

BOOK REVIEW

Tyulenev, Sergey. 2014. *Translation and Society: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, pp. 210, US\$39.95 (paperback), ISBN 978-0415-72122-6.

The field of Translation and Interpreting Studies (TIS) has been enjoying an increase in amount of sociologically-oriented translation research in recent years, thanks to the development of various *turns* in the field of Translation Studies. Translation theorists and students of translation have gradually been shifting their focus to the sociological aspects of translation (and interpreting) studies, yet since the publication of *Constructing a Sociology of Translation* in 2007, no further volume of collected papers and no book on sociological approaches to translation studies have appeared (except for a collection of articles dedicated mainly to Bourdieu's concept of habitus edited by Gisella M. Vorderobermeier (published in 2014) and Sameh Hanna's monograph published in 2016 devoted solely to a Bourdieusean approach rather than an overview of the sociology of translation). Sergey Tyulenev's *Translation and Society: an Introduction* (2014) is thus a well-timed publication dedicated to sociological approaches to TIS.

Tyulenev explicitly states in his "Introduction" that this book is different from *other* publications on translation theories and other approaches to TIS in that this book will take readers "deeper into sociologically informed thinking about translation" (p.1). Drawing on the most

basic concepts of society, members of society and socialization as well as more complicated concepts in the field of sociology, the book serves as a thoughtful introduction to research on the sociology of translation. Tyulenev himself spells out the intention of his book, which is to "motivate new generations of translation students" by introducing new theoretical terrains and sparking some research questions related to the field. The book is thus useful for students (as well as lecturers and supervisors) who aspire to do research in TIS.

The book contains nine main chapters and a concluding chapter, which are logically sequenced and well-developed starting from a fundamental overview of sociological elements to more complex yet concrete subjects on theories of sociological dimensions. Tyulenev creatively names the chapters in accordance with their content, such as "Setting the scene" (Chapter 1), "The back drop" (Chapter 2), and "A panoramic view" (Chapter 7) which discusses functionalism – a sociological approach focusing on systems and societies). In Chapter 8, "A close-up," the author addresses sociological approaches focusing on human actions, and in the following chapter, called "Negotiating a balance," he examines the negotiation of approaches introduced in Chapters 7 and 8.

Although the book is divided into 10 chapters, the contents might be largely grouped into three parts. Part I, which covers Chapters 1 to 4, can be considered preparation for the sociological dimensions. In these chapters Tyulenev

introduces some basic yet key inquiries into the understanding of sociology, from the most fundamental aspects of the rationale of sociological studies (and translation) in Chapter 1 to preliminary notions of culture, society and individuals, including the connections of these concepts in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 goes on to discuss socialization, focusing specifically on the socialization of translators as members within a society, while Chapter 4 examines the difference between occupation and profession and the issue of how translators constitute a profession through the process of a professional project. Combined, these chapters represent a thorough introduction to key sociological terms and concepts (provided at length and in detail). Readers hoping to delve more immediately into sociologically-infused landscapes, however, these chapters could be seen as redundant.

In Chapters 5 and 6, which make up what I will call Part II of the book, Tyulenev starts to delve into the research terrains of sociology. In Chapter 5, initial key elements of research practices, research designs and methodologies are introduced. A number of practical tips and techniques are also presented here in a friendly manner, making the chapter particularly useful for nervous students who are new to research. Then, in Chapter 6, Tyulenev acquaints readers with fundamental models through a discussion of theories and principles for sociologically-informed research. This chapter is a front gate providing essential information that prepares readers for a deeper exploration of more complex sociological approaches in Chapters 7 to 9.

It is not until Chapters 7 to 9, which constitute the third part of the book, that actual sociological approaches are discussed. Here, Tyulenev outlines approaches from macro-, micro-sociological theories and theories in-between in Chapters 7, 8 and 9 respectively. Chapter 7, “a panoramic view,” is given over to a discussion of functionalist-structuralist theories. This chapter lays out the most basic concepts of functions and functionalism and guides readers deeper through more complicated ideas orbiting around macro-sociological concepts, e.g. Parson’s theory of social systems (AGIL) and Luhmann’s Social System Theory (SST). After discussing theories of social equilibrium in Chapter 7, Tyulenev devotes Chapter 8 to “a close-up” view of sociological approaches involved in human activities. The chapter begins with an overview Weber’s *Verstehen* and proceeds to a discussion of Goffman’s dramaturgical approaches, Husserl’s idea of lifeworld, Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology and Latour’s Actor-Network Theory (ANT). In this vein, Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 articulate what might be termed the sociological dichotomy, while Chapter 9 seeks to “strike a balance” (p.146) between the views discussed in the previous chapters. The chapter examines approaches developed and proposed to overcome the sociological binary of individual/society – Bourdieu’s sociology and Giddens’s theory. Bourdieu’s reflexive sociological approach, therefore, makes up the major part of the chapter, in which Tyulenev delineates the key concepts proposed by Bourdieu of field, habitus, capital, *doxa* and *illusio* in an attempt to overcome the individual/society duality. While the chapter discusses each

key concept of the theoretical approach proposed by Bourdieu in detail, his concepts of struggle and historicity of fields that differentiate Bourdieu's reflexive sociology from other attempts to overcome the sociological conundrum deserve greater attention. An emphasis on these concepts would serve to highlight the uniqueness of Bourdieu's attempt to transcend the human action/society binary in a constructive way.

In his concluding chapter, Tyulenev emphasizes that the "combinability of paradigms" (p.192) is still important in the concurrent feature of sociologically-informed research. He goes on to stress the need for researchers to combine both micro- and macro-sociological approaches, especially in the field of TIS research to mirror the balance between actions and system.

Because sociological approaches are highly abstract and may be difficult for students or readers new to the field to grasp, throughout the book, Tyulenev gives a variety of concrete and relevant examples to illustrate each concept and theory of sociology. Despite having been taken from a Western-centric environment, the examples in the book range widely from basic ones that can be understood by any reader (e.g. socialization in the case of Mowgli) to more specific ones related to the field of TIS (e.g. the usage of CAT tools and the translation cases of LXX and the King James Bible (KJB)). These examples are vital in helping readers follow the more complex sociological approaches discussed in the book. Tyulenev also invites readers to contemplate the topics he is dealing with by posing thought-provoking research

questions at the end of almost every section and sub-section in the book.

In summary, this is a very useful and informative book, introducing students and readers to the sociologically-infused sphere of TIS research. The well-grounded content, useful examples, and provocative questions will surely arouse students' and readers' interest in this field. However, as Tyulenev himself suggests, this book is merely intended to "motivate new generations of translation students" (p.1) to dig deeper into the realm. Further examination of other books and materials is encouraged.

References

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