

where video recording is necessary and raises additional issues, including the requirement of informed consent from participants, the privacy of participants, and data protection concerns. Nevertheless, several key themes have been identified as priorities for empirical research. These include re-examining the way interpreter training meshes with Deaf community demands and requirements; ways of developing research-driven TRAINING; and elaborating appropriate assessment protocols. Pöchhacker (2004) also identifies GLOBALIZATION and technical enhancement as key themes for future research. The establishment of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT) in the USA and the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreter Trainers (EFSLIT) allows for the exchange of research knowledge and the opportunity to consider how research can impact on practice. The launch in 2007 of a journal dedicated to the dissemination of research about signed language interpreting and translation, *The Sign Language Translator and Interpreter*, constitutes an important landmark for promoting scholarship in the field and creates further opportunities for collaboration at an international level.

*See also:*

ASYLUM; COMMUNITY INTERPRETING; CONFERENCE INTERPRETING, HISTORICAL AND COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVES; CONFERENCE INTERPRETING, SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES; COURT INTERPRETING; DIALOGUE INTERPRETING; MINORITY; RELAY; TRAINING AND EDUCATION.

### Further reading

Humphrey and Alcorn 1996; Brennan and Brown 1997; Stewart *et al.* 1998; Brennan 1999; Metzger 1999; Mindess 1999; Harrington and Turner 2001; Cokely 2005; Janzen 2005; Marschark *et al.* 2005b; Locker McKee 2006; Napier *et al.* 2006.

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## Sociological approaches

In the past decade, a range of sociological perspectives on research in translation studies has emerged which provide new sets of analytical concepts and explanatory procedures to theorize the social nature of translation practices. Research in this area has focused on a diverse array of actual and potential sites and activities. These include: the educational institutions where TRAINING is provided; training pedagogies; the relationship between training and professional work conditions; the relationship between research and training; the social constitution of professional organizations; and the social and biological trajectories of translators and interpreters. In addition, the sociology of translation takes as its object of investigation questions concerning: the function of translation in the global distribution and reception of cultural goods; the influence of market forces on translation practices; the role of translation and interpreting in articulating socio political and symbolic claims of the nation state; translation and globalization; translation and activism; and translators' agency.

As well as stimulating research across a diverse range of contexts, the different sociological perspectives emerging within the field have introduced a number of methodological approaches for investigating translation and interpreting activity as a social phenomenon. In relation to both theory and methods, there is a distinction to be made between research which identifies itself as sociocultural and applies a more eclectic set of observational and explanatory frameworks to specific translation activity taken, for example, from cultural studies, DISCOURSE ANALYSIS or sociology (see Pym *et al.* 2006) and research which relies on theoretical and methodological frameworks that originate in the social sciences. Within the field of translation, while each approach to research may be considered, broadly speaking, to constitute a 'social-theoretical' perspective, there are clear and significant differences that should not be overlooked.

The French social theorists Pierre Bourdieu and Bruno Latour, along with Niklas Luhmann

from Germany, have so far been the most influential in approaches that originate in the social sciences. Although their respective understandings of what constitutes the social are varied, within the field of translation their work has been used, separately or in combination, to explore fundamental questions shared by translation scholars interested in the social nature of acts of translation. A brief summary of their respective work and its application to translation studies is provided below in order to illustrate the actual and potential influence of their work thus far.

Bourdieu's sociology involves a critique of structuralist attempts to develop conceptual schema abstracted from concrete analytical objects or projects and a rejection of a philosophy of the subject that concentrates exclusively on individuals as calculating, rational actors. His view of the social foregrounds social practices, not individual actions. For Bourdieu, individuals act in habitual, conventionalized ways that are to a large extent the product of the incorporation of social structures, structures that are themselves the product of historical struggles and which are therefore subject to change.

Taken together, Bourdieu's central concepts of *habitus*, field, capital and *illusio* formulate his theoretical approach to the relationship between agency and structure (Bourdieu 1977, 1990, 1991). **Fields** are sites for the confrontation of various forces, individual and institutional, and for the production, dissemination and authorization of different forms of symbolic/material **capital**. Fields are viewed as the relatively autonomous social microcosms that constitute a network of objective relations between objectively defined positions of force within social space. Each field is defined by specific stakes and interests which operate both in relation to other fields and within the same field. It is within the context of particular fields and through the **habitus** – embodied dispositions acquired through individuals' social and biological trajectories and continually shaped and negotiated *vis-à-vis* fields – that social agents establish and consolidate their positions in social space. Bourdieu's concept of **illusio** refers to the feel for and belief in the game, i.e. the tacit knowledge that allows social agents, relatively unquestioningly, to make sense of what is happening around them and to make

decisions as to how to act appropriately in the moment. Crucially, for Bourdieu, these concepts, as applied to the examination of concrete practices, serve as a means both to describe, explain and potentially transform the social world, while at the same time revealing the limits of social scientific knowledge itself.

Latour, in contrast to Bourdieu, would argue that attention to social 'forces' neglects or masks the elements, associations and contradictory voices that do not already form part of the familiar social repertoire, but which are indicative of the social being performed and created anew in increasingly complex and constantly evolving contemporary societies. Drawing significantly on ethnomethodology, Latour (1979/86, 1987, 2005) argues that the observation and description of these heterogeneous elements – both human and non-human – and the tracing of their associations for individuals themselves should be the primary work of social theorists. Social theory needs to be able to recognize the **actor-networks** and examine the **associations** being made or extended by actors themselves. Actors must be granted their own theories of what makes up the social. The task of describing a social group, for example, cannot be solely the responsibility of the social scientist, for group formation is also a constant task of social actors themselves. The task of the social scientist should be to document innovations with regard to the (social) collectives that individuals have taken up or transformed; describe the strategies they have undertaken to make certain heterogeneous elements fit together; and reproduce actors' own definitions and understandings of the new associations they have established.

Latour and Bourdieu share a commitment to ethnographic methods and to social practices as the starting point in sociological inquiry. They share a belief in the importance of examining the existence and relevance of objects, strategies and networks. Where Bourdieu and Latour differ fundamentally, however, is in the explanatory weight given to their ethnographic data. Bourdieu would argue that the descriptions given by Latour's social actors are themselves dependent upon the actors' location in the world. Latour takes these descriptions to be sufficient accounts of social reality as constituted in actors' experiences of everyday practices. He is content to leave unanswered

(and unanswerable) the question of who or what is influencing their actions. For Bourdieu, to limit social scientific observation to the point of view of agents is to treat agents as instruments of knowledge, leaving unexamined the objective structures that have produced this knowledge. His ultimate aim is not to give priority to the explanation of the social scientist or the social actor, but to apprehend the limits imposed on scientific knowledge itself. In Bourdieu's view, these limits do not originate in socially-determined subjects, whether informants or social analysts, but in the social determinants of different forms of social practice, including sociology itself.

Niklas Luhmann offers a radically different view of society, although like Latour he conceives of contemporary society in terms of complexities and contingencies rather than as the social totality (albeit based in struggle) implied in Bourdieu's work. For both Latour and Luhmann, there is no overarching, integrating space from where the development of society can be measured or co-ordinated. Luhmann elaborates a view of society that is structured according to a principle of functional differentiation (Luhmann 1985, 1995, 2006). The world is constituted by a multiplicity of **functional systems** (e.g. law, fine arts, science, education, media) and what he refers to as the **environments**, inhabited by humans and non-humans alike, that surround them. In contrast to Latour, however, Luhmann's theory reduces human individuals to mere observers. Although social systems interact with environments, they remain essentially free from the influence of human actors. Functional systems are operationally closed and incommensurable; they establish and reproduce themselves *autopoietically* – i.e. they are self-referential and self-organized – drawing on past and present resources for their continued existence. Interactions between system and environment, whilst leaving the system's operational closure intact, can, however, set off perturbations or *irritations*, which may precipitate changes in the system's behaviour.

Central to Luhmann's theorization of the social are his views on meaning and what he refers to as **communications**. Drawing on phenomenology, Luhmann suggests that social systems operate in a similar way as human

minds or intentional subjects; they process informational input from the world in the form of utterances and then select what is meaningful. For Luhmann, social systems also process meanings selectively, effectively producing themselves in and through communications just as minds produce themselves through thoughts. Importantly, however, minds and systems are kept apart in Luhmann's world; communications produce only communications. Communications produce themselves by encoding in binary terms other communications perceived as relevant to the system – for example, in translation, the historical source/target, literal/free dichotomies – and discarding others as mere irritations, unless these are important enough to force the system to adjust its coding orientations. Social systems develop rules and regularities such that, in time, they become structured in predictable ways. Patterns of expectations become established which, together with high levels of efficiency and specialization, allow that system to further distinguish itself from another – thus contributing to and maintaining both their functional differentiation and the complex character of modern society.

Translation scholars have explored the relevance of these theories to the field of translation and interpreting in a number of ways. These include the relationship between, for example, translator agency and social structure, historical, social and cognitive processes, human and non-human actors, and translation products, processes and relations of power. The work of these theorists has contributed to the endeavour to make translators and interpreters more visible, or in the case of Luhmann, invisible as social actors. It has also informed the conceptualization, at both the theoretical and methodological level, of empirical research designed to examine translation activity, including training, in the contexts of its occurrence. Bourdieu's work, the most widely discussed within the field, has been applied to a range of empirical and theoretical issues from literary and non-literary translation to sign language and public service interpreting (Simeoni 1998; Gouanvic 1997, 1999, 2001; Inghilleri 2003, 2005a; Wolf 2006; see also the collection of articles in Heilbron and Sapiro 2002; Inghilleri 2005b). Latour's Actor-Network-Theory has been taken up particularly,

though not exclusively, to theorize the translation process from the perspectives of the actors involved, including the pivotal role of translators themselves (Buzelin 2005). Luhmann's theory has been used to conceptualize translation itself as a functionally differentiated system, to explore the self-referential nature of translation communications as metacommunications and to examine the autonomous relationship between translator training and professional practice (Hermans 2007).

These emergent sociological perspectives constitute both a new direction for work in the field of translation and a potential shift in the relationship between this field and the social sciences. Sociological perspectives have expanded the focus of analysis beyond literary texts to include non-literary and spoken and signed texts. They have highlighted the central position of translators and interpreters themselves in the translation process. And unlike FUNCTIONALIST APPROACHES, where the analysis of the translator's role is concerned to describe this position in largely neutral terms within a wider functional network, sociological approaches have identified translators' professional trajectories and social positionings as crucial to both the process and products of translation activity.

The developing interest in sociological perspectives within translation studies research may also impact on discussions taking place within the social sciences more broadly. The role of social theory in the analysis of contemporary society has come under increasing scrutiny as the visible and invisible factors that shape individual and collective lives appear to some to defy traditional sociological or philosophical attempts to categorize, stabilize or transform social phenomena. The emergent sociological perspectives in translation and interpreting research are reflective of significantly distinctive epistemological and ontological positions with regard to what constitutes knowledge and understanding of the world and how social theorists can best intervene in or comment on it. Latour and Luhmann argue for better observation and description of multiple, autonomous social realities while Bourdieu would support the possibility and validity of a transformative agenda for sociology through description and scientific explanation. These differences have

implications for what form of intervention each believes social theory can or should make in complex contemporary societies. Translation scholars undertaking work in sociocultural or sociological research paradigms deal directly with these issues in their focus on the role of translation and multiple meanings in the multicultural and multilingual settings that comprise modern social systems. Translation research in this area, therefore, has the potential to play a critical role in current debates in the social sciences about modernity and the inevitability of differentiation, contingency and incommensurability in contemporary social life.

*See also:*

ASYLUM; ETHICS; GLOBALIZATION; IDEOLOGY; REWRITING.

### Further reading

Gouanvic 1997; Simeoni 1998; Casanova 1999/2005; Heilbron 1999; Heilbron and Sapiro 1999; Gouanvic 2002; Inghilleri 2003, 2005a, 2005b; Buzelin 2005; Wolf 2006.

MOIRA INGHILLERI

## Strategies

The term 'strategy' connotes a teleological course of action undertaken to achieve a particular goal in an optimal way. Problems arise, however, in defining the concept more precisely. As Chesterman (2005) has noted, not only is the term 'strategy' itself often used in different ways in translation studies, but a variety of other terms can be used to mean the same thing: 'procedures', 'techniques of adjustment', 'transformations', 'transfer operations' etc. Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002: 507) observe two different strands in definitions of 'translation strategy': (a) the procedural sense (often used by those investigating PSYCHOLINGUISTIC AND COGNITIVE APPROACHES to translating), and (b) the textual sense. The distinction here is metonymic of the greater distinction which some have proposed between prospective and retrospective translation studies (Koster 2002: 27; Wilss 1977: 67).