



Translation and Time: Exploring the Temporal Dimension of Cross-cultural Transfer

Presentation Details

Title of Paper:

Translating Space into Time: On the Use of Temporal Metaphors in Translation Studies

Abstract:

I would like to explore different ways in which temporal metaphors of translation could be used to redefine Western views of the translation process as a spatial transference in order to develop a new metaphorical metalanguage responding to the radical theoretical and conceptual changes that have taken place in translation studies in the last few decades.

The Western obsession with the spatial dimension of translation has blinded translation theory to the simple fact that translations also take place in time. Translation processes have been conceived as a jump over the abyss between the languages, but they could also be viewed as a journey of a certain duration that can be divided into a series of interlocking and overlapping stages (Benshalom 2010; Morini 2006).

Trivedi (2006) pointed to the fact that within the Eastern tradition translation is also describe as a process unfolding in time. The Sanskrit word *anuvad* was used to describe the new practice of translation imported by the colonial powers. Originally, it meant repeating a word after someone, but without carrying any spatial connotation. In the late nineteenth century, the word acquired the new Western meaning of “translation” as a transfer between languages.

Besides cultural differences in the use of translation metaphors, diverging conceptualizations of time have to be taken into account. Western spatial metaphors suggest a linear time conception mirroring the material transfer of the original across an intermediate space. However, other time conceptions might be developed. The translation process could, thus, also be conceived as a circular movement during which the translator keeps moving back and forth between the original and its translation.

Still another way of interpreting translation in temporal terms has been recently suggested by Kathryn Batchelor (2008) who discusses Homi Bhabha’s emphasis on the temporal aspect in his notion of “third space”.

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Rainer Guldin is lecturer for German Language and Culture at the Faculties of Communication and Economic Sciences at the Università della Svizzera Italiana (USI) in Lugano, Switzerland. He also lectures at the University of St. Gallen (HSG) (Switzerland). He taught courses and held seminars at the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) in Brazil, at Bauhaus Universität in Weimar (Germany) and the Centre for Translation and Intercultural Studies of the University of Manchester (England). He was visiting professor (Cathedra IEAT/Fundep) at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais in Belo Horizonte (UFMG). He studied English and German Literature in Zürich and Birmingham (England). His Ph.D. thesis focused on the German writer Hubert Fichte. He is Editor-in-Chief of the peer-reviewed open access e-journal *Flusser Studies* <http://www.flusserstudies.net/> . Main areas of research: metaphor theory; history and theory of translation and self-translation; the work and life of Vilém Flusser; translingual writing and multilingualism in literary texts; history of the body; landscape theory. Recent publications: *Translation as Metaphor*, Routledge, New York, 2015 and *Politische Landschaften. Zum Verhältnis von Raum und nationaler Identität*, transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, 2014.