*Anne Schjoldager**

Interpreting Research and the 'Manipulation School' of Translation Studies

Abstract

This article examines, explains and puts into perspective what others have dubbed the 'Manipulation School'. This group of scholars see themselves as working within descriptive translation studies (DTS), as defined by Holmes (1975), and their main methodological tool is a search for translational norms, first proposed by Toury (1980a). The article then explores how these ideas relate to current research on interpreting - especially Gile's work - and it concludes that, with certain modifications, the theory of translational norms could be extended to interpreting.

1.   Introduction

In July 1993, two colleagues, Helle Dam and Friedel Dubslaff, and I participated in the summer programme of the CERA Chair for Translation, Communication and Cultures at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, organized by the Department of Literary Studies and headed by Prof. José Lambert. As PhD students of interpreting, our special reason for choosing to participate in the CERA programme was that this year its temporary Chair was held by Daniel Gile, an interpreting scholar[1]. However, though we expected mostly to be interested in what the CERA Chair Professor had to say about interpreting research, we soon discovered that the programme offered other interesting ideas concerning theory and research methodology.

Many of the ideas put forward and discussed at the CERA programme may be said to originate in what others have dubbed the Manipulation School (Snell-Hornby 1988:22). This name was inspired by an anthology of essays, "The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation", edited by Hermans (1985). Most of the scholars in this school, who

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[1] Previously, the Chair was held by Toury (1989), Vermeer (1990), Bassnett (1991), and Neubert (1992).

* *Anne Schjoldager*
   Department of English
   The Århus School of Business
   Fuglesangs Allé 4
   8210 Århus (DK)

are mainly concerned with the cultural aspect of translation, see themselves as working within descriptive translation studies (DTS), as defined by Holmes (1975). They also share a methodological framework organized around the search for norms, as defined by Toury (1980a), and they generally agree that research on translation should be the product of interdisciplinary studies.

Though I realize that the scholars themselves would rather they were not described as belonging to a certain school[2] and though I appreciate that such categorization will always be over-simplified, I shall nervertheless proceed on the assumption that such categorization is indeed possible and useful. I shall also assume that the Leuven scholars behind the CERA programme as well as many of the visiting professors - except, perhaps, this year's CERA Professor - can, in fact, be classified as Manipulation scholars. Therefore, when wishing to deal with the Manipulation School as a whole and with its possible relevance for interpreting research, I feel justified in choosing my own experiences at the 1993 CERA programme as the point of departure in this article.

In the following, I shall first try to give a general idea of what the CERA programme usually contains and - in particular - what it contained in 1993. I shall then try to explain and put into perspective the ideas of the Manipulation School. In this connection, I shall review relevant research on translation and interpreting in both historical and contemporary perspectives. Finally, I shall discuss how the Manipulation School of translation studies may influence research on interpreting in general.

2.   The CERA Programme

The programme bears the name of its sponsor, CERA, a Belgian bank with headquarters in Leuven. The theoretical framework takes its starting point in research work done on translation at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven since the late 1960s. This work was carried out by scholars such as van den Broeck, Lambert, Van Gorp, D'hulst, and Delabastita. At first, these scholars were preoccupied with the study of translated literature, but now they have also become interested in other areas and text types. Thus, the CERA programme is by no means limited to literary translation. One indication of this widening perspective is when, in the CERA programme's "Academische Openingszitting/Opening Session 6.7.1993" (p.11), Delabastita writes that the Leuven approach is "also supremely

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2   See for instance Hermans (1985:10).

relevant to this present age of cashpoints, credit cards and electronic banking". Another indication is that an interpreting scholar was invited to become the CERA Chair Professor in 1993.

In 1993, during the first part of the programme, lectures and seminars were given by the CERA Chair Professor (Gile), the visiting professors (Gentzler, Lefevere, Pym, and Toury), the supervisors (Delabastita, D'hulst, Hermans, Lambert, and Poltermann), and other staff members (Robyns). During the last part, the participants presented their own research projects[3].

The CERA lectures and seminars given by Gile reflected very well his interests as a scholar. Perhaps his contributions could be divided into four main areas[4]: (1) general reflections on scientific research and methodology, (2) how these reflections are relevant to research on interpreting and translation, (3) how practitioners' lack of scientific training and their antagonism towards interpreting research carried out by non-interpreters may hinder the achievement of useful results, and (4) the social role of the conference interpreter (a "communication actor").

3. Descriptive Translation Studies

The aim of the CERA programme is to "instruct postgraduates in the techniques of descriptive translation research and in its underlying theoretical and methodological presuppositions", as Delabastita writes (p.10) in the "Opening Session", also quoted above. It must therefore be assumed that all scholars involved in the programme adhere to this aim. Descriptive translation studies - often referred to in the abbreviated form of DTS - is a discipline which seems to be based on at least three, interlinked research principles: Research on translation ought to be (1) pure, (2) empirical, and (3) scientific.

Pure - as opposed to applied - research is "pursued for its own sake, quite apart from any direct practical application outside its own terrain" (Holmes 1975:71). According to this view, activities that - for instance - involve translation criticism (ie evaluation) or the search for reliable

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3 The three participants from Århus gave the following papers: "Text Condensing in Consecutive Conference Interpreting" (Dam), "Establishing Coherence in Simultaneous Interpreting from German: Report on a case study" (Dubslaff), and "Empirical Investigation into Simultaneous Interpreting and Translation" (Schjoldager).

4 This division is entirely my own. The lectures and seminars were in no way explicitly organized in accordance with such principles. However, most of the time I do think all four factors were present in Gile's own contributions and in the ensuing discussions.

testing techniques in translator training are not to be regarded as real scholarship[5].

Empirical research, as opposed to theoretical speculation, is carried out on the basis of a case study of actual translations. This is done in order to describe particular phenomena and to establish general principles (see Holmes 1975:71). Therefore, the translation scholar should be more interested in describing actual relations between originals and their translations than in theorizing about how best to achieve optimal equivalence or how to define translation[6]. However, this must not be taken to mean that empirical research is atheoretical. On the contrary - though taking its starting point in the observation of facts - the advocated procedure is a continuous alternation between describing and theorizing[7].

Scientific - as opposed to normative or prescriptive - research, implies a systematic, objective description of empirical facts, rather than a subjective evaluation, based on the scholar's own preconceived ideas about right and wrong. Gile (1990c:29) defines scientific research as work based on "facts collected through systematic observation, carefully checked and assessed", whereas normative, unscientific research is work based on "facts encountered in the daily, personal and subjective experience".

I shall now attempt to point to a few scholars who may be criticized for failing to adhere to either or all of these principles. Firstly, House's (1981) work on "quality assessment", as she does not distinguish between translation *criticism* and translation *research*, could be cited as one example of the applied, evaluative approach. Secondly, Catford's (1965) linguistic theory of translation, as he merely uses translations as illustrations and never tries to test his theory by means of a corpus, might be accused of being speculative. Finally, much of Newmark's work could be cited as normative. Newmark (1988:9) even admits this explicitly when he defines the role of the translation scholar:

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[5] In one of the various working papers written and handed out during the 1993 CERA programme, José Lambert has this comment about translation criticism: ".. only those scholars who accept that Descriptive Translation Research is an important area of the discipline make a distinction between "translation criticism" and "translation research". For most other theoreticians it is not clear whether their own views on translation are part of criticism or not."

[6] According to Toury (1985:20), the question of how to define the concept of 'translation' should be greatly simplified. The scholar should merely leave that decision to the target culture: If a text is generally regarded as a translation of another text - that is what it is.

[7] See for instance Delabastita (1991:141).

"What translation theory does is, first, to identify and define a translation problem (no problem - no translation theory!); second, to indicate all the factors that have to be taken into account in solving the problem; third, to list all the possible translation procedures; finally, *to recommend the most suitable translation procedure, plus the appropriate translation*". [italics added]

4. The Manipulation School in a Historical Perspective

In the following, I shall attempt to analyze the 'ideological' background of the CERA programme. In order to put the Manipulation School into a historical perspective, we shall first have a brief look at the evolution of translation theory as a whole. Then, in order to look at the approach from a contemporary point view, a brief comparison with its major rival, the linguistics-oriented translation school, will follow.

Chesterman (in press) has some very intriguing ideas about how the history of translation theory has evolved. Inspired by K.R. Popper's philosophy, Chesterman suggests that the individual's (ontogenetic) development into a professional translator may be compared to the ("phylogenetic") evolution of translation theory. In both cases, there are seven stages in this evolution of *"homo transferens"*. I use these metaphorical stages to describe where and when we find the Manipulation scholars.

In Chesterman's first stage, to translate is to translate meanings inside *words* ("translating is rebuilding"[8]). In the second stage, the translator basically strives to obtain accuracy, which - of course - is defined by adherence to the source-text system ("translating is copying"). Newmark's concept of semantic translation and Nida's formal correspondence are related to this stage[9]. In the third stage, the translator is more like an explainer of texts. In order to adapt to the tastes of the reader, the emphasis is now on the target culture ("translating is imitating"). In the fourth stage, the translator influences and creates culture ("translating is creating"). In the fifth stage, the translator is a linguistic scientist ("translating is decoding and recoding"). Here we find the birth of the linguistically oriented school: German-based *Übersetzungswissenschaft* and English-based translatology. Translation theorists in this school quite

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[8] Chesterman assigns a dominant metaphor to each stage, which I indicate in parentheses and in inverted commas. However, the formulation is not always the one used by Chesterman himself. To make them suit my purpose, I have sometimes taken the liberty of streamlining the metaphors a bit.

[9] See for instance Newmark (1988) and Nida & Taber (1974).

clearly see their field of research as a subbranch of applied linguistics. In the sixth stage, the translator plays a social role ("translating is communicating"). Holmes (1975:71) coins *translation studies* as a new name for the discipline, which he defines as follows:

> *"Translation studies is to be understood as a collective and inclusive designation for all research activities taking the phenomena of transla - ting and translation as their basis or focus."*

Norms, introduced by Toury in his dissertation in 1977, become an important concept, and it is here that we find the birth of the Manipulation School. In the seventh stage, the translator sees his activity as a cognitive task ("translating is thinking"). Gutt's (1991) application of the relevance theory of communication[10] on translation is a good example of this stage[11].

5.   The Manipulation School in a Contemporary Perspective

According to Snell-Hornby (1988:14), there are presently two competing European schools of thought on translation. One school, *Übersetzungs - wissenschaft* or translatology, is mainly linguistics-oriented, the other, the Manipulation School, may be seen as a branch of comparative literature. The German-based *Übersetzungswissenschaft*, with scholars such as Kade, Jäger, Neubert, Wilss, Reiss, and Koller, and the English-based translatology, with scholars such as Catford and Nida, are examples of one current trend within translation theory. The ideas of this school originate, as we have already seen, in the fifth stage of the evolution of translation theory. The Dutch-based, culturally oriented Manipulation School, with scholars such as Lefevere, Lambert, Hermans, Bassnett, and Toury, exemplifies the other current trend.

   As their starting point is definitely literary, it may seem that the ideas of the Manipulation scholars are only valid for literary translation. However, according to the scholars themselves, this is by no means the intention - just as it was not the intention with the CERA programme. Mostly they see their work as representative of and applicable to all kinds of

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[10] See Sperber & Wilson (1986) and Wilson and Sperber (1990).

[11] The above paragraphs are based on Chesterman's paper at the ADLA 1993 Conference in Århus. Just before my own article was set for printing, I learned that the written version of Chesterman's paper actually introduces eight stages, not seven (personal communication). Stage six ("translating is communicating") is thus followed by stage seven ("translating is *manipulating*"), which is then followed by stage eight ("translating is thinking").

translation - "oral as well as written, literary as well as non-literary, and without restriction in time or space" (Hermans 1991:159).

Whereas the scholars of *Übersetzungswissenschaft* and translatology see themselves as working within a subbranch of applied linguistics, scholars of the Manipulation School reject linguistics as the primary source of influence for their work. Thus, according to Snell-Hornby (1988:23), these two schools may be described as "mutually exclusive". The literary starting point of the Manipulation School might offer an explanation for this renunciation of linguistics. Thus, Hermans (1985:10) has the following comment about the usefulness of linguistics in literary translation studies:

> *"Linguistics has undoubtedly benefited our understanding of translati -*
> *on as far as the treatment of unmarked, non-literary texts is concerned.*
> *But as it proved too restricted in scope to be of much use to literary stu -*
> *dies generally - witness the frantic attempts in recent years to construct*
> *a text linguistics - and unable to deal with the manifold complexities of*
> *literary works, it became obvious that it could not serve as a proper*
> *basis for the study of literary translation either."*

However, this must not be taken to mean that the Manipulation scholars are convinced that linguistics has no use at all for translation studies. But the point to note is that, as translation research by definition is interdisciplinary, the linguistic aspect is just one of many possible approaches. Therefore, according to the Manipulation School, the translation scholar should always be willing to adopt whatever method - from whatever field - s/he might find useful. Apart from linguistics, such useful disciplines are for instance comparative literature, communication theory, film and media studies, intercultural management, history, and sociology.

The Manipulation scholars base their work on the concept of the literary polysystem[12], which is defined as a system-of-systems, based on the study of how systems work (ie systemics). The concept of the polysystem was first introduced into translation studies by Even-Zohar, who saw "translated literature not only as an integral system within any literary polysystem, but as a most active system within it" (Even-Zohar 1978:46).

An overall tendency is that they accuse previous translation theorists of normative speculation divorced from reality. Thus, Toury argues that previous translation theorists had seen their task as that of devising opti-

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12 The Manipulation School is also sometimes called the polysystem group (Delabastita 1991:141).

mal methods of translation[13]. Typical of this normative approach was the so-called "equivalence postulate" (Toury 1978:56) - the traditional, normative view that translation is defined as "the replacement, or substitution, of an utterance in one language by a formally or pragmatically equivalent utterance in another language" (Hermans 1991:156). Instead, translation should be seen as the result of a "socially contexted behavioural type of activity" (Toury 1980b:180).

The Manipulation scholars thus reject the traditional, idealized idea that the target text is a faithful (equivalent) reproduction of the source text. They rather see translation as a manipulation of the source text for a certain *purpose* (Hermans 1985:11). This makes their approach both target-oriented and functional. The purpose of the translator's manipulation is to bring the target text into line with a certain notion of correctness (see Hermans 1991:166), which is found within a system of norms.

6.   The Concept of Norms

Like any other behavioural activity, translation is subject to various kinds of constraints. These constraints may be described in a continuum between two extremes: (1) objective, relatively absolute rules, and (2) fully subjective idiosyncrasies[14]. Somewhere in the middle ground, we find the intersubjective norms, neither completely codified nor completely arbitrary. Most translators are influenced by this middle ground of the normative scale rather than by the two extremes. It would therefore be both misleading and wrong to see translation as an activity which is completely ungoverned and unique - as if every potential translator would translate any source text in his/her own particular way. Just as it would be misleading and wrong to assume that it is an activity which is totally predetermined and with no room for personal decision-making. Toury (1980b:181) has this definition of norms:

> *"the 'translation' of general values or ideas, shared by a certain social group - as to what is right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate in every behavioural dimension - into specific performance-instructions which are applicable to specific situations".*

Consequently, norms help the translator to select appropriate solutions to the problems s/he meets at every level of the text. Without norms, the translator would not be able to work. There is no such thing as to 'just

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[13] Cf. above concerning Newmark's definition of translation theory.

[14] See for instance Toury (1978:51).

translate', as this would merely be a case of the translator adopting the "standard norm" (Hermans 1991:165). According to Hermans (1991:167), there would always seem to be at least three major models that supply these norms: (1) the source text, (2) the relevant translational tradition, and (3) the existing set of similar originals in the target culture.

Hermans (in press) suggests how these norms might develop: Sometimes a norm starts life as a *convention*, which regards what is permissive and which is a matter of precedent and social practice. Then, if this loose convention gains more normative force, it becomes a *norm*, which concerns what is implicitly mandatory. If this practice gains even further in normative force, it requires status as a *decree*, which concerns what is explicitly mandatory.

According to Toury (1978:53), there are two major groups of norms: (1) preliminary norms and (2) operational norms. Preliminary norms regard "the very existence of a definite translation 'policy' along with its actual nature" or "the 'directness' of the translation" - for instance whether the translation is overt or not. Operational norms regard actual decisions made during the process of translating. Toury (1978:54) also introduces the concept of the initial norm, which governs the translator's overall strategy. S/he can either - though of course never completely - opt for (1) adequacy, which implies adherence to source-system norms or (2) acceptability, which implies adherence to target-system norms.

Thus, to recapitulate, the research methodology advocated by the Manipulation School is for the scholar to start by searching for underlying norms in the translational process. But how does the scholar go about discoverting these? According to Toury (1978:57), there are two major sources: (1) textual and (2) extratextual. As textual norms are found by means of a source-target comparison, one working method would be to find and identify individual translators' strategies[15] and then subsequently to attempt a reconstruction of the process by defining the translator's underlying, intersubjective norms. Another working method would be to look for explicit, normative statements in the literature *about* translation.

The translation scholar's methodology could therefore be described in terms of Toury's (1980a) tripartite model on translational relationships. According to this model, there are three levels of relationships between originals and translations: (1) competence, (2) performance, and (3)

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[15] A strategy may be defined as an individual translator's particular employment or *de*ployment of the available norms (see Hermans in press).

norms. The level of competence denotes theoretical, possible ways of translating a text, that of performance a description of existing translations, and that of norms - as we have seen - the intermediate level of guiding principles. Therefore, the advocated methodology is a description of the level of performance, in order to be able to identify the level of norms, so as to theorize about the level of competence[16]. In other words, by means of a target-source comparison - ie an empirical study - it is the ultimate goal of translation research to reconstruct the possible translational process, to speculate about possible underlying norms that determine this process and, on the basis of these findings, to suggest abstract theoretical models.

7.   Interpreting Research in a Historical Perspective

I shall now try to categorize Gile's 'ideological' stand in the same way as I have done with the Manipulation School, still bearing in mind that such categorization is bound to be over-simplified. The following account of interpreting research is rather more elaborate than the above review of translation studies as a whole. First, I look at interpreting research from a historical point of view, then I deal with the current situation.

According to Gile (in press), interpreting research may be divided into four stages. The chronology of these stages roughly follows the decades, starting with the 1950s and finishing with the 1980s: (1) Prehistoric Period, (2) Experimental-Psychology Period, (3) Practitioners' Period, and (4) the Renaissance.

In the 1950s, some interpreting teachers and practitioners began to think and write about interpreting in an academic, though mainly introspective, way. Herbert (1952) is probably the best-known of these writers. Though the work carried out in this period did not claim any *scientific* validity, the general agenda for later research was definitely laid down in this period.

The second period saw a number of experimental studies carried out by behavioural, cognitive scientists. These scholars viewed interpreting as a complex behavioural activity which could be studied scientifically - which to them meant not only empirically but also experimentally. However, the work of these scholars - who were not practising interpreters themselves - was ferociously opposed by many in the interpreting com-

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[16] See also Toury (1985:35) and Delabastita (1991:142).

munity and their results were often accused of lacking validity for the reality of conference interpreting. For instance, they were criticized for overlooking the fact that data deriving from experimental studies of amateur-interpreters in laboratory situations may differ considerably from those deriving from real, in-conference, professional performances.

A typical example of this criticism is Bros-Brann's (1975) response to Barik's doctoral dissertation (1969) and his article in Babel (1972). Her main point concerns Barik's hypothesis that the simultaneous interpreter prefers to give his/her rendition during the pauses of the source text[17]. She dismisses this as utterly nonsense and gives this general comment to Barik's methodology (Bros-Brann 1975:93):

> *"To my mind, to use an amusing analogy, Barik's article (and his thesis which I have also read in extenso) could be compared to a study carried out by a philosopher concerning the practicalities of open-heart surgery, based on the hypothesis that surgeons wearing certain types of shoe make certain movements around the operating table".*

However, communication between behavioural scientists and (practising) interpreter-researchers was not always this bad. The NATO 1977 Symposium held in Venice under the heading of "Language Interpretation and Communication"[18] tried to bring together these two groups.

In the third stage, more practitioners became involved in interpreting. The experimental approach of the previous stage was generally rejected, and most of the work done was theoretical and (again) highly introspective. *La théorie du sens* (hereafter referred to as 'the theory of sense'), proposed by Seleskovitch in 1968, became generally known and accepted. Other models were proposed as well - for instance by Moser (1978), Gerver (1976), and Gile - but as interpreting research was still fragmented and incoherent, few people were aware of these (Gile in press).

The fourth period saw the revival of previously rejected ideas. The key words of this period were interdisciplinarity, cooperation, and descriptive methodology. This new approach was heralded at the Trieste Symposium in 1986, under the heading of "The Theoretical and Practical Aspects of Teaching Conference Interpretation"[19]. At this conference, the theory of sense was officially challenged - perhaps for the first time. Notable was also an improved research climate, as interpreting researchers seemed to have become more open-minded, which may have

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[17] See for instance Barik (1972:5).

[18] See Gerver & Sinaiko (1978).

[19] See Gran & Dodds (1989).

been "due to the larger number and weight of 'second generation re-searchers'", whose attitude differed from their elders (Gile in press).

8.   Interpreting Research in a Contemporary Perspective

Thus, interpreting scholars are now mainly interpreters themselves - or at least employed at schools of translation and interpreting. The non-inter-preter researchers from the second period have generally stopped their work, and only a few behavioural, cognitive scientists seem presently to be interested in the field. Below (in 8.3), I shall revert to why this might be a problem.

According to Moser-Mercer (1991b), the remaining interpreting re-searchers may be roughly divided into two groups: (1) the liberal arts and (2) the natural sciences. In other words, research on interpreting may roughly be said to be split between the ideas of the third and fourth peri-ods mentioned above. This division has led to a regrettable lack of com-munication among the far-from-numerable interpreting researchers in the world. The reason for this is basically to be found in distinctly incompa-tible paradigms[20]. As we may assume that both groups see their overall goal as the construction of a theory (or theories) of interpreting, it may be thought that their basic disagreement concerns how this theory should be constructed. I shall now look at the theory formation of each of these groups.

8.1. The Liberal Arts Community

This group is typically represented by the so-called Paris School[21], notably with scholars such as Seleskovitch and Lederer. In its theory for-mation, this group has given top priority to general consistency, compre-hensiveness and simplicity. The theory of sense is seen as the necessary foundation of all interpreting research and teaching alike. Though there have been few attempts to test it, most liberal arts researchers simply work on the assumption that this 'theory' is unquestionable and they regard it as *the* model[22].

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[20] 'Paradigm' is here to be understood as "the specific intellectual preference, rules and research approach of a particular scientific community .." (Moser-Mercer 1991b:12).

[21] Formerly (especially in the 1970s), this approach was synonymous with ESIT (Ecole Supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs) at the University of Paris, one of the most prominent interpreting schools in the world (see for instance Aarup 1989:190). Until recently, ESIT was headed by Danica Seleskovitch.

[22] An example of this is Aarup (1993).

The theory of sense was based on the ideas of Herbert (1952), who stressed that interpreting should not be seen as mere linguistic transcoding - ie literal translation of each segment - but rather as a process of comprehension and reformulation[23]. This philosophy may, therefore, be seen as a rebellion against the linguistics-oriented translation theory, ie Chesterman's fifth stage. In 1968, in her doctoral dissertation, Seleskovitch developed Herbert's idea of reformulation and suggested that it had to be preceded by a phase of derverbalization[24]. Thus, according to Seleskovitch, interpreting is a three-phase process: (1) listening, (2) deverbalization, and (3) reproduction of sense. In the first phase, the interpreter analyzes the meaning, ie the linguistic signal, of what s/he hears. In the second phase, s/he deliberately forgets this meaning and only retains the sense, ie the deverbalized message, and finally, in the third phase, s/he reproduces the message in his/her own words. One underlying assumption of this theory, which is not often noted, is that interpreting may be seen as completely *language-independent*. The interpreter - who of course ideally is a complete bilingual - is not supposed to have any language-specific difficulties[25]. I shall return to this point below in my discussion of Gile's effort model on simultaneous interpreting. There can be no doubt that this 'theory' was necessary at the time. Researchers and practitioners alike might have been too confident that interpreting was merely a question of linguistic transcoding. As Pöchhacker (1992:212) puts it:

> *"Indeed Mme Seleskovitch deserves whole-hearted acknowledgement for having put her foot down against the narrow linguistic conceptions of language still prevailing in the early 1970s".*

Furthermore, there can be no doubt as to its merits as a didactic tool when students have to rid themselves of their word fixation[26]. However, as its critics have repeatedly pointed out, this 'theory' is, at best, a tentative hypothesis that has never been empirically verified. It would be extremely dangerous to confuse such a hypothesis with *the* theory of interpreting. It is therefore sad to note - as Moser-Mercer (1991b:13) does - that most liberal arts researchers are unlikely to realize this.

8.2. The Natural Sciences Community

[23] See also Gile (1990c:32).

[24] See for instance Seleskovitch (1978) or Aarup (1993).

[25] One effect of this assumption is that many interpreting schools - for instance ESIT, Paris - teach all students, regardless of language combination, in exactly the same way.

[26] See for instance Gile (1990c:33).

Whereas the scholars in the liberal arts group have already formed their theoretical framework, the natural sciences group still think that interpreting research is in the initial theory-construction stage. Thus, the researchers in this group are preoccupied with proposing hypotheses and ways to test these empirically. They are still so overwhelmed by the complexity of the phenomenon that most of them do not even work on the assumption that a general interpreting theory is possible. Gile (in press) puts it like this:

> *"Interpretation research is still in its initial stages, with very little evi -*
> *dence, far too flimsy to build an interpretation theory, let alone a 'gene -*
> *ral translation theory' based on interpretation theory".*

Another characteristic of this group is their insistence on interdisciplinarity, which I shall revert to below (in 8.3). However, this does not mean that the autonomy of the field should be lost. Dodds (1989:18) puts it like this:

> *"I believe that what is to be avoided at all costs is that the academic*
> *side of interpreting be lost, that it become merely a theoretical aspect of*
> *socio- and psycholinguists, or comparative and descriptive linguistics,*
> *or of that rather "dubious discipline" semantics [quoting Haas*
> *1968:104] or, even worse, taking it to abstract extremes, of linguistic*
> *philosophy".*

According to Moser-Mercer (1991b), this group embraces more diversified approaches than the rival liberal arts group, and it may, therefore, be difficult to pinpoint typical scholars in this group. However, there can be no doubt that Gile is one of them.

Just as the scholars in the liberal arts group, Gile is concerned with the interpreting process. He also opposes the idea that interpreting may basically be seen as an extraordinary ability to switch between languages. However, rather than being interested in the interpreter's ability to reformulate, Gile is interested in the interpreter's capacity for shared attention, and rather than suggesting that his theories are self-evident dogmas he stresses the need for empirical testing.

In the mid-1980s, Gile proposed various models to explain the interpreter's capacity for shared attention, namely the effort models. The basis was an intuitive idea concerning processing capacity. This was by no means a new idea[27], but it was the first time that processing capacity was used as a conceptual tool in interpreting research. The effort models show that if one component takes up too much of the interpreter's attenti-

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[27] See for instance Gile (1990a:74).

on, other components suffer and the success of the task is endangered. These models and Gile's other models[28], though not yet empirically tested, are highly praised by interpreting teachers and scholars alike for their analytical and explanatory powers. As my own main interests lie with simultaneous interpreting, I shall limit this discussion to the effort model on simultaneous interpreting.

The basic principle of this model is that simultaneous intepreting consists of a set of competitive operations. Because these operations comprise conscious, deliberate and often exhausting components, they are called efforts[29]. There are - at least - three such efforts: (1) listening to and analyzing the source text, (2) producing a target text, and (3) short-term memory for storage and retrieval of information[30]. Each effort has a particular processing capacity requirement, depending on the task at hand. Thus, the model explains how the process may become difficult, or even break down, if the interpreter does not possess the required amount of processing capacity. In the case of overloading, at least one effort has become too demanding and the task becomes difficult or even impossible.

Apart from this basic analytical power, the model may explain at least three other factors. Firstly, the model explains how errors - formal as well as informational errors - may occur for no apparent reason. Thus, the occurrence of errors may be due to previous difficulties with processing capacity - ie the result of carry-overs (Gile 1990a:77).

Secondly, the model explains why some language combinations may seem more difficult than others. Interpreting between two topologically different languages may in certain aspects be more difficult than interpreting between languages whose syntactic structures are similar. As mentioned above, this idea of language-dependent difficulties is contrary

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[28] To my knowledge, Gile has presented five models: 1. The Communication Model, 2. The Informational Structure and Informative Sentences, 3. The Effort Models of Interpreting, 4. The Gravitational Model of Linguistic Mastery, and 5. The Comprehension of Technical Speeches (see for instance Gile 1990a).

[29] See Gile (1990:74).

[30] Contrary to what many non-interpreters may believe, this third effort is indeed very necessary. Simultaneous interpreting is not - of course - really simultaneous. It takes the interpreter at least two or three seconds (the time-lag or the Ear-Voice Span) to perform the first effort, during which time s/he needs to store and subsequently retrieve the segment just heard.

to the underlying assumption of the theory of sense[31]. An example of such difficulties is simultaneous intepreting from German into Danish[32]. As German has subordinate-clause verbs in a final position, whereas Danish has a syntactic pattern similar to English, the interpreter may have to wait a long time before s/he can process and subsequently render the content of the German subordinate clause. One strategy to deal with this problem would be to wait for the source speaker to finish his/her sentence, but this might cause overloading due to lack of memory capacity (the third effort). Another strategy would be to anticipate the not-yet rendered source-text segment (ie the verb) and come up with a qualified guess, but that might also cause overloading, this time due to lack of analyzing capacity (the first effort). However, this must not be taken to mean that interpreting between syntactically different languages are always more difficult than between more similar ones. There may well be other dissimilarities that make the interpreting process just as hard - for instance conceptual differences[33].

Thirdly, the model could explain why some interpreters sometimes find it easier to interpret from their mother tongue than from their foreign language(s). The interpreter may for instance at certain times find the listening effort relatively more exhausting than the speaking effort. Perhaps s/he is unfamiliar with the subject-matter and has a hard time just understanding what it is all about. As understanding is a prerequisite for producing *any* target text, it may be necessary, in this situation, to try to alleviate the listening effort as much as possible. This point is rather interesting as it is contrary to conventional wisdom in the interpreting community[34]. Thus, the literature on interpreting is full of statements to the effect that the interpreter should always interpret *into* the mother tongue, which must mean that it is always more important for the interpreter to have a native voice than to have a native understanding of the source text. Examples of this view would be Déjean le Féal (1990:157) when she writes about the "highly erosive effect of simultaneous interpreting on performance" into the foreign language(s) or the so-called "mother-tongue principle" of the EC and other international bodies.

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[31] See also Gile (1991b:19).

[32] See for instance Baaring (1984) or Dubslaff (1993).

[33] See also Baaring (1984:79).

[34] By this I basically mean - what used to be - the interpreting community in the western hemisphere. For an 'eastern' point of view see Denissenko (1989:157).

8.3. A Call for Interdisciplinary Studies

According to Gile (1990c:29), most of the literature on interpreting is based on speculative theorizing. One - perhaps the main - reason for this is that many interpreter-researchers are either uninterested in theory as such or are unaware of scientific methodology. Gile (1988:366) puts it like this:

> *".. most interpreters are humanities- or language faculty graduates with no scientific training and expertise, and they find less motivation in the long, somewhat arid efforts actual research implies in terms of data collection, analysis and tests of precise hypotheses than in free theorization".*

Another reason for this deplorable state of interpreting research is that those who *are* trained in scientific methodology are either not interested in interpreting, which, of course, is their prerogative, or, which is a lot worse, they often do their work without any contact with the interpreting community[35]. This means, on the one hand, that the interpreter-researchers are largely ignorant of the work done by these non-interpreters and, on the other - if they *are* aware - they do not heed this work because they find it to be based on faulty ideas about interpreting. Furthermore, the non-interpreter researchers, for *their* part, may not be all that keen on cooperating with practitioners who have this attitude towards their work - especially so as these practitioners' own knowledge of scientific methodology is far from impressive. Thus, some scientific work on interpreting may *de facto* have been wasted - or at least have had less impact than it deserved.

One example of such criticized and non-heeded scientists who did not cooperate with practitioners would be Barik mentioned above (in 7.). A more recent example would be Dillinger (1989), who compared the comprehension of interpreters and non-interpreters[36]. Dillinger was criticized on at least two points: Firstly, the task that he gave his subjects could not be compared to a real interpreting task, as far as text type and mode of delivery were concerned. Secondly, his study "focussed on what practitioners consider a marginal question while not contributing to what they consider essential" (Gile 1991a:171). In other words, according to his interpreter critics, Dillinger should not have conducted an experimental study and he should have been more interested in quality differences[37].

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[35] See Gile (1990c:31).

[36] See also Dillinger (1990).

[37] See, however, also Moser-Mercer (1991a).

Whereas Gile generally agrees with most of the criticism concerning the work of such non-interpreters, he repeatedly emphasizes the need for interdisciplinary, joint projects - especially between, on the one hand, interpreter-researchers - who he calls 'practisearchers' - and, on the other, cognitive psychologists and/or psycholinguists[38].

9.   Interpreting Research and the Manipulation School

Again taking my point of departure in the CERA programme 1993, I shall now discuss the possible influence of the Manipulation School on interpreting research. I shall take each element in turn, starting with the overall emphasis on the descriptive approach and finishing with the advocated search for norms.

There can be no doubt that research on interpreting could be carried out as a descriptive study. Gile, for one, seems to adhere to a similar principle. Though he is not averse to applied, evaluative research in the way the Manipulation scholars seem to be, Gile, too, wishes to encourage pure, empirical, and scientific research. This is particularly obvious in his criticism of Seleskovitch's work - for example when (Gile 1990c:30) he makes this comment to certain of Seleskovitch's (1975) assertions in *"Langage, langues et mémoire"*, the published version of her doctoral dissertation (later to be be published in English in 1978):

> *".. These assertions, which are not statements of obvious facts, are made without any explanation as to the bibliographical sources, ob - served facts or experiments they are based on, and therefore do not per - mit any control of the sources or the procedures that led the author to their formulation".*

Gile's call for interdisciplinarity also constitutes a similarity with the Manipulation scholars (see above in 7.3). That he sees interpreting as a behavioural discipline (Gile 1991a:155) is yet another similarity, though he never once mentions the concept of translational norms, nor, of course, does he advocate a search for norms as a methodological tool. The fact that Gile seems uninterested in norms is naturally a major difference. Perhaps the reason for this is to be found in different sources of scientific inspiration. Though both Gile and the Manipulation scholars seem to be mainly inspired by social sciences, they may be so in different ways. In their preoccupation with norms, the Manipulation scholars seem to draw heavily on sociology and, in their tendency to look at translations as the

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38 See for instance Gile (in press).

result of a manipulation of the source text which is governed by the target culture, they seem to draw on cultural studies. In his preoccupation with mental processes, Gile seems basically to be inspired by psychology.

Another difference between the Manipulation School and Gile's work lies in their attitude towards linguistics. Whereas the Manipulation scholars mostly reject the overall dominance of linguistics in translation studies, Gile seems less categorical. On the one hand, he opposes the theory of sense and its complete disregard for any language-dependent problems, but, on the other, he does not dispute the necessity to criticize linguistically oriented theories. One explanation for this difference might be that it is not as imperative for an interpreting scholar to be suspicious of linguistics as it is for culturally interested translation scholars. Interpreting research may long since have rid itself of the dominance of linguistics - which is very much thanks to the theory of sense - the Manipulation scholars are only just doing it.

We may conclude that the only significant difference between the ideas of the Manipulation School and Gile's ideas is whether the search for translational norms should be used as a methodological framework. It is therefore interesting that no other interpreting scholar - to my knowledge - has carried out descriptive work on norms in interpreting (neither consecutive nor simultaneous). In fact, I only know of two scholars who have touched upon the topic at all: Shlesinger (1989) and Harris (1990), both in brief discussion articles in *Target*, whose objective it is, among other things, to focus on translational norms[39]. Shlesinger gives a brief account of possible methodological problems that the scholar might encounter when trying to apply the ideas of the Manipulation School to interpreting. Though she definitely appreciates that translational norms must play a part in the interpreting process, she concludes that, due to numerous methodological problems involved in their extrapolation, it is far too early to start theorizing about the nature of such norms. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the concept of translational norms apparently has not influenced her own work on simultaneous conference interpreting[40]. In a response to Shlesinger's article, Harris argues that it

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[39] In 1989, *Target: International Journal of Translation Studies* started with Gideon Toury and José Lambert as co-editors. According to the journal itself its aim is as follows: "TARGET focuses on the interrelationships between the position of translating and translations in culture, the norms governing them and the modes of performing translation processes under various circumstances..".

[40] See for instance Shlesinger (1990) or (in press).

is indeed possible to pinpoint existing norms in the interpreting community, but whereas Shlesinger was mainly concerned with the concept as a methodological tool, Harris merely supplies a list of normative formulations - ie an extratextual source of norms.

I shall now explore how the concept of norms may influence research on interpreting in general. One obvious question in this connection must be: Is interpreting a norm-governed activity? I think there can be no doubt that as a behavioural activity interpreting must also be thought to be governed by norms: There is no reason to think that all interpreting performances would be either totally predetermined (ie governed by absolute rules) or be totally unique (ie governed by subjective idiosyncrasies). On the contrary, interpreters, too, need norms in order to select appropriate solutions to the problems they meet. Just as in translation, there is no such thing as to 'just interpret' (cf. Hermans 1991:165).

Following what was outlined above concerning the three major models that supply norms - namely (1) the source text, (2) the relevant tradition, and (3) similar target-culture originals - we shall now look at the possible origin of operational norms in interpreting[41]. (1) Some interpreting norms may depend mainly on the source speech itself, as well as its context and purpose. (2) Some are drilled into the interpreter while still at school, or are developed when s/he acquires professional experience - either while working him/herself or when listening, for instance, to a booth partner[42]. (3) These norms may also depend on the nature of speeches (ie originals) that the interpreter has heard in similar contexts. The researcher may gain access to these norms in two major ways: One is by means of a source-target comparison, the other is by means of normative statements about interpreting in the literature.

As far as the identification of textual norms is concerned, various methodological difficulties may be encountered that are peculiar to interpreting research[43]. The main difficulty probably lies in the lack of publicly accessible interpreting performances. Unlike literary translations, which are usually meant for mass production and may be read by anyone interested, interpreting performances are meant for the present audience only and are rarely accessible afterwards. For one thing, as Shlesinger

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[41] I take it to be self-evident that the concept of preliminary norms is irrelevant in a context of interpreting.

[42] This latter situation is very likely as professional conference interpreters are supposed to work in pairs.

[43] See also Shlesinger (1989).

(1989:114) notes, AIIC[44], the prestigious International Association of Conference Interpreters, "is averse to having speakers or conference organizers record interpreters". One consequence of this lack of public accessibility is that it may be difficult for the researcher to procure a corpus large enough for him/her safely to distinguish general from idiosyncratic norms[45]. Another methodological problem lies in the fact that, when investigating interpreting performances, the scholar may invariably interfere with the process. The literary translator is probably fully aware that his/her text may afterwards be scrutinized and compared with the source text and this knowledge does not change his/her habitual translational behaviour. But the interpreter who finds him/herself the subject of scientific analysis - be that in a real conference where his/her output is recorded or, which is even more artificial, in an experimental case study[46] - may start to behave contrary to his/her habit. This, again, affects the representativity of the corpus.

As far as the identification of extratextual norms is concerned, the problems in connection with interpreting may only be a little harder than in connection with translation. Though the literature on written translation is more abundant than works dealing with the oral mode, it should not be too difficult to find normative statements about interpreting. One such norm could be Harris's (1990:118) norm of the "honest spokesperson", in accordance with which interpreters should: ".. re-express the original speakers' ideas and the manner of expressing them as accurately as possible and without significant omissions, and not mix them up with their own ideas and expressions".

However, when investigating interpreting - especially simultaneous interpreting - we should never forget that there is at least one other important factor, namely the processing conditions, such as time pressure, the oral medium and the fact that efforts compete for attention (cf Gile's effort models). Quite clearly, we shall always find it difficult to distinguish when the interpreting performance is a mainly norm-governed activity and when it is more determined by the processing conditions. One way of dealing with this methodological problem could be to introduce a different kind of operational norm that is peculiar to interpreting. This norm could for instance govern what the interpreter ought

[44] Association Internationale des Interprètes de Conférence.

[45] See Shlesinger (1989:113).

[46] My own investigation into simultaneous interpreting and translation is one example of this experimental approach - see also Schjoldager (1993a) and (1993b).

to do when the task becomes difficult or even impossible due to overloading of processing capacity. An example of such a norm could be formulated as follows: "If the interpreter has to choose between knowingly rendering an important segment inaccurately or not rendering it at all, s/he should choose the former".

10. Concluding Remarks

In this article, I have tried to explain and put into perspective the theoretical and methodological framework of the so-called Manipulation School. I have explored how these ideas may be compared with current ideas on interpreting, and I have concluded that the theory of translational norms may indeed be extended to interpreting research. However, in doing this, we should always account for the high degree of complexity involved in the interpreting process and should, perhaps, work on the assumption that some operational norms are peculiar to interpreting. Furthermore, in our search for these specific norms, Gile's ideas about processing capacity and his effort models will undoubtedly be important analytical tools. Consequently, though a lot of empirical work is still called for in the field, the question of norms in interpreting is undoubtedly both interesting and worth our attention.

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