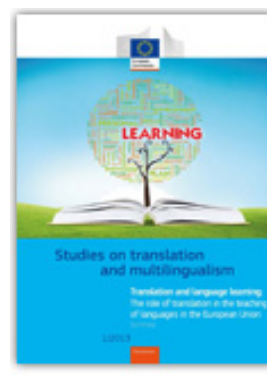
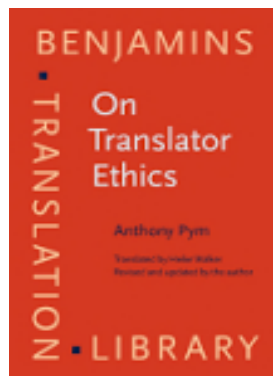


College of Intercultural Communication, Rikkyo University

2015 Lecture Series: TI and Intercultural Communication

Where Translation Studies lost the plot: creating knowledge when everyone can translate

Prof. Anthony Pym



Date: December 14, 2015 (Monday)

Time: 18:30-20:00

Location: Rikkyo Ikebukuro Campus, McKim Hall M201

http://english.rikkyo.ac.jp/access/ikebukuro/_asset/pdf/img-campusmap_ike.pdf

Open to the public. Registration is not required. No admission fees.

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Where Translation Studies lost the plot: creating knowledge when everyone can translate

Anthony Pym

When James S Holmes outlined his plan for Translation Studies in 1972, he envisaged an area for “extensive and rigorous research to assess the efficacy of translating as a technique and testing method in language learning”. That area was lost when Gideon Toury transferred Holmes to a graphic map, and has never really been recovered. In the intervening decades, Translation Studies established itself as an interdiscipline partly by turning its back on the use of translation in language learning, thereby leaving an open road where the ideologies of Communicative Language Teaching could belittle translation or shun it entirely. At the same time, translation scholars entered into an unspoken pact with the translation professions, elaborating a competence that would be specific to paid translators and interpreters, as if translation and interpreting were never done by anyone else and had no other social function.

That pact now needs to be renegotiated. In an age where statistical machine translation is online and free, everyone can work on translations. For most text types and language pairs (admittedly not so much for Japanese), we are now at the tipping point where it is more efficient to postedit machine translation than to translate from scratch, and there is some evidence that area experts, with a limited knowledge of the start language, can actually do a better job postediting than do professional translators. In fields like subtitles, online technologies have similarly allowed non-paid translators to achieve high quality while having fun. And in the really huge market, the adult learning of lingua francas, there is ample evidence that mental translation is involved in many modes of acquisition.

In this new scenario, it is time to rethink the professions, and to consider critically the places where paid language services are really needed. More generally, it is time to create democratic translation knowledge, of use to all those who translate, which is potentially everyone.

Anthony Pym is Professor of Translation and Intercultural Studies and coordinator of the Intercultural Studies Group at the Rovira i Virgili University in Tarragona, Spain. He is also President of the European Society for Translation Studies, a fellow of the Catalan Institution for Research and Advanced Studies, Visiting Researcher at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, and Professor Extraordinary at Stellenbosch University. In 2015 he holds the Walter Benjamin Chair at the University of Vienna.