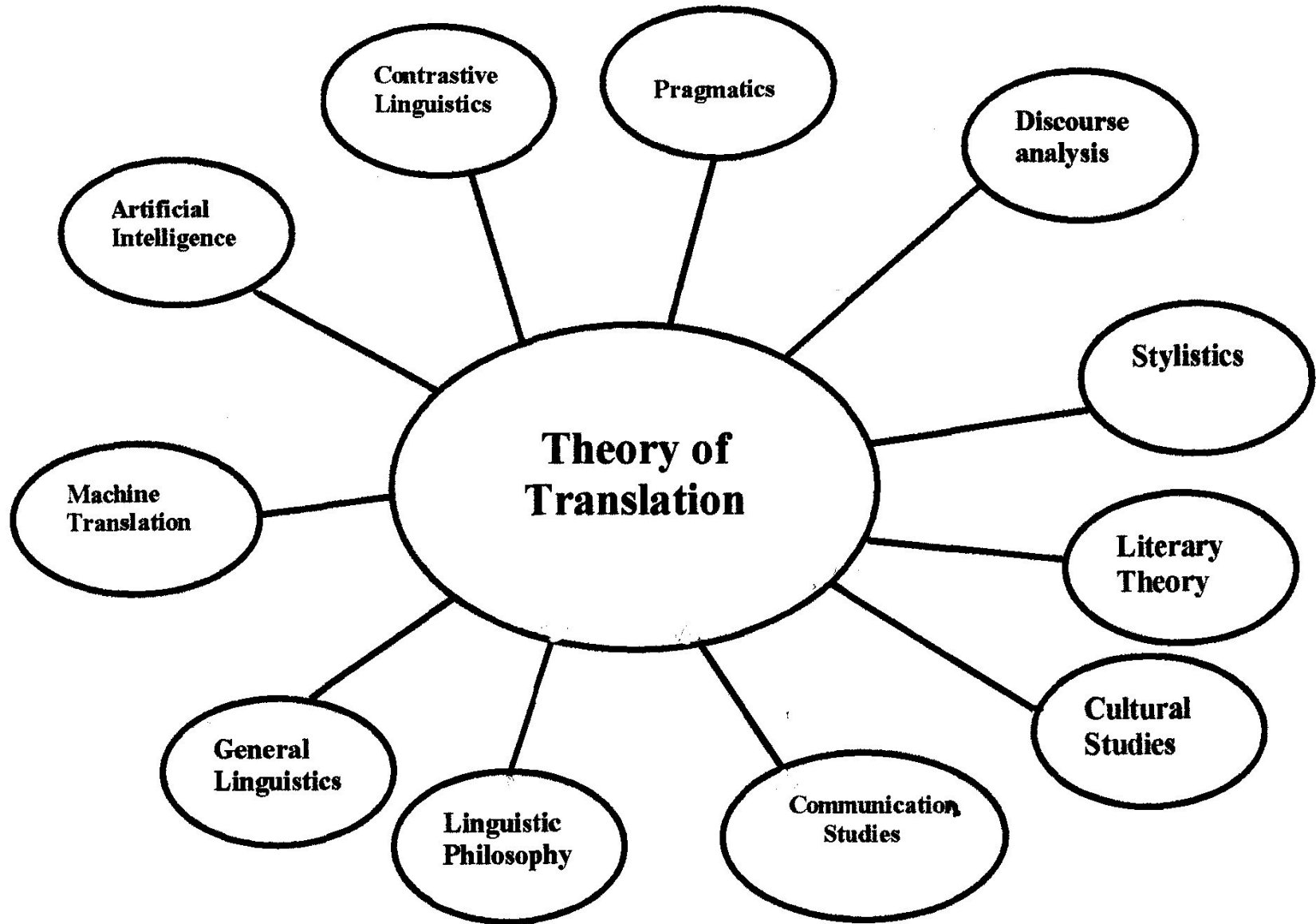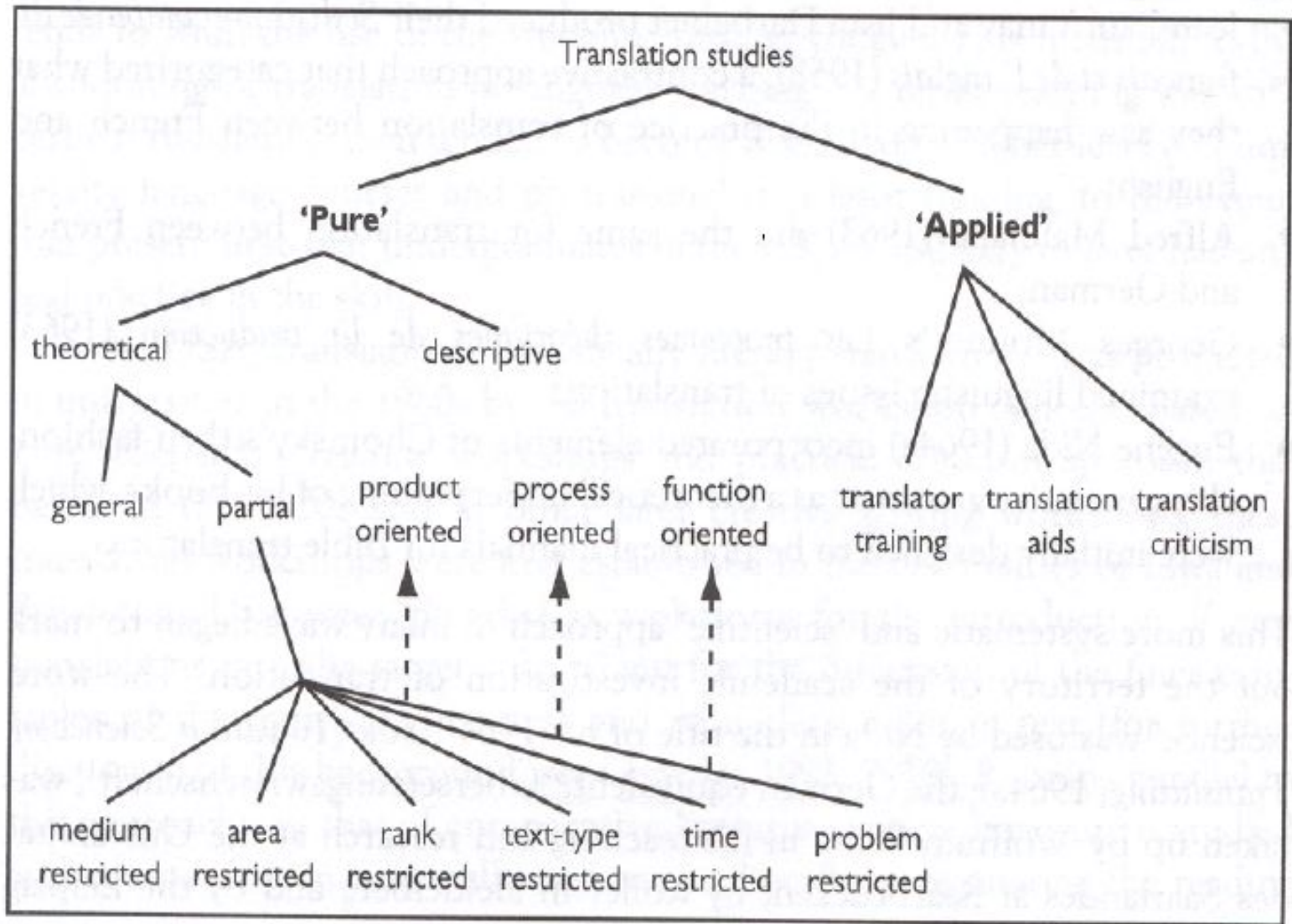# Translation Theory

Acknowledgements

- This lecture is based to a large extent on:

- MUNDAY, Jeremy. 2001. *Introducing Translation Studies – Theories and Applications.* London and New York: Routledge

- VENUTI, Lawrence. (Ed.) 2000. *The Translation Studies Reader.* London and New York: Routledge.
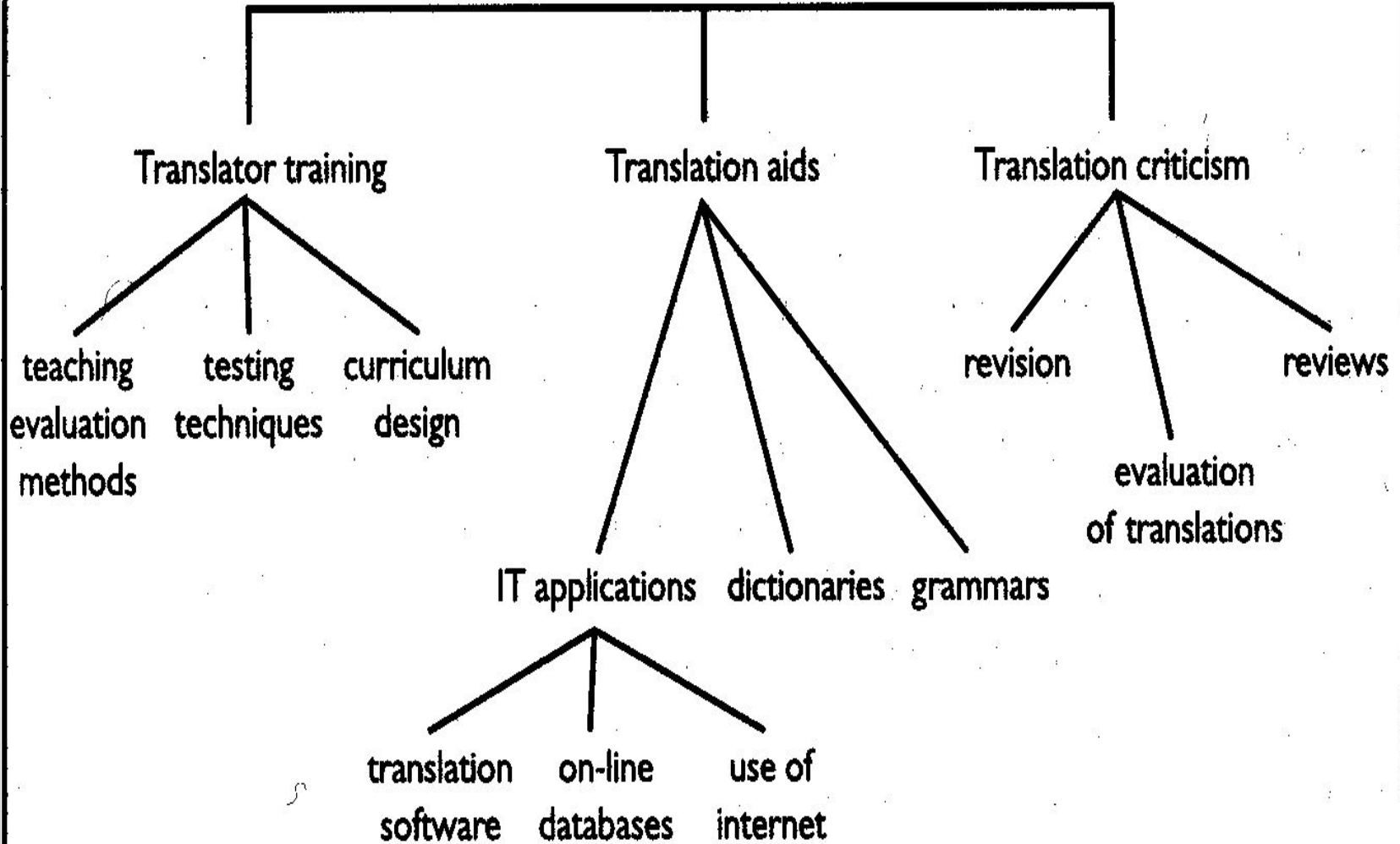
A few general distinctions

- Translating v. interpreting
- Source language/text – SL / ST
- Target language/text - TL / TT
- Intralingual v. interlingual v. intersemiotic translation
- Translation as language learning
- Contrastive linguistics
- Comparative literature

Contrastive Linguistics

Pragmatics

Discourse analysis

Artificial Intelligence

Stylistics

Machine Translation

Theory of Translation

Literary Theory

General Linguistics

Linguistic Philosophy

Communication Studies

Cultural Studies

Holmes's 'map' of translation studies (from Toury 1995: 10)

"Translation Studies" – self-perception

- Many people today think that Translation Studies is mainly:
  - Literary theory
  - Cultural studies
- And, possibly:
  - Communication studies
  - Stylistics & Genre analysis

Translation Theory - **TT** – perspective from Philosophy

- *Linguistic philosophy* - attempts to discover WHAT language means:
    - the ideal language(s) of logic etc.
    - 'ordinary language' philosophy
- *Philosophy of language* – attempts to find out HOW language means:
    - certain general features of language such as meaning, reference, truth, verification, speech acts and logical necessity
- *Philosophy of linguistics* - the study of language through linguistics

TT – perspective from Philosophy of Linguistics

- Structuralism - language reflects structure of thought, culture and society
- Transformational-Generative grammar - underlying universal language
- Functionalism - Language and its social functions
- Cognitivism - Language as it reflects our cognitive appraisal of the world, categorization of experience and use of metaphor

TT – perspective from Linguistics

- Linguists perceive it as related to:
  - Contrastive linguistics
  - Pragmatics
  - Discourse Analysis
  - Stylistics
- Once dismissed as useless to TT– all of these areas have been re-animated by corpora linguistics

TT – perspective from Information Technology

- IT specialists are increasingly fascinated by human language and:
    - Machine assisted translation
    - Machine Translation
    - Knowledge Engineering
    - Information Retrieval
    - Artificial Intelligence

TT - the professional perspective

- Translator training
- Interpreter training
- Translation aids
- Translation criticism
- Translation quality
- Translation policy
- Professional translation standards

Translation Theories

- The objectives of this seminar are:
  - To give a general outline of translation theories in this century
  - To show how these theories apply to non literary texts
  - To demonstrate that translation practice can benefit from theory

Translation theories

- Most TT is:
  - Product-orientated – focuses the translation
  - Function-orientated – examines the context and purpose of the translation
  - Process-orientated – analyses the psychology of translation and process
- But usually has elements of all three

Partial theories of translation

- Medium restricted – man or machine?
- Area restricted – specific languages/cultures
- Rank-restricted – word/sentence/text
- Text-type restricted –different genres
- Time-restricted – historical view
- Problem-restricted – specific problems, e.g equivalence

Problems

- Position of Translation Studies in academia
- Split between theory and practice
- Translation teachers' fear of theory
- Researchers still encouraged to focus on literature
- Therefore teacher/researcher faced with dilemma

Early distinctions

- People have been arguing for centuries about
  - literal v. free v. faithful translation
  - word-for-word v. sense-for-sense
- For example:
- Cicero, St Jerome, St Augustine, Martin Luther, Étienne Dolet, Alexander Tytler, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Arthur Schopenhauer
- See Robinson (1997/2002)

Bible translation

- Bassnett (1991: 45-50) - "The history of Bible translation is accordingly a history of western culture in microcosm".
  - St. Jerome's translation into Latin in 384 A.D.
  - John Wycliffe (1330-84)and the 'Lollards'
  - William Tyndale (1494-1536) – burnt at stake
  - Martin Luther – New Testament 1522, Old Testament 1534
- Try Biblegateway:
  http://www.biblegateway.com/cgi-bin/bible

The Qur'an

- See University of Southern California: http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/

- Warning: "Note that any translation of the Qur'an immediately ceases to be the literal word of Allah, and hence cannot be equated with the Qur'an in its original Arabic form. In fact, each of the translations on this site is actually *an interpretation which has been translated*."

Science in Translation
a historical view

- Scott L. Montgomery. 2000. ***Science in Translation. Movements of Knowledge through Cultures and Time.*** University of Chicago Press.

- Describes how scientific texts have been translated, 'adapted', 'revised' and added to down the centuries e.g.
  - Western Astronomy
  - Greek and Arabic Science
  - Japanese Science

Further reading

- **HERMANS, Theo & Ubaldo Stecconi. 2002. 'Translators as Hostages to History'.**

- From the European Commission's 'Theory meets Practice' Seminars – at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/translation/theory/lectures/2001_01_18_history.pdf

'Linguistic' theories of translation

- Language Universals v. Linguistic Relativism
- Science of translation
- Equivalence
- Semantic and communicative translation
- Korrespondenz and Äquivalenz
- Translation 'shifts'
- Discourse and register analysis

Language Universals v. Linguistic Relativism

- Language Universals – presuppose that languages and/or our capacity for language are universal and/or innate
  - long history leading to Chomsky and beyond
- Language Relativism – different languages show us different ways of viewing the world
  - Sapir-Whorf theory and most translation theory
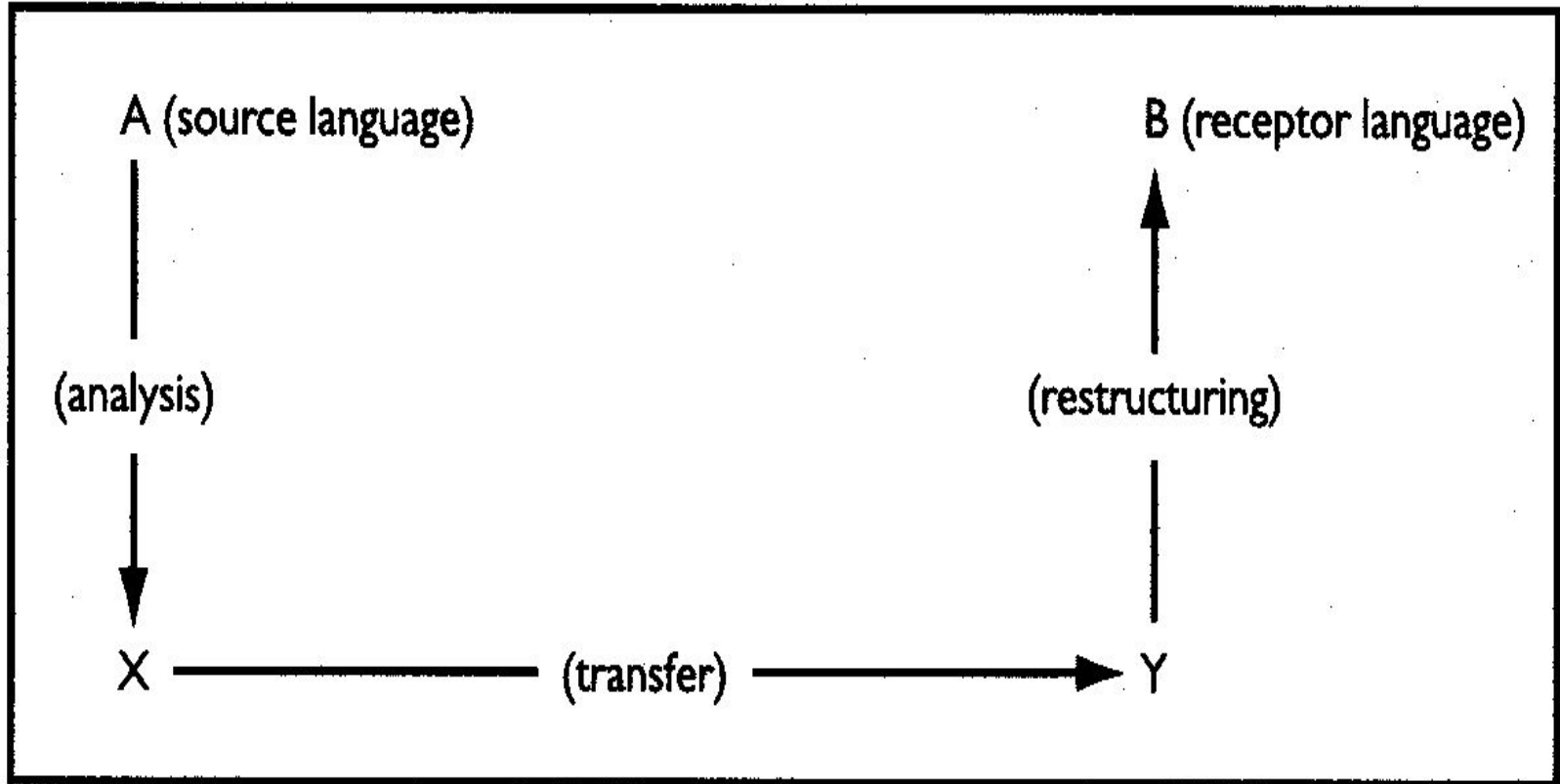
Science of translation

- Nida (1964)
  - Linguistic meaning
  - Referential or denotative meaning
  - Emotive or connotative meaning
  - Hierarchical structuring
  - Componential analysis
  - Semantic structure analysis
  - Formal and dynamic equivalence
  - Applications to Bible translation

Chomsky and TT
From Nida & Taber (1969:33)

From Nida (1964: 185-7)

- **Greek ST:**

  1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8
  egeneto anthrōpos, apestalmenos para theou, onoma autō Iōannēs

- **Literal transfer (stage 1):**

  1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8
  became/happened man, sent from God, name to-him John

- **Minimal transfer (stage 2):**

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8
  There CAME/WAS *a* man, sent from God, WHOSE name *was* John

- **Literary transfer (stage 3, example taken from the *American Standard Version*, 1901):**

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8
  There CAME *a* man, sent from God, WHOSE name *was* John

  or (example taken from *Phillips New Testament in Modern English*, 1958[1]):

  2   6   7 8   3   4
  A man, NAMED * John WAS sent BY God

Notes: Adjustments from the ST are indicated as follows: changes in order are indicated by the numeral order, omissions by an *, structural alterations by SMALL CAPITALS and additions by *italics.*

From Munday (2001: 50)

1   King James version (KJV, originally published 1611)
    1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
    1:2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face
         of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
    1:3 And God said, 'Let there be light': And there was light.

2   New English Bible (NEB, originally published 1970)
    1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
    1:2 Now the earth was without shape and empty, and darkness was over the
         surface of the watery deep, but the Spirit of God was moving over the
         surface of the water.
    1:3 And God said, 'Let there be light': And there was light.

3   New American Bible (NAB, originally published 1970)
    1:1 In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth,
    1:2 the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss, while
         a mighty wind swept over the waters.
    1:3 And God said, 'Let there be light': And there was light.

Equivalence

- Roman Jacobson (1959/2000) > "Equivalence in difference is the cardinal problem of language and the pivotal concern of linguistics'

- Discusses equivalence at level of obligatory grammar and lexicon, for example:
  - gender
  - aspect
  - semantic fields

Equivalence at word level Baker (1992) – Chapter 2

- Morphology – lexical and syntactic

- Lexical Meaning
    - Propositional v. Expressive meaning
    - Presupposed meaning
    - Evoked meaning
        - dialect – geographical, temporal, social
        - Register – field/tenor/mode of discourse

- Semantic fields and lexical sets

Equivalence above word level Baker (1992) – Chapter 3

- Collocation
  - Collocational range and markedness
  - Collocation and register
  - Collocational meaning
- Idioms and Fixed Expressions

Grammatical equivalence Baker (1992) – Chapter 4

- Grammatical vs. Lexical categories
- The Diversity of Grammatical Categories:
  - Number
  - Gender
  - Person
  - Tense and Aspect
  - Voice
  - Word Order

Newmark (1981)

- Semantic / communicative translation at level of:
  - Transmitter/addressee focus
  - Culture
  - Time and origin
  - Relation to ST
  - Use of form of SL
  - Form of TL
  - Appropriateness
  - Criterion for evaluation

Koller (1976/89)
Korrespondenz and Äquivalenz

- Denotative equivalence
- Connotative equivalence
- Text-normative equivalence
- Pragmatic equivalence
- Formal equivalence

Vinay & Darbelnet (1977/2000) Translation 'shifts'

- Direct translation:
  - Borrowing
  - Calque
  - Literal translation
- Oblique translation
  - Transposition
  - Modulation
  - Equivalence
  - Adaptation
- Function at the level of the lexicon, syntax and message

Translation 'shifts'

Catford (1965/2000)

1. level shifts

2. category shifts:

   - structural
   - class
   - unit or rank
   - intra-system

Van Leuven-Zwart (1989/90)

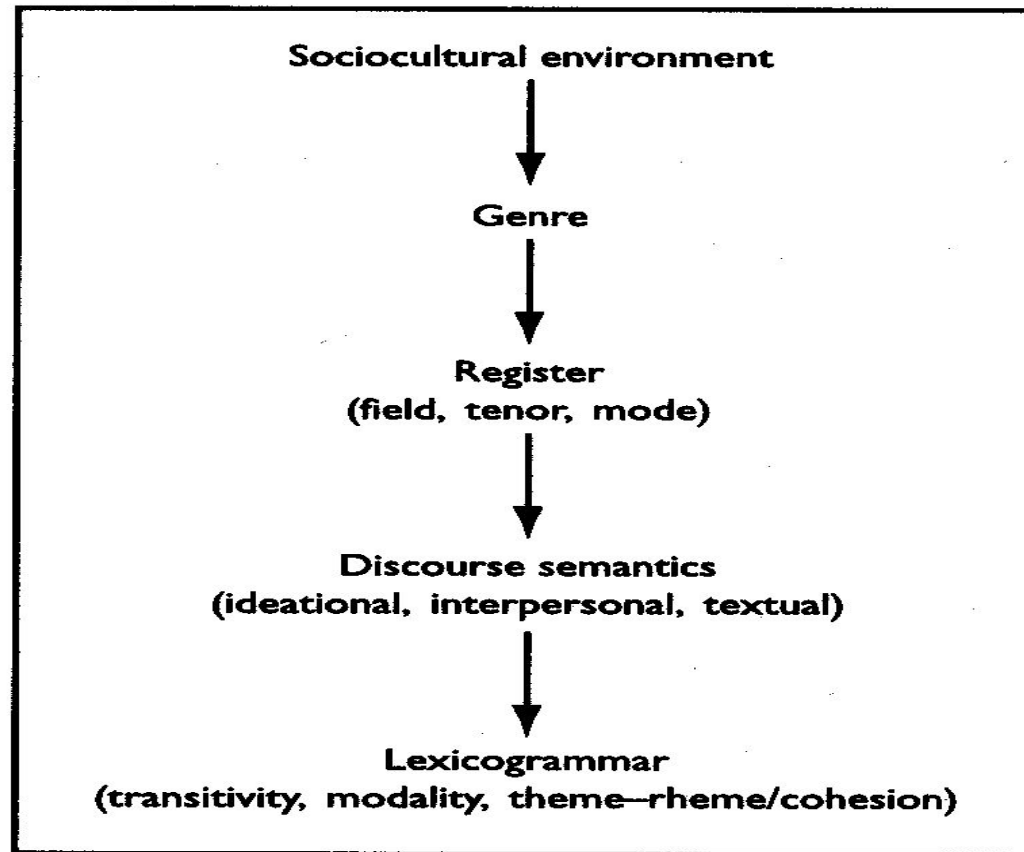– 8 categories and 37 sub-categories!

Linguistic theories and translation

- Most of these theories are considered 'linguistic' and are useful for teaching translation
- Most translation occurs at the linguistic level at some stage of the process
- However, too much stress on linguistic levels can have negative effect at the text level

Halliday
Functional-Systemic linguistics

Relation of genre and register to language

Sociocultural environment

↓

Genre

↓

Register
(field, tenor, mode)

↓

Discourse semantics
(ideational, interpersonal, textual)

↓

Lexicogrammar
(transitivity, modality, theme–rheme/cohesion)

Textual equivalence
Baker (1992) Chapter 5

- Thematic and Information Structures
  - Theme and Rheme
  - Sentence analysis – S Od Oi Cs Co Cp Adj Conj Disj
- Information Structure: Given and New
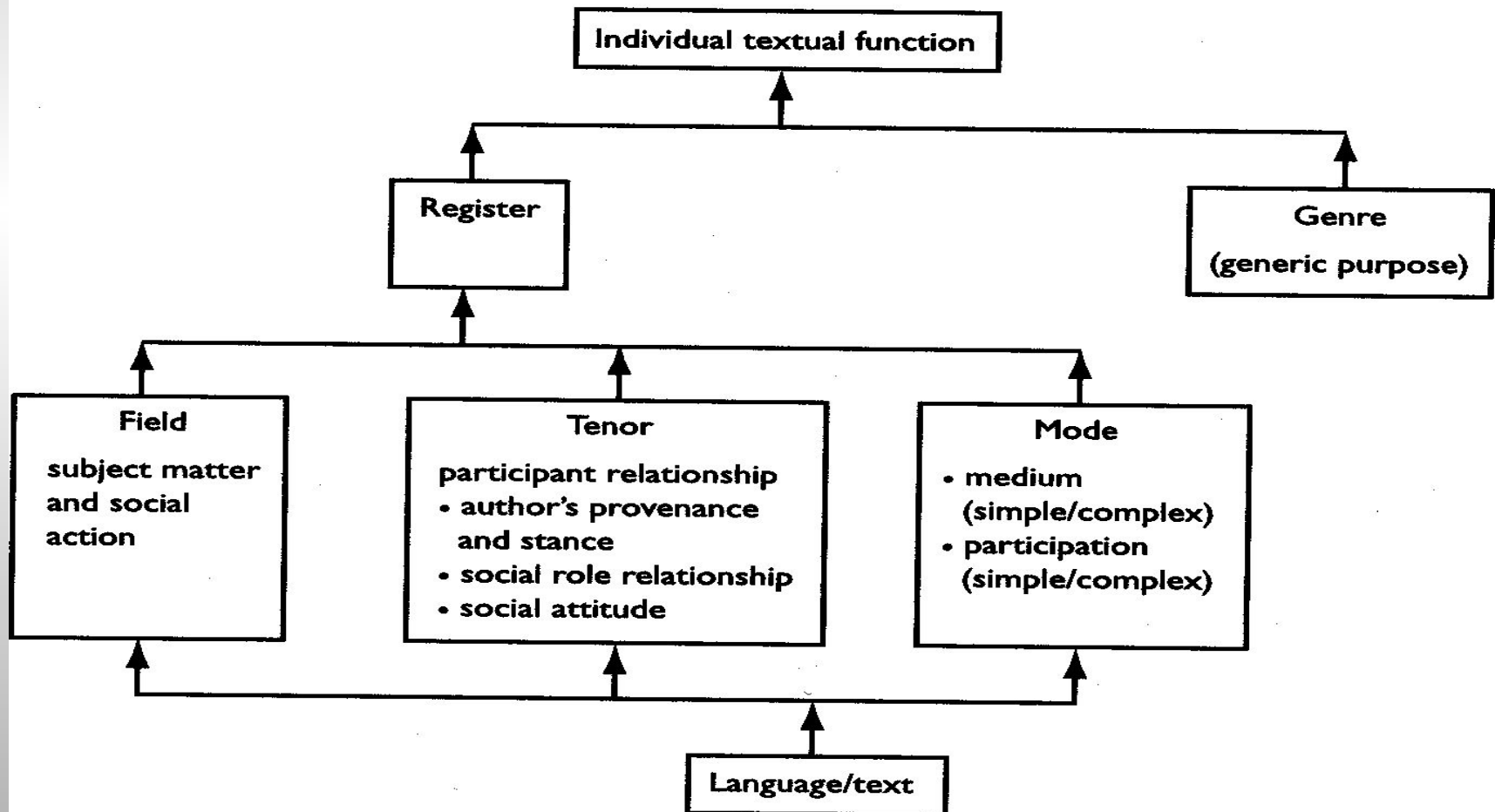- Word Order and Communicative Function

Textual equivalence
Baker (1992) Chapter 6

- Cohesion
  - Reference
  - Substitution and Ellipsis
  - Conjunction
  - Lexical Cohesion

Translation Quality Assessment House (1997)

Scheme for analyzing and comparing original and translation texts (House 1997: 108)

Focus on the function of the text

- Baker (1992) Chapter 7 - Pragmatic equivalence
- Reiss (1970s) – Functional approach
- Holz-Mäntarri (1984) – Translational action
- Vermeer (1970s) and Reiss & Vermeer (1984) – 'Skopos' theory
- Nord (1988/91) – *Text Analysis in Translation*

Pragmatic equivalence Baker (1992) Chapter 7

- Coherence
- Presupposition
- Implicature
  - Grice's maxims of
    - Quantity
    - Quality
    - Relevance
    - Manner
  - Politeness

Reiss (1970s) Functional approach

- Classification of texts as:
  - 'informative'
  - 'expressive'
  - 'operative'
  - 'audiomedial'

Reiss (1971)
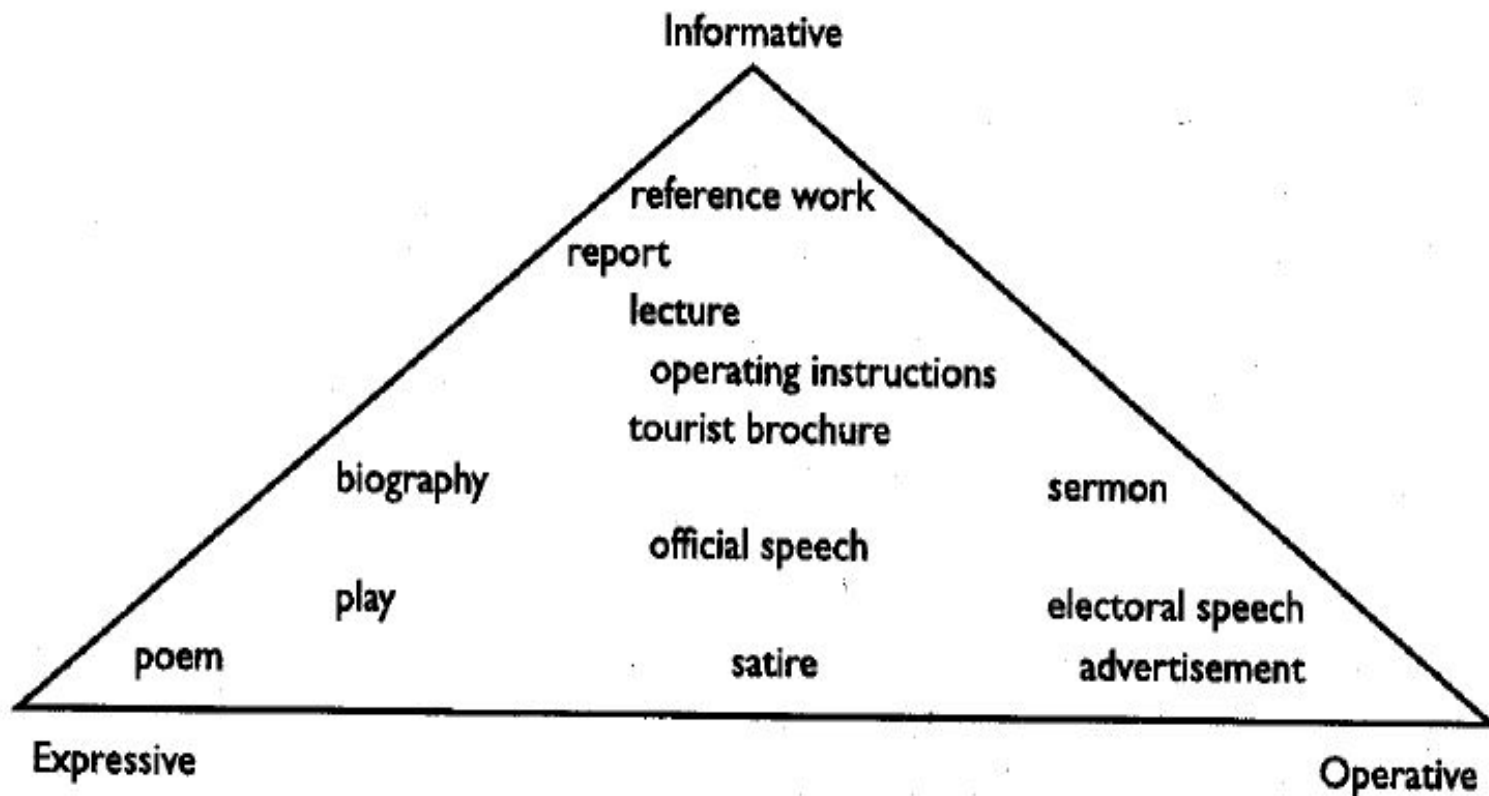# Text types

Functional characteristics of text types and links to translation methods (adapted from Reiss 1971)

Text type	Informative	Expressive	Operative
Language function	Informative (representing objects and facts)	Expressive (expressing sender's attitude)	Appellative (making an appeal to text receiver)
Language dimension	Logical	Aesthetic	Dialogic
Text focus	Content-focused	Form-focused	Appellative-focused
TT should	Transmit referential content	Transmit aesthetic form	Elicit desired response
Translation method	'Plain prose', explicitation as required	'Identifying' method, adopt perspective of ST author	'Adaptive', equivalent effect

Reiss > Chesterman (1989)
Text types and varieties

Reiss's text types and text varieties (Chesterman 1989: 105, based on a handout prepared by Roland Freihoff)

Informative

reference work

report

lecture

operating instructions

tourist brochure

biography

sermon

official speech

play

electoral speech

poem

satire

advertisement

Expressive

Operative

Holz-Mäntarri (1984) Translational action

- A communicative process involving:
  - The initiator
  - The commissioner
  - The ST producer
  - The TT producer
  - The TT user
  - The TT receiver

Reiss & Vermeer (1984) – 'Skopos' theory

- Focuses purpose or *skopos* of translation
- Rules
  1. A TT is determined by its *skopos*
  2. A TT is message in a target culture/TL concerning a message in a source culture/SL
  3. A TT is not clearly reversible
  4. A TT must be internally coherent
  5. A TT must be coherent with the ST

Nord (1988/91)
Text Analysis

Functional approach

1. The importance of the translation commission

2. The role of ST analysis

3. The functional hierarchy of translation problems

Polysystem Theory
Focus - social and cultural norms

- Even-Zohar (1978/2000)
- Toury (1995)
- Chesterman (1997)
- Lambert, Van Gorp, Hermans and the Manipulation school (1985 & 1999)

Even-Zohar (1978/2000)

- Even-Zohar considers translated literature to include:
  - children's literature
  - thrillers
  - other popular works of fiction,
  - (auto-)biography
- CONSIDER: informative writing of all kinds – e.g. travel, art and sport, journalism, university textbooks.

Toury (1995) *Descriptive Translation Studies*

- Important point in Translation Studies
- It encouraged the description of all kinds of translation and provided a wide basis on which to conduct research.
- The *tertium comparationis* = attempt to postulate 'neutral translation' v. culturally and socially 'loaded' real translations
- BUT proved unsatisfactory and abandoned

Toury's norms

- **initial norm**
  - ST norms = **adequate** translation
  - TT norms = **acceptable** translation
- **preliminary norms**
  - **translation policy** – selection of texts
  - **directness of translation** – is ST an original?
- **operational norms**
  - **matricial norms** or completeness of the TT
  - **textual-linguistic** norms.

Toury's 'laws'

- **The law of growing standardization** - suggests that the TT standards override those of the original text. This will happen when the TL culture is more powerful.

- **The law of interference** - suggests that the ST interferes in the TT by default. This will happen when the SL culture is more powerful.

Chesterman's norms (1997)

- Expectancy norms – expectations of readers
  - Allow evaluative judgements
  - Validated by a norm-authority
- Professional norms
  - Accountability norm – ethical norm
  - Communication norm – social norm
  - 'Relation' norm – linguistic norm (between SL and TL)

Polysystem theory and the NON Literary text

- Even-Zohar, Toury, Chesteman, and others see ST and TT as part of a much wider social and cultural context

- Although they may consider literary text primary, their theories and suggestions are applicable to all texts

Cultural Studies

- Bassnett & Lefevere (1991) dismissed 'linguistic theories' as having 'moved from word to text as a unit, but not beyond' and talked of 'painstaking comparisons between orginals and translations' which do not consider the text in its cultural environment. (Munday, 2001: 127)

Lefevere (1992)
Power and patronage

- Professionals within the literary system
- Patronage outside the literary system
  - The ideological component
  - The economic component
  - The status component
- The dominant poetics
  - Literary devices
  - The concept of the role of literature

Examples

- Edward Fitzgerald's 'improvement' of work by Omar Khayyam
- An 18th century translator's 'improvement' of Camões' *Os Lusiadas*
- Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* - 'softened' for children
- Censorship of 'bad' language
- Can you think of examples?

Simon (1996)
Translation and Gender

- 'Masculine language of translation theorists
- Overt attempts to promote a feminist stance through translation practice
- Contribution women have made by translating works of literature over the centuries
- Relationship of women and culture as seen through translation
  - the translator is 'self-effacing'
  - creates a 'new' work with a feminine point of view
- Link between feminist and postcolonial studies

Postcolonial Translation Theory

- Spivak (1993/2000) and Niranjana (1992)
- Cultural implications - translating between:
  - Colonized and colonizing
  - Politically powerful and weaker languages and cultures
- Power relations
- Translational and transnational factors

Example

- Spivak (2000) translates out of Bengali into English
- Try to imagine how an educated bi-lingual (English/Bengali) woman with international feminist connections might try to translate poetry by Mahasweta Devi – a poet in an Indian village.
- http://www.emory.edu/ENGLISH/Bahri/Contents.html#Authors

Other Situations

- Brazilian cannibalism (1960-1999)
  - Colonized devours colonizer and is enriched
- Cronin (1996)
  - The Irish language and English imperialism over the centuries

Cultural Studies ETC

- My suggestion - surf the Internet with:
  - cultural studies
  - communication studies
  - comparative literature
  - literary studies
  - translation studies

Cultural Studies and the NON Literary text

- Cultural Studies theorists:
  - Rarely refer to NON Literary text
  - Then tend to claim any 'interesting' text as 'literary'!
- YET Cultural Studies should – by its very nature – go beyond literature – or at least Literature.

Reaction against
TL orientated texts

- What can be done to avoid too much standardization?

- How can one avoid social or cultural bias?

- How can one truly represent the original?

Antoine Berman (1984) 'the Experience of the Foreign'

- Berman's 'negative analytic' of translation focuses the following:
  - Rationalization
  - Clarification
  - Expansion
  - Ennoblement
  - Qualitative impoverishment
  - Quantitative impoverishment

Antoine Berman (1984)
'the Experience of the Foreign'

- – The destruction of rhythms
- – The destruction of underlying networks of signification
- – The destruction of linguistic patternings
- – The destruction of vernacular networks or their exoticization
- – The destruction of expressions and idioms
- – The effacement of the superimposition of languages

Venuti (1995)
The Translator's Invisibility

- Criticizes those, like Toury, who aim to produce value-free norms and laws of translation.

- Interpretes Lefevere's notions of patronage and its influence in the context of Anglo-American publishing

- Uses 'Invisibility' to describe the translator's situation and activity in contemporary Anglo-American culture

QUESTIONS

- Can the Translator be 'Invisible'?
- Should the Translator be 'Invisible'?
- If, so – when? Give examples
- Can the Translator be 'invisible' and creative?
- If, so – when? Give examples

Pride, Prejudice ......
and Power

- Consider:
- How literary translators' describe their work – Pride
- How reviewers and the public receive translations - Prejudice
- The publishing industry and the effect of globalization – Power

Philosophy and translation

- Philosophers often find translation fascinating - a few examples:
- Walter Benjamin (1923/2000)
- Ezra Pound (1929/2000)
- Steiner (1975/92/98)
- Derrida & Deconstruction (1960 >)

Walter Benjamin (1923/2000)

- Benjamin's metaphor - **liberation** of the original text through translation.
- Believed in interlinear translation > reveals the original in all its complexity
- TL is 'powerfully affected by the foreign tongue'
- An extreme example of foreignization
- Believed this would allow 'pure language' to emerge from the harmonization of the two languages.

Ezra Pound (1929/2000) – and his followers

- Ezra Pound influenced much literary translation
- Idea that one does not need to know the SL well – it is enough to feel the 'spirit'
- Belief in archaizing and foreignizing to effect
- Led to 'literary translation workshops' - inspiration
- Leads to very good translation – OR pretentious and impenetrable texts!

Steiner (1975/92/98)
Beyond Babel

- Hermeneutic motion
    1. Initiative trust
    2. Aggression
    3. Incorporation
    4. Compensation
- Imbalance between ST and TT
- Resistant difference of the text
- Elective affinity of the translator

Derrida & Deconstruction (1960 >)

- Objective of Derrida - and Deconstruction - to demonstrate the instability of language in general and the relationship between signified and signifier in particular.
- 'Deconstruction' can and has been used to 'deconstruct' much more than 'traditional literature' . E.g.
    - Political discourse
    - Philosophy
    - Psychology & Sociology
    - Science

Philosophy and the NON Literary text

- At first sight, these theories would seem to be furthest from the NON Literary text
- BUT – consider implications for:
  - Knowledge engineering
  - Ontologies
  - Semantic frameworks
  - Descriptive terminology

Interdisciplinary Translation Studies

- In practice - Literary translation is confined to Modern Languages departments
- NON Literary translation is essentially interdisciplinary in:
  - Use of language
  - Use of text
  - Use of technology
- Snell Hornby (1995) - Text types

Figure 11.1

Text type and relevant criteria for translation (from Snell-Hornby 1995: 32)

A. Literary translation | General language translation | Special language translation

B.
| Bible | stage/film | lyric poetry | modern literature | newspaper/general information texts | advertising language | legal language | economic language | medicine | science/technology |

classical antiquity | literature before 1900 | children's literature | light fiction

C. ← cultural history/literary studies → | ← sociocultural and area studies → | ← studies of special subjects →

D.
(i) creative extension of language norm ← | narrowing scope of interpretation → | conceptual identity →

(ii) recreation of language dimensions ← | grade of differentiation | relevance of equivalence criteria → invariance

(iii) shifting of perspective → | communicative function of the translation ← | information function →

E. ← text-linguistics →
historical linguistics → | contrastive grammar → contrastive semantics → | language for specific purposes syntax standardization of terminology/documentation

dialectology ← | sociolinguistics → pragmalinguistics → psycholinguistics →

F. speakability ← | sound/rhythm → | phonological effects ←

Technology and Translation

- Desktop Publishing
- Translation memories
- Terminology databases
- Translator's Workbench
- Machine translation
- Information resources

Other aspects

- Bert Esselink –Localizaton
- Yves Gambier –MultMedia Translation, Conference Interpreting, Translation in Context
- Daniel Gouadec –Terminology and Translator Training
- Don Kiraly- A Social Constructivist Approach to Translator Education – Empowerment from Theory to Practice.

Anthony Pym

- Perhaps one of the best examples of multi-disciplinary work and interests
- Have a look at his homepage
- http://www.fut.es/~apym/

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Links

- Anthony Pym's homepage http://www.fut.es/~apym/
- The virtual symposium "INNOVATION IN TRANSLATOR AND INTERPRETER TRAINING (ITIT) " at - http://www.fut.es/~apym/tti.htm.
- Post-Colonial Studies at Emory Web site http://www.emory.edu/ENGLISH/Bahri/Contents.html#Authors
- Biblegateway:
- http://www.biblegateway.com/cgi-bin/bible
- University of Southern California: http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran University of Southern California: http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/

- European Commission's translators' workshop /seminar /interesting articles:
- http:// http://europa.eu.int/comm/translation/theory/index_en.htm
- http://europa.eu.int/comm/translation/theory/workshops_en.htm
- http://europa.eu.int/comm/translation/theory/seminars_en.htm
- http://europa.eu.int/comm/translation/reading/articles/theory_and_practice_en.htm