

Translations as Strangers

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ABSTRACT

Metaphors are indispensable to everyday communication as well as to scientific discourse. They convey implicit assumptions underlying our theoretical concepts (Blumenberg 1960, Lakoff and Johnson 2003). In translation studies, metaphors, aside from being treated as problems of translation, have been used in a hermeneutical manner to define prevailing conceptions of translation at different times and within different cultures.

This paper aims to construct a metaphor, that is, to metaphorize translations as 'strangers' in line with sociological concepts of the stranger (Simmel 1950, Nassehi 1995, Stichweh 1992, 1997, 2002, 2004). The objective is to stake out an imaginary field in which the interrelation between translation and the receiving system can be conceived. This epistemically 'productive' analogy may offer a glimpse into how translation processes may not necessarily be the result of intentions of certain actors, but may instead be the outcome of a complex and dynamic interrelation between a text and its receiving system.

KEYWORDS: Methodology, Metaphor

Introduction

What exactly do we mean by the "translation process"? And where does it end? Let us imagine that a translation of a set of instructions has been carried out to the best of the translator's knowledge and beliefs. He or she¹ has put the pen down, placed the translated text in an envelope, posted it off, and it reaches the addressee. Then, however, it is used for didactic purposes, which widens its previous meaning as a simple set of instructions, as students go on to use it as an example of how to translate properly. Perhaps the translation is then integrated into a work of art which may provoke an aesthetic or political debate, or it may initiate a change in the conventions relating to instructional texts in a particular field. Perhaps it triggers an unexpected and heated debate on gender. An image accompanying it may depict a woman emptying a dishwasher without the presence of a man, for example, or the text may not make it explicit that the product concerned is aimed at men *and* women. Further down the line, it may result in litigation, if it is thought to offend certain users, or if it has left unclear what health risks it may pose. Or it may be used as a form of evidence in a criminal trial, becoming a decisive factor in the prosecution or acquittal of an individual. I deliberately suggest such examples since they involve a kind of text which in translation studies is commonly considered as an *informative text* (Reiss 1971). Clearly, this phenomenon becomes even more apparent when *expressive texts* (ibid.) are involved, which are intended to offer more liberty of interpretation and thus offer a greater number of 'functional possibilities'. However I want to emphasize that this is actually a phenomenon specific to translation in general and not confined to particular types of text.

A Conceptual Dilemma

It may be generally assumed that the translation process ends with the termination of the translator's work, or with the receipt by the addressee of the translated text. This means that the translation is conceptualized as something that begins and ends under the aegis of actors² with specific intentions. Instead, I would like to start with the assumption that translation as an activity carried out by the translator may primarily be seen as a pre-requisite that enables the real impact of the translation within the receiving system. Translation is then understood as the processes and procedures that take place subsequent to the operation of the translator in the form of understanding, misunderstanding, communication, action, adaptation, assimilation, transformation, discursive processes, success, failure, crisis, conflicts, cultural hybridisation, and so on. These are processes that are beyond the control of any actor participating in the production of a translation – be it a translator, publisher, or employer – since it is not possible to predict every single possible reaction to a translation. My initial assumption is that the translation process develops a momentum of its own at a specific point. Translation is, therefore, not conceptualized here as a fully intentional performance or as an accomplishment by the translator whilst guided by norms and motives, but as an emergent phenomenon.³ It also means that its outcomes are indeterminate, or, in more drastic terms, there is no such thing as an “outcome” at all, since translation should then be understood as an open-ended process.

But how can we conceptualize these unintended and unpredictable translation processes? This theoretical question incorporates a methodological problem: translation is traditionally seen as a communicative and social act where outcomes are assigned to the intentions of an actor, who is presumed to have the competence to adhere to certain norms and expectations. Theoretical and conceptual tools and models are thus aligned with, and made specific to, actor-oriented research problems and problem-solving methods. The premises of these theoretical constructions inhibit not only the development of appropriate methods to solve this problem, but also the identification of the problem in the first place.

According to Fleck, a phenomenon only becomes relevant in terms of a certain *thought style* [*Denkstil*], understood as “directed perception”, which corresponds to a pre-determined way of dealing with what has been perceived in a specific *thought collective* [*Denkkollektiv*] (Fleck 1979:99). So, if an awareness of problems is primarily actor-oriented, “unintended” translation does not appear as relevant and does not enter the spectrum of academic problems conceivable within that community of thought. As it is only against the backdrop of conceptual, (pre)theoretical and cultural supposition that experiences become concrete (cf. Fleck 1979:98; Lakoff and Johnson 2003:57), the question arises: which conceptual framework can we implement to identify our theoretical problem? How can we think of translation as something unintended? Which theoretical construct allows us to focus on the processes that occur between the translation – as something independent from its originator – and the receiving system?

According to Blumenberg it is the “situation of theoretical impassability and opaqueness” that provokes metaphorical transfer (1960:75). That is how scholarly metaphors arise: as a means of getting to grips with that which is beyond conceptual reach.

Metaphors as Conceptual Tools

There are metaphors – Blumenberg calls them *absolute metaphors* – that cannot be replaced by conceptual language, since they are the backdrop against which we develop our terms and concepts. They convey the logical and theoretical supposition underlying conceptual thinking. The scientific and philosophical field is paved with these metaphors which enable us to conceive that which, in its totality, is too vast, too fuzzy, too abstract to be squeezed into comprehensible terms and concepts. In their *theoretical functioning* (Blumenberg), metaphors make such phenomena tangible in a theoretical sense by replacing the inconceivable with familiar images (Blumenberg 1960:20)⁴. Such metaphors, for example, include life as *voyage*, the world as *clockwork*, nature as a *book*, DNA as a *text*, society as an *organism*, the human organism as a *machine*, and the ever-present “conduit metaphor” (Reddy 1979). The latter refers to communication as *transporting* or *sending* meaning in the form of *objects packed* into words as *containers*, as well as the well-known metaphorical concept of translation as *bridge-building*, which actually goes with the conduit metaphor. At the core of these metaphors is the requirement to explain a concept in terms of another concept (Lakoff and Johnson 2003:5).

However, their achievement is not to determine and define the given phenomenon in the way which terms and concepts aim to do; instead, they stake out a field of references and interrelations by highlighting some aspects of the concept in question while downplaying or even hiding others. Metaphors induce a “*structural similarity*” between two concepts, thus simultaneously determining which events and experiences come into conceptual focus and which do not. (Lakoff and Johnson 2003:10, 150ff.). In doing so, metaphors flesh out a coherent sphere in which the detection and formulation of questions and problems and the development of terms, concepts and problem-solving methods become possible in the first place (Blumenberg 1960:61). Accordingly, new metaphors clear the view to new answers and introduce new methodological and theoretical ideas, since “the [structural] similarity is similarity with respect to the metaphor” (Lakoff and Johnson 2003:151). It is in fact their epistemic function which assigns metaphors an important role in theoretical constructions and a legitimate place in academic language: they operate as conceptual “catalysts” in the background, not as provisional solutions to be replaced later by terms or concepts. They are generators of concepts and terms (Blumenberg 1960:10) and thus represent decisive factors in the constitution of particular *thought styles*.

Following an analysis of the theoretical benefit of metaphors according to Blumenberg, Lakoff and Johnson, I attempt to exploit the potential of metaphors to outline a figurative field in which the interrelation between translation and the receiving system can be highlighted by constructing the metaphor *translations are strangers*.⁵ By personifying a translation, the translator, as its intentional originator, fades from the spotlight and we can focus on the “life” of the translated text. Specifying the personification as “stranger” enables us to think of the translation in a more specific way, by selecting a series of traits from the vast repertoire of potential human characteristics (Lakoff and Johnson 2003:34). Since the figure of the stranger always implies an attendant environment in which he is a stranger, the metaphorical specification will also throw light on how the receiving system reacts to translations and on how such systems process alterity.⁶

Before we start on the metaphorological “expedition”, however, some clarification is necessary. Metaphors in themselves do not constitute a theory. A theory is the interrelation of intertwining hypotheses, whereas metaphors open the view to certain interrelations and

aspects that cannot be grasped by traditional theoretical concepts. If the activity of gaining appropriate access to a research object is called “method” (Kamlah/Lorenzen 1992:125), then the operation with metaphors equally constitutes a method, a heuristic construct, that is, the implementation of a certain procedure to acquire knowledge. Against the backdrop of what was discussed in regard to the interrelation of metaphors, concepts and theoretical constructs, working with metaphors can, therefore, contribute to theory building.⁷ It is in this light that my paper has been conceived: not as the outline per se of a theory, but as a contribution to translation theory. After my “thought experiment”, I review how well this metaphorological method worked out and what was actually achieved by the operation of the metaphor: *translations are strangers*.

Introducing Translations as Strangers

The stranger is not a passing traveller. According to the well-known quotation from Georg Simmel (1950:402), a stranger is the one “who comes today and stays tomorrow”. In fact, it is his being nearby and not being outside, which is constitutive of his status as a stranger. We can only quantify something as “strange” if we recognize it in some way, it must be something to which we can relate in some regard. Hence the inhabitants of another planet are not strangers to us – in a sociological sense, they do not exist for us, as we are not related to them in any way. Strangeness then is not an inherent characteristic, but a relational concept (ibid.), in that it is the relationship to the environment that makes someone a stranger.

In this sense translations are exemplary strangers: the “life” of a text as translation is firstly conditioned by it being translated, by making its reception possible. Although it is only in its reception, as it occurs, that it effectively enters into a relationship with the system. Secondly, once a translation has entered the receiving system, it will remain in whatever transformed form was ascribed to it, for instance, a critique, a communication process, a transforming energy within a particular discourse or tradition, a travelling theory, and so on.⁸ Since it is subject to how it will be received, however, its “life form” is determined by the structure of this system (cf. Stichweh 1992:305). Within the framework of a strictly system-oriented interpretation, one is led to the conclusion that – apart from the irrelevance of the intentions and motives of actors – it is not even worth agonizing over *what* it actually *is* that is being received, since that is only a question of reception. From this theoretical perspective it depends entirely on the structural conditions of the system whether a text is treated as a translation of a political pamphlet, a love story, an instruction manual or as a joke, as form of evidence, as a work of art, and so on.

As a last consequence, translations may become mere factors of attribution, that is, the received object derives its legitimacy from the systemic attribution of the status of translation⁹. The difference between a translation of Shakespeare and the appearance of a sequence of ink blots would then exclusively depend on the systemic selection in question. This, however, leads one to the question of how processes, initiated by translations, are to be distinguished from any other cultural and social processes of transformation. For the purposes of some theoretical questions this indistinguishability might truly benefit the model. But the metaphor *translations are strangers* becomes somehow obsolete in such a construction, since a strictly system-oriented construction would detract the stranger (the translation) from any power which he (it) might have to influence the circumstances of his (its) integration: the stranger's life would depend totally on systemic conditions. However, to appreciate the “unintended” processes as *translational* phenomena, which are enabled but not controlled by the translator,

we need to conceptualize a model that would, in fact, grant the translation – independently from its intentional originator – a decisive influence on the subsequent processes.¹⁰

Metaphors as Orientation Schemes

The model world of the theorist is coherent, being restricted by a certain *thought style*, which manifests itself in certain concepts, terms, assumptions and convictions (Fleck 1979:132f.). Thus his research problems do not stand outside the style's conceptual structure, since we are not able to identify or qualify a phenomenon as relevant, if it is not perceivable within the context of our theoretical suppositions. This structure –ironically generated by the *thought collective* itself – subjects the theorist, as a member of that community, to certain *thought constraints* which determine “what can be thought in no other way” (Fleck 1979:99). Admitting that terms and concepts are not build from scratch but constructed from non-conceptual, that is, metaphorical convictions and hypotheses, metaphors must thus be acknowledged – beyond their illustration of conceptually inconceivable phenomena by means of the application of another concept (*theoretical functioning*) – as determining the direction in which the illustrated concept can be theoretically extended (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 2003:13; Blumenberg 1960:20).

The metaphor *translation is bridge-building*, for example, with its fundamentally positive implication of consent and harmony (cf. Baker 2005) does not allow for a development of the translation concept in the direction of conflict or for a conceptualization of the translator which might trigger conflict or initiate a communication breakdown. It is not possible because it would be metaphorically incoherent, so to speak, that is, virtually paradoxical, something along the lines of the notion that in building a functional and stable bridge, the bridge builder brings about the collapse of the bridge. The observation that it may be precisely the accurate activity of the translator that causes misunderstanding, disagreement, conflict or hate, is not compatible with the conciliative bridge-concept of translation, since the metaphor posits exactly such facilitation of verbal communication as its main criterion for success. This perspective obscures the fact that the bridge, the enabled communication, is in the first place a pre-requisite for dealing with alterity – independent of its results – and not the dealing with alterity itself.

In this sense, metaphors have what Blumenberg calls a *pragmatic functioning*¹¹ insofar as they operate in the background as an orientation scheme for the theorist; they allow him to develop his thoughts in specific directions and inhibit him, in turn, from pursuing other theoretical paths. This means that the role played by the translation itself in our metaphorological experiment is determined by the characteristics of the stranger whom we take into consideration in order to illustrate translations. A characteristic rather neglected by Simmel, but perhaps helpful for our purposes, is the ability of the stranger to *use* opportunities for integration offered by the system (Nassehi 1995:445; Stichweh 1992:307). This makes the stranger an active figure in the process of integration. The use of the term “integration” here is completely neutral; it implies any form of inclusion, be it positive or negative. According to this definition, even the enemy and the scapegoat are socially included, though under reversed signs (cf. Nassehi 1995). For our analogy, this means that whatever follows the operation of the translator in the receiving system is to be considered integral to the translation process, even if it leads to misunderstanding, conflict, harsh criticism, or the denial of the status of the translation, even if what was proffered as a translation is never actually used as such. Let us

first investigate how the system “offers” chances for integration to translations and then move on to consider how we can think of translations as “making use of” these options.

“Offering” and “Using” Potentialities

The receiving system is to be understood as a structure of potentialities whereby the receptive conditions facilitate the integration of determined elements, elements that meet the requirements of these conditions. However, my aim is not to show that the system gives access only to selected, whole, translated texts. This would not explain the contingent circumstances whereby translated texts are integrated into systems and how this results in unintended translation processes. The selection mechanism seems to be much more complicated.

According to Stichweh, complex systems feature *indifference* as an integrative force, as their way of processing and mastering alterity (cf. Stichweh 1997, 2004)¹². It is an essential reaction to the “universality” of alterity in “modern”, that is, functionally differentiated societies where almost every interaction occurs between strangers (Stichweh 1997:180; Stichweh 2004:37). The system reacts *indifferently* to the “alien” features of the stranger, in other words, the system does not react to them, if it cannot connect with them, and, therefore, finds them not relevant to communication or action in a given situation. It is important to bear in mind what I discussed above: a feature is not inherently “alien” but can become “alien” with reference to a context. Thus in another situation the system, in contrast, might respond to the very same features – either in a positive or in a negative way – since they may have now become relevant and can be matched up with the existing structural requirements and potentialities. In this sense, *indifference* is a means of processing “information overload” (Stichweh 2004:40): existing information gets discounted but may again become relevant in other circumstances. Therefore, the integration of social participants never involves their entire identity, but rather fragmented aspects of it. Due to their “particularized” or “atomized”, that is, multiple identities, they may be included in social structures in a variety of ways (Stichweh 2002:107), and can be integrated simultaneously into a series of different sub-systems, since “all of [their identities] imply part-time engagements” (Stichweh 2002:101).

Likewise, the integration of translations is never total but always partial, depending on which aspects the system addresses. Translations can thus be multiply integrated and hence may initiate multiple translation processes. If there is public awareness about sexual equality, the possibility exists that a translated text may trigger a debate about gender. This can occur immediately, or long after, its actual production. Features which may be irrelevant in the context of operating a dishwasher, and therefore remain without effect in that context, may eventually become relevant in another context. Even if the text becomes the object of a furious feminist critique, it may still function seamlessly as a dishwasher manual. Depending on the prevailing conception of art, it may also be possible that the manual might be integrated into an artwork and thus contribute to an aesthetic or political declaration. After all, paradoxically, translations are most frequently not used as translations as such but as instruction manuals, academic literature, novels, letters, legal documents and so on. It is only on some occasions that their identity as translations has significance.

The ability of the system to allot the novel element into “functional units” (Stichweh 1997:176) provides countless possibilities for the translation to be integrated, and it opens just as many directions for their onward progression. Integration and translation, however, are not

totally contingent processes. Our metaphor allows us to conceptualize the translated text itself as counterpoise, as the interruption of contingency in the process and hence as a decisive factor in the realization of integration. Which of the existing structural possibilities of the system will be activated depends on the potential brought to the situation by the stranger, or the translation. The potential of the translated text lies in its meaning structure. Though translations invite countless interpretations, in a pragmatic sense their meaning is not infinite. The meaning structure of a translation only allows for certain communication connections, actions and processes to be initiated. It is, therefore, unlikely – for the time being – that an instruction manual will be read to children as a bed time story, or that it will revolutionize the traditions of children's literature. If it does not meet the requirements needed to facilitate the operation of a dishwasher, it may well have been intended for use as an instruction manual but ultimately may never be used as one. In this sense we can think of translations as figuratively failing to realize existing opportunities for integration. In other words, it is the structural potential of the translation that triggers determined integrative operations of the system.

Translation is, therefore, not only to be understood as somehow operating in any context which is determined exclusively by the conditions of the system; the translated text also participates in creating the context in which translation takes place. It limits the contingency of its integration by means of its own structure; it is thus actually the translation itself that enables translation. However, its impact on the system is not solely restrictive. In co-creating the context of its integration, a translation fulfils an “innovative function” as well. The system only provides integration *potentialities*. Realizing integration is, however, determined by the interplay of two factors: firstly, the offer of solidarity – here again in a neutral sense – and secondly, the actual recourse to solidarity (cf. Münch 1998:198), or more generally: on the one hand potentialities exist and on the other, they may be realized. By keeping apart these two factors in conceptual terms, we are able to appreciate the open-ended and innovative character of translation.

According to this preliminary theoretical decision, integration is to be understood as an “active production process” (Münch 1998:190), that is, integration must be generated again and again. If it exhibits a particular meaning structure, a translation may activate systemic integration potentialities which exist but as yet have remained unexploited (cf. Nassehi 1995:445; Stichweh 1997:171). However, what is even more interesting for us, the very integration of a translation leads inevitably to a constant shift in the systemic structures and hence to constant change in the systemic conditions for integration and processes of translation. The reassuring finding that a translation can interrupt contingency in the translation process must, therefore, be qualified, since this interruption facilitates a new situation of contingency, which, in turn, gets interrupted again, and so forth. It is this open-ended interplay of translations and systems that makes translation an unpredictable phenomenon and allows for what we have called “unintended” translation processes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, let us reiterate what has been achieved by our metaphorological experiment, motivated by a conceptual dilemma, which did not cater for the phenomenon of “unintended” translation processes – that is to say, processes not intended by the originator of the translation – as a conceptual and thus genuine theoretical problem within translation studies. The metaphor *translations are strangers* has given structure to a concept of translation by

applying the sociological concepts of the stranger. Thus, a figurative field is suggested, in which it is possible to focus on the interrelation between translation and the integrating system, in order to gain insight into the conditions that make “unintended” translation processes possible. As already stated, metaphors cannot replace conceptual thinking. Their advantage over conceptual language is, however, that they allow us to put into relationship things which are not referable in conventional ways of thinking about the phenomenon in question. In turn, interrelations that are irrelevant or disturb the treatment of the theoretical problem are blocked off. With our metaphor, we have excluded the translator as the intentional producer of the translated text, which has had the advantage that the role translation itself plays in its interrelation with the receiving system has been highlighted.

This analogy has not been intended as a means of introducing a new and better metaphor for translation studies or to replace others, since my aim is not to answer the question of which metaphor is most appropriate for conceptualizing translation. This could not be answered in any case, since – being a fundamental element of theoretical constructions – each metaphor helps us to focus on certain, differing aspects alone. Accordingly, this model is, like any other model, not suitable for all research interests. It is, for example, inappropriate for normative and prescriptive analyses. No statement about the quality of a translation could be made based on the assumptions of the present approach in which translation had been declared to be an open-ended process. The question would arise: how ultimately could the decisive result be defined? At most we could consider a translation appropriate at its moment of completion for an interactive situation insofar as it maintains communication. This reminds us of Davidson’s notion of translation or interpretation as a type of “occasional theory” (cf. Davidson 1984) – but no assertion can be made in terms of generally applicable criteria for quality and success. Moreover, within the context of our model, criticism and suggestions could not be addressed to any intentional producer, since the very idea of our experiment was, in fact, to omit him from our conceptual focus; thus no improvement could be truly affected. The analogy was also not meant as a means of introducing a new concept of translation for cultural studies. Instead, it aims to enable us to develop new epistemic conditions and to allow for new theoretical insights, which provide us with a heuristic orientation scheme by illustrating a frame of reference that invites the formulation of new questions and the search for new answers.

Blumenberg warns us, however. Metaphors do not meet the requirements of theoretical concepts, though they do serve them; they indicate the sphere in which conceptual and terminological investigations may provide data (cf. Blumenberg 1960:61). Thus, after firstly drawing us away from our conceptual thinking, he urges us to find a way back – once we have the right map to orientate ourselves on this terrain.

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Notes

¹ Whenever I refer to an actor – be it the translator, the theorist, the academic, the stranger etc. – with the generalizing masculine form “he” or “his”, I will use the pronoun in a generalizing sense and refer both to female and male actors simultaneously. This is not for political, but for stylistic reasons, in order not to disturb the textflow.

² The term “actor” as used in this paper shall designate a person whose actions are guided by motives, intentions, norms and the anticipation of expectations and to whom actions and their outcomes are attributed (Schutz 1953).

³ I certainly do not argue that translations and their impact never meet the expectations and intentions of the actors involved; of course, the translation’s effect might include both the intended and the unintended or the unwanted. I would even argue that all translation processes involve intentions and motives, but that they do not necessarily determine the “afterlife” of translations. However, in this paper I will focus on the unintentional aspect of the process.

⁴ Lakoff and Johnson do not explicitly refer to this metaphorical function as “theoretical“, but the implication of their *conceptual metaphor* is similar in intent.

⁵ To clarify, Blumenberg’s *Metaphorology* is certainly not to be understood as a guide to a strategic implementation of appropriate metaphors within theoretical models. His *Metaphorology* is a historiographic study that aims to archaeologize the fundamentals of theoretical and conceptual thinking. Moreover, it aims to demonstrate how terms and concepts can only be fully understood if consideration is given to the implications of the metaphors which underlie theoretical constructions. Metaphorological analysis must then be seen to be part of conceptual history (Blumenberg 1960:9). So we will draw on Blumenberg’s considerations about the *functionality* of metaphors for concepts and theoretical constructions.

The same applies in the case of Lakoff and Johnson. We benefit from their notion of metaphors, though they do not encourage us to construct metaphors, instead they aim to show that the nature of concepts is principally metaphorical. The proposed metaphor, “translations are strangers” is then not quite of the same order as the metaphors “we live by” as discussed by Lakoff and Johnson, since this would mean that we think, experience and act according to that metaphor in our daily lives. Rather, as a matter of course, we live by the metaphor “translations are originals” – unless we are scholars of translation studies perhaps. As the researcher in this “thought experiment”, I have tried to “live by” the proposed metaphor: I have tried to think and act – on a theoretical level – according to the metaphor “translations are strangers”.

⁶ I am aware that the key term of “stranger” might be problematic, as it presents a translation problem in itself. The literature cited discusses the “Fremden” which is more and less than “stranger”. In everyday language “stranger” could mean as little as “I haven’t seen that person before”. Since I draw on sociological concepts and especially on the stranger as a social figure, however, I decided to stick to “stranger” as this is the common English sociological term for what in German classical and modern sociology of the stranger (*Soziologie des Fremden*) is called “der Fremde”(Schutz 1944, Simmel 1950 Stichweh 2002).

As for the term “alterity”, it is used in this paper not in any political sense, but as an umbrella term to designate all sorts of differences, be they cultural, linguistic, social, textual, etc.

⁷ I am certainly not laying claim to academic universality for such method: an academically legitimate method depends, as I have already stated in reference to Fleck, on the prevailing *thought style* and is, therefore, culture-bound to a large degree. There is no room here to discuss this epistemological problem, however, which has resulted in interesting findings, for instance in the field of the ethnography of communication, post-colonial studies, cultural studies and intercultural studies.

⁸ Cf. in this regard Adam (1993), who investigates the effect of translations of German sociologists on the sociological theory building in Slovenia; Shimada’s observations of the diffusion of western political and social theories and concepts within Japanese discourses around national identity and social self-image (e.g. 1998); the notion of travelling theories in Miller (1996) and Said (1991:226-247).

⁹ This might recall Toury’s functional concept of translation and his idea of replacing the “[...] assertion of the type “TT [target text] is a translation” by assertions of the type “TT *functions* as a translation” [...]” (Toury 1978:47). But his theoretical construction looks more system-oriented than it actually is. As for his concept of *operational norms* as one type of translational norm that determines the position of the translation in the target system, they clearly refer to the direction of “[...] decisions made during the translating process [...]” by the translator (Toury 1976:54) and they are further understood as “performance instructions” for the translator (Toury 1976:56). So the underlying supposition is not that translations are mere factors of systemic attribution, but that they are the intentional performance of an actor being guided by motives and the anticipation of expectations, which means that he actually has the power to influence the situation of reception.

¹⁰ As for the difference between non-translated texts and translations, I would argue that the difference is gradual. Of course translations are also texts, but not all texts are translations. One gradual, but important difference regarding my discussion about the interrelation between translation and system is that a translated text may potentially bring into play comparatively more features of a differing nature than the receiving system has 'learned' to accommodate. Thus, on the one hand, the integration process becomes more unpredictable since the system may not have developed a routine for processing these features and, on the other, the system may have even more diverse possibilities for integration.

¹¹ The distinction between the "theoretical" and the "pragmatic" functioning of metaphors permits tracing the theoretically strategic consequences of metaphors, understood as non-conceptual suppositions in theoretical constructions and is thus of heuristical use.

Lakoff and Johnson do not make such an explicit distinction between the "theoretical" and "pragmatic" functioning of metaphors. They assume, however, that metaphors structure our perception, our concepts and our conclusions and actions: "In most cases, what is at issue is not the truth or falsity of a metaphor but the perceptions and inferences that follow from it and the actions that are sanctioned by it. [...] We draw inferences, set goals, make commitments, and execute plans, all on the basis of how we in part structure our experience, consciously and unconsciously, by means of metaphor" (Lakoff and Johnson 2003:158).

¹² The term is not to be understood in its pejorative sense.

¹³ All translations of passages from the German literature, unless otherwise stated, are my own.