

The Status of Scientific Translation

Maeve Olohan

Abstract

Translation studies as an academic discipline has traditionally devoted a good deal of research effort and output to literary translation. It can, however, be argued that the concentration on literary, religious and philosophical texts and their translation has been disproportionate, given that most professional translation activity involves texts that belong to scientific, technical and commercial domains. Moreover, it is undisputed that translation has had a crucial role in the production and distribution of scientific knowledge through cultures and times. Against that backdrop, this paper investigates the current position of scientific translation within translation studies. Drawing on existing research on scientific communication more generally, and considering both textual and socio-cultural aspects, the paper then proposes some research issues which may be addressed by scholars interested in scientific translation. A range of approaches, frameworks and methodologies may be adopted, depending on the focus of research, and it is argued that there is considerable scope for enhancement of our understanding of the role which translation plays in the dissemination of scientific knowledge.