



Song Translation: Lyrics in Contexts

Johan Franzon / Annjo K. Greenall / Sigmund Kvam /
Anastasia Parianou (eds.)

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Preface

This book is the result of an international, collaborative project entitled *Song Translation – Lyrics in Contexts*, that saw its beginnings in 2017/2018. The contributions to the volume were presented and discussed at a workshop in Chania, Greece, in October 2019.

In addition to its dependency on the immediate musical context, singable song lyric translation also takes place within a wide range of semiotic and socio-cultural contexts. These contexts govern translation processes and make their mark on the translational products, while translation(s) can also be seen to, in turn, influence these contexts. A preoccupation with the study of translations in context is the hallmark above all of the descriptive approach to studying translation and translations, and each of the contributions to this volume honours this tradition by demonstrating a particular take on the relationship between song lyric translation and these contexts. A number of fascinating cases are used to illustrate this pivotal issue, from Leonard Cohen's songs translated into Norwegian and sung by female performers, to a student song ("Vårt land" ('Our land')) turned into the Finnish national anthem ("Maamme"); from the translation of liturgical texts in the Swedish Reformation, to the translation of hip hop in the foreign language classroom.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture at the University of Oslo, Norway, for having contributed funding throughout the three years of the project's existence. We also thank The Nordic Culture Fund in Copenhagen and The Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters in Helsinki for providing funding for publication costs and travel. Last but not least, considerable thanks are due to Østfold University College for valuable administrative support and for covering important expenses in connection with the workshop in Greece.

Without the excellent cooperation and unending patience of our contributors as well as our publisher Frank & Timme, this book would not have been possible. We are indebted to you all. A special thanks goes to Astrid Matthes and Oliver Renner at Frank & Timme for their tireless professionalism and support.

Corfu / Halden / Helsinki / Trondheim, September 2020

Johan Franzon / Annjo K. Greenall / Sigmund Kvam / Anastasia Parianou

Vorwort

Dieser Sammelband entspringt einem 2017/18 ausgearbeiteten Projekt *Song Translation – Lyrics in Contexts*. Die Beiträge sind aus einer Arbeitstagung hervorgegangen, die im Oktober 2019 in Chania in Griechenland veranstaltet wurde.

Die Übersetzung von Liedern bildet in vieler Hinsicht in der Translatologie einen Sonderfall: Denn zusätzlich zu rein inhaltlichen Aspekten kommen die Abhängigkeit von einer Melodie sowie die Einbettung in eine Vielzahl von semiotischen und sozio-kulturellen Kontexten zusätzlich zu einer Fülle von Aufführungssituationen. Eine Folge dieses Sachverhalts sind unterschiedliche Produktions- und Rezeptionsbedingungen für die Anfertigung solcher Übersetzungen – je nach Zielgruppe, Zweck und sozio-kulturellem Kontext. Hauptziel des vorliegenden Bandes ist die Analyse von solchen vielseitigen Translationssituationen, und zwar aus deskriptiver Sicht. Denn gerade deskriptive Ansätze ermöglichen einen empirisch gesicherten Zugang zu den komplexen Beziehungen zwischen Übersetzung, einer Vielzahl von Zielgruppen, einem vielseitigen Übersetzungszweck und dem besonderen sozio-kulturellen Kontext des jeweiligen Translationsfalls. Die Artikel im vorliegenden Sammelband beleuchten durch ihre Analysen wichtige Einzelaspekte dieses interessanten Forschungsfeldes – von Leonard Cohens Liedern übersetzt ins Norwegische für Sängerinnen, zu Translationen von Liedern in die Gebärdensprache, von Übersetzungen von liturgischen Texten während der schwedischen Reformation bis hin zur Verwendung von Liedübersetzungen zu didaktischen Zwecken – wie etwa am Beispiel von Hiphop-Texten im Fremdsprachenunterricht in Spanisch.

Für die Finanzierung des Projekts möchten wir dem Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture an der Universität Oslo herzlich danken, das uns über drei Jahre mit projektrettenden Beiträgen unterstützt hat. Für die Deckung von Publikationskosten und einem Teil der Reisekosten danken wir The Nordic Culture Fund in Kopenhagen und The Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters in Helsinki. Zu guter Letzt möchten wir dem Østfold University College für wertvolle

administrative Unterstützung sowie für die Deckung wichtiger Tagungskosten unseren Dank aussprechen.

Ohne die geduldige Zusammenarbeit unserer Autorinnen und Autoren wäre dieses Buch nicht möglich gewesen; auch nicht ohne die reibungslose Kooperation mit dem Verlag Frank & Timme. Einen herzlichen Dank an alle, insbesondere an Astrid Matthes und Oliver Renner bei Frank & Timme für eine sehr flexible Zusammenarbeit.

Halden / Helsinki / Korfu / Trondheim, im September 2020

Johan Franzon / Annjo K. Greenall / Sigmund Kvam / Anastasia Parianou

Making a case for a descriptive-explanatory approach to song translation research: Concepts, trends and models

1. Introduction

A fundamental characteristic of music is that it is made to be *shared*, with a few or many people, in different situations, within or across cultures. In the course of this sharing, both the words that often accompany the music and the music itself undergo *changes*, in form or content. Translation – both in a narrow and broader senses – is often involved in such processes, in various ways: words get translated from one language to another while the music remains unchanged, both words and music undergo alterations, the words travel unchanged while the music changes, and so on.

Residing until recently in the outskirts of disciplines such as musicology, translation studies and literary studies, academic interest in music and translation is currently rapidly growing.¹ A great range of articles and a sizeable number of substantial works on the topic have appeared over the last ten years. Helen Julia Minor's *Music, Text and Translation* (2013), an anthology presenting a diverse range of case studies of opera, art songs and popular songs, focuses on the mutual influence of lyrics and music in translational processes. Finnish translation scholar Irmeli Helin's *Nachhaltige Botschaft in den Stürmen der Geschichte: Kirchenlieder der Lutherzeit in ihren alten und neuen finnischen Übersetzungen* (2017) compares a selection of Martin Luther's hymns with their various Finnish translations. Two further monographs, Şebnem Susam-Saraeva's *Translation and Popular Music: Transcultural Intimacy in Turkish-Greek Relations* (2015) and Lucile Desblache's *Music and Translation: New Mediations in the Digital Age* (2019),

1 At least in the Western world, see Jun (2017: 93) on the apparent lack of interest in studying song translation in China.

focus on music and translation as cultural exchange, delving more deeply into the interrelationships between text, music, sociocultural and sociohistorical factors in translational processes within popular music and opera, respectively. Popular music and art music are also the respective main pivots in two influential books with a primarily practical or instructive intent written by authors who are also seasoned practitioners within music and translation, namely Peter Low (*Translating Song: Lyrics and Texts*, 2016), and Ronnie Apter and Mark Herman (*Translating for Singing: The Theory and Craft of Translating Lyrics*, 2016).

Every new, substantial contribution to a field needs to prove itself to be doing a job that previous works have revealed the need for, either by somehow neglecting it or expressly inviting it, and the current book is of course no exception. And the following is more or less how we see our mission: the literature referred to above has provided the field with many interesting case studies from all around the world, enlightening readerships on a multitude of genres (folk songs, jazz, Christmas carols, rock songs, pop songs, hymns, *Lieder*, *Schlager* music, opera, musicals, hip-hop, spirituals, etc.) looked at from the vantage point of a wide range of academic perspectives, such as literary adaptation studies, semiotics, dubbing and subtitling, fan studies, translation studies, music studies and accessibility studies. Opera and translation being a field that is relatively well covered in the literature (from Calvocoressi 1921 to Wilson-deRoze 2017), we turn our attention, here, to the song format. Previous studies of song translation have provided us with the beginnings of a broad overview of different translation practices at various times in various regions, and the field has become equipped with several new concepts explicitly tailor-made to the study of music and translation, such as *intercode translation* (Gorlée 1997), *singability* (Low 2003; 2017; Franzon 2008; 2009; 2015), and *interlingual covers* (Susam-Saraeva 2015; 2018). Two broad tracks are identifiable within the field: on the one hand, lyrics-focused studies which often, explicitly or implicitly, revolve around giving advice to translators on how to translate, and on the other, studies of song translations as historical and socio-cultural acts and objects. In this book, we would like to place lyrics centre stage, but from an expressly non-instructional, non-evaluative, *descriptivist* angle, an approach which also entails a historical and sociocultural focus. In his seminal

book, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (1995), Gideon Toury encourages researchers to build up a body of descriptive studies focused on patterns of textual shifts and their sociocultural explanations. In this volume, we take inspiration from this approach, as well as from Susam-Saraeva's (2008) call for

more descriptive and systemic studies [in the field of music and translation], focusing on questions such as: Who translates material that involves music? Where do they disseminate their translations? What is translated in the first place? For whom?

What kind of translation strategies, choices and decisions are adopted? And most importantly, why? (195, our emphasis)

In this book, we present a set of descriptive studies largely – but not exclusively – turned towards the latter two of this set of questions. These studies demonstrate the wide variety of different contexts that lyrics enter into dialogue with, such as musical, linguistic, performative, visual, medial, social, historical, cultural and technological. From different angles, they can all help answer the question of “why” various strategies, choices and decisions, are adopted.

In the following, we briefly discuss some concepts central to the sub-field of ‘song translation studies’, before presenting a visualization – a map – of where this sub-field might conceivably be situated within a hierarchy of related (sub-)fields. Next follows a broad overview and discussion of the theoretical and empirical ground covered by previous works that we perceive as falling within the sub-field, before we introduce the volume's various contributions.

2. The basic concepts

When studying song lyric translations, one needs to have an idea of what one means by *song*, *lyrics*, *translation* and *context*. Hence, in the following we discuss some definitional criteria for each of these concepts.

2.1. Song

Song can be defined generally and simply as a piece of music performed by a single voice, with or without instrumental accompaniment (*Encyclopedia Britannica*,

accessed October 2019). More elaborately, *The Harvard Brief Dictionary of Music* (Apel and Daniel 1971) has characterized it as a short composition for solo voice, usually accompanied by the piano, based on a poetic text and composed in such a way as to enhance rather than overshadow the significance of the text. Others, who have compared operatic arias to songs, have pointed out that the former is characterized by an emphasis on the musical elaboration, while in songs the words and the music are of equal importance (Apel and Daniel 1971: 278). Yet others have characterized songs as “plurisemiotic artefacts” (Fernández 2015: 270) or “mediated multiple text” (Kaindl 2005b: 241). In all of these cases, the providers of the definitions and characterizations have a particular genre in mind (here, art song vs. popular song), meaning some aspects of the characterizations will not fit songs from other genres. For example, popular songs, while they most often have a lead vocal, are not always performed ‘by a single voice’: often, there are several voices involved, even large choirs. And a German *Lied* performed live in concert is perhaps not best portrayed as a mediated multiple text. Hunting for a definition of song that fits all genres is not an easy task, but the following may be a starting point: a song is “a piece of music and lyrics – in which one has been adapted to the other, or both to one another – designed for singing performance” (Franzon 2008: 367). In order to distinguish it from for example opera, however, reference also has to be made to the song’s length: a song is generally thought of as a delimited entity; compared to a full opera, it is short. Finally, songs typically have a recognizable form: many genres of song have elements such as verses and choruses, refrains and bridges, although here there is of course a lot of variation.

2.2. Song lyrics

By *song lyrics*, we simply mean words bound to a piece of music in a song. Consequently, a lyric is a text which has been adapted to music (either through original writing or through translation) or has had a piece of music adapted to it. Song lyrics are predominantly oral texts meant for singing. Discussing translation, however, we need to bear in mind that lyrics can be translated for the purpose of understanding rather than singing (see e.g. Low 2003b: 94–95; Kaross 2013; Susam-Saraeva 2015: 63–95). If lyrics are made for singing performance, the rela-

tionship between the words and the music operates on the levels of both content and form. On the level of content, song lyrics, like poems, often implicitly suggest meanings rather than spell them out in lucid detail, and these meanings interact with musical meanings to form meaningful wholes. On the level of form, lyrics can shape conventional (or unconventional) patterns of verse, or patterns in a phonetic, vocal flow, through the distribution of stressed and unstressed syllables over strong and weak beats, open syllables over long notes and closed syllables over short notes. As mentioned in 2.1., songs are typically short, but there are genres, such as traditional ballads, that have long, epic, detailed narratives.

2.3. Translation

Translation is understood here, broadly, as a textual or non-textual operation which can be (but is often not) geared towards maximum semantic closeness to a given source text. The degree of closeness or distance from the source text is governed by contextual factors, where the *purpose* of the translation – such as singability in the case of song translation – is one such, all-important factor, demonstrating the clear relevance of functional translation studies for song translation research (Nord 1997; 2005; 2011). Inherited normative conceptions of translation (“‘equivalent’ translation is good translation”) and a lack of awareness of the importance of context and purpose may be the reason the emerging field of song translation studies still seems preoccupied with the impossible task of drawing a line between translation and what cannot be regarded as translation. Nevertheless, there is obviously a gliding scale from a situation with strong intertextual links between a source text lyric and a target text lyric, on the one hand, and very few or no such links on the other (see e.g. Susam-Saraeva 2008: 189; Franzon 2008; Kvam 2018: 272ff.).

Both close and not-so-close interlingual translation of verbal matter in song translation is frequently accompanied by changes to the non-verbal (musical, visual) elements of the song because of changes in the lyrics, as motivated by new functions of the song in the target environment and new cultural contexts (cf. Minors 2013; Desblache 2019: 4, 67). Changes at this level may or may not appear to warrant description by means of the label ‘translation’. Susam-Saraeva has

recently proposed a new concept – *interlingual covers* – to designate recordings or performances of songs resulting from interlingual activity, thus “covering all the various linguistic activities which may be deployed during the process: translation, adaptation, appropriation, and rewriting of the lyrics from scratch” (Susam-Saraeva 2018: 2). Such covers may include a switch in performer, and changes to the music and/or accompanying music videos (Susam-Saraeva, this volume). By mentioning the most important levels on which changes typically occur (lyrics, performer, musical arrangement and visuals), this definition comes across as a good alternative to the split notion of translation/adaptation within song translation research. The concept is not universally suitable, however, and may for example be less fitting for such song genres as art song, since we do not usually talk about ‘covers’ in those genres. Moreover, it excludes the phenomenon of intralingual song translation, which is also an interesting and important part of the larger picture (see the respective chapters by Fryer and Salvarani in this volume).

2.4. Context

A final concept that plays a crucial part in this book is that of *context*. Context can be looked at and talked about in two fundamentally different ways. Perhaps most commonly, context is thought of as elements that have some kind of independent existence outside of the perceiving individual, in other words “situational information” (Abowd et al. 1999: 304), used in the interpretation of a given focal element such as a word, a textual passage, a musical element, a material object, an action or a situation. Others take a more socio-cognitive stance, holding that all such knowledge cannot be seen as independent of human socio-cognitive environments but is rather filtered through such environments. In this volume, the predominant view of context aligns itself with the first of these two stances, although we also see examples of the second (see Greenall, this volume). Lyrics are seen as surrounded by various ontologically grounded (but also cognitively apprehended, of course) forms of situational information, spanning from the most immediate context, that is the musical context, via the functional context (as constituted by the purpose of the translation), to various forms of sociocultural context, encompassing ideologies, the temporal dimension, institutions, audiences, and so on.

3. Translation studies and song translation: A map

Interdisciplinary by nature, studies of songs and song lyrics in translation have emerged from a number of different overarching fields, mostly musicology and literary studies but occasionally also popular music studies, theatre studies and, increasingly, translation studies. Because of this broad provenance, a multitude of different and valuable perspectives have been accumulated, but contributors have also often operated without much knowledge of one another, leading to a typical lack of interconnectivity between works and thus to a certain lack of a common momentum. A possible remedy would be to consolidate the position of song translation research within translation studies, which is an interdisciplinary field (see e.g. Snell-Hornby et al. 1994) and thus well-suited to accommodate a complex object of study such as songs in translation, functioning as a meeting-place for researchers within the discipline. Looking at song translation research as a sub-branch of translation studies might moreover invite a somewhat closer attention to some of translation studies' central concepts and insights, honed and distilled for decades within that field, that are equally basic to song translation research but are not always taken sufficiently into account or properly understood. Although many song translation scholars are familiar with translation studies, they sometimes show traces of assumptions and concepts that have largely been left behind in such studies. One such assumption is that it should be possible to objectively identify a clear cut-off point between the phenomenon of 'translation' and 'non-translation', with the latter often labelled 'adaptation'. Another is that the notion of 'original text' is something that can be unproblematically used to label the point of departure for a given translation: in fact, especially when it comes to song translation, the notions of 'original' and 'originality' are often extremely relative.

Translation studies could furthermore, we believe, add general perspectives and provide useful methodological tools for song translation research, such as those developed within descriptive translation studies, which we are drawing on in this volume. Conversely, bringing music into the field of translation studies might broaden the horizons of scholars within that larger discipline (a point also noted by di Giovanni 2017: 15 and Desblache 2019: 6).

The top node in our Figure 1 below is thus *translation studies*. This node is connected to several established sub-fields which we do not name (for reasons of lack of space), apart from *audiovisual translation*, which, as will be argued below, can be reasonably conceived as the mother node for translation and music. Below that node are several concepts used for labelling translation studies subfields. The map² in Figure 1 further attempts to see various subcategories of song translation research in relation to each other.

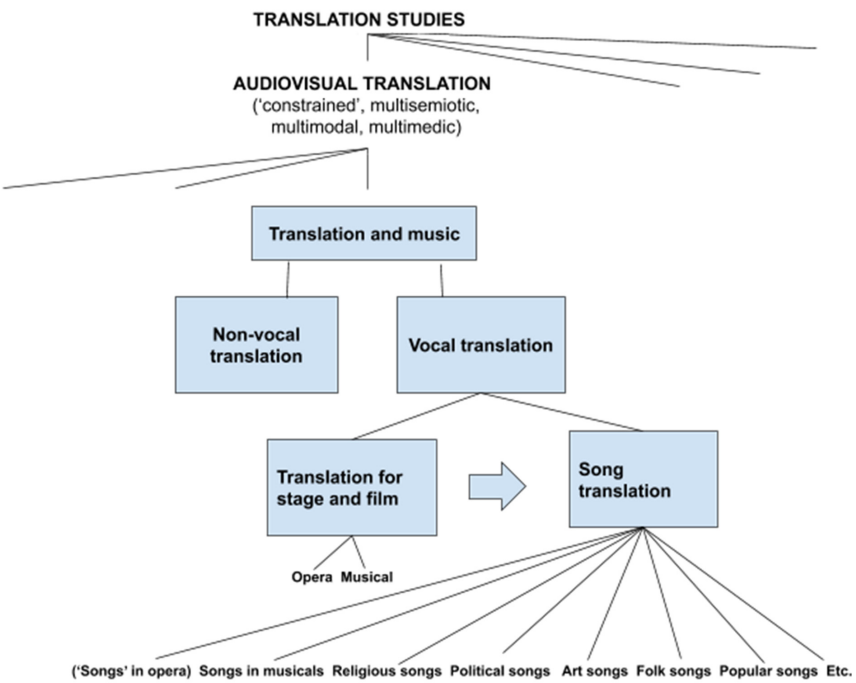


Figure 1. Translation studies and song translation research: A map

2 Other overviews of music and translation exist in the form of so-called maps, which are useful and give important insight into the relationships between various aspects of music and translation, e.g. Kaindl and Desblache’s (2013) map in Desblache (2019: 220), and Qin Jun’s map (Jun 2017: 94). The former, however, is too comprehensive for our purposes, and the latter not quite comprehensive enough.

Within translation studies, audiovisual translation (AVT) is one of the relatively new sub-fields that have experienced rapid growth in the last few decades, and now finds itself solidly established. Several scholars have argued that AVT and song translation have much in common. Susam-Saraeva (2019) and Jimenéz (2017) both point to general similarities and an overlap of data within the two fields: the object of study is in both cases *multisemiotic* (several semiotic codes, and not just the verbal one, communicate alongside and in interaction with each other), *multimodal* (several modalities, e.g. sound and visuals, are often involved), and *multimedial* (different media – TV, radio, the internet – are used in dispersing the product in question). Moreover, both AVT and song translation are forms of *constrained translation*, a term coined by Titford (1982: 113ff.) to characterize prototypical AVT. (see also Mayoral et al. 1988, and Cintrão 2009: 814–815). This notion refers to the idea that the translator of the verbal elements enjoys less freedom in terms of choosing the form of the translated utterance because the verbal content depends so greatly on other aspects of the intersemiotic, multi-modal and multimedial whole. In subtitling, for example, the translation generally has to be shorter than the dialogue it is based on, given the limited amount of space and time allowed for each piece of dialogue on the screen. In dubbing, lip syncing is a major factor in allowing which and how many words it will be possible to fit in. In singable song translation, the existing music exercises a similar constraint.³ In all three cases, these constraints often lead to a translation where the verbal content is further removed semantically from the source than current *expectancy norms* (Chesterman 1997: 64ff.) for many other kinds of translation usually ‘allow’. Finally, as music and songs are ubiquitous in many kinds of AV products, AVT theorists have already been preoccupying themselves with discussing many of the various ways they are being dealt with in translation. We thus consider translation and music, on the most general level, as a sub-branch of AVT. *Translation and music* (e.g. Susam-Saraeva 2008; Minors 2013; Desblache 2019) seems to have established itself as a generally accepted overarching term, encom-

3 Cf. also the notion of non-verbal semiotics as a specific constraint for song translations (Kvam 2018: 281–284).

passing research on any musical genre, with or without lyrics, regardless of theoretical or methodological approach.⁴ Below this node, we find *non-vocal* and *vocal translation* (Gorlée 2005). Purely non-vocal (i.e. instrumental) music undergoing some kind of versioning can also be (and has been) looked at through the prism of the notion of translation, particularly through an extension of Roman Jakobson's notion of intersemiotic translation (see e.g. Desblache 2019). Vocal music – although it does not always involve words, as in the case of vocalises or in Sami yoik (understood as partly hum or chant in Anderson 2005) – usually involves verbal and non-verbal matter in fluid combination. Vocal translation is further subdivided into *translation for stage and film* on the one hand – singing integrated in larger musical structures⁵ – and *song translation* on the other. This distinction cannot be drawn too tightly, since the former category can be seen to contain 'songs' (at least 'parts', such as arias, recitatives, trios, etc.). The justification for separating these two genres into two boxes is, however, rooted in generic differences that require different types of analyses and treatment and typical differences in research focus,⁶ which has led to a largely shared perception of the two as separate areas. In other words, we find there to be good reason to recognize song translation research as an independent category. Figure 1 lists, below the song translation box, a number of different types or genres of song – this list is of course not exhaustive. As will be seen, research has been carried out on many such types/genres, but not on all, and not extensively.

4 *Music-linked translation* (Golomb 2005) is a similarly general term, which has gained a little currency.

5 Larger musical structures include such differing genres as oratorios as well as oral epics sung in traditional cultures all over the world and arguably comparable to a staged performance. For various such traditions compared and discussed as performances, see for example Reichl (2000).

6 As noted by Susam-Saraeva (2019), research on translations of opera and other art music typically focuses on accessibility (i.e. the purpose of increasing the number and type of audiences that are able to enjoy the artistic output). Studies on opera translation also encompass aspects of production history and cultural politics in parallel with theatre translation studies. An exponent of this field of study is the 2020 volume edited by Șerban and Chan titled *Opera in Translation*. Research on non-canonized – popular – musical genres (typically songs) in translation usually focuses on their journeys within and across cultures (Susam-Saraeva 2019: 351).

4. Some trends in current song translation research

The field of song translation research is no longer as understudied as it was a decade or two ago: a great number of studies have been produced recently, and interest seems to be on an upward trajectory. But the field does still seem somewhat disparate and even fragmented: because of its aforementioned interdisciplinarity, research may become buried, so to speak, within different disciplines, thus being easily missed and hence sometimes overlooked by researchers from other disciplines.

This fragmentary state of the field makes it challenging to see patterns or trends in the research. As in most other academic fields, it is possible to distinguish between predominantly conceptual/conceptualizing works on the one hand, and predominantly empirical works on the other. Both types tend to take a particular genre as their point of departure or focus, such as operatic songs, songs in musicals, religious songs and political songs. Empirical work can be further subdivided into work that looks at how lyrics are translated in (and as a result of) their varying contexts and how songs travel within and across cultural contexts. In addition, a branch of what we might call *applied song translation studies* has been developing, one preoccupied with the role of song translation and translated songs in for example accessibility and pedagogical contexts.

Contributions to the more conceptually-oriented and concept-providing branch include the frequently cited works of Peter Low (2003a; 2003b; 2005; 2008; 2013; 2016) and Johan Franzon (2005; 2008; 2015). Low, a seasoned practitioner within music and translation, has produced several models for analysis of lyrics in translation, among others the pentathlon principle (2003a; 2005), which outlines five different parameters that song translators need to navigate among and within when translating:

- sense
- singability
- naturalness
- rhyme
- rhythm

Intended to guide song translators in their striving towards optimal translations (and perhaps also to assist researchers in identifying such optimal translations), Low's work and his categories have also been put to good use in some more descriptively oriented studies. Both Low and Franzon have gone into depth with regard to the crucial notion of the singability of lyrics, which the latter defines as "a musico-verbal fit of a text to music" (Franzon 2008: 373). Taking popular music as his point of departure, Franzon, too, offers tools for analysis of lyrics in translation, for example his much-used list of options available to the budding song translator, namely "not translating the lyrics, translating the lyrics without taking the music into consideration, writing new lyrics, adapting the music to the translation, and adapting the translation to the music" (*ibid.*).

While work by Low, Franzon and similar scholars tends to focus on the translation of lyrics in their musical, but also functional, or purposive, context, other predominantly conceptual studies have dispersed the spotlight more broadly, moving slightly or fully away from lyrics and towards further contexts, for example the interplay between the various semiotic layers involved in song translation (e.g. Kaindl 2005a; 2005b; 2012; 2013). Yet other studies have focused on the role of the song translator him or herself, also an important part of the context: for example, Greenall (2014; 2015; 2017b) looks into the motivations of singer-translators of popular music for carrying out translations (tribute, artistic, pedagogical and political), and into the role of the translator's *voice* (metaphorical and non-metaphorical) in shaping the translated product. A substantial group of researchers, such as Susam-Saraeva (2015; 2018), Okyayuz (2016) and Desblache (2019), have focused on music and translation as cultural exchange, theorizing around the interrelationships between text, music and sociocultural and sociohistorical factors in translational processes.

Some of the predominantly empirical studies on song translation, especially those adopting the more instructionally oriented representatives of the literature as a point of departure, tend to be overtly or more subtly evaluative, assuming a 'right' or 'wrong' way of translating songs, which is fine, of course, as long as the work in question is open about its prescriptive/evaluative aim. This is, unfortunately, not always the case – many a work that strongly or weakly professes scientific

objectivity ends up slipping into evaluative subjectivity (see, e.g. Aminoroaya and Amirian 2016). A majority of recent analyses, however, can be characterized as non-evaluative or descriptive, or more precisely, *descriptive-explanatory*, a term that more precisely captures the nature of descriptivist research, proposed by Saldanha and O'Brien (2013: 50). Most of them preoccupy themselves with one single genre, for example art song, where we find works by for example Beavitt (2018), who looks at the translation of Schubert's *Winterreise* into English, Apter and Herman (2012), who analyse Rachmaninoff's *Six Choral Songs*, and Kvam (2016), who examines English translations of Schubert songs into English. Furthermore, Helin (2017) investigates the genre of religious songs, comparing a selection of Martin Luther's hymns with their various Finnish translations. Popular and folk music genres are of course also strongly represented: Amini et al. (2018) looked at English Christmas carols translated into Chinese and Indonesian, Risso (2016) studied the translation of hip-hop from English into Italian (see also Taviano 2012; 2016; Tervo 2014), while Opperman et al. (2018) took as their object of study the translation of songs written by a specific singer-songwriter (i.e. Leonard Cohen; see also Mus 2018; 2019; and Angelsen and Mitchell, this volume). Bontrager (2011) analysed musical songs from animated Disney movies translated from English into Spanish. Musical songs, whether in Disney movies or not, are currently a popular topic among song translation researchers (see e.g. Khoshsaligheh and Ameri 2016; Stopar 2016; Di Giovanni 2017; Metin Tekin and Isisag 2017; Reus 2017; 2018). One particularly interesting example is constituted by Liubinienė and Beniušytė-Milašienė's (2014) study of the translation of songs from the 2004 animated feature film *Garfield* for a Lithuanian audience. The authors found that the main strategies used were to replace the original soundtracks by Lithuanian popular and folk songs, to transcreate lyrics, and even to put additional songs in the movie, employing voices of popular local actors who were well-known to Lithuanians, strategies that led to great commercial success.

Other noteworthy (sub-)genres that are represented on the popular music side are mid-century, commercial hit tunes or *Schlager* music (Schmitz-Gropengießer 2012; Smith-Sivertsen 2016), country music (Haapaniemi and Laakkonen 2019) and *chansons* (Tinker 2005; Fernandez 2015). When it comes to the large category of folk music, which may contain vastly different types of lyrical and musical

forms in different cultures, we find, among others, studies of Jordanian folk songs translated from Arabic into English (Al-Azzam and Al-Kharabsheh 2011), Kurdish folk songs translated into Turkish (Öner 2008) and spirituals translated from English into French (Desblache 2001). Al-Azzam and Al-Kharabsheh (2011) in particular demonstrate problems characteristic of songs in an oral tradition, such as even understanding the source text correctly.

Some of these studies centre on specific composers or artists. This holds for Cintrão (2009), where the topic is the Brazilian artist (and previous minister of culture) Gilberto Gil's translation of songs by Anglo-American pop artists as well as translations of his own songs into English. Finally, some researchers present case studies of single songs, for example Guthrie (2007), who looks at various English-language reinventions of Weill and Brecht's "Die Moritat von Mackie Messer" (often as "The Ballad of Mack the Knife"), and Fochi (2019), who traces the sociomusicological and linguistic journey of the Italian song "O sole mio" into the American market. Finally, Haapaniemi and Laakkonen (2019) examine Hank Williams' "Ramblin' Man" in translation into Finnish, with an interesting focus on the materiality of the song as sung and refashioned by the translator himself.

Finally, song translations are discussed in relation to a variegated canvas of *contexts*, from the immediate, musical context (e.g. rhythm, rhyme, musical meaning), to technological, visual, paratextual, functional, artistic, literary, institutional, historical, biographical, social, cultural and political contexts. In fact, much of the newer work within song translation research focuses less on the translated lyrics or songs and more on precisely the historical, social, cultural and political contexts that surround this activity. One representative of this branch is Fruela Fernandez, whose study of Jacques Brel as covered by the American artist Scott Walker is focused on how cultural products are produced and disseminated, with the ultimate aim of showing "how the study of translation can become an exploratory tool in historical and cultural analysis" (Fernandez 2015: 269). Susam-Saraeva characterizes this branch as research that investigates "the travels of non-canonized genres across linguistic and cultural borders and the role translations play in these travels" (2019: 351). Susam-Saraeva's own work is a strong representative of this focus, especially her 2015 book on the role of translation in the

Turkish-Greek rapprochement in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Marc's (2015) work on 'travelling songs' in general and Rollason's (2007) case study on Bob Dylan in the Spanish-speaking world also belong here, as does, arguably, Hayakawa's (2010) study of German *Lieder* in Japan.

We mentioned at the outset of this section that some scholarship orients itself towards what could perhaps be characterized as an applied branch of song translation studies. Many works on accessibility – translation for the visually impaired and deaf/hard of hearing – are focused on opera translation and hence not on song as such; one notable exception, however, is Maler (2013), who studies the translation of English-language songs into American Sign Language (cf. Viljanmaa, this volume). Another fast-growing sub-field deals with the role of song translation and song translations in second or foreign language learning (e.g. Hewitt 2000; Kaross et al. 2012; Greenall 2017a).

A miscellaneous set of studies which may point to future trends within song translation research includes two studies focused on especially complex intersemiotic relationships between the source, the target and their contexts. In Yeung (2008), the author analyses intertextual aspects of the way Gustav Mahler's "Das Lied von der Erde" is translated into a semiotically complex modern Chinese dance, while Nadiani and Rundle (2016) present an account of interlingual translations between non-musical and musical texts (more precisely, they report on a creative project where "poems in Romagnolo dialect [a variety of Italian] are transposed into English and performed as blues songs, and in which songs from the Anglo-American blues/roots/folk tradition are transposed and performed as poems in Romagnolo dialect" (Nadiani and Rundle 2016: 125)). Reception studies may also prove a fruitful avenue for song translation research. We might mention here Aleksandrowicz' (2019) study on the reception of subtitled song, where he investigated whether song-like – as opposed to plain prose – translations in subtitles made a difference to the audience's appreciation of the film (he found that they did not).

5. A descriptive-explanatory approach to studying lyrics in context

As stated in the introduction, the aim of the book is to place lyrics and their translation centre stage. A descriptive approach typically investigates translation strategies, patterns in the use of such strategies, and how the choice of translation strategy is influenced by various aspects of the surrounding context (Tourey 1995). Song translation research also investigates strategy use in song translation, and some researchers have borrowed and/or adapted categories from precisely translation studies. Kvam (2014; 2018), for example, adapts Nord's functional approach (Nord 1997; 2005), while Aminoroaya and Amirian (2016) borrowed the 12 micro-strategic categories formulated by Schjoldager et al. (2008) (direct transfer, calque, direct translation, oblique translation, explication, adaptation, etc.) in their study of songs in Persian dubbed animated movies, finding that direct translation and adaptation were the strategies most often deployed by the dubbing translators, and that this and other, less prominent results could largely be explained with reference to constraints in the dubbing situation. Amini et al. (2018) made use of Ana Guerra's (2012) list of 15 translation strategies (adaptation, borrowing, calque, compensation, omission, description, equivalence, etc.) in order to look for patterns in the translations of English Christmas carols, finding that the most used strategy in Chinese translations was equivalence, as motivated by a linguacultural mismatch between English and Chinese, while for Indonesian translations omission was more common, as motivated by a desire to recreate rhythm and rhyme. Finally, Risso (2016) used strategy labels from works on poetry translation (notably from Lefevere 1975) to identify what translators of rap do, finding that they generally produce rhyme translations, free-verse translations and mixed translations.

Strategies specific to song translation have also been suggested in some of the more conceptually-oriented song translation research. Many of these, often-cited categories were originally proposed with a prescriptive intention, but they can easily be – as they often have been – re-interpreted as descriptive categories, since what some scholars ask translators to do is often what translators typically do

anyway. We have subsumed these specific strategy categories under three headings, reflecting the journey from initial to increasingly more specific strategic decisions:

Macrolevel strategies:

1. The decision not to translate
2. The decision to translate, which triggers the need for the next level of decisions, whether to:
 - a. Translate non-singably, or
 - b. Translate singably

Mezzolevel strategies:⁷ Approximation vs. redoing: rewriting/domesticating/formally adjusting

Microlevel strategies: Detailed strategies for approximation or redoing

The decision whether to translate a given song or not is not as obvious as it may seem, hence the two major macrolevel strategies, to translate or not to translate. Penrod (2017) reports on the conflict, among art song enthusiasts, regarding whether such songs ought to be sung in the original or whether it is acceptable to translate them, and Greenall (2014a) discusses the fact that though many artists choose to cover pop songs in the original language, translating them and performing them in one's own language could produce a greater degree of perceived authenticity. Furthermore, when the decision has been made to translate the song, the next major decision is whether to translate it non-singably or singably, a decision governed by the song's purpose, or *skopos* (see Low 2003b; Kvam 2019: 185ff.). In subtitles, for example, the *skopos* may be to give the hearer/reader the gist of a given song lyric, or it may be to enable the audience to sing along to the tune using the words of the translated lyrics, something that will require two very different translations. If the song instead is dubbed and hence performed as a song,

7 See Kelandrias (this volume), whose Schjoldager-inspired 'macrostrategies' cover both our macrolevel and mezzolevel strategies.