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Measuring relationships in Translation Studies. On affiliations and keyword frequencies in the Translation Studies Bibliography

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This article provides an analysis of some aspects of academic publishing in Translation Studies, based on the data available in the databases of the online *Translation Studies Bibliography*. It concentrates especially on: the geographical spread of Translation and Interpreting research measured through academic affiliations; and links between keyword frequency and journals, as well as languages of publication. Firstly, an explanation is given as to why scientometrics/bibliometrics matter and, secondly, what has been done already in this respect in Translation Studies. The results of the analyses are partial and a work in progress; nevertheless they show interesting correlations that could serve as a basis for further analysis of the metadata.

Keywords: bibliography; affiliations; keywords; languages of publication; bibliometrics

When producing and transmitting scientific knowledge, authors weave a web of affinities: they cite some works to the detriment of others; they refer to certain publications; they set up more or less regular intellectual relationships. Nowadays, Translation (and Interpreting) Studies (TS) has the tools (journals, book series, bibliographies, encyclopedias, handbooks, readers, textbooks, etc.) which can trace and visualize outstanding developments in research and the most influential authors and centers so far (Gambier, 2007).

In the following pages, we aim to provide an analysis of some aspects of academic publishing in TS, especially measuring: the geographical spread of Translation and Interpreting research activity through academic affiliations; and links between keyword frequencies and journals, as well as languages of publication. First, we will define bibliometrics and justify why scientometrics/bibliometrics matter, before referring to a number of studies in TS to illustrate how bibliometrics has been applied to the field. Then we will present the results of our analyses, based on the data of the online *Translation Studies Bibliography* (TSB). More details about the exact structure and criteria used for the bibliography can be found in Gambier and van Doorslaer (2014).

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1. Bibliometrics as a methodological tool

One empirical branch of the social studies of science is bibliometrics, which can be defined as a way of measuring and analyzing scientific output, studying the evolution and trends of academic disciplines, and evaluating scholarly communities. Since the early 1970s, bibliometrics has become an accepted branch, in particular in the natural sciences and technology. It offers a wealth of quantitative methods for the analysis of research. Therefore, we can have publication analyses focusing on a specific field (e.g. audiovisual translation) and/or a geographical area (e.g. TS in the Baltic States), (co-)citation analyses (e.g. who are the most frequently cited authors), co-word and keyword analyses (e.g. how to recognize the thematic content of publications), and social network analyses (e.g. what the relations are between different agents or concepts acting within certain social or thematic structures) (Grbić, 2013; Grbić & Pöllabauer, 2008a) to name but a few areas within the multitude of possibilities of inquiry.

The terms ‘bibliometrics’ and ‘scientometrics’ are not used in a very consistent way in the literature. They are sometimes considered synonyms; sometimes bibliometrics is a hyperonym or even a hyponym for scientometrics. Other terms have been introduced recently, such as webmetrics (for quantitative studies of information available on websites) and informetrics as an umbrella term for all the terms listed here; the second part of the compound (-metrics) suggesting the application of mathematical and statistical methods. In this article, we define scientometrics as the study of information and publications in their social, economic, and political settings, whereas bibliometrics is seen as the study of the production, dissemination, and use of scientific publications and communications, based mainly on textual parameters. We are aware that in TS both terms (scientometrics and bibliometrics) are used interchangeably, as will become apparent when we report briefly here on a number of studies. This relative terminological confusion is not specific to TS and certainly mirrors how research and researchers are evaluated nowadays, in a rather limited way (taking into account the quantity of publications and ignoring the context of their production).

One of the first articles, if not the only one, in the field of Terminology with an explicit bibliometric approach was published in 2007. The authors (Castro-Prieto & Olvera-Lobo, 2007) analyzed nine journals in Translation Studies, including 1072 articles written by 750 scholars between 1967 and 2001. After an author citation analysis, they visualized the relationships between authors through social networks and confirmed that terminology was then developing in three directions (theoretical foundations, Natural Language Processing, and Socioterminology), showing that a greater frequency of co-occurrences indicated a stronger affinity between authors.

A number of publications have already dealt with bibliometrics in Translation Studies. The first article, by Šajkevič (1992), gave a statistical analysis of the data provided by the *Index Translationum*, including tables and graphs on translated books and authors, and established different correlations. We can here recall two other historical bibliometric studies (D’hulst, 2011; Wilfert-Portal, 2012) which raised more issues than they solved but clearly built a bridge between the History and Sociology of Translation. Van Doorslaer (2005) carried out a keyword analysis of the TSB, then containing 7000 annotated entries. The quantitative analysis and the thematic fields indicated the priorities in the dissemination of TS research over a decade. Gile (2006) studied the interdisciplinarity of TS through an analysis of different types of citations (related to the cited author’s theory, opinions, definitions, methods, and results), mainly in the Proceedings of two EST Congresses held in 1994 and in 2000. Toury (2009) delivered a quantitative analysis of the publications in

the first 20 years of *Target*, based on the major contributing countries, distribution of the journal (subscription) per country, and the gender of the authors, these parameters being of interest for a sociocultural account of TS research activity. Here a journal was considered as a basis for understanding the development of a discipline.

To our knowledge three more articles have been published in the last four years. Rovira-Esteva and Orero (2011) gathered a corpus of 71 volumes of nine indexed journals published in 2007–2009, namely 495 papers, and looked at three indicators used for assessment (numbers of pages per article, listed order and number of authors, and prestige of the publishing house). While they compare different disciplines and international journals, some indicators are missing from this article, such as the language of publications, which is hardly mentioned (Rovira-Esteva & Orero, 2011, p. 246). They also focus on a national perspective (the number of Spanish authors are counted in a separate category). Another point is the representativeness of their selection: the journals of one important publishing house in the discipline (John Benjamins) are not represented, which may have a serious impact on the results. Moreover, one can ask if there is any correlation between the number of training programs in a given country and the number of publications.

In 2012, the same two authors published another article, then focusing on evaluating quality in TS research, especially by Spanish agencies which have their own benchmarks and evaluating systems. The three main relevant issues were: who evaluates, what is evaluated, and how the evaluation is carried out; in other words, what are the existing assessment procedures and criteria. In both articles, the authors are very cautious about the ways they proceeded, but that does not exclude critical comments. Franco Aixelá (2013) analyzed the overall pattern emerging from a list of 51 most cited works in TS, classified by their impact factor for 2000–2009, as extracted from the Alicante bibliography BITRA, mainly in terms of chronology, authors, types of publication, subgenres, and approaches. The most cited works in TS in the 2000s are books edited between 1984 and 1999. To these publications, we can add a few Master's theses (Erwin, 2001; Nyström, 2010; Rowbotham, 2000). All have studied citations in a certain number of journals or monographs and collective volumes: what and whom are cited in TS; what adjacent domains hold sway; who influential authors are at a given period of time; or what the dominant regions are. It is also worth mentioning one Doctoral dissertation (Nasr, 2010) that analyzed 542 citations in texts in English and French from the TS literature on translator training, published between 1966 and 2009 in terms of authors cited, type of medium, and language.

In the specific field of Interpreting, several articles have dealt with bibliometrics. Pöchhacker (1995a, 1995b) compared the productivity of scholars, measured by the number of their publications, productivity by country, and university and types of text (article, dissertation, monograph). Gile (2000) is one of the first scientometric analyses of the history of research in conference interpreting. The number of authors in that subfield has increased, but, indeed, few of them display long-term activity. Moreover, much of the research is not conducted in an academic institution. Gile (2005) has focused on citation analysis. Grbić and Pöllabauer (2008b), a follow-up to an introduction paper on a similar topic, edited in 2006, combined bibliometric, network analytical, and text linguistic (word and co-occurrence analysis) methodological tools to study the spoken and sign language community interpreting in German-speaking countries, drawing on 595 publications (1979–2006). Different aspects were taken into account, such as the types and nature of the publications, the languages, the disciplinary affiliation of the authors, the agents (individuals, institutions) involved in research, the network of (co)-authors, and the most common co-occurrences of topics. Grbić and Pöllabauer (2008c) investigated Gile's efforts for the scientific community, applying statistical methods to the range of his academic work

in order to explore the thematic landscape of his publications and citations and his network with co-authors, thus showing his impact in the field of Translation and Interpreting Studies. This author-centered diachronic scientometric study uses network analysis, a keyword analysis of titles, and analysis of citations of Gile's writings by other authors.

Grbić (2007) also tackles sign language interpreting through a quantitative bibliometrical analysis of works published between 1970 and 2005. Her article especially investigated the ways in which sign language interpreting has been addressed in print over time and the way in which production has developed in the last 30 years, with reference to the relationship between research into sign language interpreting and translation and interpreting in general. Gao and Chai (2009) concentrated on publications about simultaneous interpreting, especially when dealing with cognitive and empirical studies. Aquino Albres and Broglia Feitosa de Lacerda (2013) approached training in sign language interpreting in Brazil and tried to correlate the influence of international research on the national market. Through a bibliometrical analysis of a database of articles published between 2008 and 2012 in 14 different journals, Wang (2013) has mapped the latest developments in Interpreting Studies in China, similar to Gao and Chai (2010) and Tang (2010). Regarding the content and citation sources of the 176 articles, the author has examined who the active researchers are, what the distribution of research topics is, and what research methods are used.

Bibliometric methods are now being used in Translation Studies in an intensive way to conduct partial or topical analyses (focusing on a specific author, country, type of interpreting, etc.). Such analyses applied to well-defined and well-limited corpora reveal clear trends and influences. Of course, quantitative data have their own limitations: to what extent are they representative? Do they underscore particularities and differences? Can we compare the reliability of the data provided by a single author or a single journal and the data collected by different producers, such as in the UNESCO *Index Translationum*? The quality of bibliometric research depends on selection criteria, clear definitions, and relevant categories; in other words, it depends on the focus of the researchers and the tools they employ (see van Doorslaer, [forthcoming 2015](#)).

2. Analysis of the affiliations in the TSB

The analysis conducted in this article will make use of the online TSB (Gambier & van Doorslaer, 2014). The TSB has been available online for 11 years and offers a new release every year. The principles underlying this bibliography have been described previously (see van Doorslaer, 2009): an extensive list of keywords based upon newly developed conceptual maps of the discipline, systematic abstracting of all included entries (except for the reviews), scholarly selection criteria for the inclusion of entries, and bibliographic software developed by a renowned international publisher also used for other (sub)disciplines (such as pragmatics). The TSB database contains interesting information for quantitative analyses of the development of the publication practices in translation studies (and, consequently, on the development of the discipline as a whole). Earlier articles have dealt with keyword analyses (van Doorslaer, 2005) or with figures on the continental and linguistic spread of TS publication production (van Doorslaer, 2014). We are also in the process of analyzing part of the data from a social and professional network perspective, as partly suggested in Grbić and Pöllabauer (2008b). Both the technical processing of the material and the preparation of the databases for the networking software are labor-intensive tasks that were not finished by the time we

wrote this article. Therefore, in this contribution we want to concentrate on some elements that may indicate networking tendencies: aspects of affiliation and two main combinations, i.e. keywords in journals and keywords in languages of publication.

At the time of the analysis (December 2014), the bibliography contained a selection of approximately 26,500 scholarly publications. Although not visible to its users, the TSB database also contains a field with information about the affiliations of the authors. These data are only included when publications explicitly mention the affiliation. This was the case in about one-third of the entries, resulting in 9906 fields with an affiliation included as mentioned in the publication. This means that the data are not comparable and as such not ready for a bibliometric analysis. Affiliations are mentioned in different languages and according to various formats. Sometimes only the city or the university is mentioned, in other cases the research center, the faculty, or the department is listed as the main affiliation. For the purposes of this article we have homogenized the affiliation fields in the TSB database at the level of the university. Only when the university was explicitly mentioned was the field taken into account for this analysis. Consequently, limited announcements, like mere city names (e.g. Beijing), research groups (e.g. Petra), or non-university affiliations (e.g. Russian Academy of Sciences), are not included in the results. In some cases, based on the author's name or the research group, it was tempting to assign a university with high probability but we did not. In case of a double university affiliation, we only included the first one mentioned in the publication. Co-authors were listed with their separate affiliations.

Many researchers mention the official name of their university in the local language, but a growing number only write down an English translation of the name, which sometimes hampered the homogenization. When, for instance, 'University of Montreal' is mentioned, we suppose that the French-language 'Université de Montréal' (and not Concordia or McGill) is meant, although it cannot be totally excluded that some authors may have used the city name as a *totum pro parte* for one of the other universities in the city. The 'University of Barcelona' is supposed to be the 'Universitat de Barcelona', but perhaps one of the other Barcelona universities was intended. Some confusion also had to be cleared in cases such as 'York University' (in Canada) and the 'University of York' (in the UK).

The TSB concentrates mainly on publications in the past two decades in Translation Studies, occasionally also including older sources (for instance in the case of older journal volumes or of seminal texts). When dealing with historical material, affiliation names may have changed due to new political or institutional circumstances. The South African University of the Orange Free State, for instance, has changed to the University of the Free State. Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, traditionally had separate institutes for translation and interpreting, in close collaboration with universities, but in recent years these institutes have been fully integrated into the universities, like the former Lessius (Antwerp) or HUB (Brussels) into the KU Leuven. Another example of such a merger is the University of Eastern Finland, which includes former universities and institutes in Joensuu, Kuopio, and Savonlinna. For this analysis we have decided to list the current names and add the historical affiliations to the university to which they now belong. The results of an 'école' such as ESIT, for instance, have been added to the figures of 'Paris 3 Sorbonne Nouvelle'.

It is also useful to mention here that affiliations were counted independently of the language of publication. The (partial) homogenization of the affiliation names has been carried out for publications in all languages. Taking into account the selection and processing principles described above, we have arrived at a list of several hundreds of universities and other affiliations worldwide that are listed in the TSB affiliation field, based on the whole database. Some of them appear only once or a couple of times, but a

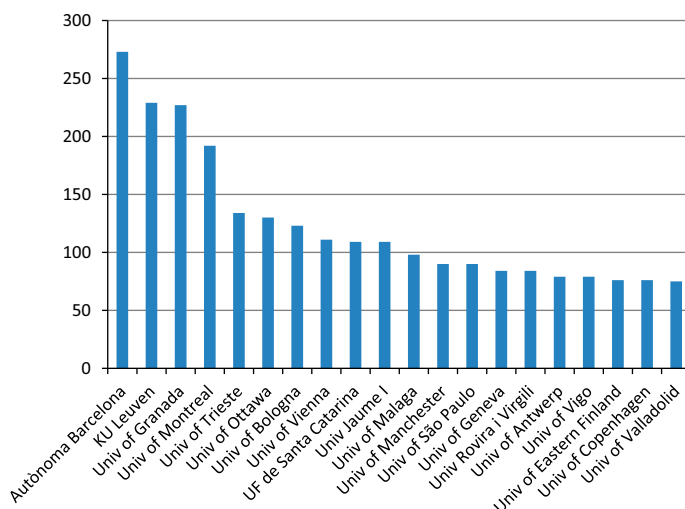


Figure 1. Number of affiliations listed in TSB database.

considerable number of universities show dozens or even hundreds of hits. The 20 universities with the highest number of appearances are listed in Figure 1.

It may be tempting to read Table 1 as a top 20 of institutional publication production in Translation Studies, but there are a series of arguments against such interpretation. First of all, these are only the results based on the TSB database, which uses the selection criteria for inclusion that are listed in Gambier and van Doorslaer (2014). Secondly, there are very distinct practices of affiliation announcement. Particularly in the past, some journals or series did not mention universities or centers in which the author was active. Only recently, it seems, has it become a default practice to include affiliations. And, of course, there are also practical matters of availability of sources that may have an impact on these results. The central TSB office is based at (the Antwerp campus of) the KU Leuven, which makes it plausible that KU Leuven publications were more easily within reach, although it has to be added that this practical limitation has become less important in an era of digital availability of most sources.

Despite these relativizing remarks, it cannot be denied that all universities in this list have a considerable tradition in TS research. Mainly European, but also North and South American universities are represented in the figure. The absence of Asian universities in the list of the first 20 universities is probably the result of a combination of factors: Asian publications have lesser representation in TSB, and the practices of affiliation announcement are less homogeneous. In the current list, universities like Lingnan, Guangdong, and Hankuk appear a bit further down the list, between places 30 and 40.

At first sight, it may seem remarkable that seven out of the 20 universities in the list are based in Spain. Catalonia and its susceptibility to language (and identity) matters is certainly one of the factors influencing that phenomenon. It is no coincidence that a Catalan university is at the top of the affiliation list. Moreover, it has to be said that in its first years, TSB has collaborated with BITRA, the bibliography compiled by Javier Franco at the University of Alicante. A selection of batches from that bibliography was submitted to TSB and this has had a certain impact on the number of publications coming from Spain. Thirdly, it is well known that Spain's educational and academic policy has largely institutionalized translation and interpreting at the academic level. The large number of departments in the field has

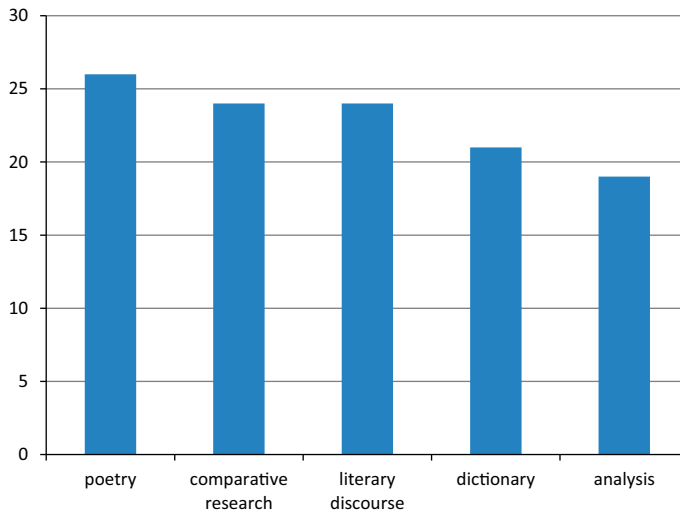


Figure 2. Keywords, *Cadernos de Tradução*.

impacted the number of journals and the publication production. Although not all of these journals are systematically covered in TSB (from the beginning a selection was made based on the recommendations of the Editorial Board), several of those publications have been submitted online by external contributors.

3. Keyword combinatory analyses

As already mentioned, an analysis of the TSB keywords has been carried previously. In this part we would like to link the occurrence of keywords to the profile of some of the main journals in the discipline, as well as to some of the languages of publication present

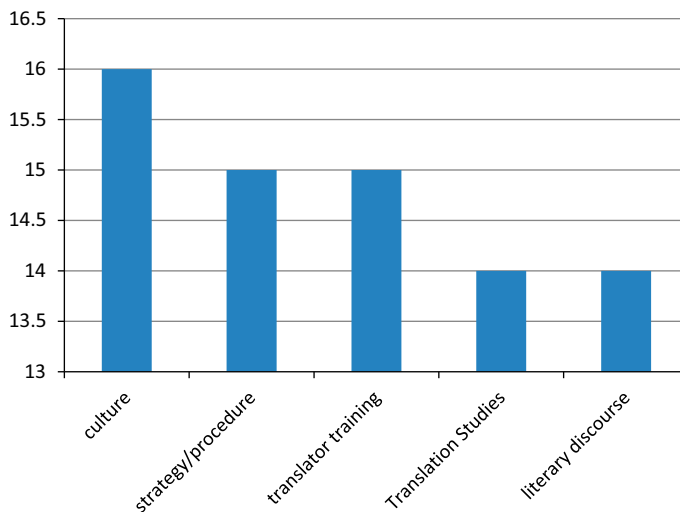
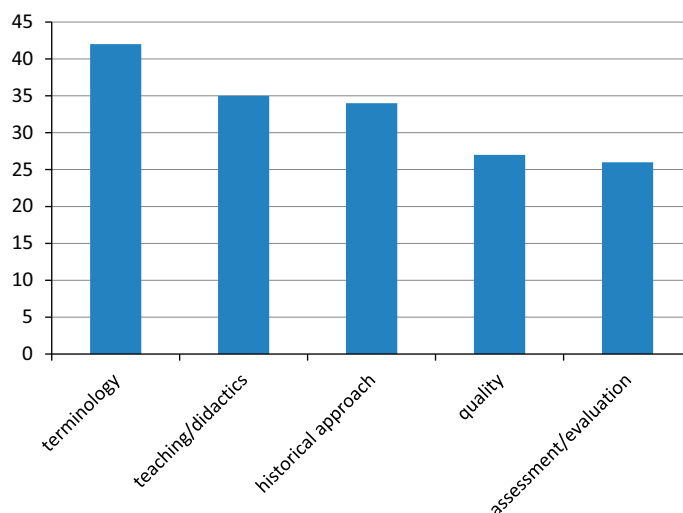
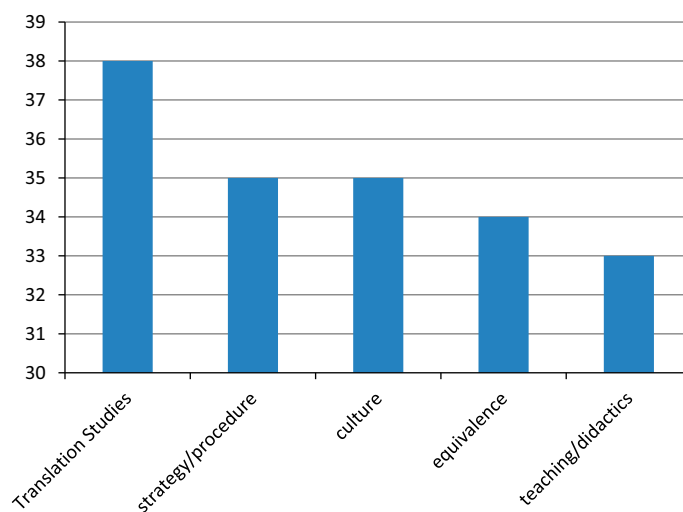


Figure 3. Keywords, *Chinese Translators Journal*.

Figure 4. Keywords, *Meta*.

in TSB. The bibliography has a list of more than 600 keywords based on its conceptual maps. A selection of these keywords is attributed to each publication. They can relate to the content and also to the object of study, the scholarly approach, the methodology used, etc. This inevitably means that some keywords have been attributed much more than others. As the TSB database allows us to combine several categories, we would like to diversify the mere frequency of keywords by combining them with characteristics of the source. Based on combined criteria of tradition, prestige, continental representation, and large presence in the database, we have selected seven TS journals and for all of them extracted the five most frequent keywords. The results can be seen in Figures 2–8.

Despite the more than 600 keywords used in TSB, it is inevitable that some keywords with generic characteristics appear more often than others and can be found in many

Figure 5. Keywords, *Perspectives*.

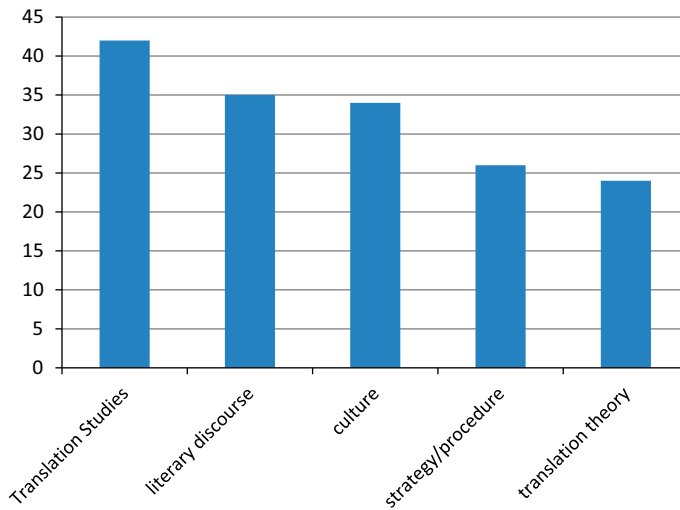


Figure 6. Keywords, *Target*.

journals. Nevertheless, it seems that the profile of the journals can be more clearly outlined (some might say confirmed) by this keyword frequency per journal. Whereas *Cadernos de Tradução* and *TTR* have given ample attention to the translation of literature/literary discourse in their publication history, the *Chinese Translators Journal* and *The Translator* have given a more prominent place to cultural discourse, approaches linked to the cultural turn, and publications about strategies and procedures. Yet another dominant focus can be found in *Perspectives* and *Target*, two journals with a lot of contributions dealing with the discipline of Translation Studies itself, i.e. a disciplinary or meta-approach. Compared to the other six, *Meta* has the most divergent profile in terms of its main keywords. Neither literature nor culture or Translation Studies belong to the top five of its keywords. More central in the topic selection of *Meta* were contributions

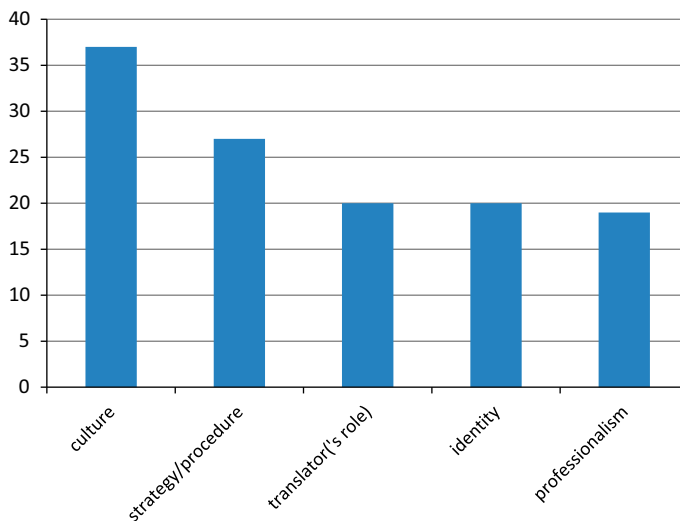
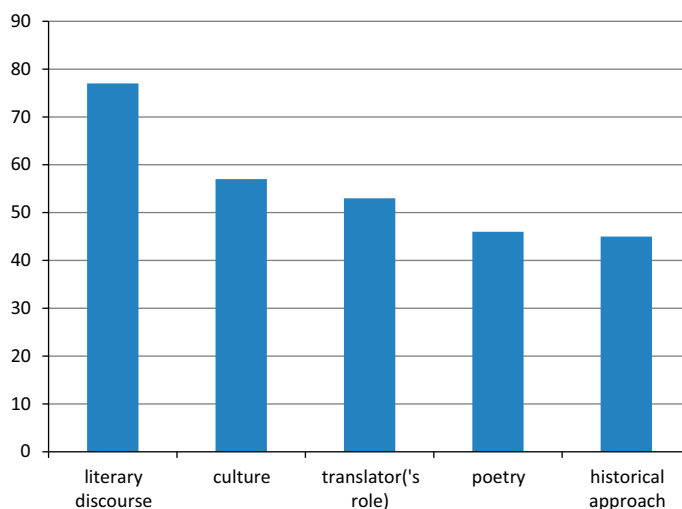


Figure 7. Keywords, *The Translator*.

Figure 8. Keywords, *TTR*.

dealing with terminological or didactic aspects of translation. Though such bibliometric findings mainly offer indications and would have to be framed by qualitative refinements (in this case additional explanation categories referring to the background of *Meta*, for instance), they also provide us with a larger comparative perspective on the topic selection (criteria) of journals.

A similar bibliometric exercise can be carried out by combining the keywords in TSB with the languages of publication present in the online bibliography. Earlier research has shown that the share of English-language publications in the total publication production is growing. Topical focus differences between languages could indicate certain common points of interest within a linguistic community. Given the dominant position of English and knowing that a growing number of researchers from all language areas use English

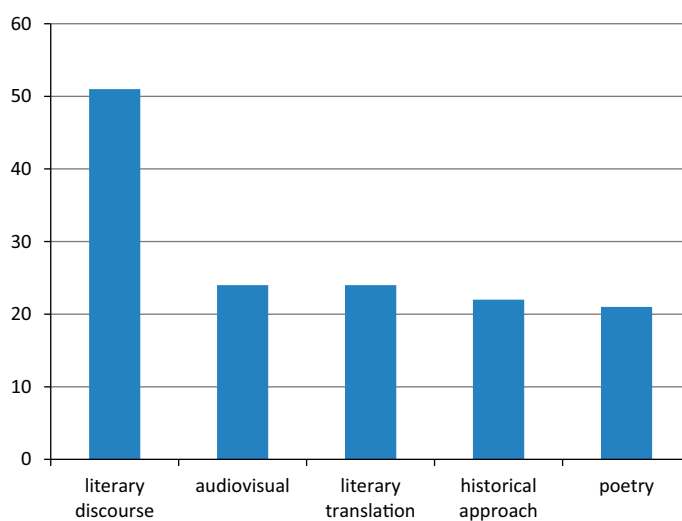


Figure 9. Keywords, Catalan.

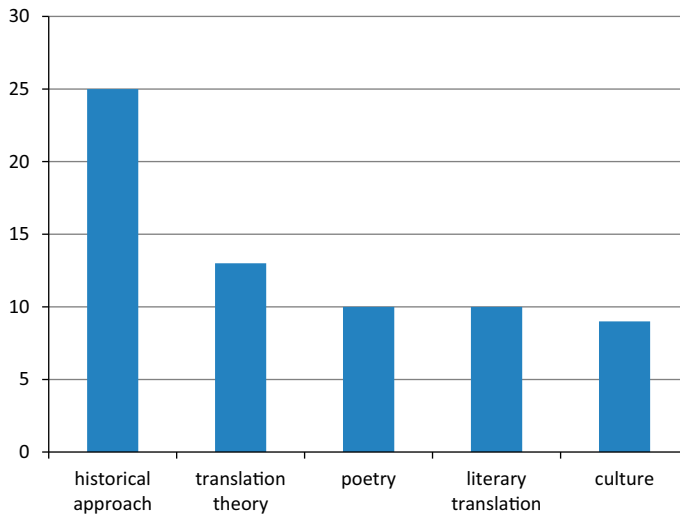


Figure 10. Keywords, Chinese.

nowadays as their medium of scholarly communication, we realize that linguistic communities are probably less decisive with regard to publication topics than they may have been before. A diachronic study could shed more light on that. Nevertheless, we have selected the keyword data for five large languages and also added Catalan as a language of lesser diffusion that has a strong tradition in the discipline (see figures 9–14). We are aware of the fact that the comparability of these languages is very relative for a number of reasons, especially between Catalan and the languages of larger diffusion but even within languages spread over different countries or continents.

Interestingly the most frequent keyword in the most-used language (machine translation in English) is a keyword that does not appear at all in the top five of all other languages. As machine translation is not exactly a very modern or new topic, it can

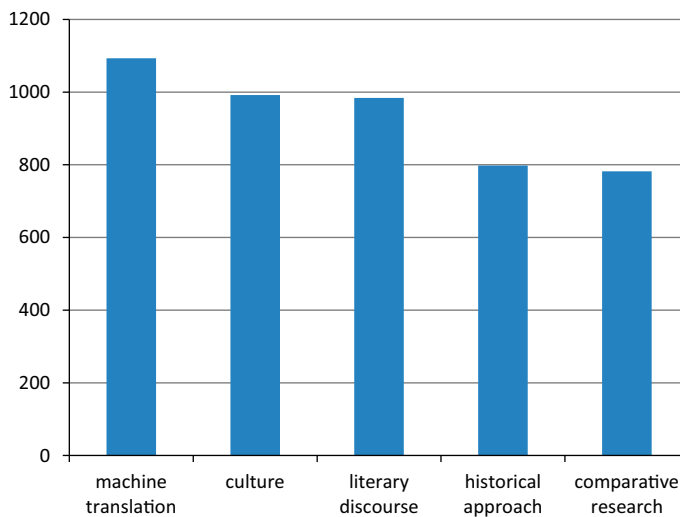


Figure 11. Keywords, English.

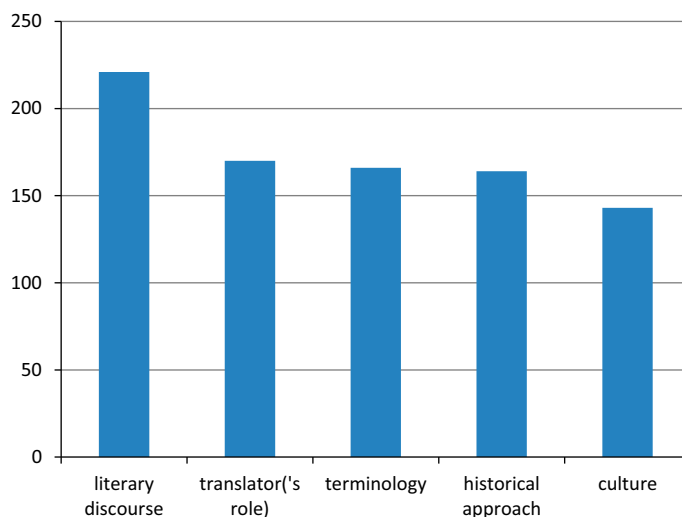


Figure 12. Keywords, French.

be hypothesized that the technicality of the topic (maybe combined with the interdisciplinary exchanges with other technical fields) creates a dominance of English-language publications that is far more distinct than with other topics. The Romance languages of Catalan, French, and Spanish all show a publication history in which literary discourse in translation has been the main object of study. According to the TSB keywords, publications in Chinese very often deal with historical approaches or historical material. Publications in German are the only ones in this analysis that pay considerable attention to both disciplinary (Translation Studies) and theoretical topics and approaches. As such, they show similar characteristics with the profile of the journals *Target* and *Perspectives*. Here, again, a diachronic study would be needed to see whether this can be connected to

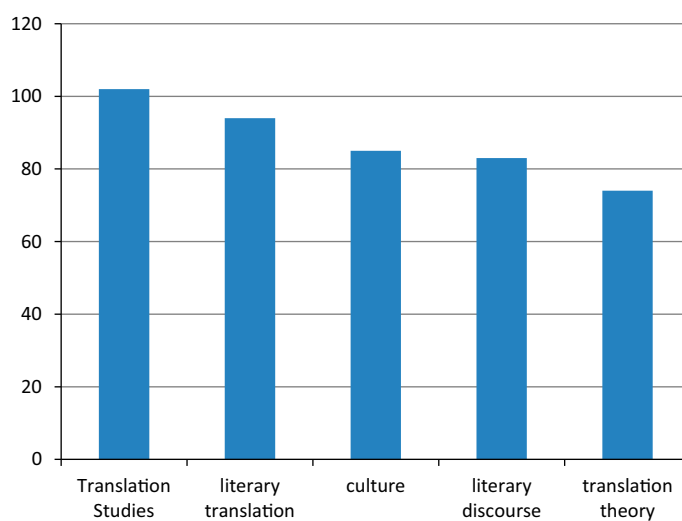


Figure 13. Keywords, German.

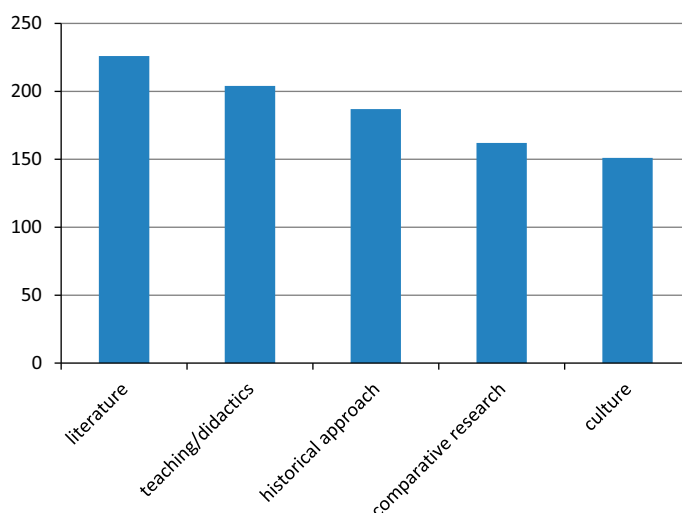


Figure 14. Keywords, Spanish.

the position of the discipline in the 1980s and 1990s; a period in which German was used more for scholarly publication in TS.

4. Conclusion

Bibliometric analyses have the ability to offer factual, quantitatively based, but sometimes also broader views on tendencies in a discipline. As such, they add value to our knowledge of the institutionalization in the field. In our ongoing attempt to discern social and professional networks in Translation Studies, the data presented in this contribution belong to a larger work in progress. Nevertheless, we believe the data show that affiliations indicate productivity and research density. In the near future, we plan to combine the affiliations with co-authorship data, as this data can also be extracted from the large databases of TSB.

Other important indicators of topical choices and topical profiles were made explicit by combining keyword counts with their publication source or with their language of publication. It was shown that the profiles of journals can be described and/or tested through keyword frequency analysis. The results of a similar exercise, testing the category 'language of publication', showed some remarkable differences in topical preferences per language. Whereas this article has studied the total productivity over the past decades, future research could add a longitudinal or diachronic approach to the analysis. The development and expansion of the discipline (various 'turns', topics, geographical distribution differences, Euro- and other-centrism, etc.) could be taken into account when carrying out more refined analyses of chronological development and change. Additional research could also include other bibliographies or even comparisons with tendencies in related disciplines.

Notes on contributors

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