

## ***No 'Common Ground' - Some theses when discussing quantitative vs qualitative research***

for DGÜD (Heidelberg) by Heidrun Gerzymisch

It is often overlooked in debates on quantitative vs. qualitative research designs in 'translation theory' that *collective* standards are applicable only for the collective and are not identifiable as (translation) phenomena. Establishing a *collective standard* presupposes grouping *individual* objects with the same parameter range in a process of *collectivization*. A *collective* differs from the extensional *individual* set of objects in that the identity of the objects, their individual identifiability is lost. *Individualizing parameter values* are 'anonymized' because they are not relevant for the statistical investigation and are, therefore, no longer accessible on an *individual* level of text and translation. The process of *collectivization*, the grouping of *individual* objects relative to a *collective* analyzing parameter thus implies a 'gain' (quantitatively comparable data) and a 'loss' (*individualizing parameter values*). It needs to be kept in mind that collective quality translation *standards* do not reveal *individualizing parameters* like the translation situation or purpose, the translator's competence or other factors that usually constitute a translation situation. Being no longer identifiable as phenomena, projecting *collective standards* to individual texts is, therefore, a fallacy.

The same is true when projecting a *collective* parameter value at a system level as 'type', following Pierce's type-token differentiation, and then transferring it to individual instances in texts. While it is possible to project the mean value of a distribution relative to a *collective-analyzing* parameter as an inherent feature to a system's type by way of *generalization*, the statistical mean of the normal distribution curve changes its status in the process: it is no longer a value in a range of (dis)continuous values (for *individual* objects) but a discrete inherent value of a type on the *system* level in opposition to other inherent values of comparable types. The deviation range and the number of statistically investigated objects are no longer accessible and the process is irreversible. On top of the anonymization of *identifying parameters* during the *collectivization* process, the *generalization* process thus involves another loss, the number of objects investigated and their deviation range, in exchange for a higher rank system type. It is therefore a fallacy to assume that a collective *standard* as type, for instance 'normalization' or 'explication' can systematically be found on the phenomenological or *individual* level of texts. If this is nevertheless done, it implies a false reasoning and we speak of a *fallacy of re-collectivization or of-re-individualization*. This implies that from the results of a statistical analysis no conclusions can be drawn with respect to the *individual* objects in the collective, much less on the phenomenological level.