The Translator as the Economist: An Economic Turn for Translation Studies?

H. Pierre Hsieh

University College Cork (UCC)
Ireland

Abstract

Interdisciplinarity has been garnering considerable popularity in translation studies in the form of turns and shifts by engaging in cooperation with fields such as sociology. We should now perhaps consider an economic analysis of translation, viewing the translator as a *homo sapiens oeconomicus* and not merely a *homo sapiens*. In this paper, economics will be explored as a methodology, and, at the same time, considerable effort will be dedicated to how interdisciplinarity has been handled in translation studies. Unbeknownst to translators, economics, by virtue of its rigorous and powerful methodology, has been successful in explaining human behaviour, especially behaviour that involves repeated choice and decision making by an actor who is portrayed as a rational and egocentric individual in constant pursuit of their own interest and utility. This constitutes an accurate description of the translator, a human being who is confronted with interdependent choices to make, ambivalent or straightforward, that require sophisticated skills and tactics based on considerable information, which may or may not eventually yield the intended results. Thus, there must be a built-in mechanism with which the translator maximizes his utility while following his unspoken agenda. My argumentation will center on three trajectories of economics: game theory, choice theory and cost-benefit analysis, all of which are rigorous model-based propositions in economics.

Keywords: Economic Analysis, Interdisciplinarity, Law and Economics, Turns of Translation Studies

Cite as: Hsieh, H. P. (2015). The Translator as the Economist: An Economic Turn for Translation Studies? *Arab World English Journal*, 8 (1).

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol6no2.3>