
TRANSLATION AND LANGUAGE TEACHING. Malmkjaer, K. et al.. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1998, 144 pp.

After hovering in a shadowy limbo for at least a century, translation

in language teaching has eventually been rescued to the sunlight. Its upsurge has been witnessed during the last two decades in an unprecedented way. *Translation and Language Teaching* is, therefore, a timely publication given the impending transformation being coined in translation spheres.

Translation and Language Teaching is a collection of 11 (eleven) articles/papers, whose authors rigorously explore the potentiality of the mutual collaboration between the two areas involved. Of special interest is the overview of the history of translation in language teaching, which accounts for the bad reputation translation eventually got to have within the language teaching community and shows how the traditional arguments against its use can all terminate if classroom translation assumes a different role or if it somehow “resembles translation proper sufficiently closely” (p.2). The volume is strategically divided into three parts. The three contributions in Part One focus on the issue of the kind of language needed in translator training; the four papers in Part Two propose ways in which translation exercises can be used in language classrooms. Finally, the four articles in Part Three draw attention to similarities and differences between the concerns of teachers of translation and teachers of language who share an interest in translation practice in language teaching.

Part One – Language Teaching for Translators - first features a

paper by Mackenzie entitled *The Place of Language Teaching in a Quality-Oriented Translator’s Training Programme*. Written within the perspective of a functional theory of translation, it suggests the main attributes of translators “as providers of professional service” (p.15). Rather than mere linguistic expertise, what translators need is the “ability, firstly to recognize where their knowledge of skills are lacking, and secondly to supplement these inadequacies through information search and cooperative activities” (ibid). It is this cooperative attitude which informs both her teaching and the model of translation she proposes.

In *Teaching Translation into L2: A TT-Oriented Approach*, Weatherby tackles the basic question: “How can translation courses into L2 overcome the stigma of unprofessionalism attached to this type of translation and acquire the status of preparation for real professional activity?” (p. 21). In an attempt to answer this question she provides a largely TT-oriented approach which helps raising “awareness that translation is not simply a matter of literalist fidelity” (p. 28), as in the

traditional translation taught at school, but a way of taking a initial step towards professional translation.

Anderman's *Finding the Right Word – Translation and Language Teaching* - is concerned with the problems translators face when trying "to match lexical items between source language (SL) and target language (TL)" (p.39). She elaborates on issues such as Translationese – Discrepancy in Lexical Frequency between SL and TL (English and Swedish), Learning New Words, Textbooks and Dictionaries, Language Teaching Methodology and Maturational Stages of Learning, and finally, Teaching Language through Translation.

Part Two - Translation and Language Teaching - brings as its first article *The Foreigner in the Refrigerator-Remarks about Teaching Translation to University Students of Foreign Languages*. Klein-Braley and Franklin report on current translation practice in German universities. They discuss two possible approaches to teaching translation: the 'holistic', beginning directly on texts (learning by doing), or the 'atomistic' (sub-text-level materials). Their advice is: 'real' texts to approach the process

of professional translation as far as possible.

Newson's proposal in *Translation and Foreign Language Learning* is a simple model for teaching translation in an EFL context where translation serves as a test for evaluating ability in the target language. The writer presents suggestions by fixing parameters such as: limitation for the kind of text to be translated, computer programs to measure texts in terms of word frequency, word processing measurements of readability, the creation of a data bank of such selected texts, syntactical contrastive studies of the two languages for spotting potential translation / interference problems.

In his paper *The Principled Use of Oral Translation in Foreign Language Teaching*, Stibbard regards the first language as a valuable asset to the learner and argues that "its use in EFL settings is by no means detrimental to foreign language development" (p.69). He claims translation can be a useful pedagogical tool provided there is a sound understanding of the many factors affecting the translation process. The author puts forward, rather enthusiastically, several justifications for the use of

translation. Among them, one supported by the affective humanistic approaches in TEFL which emphasize “the need to reduce anxiety in the early stages of language learning by allowing some use of the mother tongue” (p.71). He goes as far as to say that translation should be included in a teaching program as a ‘*fifth skill*’ together with the four other skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening.

The last text of part two – *How Different are the Results of Translation Task ? A Study of Lexical Errors*, developed by Källkvist, investigates the distribution and types of lexical errors in different production tasks. The paper aims at comparing lexical errors among the major lexical word classes: nouns, lexical verbs and adjectives induced in free compositions and in translations. Higher proportions of lexical errors were found to occur in translations.

Part Three – At the Interface - introduces us to Ivanova in *Educating the Language Elite – Teaching Translation for Translator Training*. She discusses the ambiguities of the competence / skill distinction in translation theory and tries to define the

requirements the translation task encompasses. Language learners’ translation processing and its underlying cognitive mechanisms (particularly interlanguage connections) are also taken into account. Specially insightful is the link she makes between the common features of translation, metalinguistic tasks and reading-writing, thus hinting translation to be “a skill requiring highly analysed knowledge and high control” (p.95). The author argues “learners’ motivation can be increased when they are encouraged to explore their own strategies and interact in drafting and revision” (p.104) while translating in the classroom.

Teaching What They didn’t Learn as Language Students, by Vienne sets out to demonstrate the complexities involved in translating, which go beyond mere linguistic competence. To this aim, she categorically emphasizes the centrality of situational analysis and practice in resource research and exploitation in training professionals translators.

Qualification for Professional Translator- Translation in Language Teaching Versus Teaching Translation is Schäffner’s agenda in this paper, where she states that translation

exercises in language learning programmes have a different aim compared to translation practice in a specially designed syllabus for translator training. For her, translation competence involves “an awareness of and conscious reflection on all the relevant factors for the production of a TT that appropriately fulfils its intended function” (p.125).

Bringing the book to a close, *Communication Strategies, Learning Strategies and Translation Strategies* portrays Chesterman’s research on strategies, a concept which arrived to Translation Theory only in the 1980s, with research into think-aloud protocols (TAP). In Translation Studies, work on Translation Strategies has been based on research on communication and learning strategies and also on taxonomies of translation shifts. Although it is addressed to teachers of translation and teachers of language with an interest in translation in language teaching, professional translators may also derive benefit from this essential introductory reading. The publication might also be of interest as a modular component in degree courses in Translation and also in

Applied Linguistics and TEFL. All papers are consistently lucid and interesting, bearing pertinent research evidence and enriched by exemplified illustrations to support the main arguments. They are written in a rather straightforward style and contemplate the reader with a wisely woven integration of findings from research on *Language Teaching for Translators, Translation in Language Teaching* and their *Interface*. To this extent, the authors have succeeded in setting the grounds for translation teaching in the modern history of translation. Revealing the pitfalls and challenges of translation, the authors take us to a panoramic journey through translation teaching history and domain into the general landscape of Translation Studies. In sum, the book has accomplished the practical albeit ambitious goal of dealing with the pros and cons of including translation in the language classroom. It has supplied the translation terrain with a rich contribution, rescuing translation teaching from its long-dated slumber and placing it where it deserves.

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