An Investigation of the Role of Discourses of Philosophy in the Development of Translation Studies from a Historical Perspective

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Received: 06.04.2017 Accepted: 10.06.2017

Extended Abstract

1. Introduction
The various disciplines in the humanities are related by chains of authority. Sociolinguistics, for example, historically refers to linguistics and to sociology for the authority of its founding concepts, just as linguistics in turn might refer to philology, or sociology might look back to history, to psychology, or to political economics. In the same vein, the investigation of discourses of philosophy from a historical perspective might be related to translation and translation studies, so that frames and theories in the interface of philosophy and translation can be historically projected. These chains allow concepts to be borrowed and thus constantly displaced. They also allow authority to be projected back onto the discipline referred to, such that authority itself is also constantly displaced across disciplines in consideration. Proposing frames can enable us to idealize Western philosophy as a set of discourses that do not ostensibly borrow authority from external disciplines. It is, instead, a place where terms and concepts would be elaborated and refined for use in other disciplines; it might supremely act in the service of others. On the other hand, translation of philosophy and philosophical discourses has been a concern of Western philosophy ever since the relation with the classical past became problematic. In this vein, the authority of philosophy and the role it takes in other fields of study, including translation studies is notable, which is the main topic of the current study.

Drawing on the immense prominent theories and notions proposed by varied scholars in the field of philosophy, the main objective of the present study is to theorize on translation and offer an all-round framework to enable us to hypothesize that translation studies, as a client discipline, is drawing on philosophical discourses and indeed on many other intermediary disciplines as well. In this vein, taking advantage of varied theories and concepts in the area of philosophy, the present research aims to find answers to the following questions:

1. What is the historical relationship between discourses of philosophy and translation studies?
2. How can revision of discourses of philosophy assist development of translation studies?

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3. How can hypothesis-making on translation studies be attained through proposing a general all-round framework?

2. Methodology
As a descriptive study, the current research aims to investigate the role of the discourses of philosophy in the development of translation studies from a historical perspective. Accordingly, it attempts to unravel the interfacing role of the philosophical discourses in translation studies to probe the main impact of philosophy on translation and translation theories and reveal in which way(s) the revision in discourses of philosophy can contribute to the developing area of translation studies.

3. Discussion
The evidence proposed in this study revealed a major problem in the relationships between philosophy and translation. Considering the relevant evidence, the findings showed that authority would mostly flow more from philosophy to translation studies than the other way around. In other words, the theorization of translation has leaned on philosophical discourses far more than philosophers have seriously considered translation. In this highly asymmetric relationship, difficult texts fall into the hands of readers from more generalist spheres, therefore, one may suspect that the philosophers would not always identify with what has been done in their name. Besides, in the presence of philosophical authority, many translation theorists are needlessly parochial, while in the absence of philosophical authority, a rather quaint empiricism rules, as in much of Descriptive Translation Studies, or in corpus linguistics, or think-aloud protocols, which rarely transcend positivist notions of science. The central divisions of philosophical discourse itself could help poorly in this respect. Hence, the result is not just a lack of dialogue, but serious misunderstandings. Furthermore, considering the findings it was shown that the discourses of philosophy might be related to translation studies in at least three ways: Philosophers of various kinds have used translation as a case study or metaphor for the issues of more general application; translation theorists and practitioners have referred to philosophical discourses for support and authority for their ideas; and philosophers, scholars, and translators have commented on the translation of philosophical discourses.

4. Conclusion
Translating can be seen as a problem-solving activity in which a source element may be rendered by one or more elements in the target language. If translators have only one available option, there is no more to be said; no philosophy is needed. When, however, they have two or three options, translation is worth talking about, ideally between translators, who start theorizing. And when there are numerous options available and no clear theory about how to reduce that complexity, the cause for discussion reaches levels where philosophical discourse may be turned to, for ideas
about the options, although rarely for translational solutions. This can be seen in most of the theories and approaches which have been dealt with in this study.

In general, what the philosophical discourses may miss, are for the most part the logics of the more everyday activities, the many techniques by which translators themselves constantly reduce complexity. In addition, philosophical discourses show great tendencies to be revised with respect to problems where more than three or four alternatives are available, and while to develop words appropriate to those alternatives might be the role of philosophy; to adapt and propose them might be one of the roles of translation studies. The current study, as well as the following analogous studies in future, can prepare the ground for proposing further frames and theories in the interface of philosophy and translation.

**Key Words:** Revision, Theory, Discourses of philosophy, Translation studies

**References**


