翻译教育面面观

——安舍尼·皮姆教授访谈录

摘要：在访谈中，我们主要就翻译教育的相关问题请教了皮姆教授，包括翻译研究的职业转向、职业转向对翻译研究的影响、产学研一体化的翻译教育模式、翻译技能与翻译能力的关系、翻译技能及其表现模式、翻译技能与译者培训、翻译技术与翻译伦理、翻译与本地化等。皮姆教授的精彩回答，特别是其以问题为导向的总体研究思路，对我们启发很大。在此，与译界同仁共享具体的采访内容，希望对国内的翻译教育有所启示。

关键词：翻译教育；职业转向；翻译技能；翻译技术；本地化

Aspects of Translation Education

An Interview with Professor Anthony Pym

Abstract: In this interview, we consult Professor Pym on the way translation education relates to the translation industry, translation research, expertise, competence, performance models, technology, ethics, and localization. The answers provided by Professor Pym are illuminating, especially his overall problem-oriented research philosophy. The content of this interview is presented here in the hope that is might be of use to translation education in China.

Key words: translation education; translation expertise; translation technology; localization

The following is a slightly revised version of an interview that took place at the Nankai University in Tianjin, China, on June 12, 2010. The interviewers were Feng Quangong, Liu Yanchun and Wang Shaoshuang.

Question：I think there are two commonly acknowledged turns in Translation Studies, that is, the linguistic turn and the cultural turn. At present there seems to be emerging a third turn, namely the professional turn, which is characterized by researching areas like translator training, translation technology, the translation industry, professional translators, translation management and professional translation competence. The professional turn is both a descriptive summarization of the statue quo and a predictive assertion of the trend of Translation Studies. Here I would like you to comment on the professional turn in Translation Studies, especially regarding future developments.

Pym: I think the whole talk of turns is silly, because you can find so many turns. You can find a cultural turn by Mary Snell-Hornby and Susan Bassnett, you can find a "return to ethics" in a book I edited, you can find a sociological turn announced by Michaela Wolf, and you can find a performative turn in the work of Lorna Hardwick; last year a journal came out in Brussels announcing a *return* to linguistics, to pragmatics, and a colleague in Tokyo, whose text I have just read, announces a technological turn. We're getting giddy.

It's not true that the whole discipline suddenly turns this way and turns that way like a pack of sheep. What we have are serious problems requiring solutions, and those problems are different according to each historical period and each place, especially regarding the technologies available.

It makes more sense to talk about problems than about turns. It makes more sense to think what were the problems we had to solve in the 1960s, what were the problems in the 1980s, and what problems we have to solve in 2010. And most of those problems concern the profession, technologies, and how we interact with technologies. I don't care about the turns. For some people, the problems are still linguistic. That's fine: they can still do that now if they have linguistic problems. For others, it concerns culture. That fine, too: they can still do that because those problems are still there. Different problems coexist. The work of researchers is to pick the problems that are the most important for us and for our immediate environment. You want to work on *this*, to solve *this* problem, for *these* people. So don't think about turns. It's silly.

Question: So problems should come first?

Pym: I think research should try to solve problems and researchers must first identify problems, problems for your society, for the people who read your research, and for you. Research exists in order to help solve problems and the first step of research is to identify problems.

Question: The professional turn of Translation Studies is instrumental in shifting the emphasis of translation research and education to the translation profession guided by translation market and industry, and also it is instrumental in forming a model of translation education characterized by the integration of industry, education and research centering on the cultivating of qualified translation graduates. So do you think it is possible to form a model of translation education by integrating the translation industry and translation research, and how can we achieve close cooperation between them?

Pym: It's true there are trends. One trend is what we call a sociological turn, if you like. It has evolved from awareness of norms and the relativism of how translations are done. A translation that is good in one culture may be bad in another. I am interested in sociology that involves knowing how the translation profession is organized in a certain culture, a professional culture, or some prefer translation culture, the ideas of the people engaged in translation. That can be done sociologically quite well. We can get the information by which we can understand why translation is done the way it is done. It is not enough just to say *what* is done. When we ask *why*, we need sociology, a sociology of professions, and increasingly of non-professionals.

At the same time, since the mid 1980s, translator training has to adjust to changes in the profession. Those changes affect a wide range of things that translators have to do. When translators go into a company, they do more than translate. They have to work with technologies, they have to do product engineering, and they might be doing graphics, they might be doing company representation. So, we train people to translate with a pen and paper; they go into business; they have to do many other things. That's problematic.

One of the solutions has been to bring professionals into the classroom to teach, and also to send students into business, into companies to do practicums or internships or work placements. So there is increasing exchange between the profession and the training situation. That's a good thing.

Now what are the problems? Problem one: the technologies we currently have --- which are basically data-based machine translation, free-access translation memories, and interactive website

technologies --- these technologies are moving towards non-professional translation. It is now possible for non-professionals to produce translations and distribute them free of charge. People in China watch American sitcoms on websites translated by non-professionals, in creatively subtitled versions. The websites are illegal and they disappear. But this means China is receiving a lot of culture through non-professional translation. The technology enables non-professional translation to exist. That challenges professionalism.

We have a big problem now with our professions. They want high pay and better social recognition, and yet we have technologies that allow everybody to translate. So we have competition. That's interesting. It's going to change the nature of the translation profession.

The second problem is about teaching. I have had professionals come into my classroom to give talks on using translation memories, on designing websites, and on marketing. Some of them have been really bad teachers. A good translator is not necessarily a good teacher, just like a good teacher is not necessarily a good translator. There are different skills.

I'm very much in favor of enhancing dialogue between training and profession. Part of this involves training translator teachers. What we do? On the one hand, we have teachers who know how to teach; on the other, we have translators who know how to translate. So we organize seminars where they both attend, and they more or less teach each other.

The other thing that fosters exchange is the work placements we organize. Our students go into the workplace to learn how the business operates. Sometimes they are simply exploited. So not only do we have very good relations, but also some very bad relations with industry.

The ideal is to enhance exchange between training and professions. But professionals can't always teach and professionals sometimes exploit our students. So it's not easy. It's not a big automatic turn either. It's been going on for a long time in most profession-oriented training programs.

Question: So it's very hard to achieve a win-win situation between translation industry and translation education?

Pym: No, no, look, there are good examples everywhere, and our program in Spain is rather exceptional. Our program only has 16 students a year in the professional Masters. We only train them in translation technologies, only Spanish-English, so it is highly focused. We train them for the localization industry. You know we try many things but we only really work with a few companies because they employ our students. Once our graduates are in the company, when they have some years of experience, we employ some of them as teachers.

Question: In view of the fast development of the translation industry, do you think the research objects of Translation Studies will be mainly shifted to investigating the translation industry, translation profession, and professional translators? And if this is a trend, do you think the shift of research objects will have a great influence on the positioning of Translation Studies as a discipline?

Pym: No, no and no. As I said, you locate problems you want to solve. Problems can exist anywhere. I don't think all the problems we have to solve concern the translation industry. I suspect that the industries are changing so fast that research will always arrive late. If I look at a

translation company now and describe it in my research, my description will be merely historical in five years' time, because these objects change so fast.

The companies themselves have very intelligent people working there, especially in technologies and on the engineering side. They are solving their problems. They are developing from within. They don't really need any sociological work from researchers. Perhaps we can help with some technical work: we'd like research on translation memory usage, how to improve the user interfaces, how to clean databases, how to incorporate machine translation more efficiently. They would like research on that.

Problems exist everywhere, not just in translation industry. Here is something for you think about. I went a seminar in Israel on the translation profession. We had sociologists talking about other professions, about how teachers became a profession historically, how they defend their professionalism, about lawyers, about the way lawyers are profession because they have a discourse, a language that excludes outsiders. What's a profession? Some people may say profession is a discourse of exclusion.

Question: In China there is little research on such topics. I think it's time for translation scholars to turn their attention to translation industry, translation companies and professional translators.

Pym: Okay, but you can't do it within a five-year period. It's interesting to do it in a fifteen-year period, comparing the current situation with 20 years ago, with 40 years ago -- tremendous changes in political regimes, the tremendous impact of technologies. It's very interesting to see how the profession has evolved. But it's very hard to do any real research by looking at a company now.

Question: In recent years, many universities in China have established translation majors at undergraduate level and Masters of Translation and Interpreting (MTI) in order to cater to social and industrial needs. Could you give some suggestions for the sound development of translator training in China, especially regarding teaching staff, teaching contents and teaching methods?

Pym: I'm interested in this and I am trying to figure out what's happening. I have some opinions, only opinions. The first is that you can't train a good translator at an undergraduate level. I think in undergraduate training you can give courses on translation because it is interesting. When you learn a foreign language, you learn to do what? You learn to read, write, listen, speak and you learn to translate. Translation on that level is a basic language skill. But don't confuse that with professional training. Usually language competence is not developed enough. And undergraduates should be free to explore the world of art, philosophy, and revolutions, whatever. Those are the only years we really get for the free exploration of knowledge.

At Master's level, I like the MTI curriculum, and it seems right to focus on industry, on training people for industry. But I think the industry is very fragmented. Training people for conference interpreting is not like training people for interpreting for business, which is not like training people to do dubbing and subtitling, which is not like training people for community interpreting, which is not like legal interpreting. I think a country like China, which has such vast human resources, should be offering specialized Masters. So if you want do medical translation, you go to this program; if you want to do subtitling and dubbing, you go to that program; if you

want to work with Korean and Japanese, you go to another program, at another university. I don't see enough specialization at present.

If you specialize in a sector, you can work with companies in that sector. However, if you do the MTI in two years to make everybody a professional translator or interpreter, you might be dreaming.

You can start ten MTI programs per year in China -- that's good. You can have a really wonderful curriculum -- but who can start to teach? The instructors will tend to be teachers of English who have never been professional translators. So you have a problem. What you do? Well, you have teacher-training programs: the Translators Association of China participates in a teacher-training program, and there might be others. Presumably, you train teachers how to teach the MTI. That's fine. I can see a teacher-training syllabus on the TAC website. It's good, but it's very traditional, with no technologies, no professional components. The experts from abroad are very good traditional teachers, who know little about new technologies. So I suspect you have a problem.

Question: Localization is closely related to translation, so is technical writing, project management, information retrieval, and document editing. Do you think it is urgently necessary to integrate these topics as individual courses in translator training? And do you consider these abilities to be integral parts of professional translation competence?

Pym: No, no, no. In the United States, people who do good project management often have a background in business. In Europe they tend to have a background in languages as well. But if you are a good business manager, you are a good project manager, and you don't really have to know about translation. You can be a very good translator and not be able to do project management. Someone who can translate very well may not be great with technology, with product engineering. So I don't think all students need to know about project management. Only people who wish to take it should go to those classes. On the other hand, I do think all students should know about translation memory systems because they are so useful and accessible.

In a translation company, there are many things to be done: you get the project, you check it is all there, you divide it up, you have a project manager, and you feed the translation assignments into the translation kits; your translators translate; you assemble the document, you verify it, you check it, you put in the images, reassemble it and send it to the client. And you do terminology and desktop publishing everywhere; there is a lot of checking involved. So localization companies require a wide range of skills, but the people working there come from very diverse backgrounds. You can't try to train someone as if they had come from all those different backgrounds. And also they learn skills on the job. Editing is a separate skill. You can learn to be an editor. You can do a course on that. Revising has to be a major part of translation because of the low quality work done by translation memories and machine translation. You know technologies make it go fast. There are mistakes in the product. We have to know how to revise efficiently. That's a big gap.

Question: What is the relationship between translation competence and translation expertise? Is the study of translation expertise the extension of the research on translation competence? What's your comment?

Pym: Expertise research has a very definite background in research on skills in companies and particularly computer skills. When they started to ask how the computer can do some things and humans do others -- the classic reference is *Mind over Machine* by Dreyfus and Dreyfus -- researchers began to realize that humans have certain skill acquisition modes that computers did not have. Sometimes, computers can't learn -- they just repeat operations. When they can learn to adopt operations to particular circumstances, they do so thanks to what are called "expert systems", and I think that is the kind of reference we should bear in mind here.

When researchers asked those questions in the 1980s, they got some answers. Humans make global judgments; computers tend not to, they work through data. So holistic judgment should be an element of expertise. Other related features are reliance on intuition, and confidence, while novices will not have confidence, they might have the feeling of what is right and wrong, but they won't use it as a basis. Expertise is that for me. It's not the accumulation of knowledge. It's not having a different kind of skill. It's having a skill on a holistic level with an attitude that is quite different from that of novices.

That is not really competence. Competence comes from education research, the kind of competence we are talking about here, which is not Chomsky's competence in linguistic theory. It comes from education research when people say what the students have to learn, they have to learn things and they have to learn how to do those things. So knowledge and skills together are competence. We get one, and the next, and the next.

Expertise is a very specific qualitative advance within the same skill set, from one level to another. It's not getting another competence. It's getting better with a particular competence. I wrote an article some years ago arguing against the componential view of translation competence held by many people. My colleagues in the PACTE group in Barcelona, or the people now developing a European Masters in Translation, say translation competence is divided into language competence, cultural competence, technological competence, transfer competence, ethical/professional competence, and so on. That is, everything you need. I am not very interested in that kind of thinking. I suspect it is ultimately random. It is describing your curriculum. You don't know how you got these things; you just list the things you have. Within each of those blocks, whatever they are, you can do expertise analysis. I think we have to look at it as qualitatively different.

Expertise analysis should be able to say how you get to do things faster and more efficiently and more securely. I am far more interested now in expertise. In my article, I argued translation competence was just one thing and I tried to describe that one thing. I would now call that expertise. I would say that if people get more *global* processing, go *faster*, and have more *confidence*, then they have expertise.

Question: In one of his papers, Shreve thinks that there is no way to answer your questions about translation expertise without, as you suggest, developing an empirical approach based on the assessment of performance. Have there been any operational performance models of expertise in Translation Studies established to date? If not, when can it be realized?

Pym: Models of expertise are used by Professor Barbara Moser-Mercer in Geneva for working on the training of interpreters, not translators. And it is also, through her, in the European Masters in Conference Interpreting. So expertise is a viable model being used for conference interpreters, but

not for translators, where the focus is on competencies. I think if you look at recent usages of the term "competence" by the PACTE people especially, you find it comes very close to expertise. The way they use the term has been changing over the years.

Question: So is it possible for us to establish any operational performance models for expertise study?

Pym: There is now a sizeable body of research that compares the translation processes of novices and professionals, using think-aloud protocols, keystroke logs and eye-tracking. And Susan Göpferich, now in Germany, has a project to study longitudinally how students develop. She studies their translation processes in successive years of training, and she compares them with a group of professionals. So some research is being done.

Question: What can we learn from the performance models of translation competence in order to learn translation expertise?

Pym: I personally think that we have to forget about the models, virtually all of them. I am more interested in looking at more specific skills and see how the skills are acquired and how to reach expertise level. Skills might be banal things like learning to apply a style sheet, learning to create a password on Microsoft Word, learning to create a website, or learning when to correct a source text and when not to. A doctoral student of mine has been doing research within the United Nations system, asking the people who revise new recruits about what skills are missing. What do you have to fix up all the time? And we get a list of skills that are missing among recruits. It makes sense to me to take those skills and train people in those skills, because those are the skills graduates do not have. And I don't really care if that is expertise or competence; I don't care if it fits into anybody's model.

Where do the models come from? From God? God says this is translation competence? No, the models are based on reproducing what we did when we were students, or reproducing what we think the market needs, but the market changes every five years. It could be based on some concrete input from employer groups and from research. I just talk about skills and how we become experts in those skills. You don't need competence or performance models.

Question: Is it possible for us to build any theoretical framework to study translation expertise?

Pym: Sure. Expertise has an internal theoretical framework, but the whole of education theory is based on the question of how people learn. How do people start out not being able to do something and finish up being able to do it well? That question concerns the whole of education. I don't see any reason for talking about a separate theory for translation expertise.

Question: Another question is what is your understanding of the relationship between translation expertise and translator training? Of course, translator training is confined to undergraduate translation students and MTI students.

Pym: As I said, I don't really care what students do as undergraduates. They are not going to be

trained as professionals there; they should have a good time as undergraduates and learn languages for fun and interest. In Europe, under the auspices of the European Commission, they are setting up a European Masters in Translation. In a talk I gave there last December, I said there is no empirical evidence for anything they are presenting in their model of six competencies. People have to agree on some kind of model, and that's fine, but the number of translation competencies could be five, it could be four, it could be ten. I just wanted to say, look, there is no empirical research to justify what you are saying. If you want to do it, and you agree to do it, and you have consensus, that's fine, go ahead. But be aware there is no empirical research. And that is still the case.

So your question is about the relationship between training and expertise. Until we have empirical data about what expertise is, there is no relationship, only opinions. Who are the people who set up teacher-training programs? They are academics who think they know what the market needs. How do they know? Have they worked in that market and got some data from it? Have they have done research on it?

China risks doing the same thing. One warning: in Spain, after 1992, we expanded translator training from just three programs to the 26 or so that we have now. Spain is not China; it has a much smaller population. But what happened as a result of that expansion? We have now flooded the labor market with graduates, with people who have a degree in translation and interpreting. The pay for translators has thus gone down, and most of our graduates can't find jobs as translators. We've helped ruin the market. We thought we knew what the market needed, but we did not know how many actual graduates they need. Nobody asked that question. Students sign up to study translation; they want to do translation because it sounds practical; it sounds like it'll get them a job. As long as they sign up, we teach it. And then we put them in the market, but there are few good jobs to be found. So where is the research that will tell us many real jobs there are for translators? Easy to do: Count the job announcements, or follow where your graduates go. See how many good translation jobs are available. Probably not thousands.

Question: What kind of changes do you think translation technology has brought to translation ethics?

Pym: My first opinion is that ethical communication requires knowledge of the person you are communicating with. And the more mediation you have between the people you are communicating with, the less humanized the communication, and the more difficult it is to operate ethically. You have to know what your text is for, what effects it is to produce, and why.

Since the role of technology is always to mediate, to stand between communicators, even as it extends our senses and capacities, since technology always mediates, I have tended to see it as dehumanizing. I have now revised my opinion. In the last few years I've come to see that interactive technologies can rehumanize communication, especially translation. For example, if you're working with a translation memory, you're working with processed texts whose purpose and form you are unable to see. That's dehumanizing. If you are working with machine translation, it's the same thing. But if you are working on an interactive website to localize Facebook in your favorite language, if you do it with a group of people, if you talk instantly with these people about how to do it, and different people propose different translations, technology is doing something quite different. Translators vote on the best translation -- that's how they did it in Facebook's

crowd-sourcing. Nonprofessional translators are thus participating in the translation work, and technologies allow them to do this very easily. People supporting Greenpeace, for example, can translate for their cause together, interactively discuss things, modify existing websites and make the translations better, as a way of pubic involvement. Technologies allow us that ethical involvement. This means that technologies do mediate, but also enhance the involvement of more people, specialized people across the globe. I think that's wonderful. So I've come to see this ambiguity of current technology. Some aspects are good, others are bad.

Question: Some scholars hold that localization is part of translation, but others argue that translation is part of localization. So which belongs to which? What's their relationship? In your book *Exploring Translation Theories*, you mention that localization is a new paradigm. What's your comment?

Pym: Localization is sometimes confused with the adapting of texts to new contexts. But for me the radical change is that we translate from an internationalized version. That's what we get as the source product. We take out the cultural elements specific to that source as much as possible and then translate it simultaneously into many different languages. So we have a source text that is prepared so as to make translation fast. That preparation of the new source text is internationalization. And that's what's new in the localization paradigm.

Now, if you look at the textbooks on localization, they have a work process in which translation is just one phase. For most of the localization industry, translation is a minor facet of what has to be done. If the budget for this project is 100 units, the translation might get units. In terms of resources, a lot of money goes to the project manager, the person who runs it, and the rest of the money goes to project engineers, the people who do the technology. So from that perspective, the answer is clear. For the localization industry, translation is part of localization, and it's not the most important part. We don't get the most money. That's negative.

However, speaking in terms of translation theories, I could consider translation as any transfer or any movement of knowledge between cultures and languages. And if I look at that whole process, I would say that localization is a very interesting model of the way we can move knowledge from one language to another. Therefore, on that level, this is one possible approach to translation; on that level, localization is part of translation. So my answer is that it depends on the problem you are trying to solve.

My problem in writing the book was to organize the theories of translation so that I could see the different paradigms. For that problem, localization is one thing, part of translation. But if you are a project manager, setting up and running a localization project, for you obviously translation is part of localization. There are no fixed meanings for the terms. It depends on the problem you want to solve.

Question: You have a rich research background and knowledge in a lot of disciplines. What do you think of the explanatory power of Cognitive Linguistics in Translation Studies? Some well-known representatives of cognitive linguistics are George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, Ronald Langacker, Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner.

Pym: It's okay, but it's never been intellectually satisfactory for me. Firstly, these people call

themselves cognitive linguists. They have a way of analyzing texts according to what they call cognitive principles, for which there is actually not a lot of empirical data. My background is in sociology, where there is quite a lot of data. Sociology works with texts, but we also work with people, that is, with questionnaire data, interview data, personal background data, and it seems to be logical if you want to know how people think, you need textual data and extra-textual data. It seems strange to me that you can somehow know how people think just by looking at language. It seems to me inadequate. Why not get other kinds of data about the thinking people? When I talk about cognitive approaches or cognitive studies of translation process, I look at the text, but I also look at the way the eyes move on the screen, I also look at what the cursor is doing, I also look at what references translators are using, at the arguments they make, and at the interview data, what they say before and after the experiment. I look at how much experience they have, what their languages are, what sex they are, how old they are. This is part of what a person is. Young people do not think like middle-aged people, who do not think like older people. Women don't think like men. Why just look at texts? There are a lot of data out there about people.

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