

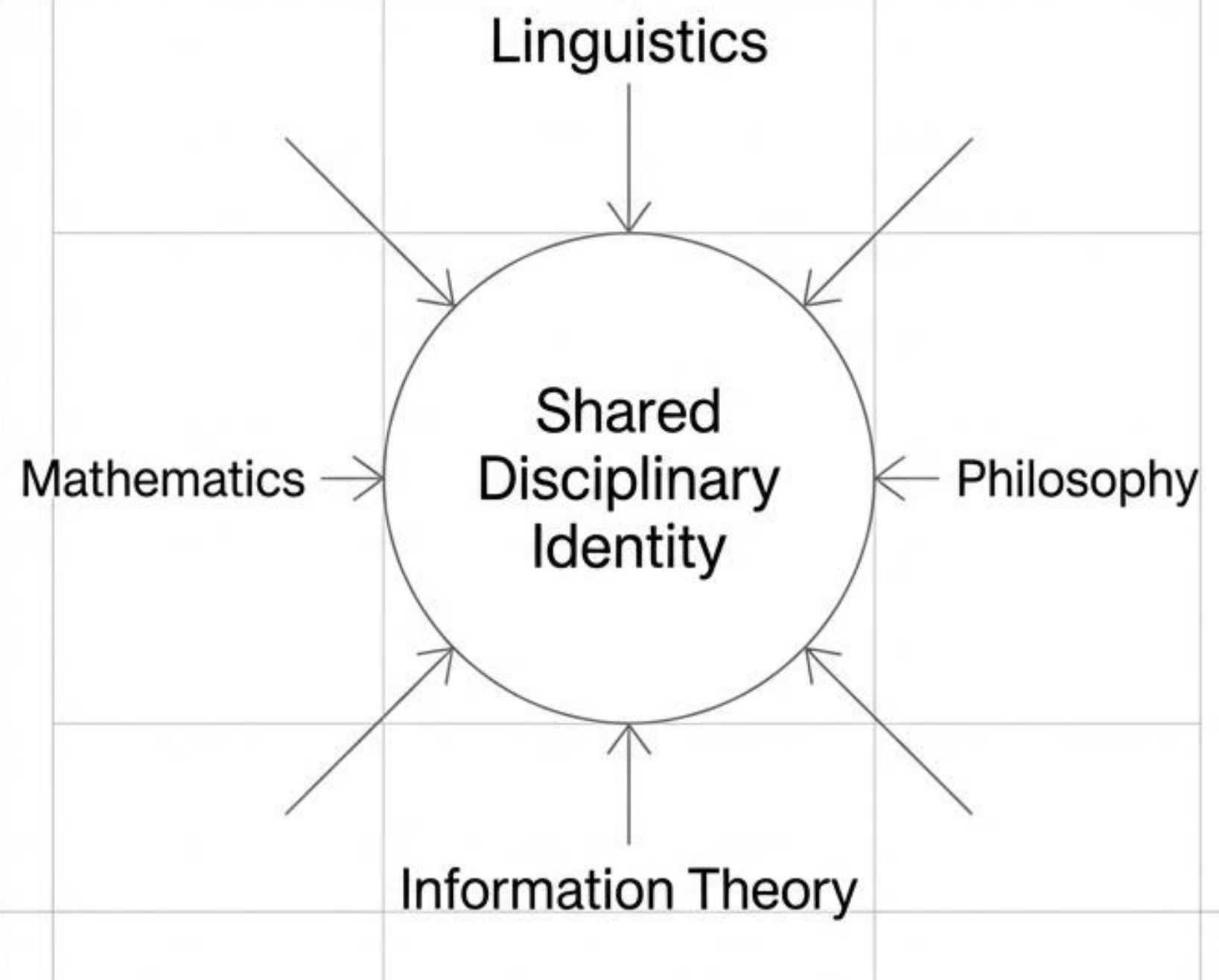
The Name and Nature of Translation Studies

Mapping the Discipline: A Synthesis of James S. Holmes' Foundational Framework

An architectural overview of the empirical discipline of translating and translations.

From Scattered Focus to Disciplinary Utopia

For centuries, translation received incidental attention from scattered philologists, theologians, and literary scholars. The mid-20th century marked a turning point, creating a tension between old paradigms and the need for new methods.



A unified focus on the complex problems clustered around translating.

Defining the Territory: What do we call it?

A new discipline requires a unified name. Early attempts varied based on language and scholarly fashion.

Translatology	Rejected. Greek/Latin purists object to the suffix contamination; lacks broad social recognition.
Translation Theory	Rejected as a blanket term. Theory is only one specific branch of the broader discipline.
Science of Translation	Rejected in English. Translation does not share the strict formalization of hard sciences like physics or chemistry.

Translation Studies — The adopted standard in English. Broad enough to encompass arts and humanities, specific enough to remove confusion.

The Two Main Objectives of an Empirical Discipline

As a field of pure research, Translation Studies shares the dual objectives of all empirical disciplines:



(A third branch, Applied Translation Studies, exists outside pure research).

Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS)

Maintaining the closest contact with empirical phenomena.

Product-Oriented

Focus: Existing translations.

Scope: Individual text descriptions, comparative analyses of multiple translations, up to diachronic surveys and general histories of translation.

Function-Oriented

Focus: Socio-cultural context.

Scope: Examining which texts were (or were not) translated in a specific time and place, and their societal influence (Socio-translation studies).

Process-Oriented

Focus: The act of translation.

Scope: Investigating the little black box of the translator's mind during the event event (Psycho-translation studies).

Theoretical Translation Studies (ThTS)

Evolving principles, theories, and models to explain and predict.

The Ultimate Goal: General Translation Theory

A highly formalized, complex, and fully inclusive theory that accommodates all phenomena of translation.

Status: Currently unachieved; existing attempts are mostly axioms or too exclusive.

The Current Reality: Partial Translation Theories

Specific, restricted theories dealing with only one or a few aspects of translation.

Status: The area where the most significant academic advances are currently being made.

The Matrix of Partial Theories

Medium-Restricted

Based on how translation is performed (Human vs. Machine vs. Mixed; Oral vs. Written).

Area-Restricted

Limited by specific languages (e.g., French-German pair) or specific cultures involved.

Rank-Restricted

Focused on specific linguistic levels (word, word-group, sentence) rather than the whole text.

Text-Type Restricted

Focused on specific genres or messages (e.g., literary, theological, scientific).

Time-Restricted

Focused on the temporal context (contemporary texts vs. older, cross-temporal texts).

Problem-Restricted

Confined to specific micro-issues (e.g., translating metaphors, proper names, or defining equivalence).

Applied Translation Studies

Of Use, Not of Light

1

Translator Training

Teaching methods, testing techniques, and curriculum planning for professional translators.

2

Translation Aids

Developing specialized lexicographical tools, dictionaries, and variety-marked translation grammars.

3

Translation Policy

Advising society on the role of translators, determining which works need translating, and assessing translation's role in language learning.

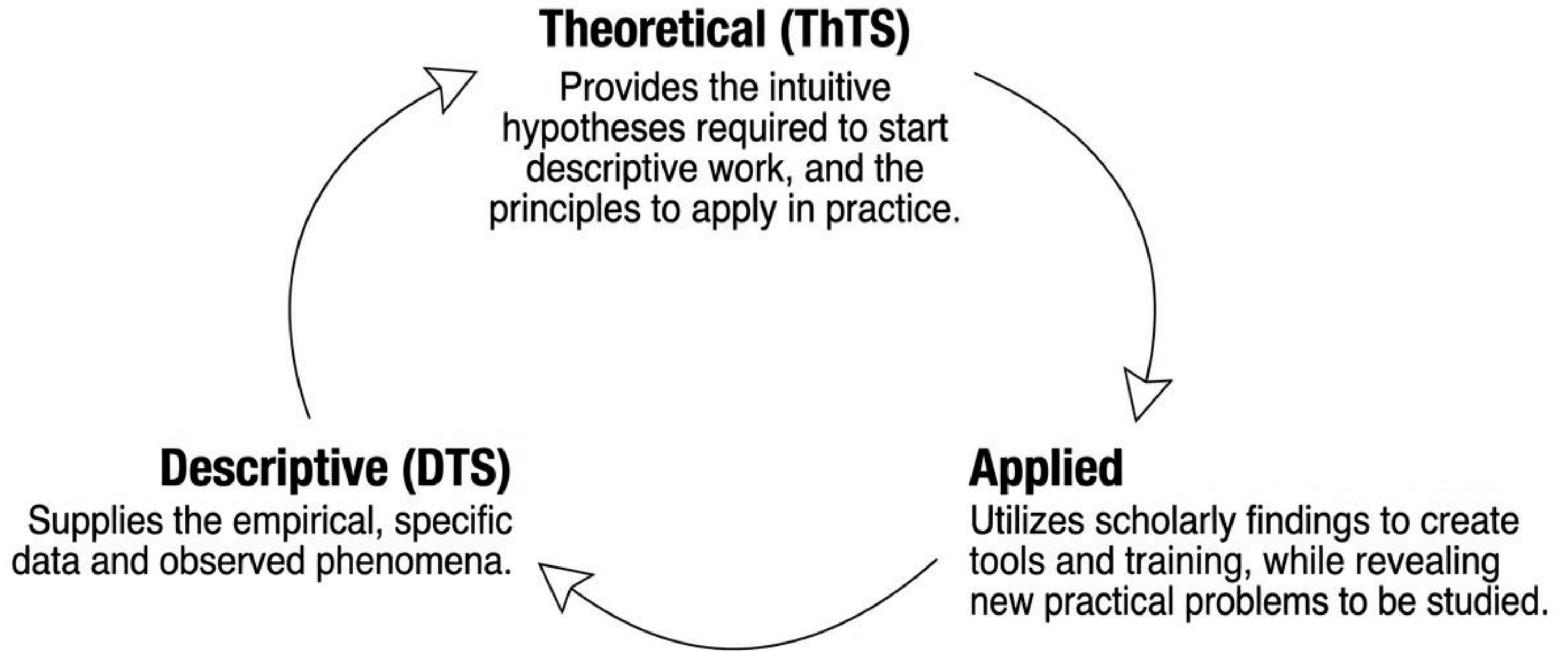
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Translation Criticism

The interpretation and evaluation of translated works, elevating it beyond intuitive, impressionistic reviews.

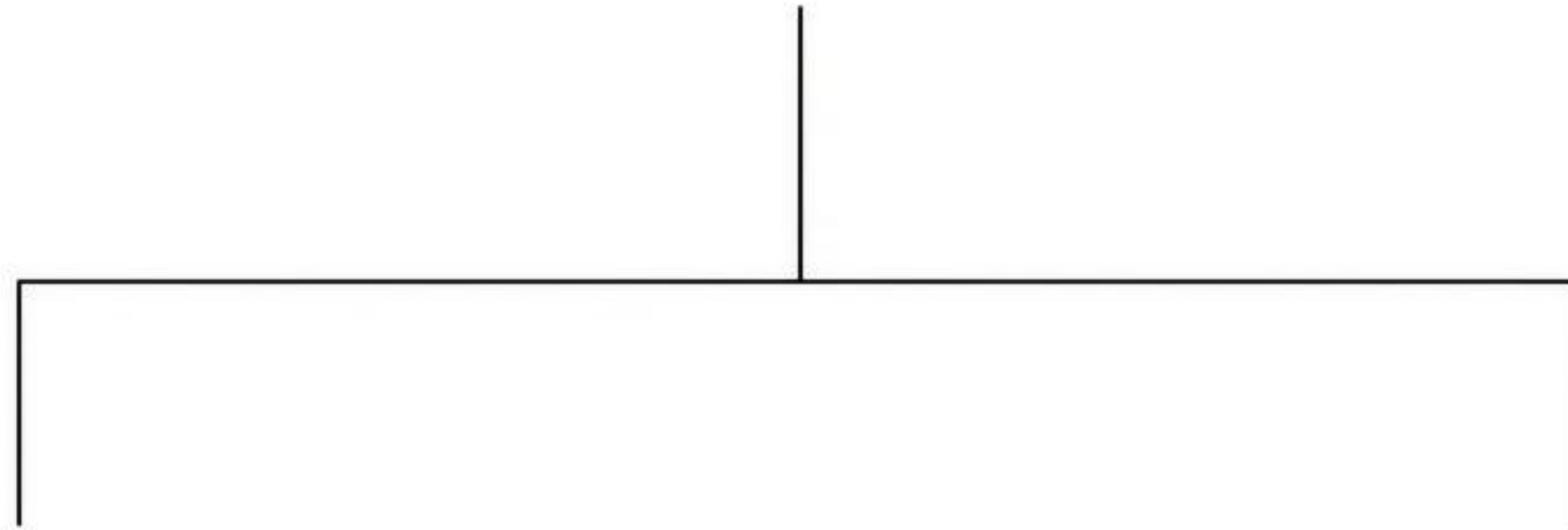
A Dialectical Ecosystem

The branches of Translation Studies do not operate in isolation. They form a continuous feedback loop required for the discipline to flourish.



Beyond the Map: The Meta-Dimensions

In addition to studying translating and translations, the discipline must also study itself.



The Historical Dimension

Tracing the history of translation theory, descriptive studies, and applied training methods.

The Methodological Dimension

Evaluating which models and analytical methods yield the most objective results, and continuously questioning what the discipline itself comprises.

Translation Studies

Pure Research

Descriptive (DTS)

Product-oriented

Function-oriented

Process-oriented

Theoretical (ThTS)

General Theories

Partial Theories (Medium, Area, Rank, Text-Type, Time, Problem)

Applied Research

Translator Training

Translation Aids

Translation Policy

Translation Criticism