

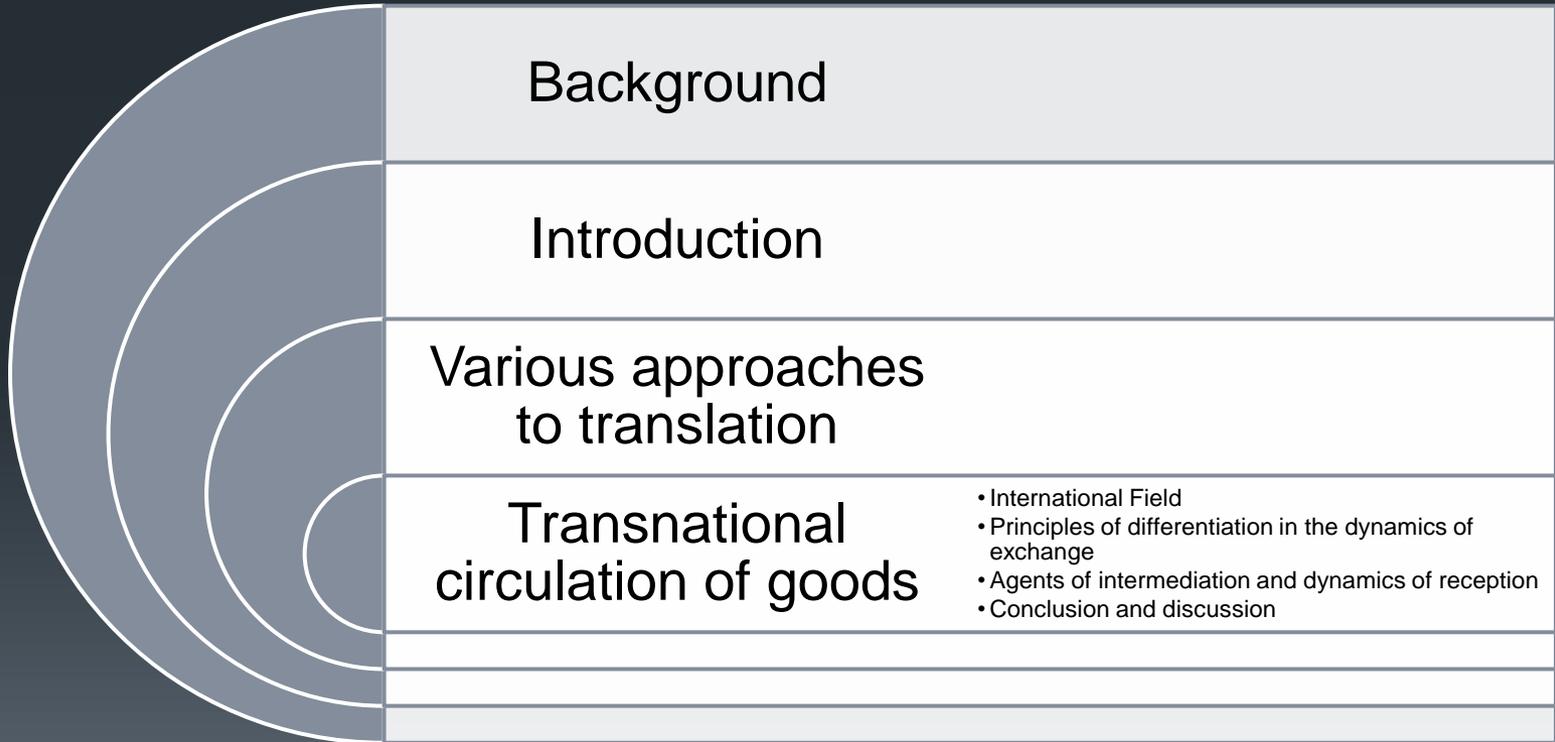


Outline for a Sociology of translation: Current issues and future prospects

Analysis of Heilbron, Johan and Sapiro, Gisèle

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Structure of Presentation





John Heilbron

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Gisèle Sapiro

Gisèle Sapiro is a French sociologist greatly influenced by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Since 2011, she is director of studies at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris.

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Introduction

Influenced by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu approach to power within the context of comprehensive theory of society, Helbron and Sapiro reject the idea of interpretive approach to the text and the economic analysis of transnational exchanges, and call for study of translation practice from their specific position within the world system of translation



Interpretive approach consists of two opposite tendencies

- **Objectivist:** arises from classic hermeneutics focus on literary and philosophical studies of translation
- more to do with understanding of text and involves comparison of translation with the source text, source language or source culture and examine the creative deviation from the original
- **Subjectivist or relativist:** has its affinity with framework of culture studies
- Focus on various modes of appropriating texts, on the instability of their meaning and the mutual permeability of cultures
- Considers translation in the context where they are produced and actually function, in other words in the target culture, considered as autonomous cultural system, operating in and for themselves, rather than systems embedded in larger set of transnational relations.



Economic Approach

- The economic approach, more powerful socially but much less widespread within studies on translation, performs a reduction that is somewhat the contrary.
- assimilates translated books into the most general category of goods, identifying them as merchandise produced, distributed and consumed according to the logic of national and international markets.
- To considering translated books as commodities like any other commodities occults the specificity of cultural goods as well as the modalities specific to their production and marketing.

Development of sociological analysis

- The methodologies developed through cultural turn or economic approach to translation do not provide sufficient scope to broaden research on role of translators and various agencies, involved in translation process as an agent.
- Translation emerged to be viewed as “socially regulated activity” (Hermans 1997) that involves the following:
 - Questions about the stakes and functions of translations
 - Their agencies and agents
 - The space in which they are situated
 - Constraints: both political and economic that circumscribe them



Focus : Translational circulation of cultural goods

- Structure of the field of international cultural exchange
- Types of constraints – political and economic – that influence these exchanges
- Agents of intermediation and process of importing and receiving these by the recipient country



International Field

Based on the program proposed by Pierre Bourdieu (2002) on social conditions of international circulation of cultural goods, both the writers place transnational transfer of translation within space of nation states and language groups, and propose to analyze translation as embedded within the power relations of national states and their languages.

Power relations are of three types

- Political
- Economic
- Cultural: a) power relations between linguistic communities as assessed by number of primary and secondary speakers b) symbolic capital accumulated by different countries within the relevant field of cultural production.

International field: Unequal distribution of translation

- Worldwide % distribution of translation

Hyper- Central	Central	Semi – peripheral	Peripheral
Source language English: 50%	Source language German: 10% French: 12%	Source language 8 languages including Spanish 3% Italian 1%	Rest other languages Less than 1%

(Sources not mentioned, acknowledges the comments made by Pym on deficiencies it contains)



International Field: Export by dominant countries

Worldwide % of translated book in comparison to national production of books

England and USA : Less than 4%
Germany and France: 14% to 18%
Italy and Spain: 24%
Netherlands and Sweden: 25%
Portugal: 35%
Greece: 45%

(1990: source not mentioned)



Principles of differentiation in the dynamics of exchange

Three factors

- Political relations between countries and political orientation of the government - also involves type of government, liberal, communist, fascist etc.
- Economic relations (especially the international book market) and economic factors and global agreements
- Cultural exchanges between countries: within which literary exchanges may enjoy relative autonomy



Some key points of dynamics of exchange

- calls for study of purely economic logic through more refined technique than standard models of cultural economics, as non- market forces, notably state institutions are also involved in construction of supply and demand of cultural goods.
- other dimensions (notably political and symbolic ones) translation of a canonic work of classic literature may serve to accumulate symbolic capital, whereas the translation of a text of a dominated literature into a dominant language like English or French constitutes a veritable consecration for the author (Casanova 2002).
- Large scale circulation: profit vs. small scale circulation for ideology, prestige and diversity, and state intervention to curb effect of economic constraints in a free trade economy.

Agents of Intermediation and dynamics of reception

Influenced by political, economic and cultural factors, in space and time

- **Stage I: with formation of nation- states: embassies and govt agencies played key role in cultural exchange** ional literature etc.
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- **Stage II: Industrialization of book market:** Emergence of specialized agents in trade of translated books: independent publishing houses with foreign rights departments, literary agents, international book fairs etc. and decrease in intervention of govt. agencies
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- **Stage III – Professional development and development of professional associations** characterized by strong individualism and division in terms of gender, ideology, political and social affiliations and logic of completion



Structure of space of reception.

- This space is also more or less governed by either market or political factors, and depends on the functioning of its institutions: controls over print publication, specialized book series, the editorial policy of each publishing company, the space of journals and periodicals, the modes of consecration (literary prizes and awards), etc.
- Also depends in part by the representations of the culture of origin and by the status (majority or minority) of the language itself.
- The value of translation does not depend only on the position of languages, but also on the positions of both translated authors and their translators, and each of them in both the national literary field and the global literary space (Casanova 2002).



Structure of space: Functions of translation

- The translation into central languages constitutes a consecration that modifies the position of an author in his field of origin. Inversely, it is a mode of accumulation of literary capital for groups
- Translation is also means of accumulating symbolic power for publishers lacking economic and cultural capital
- Literary translation may play a role in the creation of collective identities including national, regional or social, religious or genre identities.



Conclusion

Translation as a socially regulated activity that has following three dimensions

- Nation states and various agents get engaged in the cross- national transfer that involves existence of field of international relations of exchange forming global system of translation
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- These exchanges involve power relations, and nation states and various agents involved compete with each other to gain supremacy through political, social or cultural dynamics
- The dynamics of translation depend on the structure of space of reception and the way relevant intermediaries shape social demand.



Questions

- How we apply social theory of Bourdieu in the field of Professional translation that deals with technical and scientific text ?
- Where do we place influence of IT, social media and crowd outsourcing (the role of non-human actants) in translation in wake of resources becoming global?
- With reference to practice and role of various agents involved in circulation of cultural goods, where do we see improvised performance, or doxic experience (not fully conscious) as proposed by Bourdieu? On the contrary, in international arena, especially GATT and TRIPS, or international relations, all actions are conscious and fully negotiated and deliberated?
- How do we explain habitus of the agents in global system of translations?



Thanks