

Creolising translation, translating creolization

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ABSTRACT

Reflections on translation seem generally to be based on conceptions that assume languages to be uniform and standardized entities, with little attention being paid to languages such as creole continua, which come from mixed socio-cultural contexts. Against this background, this study seeks, first, to identify the underlying link between translation and standardized languages and, second, to determine whether translation can be conceived in such a way that it relates not only to stable, internally homogenous languages but also to non-standard polylectal entities such as creole continua. The thesis argues that the conventional concept of language used in translation studies is that which emerged from the specific context of linguistic homogenization and standardization. It explicates the evolution of this context and its role in shaping conventional understandings of translation. Further, it contests the validity of using this language context, to the exclusion of situations marked by heterogeneity and a lack of clear and distinct language boundaries, to define all translation practice. By contrasting the language context of standardized languages with that of polylectal varieties such as creoles, this thesis attempts to shed light on the challenges continua languages pose to conventional translation theories and shows how contexts marked by non-standard continua languages might provide new insights into and shape or re-define the discourse on the inter-textual relationship called translation. In this way, it seeks to move the discussion on translation and mixed languages away from the question of how to translate creoles, towards a conception of translation that implicitly accommodates such languages.

KEYWORDS: creole continua, creolization, conventional translation theories, linguistic standardization

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