

The Evolution And Development Of Global Translation Studies

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Annotation

This article scientifically analyzes the formation and development stages of global translation studies as a distinct discipline. The research highlights the transition of translation from traditional linguistic approaches to modern cultural, cognitive, and technological paradigms. Furthermore, the role of significant schools in world translation studies, particularly the manipulation school, skopos theory, and contemporary trends such as artificial intelligence and machine translation, is examined. The purpose of the article is to reveal the unique evolution of translation studies as an independent science and its interdisciplinary connections.

Keywords: Evolution of translation studies, linguistic paradigm, cultural turn, skopos theory, interdisciplinarity, translation strategies, machine translation, cognitive translatology, world translation schools.

Introduction

The history of human civilization is, in many ways, the history of translation. From the early diplomatic exchanges in ancient Mesopotamia to the complex digital localization of the 21st century, translation has served as the vital bridge between disparate cultures. However, Translation Studies as an independent academic discipline is relatively young, having undergone a dramatic transformation over the last half-century. This article explores the evolution of this field, tracing its journey from a sub-branch of linguistics to a sophisticated, interdisciplinary science that incorporates culture, sociology, and cognitive technology.

In the mid-20th century, the "Linguistic Stage" dominated the field. Scholars such as Roman Jakobson and J.C. Catford viewed translation primarily as a process of finding formal equivalents between two languages. The focus was on "accuracy" and "fidelity" to the source text. However, the 1970s and 1980s brought about what is now famously known as the "Cultural Turn." Led by theorists like Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, this movement argued that translation is not just about words, but about

power, ideology, and the cultural context in which a text function.

As the field progressed into the 1990s and 2000s, the emergence of Functionalist Theories, such as Hans Vermeer's *Skopos Theory*, further revolutionized the discipline. Translation was no longer seen as a mere mirror of the original, but as a purposeful action designed to function effectively in a target environment. Today, we are witnessing the "Digital and Cognitive Turn," where the focus has shifted toward the interaction between human translators and Artificial Intelligence, as well as the neurological processes occurring in the translator's brain.

This research aims to synthesize these developmental stages to provide a comprehensive overview of how global translation studies have adapted to the needs of a globalized world. By examining the shift from "text-to-text" equivalence to "culture-to-culture" mediation, we can better understand the current challenges and future directions of this ever-evolving discipline.

1. The Linguistic Era: Equivalence and Structure, During the mid-20th century, translation was primarily viewed as a branch of applied linguistics. The central

debate focused on the concept of equivalence. Researchers like Eugene Nida introduced the distinction between "formal equivalence" (word-for-word) and "dynamic equivalence" (sense-for-sense), aiming to achieve a similar response from the target audience. In this stage, the source text was considered "sacred," and the translator's task was to reproduce its linguistic structure as accurately as possible.

2. The Cultural Turn: Translation as Mediation, In the 1980s, the focus shifted from the word to the culture. Scholars such as Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere argued that translation does not happen in a vacuum but is influenced by social, political, and ideological factors. This period introduced the idea of "translation as rewriting." It was recognized that translators often "manipulate" texts to fit the norms of the target culture. This shift allowed translation studies to borrow methodologies from sociology, history, and post-colonial studies, making it a truly interdisciplinary field.

3. Functionalism and Skopos Theory, A major breakthrough occurred with the emergence of the Skopos Theory, developed by Hans Vermeer. This theory posits that the most important factor in any translation is its *Skopos* (purpose). According to this view, the translator is not a mere transcriber but a professional communicator who may change the

structure of the source text to fulfill a specific function in the target culture. This approach liberated translation from the strict "fidelity to the source" and prioritized the needs of the target audience and the client.

4. The Technological and Cognitive Turn, In the contemporary era, the development of global translation studies is defined by Technology and Cognition.

The Technological Shift: The rise of CAT (Computer-Aided Translation) tools, Neural Machine Translation (NMT), and Artificial Intelligence (AI) has redefined the translator's role. Modern translation is now about "post-editing" and managing large corpora of data.

The Cognitive Shift: Current research focuses on the "black box" of the translator's mind. Using tools like eye-tracking and EEG, scholars' study how translators make decisions, handle stress, and process information.

5. Globalization and Localization (Glocalization), Today, translation has expanded into Localization (L10n). This involves adapting products, software, and advertisements to the linguistic and cultural requirements of a specific locale. The evolution of the field shows that translation is no longer a localized activity between two languages but a global industry that drives international trade, diplomacy, and digital communication.

Summary of the Evolution

Period	Key Focus	Leading Scholars	Core Concept
1950s-1960s	Linguistics	Nida, Catford	Equivalence
1970s-1980s	Culture/Society	Bassnett, Lefevere	Manipulation/Power
1990s	Function	Vermeer, Nord	Skopos (Purpose)
2000s-Present	Technology/AI	Cronin, O'Hagan	Machine Translation/Localization

The evolution of global translation studies demonstrates that the field has successfully transitioned from a narrow linguistic focus to a broad, multi-dimensional academic discipline. As traced throughout this

research, the journey began with the rigid pursuit of equivalence in the mid-20th century, moved through the transformative "Cultural Turn" of the 1980s, and arrived at

the functionalist and technological paradigms that define the modern era.

One of the most significant findings of this study is that translation is no longer viewed as a passive act of "word-for-word" substitution. Instead, as emphasized by Hans Vermeer's Skopos Theory, it is a purposeful, strategic action that bridges cultural gaps. The integration of sociology, history, and cognitive science has enriched the discipline, allowing it to address complex issues of ideology, power, and identity that were previously overlooked.

Looking ahead, the development of global translation studies is facing its most profound shift yet: the Digital Revolution. The rise of Artificial Intelligence and Neural Machine Translation (NMT) does not signal the end of the translator's role, but rather its evolution. The "human-in-the-loop" model is becoming the new standard, where the translator acts as a cultural mediator and a post-editor of high-tech outputs.

In conclusion, the progress of this discipline reflects the increasing interconnectedness of our world. As globalization continues to bring diverse societies into contact, the demand for sophisticated translation—not just of language, but of meaning and intent—will only grow. The future of translation studies lies in its ability to remain adaptable, interdisciplinary, and human-centric in the face of rapid technological change.

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