

# Investigating Translation Concepts in MT as Living Translaboration

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Translation has become a highly divergent concept ranging from rather narrow to almost metaphorical interpretations of the term. Disciplines such as Cultural Studies, at one extreme, and Computational Linguistics at the other, both use the term “translation” to refer to phenomena that do not share much common ground.

Translation Studies as a discipline is particularly well suited to look both ways thus aiming to reconcile different notions of translation.

Dealing with the term’s broad interpretative spectrum, the area of machine translation turns out to be of particular interest, as translation concepts in MT are influenced by multiple factors. Like any other technical artefact, machine translation can be described as socially constructed by certain groups like MT researchers and developers (see Pinch/Bijker 1984). At the same time, developers are also bound by what is feasible on a technical level, forcing them to react to “resistances” posed by the technology (see Pickering 1995). The translation concept in MT can thus be seen as the product of collaboration between different social actors, on the one hand, and the preconditions of the material world, on the other.

In my paper, I will give insights into an empirical study involving interviews with MT researchers and developers, on the concept of translation inherent in machine translation systems. I will argue that this research represents an example of translaboration since it promotes the discourse about translation as an overall concept across different fields.

## **References**

Pickering, Andrew (1995). *The Mangle of Practice. Time, Agency, and Science*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pinch, Trevor J. & Bijker, Wiebe E. (1984). “The Social Construction of Facts and Artefacts: Or How the Sociology of Science and the Sociology of Technology Might Benefit each other”. *Social Studies of Science* 14(3), 399-441.