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Merits of Scientometrics in Exploring Developmental Patterns: Translation Studies in Perspective

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Translation studies has become an established area of inquiry. The scientific investigation of relevant issues began around the second half of the past century (Munday, 2012, p. 10). It started to grow rapidly, universities in most developed countries turned to design academic courses by offering certificates and degrees in training translators and translation educators (Venuti, 2000, p.1). By the end of the 20th century, this field of study had already flourished as a new academic major (Gentzler, 2014). But systematic attempts were not made to explore relevant trends and topics, for which the potentials of scientometrics and bibliographics are suggested (Gile, 2015), although few studies can be found regarding trend analysis (e.g. Dong & Chen, 2015; Wang et al. 2019). In fact, scientometrics dwells on quantitative tracing of historical patterns of how scientific documents emerge in journals, books, and other publications. Indeed, it offers a better insight into scientific trends in a specific field of study (Miners & Leydesdorff, 2015). By drawing on bibliographic methods and co-occurrence patterns, it further facilitates mapping those trends and the underlying movements (Leydesdorff & Vaughan, 2006, p. 1).

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This letter is prepared to remind scholars and researchers in translation studies of the criticality of science evolution (Coccia & Bellitto, 2018), and stressing the policy makers' mission in grasping such trends to portray future directions. Enriched by visualized outputs, these often provide us with a macro-level image of scholarly documents published as papers and books. For instance, the growth of Translation Studies was recently investigated by applying scientometrics to help relevant topics emerge, where 12 major clusters emerged: translation competence, translation in conflict zones, translator training, collaborative translation, translation and society, language policy, post-editing and revision, media translation, the translation profession, and web localization (Zhu & Aryadoust, 2022).

For effective enquiry, a well-planned search strategy is required to include all fields (e.g. title, abstract and keywords), and to examine documents related to Translation Studies. The keywords included in the search strategy must be meticulously determined by the researchers' agreement from the relevant literature to be all inclusive with minimum error. What scientometrics can further offer is to utilize an auxiliary software like VOSviewer used for visualizing bibliometric networks of researchers, publications, journals and citations (Wang et al., 2019) by unearthing databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, etc. In fact, figures and Excel files are then extracted to reveal types and frequency of documents, sources, affiliations, year of publication, authors, countries, subject areas and sponsor funding. Relevant analyses in VOSviewer may render patterns of co-authorship, keywords co-occurrence, co-citation, top journals, countries and universities (Shomoossi, et al., 2019).

In fact, the way Translation Studies has meandered its way to independence is a joint product of interdisciplinary works of scholars from around the world. Its slow development during a so-called infancy period has now reached maturity by a steady growth as an academically established area of research throughout the 1990s until now (Gentzler, 2014). In this regard, another prominent contribution of scientometrics which is less considered in evolutionary terms is 'how other disciplines may have played a role in the maturity of translation studies'. For instance, the interdisciplinary nature of translation studies is clear as far as language and linguistic studies are involved. However, the list of other contributing disciplines may extend to such areas as *arts and humanities, social sciences, computer science and engineering, biomedicine, psychology, business and economics,* as well as *management and marketing*. Its rather rich interdisciplinary interaction basically nested in *arts and humanities,* and *social sciences* but the impact of other areas (e.g.

computer science and *artificial intelligence)* should not be underestimated, particularly in the development of machine translation, computer-aided translation, mobile applications, as well as online and offline translation (Alotaibi, 2020). Such capabilities can further prompt research and services of this filed in areas such as *medicine* and *psychology* (Xiangtao, 2007). In fact, the interaction between scientists and their international collaboration, in particular, may act as a motivational force behind the evolution of disciplines (Sun et al., 2013).

All in all, the journey of Translation Studies towards maturation and development is to be traced in its scholarly publications, which are now easily accessible in databases such as Scopus. Moreover, contributions from other disciplines reveal its interactive history of evolution into a fully flourished academic area. In short, this preliminary letter is intended to provide readers with a brief introduction to (1) the value of scientometric studies and (2) the evolution of translation studies in light of other branches of sciences. Finally, further studies by scientometric investigation may appropriately enrich our understanding of the future trajectories of the field, an alluring domain for senior researchers.

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