

## Translation in the Era of Globalisation

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### Abstract

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The globalisation process, which has brought about drastic changes in the global economy, has affected contemporary translation in many ways. As Michael Cronin (2003) puts it in *Translation and Globalisation*, “if contemporary reality is inescapably multicultural and multinational, then it makes sense to look at a discipline which has mediation between cultures and languages as a central concern to assist us in understanding globalisation.” It is in this context that this paper aims to show that due to globalisation, translation is influenced by the rise of e-commerce and localisation as well as by automation, the rise of supra-national organisations, time constraints and the centrality of specific languages. The methodology of the paper is mostly descriptive. Indeed, the historical conditions that gave rise to globalisation are recalled briefly, and the link between translation and globalisation is described along the lines drawn by several authors including Denis Thouard, Michael Oustinoff and Joanna Nowicki, Louis-Jean Calvet and Michel Rochard. The major finding of the paper is that the way translation is done in the ICT era is different from the way it used to be done with pen and paper. Machine translation is quite successful in some institutions but in most cases, it is poor and needs to be revised. Major organisations use translation memories to save money and time. Translation remains a major medium for the spread of knowledge. The centrality of a few languages in the global system of translation is putting peripheral languages at risk.

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### Introduction

The globalisation process has affected all spheres of economic activity including translation. In *Translation and Globalisation*, Cronin (2003: 11) quotes Castells who has noted that: “The dramatic slump in Western economies in the 1970s, with record unemployment and high inflation triggered by oil price increases in 1974 and 1979, led to a fundamental restructuring of economies in the developed world, with a strong emphasis on privatization and deregulation (see Castells 1980). The period also witnessed the advent of the information technology revolution that would dramatically transform work practices at local and international levels. (Castells 1996: 40–6)

Castells describes the economy that has emerged over the last three decades as informational and global. The economy is informational because the productivity and competitiveness of firms, regions and nations basically depend on their ability to efficiently create, process and apply knowledge-based information. This new economy is global because the central activities of production, consumption and circulation, as well as their components (capital, labour, raw materials, management, information, technology, markets), are organized on a global scale, either directly or through a network of connections between different economic agents.

The IT solutions made available to translators have dramatically changed the practice of their profession because they are now able to use sophisticated tools to do their work faster, meet market demands and connect not only to one another but also to major corporations and firms around the globe. From the mid-1980s onwards, computers functioned not in isolation but increasingly in networks. (Castells 1996: 45)

In the global era, translation has become a big business because of several factors including localisation. Indeed, localisation is one aspect of e-commerce which is driven by the globalised economy. Multinationals and major corporations sell their products around the globe and constantly customize them to suit their customers’ needs and demands. The volume of materials to translate and the number of languages involved in the translation process are considerable.

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Against this background of global market demands and given the imperatives of localisation, a number of issues crop up and will be discussed in the following paragraphs. One of these issues is the purpose of translation. In other words, why do we translate? Is translation simply about getting product documentation translated fast in order to satisfy market logic? Are we comfortable living in a world characterised by translation frenzy or do we prefer this activity to remain a human activity with professional values and ethics?

There are other issues that crop up, including the centrality of some languages in the global era and the *peripherality* of others. The difficulty in translating concepts is yet another issue to be discussed. Joanna Nowicki and Michaël Oustinoff(2007) stress the difficulty in translating medical concepts in the European Union.

Nowadays, the availability of computers and software designed in a way that makes it possible to align words and sentences between a source language text and a target language text, is good news for terminological exploration.

To adequately tackle this topic of translation studies and globalization, it is important clarify what these concepts entail.

## **I. Definition and scope of the concepts of Translation and Globalisation**

### **I.1 Definition and scope of the concept of Translation**

In *Translation and Globalisation*, Cronin says that translation should not be seen simply in terms of quality or tools used to speed up the exercise. It should be elevated to the level of a scientific discipline. To justify his viewpoint on this issue, he comments that:

Languages are uniquely constituted by their differences so that translation as an operation involving two or more languages has *ipso facto* considerable bisociative potentials. It can be argued that, in teaching translation studies, more time has to be devoted to highlighting the epistemic specificity of translation as expressed in the concepts of distance, the nomadic and the bisociative. [...] Such a view leads to a re-centring of translation studies as a discipline in the contemporary world that is both an area of study with specific vocational concerns and a discipline whose potential importance for other areas of human enquiry is striking if often overlooked. (Cronin, 2003: 127)

The nomadic nature of translation is due to the fact that translators make frequent incursions into the culture of the target language and get back to the source language. There is always a movement back and forth. Translators transfer concepts from a source language to a target language. This exercise is very complex because concepts are not universal, and meaning is not isomorphic across languages. The *bisociative* nature of translation lies in the two languages involved. Every language is a cultural product. When you want to translate a term, you associate it to one or more terms in the target language and you make sure that the conceptual areas of the term are carried along in the translation. It is not always easy to find the exact match of a word or a concept in the target language.

Regarding the notion of distance, Cronin makes a comparison between translation and pilgrimage. He says that pilgrimage is the movement of people to relics while translation is the movement of relics to people. It is easier to take the relics to the believers rather than taking the believers to the relics. A story told by Norwich is used to explain this point:

In AD 828, two merchants arrived in the city of Venice with a corpse. The body was not any old body, however, but that of St Mark, the Evangelist. They had stolen the mortal remains of the saint from the tomb where he lay in Alexandria [...] (Norwich 1983: 28–9). It was, after all, preferable to bring the relics to believers than have large numbers of believers travelling long, uncertain distances to the relics or as Brown puts it, ‘translations – the movements of relics to people – and not pilgrimages – the movement of people to relics – hold the centre of stage in late antique and early medieval piety.’ (Op. Cit.: 90)

The other concept which is included in the topic and needs to be defined is globalisation. What is globalisation?

### **I.2 Definition and scope of the concept of globalisation**

For Roland Robertson, “Globalization refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole” (Robertson 1992: 8).

Jonathan Friedman, for his part, claims that globalization “is about processes of attribution of meaning that are of a global nature”(Friedman 1995: 73).

Cronin says that “globalized institutional structures are one expression of globalization. As such they are a subset of the global system or global process that describes, in a global context, the formation of centre/periphery structures, their expansion, contraction, fragmentation and re-establishment throughout cycles of shifting hegemony” (Cronin, 2003: 74).

To avoid confusion in the face of the multiplicity of definitions, Cronin says that:

“A proliferation of terms can produce discrimination in argument, but it can also generate confusion. We will use the term ‘globalization’ in the sense of a *critical* theory of globalization that encompasses global movements and exchanges of people, commodities and ideas, and a politico-historical approach to changes in global processes”. (Ibid)

In his book, Cronin discusses the conditions that should be put in place to attract global investments. For example, an attractive fiscal environment is necessary. “There is the presence of an attractive fiscal environment [...] and the commitment to the ideological assumptions of neo-liberalism” (Brooks 2000: 50).

Of importance to international investors is the implementation of neo-liberal economic policies. Cronin says that Ireland implemented neo-liberal economic policies in the late 1980s and attracted a lot of international investors. “From the late 1980s onwards, successive Irish governments embarked on an aggressive privatization and deregulation policy, notably in the transportation and telecommunications sectors. (Op. Cit.: 84) Another characteristic of globalisation is the decentralisation of capital accumulation from the centre and the emergence of new small centres.

In the shift from what Scott Lash and John Urry (1994: 2) call ‘organized’ to ‘disorganized’ capitalism, there is a decentralization of capital accumulation from the centre, where production is deemed to be excessively costly, to other areas of the global system. As a result, Friedman notes: “New, small and rapidly expanding centres emerge.” So far, the definitions and/or scope of translation studies and globalisation have been given. Now, it is important to demonstrate in a more detailed manner the salient issues emerging from translation in the global era.

## II Salient issues emerging from translation in the era of globalisation

### II.1 Localisation and e-commerce

The *Localisation Industry Standards Association* (LISA) defines localisation as the process of modifying products or services to account for differences in distinct markets. Thus, it would entail adapting, translating and customising a product for a specific market. This would involve dealing with specific local or cultural conventions. By local, we mean conventions such as sort order, keyboard layout, date, time, number and currency format. Localisation might seem identical or similar to translation. (Hyde et al., 2009: 22). However, the process of localisation is much broader than simply translation.

Localisation should ensure that the product provides the local user with the correct local "look-and-feel" while they interact with the product. Aspects of localisation include: (1) Translation of the product's interface and documentation. (2) Colours, images, graphics and icons: adapting to cultural and legal requirements. (3) Rendering (can we display the text correctly), fonts (do we have fonts and characters for the language), bi-directional text needed in Arabic and other languages. (4) Locale data: how to display dates, time, number, currency and other regional data. (Ibid)

The localisation industry is characterised by speed and rapid responses to market demands. Damien Scattergood, Localisation Technology Group Manager for Symantec, declared in an interview: ‘Symantec’s Localisation Tools suite is Earthworks. It’s a name coined from making our products work worldwide. Earth is our market’ (Localisation Ireland, 2000: 10).

Symantec’s best-known product is the Norton Anti-Virus software, and rapid response to new viruses is crucial. The response is not only technical but linguistic. Same-day delivery of US and German products is a standard requirement. As Scattergood notes, ‘We’re pushing back barriers all the time. Time to market is a big priority. Our tools have a strong automation focus. I’m looking for edges all the time. If our engineer does something twice, I want to know why and how our tools can remove the repetition.’ (ibid:10)

There are two things that need to be noted in this discussion on localisation, namely the increasing volume of translation into many languages and the need to speed up the process to meet market deadlines which are very tight. Another salient issue emerging from translation in the global era is automation and this is the issue that is going to be discussed next.

## II.2 Automation

As pointed out earlier, the informational economy emerged at the end of the twentieth century, because the information technology revolution provided the tools or the material basis for this new economy characterised by the use of IT tools and products in virtually all spheres of activity. It is useful to investigate to what extent translation has been affected by the process of globalisation. In the following quotation, Cronin stresses that it is not possible to discuss translation in this global era without relating it to information and communication technologies. “Discussion of contemporary translation that does not take into account the changing relationship between translators and things, between translation and the technosphere in the informational economy, is neither possible nor desirable. (2003: 23)

What does Cronin mean when he talks about the relationship between translators and things? “By things, we mean here all the tools or elements of the object world which translators use or have been affected by in their work down through the centuries.” (Ibid: 10)

The idea that emerges from this quotation is that there has always been a relationship between translation and tools. In other words, translators have always used tools, and these are not only pen and parchment, word lists, lexicons and the products of translation but also modern-day computers and modems. One of the implications is that irrespective of the domain of translation activity, translators are engaged with a technosphere, whether that be the chirographic technosphere of pen and parchment or the digital technosphere of terminal and Internet connection. Cronin (Ibid: 28-29) states that “the point here is not to promote a purely instrumentalist view of translation and language or to promote a naive form of technological determinism, but to see current developments in the context of a long translatorial involvement with technologies external to the human body.” If this is the case, then we can see the relationship between translators and new technology in the informational society less as a schismatic break with a venerable craft tradition than as a further stage in the development of an exosomatic dimension to human engagement with translation.

The purpose of this sub-section is not to list all the IT tools which are now available to translators. Suffice it to say that nowadays, in most international organisations and corporations, the translation services use translation software including Systran, Trados, Lantra, Linguee, Microsofttranslator. Translation memories are also being used. The latter are tools that recycle already translated texts from documents to be sent out for translation. Indeed, in most companies and organisations, there are ideas and paragraphs that keep on appearing in various documents. Translation memories detect these portions and replace them with the texts that have already been translated. There are also terminology databases including IMFTERM, ILOTERM, UNTERM. Multitrans, for example, is also a translators’ resource. Some software are designed for the purpose of extracting words from texts and aligning them with their equivalents in target languages. Terminologists make use of these software because company terminologists’ job is to provide terms and their equivalents in target languages. There are several translators’ fora on the worldwide web that give them an opportunity to connect and share ideas and experience.

In the case of a German company like Schneider, technical documentation for large systems is created in three different languages (French, German, English) at three different sites separated by thousands of miles. Both the coordination and the translation of dispersed information is made possible through the use of IT systems (HofmannandMehnert, 2000: 66).

Cronin reports that Robert Sprung and Alberto Vourvoulias-Bush, in an article on adapting *Time* magazine for Latin America, note how the availability of a high-speed data network and Quark Publishing System software (QPS) allows not only space but time to be manipulated in the global translation industry: “The high-speed network meant that anyone with access to QPS could work in the same “virtual office”. This allowed instant transfer of files between *Time* and translators.” (Sprung and Vourvoulias-Bush, 2000: 25)

Calvet has also contributed to the discussion on the issues emerging from globalisation. We shall examine his ideas in the following paragraphs.

## II.3 *Le modèle gravitationnel*

In explaining what he means by *le modèle gravitationnel*, Calvet (2007: 45-46) indicates that around the globe, there are between six thousand and seven thousand languages but only the English language is “*hypercentral*”. In addition to English, there are about ten “*super central*” languages, including Spanish, French, Arabic, Malaysian, Hindi. When the speakers of these *super central* languages have to learn a second language, they learn either English or another “*supercentral*” language. These *supercentral* languages play a pivotal role with respect to about two

hundred *central* languages. Approximately, seven thousand *peripheral* languages evolve around these *central* languages.

Another important point made by Calvet is that the people who keep these languages together are bilingual people, translators and interpreters. He stresses that bilingualism is the *cement* that holds languages together. It is within this pyramidal frame of world languages that Calvet reviews the global situation of translation and argues as follows:

On peut, dans ce cadre général, analyser la situation mondiale de la traduction : de quelles langues et vers quelles langues traduit-on ? Johan Heilbron (1999), utilisant les notions de centre et de périphérie empruntées à Wallerstein, a ainsi étudié les flux de traductions de livres comme un système international en se basant sur l'idée que plus on traduit à partir d'une certaine langue, plus celle-ci est centrale. Il souligne ainsi qu'environ 40 % des ouvrages traduits dans le monde le sont à partir de l'anglais [...] Suivent le français, l'allemand et le russe, chacun à l'origine de 10 % à 12 % des traductions... Ainsi, souligne Heilbron, moins de 5 % des ouvrages publiés aux États-Unis et en Grande-Bretagne sont des traductions, entre 10 % et 12 % en Allemagne et en France, entre 12 % et 20 % en Espagne et en Italie, autour de 25 % en Suède et aux Pays-Bas, etc. (Ibid : 46-47)

Calvet has reproduced Unesco's *Index Translationum*, i.e. a database dedicated to books translated and published since 1979 in one hundred member countries. There are 1, 500,000 references (note that these figures are constantly updated). The *Top 50 target languages*, i.e. the languages into which translations are done, are mentioned. (Ibid : 52-53)

1. Allemand	241 364 ouvrages traduits
2. Espagnol	183 420
3. Français	164 380
4. Anglais	102 366
5. Japonais	84 023
6. Hollandais	82 308
7. Portugais	64 342
8. Russe	61 061
20. Catalan	14 082
21. Grec moderne	13 936
28. Arabe	7 993

Another salient issue emerging from translation in the global era is the difficulty in translating concepts.

#### II.4 The difficulty in translating concepts

In a section under the heading *Traduction, conceptualisation, communication*, Nowicki & Oustinoff tackle a thorny issue in translation studies, i.e. the translation of concepts. It is difficult to translate concepts because they are specific to the languages in which they are found. How do you translate a concept like *pueblo* which means both *city* and *people* in Spanish? These two authors have made reference to a paper by Goldman.

Noemi Goldman, dans son article, « Un dictionnaire de concepts transnationaux : le projet Iberconceptos », nous expose un projet dont le titre complet parle de lui-même : « Le monde atlantique comme laboratoire conceptuel (1750-1850). Fondements d'un Dictionnaire historique de la langue politique et sociale dans l'espace ibéro-américain. » Fruit du travail de plus de soixante chercheurs de neuf pays différents, [...] l'analyse de concepts socio-politiques clés tels que América/Americanos, ciudadano (citoyen), constitución, nación, opinión pública, etc., permet de montrer leur variabilité selon le pays ou le bloc politico-linguistique considérés. (Ibid: 12)

*Iberconceptos*, a terminological project for nine countries in the Ibero-American space, reveals that concepts like America, American, citizen, constitution, nation, public opinion vary from one country to another. This is a terminological challenge that translators are aware of. Concepts are difficult to transfer from one language to another. At times you cannot transfer the totality of some concepts because there are no readily available equivalents in the target language. Another author cited by Nowicki & Oustinoff in their paper is Peter Stockinger who challenges the translatability and adaptability of monolingual text messages and audio-visual materials on Internet for a multilingual and multicultural knowledge-based market.

Peter Stockinger, dans son article « Des archives audiovisuelles monolingues sur un site multilingue » insiste sur le fait que l'on ne peut se satisfaire d'une vision réductrice, mécanique, de la traduction. À l'heure où l'on assiste à la production et la diffusion de corpus non seulement textuels mais également audiovisuels de plus

en plus considérables sur Internet, se pose de manière aiguë la question de l'adaptation (aussi bien linguistique que culturelle) d'œuvres intellectuelles monolingues à un « marché des connaissances » aujourd'hui devenu - par l'intermédiaire des TIC - massivement multilingue et multiculturel. (Ibid: 11-12)

Examples of medical terms have been given in the paper to stress the difficulties in translating them in different European languages. Translation in this context depends, to a great extent, on the cultural realities of each European country. The globalisation of the English language is posing challenges to researchers who are not comfortable writing in English, the *lingua franca*.

## II.5 Calls for another *lingua franca*

Astrid von Busekist has a different viewpoint on the use of English as a *lingua franca* in Europe as he puts it in « Pourquoi traduire ? Les enjeux politiques d'une *lingua franca* européenne » where he intends to fight the received idea that taking English as the only *lingua franca* would be the cheapest and most democratic solution. This is not true: from an economic point of view, it means putting the entire burden of language expenditure on non-English-speaking countries; it is also unfair to the 50% of the European population who do not speak English. Several languages of communication are needed in Europe, and the author advocates drawing inspiration from the example of India. (Ibid: 13) (Ibid: 13)

According to this point of view, the use of English as *lingua franca* in Europe means that non-English speaking countries should bear the cost of linguistic operations. Therefore, there are calls for several languages to be used in Europe to avert this injustice.

In the following paragraphs, the discussion will focus on translation as a feature of global citizenship.

## II.6 Translation as a feature of global citizenship

In *Translation and Globalisation*, translation is described as a characteristic of global citizenship because it is only through translation that people understand the cultural and artistic productions of other linguistic communities. Cronin refers to Delanty (2000) who states that citizenship is seen as no longer exclusively defined by nationality or the nation-state. However, how do speakers of minority languages who consume a lot of translations maintain their identity in a world driven by homogenizing forces?

If speakers of minority languages are major consumers of translation products (if only to make sense of the world in their own language) then, how do they maintain their identity in a world subject to any number of homogenizing forces? (Cronin, 2003: 6)

So far, a number of issues have been raised in the frame of the relationship between translation and globalisation. In the next section, we are going to make some recommendations.

## III. Discussion and recommendations

### III.1 Redefining the ends and ethics of translation

Cronin has rightly raised questions about the ends of translation saying that “we may be producing (and translating) larger and larger quantities of information but we may not quite know what to do with it.” (2003: 65-66) He says that traditionally, translator training has concentrated on means, and ends have tended to appear largely in terms of functional appropriateness. That is, trainee translators are shown what they need in order to translate (means) and for whom they are translating (what is the aim, purpose, target, *skopos* or end of the translation). “It is arguable that what needs to be equally stressed in the education of translators in a global and informational age is a definition of the ends of translation – but in a sense that goes beyond the simple enunciation of the functional objectives of texts.” (Ibid) Ends here are to be understood in the broad sense of the role of translation in the culture, economy and body politic of the modern world.

Another important point made by Cronin is that translation studies cannot be taken seriously as a discipline if the only thing it has to offer is an increasing number of fast-track solutions “to maximise translation output and quality.” It is by showing those outside the discipline (and within too, of course) that translation engages with questions which are of real importance for the past, present and future of humanity that they are likely to listen. (Ibid: 2-3)

Cronin's point of view on the ends of translation is correct. People need to know that translation is not simply a mechanical operation in which all that matters is the number of pages that can be translated in a record time. Translation should be treated as a scientific discipline that is at the crossroads of many other disciplines. For

example, there is a need to teach terminology, translation history, corpus linguistics and other sub-disciplines in the frame of translation studies. The importance or relevance of some of these sub-disciplines to translation studies will be discussed below.

### III.2 History of translation

Joanna Nowicki and Michaël Oustinoff have also discussed the link between translation studies and globalisation in a paper entitled « Problématiques de la traduction à l'heure de la mondialisation ». In that paper, the authors underline the fact that in the Francophone world, the term *traductologie* was coined by the Canadian national Brian Harris at the beginning of the 1970s, however the internationalisation of the discipline coincided with the development of translation studies from the 1980s (Venuti, 1995) in the Anglophone world.

Dans le monde francophone, le terme de « traductologie » (que l'on doit au Canadien Brian Harris) remonte au début des années 1970, mais l'internationalisation de la discipline coïncide avec le développement spectaculaire des Translation Studies à partir des années 1980 (Venuti, 1995) dans le monde anglosaxon. Leur importance ne doit pas être sous-estimée, d'où le titre de l'article de Michaël Oustinoff : « Les Translation Studies et le tournant traductologique », mais à condition qu'on les mette en parallèle avec les autres approches possibles, qu'elles ne sauraient occulter. (Nowicki & Oustinoff, 2007: 10)

Nowicki & Oustinoff have also referred to a paper by Denis Thouard which describes translation as a major issue and a gateway between languages. This view was already expressed by promoters of the Romantic Movement in Germany, especially Wilhelm von Humboldt. In their opinion, globalisation only underscores the fact that it is important to take into account the diversity of languages in the intercultural dialogue and the need to find bridges.

L'article de Denis Thouard, « Points de passage : diversité des langues, traduction et compréhension », s'inscrit dans la perspective de l'herméneutique et de la vision de la traduction élaborée par les romantiques allemands (voir Berman, 1984) et notamment par Wilhelm von Humboldt. Dans un tel cadre, la langue n'étant pas un simple instrument au service de la pensée, la traduction devient une question majeure. La mondialisation ne fait que renforcer l'importance de la prise en compte de la diversité des langues dans le dialogue interculturel, et la nécessité, par conséquent, de trouver des « points de passage ». (Nowicki et Oustinoff, 2007: 11)

Of course, Joanna Nowicki and Michaël Oustinoff have taught us something about the history of translation studies and *Traductologie*. Translators should have this background information on their profession. There are many things that the history of translation can teach us. The historical role of translation in Arab countries in the 9<sup>th</sup> century is another lesson of history.

Calvet recalls the role played by translation in introducing science in Arab countries. According to Ahmed Djebbar who has been quoted by Calvet, science books were translated into Arabic from Greek, Persian, Syriac and Sanscrit. The authors whose books were translated were Hippocrates, Euclide, Archimède, Appolonius, Heron and others. Princes payed translators to translate into Arabic books by Aristotle, Euclide and Ptolemy.

En lisant l'ouvrage d'Ahmed Djebbar (2001) consacré à la science en arabe, on est frappé par le fait que la traduction accompagne l'histoire de cette science, en amont et en aval de sa splendeur, ou si l'on préfère avant son apparition et après sa disparition. Prenons l'exemple de la médecine. Il est bien évident qu'elle n'a pas été inventée par les Arabes, mais qu'ils sont partis de recherches antérieures, celles d'Hippocrate et de Galien, et aussi de médecins persans et indiens qui en sont les grands ancêtres. Djebbar écrit à ce propos : « En Mésopotamie, l'enseignement médical se faisait en syriaque, [...] il s'appuyait essentiellement sur seize livres de Galien et douze livres d'Hippocrate, qui avaient été traduits en syriaque au **VI<sup>e</sup>** siècle [...]. Tout au long du **VIII<sup>e</sup>** siècle, les nouveaux ouvrages de médecine ont été écrits en syriaque. » (Djebbar, 2001:304-305).

In the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the first medicine books were published in Arabic thanks to a tradition of translations from Greek, Sanskrit and Syriac into Arabic.

Au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle, lorsque paraissent les premiers écrits médicaux en arabe, leurs auteurs s'appuient donc sur une solide tradition qui leur est parvenue grâce à des traductions du grec, du syriaque et du sanscrit ; surtout du syriaque en fait, mais il s'agit le plus souvent de textes traduits entre le Ve et le VII<sup>e</sup> siècle du grec vers le syriaque et retraduit ensuite vers l'arabe.[...] Il en va de même pour ce qui concerne la géométrie : Euclide, Archimède, Appolonius sont traduits du grec vers l'arabe, tout comme les textes de physique d'Euclide, Archimède et Héron. [...] Ces traductions sont d'abord le fait du prince : Al-

Mansour (754-775), Haroun al-Rachid (786-809) ou Al-Ma'moun (813-833) font traduire Aristote, Euclideou Ptolémée, ainsi que des astronomes et des médecins indiens. (Calvet, op. Cit.: 49)

The relationship between Arabic and science was quite useful and fruitful because after introducing science in Arab countries in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, translators went ahead to translate scientific books from Arabic into Hebrew and Latin in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. « Les traductions d'ouvrages arabes en latin, parfois via l'hébreu, ont été très nombreuses. Dans les universités créées en Europe à la fin du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle et au XIII<sup>e</sup>, les professeurs ont certes beaucoup enseigné Hippocrate et davantage encore Galien, mais aussi les médecins arabes. » (Djebbar, 2001: 329)

The conclusion that Calvet drew from the history of translation and science in Arab countries and subsequently in European universities has a lesson to teach us. Translation is a medium of transmission of knowledge and information. Translation introduced science in Arab countries in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and was instrumental in exporting it to European countries from the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

**III.3 Corpus linguistics** Another area of study that needs to be stressed in translation studies is corpus linguistics. This field makes it possible to do research in terminology. The availability of computers and of large amounts of texts in digital form offers the possibility to carry out terminological exploration as part of translation studies. This is the area of corpus linguistics. What does this concept entail?

Kennedy says that corpus is "a collection of texts in an electronic database" (Kennedy, 1998:3). And corpus linguistics is a merger of technology and linguistics, as corpus linguistics is defined as: "the study of language on the basis of text corpora" (Aijmer & Altenberg, 1991:1).

Corpus linguistics has recently become the reliable source of real linguistics data and statistical information about language. Also, it offers fast processing, sorting and searching of data, direct access, time and procedures reduction, and sufficient ability to control huge amount of language data (Kennedy, 1998:5).

Johansson notes that corpus, when used appropriately, turns to be one of the most important tools of experienced translators (1991:313). Indeed, in many documents, there are so many technical and scientific terms that translators come across, but they find it difficult to translate them. What to do under these conditions? The best thing to do is explore the concept in the source language text. Indeed, there are two issues: the need to gather information on the concept and the need to find a proper denomination for the term in the target language. Translators should guard against the tendency to look for an equivalent of the term under investigation in a terminology database without making an effort to search for information on the concept that the term designates. There is no point in using a proper denomination without understanding the concept it refers to.

The issue of terminology and corpora and the way translation is mechanically done on Internet is another concern for Joanna Nowicki and Michaël Oustinoff. They have quoted Peter Stockinger thus

Peter Stockinger, dans son article « Des archives audiovisuelles monolingues sur un site multilingue », insiste sur le fait que l'on ne peut se satisfaire d'une vision réductrice, mécanique, de la traduction. À l'heure où l'on assiste à la production et la diffusion de corpus non seulement textuels mais également audiovisuels de plus en plus considérables sur Internet, se pose de manière aiguë la question de l'adaptation (aussi bien linguistique que culturelle) d'œuvres intellectuelles monolingues à un « marché des connaissances » aujourd'hui devenu -par l'intermédiaire des TIC - massivement multilingue et multiculturel. (2007 : 11-12)

### III.4 Translation ecology

Cronin says that the pressures on languages must not simply be viewed in macro terms. Though a language like English is undoubtedly exercising its own particular hegemony in late modernity, with specific translation consequences, the difficulties faced by many minority languages come not from international but from national languages. As Herman Batibo points out with respect to the world's linguistically richest continent, Africa, "The biggest threat to the minority languages in Africa is not the presence of the colonial languages but the predominance of the powerful indigenous lingua francas." (Batibo2001: 312).

That is the situation in which the world is today. Therefore, decisions in the political, academic, scientific and cultural spheres need to be made to avoid language disappearance and irrelevance.



## Conclusion

In a nutshell, translation is greatly influenced by the globalisation process. E-commerce, localisation, automation, globalisation of English, terminological challenge, speed and market time are some of the issues discussed.

As already pointed out, in the era of globalisation, translation is done using IT tools which make the work faster. Considerable amounts of texts are translated quickly, especially with software and translation memories. However, English is the main language that is being used in the global era. As a result, a lot of documents are translated from English into many other languages. This situation represents a risk for the survival and usefulness of thousands of languages in the world. It also impoverishes English because not much translation is done from other languages into English.

Translation is a major medium of transmission and dissemination of information and knowledge. It is therefore a profession that needs to be practised by competent people. We are tempted to suggest a return to the *fundamentals* of translation in order to avoid the simplicity and hurry with which translation is done for commercial purposes in the era of globalisation. A question that comes to mind is the following: Can we translate the Bible or medical documentation with the speed at which commercial documents are translated nowadays?

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