Robinson, D. (2023). *Questions for Translation Studies*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.162 (pp. 273)

Taking inspiration from the classical genre of *Quaestiones*, Douglas Robinson seeks to engage readers - and himself - with a number of questions regarding theoretical approaches to translation studies in his monograph: *Questions for Translation Studies*. However, these questions are not meant to be answered definitively; instead, they aim to provoke contemplations and inspire new research directions. Drawing from hermeneutics, phenomenology and 4EA cognitive science, this scholarly monograph challenges the existing paradigms and invites readers to reconsider the dynamically intricate processes involved in translation.

Divided into two major parts, the book contains seven questions (chapters). The first part (Questions 1 to 3) examines equivalence theories. Recognized as the arguably undertheorized Ground Zero of Translation Studies (p. 3), semantic equivalence (SE) is extensively investigated in Question 1. This chapter begins with an introduction of Frege's thought, suggesting that the subjective nature of individual interpretation be given equal weight while maintaining sense and referent during translation. After critiquing the relatively popular analytical model, Componential Analysis, for its straightforwardness and stasis, the chapter elaborates on Qualia Structure to emphasize that achieving equivalence requires focusing on the phenomenological experiences of words (qualia) in both source and target languages, rather than mere word-for-word replacement. An interim conclusion drawn from Question 1 asserts that, due to the dynamic nature of qualia, semantic equivalence and the semantics of words and phrases are continuously generated by human interpretive consciousness through emotional, energetic, and logical interpretants.

Dynamic equivalence (DE) is explored in Question 2, focusing on the ultimate meaning of "dynamic". By examining "responses", a key element in DE, and reframing it as human experience, the chapter initially challenges DE, arguing that it is impossible to empirically verify and compare the responses of target readers to those of source readers. Moreover, critiquing that DE is neither presented as rhetorical nor dynamic but merely as the best way to translate (p. 43), three concepts from Aristotle's Rhetoric—*logos* (logical speech), *ēthos* (ethical self-image), and *pathos* (emotion/feeling)—are introduced to interpret the rhetoric of DE. Through examples of Bible translation, the persuasive elements of *ēthos a*nd *pathos* overshadow mere *logos* in DE, pushing it beyond simple functional equivalence and introducing risks and rewards. Additionally, this approach exposes translators to a broader spectrum of social dynamics, making the process less predictable than traditional logical frameworks.

Question 3 throws light on deverbalization within the frame of 4EA (embodiment, embeddedness, enactivity, extendedness, and affect) cognitive science, focusing on the cognitivist reframing of *sens*, the enigma emerging between deverbalization of source text (ST) and reformulation of target text (TT). By reviewing various existing theories, this chapter underscores that *sens* remains a deeply relational experience of embodied, enactive opportunities within the physical world, highlighting the critical role of shared affective

histories. The translation of "*dao*" in *Daodejing* is exemplified to demonstrate how different interpretations arise from distinct shared affective histories. As a result, disagreement among target readers may occur in terms of the quality of translation. In addition, the chapter suggests that deverbalization may place more pressure on interpreters than translators, given the exceptionally brief time window available for interpreters to deverbalize.

In the second part of the book, three questions (Questions 4 to 6) are raised towards descriptive translation studies (DTS). Question 4 scrutinizes the concept of norm and how it is formed. The chapter begins by questioning the strategic vagueness in Toury's definition of norm, which overlooks its formation and execution. This oversight, while beneficial for translation studies, prioritizes "rationality" over "reality" in translation practice, implicitly treating translators as perfectly rational Econs. Consequently, this chapter introduces the concept of Humans from behavioral economics to clarify norm formation, accounting for human irrationalities. It categorizes Humans into Masculine Humans, Feminine Humans and Queer Humans, with the latter two's norm formation detailed through Kahneman's decision science. Examples illustrate how they act as feeling-based hermeneuts, phenomenologists, and 4EA cognitive scientists, actively creating norms based on sense-making responses to surprise and perceived enactive/affective repetition. The chapter advocates for reframing norm theory through the 4EA cognitive mode, emphasizing affective underpinnings over aggregated descriptive patterns of translator decision-making.

Toury proposed two laws of translation: the law of growing standardization and the law of interference. Question 5 presents a nuanced critique of the legal status of these laws, addressing them from a more complex, humanized perspective—a perspective Toury may have overlooked by treating texts, rather than translators, as subjects. This chapter explores Pym's risk-management model, highlighting that these laws represent risk-averse behaviors among translators. To further understand their motivations, Foucault's concept of biopolitics is introduced, demonstrating that even in a free market, translators tend to control their creativity and conform to the law of growing standardization, similar to the dynamics of panopticism. The chapter argues that this self-discipline stems from the notion of "equivalence", which positions translation as secondary and derivative, exposing translators to greater risks. Moreover, it discusses the inherent resistance and regulation within the challenging nature of translation, suggesting that the joy translators find in difficult texts could lead to experimental language development approaches.

In the framework of DTS, translated discourse is compared with non-translated texts in the target language, rather than with their source texts, highlighting the translator's intricate role as a narrator. Question 6 delves into the narratoriality of translators through Kruger's concept of "narrative impostulation", which perceives narrative as the imaginative projection of mental spaces (p. 190). The chapter, acknowledges Kruger's cognitive reframing of translation narrative while critically enriching it with the concept of heteronym, coined by Pessoa, to theorize narratorial impostures. This theoretical proposition sees the source author, the translator, the target reader, the source reader, the translating/narrating self, the editor, the critic, the publisher and the poet as subjects and objects of impostulation, demonstrating that

narratorial reliability and unreliability are audience-effect rather than inherent qualities of the text. Consequently, the chapter advocates for a more humanized perception of translation, recognizing the translator's human expressivity, through which they act as both interpreters and creators.

As the conclusion of the book, Question 7 touches upon the translator's visibility by defining its metaphorical connotation: recognition, credit and even esteem, beyond mere visible and audible embodiment. To expound on the vehicle of this metaphor, Merleau-Ponty's framework of embodiment is utilized in seven steps. The exploration confirms the overlap of the body, language, and the visible world by integrating Merleau-Ponty's concept of embodiment with Bakhtin's heteroglossia, proposing that human engagement with the world is an active, embodied process rather than passive reception. On the basis of that, it is inferred that translation should be regarded as a deeply embodied activity rather than a purely cognitive one. This is because it is through the translator's embodied engagement with the world that translations are produced (p. 243). Moreover, the chapter offers suggestions for translators to reclaim their bodies and counteract the subservient tendencies instilled by normative practices.

As a combination of contemporary translation theories and classical scholarly tradition - *Quaestiones*, the book meticulously explores the theoretical issues in translation studies, making it a valuable and intellectually stimulating resource for both novice and veteran researchers. Moreover, through interdisciplinary approaches including economics, philosophy, cognitive science, etc., the book presents fresh insights and broadens the scope of existing translation theories. However, it is not without its limitations. The focus on Nida's equivalence and Toury's DTS may overlook other significant and impactful perspectives such as the Skopos theory and the Polysystem theory.

Ultimately, the forte of this book lies in its ability to provoke thoughts through its questions and to challenge seemingly accepted details in translation theories. It offers much for translation enthusiasts, students and researchers with much to ponder as they seek to answer the questions it raised.

Acknowledgement

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