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Scarpa, Federica (2020). *Research and Professional Practice in Specialised Translation*. Palgrave Studies in Translating and Interpreting. Palgrave-Macmillan. pp. XI, 419. € 69.99 (Hardback) /€ 58.84 (eBook¹). ISBN 978-1-137-51966-5, 978-1-137-51967-2.

In *Research and Professional Practice in Specialised Translation*, Federica Scarpa brings together the most relevant current theories on one of the oldest activities in human history: translating knowledge from one language into another in order to satisfy our curiosity or strengthen our individual or communal lives. It is an erudite book on the topic of specialised translation written by this well-known Terminology, English Language and Translation Professor at the Department of Legal, Language, Interpreting and Translation Studies (IUSLIT) of the University of Trieste. It is Scarpa's third inquiry into specialised translation and a further development and reorganisation of her Italian *La traduzione specializzata. Un approccio didattico professionale*, which was published by Hoepli in 2001 and 2008, and which was translated into French and published as *La traduction spécialisée : une approche professionnelle à l'enseignement de la traduction* (2010) by the University of Ottawa Press. With Palgrave-Macmillan's 2020 publication, Anglo-Saxon translation scholars can finally become acquainted with the author's completely revised account of both professional practice and research into the field of specialised translation.

The academic monograph is mainly aimed at students and novice trainers of an academic course in specialised translation. Should they rely solely on the table of contents in the printed Italian edition (which is organised into four chapters, a bibliography and an index), potential readers could well underestimate the wealth of knowledge that has been collected in this book. The pdf version, however, has bookmarks for each section and subsection, and presents a transparent chapter-by-chapter survey. Each of the four chapters begins with an introductory section. Prospective readers may also want to know that each chapter is separately available online. This has the consequence that an explanation of some basic concepts (for instance, the notion of specialised translation) may recur in the book. The four chapters are followed by a complete list of references and an index. Intratextual and bibliographic references have all been provided with hyperlinks, which is much appreciated. Only a couple of times might the numbering of the subsections lead to confusion: there is a §1.1.1 (with four further subsections) but no §1.1.2, and there is a § 3.1.2.1, but no § 3.1.2.2.

After a very brief historical sketch of the development of Translation Studies and an overview of the contents addressed in its subsections, the first chapter, consisting of more than one hundred pages, immediately takes a mainly text-oriented and pragmatic approach as it introduces the notion of specialised translation. The reader is offered a definition of 'special language' (§1.1), which is used synonymously with LSPs or Languages for Special Purposes, the actual objects of specialised translation. The book in

fact restricts itself to translation in the context of science and technology. This does not only exclude literary translation, which is here regarded as complementary to specialised translation, but also the language used by politicians, for tourists and jargon not related to specialised topics. It further focuses on the shared characteristics of the main two types of specialised translation analysed —i.e., technical and scientific translation— which are more numerous than their differences. This does not mean, however, that there is no variation. LSPs, which are looked upon as registers, show variation in terms of domain (e.g. physics versus history) and in terms of specific audience (e.g. experts versus interested laypersons). There is also an explicit recognition of the functions which LSP texts display besides the strictly informative one. The most frequent linguistic features of these LSPs are described in §1.2. The general pragmatic criteria often linked to LSPs – precision, economy and objectivity– are first reviewed, after which Halliday's 'syndrome of [mainly lexico-grammatical] features' of the language of science is explained. These are further dealt with in more detail at various linguistic levels. Typical argumentative patterns, thematic structures and cohesive ties are pointed out as characteristics at textual level. The description at the level of syntax entails discussions of nominal constructions, passive voice, and tense. In addition, the importance of the writers' stance markers is highlighted, in particular the use of epistemic and deontic modal verbs in LSP texts, examples of which are provided. At word (or phrase) level, the issue of LSP terminology and domain knowledge is discussed in more detail. Various requirements of LSP terminology are problematised: monoreferentiality and standardisation, transparency and conciseness in neologisms, and other word-formation processes such as metaphorisation. The next section refers to the dominance of Anglo-American models in academic and technological discourse (§1.3), which has its repercussions on translation policies and practices worldwide. The latter are only briefly discussed in section §1.4, which reflects a dearth of recent studies and knowledge in this particular area. The final subsection elaborates on the difference between specialised and literary translation. Scarpa provides pedagogical arguments in favour of not regarding literary translation as specialised translation and also in favour of debunking some myths that establish a hierarchical relation between these two types of translation.

The second chapter is shorter, but broader and more conceptual in its nature, and it has the aim of stimulating practising translators, students and professionals alike to reflect on their practices. In contrast with the first chapter, Chapter 2 does not focus on scientific and technical languages as special languages, but argues for an approach which is broader and which covers various process- and product-oriented theoretical models.

In the first section, Scarpa does not avoid expressing her position on the much-debated concept of 'translation equivalence'. She joins Mossop (2014) in his proposal to take an 'invariance-oriented' approach by

focussing on “the translator’s point of view at the moment of production (i.e. his/her ‘mental stance’) to produce sameness (process-focused invariance/sameness), as opposed to what results from ‘after-the-fact comparisons of source text and translation wordings’ (product-focused equivalence)” (116). By referring to Koller’s pragmatic view of equivalence and the distinction he proposes between five different types of equivalence (Koller 1979), Scarpa states that it is most relevant to obtain referential, pragmatic and text-normative equivalence between a specialised source text and its translation. She further refers to House’s pragmatic model, Gutt’s cognitive model (2000) and to functionalist approaches, after which she adopts Nord’s functionality and loyalty model, which is actually reflected in FIT’s Code of Professional Practice.

The second section introduces descriptivism in Translation Studies and the notion of ‘norms’ as proposed by Toury (2012[1995]) to refer to hypotheses about regular translator behaviour. In this regard, Scarpa mentions the explicit norms for terminology issued by the International Organization for Standardization and stimulates translation trainers to encourage trainees “to research and familiarise themselves with both the texts and the practices that characterise specific specialised domains” (125). Explaining the difference between comparable and parallel corpora and their use within LSP translation, Scarpa further goes on to introduce the notions of translation universals and laws of translation. Normalisation appears as a special relevant characteristic in the specific context of specialised translation.

The third section discusses translation problems and some predictors of translation difficulty, such as the Choice Network Analysis model proposed by Campbell and Hale, and the determination of Rich Points, an approach attributed to PACTE 2017 but already present in work published by this research group in 2011 (PACTE 2011). While MT research is briefly mentioned, some more recent advances in this field could have been included in this overview, such as the development of neural machine translation systems that are considered to be achieving “the best human evaluation performances” in the translation of scientific papers (Morishita, Suzuki, and Nagata 2019). A more detailed discussion is devoted to different types of translation problems: pragmatic and cultural problems (e.g. different rhetorical styles in source texts and target texts), linguistic and text-specific problems (including syntactic and terminological problems). Finally, the chapter concludes with a section that describes the ethical responsibility of specialised translators. Traditionally, translation ethics have for long relied on the notion of fidelity to the source text. Scarpa states, however, that today there is “collective (rather than individual) responsibility for translation mistakes [...], primacy of purpose [...] and human virtues” (155-6) and points to Chesterman’s ‘ethics of representation’, ‘ethics of service’, ‘ethics of communication’, a ‘norm-based ethics’ that depends on the features of the translation event and ‘an ethics

of professional commitment’ (Chesterman 2001). Many professional codes of ethics reflect at least four of these five types of ethics. The chapter closes with a detailed discussion of a translator’s textual and interpersonal responsibilities.

Chapter 3, which again spans more than one hundred pages, addresses the practice of translating scientific and technological texts. It deals with the first two phases of the translation process, a term which needs to be understood in its narrow sense (i.e., as the translation act) (Toury 2012[1995]). Hence, this substantial –mainly prescriptive– chapter is divided into two main sections, and adopts an approach that may seem somewhat dissociated from the discussion of translation problems in the previous chapter.

The first section describes the translators’ activities related to the identification of translation problems. The reading comprehension stage is highlighted. Scarpa points out that translators do not just simply read for comprehension, but already exert more effort and engage in a productive reading which tries to identify translation problems in order to find solutions. It is followed by two other sections that reflect on the choice of a macro-strategy for the translation as determined, among other factors, by the features of intertextuality and the variability in the function of the translated text itself. The former is mainly described in terms of text typologies: intertextuality is primarily understood from the perspective that for each specific text there are many other texts with similar features since they address a very similar topic and also function similarly; intertextuality as expressed verbally in source texts in allusions or textual references –the latter being a typical characteristic of academic texts– is only briefly mentioned in the first chapter of the book. Selecting Taylor’s classification (2006) as her point of departure, Scarpa shows how the macrotype of a source text has often been related to a particular translation approach (for example, foreignising, localising either partially or heavily, and standardising). She includes a brief discussion of the model that translators may want to use for their translations (either that of previous translations or comparable target language texts). The description of the preparatory phase is concluded with an enumeration of the translation modes in cases where the translation instructions deviate from the prototypical translation and involve either a reduction of the content of the source text (as in synoptic translations) or a different communicative purpose (as in the summary and localisation of an academic article for a popular-science magazine). The latter topic is awarded such high value in current translation norms that it could arguably have earned the first place in the description of the preparatory phase.

The second section describes the text production stage of the cognitive and linguistic translation act and the various translation strategies – a term used to cover both macrostrategies and local translation solutions– that may be

employed by specialised translators. It starts with a nuanced approach to the dichotomy of literal translation and paraphrase as macro-strategies and with the seven main categories of paraphrase identified by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958). Afterwards, a description of more translation solutions at textual, syntactic and lexical level is offered. Linked to the last level, that of the lexicon, a detailed explanation on the translation of metaphors is also found.

The final chapter, of equal length to the second one, discusses the final stage of the translation act and pays much attention to the notion of quality in specialised translation. Scarpa highlights that the quality of professional translation suffers from poor working conditions and the lack of sufficient suitable professionals, despite national and international standards regarding the *process* of translation rather than merely the *product*. She cherishes hopes, however, that collaboration between translation professionals and Translation Studies academics will make it possible to set up a quality evaluation model that will lead to objective, repeatable and reproducible quality judgements. Her own analysis of translation product quality takes a dual binary approach which emphasises four parameters: *accuracy* and *readability* in a (didactic) academic setting, and *adequacy* and *acceptability* in a professional setting. A separate section is dedicated to each of the former two parameters, while the latter two are discussed in just one section. Readers who are especially interested in the professional approach may, therefore, be somewhat disappointed at the brief discussion of the importance of the context and the purpose of the target text, in which a reference to consumer automatic quantitative practices, such as TAUS's Dynamic Quality Framework (Görög 2014) is missing. More attention, however, is paid to the different levels of quality currently in force in the translation profession, as well as to the importance of practices of revision and typologies of translation errors (§4.4 and 4.5). The final section, for instance, argues in favour of translation error categorisations in both the didactic and the professional domains.

While the book hardly offers any new recent data itself, its comprehensive approach with numerous examples provides an excellent insight into the field of specialised translation. Well-referenced and broadly oriented, this is a traditional and very thorough example of a text-linguistic and translational scholarly work rather than a practical course book. Notions are directly connected to the available literature and terms are clearly defined. In fact, the book presents a very extensive state of the art on the topic of specialised translation in which the author has included her own work among the many other voices that can be heard in the area. Much attention has been paid to norms at various levels. Furthermore, the author does not shy away from expressing her own norms regarding specialised translation while focussing on the role and the reception of specialised translation rather than terminology. If anything is missing, it may be some

visualisations of the complexity of translation decision-making for the younger generations.

There is no doubt that the book will itself function as a much sought-after introduction to the field of specialised translation for both translation students, scholars and possibly also professionals alike. However, and perhaps more importantly, this book could also be a springboard for future research. Judging from the references in the book, it seems clear that there has been an increase in the number of studies on specialised translation, and Scarpa herself underscores the increase in interest in the field. Nevertheless, this seems only to be true until the middle of the previous decade. The number of references dated from 2015 onwards in the bibliography is noticeably fewer than in earlier years, while, probably, the importance of scientific and technical translation has only increased. However, today, very little is known about that market: is it really growing or is anglicisation taking the upper hand?; has the role of the specialised translator in the production chain changed?; what are the translation-related characteristics of science popularisation?; which textual strategies and local solutions are today's specialised translators applying? There is no reason why Translation Studies specialists should not investigate specialised translation more thoroughly. After all, translators themselves do market their services by referring to their specialised knowledge fields. It is time to open our eyes to this blind spot in Translation Studies – or to continue Scarpa's metaphor, to send the fairy to the "Cinderella of academic research in translation" (111).

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Sonia Vandepitte

Ghent University

E-mail: sonia.vandepitte@ugent.be

Notes

¹ The book is also freely downloadable from <https://ebin.pub/qdownload/research-and-professional-practice-in-specialised-translation-1st-ed-9781137519665-9781137519672.html>.