

Dollerup, Cay. 2006. *Basics of Translation Studies*. Iași. Institutul European, Romania. (First Edition: Romania).

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Translation Studies is one of the most dynamic **topical** spheres of present-day linguistics, the reason for which is seen in the processes of globalization and internationalization that brought about a boom in the translation business. Cay Dollerup's work is meant for these young translators as well as young teachers and Translation Studies students who have recently begun or are planning to begin to serve this challenging, though 'servile path' as Vladimir Nabokov once termed in his book so titled. The book is an elaboration of a distance course for New York University students.

The book is **scholarly innovative** and a successful attempt to present within a single volume both the most renowned Translation Studies conceptions and to offer a concise but rather comprehensive excursion into its history. The author points out in particular that interpreting must have existed ever since the first contacts between humans speaking different languages, while translation is approximately 6000 years old. It stands to reason that interpreting, that is oral rendition of utterances, came first, as writing and other adjacent activities, translation for one, originated on the basis of oral speech much later. There is plenty of exciting and relevant information from the history of translation. For example, Cay Dollerup mentions that Alexander the Great 'used interpreters on his campaigns... The Roman administration had no less than 130 interpreters for dealing with the Caucasian rulers alone'. He also points out that the number of interpreters considerably increased during Napoleonic wars because there were 'young men of the European bourgeoisie in various countries, who had learnt French as part of their education in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and who were keen to test it, to mediate, to interpret' between the local population and French troops. The author's periodization of translation history is also noteworthy: the first period lasted until circa 1530, that is, until the Lutheran Reformation; the second one – from circa 1530 until 1790, the epoch of the French Revolution; the third period lasted from the French Revolution to the Second World War: 1789 – 1939/41; the fourth period took the years from 1945 to circa 1970; the fifth one included circa 1970 to circa 1990, that is, the period of expansion of the European Union; and finally, the sixth period has lasted from 1990 until present day. As it follows, the first period was the longest. Isn't it so due to scarce information on the period as compared, for example, to the shortest – the fifth one? Anyway, Cay Dollerup's periodization looks like in above.

It is **theoretically relevant** that the author provides new translators with scholarly linguistic information. He writes about the dynamics and instability of cultures and languages, about language families dealing in more detail with the Indo-European one, and especially touches upon the history of the English language. This kind of knowledge is really important for translators, since many of them badly lack a linguistic background. However, I cannot help objecting to the author's classification of languages, where he places Estonian into the Balto-Slavic group (p. 26), which must be a slip since the language belongs to a Finno-Ugric group. The author probably meant Latvian and Lithuanian.

Cay Dollerup also mentions that 'we may talk of British English, American English, Australian English, etc. as different languages' (p. 26). I am not at all positive if it is worthwhile to consider these variants as different languages because these are absolutely variants of English. To be a language, one has to differ systematically from other language(s), there should be at least a single feature available that would make a language different from other relative languages, like the presence of an extra case for the noun in Ukrainian as compared to Russian. The differences in lexis

and pronunciation cannot prove sufficient to approach language variants as independent separate languages.

The book under review being on translation, Cay Dollerup defines the notion as ‘any material which is presented in a linguistic form in a source language and is realized in a linguistic form in a target language’. This position is really praiseworthy in a definitionless desert of scores of papers that manage to go without the definition of the primary notion at all. He also mentions the following fact that is quite often overlooked by translatoologists: today most translation activity does not take place between nations, but within nations, because in many countries there are ethnic minorities that do not speak the official language. Much translation activity is done within a country and meant for these ethnic minorities.

One of the main perspectives of the book is that nobody and nothing is perfect. The author is of the opinion that there is no such thing as an ideal translator and a perfect translation, which I believe is true due to a number of reasons, for example due to cultural and linguistic asymmetry. As José Ortega y Gasset put it in *Nishcheta i blesk perevoda* [= *The Misery and Splendour of Translation*]: ‘... Every language is a special equation between what is said and what is unsaid. Every nation keeps silent about one thing to be able to say some other, since it is impossible to say everything. That is why it is so difficult to translate: it is all about saying something in a language that this language is inclined to keep silent of.’

The book is arranged as a practical aid easy and convenient to work with: each chapter opens up with an abstract, followed by learning objectives. The text of the chapter is subdivided into sections. Finally, a short summary ends up the chapter.

The topics discussed by Cay Dollerup are of undeniable interest both for practicing and future translators. The author considers, among other titles, *The Problem of Western Centrality in Translation Studies*, *Modes of Translation in the Modern World*, *The Nature of Translation*, *Translation Approaches*, *The Translator in Society*, *Synchrony and Diachrony in Translation Work*, *Source Texts and Translation Today*, et cetera. The **practical tendency** is one of the major valuable aspects of this first edition.

The book is recommended without any reservation. It approaches profound professional issues and is presented in a precise and logical way. The book is topical, relevant and up-to-date. It will prove the perfect manual for newcomers in translation and will sure be of assistance to those who have been working in the field for quite a few years and would like to refresh their theory.

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***Bibliography for Translation Studies (Excerpts only).***

Although in the last decades there has been an outburst of publications in Translation Studies, Cay Dollerup's *Basics of Translation Studies* brings new insights into the discipline and provides palpable proof of the complex and dynamic character of translation. Its 15 chapters include a number of issues, part of which have been frequently taken for granted by many authors of textbooks, or are still felt to have been insufficiently discussed in the field's literature. Such issues relate, for instance, to: 1) histories of translation that tend to focus on the Western / European perspective, despite the increasing number of papers and articles coming from other geographical areas; 2) the existence of several "modes of translation", which encompass, besides full-length translations of written texts, (different ways of) interpreting, "gist" and "spot" translations, "sight" translations, dubbing, subtitling and surtitling. These modes are all described in the book, and need to find a place in any general course of Translation Studies; 3) the importance of the language pair(s) that is/are considered for translation in a translation programme, according to which theoretical courses need to be oriented, if there is an interest in meaningfully linking the theory to the practice of the discipline; 4) a detailed examination of the tools translators need to be aware of in their work, which include, in Dollerup's presentation, besides dictionaries and other documentary sources, corpora as well as knowledge of copyright, "droit moral", and the possibility of "recycling" translations; 5) the sociological dimension of translation, that not only relates translation to norms, but also to other agents and institutions that are responsible for the spreading and the reception of translations (senders, clients, revisers, other translators, publishing houses, firms, companies, the EU, etc.); 6) a number of well-known translation models - to which Dollerup adds his own - that are successively re-discussed and evaluated in terms of their comprehensiveness as well as their "proactive" or "retrospective" orientation.

This list could well continue as Cay Dollerup's purpose is to analyse, or, at least, mention as many aspects as possible that are relevant to translation. His discourse is organised round a series of dichotomic pairs, some of which belong to his own terminology and line of argument: proactive vs. retrospective, imposition vs. requisition (of a translation), prescriptive vs. descriptive, etc. Like Toury in *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (1995), Dollerup thinks that translations are autonomous texts in target cultures, functioning independently of their source texts. His wide experience in translation has taught him that there is no such thing as the 'perfect' translation. Instead, he speaks of translations that are 'adequate' when they convey "the meaning of the source text to the target language in a given situation. It is only the users, clients, senders, recipients, the parties communicating, that can determine whether this criterion is met or not" (65). Rather than idealise translations, Dollerup thus prefers to refer to them in terms of "approximations", as no source and target languages and cultures are symmetrical and therefore comparable in every respect. This realistic position comes from a well-informed scholar as well as a widely experienced practitioner and teacher of translation, fully aware of the role that translation and Translation Studies fulfil in an era of globalisation.

*Basics of Translation Studies* is structured in a reader-friendly manner: each chapter starts with an outline of the issue that will be explored and ends with pertinent conclusions to it. A host of examples drawn from the Dollerup's own experience clarify the theoretical points. The comprehensive bibliography testifies to the author's exhaustive readings in the field as well as to his

own contribution to the development of the domain. The “Suggestions for further readings and sketches for assignments” round off a coursebook that is worth including in the “compulsory bibliography” undergraduate and MA students of translation could profitably go through in view of their future careers. To their trainers the book provides yet another significant manner of approaching translation and Translation Studies.

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