

Juliane House (2018), *Translation: The Basics*. Routledge. 210 pages, ISBN 978-1-138-01640-8.

This book presents a comprehensive and comprehensible introduction to basic concepts, new trends and applications of translations within the area of translation studies. It helps readers to become familiar with the discipline of translation in a reader-friendly manner, without presupposing previous knowledge or oversimplifying the contents. The book consists of four parts which offer an overview of some of the main issues, much-discussed concepts, new trends and real-world applications of translations. Not only does the volume give an overview of the relevant and central literature in this field (pp. 189–199), it also provides a glossary which includes explanations of key concepts (pp. 176–188) as well as an index of the most important terms and named entities in the book (pp. 200–210). In particular, the glossary is very helpful to readers who are new to the field since it includes definitions of established content, such as *source text* or *target text* (p. 186), as well as relevant research methods, such as *verbal reports* (p. 188) or *eye-tracking* (p. 180).

The first part of the book is dedicated to definitions, the history of the discipline and some important dichotomies. Defining translation as “a procedure where an original text [...] is replaced by another text in a different language” (p. 9), House opens up the first dichotomy, i.e. positive and negative perspectives on translated text. On the one hand, translations “provide access to new ideas and new experiences” (p. 9), on the other hand, translations seem to be “a type of secondary communication” (p. 10) bound to the original text in the source language. From a historical perspective, House argues that Friedrich Schleiermacher’s dichotomy between word-for-word and free translation has influenced a paradigm shift in translation studies and practice (p. 13). The overall solution to the problem of this “double-bind relationship” (p. 10) seems to aim for “pragmatic equivalence” (p. 10), i.e. semantic and pragmatic comparability of source and target texts. Other dichotomies concern the conception of translation as an art or a science, and translation as a process or a product (pp. 15f.) or the difference between written and oral translation (i.e. interpreting) or human vs. automatic translation (pp. 16f.). Another important aspect discussed in the first part of the book is translation competence and how it differentiates a professional translator from a bilingual person practicing “natural translation” (p. 26).

From a scientific point of view, House presents the paradigm shifts in translation studies and the different schools which are involved, spanning the linguistic influences of the so-called cultural turn to ideological accounts (pp. 31ff.). House not only introduces important translation scholars, but also

philosophers, linguists, etc., their views and the theories with which they describe the phenomenon of translation. She addresses post-modernist, post-colonial, post-structuralist and functionalist views in a comprehensive and comparative manner without getting lost in details. Finally, House discusses the role of culture and ideology in translation (pp. 46ff.). She critically evaluates the appropriateness of established notions, such as national characters, mentalities or stereotypes (pp. 47ff.), against more useful concepts, such as small cultures, community of practice and superdiversity (p. 50). The reader profits from the author's objective and, at the same time, concrete and pointed way of discussing these controversial perspectives.

The second part of the book is dedicated to controversial and much-discussed topics in translation studies. It begins with a historical overview of "linguistic relativity and translation" (p. 59), focusing on the central question of when and why translation is possible or impossible. More recently, these questions are investigated using neuro-imaging, indicating that "[c]onceptual representations are language-independent, whereas lexico-semantic, morpho-syntactic and phonological representations are language-specific" (p. 67). These innovative findings provide insights into how translation is possible from a cognitive perspective: while concepts are interconnected, expressions can be transferred into different languages.

Another controversial question is whether translation universals really exist. In order to set the stage for this topic, House critically examines the existence of language universals in general based on some prominent examples, such as Greenberg's famous 45 universals (p. 71) or Chomsky's Universal Grammar (p. 72). The universalists argue that "their [the universals'] explanatory potential includes general cognitive, social-interactional, processing and perceptual as well as possibly other human faculties" (p. 73). This potential also seems to be adaptable to the study of translation – some of the most prominent universal hypotheses being explicitation, simplification and the over- or under-representation of source or target elements. However, based on the findings of the project "Covert translation", House presents four very convincing reasons against translation universals at the performance level (pp. 76f.).

Finally, the notion of translation quality and the different approaches to translation quality assessment are introduced in this part of the book (pp. 78ff.). The latter range from anecdotal and subjective judgements of response-based approaches to text- and discourse-oriented views. By assuming translation to be re-contextualization, House presents her own translation assessment model, first developed in 1977 and revised in 1997 and 2015 (pp. 84ff.). This model is based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Register Theory, which

allows the embedding of text and translation within a sociocultural system. House's model distinguishes between "overt and covert translation" depending on the required level of equivalence (p. 85), and the application of a cultural filter depending on the differing norms and conventions between sociolinguistic source and target systems (pp. 92ff.). With regard to her approach to translation quality assessment, the focus is on the scientifically based linguistic analysis of social and personal judgement. As a result, the model can be empirically tested by means of translation corpora, which offers an inter-subjective and systemic method of quality assessment. Although the author criticises automatic evaluation metrics (e.g. *BLUE*, p. 98), more sophisticated models, such as *MQM* (Lommel, 2014), are also worth mentioning since they could be a good option when combining automatic, semi-automatic and human quality assessment, especially when it comes to post-editing machine translation or other automatised workflows.

The third part of the book deals with some more recent developments in translation research. First, translation is examined from a cognitive point of view. House presents several methods to empirically investigate translation processes. They range from introspection and verbal report data from behavioural experiments (e.g. keylogging and eye-tracking) to neuro-imaging techniques, such as fMRI, PET or ERP studies. The author explains the different methods in detail and critically discusses their advantages and disadvantages, respectively. Alves et al. (2010) use a mixed-methods approach, combining product and process data to investigate translation units (p. 106). This data triangulation approach appears promising and helps to compensate for the weaknesses of individual methods. The chapter concludes with Paradis' neuro-linguistic theory of the bilingual brain (pp. 109ff.). According to House, this theory explains "the representation modi of two languages as keys to essential translation processes of decoding, comprehending, transferring, re-assembling and re-verbalizing" (p. 111) and it "clearly supports the concept of the cultural filter in covert translation with its hypothesized complete switch to the target language pragmatic norms and the hypothesized co-activation of the two pragmatics components in overt translation" (p. 111). At this point, however, it is not entirely clear why House focuses on Paradis' theory without mentioning other recent developments: based on empirical findings, Kroll et al. (2010) implement the factor of language proficiency in bilingual language processing in their revised hierarchical model; whereas Dijkstra et al. (2019) propose their Multilink model on the basis of a computer simulation – to name but a few examples. The selection of models in House's discussion does not appear to be sufficiently motivated.

The author moves on from a process to a product perspective. Within this context, she explains the use and function of translation corpora and their importance for an empirical account of translation studies. She introduces Baker's pioneering work and different corpus designs. Furthermore, she presents her own diachronic corpus project which examines the English-German language pair (p. 115), as well as a case study on linking constructions in translations (p. 121). From a corpus-linguistic perspective, it would be worthwhile aligning and annotating such a corpus on several linguistic levels in order to enable more sophisticated and systematic queries in terms of precision and recall (see, for instance, the CroCo Corpus, Hansen-Schirra et al., 2012).

This part concludes with a discussion on the role of globalisation and digitisation in translation. Both phenomena result in an increasing demand for translation and interpreting on the one hand, and in the strong development of English as a lingua franca on the other. House argues, however, that the latter cannot be regarded as a threat to translation (p. 135); translation and global English will instead exist "side by side, supplementing and benefiting from each other" (p. 140).

The final part of the book provides a fresh overview of applied perspectives towards translation. The first example addresses the integration of translation practices in the foreign language classroom. House begins with a critical discussion of historical approaches (pp. 144ff.), which leads to new forms of translation usage in pedagogy. Further examples deal with translation practices in multilingual institutions (pp. 154ff.) and multicultural societies (pp. 156f.). From a research perspective, the microhistory of translation becomes increasingly important (pp. 157f.). For this purpose, archives, interviews, notes and data which document the generation process of a translation are collected and analysed. Another focus is the changing working environments and conditions experienced by translators, which are triggered by computer-assisted translation, digitisation, etc. (pp. 158f.). This also affects collaborative translation practices as in audio-visual translation (pp. 170ff.). Finally, ethical issues as well as the social and political role of translation are of particular importance regarding recent developments in translation practice and research. Within this context, intralingual translation efforts into easy and plain languages are also worth mentioning since they affect the rights of people with special communication problems and also help to ensure communicative inclusion (see, for instance, Maaß, 2020).

All in all, the author can be congratulated on her reader-friendly and comprehensive introduction to translation. She successfully manages to introduce basic concepts, sheds light on controversial phenomena and debates as well as

discusses new trends in translation studies and applications in the real world. Together with the glossary of key concepts and their explanations, this book is highly recommended for readers who are interested in familiarising themselves with the field of translation or refreshing their existing knowledge.

Silvia Hansen-Schirra

Professor of English Linguistics and Translation Studies, University of Mainz,
Germersheim, Germany
hansenss@uni-mainz.de

References

- Alves, Fabio, Adriana Pagano, Stella Neumann, Erich Steiner, and Silvia Hansen-Schirra. 2010. Translation units and grammatical Shifts: Towards an integration of product- and process-based translation research. In: Gregory M. Shreve, and Erik Anglone (eds.), *Translation and Cognition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 109–142.
- Dijkstra, Ton, Alexander Wahl, Franka Buytenhuijs, Nino van Halem, Zina Al-Jibouri, Marcel De Korte, and Steven Rekké. 2019. Multilink: a computational model for bilingual word recognition and word translation. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 22(4): 657–679.
- Hansen-Schirra, Silvia, Stella Neumann, and Erich Steiner. 2012. *Cross-linguistic Corpora for the Study of Translations. Insights from the Language Pair English-German*. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter.
- Kroll, Judith F., Janet G. Van Hell, Natasha Tokowicz, and David W. Green. 2010. The Revised Hierarchical Model: A critical review and assessment. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 13(3): 373–381.
- Lommel, Arle. 2014. *Multidimensional Quality Metrics Definition*. Online: <http://www.qt21.eu/mqm-definition/definition-2015-06-16.html>. Last access: 28 June 2020.
- Maaß, Christiane. 2020. *Easy Language – Plain Language – Easy Language Plus: Balancing comprehensibility and acceptability*. Berlin: Frank & Timme.