

Prof. Dr. H. Gerzymisch-Arbogast

Training for PhD Projects

3 October 2008

TRANSLATION
CONCEPTS

Overview

- I. Problem Statement
- II. Theoretical Background
- III. Questions for discussion
- IV. Example

I. Problem Statement: LAP versus ESP

Some TS scholars who come from established empirical disciplines such as psychology or neurophysiology tend to do research in compliance with the norms of the “scientific method”. I will refer to this type of research, sometimes mistakenly assumed to be characteristic of the natural sciences only, as the “Empirical Science Paradigm” (ESP). Other TS scholars come from a humanities background and tend to do research somewhat differently, in what I will refer to here as the “Liberal Arts Paradigm” (LAP).....

Daniel Gile, EST Research Issues, January 22, 2005

In the ongoing debate about research paradigms in the TS community, it may be interesting to bring up the case of History. History is classified in the humanities and is perhaps unique among academic disciplines in that its product is often a narrative and/or description of a past event or situation presented in a way which is easy to understand for non-experts. To laypersons, the technical work, and in particular the collection, technical analysis and scientific assessment of data for theory development are totally invisible...

Would it not make sense to call History an essentially empirical discipline (though Historians may also want to reflect on historical phenomena more 'philosophically' in a LAP-oriented way)? In view of the nature of the evidence sought and used to develop theories, would it be absurd to make a case for the inclusion of this discipline from the Humanities among the 'harder' sciences?

These questions are designed to provoke, but ultimately to make a point: if we understand that it is possible to classify a discipline from the Humanities as an empirical discipline, and if this discipline can meet requirements of the 'Scientific Approach' whilst using qualitative rather than quantitative research and naturalistic methods rather than experimental methods, isn't it time we let go of superficial stereotypes of 'science' and focus on underlying norms and processes?

Daniel Gile, EST Research Issues January 21, 2008

II. Theoretical Background

The LAP vs. ESP debate goes back to the 'Two Cultures Debate', a controversy known as the Snow-Leavis Controversy

http://academics.vmi.edu/gen_ed/Two_Cultures.html

In Translation Science the issue was initially raised by Barbara Moser Mercer and taken up for instance in Pöchhacker's chapter 11 and Gile's response in chapter 13 of Schäffner, Christina (ed). 2004. ***Translation Research and Interpreting Research***. Clevedon, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters.).

The LAP vs ERP controversy in TS has been taken up by EST in the Research Issues (under Liberal Arts and Empirical Science) and has recently been debated at the EST Research Colloquium at ESIT/Paris on September 27th, 2008.

Suggestions for finding a shared ground in the LAP and ERP debate cf.

- Gerzymisch-Arbogast/Klaus Mudersbach (1998:32ff, insbes. Kapitel 2 Wissenschaftstheoretische Grundlegung der Methodologie des Übersetzens, 2.1 Wissenschaftlichkeit und methodisches Denken in Natur- Und Geisteswissenschaften
- <http://www.translationconcepts.org/interalii.htm>, Video clips of the Vienna conference May, 1st

III. Questions for discussion

Are there 'scientific' standards which the two paradigms share?

Definitions of theoretical concepts used

Formulation of hypotheses and aims

State of the Art Formulation

Presentation of Results (Quantitative vs. qualitative results)

Are there ‘scientific’ principles that the two paradigms do not share?

Actor vs. Observer view

Three Perspectives (At-Hol-HolAt)

Three Dimensions of looking at facts,
objects, research (ICS)

Research Methodology or ‘Strategy’

Measureability, Proof of Adequacy

IV Example

**TRANSLATION
CONCEPTS**