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Translation as a Paradigmatic Universal, Post-Industrial, Knowledge-Based and Innovative Service

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Abstract & Keywords

English:

In this paper I argue that translation activity, in all its oral and written forms, is a paradigmatic universal, post-industrial, knowledge-based and innovative service in very advanced societies and economies. I base this argument on general social and economic concepts that are little known in the field of Translation Studies, and which revolve around the following topics: (1) definition, characteristics and type of services sector; (2) global tendencies related to the services sector; and (3) innovation in the services sector. The fact that translation services are contemporary services par excellence leads to certain problems for measuring them. In conclusion, I mention three principal consequences of such a fact for research in other disciplines, for research in Translation Studies and for the training of translators. This paper can be considered as a basis for future research that could focus more on the present and future of translation services.

Keywords: innovation, knowledge-based services, translation services, post-industrial services, services sector

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1. Services as an economic activity

1.1. Three economic sectors

In terms of a classical, idealistic division, the economies of industrialised countries are divided into the following three economic sectors: primary sector (agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining and quarrying); secondary sector (manufacturing, industries, production of goods); and tertiary sector (service sector, production of services). As we shall see in the subsequent parts of the article, this tripartite division can only serve as an initial point of reference since there are uncountable changes in societies and their economies that show the arbitrariness and artificiality of this classification, especially when referring to the secondary and tertiary sectors.**[1]**

1.2. Definition and characteristics of services

Durand defines the concept of services as time of qualified work (supported by a skill) offered by an individual or an organisation for the benefit of another individual or organisation (Durand 2004: 207–251; see also Kuznik 2012: 110–113). In that sense, the beneficiary may purchase access to a tangible good; the availability of another person's time (services for the elderly, tourism, consultancies); or another person's abilities (health, culture, leisure, television). Most service relationships consist of an exchange of written information over time to ensure the success of the co-production of the service between expert and user (Durand 2004: 223).

Services have several unique characteristics. Sadler (1997: 98–102) mentions the following:

1. Services cannot be produced beforehand and stocked. Only the potential for carrying them out can be prepared for; however possible fluctuations, sometimes considerable, in the scale of the activity must be taken into account.
2. Services can be evaluated only after their production (execution), never before it. That is why we need standards for this execution and the whole process of its production is based

on the trust that the standards will be applied.

3. Services are produced in different spaces, which may be very disperse and are frequently near the customer; that is why the supervision of their execution is very difficult.
4. Contact with customers is required and therefore also special communication skills. This contact serves two purposes: personalisation of the customer's assignment (adaptation to particular needs) and teaching the customer how to use the product or the result of given service.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OCED) in its 2005 *Oslo Manual* (3rd edition) mentions the following characteristics of services: (1) the service sector is diverse; (2) the distinction between products and processes is often blurred, with production and consumption occurring simultaneously; and (3) the development of processes can be more informal for services than for goods (initial phase of search, idea gathering and commercial evaluation) (OECD 2005: 38).

Services demand a different type of work organisation than industry; there are often no fixed working hours for those providing services and there has to be greater flexibility in their way of working. This makes it very difficult to plan the work and to control external conditions.

The most important factor in providing services is the quality of the work and not the quantity (Orczyk 2007: 2). Some services are reciprocal, others unofficial; there are also people trained to offer services who are waiting to see whether there will be a demand for a particular kind of service at a particular time (availability). These characteristics result in the lack of a direct and simple relationship between services and an increase in gross national product, as is the case in industry. On the other hand, services are directly involved in producing improvements in the welfare of society (Orczyk 2007: 2).

The fall in the number of jobs in industry (at least until now) was linked to an increase in the profitability of the sector but without an increase in salaries. In services the situation is different as growth in profitability is slower but it is linked to a simultaneous increase in salaries, at least for a large number of services. The explanation for this phenomenon lies in the way in which salary calculations are made: apart from the cost of providing the service itself, they include the waiting time and preparation of the service (Orczyk 2007: 2).

Carrying out the actual service, however, is an intensive activity requiring an intellectual effort, creativity, autonomy of action and responsibility, in addition to the control of changing external circumstances and exposure to unanticipated factors, which increase stress rates during the work (Durand 2004: 253–303).

1.3. Typology of services

Howells and Tether (2004, quoted in OECD 2005: 38) distinguish between the following types of services: (1) services dealing with goods (transport or logistics); (2) services dealing with information (call centres); (3) knowledge-based services; and (4) services dealing with people (health care).

Boje (2003: 128–138, quoted by Orczyk 2007: 3) identifies the following groups of services in post-industrial societies: (1) services involved in industrial activity for the production of goods (financial, banking and legal services, etc.); (2) services involving the sale and distribution of goods and information, distribution of people and services (transport, communication, marketing and sales); (3) social not-for-profit services provided by public organisations (health and social care, education); and (4) private services consisting in the satisfaction of individual needs through direct contact with the client (tourism, beauty care).

1.4. Occupancy rate by service type

After Orczyk (2007: 3), the following section presents the evolution of the quantity and structure of occupancy rates according to the four groups of services mentioned above. A link is therefore established between the labour market (occupancy rate) and the service sector.

In post-industrial societies, in the first group of services (linked to industry) there has been a considerable increase in the occupancy rate as a result of the creation of networks among the organisation involved in the production process, especially in the departments of technology and marketing (outsourcing). These strategies translate into employment for highly qualified individuals on the one hand and those with very low qualifications assigned to simple tasks on the other. In

both cases an increase in the number of work teams for this group of services has been observed.

In the second group of services (sales and distribution) a balanced evolution has been noted since the abrupt change in structure for jobs in this type of service took place back during the era of industrialisation. This group recruits a very high number of employees in post-industrial societies – approximately a fifth of total occupancy.

In the third group of services (social services) there have been major changes in the structure and level of occupancy. It is the group that employs the highest number of people in the entire service sector, independently of the status of those services in each particular society.

Finally, in the fourth group of services (private services) it is difficult to identify clear trends in occupancy. Some of these services are mixed or overlap with social services which creates fuzzy boundaries for both groups. Also, personal services are largely offered from people's homes – privileged locations for reproductive activity – and are not reflected as much in the official figures. However, researchers have highlighted the growth in demand for these services as a result of the increased free and available time of members of society.

2. Global tendencies related to the services sector

2.1. Boom in services

For several decades now, basically since the end of the Second World War there has been a boom in services in highly developed countries and growth in occupancy in the service sector. It is practically the only sector where occupancy is constantly on the increase. Sadler (1997: 44–45) mentions the following factors contributing to these changes:

1. An increase in purchasing power in societies generates demand in the fields of tourism, food consumption and financial services.
2. An increase in the welfare of societies contributes to participation in the social life of the elderly and therefore generates the need for medical and care services.
3. An increase in the welfare of societies goes together with an increase in the numbers employed in government, education, security forces and social services.
4. The appearance of new consumer goods and products in turn generates a demand for new services or the redesigning (internet, insurance).

As Peneff states, 'in France today [end of the 20th century] three- quarters of wage earners and two-thirds of the labour force belong to the service sector' (Peneff 1998: 15). Also, as Durand says, the other sectors – industry and agriculture – are the main clients of the service sector:

Service activities have won such a firm place in the economies of more developed countries that they have considerably reduced those of the industrial and agricultural sectors. Because these sectors are also increasingly turning to services and information technologies, the roles are becoming increasingly juggled to the point where it has required the typology of these three sectors to be abandoned. (Durand 2004: 207)**[2]**

Durand (2004) explains the explosion in services in industrialised countries by three factors: (1) professionalisation of some domestic activities (hairdressing, repair workshops); (2) externalisation of many activities by companies (accountancy, logistic, cleaning); and (3) computerisation of economic life (computing and communication services).

The process of computerisation of services contributes to an increase in profitability and therefore a reduction in the numbers of employees required. However, this trend is not observed in jobs that require human contact and so in that area employment is more stable (medical care, tourism, education, government jobs). Obviously technological advances in information change the way in which people communicate but they do not change the basic principles of these services or their scope and content. (Orczyk 2007: 4).

2.2. Servicisation of manufacturing. Industrialisation of services

The increased number of services and their diversification also cause diversification in the labour relations that exist in this field.

The importance of industry to the economy is dwindling and it is acquiring features that are typical of the service sector because the production function is falling in favour of growth in the areas of conception, marketing and distribution as a result of the mass use of technology in production

companies (Gadrey 1998). This phenomenon is called *servicisation of manufacturing*. So people employed in industry are also either partly or completely involved in service tasks, although statistical data for occupancy rates often show them as forming part of the industrial sector. If the same service activity were outsourced, the person providing it would appear in the service sector.

Durand gives the following example: 'maintaining the equipments falls to industry where the workers or technicians of the parent company are involved but the same operations fall to services when they are sub-contracted' (Durand 2004: 244).**[3]**

Jean, meanwhile, presents a good example of the *servicisation of manufacturing* in a job-content perspective (Jean 1998). The tasks of engineers (a strong growth employment category together with teachers and scientific professions) extend to all the work situations around them. According to Jean, the job of an engineer today displays the following features: constant diversification of tasks, increasingly multidimensional activities, increasingly clear separation between technical and managerial tasks.

On the other hand, *services* are becoming *industrialised*: they are organised according to a production model paradigm and standardised so that they can be carried out serially. This happens when services are standardised to the limit (Orczyk 2007: 2). The result is the appearance of immense centres of workers with a typically industrial organisation of the work.

It seems that besides these trends personalised services or services for people are maintained since there is no option to standardise them on a large scale. Also, the *industrialisation of those services* is not possible because there are too many disturbances to the work process as a result of deficient communication with the client or the impossibility of respecting their demands and needs (Orczyk 2007: 3).

Durand offers a different explanation to resistance to industrialisation in the case of the type of services where most of the work involves the content of the information and the transformation of its meaning, in the search for possible contextual relationships and in reflections on its sense rather than the automated activity under pressure of time of tense workflows (Durand 2004: 243–252). According to Durand, these services require a high level of autonomy in the task, and he calls this type of work 'relational work' (in French: '*travail relationnel'*), since 'for the employees, putting information onto a computer screen [...] leads to a linking of that information with other information, with its context, with other people; the sense of the information is thus the content of this work' (Durand 2004: 245).**[4]**

2.3. The information society and advanced, knowledge-based services

This section deals with advanced services linked to the creation of the information society and development of knowledge work (Harrison and Kessels 2004; Risku, Dickinson and Pircher 2010). With the arrival of the information society the importance of knowledge work in organisational and business knowledge-based contexts, has emerged (Kuznik, forthcoming).

The importance of knowledge, the specific conditions of its creation, protection and application cannot be defined in terms of quantity but only in terms of quality. The key question is the relationship between knowledge and work. It is not just a question of the quantity of investment in scientific research, with considerable resources dedicated to employing researchers and teaching staff (especially in higher education) and creating centres for training and research, but the quality of the knowledge and the consequences of its protection and transfer to agents in society. Advanced services go hand in hand with the culture of innovation: the creation and transfer of knowledge for improving the performance of production processes. The qualitative component of advanced services also promotes personal development for the people who offer them. Changes in the employment structure of advanced services show how these services favour people with certain initial characteristics (age, training, attitude) (Orczyk 2007: 2).

To date proposals of definitions of knowledge have depended on the historical moment and the theoretical focus (Gouza 2007: 19). From a compilation of different definitions made by Gouza (2007: 20), here I highlight several proposals. Davenport and Prusak define it as 'a set of experiences, values and contextual information that provide a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information' (Davenport and Prusak 1988, quoted in Gouza 2007: 20). For Leonard and Sensiper, knowledge is relevant information, applicable to action, based, at least partly, on experience (Leonard and Sensiper 1998, quoted in Gouza 2007: 20). Beijerse holds that knowledge is the capacity to interpret data and information through a process of conferring meaning to both (Beijerse 1999, quoted in Gouza 2007: 20).**[5]**

Risku, Dickinson and Pircher (2010) remind us that the concept of knowledge work goes back to 1959 when Peter Drucker used it for the first time in his book *Landmarks of Tomorrow*. This concept refers to the type of work in which the use of knowledge predominates. This is a characteristic of many intellect-based professions (researchers, engineers, conceivers and creators, analysts and teachers).

The nature of knowledge work is clearly defined when compared against other types of work. For this purpose the classification of employment activity carried out by Dirube (2004: 95–96) in the area of human resources management is useful. He defines three main types: (1) repetitive work; (2) personal services; and (3) analytical-symbolic work.

Repetitive jobs (type 1 in the classification) are understood as being routine tasks for which a standard education or training that enables them to be carried out is sufficient. Normally, jobs in this category are carried out alongside others doing the same thing (workers) in large, closed spaces. The main virtues that the worker should have are: the capacity to follow instructions received, reliability in their execution and loyalty (low or zero creativity and conflict). Production line work and intensive production work would fit into this category.

Personal services work (type 2) also consists of routine tasks but this time person to person. Workers in this category have to know how to smile, transmit trust and optimism and be polite. In this section Dirube includes domestic workers, taxi drivers, hotel receptionists, flight attendants, nurses and even general medical practitioners.

Finally, the workers carrying out analytical-symbolic tasks (type 3) are able to identify and solve problems, use symbols, words and visual and oral representations. They are able to make their work seem unique, they are capable of adding personal value that enriches their work and they are creative. The final result of their activity is often the easiest to produce, but what defines them is the way they plan their work, how they conceptualise the problem, how they reach the solution, how they focus it and communicate it and how they involve others to achieve the desired result.

2.4. Networks and the global information economy

This section concludes looking at global trends that have an impact on the service sector by outlining the crucial elements in network society and network enterprise theories (Castells, 1996; 1997; 1998; 2001; 2006) which, for some authors, are more than theories and are highly elaborate descriptions of the current economic situation using the network metaphor.**[6]** This network metaphor very clearly shows one of the main social and economic features of our time: the creation and expansion of social networks and the generalised practice of subcontracting.

Castells spent a lot of his professional life in the USA, involved in many research projects on cultural change and employment in industrialised countries. The results of his numerous studies into the phenomenon popularly known as globalisation have been synthesised in his Network Society Theory (Castells 1996; 1997; 1998; 2001; 2006). According to Castells the network society is the result of a series of economic, social and cultural changes which began with the technological revolution in the 1970s. The micro-processor, internet and genetic engineering all promoted exponential growth in interactive computer networks general new forms and channels of communication and social relations. This technological revolution contributed the basis for a fundamental restructuring of the capitalist system from the beginning of the 1980s, creating a 'new technoeconomic system of information capitalism' (Castells 1997: 48). 'Internet is the fabric of our lives' Castells stated (2001: 15).

Castells identifies three broad types of economic development: agricultural, industrial and informational. In the information economy productivity is based on the technology for the generation of knowledge, information processing and the communication of signs.

Castells warns that the networks themselves are horizontal but not symmetrical and are formed around powerful multinational corporations. The unstoppable increase in flexible labour relations meant the establishment of the temporary supplies, services and works employment contract as the norm.

We do not only owe the concept of the network society to Castells but also the process of information working and network corporations which form the organisational basis of the information economy. In the global information economy, with the network corporation, as its organisational base, the working process itself undergoes a profound change, generating a new paradigm of information work. Under these conditions added value is generated through the innovation of products and processes and the products and inventions of the financial markets play

an increasingly growing part of that.

The network corporation is not a network of individual companies but a kind of networked organisation of economic activities that is generalised in all areas of the global economy. For the first time in history the basic unit of organisation is not an individual or a group (company, state, capitalist class) but the network itself, composed of different individuals and organisations in a state of constant modification. The operative unit is a temporary project in the form of a transnational network of large and small companies, personal networks and computer networks.

In the network society, project-based organisation is the best reflection of the new structure of social and organisational life. From a subjective view of the work the notion of projects implies the end of a coherent employment biography. The traditional notion of employment becomes more like a portfolio of activities that are self-managed. The full-time permanent worker is replaced by an occasional collaborator whose activity is remunerated in different ways which are always variable and related to the final result of the product.

3. Innovation. A key issue in the knowledge-based economy

This reflection on the present and future of the service sector would not be complete without talking about innovation. As the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) state in the foreword to the third edition of the *Oslo Manual* published in 2005, 'It has been long understood that the generation, exploitation and diffusion of knowledge are fundamental to economic growth, development and the well-being of nations.' (OECD 2005: 3). Knowledge therefore contributes to the growth of nations and innovation is the key issue in this knowledge-based economy.

Below there is a presentation of different classification of innovation together with their definitions and examples, starting with the proposal by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, followed by the European Commission and finally the '4Ps' model designed by Bessant and Tidd (2007). In these three proposals I want to highlight the variety of types of innovation and their applicability in the analysis of translation services as an economic, market-oriented activity.

3.1. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

What is the objective of innovation initiatives in society? From a market-orientated perspective the OECD, following Tirole, offer the following answer to that question: 'Firms innovate to defend their existing competitive position as well as to seek new competitive advantage.' (Tirole 1995, quoted in OECD 2005: 30). According to that statement, the objective of innovation in the world of business is to increase competition among the different companies. The 2005 *Oslo Manual* (3rd edition) focuses on innovation in the business enterprise sector, i.e. market-oriented sectors (primary industries, manufacturing and services sector), but also recognises that innovation exists in the public sector, i.e. non-market-oriented sectors: government services, health and education.

In a very broad definition, innovations are (planned) significant changes to improve firm or societal performance. More specifically, in the market-oriented sectors, 'an innovation is the implementation of the new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organisational method in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations' (OECD 2005: 46).

In the 1st (1992) and 2nd (1997) editions of the *Oslo Manual*, the focus was on firms' technological development of new products and new production techniques, and only gave a *technological product* and *process* definition of innovation. The 3rd edition (2005) includes two additional types of innovation: *organisational* and *marketing* innovations; in other words, non-technological innovation. It also refocuses innovation in the first two types (product and process innovation), since it admits that they can deal with *goods* or *services* (both new products and significant improvements), and not only with goods. The 3rd edition therefore 'recognises the importance of innovation in less R&D-intensive industries, such as services and low-technology manufacturing' (OECD 2005: 11).

The authors are very aware of the specificity of services as an economic activity and warn that innovation in services-oriented sectors can differ substantially from innovation in many manufacturing-oriented sectors, since the former (services-oriented sectors) are 'often less formally organised, more incremental in nature (not radical) and less technological' (OECD 2005: 11). The production of services tends to be a continuous process and for that reason the identification of

innovation in terms of single event is very difficult (OECD 2005: 38).

3.2. The European Commission

The European Commission (EC) distinguishes between *industrial* innovation, *public sector* innovation, innovation in *services* and the *workplace* innovation (EC 2014).

As the EC states, workplace innovation is a generic term to cover innovations in the way enterprises are structured, the way they manage their human resources, the way internal decision-making and innovation processes are devised, the way relationships with clients or suppliers are organised or the way the work environment and the internal support systems are designed. Workplace innovation can be found in all types of organisation, be they large corporations, SMEs or even public administrations. In practice they are often combined with technological, process or marketing innovations as they allow companies to tap further into staff creativity, to boost their innovation capacities and to find new solutions swiftly. Workplace innovation: (1) improves performance and working lives through positive organisational change involving inclusive dialogue and by releasing the creativity of employees; (2) coalesces the strategic knowledge of the leadership with the hands-on, practical but often unrecognised knowledge of frontline employees; and (3) seeks to engage all stakeholders in the process of change, leading to 'win-win' outcomes in which a creative convergence is forged between enhanced organisational performance and enhanced quality of working life.

Later on, the EC states that 'in some parts of Europe, the term 'social innovation' refers to what the European Commission calls 'workplace innovation' (EC 2014). The EC, after Murray, Calulier-Grice and Mulgan (2010), defines *social* innovation as 'new ideas that work to address pressing unmet needs. We simply describe it as innovations that are social both in their ends and in their means. Social innovations are new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations' (EC 2014). It adds that the term 'social innovation' is a relatively new one, but social innovation itself is not new. 'There are many examples of social innovation throughout history, from kindergartens to hospices, and from the cooperative movement to microfinance. A 'field' of social innovation is, however, a new idea.' (EC 2014).**[7]**

3.3. The '4Ps' model (Bessant and Tidd 2007)

The '4Ps' model, containing a four-type classification of innovations, developed by John Bessant and Joe Tidd (2007), provides a powerful tool for an analysis of social sectors of activity, even in the field of humanitarian innovation (HI 2014). This model is built on the hypothesis that successful innovation is essentially about positive change, and it puts forward four broad categories where such change can take place:

1. *Product* innovation: changes in the things (products or services) that an organisation offers. It is the most commonly understood form of innovation which introduces or improves a product or service; a change in what is offered to end users. There are innovative products which help to achieve humanitarian goals. For example, the LifeStraw is a portable water filter developed by Vestergaard-Frandsen which enables individuals to drink clean water from almost any source.
2. *Process* innovation: changes in the ways in which products and services are created or delivered. Examples of process innovations that have had a positive effect on the humanitarian sector are the increasing stockpiling of goods in strategic locations, or the use of pre-made packs and kits.
3. *Position* innovation: changes in the context in which the products or services are framed and communicated. An example can be seen in attempts by humanitarian agencies in different complex emergencies to develop principle based cross-agency positions in relation to belligerent parties in complex emergencies which amount to a set of conditions under which humanitarian aid would be delivered, and a clear articulation of the situations where it would not.
4. *Paradigm* innovation: changes in the underlying mental models which shape what the organisation does. Examples of paradigm innovation in the international humanitarian sector include an increasing emphasis on local ownership and leadership of responses to crises as an alternative to internationally dominated responses.

4. Translation as a paradigmatic universal, post-industrial, knowledge-based and innovative service

4.1. Features of translation as a universal, post-industrial, knowledge-based and innovative service

Translation services, as language services that allow communication between languages in highly developed societies, possess features that identify them as paradigmatic universal, post-industrial, knowledge-based and innovative services; in other words, contemporary services par excellence.

4.1.1. Translation as a universal service activity

Translation seen as an economic activity is a service and therefore forms part of the services sector. The suppliers of this service may be of different sizes and be differently constituted legally, from large multinationals to regular freelance translators and liberal professionals (literary translators). When translation activity is carried out in an organisation that does not specialise in translation services, the people who do the work (the translators) form part of the payroll and therefore appear in the statistics and official figures as employees in the industrial sector (and also, to a lesser degree, in the primary sector). This is the case of payroll translators working in Polish, French and English in Polish electrical power stations with the financial participation of the French company Electricité de France (EDF). This shows that one of the great world trends to make services from industry is also present in the field of translation activity.

The service of translation, according to the definition of services by Durand (2004: 207-251), is qualified working time spent doing translations (supported by translation competence) made available by a translator or translation services supplier for the benefit of an individual or organisation. The beneficiary can purchase the right of access to a tangible product (the translated text), the temporary availability of another (an interpreter or consultant in cultural mediation and the skills of the other person (the translator, interpreter or expert in translation and interpreting-related issues). Much translation service work involves the exchange of information with the client to ensure the co-production of the service.

Translation services share all the characteristics of services in general identified by Sadler (1997: 98–102): these services cannot be produced and stocked beforehand; can be evaluated only after their production; are produced in different spaces; and a constant contact with the customer is required, mostly with the aim of personalisation of the customer's assignment, rarely for teaching the customer how to use the result of the translation service.

Similarly all the characteristics mentioned by the OECD (2005) are present in translation services: they are extremely diversified; it can be very difficult to distinguish the process from the product itself (especially in the case of interpreting); carrying out these processes is often informal, less structured and standardised, especially in the case of translations for advertising, works of literature and other more complex assignments requiring a more creative approach.

The issue of quality in translation services takes precedence over quantity with the reflexions of translation scholars focusing mainly on quality and much less on issues of quantity. This service (or activity) is often carried out unofficially or reciprocally. During their working hours translators (and generally, suppliers of translation services) frequently find themselves in a waiting period; they are available to receive translation commissions and this waiting time (availability) must be included in the final price of the product they deliver, together with its preparation and the cost of the personalisation of the service (Orczyk 2007: 2). It is also a service that requires intellectual and creative input, autonomy and responsibility and exposure to unpredicted factors and external circumstances increases the stress involved in the work (Kuznik and Verd 2010; Durand 2004: 253–303).

Translation services are included in all the types of service mentioned by Howells and Tether (2004, quoted in OECD 2005), since there are translation services dealing with goods, with information, with knowledge and with people. Equally, they cover the complete typology of services proposed by Boje (2003: 128–138, quoted by Orczyk 2007), as services applied in the production of goods in industries, in the selling and distribution of goods, persons, information and other services; as a social and private (personal) services.

4.1.2. Translation as a post-industrial and knowledge-based service activity

Translation services are affected by all the global tendencies related to the services sector in general.

Major developments in these services in highly developed countries during the second half of the 20th century are well known and growth has recently accelerated.

Translation activity forms a large-scale part of the activities of the industrial sector and the opposite is also true: the organisation of some translation services appears more like industrial organisation (computer-assisted translation or machine translation that deal with huge volumes of translation materials; Gouadec 2007: 297–316). However, a certain section of translation activities has resisted the trend towards industrialisation, especially those that require conceptual and creative working (legal and literary translations, translations for advertising and interpreting; Orczyk 2007: 3; Durand 2004: 243–252). This group of services is the typical 'relational work', that Durand (2004: 245) talks of.

Translation is a knowledge-based activity, as demonstrated by Risku, Dickinson and Pircher (2010). These authors define concepts of an intellectual worker, intellectual capital, explicit and tacit knowledge and knowledge management, and apply them to the works of translators and the discipline of Translation Studies. They demonstrate that knowledge generated during the theory and practice of translation is a very important component of cultural capital in the knowledge-based society and a key factor for the creation of values in organisations. They identify five different types of knowledge possessed by translators in organisations: (1) language, linguistics and translation; (2) country and culture; (3) general and specific thematic questions; (4) clients and business; y (5) information technologies and computer use. For each type they identify the aspects that may be coded (explicit knowledge) and those that may not (tacit knowledge) and they propose a series of instruments for the management of each type of knowledge in both their explicit and tacit dimensions. In their conclusions they consider the epistemological nature of Translation Studies and present three different facets of the discipline: (1) as a natural science; (2) as a technical discipline (engineering); and (3) as a human, cultural and social science (also see Mayoral 2001; Kuznik 2008; 2012; forthcoming).

In the classification of different types of jobs proposed by Dirube in the field of human resource management (2004: 95–96), translation is included in three job types: (1) repetitive jobs in the case of more standardised or routine assignments or partial assignments; (2) jobs involving personal service in the case of interpreting and contact with the client (managing the translation commissions); and especially in (3) analytical-symbolic jobs, because what defines the job is the way in which the translators plan their work (translation method, strategy, techniques), how they conceptualise translation problems and find appropriate solutions, how they communicate their translation activity to other agents in the market and how they involve others to achieve the desired result (consulting specialists in specialised translation).

Translation services are carried out within and through a dense network of market agents with whom they have constant commercial and social relationships (Abdallah and Koskinen 2007; Risku and Dickinson 2009; Abdallah 2012). Trust is a key point in these relationships since, as with any service, translation services can only be evaluated after production (execution), never before, and the whole production process is based on the trust that the agreed standards between the parties will be applied (Sadler 1997: 98–102).

Translation services are part of and contribute to the information society because they consist of the computerised (digitised) processing of multilingual information.

4.1.3. Translation as an innovative service activity

Translation services have potential for innovation in all the different innovation types mentioned by organisations and scholars: (1) they can incorporate product and process innovations (e.g. changes and combinations of different text formats), organisational and marketing innovations (e.g. the reorganisation of the stages of a commission, regrouping and redefining work teams, innovative planning strategies and contact with the clients (OECD 2005); (2) they may contain elements of industrial innovation as well as workplace and social innovation (EC 2014); (3) they adapt to all the types of innovation proposed by Bessand and Tidd (2007) in their '4Ps': product, process, position and paradigm.

4.2. Difficulties in measuring translation as a paradigmatic, contemporary service

The nature of translation services as universal (omnipresent), post-industrial, knowledge-based and innovative services means that it is very difficult to measure them. This difficulty can be broken down in to the following aspects:

There is no exact employment data in the services sector in general (UNDP 2004, Orczyk 2007).

There is no clear insight (access) into data about individual services (private services, customer satisfaction, individual needs) (Boje 2003).

The industry sector has incorporated a high number of services; in other words much translation activity is carried out within organisations belonging to the industrial sector (and the primary sector, to a lesser extent) and we have no direct access to those data since the translators employed in those sectors appear in the figures as being components of them.

Outsourced translation services are measured several times in the same study and we do not have an efficient methodological tool to isolate (control) them (Gouadec 2007; Kuznik 2012).

Translation service suppliers always offer a range of additional services which makes it difficult to identify the translation service itself, without including the additional elements (Kuznik 2012).

The content of translation jobs is extremely hybrid by nature (Kuznik and Verd 2010; Kuznik 2011; 2012).

These methodological difficulties make it impossible to give an exact description of the situation of translation services in the market and so we have no clear image of that situation. Research in the field of Translation Studies must take these limitations into account.

Conclusions

The first consequence of the fact that the translation activity is a paradigmatic universal, post-industrial, knowledge-based and innovative service is for the neighbouring disciplines such as sociology of work, organisational studies, and economics. They should be interested in studying translation services as paradigmatic, contemporary services in highly advanced societies and economies. This is a very strong argument when talking to researchers from other disciplines and encouraging them to carry out more multidisciplinary studies, jointly with Translation Studies researchers. In that sense, it also means an ennoblement of translation services as an object of study because as a form of multilingual communication they are present everywhere.

The second consequence is for Translation Studies researchers, exploring the sub-field of economic, organisational, employment and professional aspects of translation. When studying a single aspect (for example, typology of translation services), they should not forget other important aspects of the same situation. They should also be able to identify evolutionary features and trends that translation services share with other services in general, and the specific features and trends that are unique to translation services sector.

The third consequence is for translator trainers who should be aware of the type of service sector for which they are training future professionals in translation and interpreting, whether to focus translation activity as a universal, post-industrial, knowledge-based and innovative service or as a traditional service that relies less on technology.

For the first type of services, especially, we can recommend the following training strategies for translators and interpreters:

Encouraging creativity in all parts of the university community: students, lecturers and researchers.

Encourage an entrepreneurial spirit among students, lecturers and researchers.

Transmit knowledge to students, lecturers and researchers about the services and innovation in the service sector.

Bring teraching and researching closer to the real market situation through the following possible actions: use real texts and real translation briefs; carry out real translation projects or simulations of them; promote the use of ITC; strengthen professional practices, where possible in innovative organisations external to the university; include training in the creation of companies, marketing, taxation, business plans; carry out professional guidance activities and activities related to entry into the labour market; centralise job offers for students and graduates; promote applied research in collaboration with business networks;

promote the contracting of PhD holders in innovate companies; and finally ensure that these actions are suitable documented and distribute information about them.

We should not lose sight, however, of the fact that advanced translation services coexist alongside their simpler, less technological forms. This is the case of legal translation, for example, where the handling of the source and target texts on paper is essential.

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Notes

[1] This article was translated into English (quotes originally in French included) by Fiona Kelso with funding from the PACTE Research Group (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona); Project

Reference: 2009SGR 00064, Support grants for research groups in Catalonia (SGR), Department of Universities, Research and the Information Society of the Generalitat de Catalunya (Spain).

[2] The same quote originally in French: 'Les activités de services ont conquis une telle place dans l'économie des pays les plus développés qu'elles réduisent considérablement celles des autres secteurs, industriel et agricole. Parce que ces secteurs recourent aussi de plus en plus aux services et aux technologies de l'information, les cartes se brouillent de plus en plus, jusqu'à imposer l'abandon de cette typologie des trois secteurs' (Durand 2004: 207).

[3] The same quote originally in French: 'la maintenance des installations relève de l'industrie quand les ouvriers ou les techniciens de la société mère interviennent, mais les mêmes opérations relèvent des services lorsqu'elles sont sous-traitées' (Durand 2004: 244).

[4] The same quote originally in French: 'pour ces salariés, la prise d'information sur un écran ordinateur [...] conduit à une mise en relation de cette information avec d'autres informations, avec son contexte, avec autrui; elle est bien travail sur le sens' (Durand 2004: 245).

[5] For definitions of the two dimensions of knowledge (codified and tacit knowledge), knowledge management and knowledge transfer via knowledge transfer projects from research institutions to business sector, see Kuznik (forthcoming).

[6] According to Köhler and Martín Artiles: 'The criticisms of Castells' work are centred on two key aspects: its scant theoretical weight and its empirical partiality. Many authors see in the 'network society' concept nothing more than a group of current trends (ITC, lean production, financial markets, etc.) in the form of a model presented as 'future society' (Freyssenet 2002). Castells' work is more like an x-ray of current trends in the most advanced societies than a sociological theory (Abell/Reyniers 2000).' (Köhler and Martín Artiles 2004: 237); see also: Durand 2004: 40.

[7] To compete this information about social innovation, there follow quotes from some parts of the Wikipedia page: 'Social innovation refers to new strategies, concepts, ideas and organizations that meet social needs of all kinds — from working conditions and education to community development and health — that extend and strengthen civil society. [...] The term has overlapping meanings. It can be used to refer to social processes of innovation, such as open source methods and techniques. Alternatively it refers to innovations which have a social purpose — like microcredit or distance learning. The concept can also be related to social entrepreneurship (entrepreneurship is not necessarily innovative, but it can be a means of innovation) and it also overlaps with innovation in public policy and governance. Social innovation can take place within government, the for-profit sector, the nonprofit sector (also known as the third sector), or in the spaces between them. [...] The social innovation theory of "connected difference" emphasizes three key dimension to social innovation. First, they are usually new combination or hybrids of existing elements, rather than wholly new. Two, their practice involve cutting across organizational or disciplinary boundaries and lastly they leave behind compelling new relationships between previously separate individuals and groups. Social innovation is gaining visibility within academia.' (Wikipedia 2014)

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