

Translation of Theoretical Discourses in the Polish Humanities at the Turn of the 20th and 21st centuries

The aim of the project is to characterize various translation-related problems in the selected Polish translations of texts representing the most important theoretical currents in the humanities since the 1960s (poststructuralism and deconstruction; feminism, gender studies and queer studies; postcolonial studies), written originally in English or French. Apart from studies of selected cases – based on the comparative analysis of originals and translations as well as contextual information – the project aims at collecting and compiling dispersed data concerning the dynamics and the characteristics of the translations of theoretical texts into Polish published after 1989 (e.g. which texts of which authors have been translated, who translated them, where and when they were published, how the reviewers have commented on them, how the translators have commented on their difficulties, how the key concepts and stylistic features have been translated).

Drawing on the findings of scholars examining the phenomenon of ‘travelling’ theories and concepts in the humanities, I assume that the theories, ideas and concepts to some extent change their meaning and function when they enter a different language and context. In order to identify the reasons, consequences and the specificity of this change, one has to examine their point of departure, the distance travelled, the position in the target culture and their new, modifying usage. A factor considerably influencing such ‘travels’ is the process of translation which enables them on the one hand and generates diverse shifts on the other. This results not only from the objective differences between the systems and histories of particular languages, but also from cultural factors. As translations are among the key media responsible for the circulation of foreign theories, the research on the aforementioned issues can contribute to the characteristics of the condition of the contemporary Polish humanities and to the exploration of its “archeology”.