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Gambier, Yves and Doorslaer, Luc van (Ed.). *The Metalanguage of Translation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2009, p. 192.

The *Metalanguage of Translation*, sections of which contain materials originally published in volume nineteen of the international translation studies journal, *Target* (2007), presents a compilation of eleven position articles, written by eleven contributors who draw attention to the often diametric variations between the practice and conceptualization of translation studies and the language we use to describe it. This volume provides a multiplicity of metalinguistic topics covering everything from terminology and bibliography to epistemology and localization.

In the first article, “How about meta?: An introduction,” written by the editors, Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer, readers are encouraged to

consider the intimate relationship that exists between translations and our knowledge about translations. Gernot Hebenstreit later examines this concept in greater depth throughout the volume’s second essay by using classical texts to highlight the usage of definition theory to translation terminology in “Defining patterns in translation studies: Revisiting two classics of German Translationswissenschaft.”

The third article, “Risking conceptual maps: Mapping as a keywords-related tool underlying the online Translation Studies Bibliography,” crafted by Luc van Doorslaer, contains multiple bibliographies on translation studies that serve to help scholars systematize and organize a wide range of translation-style values, standards and ideas. He eventually uses these bibliographies to help introduce what’s known as a “mapping principle”, the challenges it faces and the manner in which it is regularly used for online projects. Relating directly to Anthony Pym’s conceptualizations, Doorslaer later argues

that the majority of pre-designed maps understood in the specific rationale as schema (which form knowledge and concepts relating to translation studies) are “peculiar instruments of power” leading individuals to “look in certain directions” while causing them to miss other directions. Maps, he believes, “name and control. [Luc Doorslaer believes that a] displacement of power in this field might thus be intimated by a certain remapping.” The suggestions he proposes also apply to adaptation studies since past theoretical discourses were, in large part, dominated by what is coined as “fidelity mapping.” According to the author, in today’s society this type of design has been replaced by other discourses, such as Thomas Leitch’s notion of “cinematic literacy.” All in all, Van Doorslaer dismisses the notion of such totalizing arguments and instead calls for the invention of what he refers to as “open maps” which unite “language, concepts, terms and approaches that were never meant to be brought together

[...]. They call for criticism, changes and additions.” Through this approach, adaptation studies may join with translation studies to look towards other disciplines in order to develop new theoretical perspectives.

In continuation, Leona Van Vaerenbergh writes about current dictionaries and encyclopedias on translation in her article, “Polysemy and synonymy: Their management in Translation Studies dictionaries and in translator training. A case study.” Vaerenbergh mentions how differently various translation studies dictionaries define terms and she goes on to introduce her readers to a methodological structure that addresses such ideas and places them in direct contrast with the backgrounds in which they have their origins. The author explores the connections between concepts and looks for the pre-existing translations of such terms in foreign languages. Towards the end of her article, Vaerenberg stresses that ideas are derived culturally, and that the only way to create some form of commonality in

regard to translation studies is to communicate across both cultural and linguistic distinctions.

In the fifth article of the volume, “The terminology of translation: Epistemological, conceptual and intercultural problems and their social consequences,” Josep Marco shares his opinion that the epistemological, conceptual, and intercultural issues contained in translation terminology are undeniably linked. He argues that the justification for why many of the terms associated with translation (or adaptation) resist definition is related to the fact that “[they] are used in a non-standardized, even chaotic way, the most frequent result being that there is no one-to-one (i.e. univocal) relationship between term and concept.” In other words, Marco says scholars should focus more intently on how a term has been used at varying points in history or in different cultures rather than blindly rejecting terms such as fidelity as old-fashioned and/or cliché.

The sixth article, “Natural and directional equivalence in

theories of translation” by Anthony Pym, relies on the concept of equivalence to show the co-existence of two contending understandings of this term. He views the concept of equivalence (which he thinks has reacquired a position of value in translation as a result of the localization process) “to ensure the imposition of controlled patterns on all cultures.” In the contemporary world, Pym believes that uniqueness is accepted more generally than universalism. He understands that translations have become such a localized process that they are now robbed of their “more creative or more adaptational aspects.” In the article that follows, “A literary work—Translation and original: A conceptual analysis within the philosophy of art and Translation Studies,” Leena Laiho studies the translatability of a literary work while framing the discussion in the theoretical context of both analytic philosophy and translation studies.

Mary Snell-Hornby later analyzes the concept of terminology in “What’s in a name?:

On metalinguistic confusion in Translation Studies” by observing ways in which a new term may be introduced. Hornby presents a possible solution for making this process simpler when she states that while translation (like adaptation) can adopt different theoretical approaches, the basic ideas and terms of that theory must be clearly and unambiguously explicated in their specific coinage. This, she suggests, may demand a significant amount of knowledge in more than one language; “a demand that does not seem unreasonable for anyone working in the field of translation.” With this in mind, Hornby continues to highlight that the translator should work between various local viewpoints in order to create a kind of terminological agreement.

The Metalanguage of Translation next moves forward to encourage a more conceptual diversity despite the attempts of generations of scholars to formulate theoretical norms for both translation and adaptation studies. The meaning of basic terms (equivalence, original text, fidel-

ity, etc.) is elusive; “the signifieds playfully escape the grasp of signifiers; although we keep trying to name, our desire for dominance and univocality inevitably fails in the last instance and capitulates to the plurality, elusiveness, equivocality and fuzziness of language.” If nothing else, this volume demonstrates the need for adaptation studies and translation studies to learn from one another, as well as to analyze in greater detail the insights produced in different languages and/or cultures.

The ninth essay of this volume, “In defense of fuzziness,” author Nike K. Pokorn clarifies the dangers of defining such precise and exact concepts as “native speaker” and “mother tongue.” In Iwona Mazur’s article, “The metalanguage of localization: Theory and practice,” the author hints that this type of localization “is a much broader concept than translation, as it involves not only modifying the Content of a product, but also its Package [...]. Whereas the former process is usually performed

by translators, the latter one is not necessarily so.” Translation then, like adaptation, should not be bounded by its focus on technical concerns (involving source and target documents). Rather, it should investigate in considerable detail the conditions of production from both texts.

The tenth article, “The metalanguage of translation: A Chinese perspective” by Jun Tang, offers a brief explanation of translation’s development throughout history and mentions the recent domestic worry in relation to the uncritical acceptance of Western academic discourse in China. According to the author, Western theorists may learn from their Chinese colleagues who had “a keen sense of politics” during the mid-twentieth century in their attempts to promote vernacular Chinese as the official written language of communication.

In the final article of the volume, “Translation terminology and its offshoots,” editor Yves Gambier addresses the history and principles of compiling translation terminology and also decides to incorporate a subject index to guide the reader.

The Metalanguage of Translation seeks to educate beginner to intermediate level translation studies scholars about the field’s value as a discipline while expressing the need for additional research to be carried out. These are carefully written essays brought together to express the metalinguistic topics of discussion that often question the very language that has shaped translation studies as a whole. This volume is recommended for all those interested in better understanding translation and its overarching application.

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