loss in translation” (Dollerup and Grun 2003).

Figure 6:
AN ‘OLD’ TRANSLATION (B1) IS CHALLENGED BY A NEW ONE (B2)

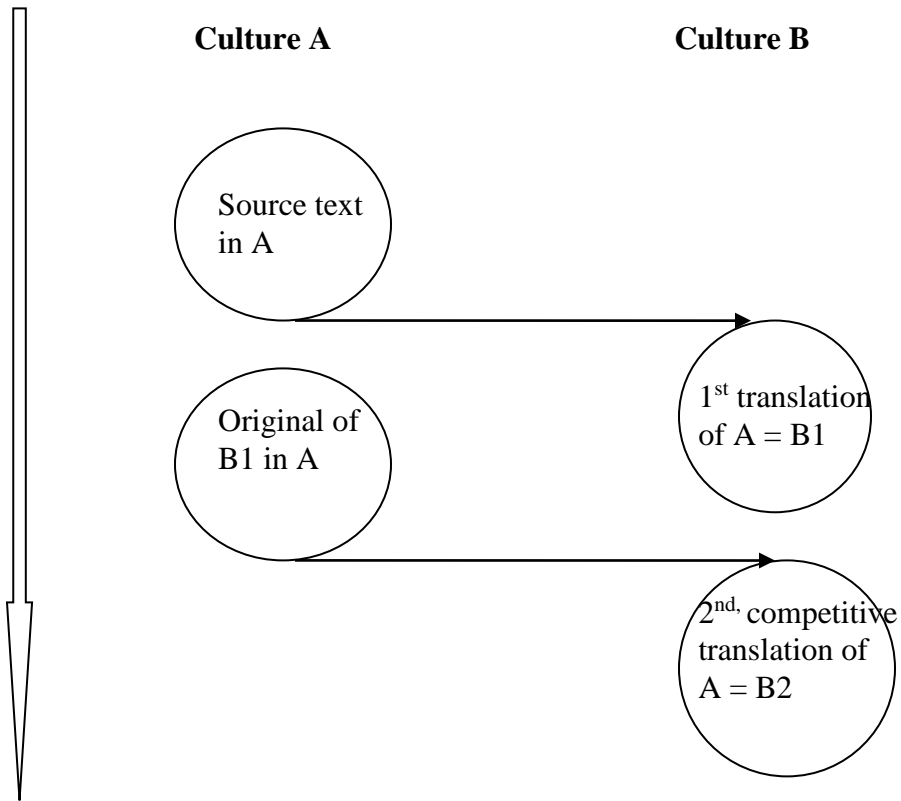
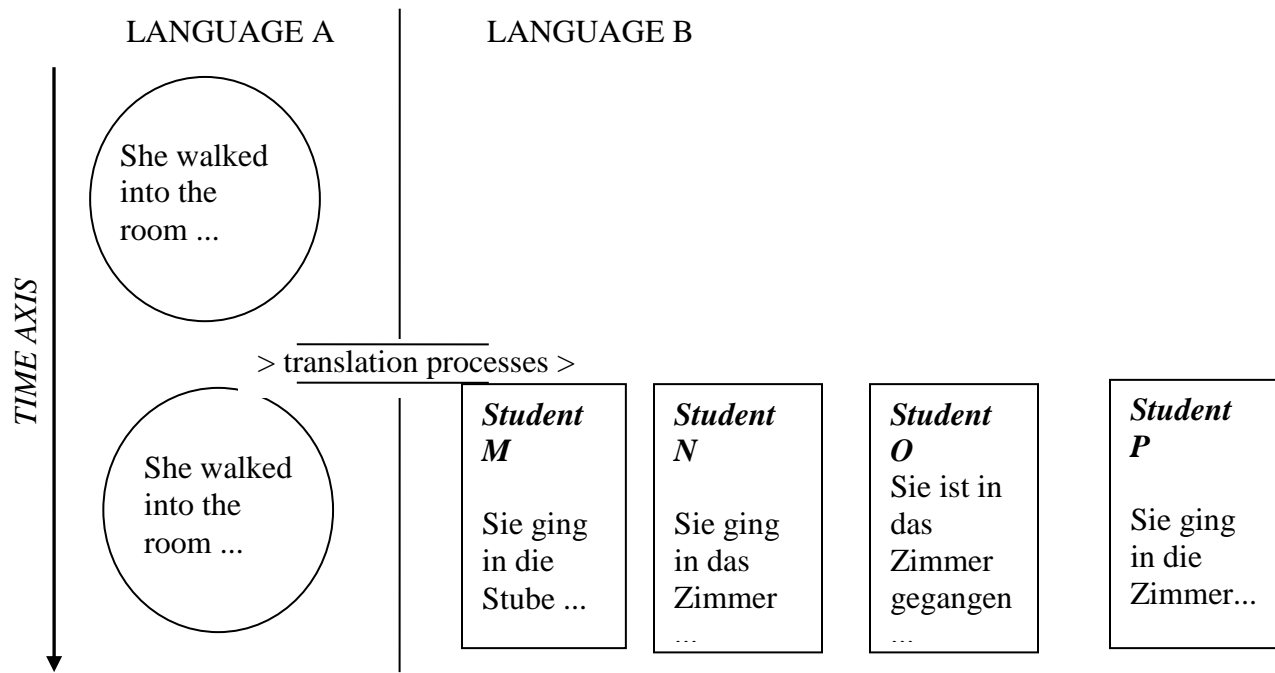
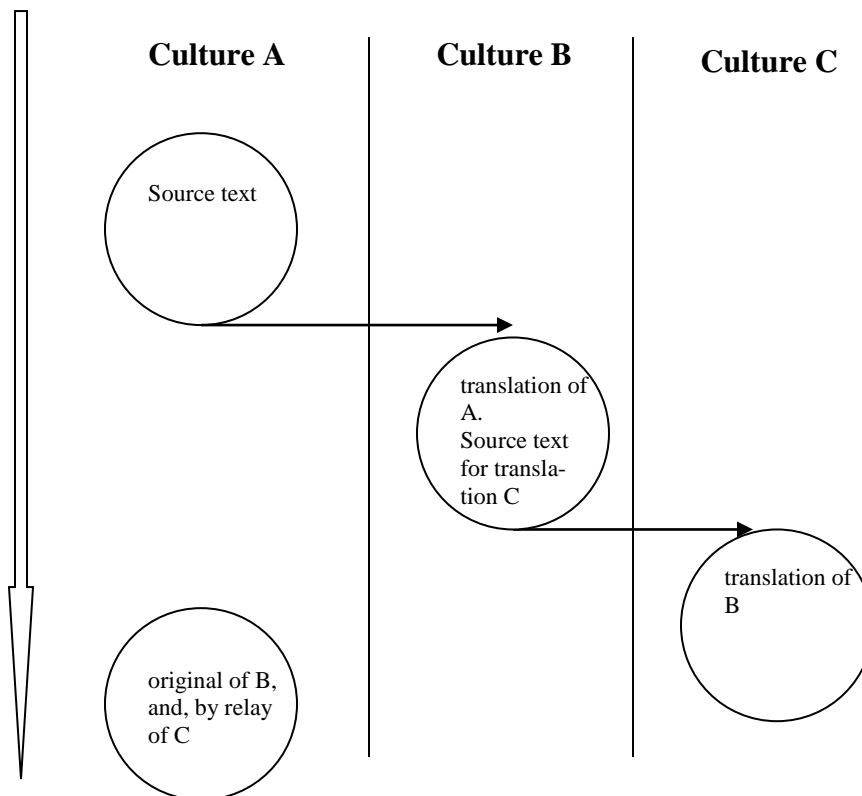


Figure 7:
TRANSLATIONS IN A CLASSROOM



The suggested framework also allows us to discuss ‘relay’ in translation (Dollerup 2000). In relay, a source text is translated for an audience in another language. The translation in this language then serves as the source text for a third-stage translation. This is shown in Figure 8:

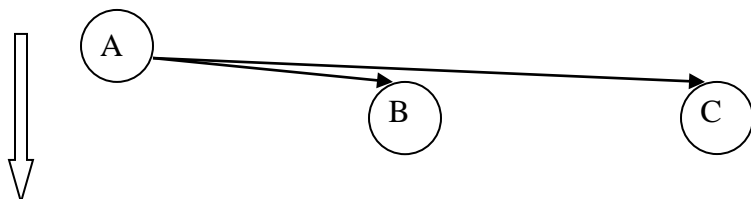
**Figure 8:
RELAY**



The framework permits us to describe other features in modern translation work as well. Formerly, the source text was usually produced long before the translation, and it was translated because it was a respected and revered ‘classic’. This is no longer the case: most modern texts are translated within a short time, usually only a few weeks or months, after the initial source text has been written, and the main motive is economic. This applies to manuals and instructions that go with the production of modern machinery (Mogensen 2004), for industrial products and household appliances. ...// 89 ... Figure 9 provides us with a picture different from the previous ones:

Figure 9:
TRANSLATIONS OF MODERN TECHNICAL TEXTS

Time axis: Six months



Furthermore, the framework does not run counter to the fact that today many source texts, including most of those in industry, do not have one identifiable ‘author’, but either a team or a number of authors who - as time passes and new things are added to the product in hand - include one or two new sentences in the source text describing new features, witness figure 10.

Figure 10:
ADDITION OF ONE NEW SENTENCE IN A TECHNICAL TEXT

German 1st version	Hungarian 1st version	German 2nd version	Hungarian 2nd version
- Den Stab ca. 4 Stunden in ein Glas mit Essig legen - Stellen Sie den Dampfregler auf TROCKEN	Áztassa be a szárat 4 óran át alkoholos fehér ecetbe vagy citromlébe -Allítsa a gőzszabályozót száraz funkcióra ...	- Den Stab ca. 4 Stunden in ein Glas mit Essig legen -Den Stab mit Leitungswasser abspülen und wieder einsetzen - Stellen Sie den Dampfregler auf TROCKEN	Áztassa be a szárat 4 óran át alkoholos fehér ecetbe vagy citromlébe - Öblítse le a szárat a vízcsap alatt. Helyezze vissza a helyere -Allítsa a gőzsa- bályozót száraz funkcióra

The above instructions for an electric iron have had a new sentence inserted in the 2nd version (“Den Stab mit Leitungswasser abspülen und wieder einsetzen”). This, of course, should be included in the instructions in other languages, including Hungarian. In all likelihood, the translators are given only this one sentence for translation, as the firm is unlikely to be willing to pay for a completely new translation. The translators may or may not have been allowed to look

at the context in this example. The point to note is that in many cases the modern language professional may not be given the larger context at all. ...// 90 ...

The situation often can be even trickier. Today, it is not only teams of writers who may be the ‘authors’ of texts for translation, but the editing or re-writing of a source text may continue after it has been translated into other languages: many best-sellers are thus revised by the authors until shortly before publication in ‘their native language’ and translators are not always informed about changes. This also happens with instructions, tourist brochures, and the like. Similarly, target texts may well be re-written independent of the source text wording. This occurs in many publishing houses where in-house editors ‘correct’ for fluency. And it also happens in many texts in tourist brochures (examples are quoted in Dollerup 1998; 2002; 2004). Passages, indeed parts of books, may be left out (Dimitriu 2004: 170; Dollerup 1998: 37). Editing is part and parcel of the process of ‘localisation’ (Esselink 2000). What we have here is thus a dissolution of the direct textual bond, the causal link between the source and target text.

Turning towards international legislation – among which the body of legal documents of the European Union institutions looms large – we can also describe what is happening. The European Union at present has twenty official languages, and in principle, any new legislation is to be ‘identical’ across the languages, or at least ‘legally equally valid’, and furthermore to appear at the same time.

The actual ‘working’ - or better ‘tool’ - languages that are used for everyday internal work at the European Union institutions are English and/or French. Since new legislation is both influenced by previous legislation as well as the negotiations leading to the actual piece of legislation involved, the documents in the tool languages come to be repositories of negotiations and views first expressed in other languages as well. Therefore, these internal working documents cannot be said to be true ‘one-language’ source-texts. What is more, the working documents have no special status, until they come to constitute – for a brief while – the source texts for the final translational products in all the European Union documents, as shown in figure 11.

In principle, legally binding European Union documents are published at the same time in all the member states. At that moment, something unique happens in terms of translation: the status of the text that served as a source text until that very moment is changed. It is no longer the source text, but one of the twenty equally valid texts in the twenty-three official languages of the European Union. Another interesting fact is that none of the texts can be changed. Unlike ordinary translations, the authority of which can be challenged (Dollerup 2001: 289), none of these legally binding texts can be re-translated: they have attained a final, legally binding form.

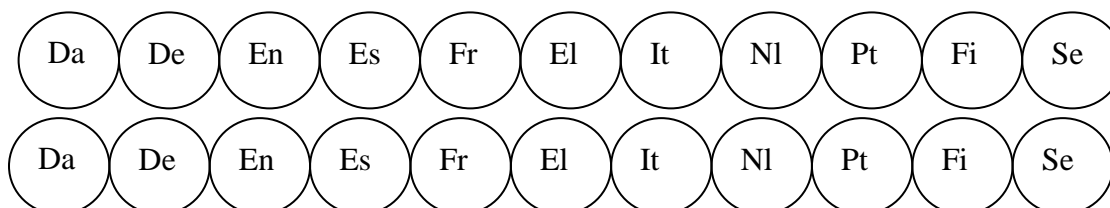
No matter how unsound this may be to linguists, this is a political reality. The source text is no longer a source text, because this would imply that either an English or a French (and occasionally a German) text would be superior to texts in other European Union languages – and this is politically impossible. ...//91 ...

Figure 11:
THE TOOL LANGUAGE(S) AND LEGAL TEXTS IN THE EU-LANGUAGES:

Process (time axis possibly several years):

Primarily conducted by means of tool languages (English and French):
Negotiations,
Translation, interpreting, use of terminology, use of Translation Memories, etc.
Political decisions

Result (presented simultaneously):



We may argue that the texts cannot be ‘the same’, but on the other hand, it must be realised that in all the European Union languages, there is by now a body of *Acquis Communautaire* – common legislation – running into c. 100,000 pages in each official language. By their sheer mass, they have come to constitute a massive body that politicians, bureaucrats, legal experts, and national experts in numerous fields agree ‘are the same’. This is not merely words, but they also illustrate in deed, in the implementation of this body of laws, that they are understood to mean ‘the same’. This is something previously unheard of in human history on this scale.

And, finally, we should also be aware that within the last decades human life has been changed fundamentally by the internet - which right now can ‘translate’ source texts between English, French, German, and Spanish so well that readers, who are willing to put up with atrocious grammar and vocabulary, can understand 80-90% of what is said in the source text.

Conclusion

In this article, I started out by stressing that current theories of translation are hardly more than ‘hypotheses’ that have not really been subjected to falsification. What is more, they are largely based on models of communication and often assume that senders, translators, and audiences are easily defined. It is my contention that this type of approach permeates much thinking about translation, and that it is not adequate for describing translational activities in the modern world. Translation has always been more complex than scholars believed, but today, the sheer bulk and ubiquity of translation oblige us to face this fact. ...// 92 ...

When we make allowances for, e.g., technical writing and instructions that appear in numerous languages as a result of the globalisation of trade and technological development, as well as legislation demanding that products must be sold with instructions in the languages of the countries in which they are marketed, most texts are written by teams rather than one author. The

source text can be changed at any time, either for linguistic elegance or in order to be updated. The source text may be translated into English, which functions as the modern lingua franca, and then, from this relay language, be translated into other languages.⁵ Translations may be checked for fluency by target-language editors without any reference to the source text, which thus loses ‘authority’, and also becomes an imprecise entity. This is at its most obvious in the instantaneous translations offered for free on the internet.

The framework presented in this article has been set up in order to cope with this changed reality. It does not imply that other models and frameworks are wrong. But it does allow us to pose more precise questions, for instance, about the nature of specific source and target texts. This is why such a framework - at present - will provide a fairly good background for discussing the nature of translations.

Notes

1. The listing is a summary of points I have made in a number of publications, in their most elaborate form in Dollerup (2003a: 8-9).

2. This model was first presented in Dollerup (1974: 198).

3. These views, of course, are most often met with in countries and at institutions where Translation Studies is a new discipline. Unfortunately there are still traces of them in established Translation Studies. It is - in my view - a problem that few established scholars pay heed to the constant recruitment of young scholars, who, in school, have been taught to take ‘equivalence’ seriously, which makes this idea so long lived.

4. This is prompted by the fact that there are few reasonably good tools for comparing source texts and translations as well as different translations. The idea of layers was first aired in Dollerup (1986: 74-76), as a general principle. It was used for extensive analysis on the large (binary) corpus of Danish translations of the German Grimm tales (1999a: e.g. 47-50, 200-201, 310-313). In Dollerup (2003b), the analysis involved translations between several Indo-European languages (a multilingual corpus). In Dollerup (2004/5b), I tested it on a multicultural corpus, that is, between Indo-European and non-Indo-European languages and was satisfied that it worked.

5. Katrine Brøndsted, a student of mine, called my attention to it. In the context of the novel, the deviation in question turns out to be significant in the plot, since it is the very phoenix that saves Harry when he is danger.

6. In order to avoid being accused of ‘saying the obvious’, I wish to stress that the crucial point to me is whether **the target audience** is convinced that a translation is adequate. This goes beyond Hans Vermeer’s “The target text, the *translatum*, is oriented towards the target culture, and it is this which ultimately defines its adequacy.” (Vermeer 2000: 222-223)

76. Seymour (2002) discusses the erroneous translation, or use, of the word ‘authentic’ as opposed to ‘valid’, which was central to all common European Union legislation in some of the then eleven languages. At the European Union, this error is not allowed to affect proceedings and legislation, and, in all likelihood, it will be done away with in one of the major rewritings of the European Union treaties.

Lewis (1999) mentions a much less innocent difference in the United Nations Security Council resolution 242 of 22 November 1967. At the time, Israel had conquered the Gaza Strip and the West Bank of Jordan. The English resolution is one of the best known world-wide calls for a “withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict”; whereas the French resolution – which was the one read by the Arab nations – had the definite article: “les territoires”. This may not be a translation error at all, but a deliberate difference, since the French have always been pro-Arabic.

I am indebted to Ms Noemi Scrivener for having provided me with the Hungarian texts.

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