



The School of Languages and Cultures and the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies
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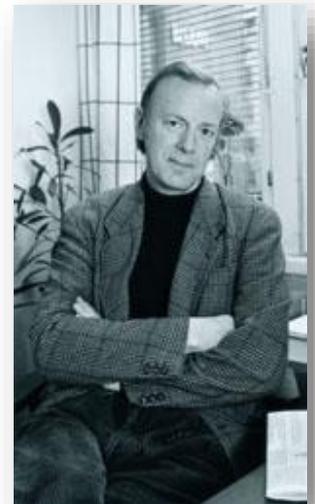
warmly invite you to

Is empirical translation research under threat?

by

Andrew Chesterman

Abstract: This talk takes up a set of themes that have occupied me for many years, concerning a kind of fragmentation in Translation Studies. I do not mean the natural fragmentation of a complex field into various subfields: linguistic, cultural, sociological, cognitive, etc. I have no problem with this. What concerns me is what appears to be a broader methodological split, which can be characterized as a divide between empirical and non-empirical approaches, a divide that seems to be affecting the humanities as a whole. I start by briefly introducing three philosophers of science, all of whom have influenced my present position: Karl Popper, Georg Henrik von Wright, and Dagfinn Føllesdal. I then refer to some relevant work in Translation Studies, starting with the “shared ground” debate in *Target* (2000–). I share the concerns of empiricists such as Anthony Pym and Dirk Delabastita, and will argue against scholars who defend a postmodern view, such as Karen Bennett. I discuss some of the trends that seem to be challenging the empirical research tradition: these include the use of unstable terms, the increase in the purely metaphorical usage of terms, explicitly anti-empirical positions, and the recent proposal concerning “Post-Translation Studies”. Will these trends prevail? What will our discipline look like in twenty years’ time?



Bio: Andrew Chesterman was born in England but moved to Finland in 1968 and has been based there ever since, mainly at the University of Helsinki, where his subjects have been English and translation theory. In 2010 he retired from his post as professor of multilingual communication, but continues to be active in Translation Studies, refereeing, writing, and giving occasional lectures. His research interests have been in contrastive analysis; translation theory, norms, universals, and ethics; and research methodology. He was CETRA Professor in 1999 (Catholic University of Leuven), and has an honorary doctorate from the Copenhagen Business School. Main books: *On Definiteness* (1991, CUP); *Memes of Translation* (1997, Benjamins; revised edition 2016); *Contrastive Functional Analysis* (1998, Benjamins); with Emma Wagner: *Can Theory Help Translators? A Dialogue between the Ivory Tower and the Wordface* (2002, St. Jerome Publishing); and with Jenny Williams: *The Map. A Beginners’ Guide to Doing Research in Translation Studies* (2002, St. Jerome Publishing). A selection of his papers was published in 2017 as *Reflections on Translation Theory. Selected Papers 1993–2014* (Benjamins).

Tuesday, March 19, 2019

VZ 606 5:30pm

Followed by light refreshments