

OPEN AREAS IN TRANSLATION STUDIES: ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESS

ÁREAS A SEREM DESCOBERTAS PARA OS ESTUDOS DA TRADUÇÃO: ORGANIZAÇÕES E *BUSINESS*

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ABSTRACT

When the eminent Centre for Translation Studies (CETRA) and Target were founded at the end of the 1980s, openness to business societies and the participation of colleagues from outside Translation Studies (TS) was guaranteed, as several noteworthy publications from the 1990s and the early 2000s demonstrate. However, it now seems that discussions around business and language are continuing along other channels, and this means it may be interesting for TS to look at what is being produced by scholars from Organization Studies. There are several Brazilian initiatives that may provide a possible starting point to reflect on new academic partnerships, on the selection of new centres (e.g. in Brazil), and on themes (including organizations) for TS research. A number of illustrations from the automotive sector can provide examples of how Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) methods, in combination with the use of the Internet, may help TS to reengage debate with other disciplines on business issues.

Keywords: *Descriptive Translation Studies, Globalization, Organizations.*

RESUMO

Quando o CETRA (*Centre for Translation Studies*) e a revista *Target* foram criados no final dos anos 1980, a abertura ao *business* bem como a participação de colegas oriundos de outras disciplinas além dos Estudos da Tradução (ET) estavam garantidas, como demonstram algumas publicações importantes dos anos 1990 e do início dos anos 2000. Entretanto, tudo indica que as discussões relativas à relação entre *business* e línguas estão continuando em outros canais e que os ET teriam de observar a produção realizada por pesquisadores dos Estudos Organizacionais para encontrar novos estudos sobre esses temas. Contudo, iniciativas brasileiras podem caracterizar um ponto de partida para uma reflexão a respeito de novas parcerias acadêmicas, a seleção de novos centros (e.g. Brasil) e temas (e.g. organizações). Algumas ilustrações tiradas do setor industrial automotivo

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proporcionam exemplos da maneira como os Estudos Descritivos da Tradução (EDT) combinados com a utilização de Internet podem auxiliar os ET na reabertura de um debate com outras disciplinas sobre questões relacionadas ao *business*.

Palavras-chaves: *Estudos Descritivos da Tradução, Globalização, Organizações.*

WHY (RECENT) HISTORY SHOULD BE REMEMBERED

An openness to business societies was one of the initial principles of CETRA in 1989 (<https://www.arts.kuleuven.be/cetra>). It began life as the “CERA Chair” (the name refers to the bank that was its first sponsor) in 1989, and this was the same year that saw the launch of *Target*, the TS journal published by Benjamins, - and both shared similar goals. Both institutions recognized that translation is an area of academic research that is influential at the highest levels and from international perspectives.

CETRA’s first publication was the result of an interdisciplinary collaboration¹ that, in accordance with the academic compass at the time, was written in Dutch: “*Taal, Vertaling, Management: verkenningen in een economisch niemandsland*” [*Language, Translation, Management: explorations in an economic no man’s land*] (HERMANS et al., 1994). Participants in the symposium *Vertaling en Management* [*Translation and Management*, 19 November] in 1991, which gave rise to the book, represented (a) translation agencies in Belgium; (b) companies in Belgium that made use of professional translation services; (c) Belgian academic and business experts; and (d) a cohort of masters and graduate students. In addition to the publication in Dutch, there was also an international discussion paper published in *Target* in 1998. The theme of the article was that up until that point, TS had reduced the issue (HERMANS; LAMBERT, 1998) of translation to the level of services; i.e. to microscopic, pragmatic and normative matters (“How to translate?”, etc.), and to the reductive traditional question of what are/were good/bad translations. Researchers did not really take into consideration more fundamental and functional questions such as: “When and why do companies decide to translate?”, “On the basis of what kind of instructions?”, and, “Is translation an added value or not?” One might ask whether such questions deserve to be a part of academic programmes, however, perhaps the real question should be to ask what kind of people and departments are prepared for such fundamental and functional questions. The German Škopos theory claims to concentrate on functionality, but this is from the perspective of the translator rather than from the perspective of company management.

From the first CETRA sessions in 1989, colleagues from the economics, management, and social psychology departments, took part in several sessions in debates with CETRA academics on language and business. They felt an affinity because they had experienced how central language is in their own everyday research areas, particularly since electronic communication started redefining space and time. The origins for such interdisciplinary questions came from the “linguistic turn” in social research (which even today, is almost unknown in TS). Coming from sophisticated traditions of empirical research, they felt at ease with the empirical and interdisciplinary shift in translation matters, and these had a major influence on the CETRA booklet about the translation

¹ Collaboration between established academic researchers from Organization Studies (Maddy Janssens) and Translation Studies (José Lambert), and young scholars from Economics (Catherine Labio), Sociology (Peter Simoens) and Translation Studies (Stef Wauters, Peter Janssen, Johan Hermans, Inge Dekyvere, etc.).

business market in Belgium (HERMANS et al., 1994). It took the new team ten years before an interdisciplinary publication summarized the first results of cooperation between an international audience in Organization Studies in the *Journal of World Business*, published under the provocative title: *Developing Language Strategies for International Companies: the Contribution of Translation Studies* (JANSSENS; LAMBERT; STEYAERT, 2004). Until today, this article is still often quoted in Organization Studies' (OS) texts, – but hardly at all in TS.

HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONTINUITY?

Further interaction between business and language was planned within very dynamic international research communities, and particularly within EGOS (the European Group for Organizational Studies: www.egosnet.org).

The discovery of a new area for research was clear from the works *Understanding Organizations Through Language* (TIETZE; COHEN; MUSSON, 2003), and *Discourse and Organization* (GRANT; KEENOY; OSWICK, 1998), where mention of translation was lacking. In 2001, Steyaert and Janssens had given it a central position on their agenda in *Meerstemmigheid: Organiseren met verschil [Multivoicedness: Organizing within Differences]*. Multilingualism and translation only started to be systematically recognized on the agenda of EGOS symposia and other publications after 2006.

More than mere theoretical debate, this was the start of empirical research on translation and multilingualism, which little by little established a new research area and new research groups, especially with Rebecca Piekkari and her teams in Finland, and the early pioneers, Chris Steyaert (now St.Gallen) and Maddy Janssens (KULeuven). As *Language in International Business* revealed, even in Australia and Europe, Canada and the USA, “There was a book to be written about how global expansion brings language into focus” (PIEKKARI; WELCH; WELCH, 2014, p. 8). Influenced by Steyaert and Janssens, perspectives on translation remained open and interdisciplinary. Members of CETRA were not particularly active in these networks, but in the sessions on “Englishization” and business communication at the EGOS meetings in Helsinki (in 2010) and in Lisbon (in 2011), the following game rules were suggested as a basis for further interdisciplinary research:

- (a) There are no monolingual societies;
- (b) Wherever bilingualism is active, there are good reasons for imagining multilingual practices;
- (c) There is no language policy without a translation policy (MEYLAERTS, 2010).

The discovery that the invisibility of translation and translation culture is often dependent on strategic planning, is enough to encourage research on “the languages of the contemporary world”, where translation is worthy of more than just a few footnotes, and with research programmes that are inspired by several disciplines, including TS. In addition to Janssens et al.’s 2004 article, there was also a range of other publications worldwide, including Steyaert and Janssens (2015). Empirical work on specific multinationals demonstrates that innovative research into translation may now be provided by experts in OS or in Social Research, such as *On Translation behaviour: An exploratory study within a service multinational* (PIEKKARI et al., 2013), and these debates on individual and collective discourse should inspire contemporary TS as well as translation theory.

In the meantime, a number of well-regarded publications have managed to integrate multilingualism and translation matters into the official agenda of OS: chapter 2 of *Language in international business. The Multilingual reality of global business expansion* (PIEKKARI; WELCH;

WELCH, 2014); and chapter 14 of *The routledge companion to cross-cultural management* (HOLDEN; MICHAILOVA; TIETZE, 2015). Over recent times, there have been responses from TS appearing from new continents like Asia, (South) Africa, and South America, where languages and communities are regularly faced with conditions that are unfamiliar to those in the West. It is due to the mobility of Academics that scholars from South-American environments have recently started exploring new business markets based on TS oriented research programmes.

Not unlike the EU, Latin America and Brazil have discovered new markets because their expansion is both geographical-cultural and technical (in terms of thematic areas). From the perspective of the language market, the reach of business is tremendously wide – and almost fully unexploited; in Europe, as demonstrated in TS (and by the lack of references in the *Translation Studies Bibliography* – TSB), the potential dimensions of the research market require no further discussion at this point, other than that theoretical and methodological approaches should be empirical, and need to consider the business orientations of the relevant companies – as while they continue to exclude organization and management issues, they have no future.

This was the starting philosophy for a new plan for business-oriented research in Brazil, which began at a student level, and also to a large extent involved international (intercontinental) projects. Any question of “Why in Brazil?” should be put aside as outdated, both in TS and in OS, given the unavoidable new priorities in our increasingly globalized world. It is better to ask “Why NOT in Brazil?”, one of the BRIC countries; why not also in South Africa, where new joint global ventures are being forged?

Research in *delocated* situations, as well as in networking is still incipient: observing and analyzing international companies exploring their new markets in a colonial world, and which is fast becoming postcolonial and then global(ized) is – again – more than just a point of interest. A more useful question is about how the increasingly internationalized business world was/is going to react to the new challenges in their cooperation with universities and research. Part of the answer may be found in the already current commercialization of Academia.

In June 2014, the PGET Centre at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) devoted a Symposium to the question of languages in international companies (the 1^o *Simposio Internacional: Empresas Multinacionais, Língua(s) Tradução*) [the 1st International Symposium: Multinationals, Language(s), Translation] (PGET-UFSC)². Its target audience was varied, with academic and non-academic participants representing different, yet complementary backgrounds (government, and private business; experts in organization, economists, linguists and translation scholars). In their introduction, the organizers (who are also the authors of this article) stressed multilingualism and translation as crucial and strategic global challenges. Other speakers explored language issues in American companies with a hundred years of experience in Brazil, alongside prominent exponents of the French automotive industry. The dissemination of early experiences from the burgeoning (South)-American business world has continued in more recent international meetings³. The main difference now is that due to globalization, scholarly experience is subject to greater pressure. It has, at least in OS, also become more influential.

Since the 1990s, the question of language and translation has undergone a revolution with the impact of the Internet and social media. China, South East Asia, and the world as a whole are part of contemporary modern living and business. How business itself is handling its multicultural

² See <http://www.pget.ufsc.br/curso/realizacoes.php?id=271>.

³ The authors of this article presented communications on this subject during the TRIG colloquium (Brussels, 2014: http://eu-researchprojects.eu/time/TRIG_2014) and at the 5th IATIS conference (Belo Horizonte, 2015: <https://www.iatis.org/index.php/iatis-belo-horizonte-conference>).

and multilingual agendas is much more complex that it was in 1990. How businesses approach their agenda without keys to the language and translation market is *their* problem; however, how TS together with other disciplines, continues its tasks and justifies its responsibilities while ignoring the globalized world of business, is *our* problem.

INTO A NEW WORLD

The best way of showing the possibilities of market-oriented TS is to give a panorama of the new resources in representative areas in business companies and organizations, from the perspective of insights gained over recent years. One major innovation has been the shift from bilateral (source/target) into multilateral communication (LAMBERT, 1989; PYM, 2004, CRONIN, 2003).

Among corporate solutions for dealing with foreign activities and their associated language issues, several Business (rather than TS) scholars have commented on: (1) the intervention of intermediaries who explore new markets (by looking after contacts, and therein finding linguistic solutions); (2) the hiring of local employees (however, this only moves translation issues up one level – i.e. from employees to managers, or managers to headquarters); (3) investment in language training (especially business language courses for managers in contact with other companies, or in the company's historical language if different – which is vital for contact with headquarters, and (4) strictly technical translating/interpreting tasks (PIEKKARI; WELCH; WELCH, 2014). It is worth noting that scholars with a Business Studies/Organizational Studies background take a narrower approach of translation than that which we intend to use. Within TS, in principle every discourse and document circulating different markets is linked by a translational relationship to models and prototypes in use elsewhere (e.g. in the home company's native market). Observation of translation within Multinational Companies (MNCs) highlights both organizational issues (Who produces what? Who translates what?), and the norms that operate within this complex polysystem. Norms are defined along DTS and Toury (1995) principles, i.e. not as value judgments or methods to be adopted/avoided. Regarding the translation process, several publications (developed in research traditions other than TS) offer alternative options and warrant further exploration. Piekkari et al. (2013) have demonstrated how certain translations are often provided by non-professional translators. The issue of whether translations are outsourced or handled by specific internal services also deserves to be mapped (among other options), and there are several promising new perspectives on translation products.

FROM GLOBALIZATION TO INDUSTRY: SELECTING POSSIBLE OBJECTS OF STUDY

The above has described the lack of studies dealing with organization(s) in TS. For scholars interested in doing research in this area and in analyzing specific situations – e.g., those linked with to globalization – the first step is to select an object of study that offers the maximum range of international communication situations – on the understanding that greater international communication implies more translation in general, as well as particular kinds of translations. We realise that multilateral communication and translation does not just apply to business organization; over the ages, business communication and translation has often shared features with political, legal, religious, and even literary translation, among others. However, national language policies have never been a sufficient key to business matters, and it has only been over recent centuries, mainly in particular geo-cultural zones, that they have played a prominent role. The focus of this paper is recent – the era of Globalization.

A distinction should be made between three main types of multinational⁴ organizations: those that are political (e.g. the UN, FMI, etc.); those that are ‘semi-political’ (e.g. NGOs, religious organizations), and MNCs (whether culture led such as international media and the film industry, etc., or profit led such as companies in the food industry, banks, etc.). Political and ‘semi-political’ organizations often communicate in a wide range of languages, but MNCs have even more diversified contacts with authorities/clients and partners. This is particularly true if we look at the industrial sector. Here MNCs’ communication circulates between headquarters and subsidiaries, clients, suppliers, workers unions, governments, the media, etc. A suggestion for the industrial sector would be to select a relatively complex product that requires a high number of employees in local plants. This type of configuration automatically implies increased communication streams between MNCs and their suppliers and employees, as well as obligatory communication with clients, which is likely to be more elaborate if the product itself is complex and expensive. For these reasons, certain sectors such as the automotive industry seem good candidates for case studies. If a MNC warrants its ‘multinational’ tag, the chances are high that somewhere and somehow translation is used to maintain coherence throughout the company’s worldwide discourse and strategy, and it is at this that TS scholars should be looking. Rather than those methodologies more commonly used by TS, what research methodologies might be appropriate to study such complex networks of communication?

MNCS, THE INTERNET AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A substantial help to 21st century researchers in comparison with their counterparts from the mid-20th century is that, although MNC networks are now more complex, the means to access much of their communication without needing local correspondents, is now considerably easier. The Internet provides a window on MNCs’ communications, as both their corporate and commercial sites are fully available. Within a few hours it is relatively easy to find a variety of textual genres in many languages, which even twenty years ago would have taken months to collate: press releases, annual reports, brochures, product descriptions, and so on. It makes little sense to try to establish a unique link between, for instance, a specific market and a text produced in a MNC’s ‘mother language’ (or corporate language). The whole methodology, which is aimed at detecting links between companies’ verbal discourse in different markets, should instead consist of a systematic juxtaposition of several Internet sources, which make it possible to observe, describe and analyse their dynamics. There are a few basic steps: firstly, it would be foolish to think the whole world can be analysed synchronically in a single movement, therefore it would seem reasonable to choose to study one specific market – preferably one that is dynamic or new, or that has something particular that justifies a closer look. In line with the fundamental principles of Descriptive Translation Studies – it should not be hard to recognise Toury’s *preliminary norms* (TOURY, 1995, p. 72). The next step should then consist of a macro-level observation of possible relationships between the various texts. We take into consideration that more than one among these texts may have been used as a model, and that complex relations may become visible (indirect translation, combination of fragments, etc.). This wider view is often ‘forgotten’ when researchers postulate a direct – perhaps inexistent – link between a local text in the market under observation, and a text produced either in the *lingua franca* or in the company’s native language. Factors such as the ‘language channel’ or the ‘distribution channel’ – that are related to intermediary translation and/or previous versions

⁴ Multinational is used here as a generic term. We are aware that for further analysis other concepts are also needed (e.g., global, international or transnational (BARTLETT; GHOSHAL, 1992).

of a text – may also interfere in an overly simple direct relationship that is largely imagined. Once possible sources (or inspirations) have been identified, the next methodological step is to look at the textual marks of translation – Toury’s ‘operational norms’ (TOURY, 1995, p. 72-73) – such as deletion, addition of textual material, shifts in concatenation, etc.

Regarding MNCs’ verbal discourse, following these elementary steps will undoubtedly lead to several basic, yet important, observations of privileged communication streams (i.e., which centre produces which kinds of messages; which centres are merely reproducers; what kind of messages are produced locally, etc.), and will therefore lead onto power, strategic and organizational issues. *Directionality* has a much greater chance of being differentiated than in a pre-globalised world, other than in situations where the *lingua franca* is dominant (e.g. in IT).

A BRIEF ILLUSTRATION: JEEP RENEGADE SITES

To illustrate the basic steps set out above, the following is a brief description of what can be found when analysing the website of a car manufacturer. We opted for a local case study and a specific situation: the Brazilian communications for Jeep for its latest model launch in the local market: the Jeep Renegade. We had no previous knowledge of the company’s site, and no real idea of what we would find on its Brazilian site. However, we have made studies of other car manufacturers’ sites previously, with a wider – and more in-depth analysis of a similar case (for a PhD on Peugeot’s external communications within Brazil). We therefore envisaged that we would have a good chance of finding preliminary information on its translation paths after a few days of study. The initial choice of which company to look at was not random. Although the Jeep Renegade is a “global car” produced and sold in North America and Europe, we also knew that it was produced in Brazil, giving the basic set of conditions to “guarantee” interesting findings relating to translation. In accordance with our methodology, we began by looking at macro-level streams of communication to find where translation is used. We selected two areas of the company’s Brazilian site (www.jeep.com.br), that are structured in a very similar way to the US and European style. We chose to look at the “*imprensa*” section – press releases – and the commercial/advertising section dedicated more specifically to the Renegade model. The press release section on the Brazilian site has no equivalent in the North-American (www.jeep.com) or European sites (in Portugal or Italy, for instance). However, while some releases focus on purely local matters, it is difficult to believe that the others were produced in Brazil (c.f. figure 1).

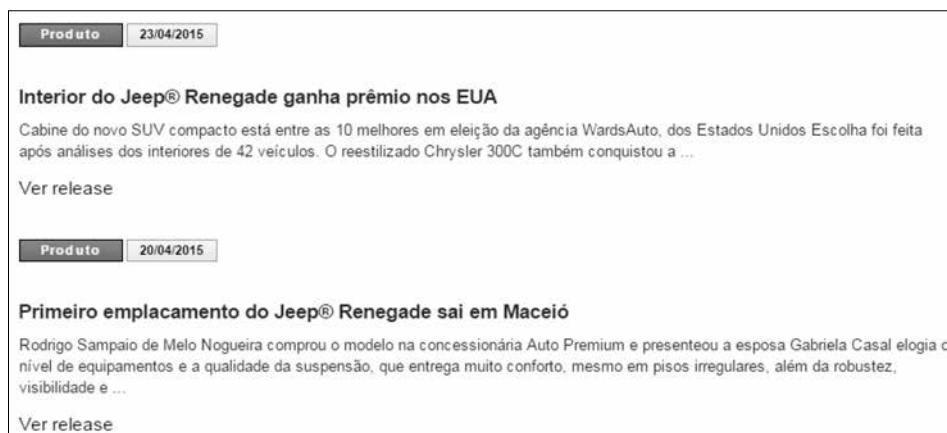


Figure 1. Diversity in press releases on the Brazilian site
 Fonte: <http://www.fcacpress.com.br/>

The news release from the 20th April announced the purchase of the first Brazilian Renegade by an inhabitant of the north-eastern city of Maceió. Searches for an equivalent message in other languages were unproductive. One would not expect this kind of text to be necessary strategic information for other markets. However, the announcement three days later of a new award in the USA for the Renegade, seems to have taken its title from a foreign source – the corporate site for the Fiat Chrysler Automobiles Group (<http://www.fcanorthamerica.com>) released on the 16th April, (six days before the Brazilian site), which announced: “New 2015 Chrysler 300 and All-new 2015 Jeep® Renegade Named to ‘Ward’s 10 Best Interiors List for 2015’”. More verification is needed to confirm that this was indeed the main source for the Brazilian release (and in particular to check if there was any indirect translation involved). Nevertheless, the macro-level identification of sources and streams of communication between the FCA corporate site and the Brazilian Jeep site seems to make sense. Another macro-level relationship can be found in the clear similarity (c.f. figures 2 and 3) between the Brazilian version of the Jeep Renegade section and the sites in the USA and Portugal (the latter being very similar to other European sites for Jeep). Multilateral checking and counterchecking of multilingual communication, including translation, is part of the methodology and is vital if one wants to trace the stream of communications.



Figure 2 - Jeep Renegade section of the sites in Brazil and in the USA.



Figure 3 - Jeep Renegade section of the sites in Brazil and in Portugal.

It is important to note that, while some elements (like the sunroof description) are common to all the sites studied, others are mutually exclusive (the “essential adventure equipment” described in figure 2 is not mentioned in the European site, and the texts dealing with wheels and lights are not displayed on the US site).

At this stage of our analysis, although strong elements such as titles, dates, pictures and structures are already good indicators of the possible origins of the Brazilian communication selected, only more sophisticated text analysis can lead to more precise evidence.

A “simple” textual comparison (table 1) is sometimes sufficient to confirm the translational relationship.

Table 1 - Introduction of the Brazilian and American releases on the Renegade’s award.

<p>São Paulo, 23 de abril de 2015 – Depois de passar dois meses avaliando as cabines de 42 veículos baseando-se em critérios como acabamento, conforto, seleção de materiais, ergonomia, informações/telas, custo-benefício, segurança e estilo, os editores da tradicional agência norte-americana WardsAuto colocaram o Jeep® Renegade na lista dos 10 Melhores Interiores da Ward’s de 2015.</p> <p>Source: http://www.fcapress.com.br/pt/jeep/verRelease/1613.do</p>	<p>April 16, 2015 , Auburn Hills, Mich. - After spending two months evaluating and scoring 42 vehicles based on fit-and-finish, comfort, material selection, ergonomics, information/displays, value, safety and design aesthetics, WardsAuto editors named <u>the new 2015 Chrysler 300 and the all-new 2015 Jeep® Renegade</u> to its Ward’s 10 Best Interiors list for 2015.</p> <p>Source: http://www.fcanorthamerica.com/News/Pages/Wards-Best-Interiors-2015.aspx</p>
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The two only slight differences (underlined in table 1) are an explicitation of WardsAuto for Brazilian readers, and the omission of another model also awarded together with the Jeep Renegade.

Sometimes, other possible models need to be compared (c.f. the second example in table 2) to achieve more interesting results.

Table 2 - Introduction for the description of the Renegade, in its Brazilian, American (English and Spanish) and Portuguese versions.

Brazil	Portugal
<p><i>Trazendo o melhor de um 4x4, o novo Jeep ® Renegade Trailhawk ® está pronto para qualquer desafio. Ele tem tudo o que você precisa e dispensa o que não é necessário. A aventura está chegando. Prepare-se.</i></p> <p>Source: www.jeep.com.br</p>	<p><i>Tendo o mundo por explorar e aventuras por experimentar, irá desejar um veículo preparado para quase tudo. O All-New Jeep® Renegade 2015 tem tudo e apenas o que precisa. A aventura aproxima-se. Prepare-se.</i></p> <p>Source: www.jeep.pt</p>
<p>USA (English)</p> <p>Best-in-Class 4x4 capability+ means the All-New 2015 Jeep® Renegade Trailhawk® is ready for anything. It's equipped to take on the world. Just like you.</p> <p>Source: www.jeep.com</p>	<p>USA (Spanish)</p> <p><i>Tener la mejor capacidad 4x4 en su clase+ significa que el totalmente nuevo Jeep® Renegade Trailhawk® 2015 está listo para cualquier cosa. Está equipado para enfrentarse al mundo. Como tú.</i></p> <p>Source: www.jeep.com</p>

In this example, it is easy to identify the connection between the American site (principally the first part), and the European site (principally the second part). It should be noted however, that this does not mean that the Portuguese site itself does not mirror any of the other European sites; further research is warranted.

We aim to identify the channels followed by texts and the models used in Brazil through macro-level observation followed by micro-level counterchecking. The second step of our research aims to identify the operational norms. This is a classic stage of all translation observation, and should lead to other organizational questions such as, for example, relationships between subsidiaries.

Our main purpose with this illustration has been to stress the importance of macro-level observation, and to show the need to ensure that real models have been identified before entering the second stage of analysis. It can be very easy to make mistakes by undertaking a micro-level analysis on a possible (but not real) source-text, or by forgetting that there may be more than just one source text used within multinational organizations.

THE NEXT STEPS

As the Jeep analysis demonstrates, it seems that DTS may be able to contribute important arguments in the ongoing debate on business, language, and translation. The interdisciplinary links that were central to the founding of CETRA, can be activated throughout the world, including Latin America. It is clear that disciplines other than TS or OS can also benefit from innovative research on globalizing businesses, which is supposed to be a chapter of research on cultural

matters. The question remains as to why it has still not been recognized by universities as a key area of research?

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