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Interdisciplinary Investigations at the Intersection of Philosophy and Translation Studies

1. Introduction

In view of the fact that translation practice requires multidisciplinary skills from the translator, a research-based approach to the phenomenon of translation also needs to take multiple perspectives into account. Accordingly, multidirectional empirical analyses conducted on the basis of comparing source and target texts have become the starting point for emerging cross-disciplinary approaches to conceptualise translation. Applying the tools and methodologies of various disciplines to examine translation issues has prompted Mary Snell-Hornby, Franz Pöchhacker, and Klaus Kaindl to acknowledge translation studies as an integrated concept, or in other words, an interdiscipline [Snell-Hornby 1995 [1988]: 31-35; Snell-Hornby, Pöchhacker, Kaindl 1994].

Against the background of other disciplines, the philosophical investigation of translation is undertaken in the most general terms. Noteworthy, Salah Basalamah's research has shown that translation approached philosophically has the potential "to act as a metaconcept" that facilitates

interdisciplinary interactions and thus contributes to the expansion of knowledge [Basalamah 2019: 481]. Philosophical theories go beyond the mainstream philological explanation of the notion of translation as the transfer of meaningful content within two languages towards a conceptualisation that is carried out at a metatheoretical level and refers to any transfer occurring within cultural signs and other human phenomena.

As a discipline that seeks a holistic understanding of the world, philosophy can be related to translation studies in a number of ways. On the one hand, a sub-discipline called *philosophy of translation* considers the process and product of translation from different perspectives; on the other hand, translations of philosophical works into foreign languages are analysed from the point of view of both philosophy and translation studies. Accordingly, the interdisciplinary scope under consideration includes *the philosophy of translation* that exists alongside *the translation of philosophical thought*.

As a preliminary step, this article approaches the issue of translation complexity by overviewing selected attempts to translate philosophical writings. The subsequent pages cover the matters concerning some of the major directions in the development of philosophical reflection on translation. An essential part of this paper focuses on the ontological and epistemological conditions of translation, which are to a certain extent embedded in the hermeneutic reflection on the translation act.

2. The translation of philosophical thought

The matter of translating philosophical thought can be approached both from historical and conceptual perspectives. The former is fundamentally practical, while the latter is theoretical.

As a reflective process that involves thinking in order to go beyond seeking merely literal equivalents, the act of translation, according to Łukasz Bogucki's view, resembles philosophical activity [Bogucki 2022: 206].

Moreover, in the same way that philosophy is open to competing viewpoints, translation permits a multiplicity of rival interpretations. Significantly, in both philosophy and translation, it is possible to notice not only a plurality of meanings, but also a multitude of approaches to them.

Another point is that translation theorists quite frequently formulate substantive accounts that support philosophical ideas [Leal, Wilson 2023:

5-6]. On the other hand, theorisation of translation is grounded in philosophical discourses well beyond the extent to which philosophers have actually considered translation. In this asymmetrical relationship, philosophy has gained superiority and authority [Pym 2007: 33]. In fact, translation studies turn to philosophy to draw upon its thought and at the same time develop and enrich it [Leal, Wilson 2023: 5-6].

Looking from an overall perspective, any act of translation principally contributes to the dissemination of the ideas contained in the source text. Walter Benjamin maintains that translations prolong the life of their source texts alongside contributing to its glory. In this view, the target texts are a chance for the original to fully flourish far into the future [Benjamin 1972: 11]. Significantly, so far as translation is concerned, it also enables the repeatability of philosophical thought across languages, as Anthony Pym points out: “Translation becomes a condition of philosophy’s own iterability, placing its legacy in foreign hand” [Pym 2007: 40].

In the same vein, Elad Lapidot contends that “in increasingly multilingual reality, . . . translation is essential to philosophy’s concrete existence” [Lapidot 2012: 89]. Under these circumstances, philosophy acknowledges its translation, while requiring the target text to be ‘the same’ as the original. In order to produce an inter-lingual copy, one needs to translate something untranslatable, thereby paradoxically making a contribution to generating diverse meanings in languages [Lapidot 2012: 90].

Furthermore, it is argued by Alice Leal and Philip Wilson that translation can be used as a philosophical tool in this respect that “investigating the translation issues in a text can illuminate what is at stake philosophically” [Leal, Wilson 2023: 6-7]. Indeed, one can identify a number of actual examples of translations that have contributed to shaping philosophical thought both in terms of concepts and exemplifications. As an instance, practically accessible to the majority of people through translations, the Bible provides a field for plurality of considerations regarding the act of translation that are of relevance to philosophy [Leal, Wilson 2023: 6-7].

As far as philosophical translation is concerned, it dates back to ancient times and is primarily of practical importance, as it enables the dissemination of philosophical ideas in different countries and, as a result, has a tremendous impact on the development of philosophical thought. In fact, Plato can be considered one of the earliest translators as he translated Socrates’ ideas from speech into writing. In medieval times, Aristotle’s works were translated from Greek into Latin through the medium of

Arabic. Saint Thomas Aquinas, in turn, has introduced Aristotelian philosophy into Christianity with regard to terminology and concept adjustment [Andrzejuk 2012: 11-18]. Remarkably, in the earliest periods, translations were commonly addressed as if they were originals [Pym 2007: 25]. Afterwards, from olden times until the modern era, various philosophical works have been translated into national languages.

Both theoretical and practical contributions in the field of philosophical translation have been made by Roman Ingarden, who apart from being a remarkable phenomenologist, was also the translator of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* by Immanuel Kant [Kant 1781; Kant 1957].

It appears to be reasonable what Ingarden has concluded that in the case of translating philosophical works, the translator's philological competencies may prove insufficient to translate the text adequately into the target language. Indeed, translation performed by a professional who thoroughly understands the philosophical dimension of the text involves the lower likelihood of errors occurrence [Ingarden 1955: 165].

First and foremost, philosophical competencies are of considerable importance from the perspective of preserving the precision of philosophical terminology, including neologisms and other philosophical expressions that are of limited translatability. Moreover, a translator needs philosophical literacy to avoid this kind of *visibility* [a term coined by Lawrence Venuti: Venuti 1995] that involves the target text revealing to the reader a distortion of the underlying philosophical sense conveyed by the source text.

In quite general terms, Roman Ingarden claims that classical philosophical texts, apart from infrequent cases of those situated at the intersection of literature and science, can be commonly classified as academic texts that are generally expected to adhere to the same rules that pertain to academic translation [Ingarden 1955: 169-177].

In this regard, immense terminological precision is one of the important requirements for the accurate reconstruction of the thought content of a philosophical text. However, the postulate of preserving the accuracy of meanings notwithstanding, the translator is supposed to preserve the philosophical source text's ambiguity, provided that the ambiguous words or passages have been used deliberately by the source text's author [Ingarden 1955: 169-177].

On the practical side, the translator is expected to give careful consideration to the fact that philosophers tend to "invent their own terms, or assign new meanings to old terms, or use ordinary words in a new,

technical sense” [Parks 2004: 1]. Consequently, the challenge of translating philosophical content requires utmost clarity of thought. In addition, the translator of philosophical texts “has to pay very close attention to the author’s words, comparing and contrasting the different uses of one and the same word in different contexts” [Parks 2004: 1].

Owing to the aforementioned importance of precise word choice, philosophical translation is obviously considered particularly demanding. Of relevance in this context seems the question raised by Lisa Foran: “How much does a translator speak ‘in the name of’ the author?” [Foran 2012a: 2].

Against this background, the translator’s failure to adhere to the principle of strictly following the meaning of the source words can result in vagueness potentially disrupting the reader’s comprehension of the original text content. Bearing in mind that philosophy addresses metaphysical, axiological, ethical or general human issues, which are considered within logically consistent theories based on axioms, the translator quite often needs to do a semantic analysis of each target word or phrase before using it.

According to the perspective of the translator, what perhaps most distinguishes the translation of philosophical texts from that of other specialised texts is the necessity of searching for the equivalents of terms deliberately invented by philosophical authors in order to express meanings that are inexpressible in terms hitherto coined (such as Heidegger’s notion of *Dasein*). This is arguably the reason why translations of philosophical texts are fairly frequently done by philosophers, some of whom, in turn, undertake philosophical reflections on the phenomenon of translation.

Admittedly, some philosopher-translators have already been mentioned in this paper, but certainly it deserves to be stated clearly that valuable contributions have also been made in this field by such authors as: Friedrich Schleiermacher, a translator of Plato’s works [Schleiermacher 2016], Walter Benjamin, who translated the philosophized novel by Marcel Proust [Proust 1930], Roman Ingarden, a translator of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* by Immanuel Kant [Kant 1781], Jacques Derrida, who translated one of Edmund Husserl’s books [Husserl 1962]. Nonetheless, in many cases of translations, even those carried out by philosopher-translators, it proves impossible to find such target language equivalents of terms of the original authors’ invention which would completely cover the meanings of the source terms.

In this respect, Barbara Brzezicka’s studies may clearly be of relevance, as she analytically examines the Polish translations of Jacques Derrida’s

writings and reveals various types of obstacles encountered in translating the philosophical dimension of texts. Among other things, she observes challenges related to the translation of philosophical word games that contribute to structuring Derrida's argumentation. Furthermore, according to Brzezicka, stylistic considerations can lead to semantic shifts even in cases where translators interpret the source text correctly [Brzezicka 2018].

Along the same lines, one can consider the practical attempts undertaken by translators to find equivalents for philosophical terms. Remarkably, the philosophical concepts, acknowledged as inherently untranslatable, have been collected in an encyclopedic dictionary *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles* edited by Barbara Cassin. Originally written in French, the lexicon covers about 400 terms considered extraordinarily challenging for translators, combined with their approximate equivalents or semantically related words found in selected languages, as well as philosophical and linguistic explanations regarding the origin and historical context of each concept [Cassin 2004].

To an even greater extent than the French original edition, the attempt to translate the dictionary of untranslatable terms into English has revealed that if not utterly impossible, the translation of philosophical concepts is indeed hardly possible [Cassin 2014]. As a matter of fact, translating the aforementioned dictionary stands as one of many cases when philosophical translation is pushed to the limits when it comes to transferring terms. In the words of one of the editors of *Dictionary of Untranslatables. A Philosophical Lexicon*, Emily Apter, the work on developing the English version of the French lexicon was, in fact, "an act of rewriting" rather than a translation process [Apter 2014: VIII]. In this regard, some concepts remain untranslated in the English edition while new content is added by translators instead. Furthermore, those concepts translated from French have been adjusted for Anglophone audience whenever relevant [Apter 2014: VIII].

Paradoxically, after all, a French dictionary of untranslatable philosophical concepts translated into English may contribute to confirming that an adequate translation of philosophical thought is actually in some respects infeasible. Together with the failure to find equivalents for certain philosophical terms, the tendencies to compensate for these inadequacies by including new content and ideas (which is hardly justifiable in the case of dictionary translations) allow to conclude that philosophical translation may bear a close resemblance to the translation of poetry in that it seems

to be rather a piece of writing created from scratch than a straightforward act of translation.

The challenges of translating philosophical contents may provide some insight as to why philosophers prefer their own translated texts to anything produced by translators. Accordingly, as Anthony Pym has observed, translation can be recognised as the actual mode of doing philosophy, whereby “Western philosophy, at a certain level, has become a series of conceptual translations of itself” [Pym 2007: 41].

Against this background, it may be significant to mention that the translation of philosophical texts, which contain abstract intellectual terms and essentially involve interpretation, may fairly often serve the explanatory function of philosophical thought. Thereby, philosophical translation provides an insight into the intrinsic nature of translation [Bogucki 2022: 215]. In consequence, in the words of Łukasz Bogucki, “translation . . . fuels the philosophical vernacular and indigenous philosophical tradition” [Bogucki 2022: 211].

3. The philosophy of translation

The philosophy of translation lies largely in establishing systemic theories regarding the inherent nature of translation. Admittedly, philosophical approaches to the phenomenon of translation vary from one another, but certainly they are developed in the framework of changeless and stable mechanisms. On the whole, philosophers provide insights into the most general knowledge of what constitutes translation, later categorising the information obtained.

Sergey Tyulenev’s paper *Systemics and Lifeworld of Translation* refers to translation as a self-(re)producing system. The author of this article describes translation by means of the term “autopoietic system,” explained as operational closure, based on systemic circularity. According to Tyulenev, “translation operations lock on themselves” [Tyulenev 2012: 141].

For one thing, translation is a self-contained system; and for another, its objective is to enhance cross-linguistic communication and consequently inter-human interactions. Anthony Pym argues that the theorising of translation involves an ongoing dialogue between philosophical discourses and translation practices. Although translation is conceptualised as problem-solving, in some cases the translator may have only one available target option corresponding to the source structure, which hardly prompts philosophical enquiry. However,

other contexts may provide an opportunity for the translator to pursue one of the acceptable two or more target variants, which may seem worth discussing. In short, a range of variants becomes a starting point for theorising. Some of the theoretical considerations and approaches, in turn, do actually turn to philosophical discourses [Pym 2007: 44].

Reaching back to ancient times, the interpretation of the Bible, referred to as biblical hermeneutics, has become the foundation of philosophical reflections on the subject of translation. Hence, known for his translation of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures into Latin, Saint Jerome of Stridon can be considered the first translation theorist. In some of his letters, he referred to the translation method, which makes the main objective of any act of translation to be to convey meaning [Hieronymus, *Epistola LVII*, *Epistola CVI*].

Subsequently, biblical hermeneutics has set the stage for philosophical hermeneutics, an approach that redefines the concept of translation as a transfer occurring not only at the level of utterance but also at the level of thought or experience [Schleiermacher 2016: 143-172; Gadamer 1975; Gadamer 1993: 279-285; Heidegger 2005; Ricoeur 2006; Steiner 1998].

Although hermeneutics has significantly influenced the further development of the philosophy of translation, it is not the only philosophical branch that has been concerned with philosophising the activity of translation. The interrelationships between philosophy and translation studies have been investigated by, among others, representatives of such approaches as: the Frankfurt School [Benjamin 1972], deconstructionism [Derrida 1976], analytic philosophy [Quine 1965], phenomenology [Ingarden 1955: 127-190], structuralism [Jakobson 1959: 232-239; Riffaterre 2009: 107-120], and existentialism [Nietzsche's short fragments about translation, Nietzsche 1993: 79-97].

What is more, intersections of translation studies and philosophical thought are currently becoming particularly prominent in the fields of ontology and epistemology. In fact, contemporary philosophy of translation, on the one hand, addresses the core issues related to the inherent nature of translation considered in its broadest sense, while on the other hand, it investigates epistemological questions such as understanding the process of translation or the truth of translation, as well as the relationship between text and reality.

3.1. Ontological approach to translation

The scope of philosophical research encompasses enquiries into the nature of translation as such. These investigations in particular focus on translation from the perspective of capturing its unique essence and recognising its philosophical properties, as well as considering translation through the lens of identity and difference.

Broadly speaking, ontology examines the existence status of translation by pondering the underlying nature of the relationship between target text and source text. Rejected by Peter Geach [Geach 1972: 238-240], absolute identity, certainly cannot be taken into account when discussing the issue of translation.

Although, in view of the alleged necessity of cultural transfer, scholarly papers have long regarded the notion of identity applied to translation as a non-relevant category [Tourey 1995: 17-23; Berman 2009: 249-264; Bednarczyk 2002; Heydel 2009: 21-33; Krysztofiak 1996: 37-136; Balcerzan 1998: 19-25, 104, 147; Tokarz 2014: 68-83], it seems notable to recall one type of identity. Invented by Peter Geach, relative identity, conceived as a predicate that can be referred to objects, rather than as a relation between objects [Geach 1972: 240], could be taken into account when discussing the nature of translation. Remarkably, the identity issue is relativised by Geach to what is asserted about it in language [Geach 1972: 240-241]. Joanna Tędziągolska, for her part, distinguishes a type of relative identity conceptualised as equality in some respect. Identity specified in this way leaves room for some inconsistencies between items [Tędziągolska 1995: 110-111, 122]. Even though the explanation of identity provided above may be questionable, the source text and the target text considered in its light could be deemed identical in terms of transferring semantic content and the same information value.

A significant contribution to contemporary investigations in the philosophy of translation has been made by Jolanta Kozak, who observed that the essence of translation is contained in an ontological paradox, which can be expressed in a logical formula $p \wedge (\sim p)$, since the text in the act of translation appears “as the same but not identical” [Kozak 2009: 13-28; translated by the author of this article]. Actually, translation approached ontologically is an increasingly important area, as it contributes to a deeper understanding and to clarifying the fundamental principles underlying the act of translation.

Interestingly, as a practical matter, empirical average readers of translations repeatedly identify the target and source texts. With reference to Dorota Urbanek, some target audience representatives may not even recognize they are reading a piece of writing originally created in another language, as well as not ponder the significance of the translator of that text [Urbanek 2004: 144].

Owing to the high level of generalisation and abstraction required, establishing universal ontological criteria to define translation proves problematic. Nevertheless, in any case, otherness rather than sameness comes very clearly to the fore when it is related to translation. Lisa Foran, applying Emmanuel Levinas's terminology, explicitly calls translation "a path to the Other" [Foran 2012b: 75].

At the other end of the spectrum, a radical view of the existential form of translation has been expressed by George Steiner, who has proposed the concept of perfect translation, consisting in being absolutely synonymous. Under this approach to the act of translation, not only does the semantic congruence of the source and target texts define translation, but also the complete representation of every source text item at the phonetic, grammatical, and contextual levels is required [Steiner 1998: 428]. Nevertheless, the practical implementation of Steiner's concept appears essentially impossible. Needless to say, a perfectly synonymous target reconstruction of a source text seems unfeasible even in the case of translations within very closely related languages.

However, presuming that the identity of translation is considered at a purely semantic level and not at a formal stage, there is a need to give special consideration to translations made within the aforementioned very closely related languages, such as certain Slavic tongues. Remarkably, in some cases the structural and semantic proximity of very closely related languages implies the possibility for the translator not to make interpretative modifications to the source text. As a result, it is true to say that besides target texts semantically modified in the process of translation, so not completely identical with the source texts, there are potentially possible cases of translations that are completely semantically equal, in other words, identical to the source texts. One can find illustrative examples among translations within the Polish and Kashubian languages, whose recipients may share the same or very similar cultural background and knowledge.

Another point is that potential perfect translation has to be confronted with various types of differences (for example, linguistic or cultural ones) commonly assumed in the translation process. According to Veronica O'Neill, notwithstanding a certain degree of kinship within the source and target languages that is revealed in translation, one is also likely to find a game of differences between any languages [O'Neill 2018: 87, 91-96]. In accordance with this view, when put into practice, a perfect translation basically appears beyond the realm of possibility.

Undeniably, however, the linguistic divergence remains some space for dialogue. Given the impurity of natural languages that gets in the way of transference of meaning in the process of translation, Paul Ricoeur suggests to constitute a third language, positioned between the source and target languages. This artificial and at the same time universal language, perfect and pure by nature, would aim to enable a comprehensible dialogue between natural languages, resulting in a perfect translation [Ricoeur 2006: 23-26]. In the light of the issues outlined above, Paul Ricoeur's idea of a third language can be explained in terms of seeking a solution to meet George Steiner's postulate of synonymy in translation.

Needless to say, it cannot be entirely ruled out that, in the future, Paul Ricoeur's universal language, serving as a reference point for source and target languages in any translation process, will be implemented with the support of artificial intelligence, but for the time being Ricoeur's concept is beyond practice. Altogether, from an ontological point of view, it remains challenging to produce a translation that is identical in terms of semantics to the source text.

Noticeable in the process of translation, intertextuality combined with the subjectivity of the translator's choices, generally fails to allow the complete transfer of the source content. Veronica O'Neill has found that perfection can be revealed in translation, albeit only momentarily, through "universality, as pure language in the process of translation" [O'Neill 2018: 93].

Coming from a different angle, the ontological status of an individual translation may originate from a number of determinants that can be viewed as opposites. O'Neill has made the point that translation is likely to reveal either sameness or multiplicity, which in turn derive from the passive or active attitude of the translator. By the same token, substantially, the translatability or untranslatability of a given text can be related to the translator's assumption of an overlying or underlying role [O'Neill 2018: 156-157]. On the other hand, applying Veronika O'Neill's notions, one

may conclude that the ontic status of translation may involve the issue of the moreness of the source text contrasted with the moreness of the translator.

Taking a different perspective, Lisa Foran, in reference to Jacques Derrida, reveals the ontological paradox of trying to maintain linguistic uniqueness and difference in translation, while at the same time moving beyond the individual language [Foran 2012b: 83]. The process of translation, for one thing, enables to preserve the structure of an individual language, and for another, it allows to discover, reconstruct, develop, and explore the hidden structural nature of that language [Foran 2012b: 83].

As such, ontology first and foremost addresses the issue of existence. As far as translation considered in this context is concerned, the question of preserving the source text or of threatening to lose its self is of relevance. Against this background, being open to the Other, but only to a certain extent, could be something required of the translator.

In a similar vein, the opposition of translatability and non-translatability is conceptualised by Lisa Foran within an ontological framework. In accordance with her view, as much as absolute translatability fundamentally contradicts linguistic uniqueness, absolute untranslatability dooms the text to non-existence [Foran 2012b: 85-86].

Crucially, ontological issues pertaining to translation can be examined in a number of ways, amongst others through the lens of the text-to-text interrelationship, alongside the text-to-world connection. From an overall perspective, not only does language serve as a tool for the translator's activities oriented towards constituting the text, but first and foremost it denotes and reveals reality.

In this regard, the ontological status of translation ought to be established not merely in terms of the interrelation of the source text and the target text, but also at the level of the translation's reference to the world. According to Beata Pieczychna's view, translation constitutes the space within which language comes to life in order to uncover its fullness. On these grounds, it can be concluded that "translation is one of those special phenomena which not only articulates the world but also transforms it" [Pieczychna 2021: 101].

When considering the nature of translation, a significant issue to be addressed is also determinacy. Adhering to Willard Van Orman Quine's idea, translation remains undetermined by empirical data [Quine 1965], however, this view has been challenged in a number of studies. From the

perspective of Ian Hacking, for instance, Quine's error lies in making a hypothesis on the basis of an anecdote [Hacking 1981: 171-175]. Serge Grigoriev, on the other hand, argues that Quine has never investigated in detail the links between indeterminacy and the concept of meaning [Grigoriev 2010: 395-411].

Correspondingly, the issue of determinacy of translation also needs to be viewed at other levels. One can agree that the target text is determined by the source text and by the author of the original, as well as the translator, in addition to language.

Nonetheless, the above view of the multidirectional determinacy of translation has not been found commonly acceptable. Shyam Ranganathan, who adheres to a text-type conception of semantics, states that inasmuch as translation is a relation between texts, a textual account of meaning and translation needs to be considered [Ranganathan 2007]. By the same token, since language is not the object to be translated, one ought to consider translation to be determined by the source text rather than by language [Ranganathan 2007].

3.2. Epistemological approach to translation

Epistemological considerations related to translation revolve around the issue of cognition. More specifically, this research area within the translation studies covers, among others, such matters as interpretative understanding with its capacity to achieve meaningfulness, and the question of rationality as related to translation by artificial intelligence, as well as the epistemological concept of truth.

The first point is that the epistemological approach to translation investigates the issue of the translator's pursuit of understanding the source text. In its very nature, the act of understanding involves an internal grasping of how the different items of information are linked to each other "in terms of explanatory, logical, probabilistic, and other kinds of relations" that are "constitutive of justification" [Kvanvig 2003: 192-193].

As Beata Piecychna points out, when considering the entire process of translation, the pivotal actor is obviously the understander, i.e., the translator [Piecychna 2021: 111]. From the translator's perspective, in turn, a thorough understanding of the source text is a fundamental factor in determining the accurate transfer of meanings into the target language. To put it another way, every decision made in the translation process requires prior understanding.

What is important, cognitive processes, in particular holistic understanding, appear not only to be essential for producing a translation, they primarily constitute the foundation for undertaking any meaningful self-reflection and meta-reflection on the act of translation.

Against this background, a philosopher essentially seeks to understand the inherent nature of translation. As a practical matter, this nature as such has been substantially grounded in the ways in which translators comprehend source texts. In the words of Sergey Tyulenev, translators “(at least initially) sincerely intend to contribute to the establishment of mutual understanding between parties communicating through them” [Tyulenev 2012: 147].

A point worth emphasising is that translation, on the one hand, is supposed to facilitate communication, and on the other hand, it is an act of communication in itself. Referring to the words by George Steiner, “inside or between languages, human communication equals translation” [Steiner 1998: 49].

Nonetheless, another insight into the role of comprehension in the translation process may be offered in philosophical research. Namely, in line with Feargus Denman’s view, there is no practical difference between translation and paraphrasing, provided that both involve such ways of restating contentions or ideas that rely on the use of different words. Granted that Denman’s claim is right, it might be assumed that someone comprehending the source text is also supposed to understand its paraphrased replacement. A paraphrase aimed at rendering the content of a text more accessible, may in turn be taken as a translation. It is the translator’s responsibility to transfer something unintelligible into a language that someone can understand [Denman 2012: 158].

Tackling the same issue, one of the representatives of philosophical hermeneutics, Hans-Georg Gadamer compares translation with a conversation seeking understanding, and against this background considers the situation of the translator as analogous to that of the interpreter [Gadamer 2013: 404-406]. In examining the hermeneutic approach to the translation phenomenon, Beata Pieczychna has observed that interpretation, with its capacity to achieve meaningfulness, entirely determines understanding in Hans-Georg Gadamer’s thought. Indeed, as far as interpretation is concerned, it does not only serve the translator to decipher meanings, but also its purpose is to shape content. In some cases, the translator turns to an

interpretation which enables “agreement on a given matter to help achieve well established understanding” [Piecychna 2021: 187].

Friedrich Schleiermacher’s findings suggest, moreover, that in a paradoxical way, the interpretation carried out by the translator distorts the author’s original thought, preventing the target readers from getting familiar with the actual source text, and at the same time, none of the translation approaches (Schleiermacher distinguishes two ways: paraphrase and imitation) are free from interpretative activities [Schleiermacher 2002: 228-229].

From an overall perspective, the translator’s endeavours to understand the source text and then to reconstruct it in the target language in such a way as not to misrepresent the author’s ideas, involve an intention to convey the truth. On the other hand, “truth and trust may lead to understanding” [Chesterman 2017: 350]. Moreover, it is worth remarking that translation studies offer a conceptualisation of the epistemological notion of truth in translation by means of metaphors relating to fidelity and betrayal [Steiner 1998; Danto 1997: 61-63; Emery 2004: 143-167; Lederhendler 2009: 35-46; Tyulenev 2012: 139-155].

By and large, implementing a range of interpretive strategies and creative solutions facilitates translators’ attempts to adhere to the principle of faithfulness to the source text in practice. Remarkably, Sergey Tyulenev has made the essential point that some translators may even “try to be (hyper)faithful to the original texts” due to a sense of moral obligation to keep as close as possible to the author’s words [Tyulenev 2012: 147].

At the other end of the spectrum, arriving at the truth stems from “a principal movement” through which translation translates itself, enabling the truth to be interpreted and understood. In considering translation as a mirror image of hermeneutics, Carla Canullo argues that the truth, by virtue of its intrinsic inexhaustible nature, always remains sayable, even if untranslatable. Significantly, what makes the truth accessible is interpretation [Canullo 2022: 173-177].

Recent findings suggest that the challenge for translators to shape meaning so as not to lose the truth in translation entails the issues of ethical concern. In line with a pervasive approach, the fundamental ethical value of translation lies in faithfully mirroring the source [Lambert 2023: 34-35]. Nevertheless, Andrew Chesterman highlights the significance of another level of ethics, which is focused on the translator’s relationship with the wider world rather than just with the text itself. According to this

view, not only does the translator's ethical responsibility involve the comprehensible interpretation and processing of meanings, but it also covers the possibility of challenging the potential reader expectations. In practical terms, the translator is assumed to act as an ethical decision-maker who is aware of the available alternative translation choices and seeks optimal translation solutions [Chesterman 2017: 347-356].

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the epistemological approach also encompasses the issue of understanding in the case of translation performed by artificial intelligence. Particular prominence is given to whether the information processed by a machine can result in an adequate translation.

Remarkably, in his well-known Chinese Room argument, John Searle reasons that it is a prerequisite for a translator to possess mental states in order to translate adequately. Artificial intelligence is thus intrinsically incapable of understanding anything as it operates on the principles of syntax rather than that of semantics [Searle 1980: 417-424]. Coming from a different angle, Zinovia Rovienskii, Avenir Uyemov and Ekatierina Uyemova point out that the possibility of overall formalisation of language and complete automation of linguistic operations performed in the process of translation still remains doubtful, albeit absolute formalisation cannot be excluded [Rowieński, Ujemow, Ujemowa 1963: 54]. Admittedly, advancements in artificial intelligence may trigger beliefs that a translation need not be carried out by a self-conscious being, since an algorithm capable of translating texts flawlessly is programmable. Although so far an automatic translator capable of replacing humans has not been developed, in accordance with Oxford Report, whose authors examine how susceptible jobs are to computerisation, the estimated probability of computerisation for the profession of translator and interpreter is 38% [Frey, Osborne 2013: 67]. As is well known, the computing power of computers as well as the text base that enables artificial intelligence to learn is constantly growing [Kisielewicz 2017: 326-327; Chan Sin-wai 2018; Wołk 2019]. What is more, according to Michael Cronin's view, not only can machine translators learn, but they are also able to enter into some types of dialogue and interaction, which makes them increasingly reliable tools [Cronin 2016: 119-138].

The fact remains that an algorithm that does the translation based on simulated cognitive abilities and without the assistance of a human still seems to be just a postulate. The currently known neural machine

translation services are primarily designed to provide computer-assisted translation tools. However, recent research shows that brain-like mechanisms, embedded in the most advanced translation models, are largely able to cope with the semantic ambiguity and language's complexity [Scott 2018].

Either way, the prominence of human cognition in establishing translation solutions needs to be confronted with the limitations of machine translation. In light of the foregoing considerations, the critical boundary between human and automatic translators is based on the semantic level. Interestingly, adhering to Alexandros Nousias' view, semantic alteration and reduction, recognised in the products of machine translation, contribute to developing a non-natural construct that raises ethical doubts on account of social and semantic misrepresentation. Accordingly, being designed to handle only syntax, automatic translators currently need to be regarded as tools merely capable of processing information through the consumption of meaning rather than its construction [Nousias 2023: 30-44].

The aforementioned arguments lead to the conclusion that the epistemological perspective, inherently linked to a certain ethical dimension, highlights the value of human cognitive capacities, regarded as trustworthy and contrasted with the dehumanisation of translation performed by machines. As a result, translation is recognised as a human intellectual endeavour that requires understanding and interpreting in an interdisciplinary context and, as such, entails ethically responsible decision-making choices on the part of the translator. In a nutshell, it is the human factor that is believed to make it possible to construct translations truthfully and ethically according to the results of a comprehensive semantic analysis.

Furthermore, on the whole, the epistemological approach may provide the suggestion that true understanding in the translation process is to guide the translator to the truth revealed to the target audience.

4. Concluding remarks

Broadly speaking, not only does the nature of translation consist in the reproduction of meanings, but also and above all, translation has the character of a highly dynamic process, whose emergent dimensions have been revealed within the various research areas of translation studies throughout time.

Acknowledged as the most comprehensive discipline, philosophy appears to make an outstanding contribution to revealing the inherent holistic dimension of translation. The philosophical research regarding translation is currently a burgeoning field, involving attempts to establish a philosophically grounded theory and its universal principles that govern the translation process and its various aspects.

This paper contributes to supporting the idea that philosophy plays a significant role in developing the broader framework of translation theory. As a matter of practice, philosophical reflections on translation have been undertaken by quite a number of philosophers who had experience as translators of philosophical and other texts (e.g. Friedrich Schleiermacher, Walter Benjamin, Roman Ingarden, or Jacques Derrida). Accordingly, the philosophical approaches to translation have been established, at least to some extent, based on the philosophers' self-observation of translation practice, alongside reliable observation of translations done by other professionals, followed by practical findings mainly embedded in ontological, epistemological, ethical, semiotic, or hermeneutic perspectives.

The foregoing considerations lead to the conclusion that philosophy and translation are interrelated in the sense that they explain each other and their scopes overlap. In accordance with the view of Łukasz Bogucki, "both translators and philosophers are explainers, guides in the respective mazes of language and life" [Bogucki 2022: 205].

Undoubtedly, however, the investigations conducted at the intersection of philosophy and translation studies aim not only at drawing parallels between these disciplines, but also and above all at examining the profound interconnections underlying them.

The challenges that have been revealed by investigating the interdependence of philosophy and translation studies show that translation as a philosophical phenomenon is addressed through a number of approaches that have only selectively been covered in this article due to its limited length. Taken together, the referenced philosophical studies seem to support the idea that the theoretical foundations of translation have been conceptualised within various branches of philosophy, of which, apparently, the ontological and epistemological concepts, along with the hermeneutical ideas, have most prominently become part of the interdisciplinary discourse on the nature of translation.

In light of all the above, it is reasonable to state that investigations conducted at the intersection of philosophy and translation theory indisputably

contribute to the considerable growth of both translation studies and philosophical thought.

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ABSTRACT

This article provides an overview of the challenges faced at the intersection of philosophy and translation studies. The interdisciplinary scope under consideration covers philosophical contributions to theoretical investigation of translation, which are substantively grounded in the experiences of practicing translators, amongst whom are philosophers. Furthermore, the paper emphasizes the prominent role of philosophy in establishing the fundamental conditions and concepts of translation, and addresses the numerous philosophical approaches contributing to the interdisciplinary discourse on the nature of translation. Considerable attention is given to metaphysical and epistemological points that seem to play a significant role in conceptualising translation issues and establishing the theoretical foundations of translation studies, as well as in providing a deeper insight into the translation process. On the whole, the philosophisation of the translation phenomenon contributes to the substantial growth of both philosophical thought and translation studies.

KEYWORDS: translation of philosophical thought, philosophy of translation, interdisciplinarity, translation studies, ontology, epistemology, ethics, hermeneutics

ABSTRAKT

Badania interdyscyplinarne na pograniczu filozofii i przekładoznawstwa

W niniejszym artykule zostały przedstawione zagadnienia z pogranicza filozofii i przekładoznawstwa. Rozpatrywany wymiar interdyscyplinarny obejmuje wkład filozofii w teoretyczne badania nad tłumaczeniem, dla których podwaliną stało się praktyczne doświadczenie tłumaczy, którymi byli również filozofowie. W artykule podkreślono ponadto znaczącą rolę filozofii w ustalaniu fundamentalnych uwarunkowań i koncepcji przekładu oraz omówiono różne stanowiska filozoficzne współtworzące interdyscyplinarny dyskurs na temat tłumaczenia. Szczególną uwagę poświęcono

kwestiom metafizycznym i epistemologicznym, które zdają się pełnić kluczową rolę w konceptualizacji zagadnień związanych z przekładem i tworzeniu teoretycznych podwalin badań przekładoznawczych, a także umożliwiają głębsze zrozumienie procesu tłumaczenia. Co istotne, ufilozoficznienie zagadnienia przekładu przyczynia się do istotnego rozwoju zarówno myśli filozoficznej, jak i przekładoznawczej.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: przekład tekstów filozoficznych, filozofia przekładu, interdyscyplinarność, przekładoznawstwo, ontologia, epistemologia, etyka, hermeneutyka