CFP: Cross-Linguistic Disagreement: An international conference on disagreement in the age of globalization [Submission]

**Towards a generative Pragmatics of Translation**

In my submission I want to problematize the conception of language which underlies the present notion of cross-linguistic disagreement. I will argue that if we understand correctly the phenomenon of language it will change our perception of translation in such a way as to make inadmissible the categories of correct or incorrect translation. The problem presents itself as analogous to the contrast between Immanuel Kant’s schematism and Charles S. Peirce conception of a diagram. While the former presupposes a totality of both languages, the latter entertains an ever-evolving correspondence between the two systems, the relations between which are exemplified by the diagram itself. On this account the problem of translation is only a variation of the problem of communication within the same language, which is to say that different communities that share the same language face similar issues, though these miscommunications may be masked by the use of one and the same language on the surface level.

Consequently it will be argued that translation is not merely the activity of decoding one language in terms of the other, but is far more active and actually constitutes a surface of communication through its very activity. The two languages which are thus mediated do not match up neatly, their lacunae and their senses do not neatly correspond to each other. Besides problematizing the notion of languages as fixed entities which are transformed into each other through translation, this account also introduces all kinds of influences into the act of translation. Most notably among these are the power-relations that influence the development of correspondences between both languages, for example in dictionaries. This criticism can be found in the works of Sakabe Megumi, who remarks upon this phenomenon in the history of English-Japanese translation.

My conclusions are twofold; first of all, the correctness or incorrectness of a translation is no Boolean value, but rather a matter of convergence in the sense of C. S. Peirce. Secondly, the process of translation is not a strictly formal one in that it is subject to all kinds of influences which determine how this convergence is achieved. This is to say that instead of thinking of translation as the rendering of an extra-linguistic meaning in either language, more or less accurately, translation effectively constitutes a new language. This resulting language exists as a correspondence between elements from both languages which are translated into one another, conceived of in terms of a dynamic set of relations. In this sense cross-linguistic disagreement is the default position of any inter-language communication and the aim of translation is the creation of correspondences itself. In this process both languages are liable to change, though not necessarily to the same extent.