



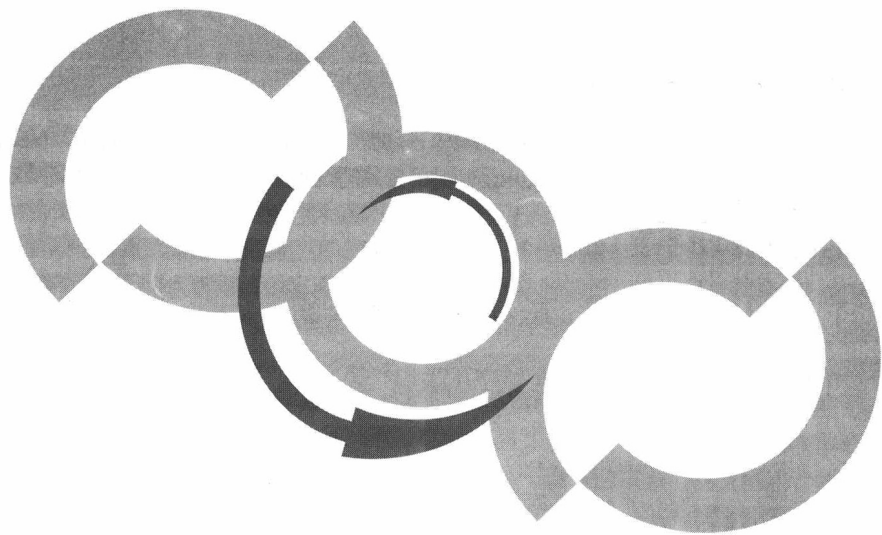
Curriculum Design, Needs Assessment and Translation Pedagogy

翻译教学：需求分析与课程设置

李德凤 著

外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS



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Preface

The past three decades have witnessed considerable development in the discipline of translation studies. The most remarkable change is its move away from the traditional prescriptive approach towards the adoption of an innovative descriptive approach in the study of translation. Such a move has enabled the subject to be studied from new perspectives, such as the polysystem, cultural, feminist and corpus-assisted approaches.

As translation studies gains momentum in its growth and establishes itself as an independent discipline, the market for language and translation services has also been growing rapidly as the result of increasing globalization and internationalization. Common Sense Advisory, a market research firm, estimated the global market for language services was approximately \$26 billion in the year of 2010, according to its six-month study involving 23,380 suppliers of translation and interpreting services across 149 countries. This fast rising market demand for bilingual and translation skills and expertise, coupled with the strong development in translation studies as an independent discipline, has led to proliferation of translation training programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in many countries.

China is probably the country that has seen the most robust growth in translation training programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in the last five years. As of early 2011, there are altogether 42 BA and 158 MA translation programmes. Unlike many other established disciplines, translation studies is still a young discipline and translation training, as one component, does not have a bulk of related literature either in Chinese or English to consult with respect to many of the curricular and operational issues. As such, the exciting growth of translation training in China has been accorded with numerous opportunities but at the same time also met with tremendous challenges in many aspects, e.g. curricular designs, teaching

methods, materials development, testing and assessment, teacher training and so forth. It is apparent that there is a dire need for research on translation teaching. Happily, many teachers have embarked on the project of translation teaching in the Chinese context.

During my days of pursuing graduate studies, I specialized in both translation studies and language education, taking a particular interest in data-based empirical research methods in language studies. Therefore, when I started teaching translation at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, I took a particular interest in research on translation teaching, attempting a combination of education theories with empirical research methods in the endeavor. Over the past ten years, I have carried out a couple of projects on translation teaching and published a number of articles in international journals reporting my own search and research for answers to some of the focal issues in translation teaching.

This idea of a volume of collected articles on translation teaching came from the suggestions of colleagues and friends. Over the years, they have repeatedly urged me to make a selection of my articles on translation teaching, compile them into an edited volume and make them accessible to readers in China, as many of them have little access or are even still denied access to research published in international journals. At first I was somewhat dubious about such a need. However, in the past few years, I have received numerous emailed messages from teachers and graduate students in China as well as from other parts of the world, requesting one or more of my articles and without fail always citing little or limited accessibility as the grounds for such requests. So, finally, I was convinced of the market need for such a book and made a selection of 12 of my articles on translator training and compiled them into the current volume.

The book consists of three parts, each containing four articles. The first part deals with some fundamental issues in translation teaching: for instance, the perennial question on whether language teaching should be a component in translator training curriculums; the great debate in translator training on whether theory should be taught and how it can be most effectively taught in translation programmes; the thorny issue of translation testing and how a teaching-oriented approach can be adopted to improve translation testing.

The second part focuses on curriculum design, the most important aspect of translation teaching. As the primary goal of almost all translator training programmes is to produce competent translators, specialized translation

makes up the major and most important component in many translation programmes. Therefore, specialized translation courses in Hong Kong, where they have been offered for several decades, are chosen for analysis from a curricular perspective. This is then followed by a more detailed analysis of two popular specialized translation courses, namely commercial translation and journalistic translation. As translation technology has also become very important in professional translation today, the last chapter in this part takes up the issue of translation technology in translation curriculum.

The third part argues for the adoption of a needs assessment model in translation pedagogy and curriculum development. It is contended that the designing and a translation curriculum, including curricular content, teaching methods, and assessment and testing, should always be informed by societal needs and therefore should invariably begin with an assessment of the needs of the major stakeholders or the market. Three case studies designed to survey the needs of three different groups of stakeholders in translation training, namely translation trainees, professional translators and administrators of translation services, are then presented for analysis.

This book is geared towards translation teachers, graduate students as well as researchers of translation studies. It provides answers to some fundamental issues and questions that each and every translation teacher may face in their teaching. These issues will also be of interest to graduate students of translation studies since many of them are indeed translation teachers in the making. Besides, the data-based research projects reported in the book may inspire graduate students who are searching for ideas for their theses and/or research methods to carry out their research projects. Some may even simply replicate some of the projects contained therein as the designs and methods can be easily transferred to a new research context with minimal modification. Additionally, teachers and scholars who aspire to publish in international journals, particularly those who have a keen interest in carrying out data-based empirical translation research, can take advantage of the methodological designs as references for their own projects and familiarize themselves with the format and style for publication in international journals. It is also for this purpose that additional editing of the articles is kept to minimum in the compilation of the book.

Finally, I should like to express my thanks to all the journals that have previously published these articles of mine and have kindly granted me the copyright permission to include them in this book. I am also grateful to

Hong Kong Research Grants Council, Shanghai Jiaotong University and Shandong University for providing needed funding for carrying out these empirical projects and publishing the reports. Special thanks are due to all the participants, students, teachers, professional translators and administrators of language services and translation companies, for taking their precious time to complete the questionnaires and attend the interviews. Without their most generous support, the projects upon which many of the research reports are based would not have been possible. Grateful thanks go to editors of Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press for the coordination and editing they have provided for the book. Also thanks to Jing Liu and Jia Yan for their assistance in the preparation of the book.

Defeng Li

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Part I

Fundamental Issues in Translation Teaching

Language Teaching in Translator Training

Translation Theory in Translation Teaching

Reflective Journals in Translation Teaching

Making Translation Testing More Teaching-oriented

Language Teaching in Translator Training¹

Abstract: In recent years there has been an increasing interest among translation scholars and practitioners alike in promoting translation professionalism and hence winning recognition for translation studies as an independent discipline. Many have convincingly and justly argued for the existence of a hardcore subject-matter knowledge for translation studies and have stressed the importance of this knowledge in the development of the students' translational competence. Unfortunately, in this attempt, the importance of language competence and thus language training is unduly played down.

This article examines this issue by looking at translator training in Hong Kong. It argues that the assumption of students L1 and L2 competence being adequate to study translation immediately upon entering translation programmes is unfounded and might be at least partially responsible for students' slow improvement in their translational competence throughout the programme. Key issues for strengthening language training for translation students are also highlighted in this paper.

Key Words: language competence, translational competence, translator training

1. Introduction

In the 1980s and 1990s, emphasis in translation training and translation studies tended towards the cultural, functional and practical issues involved in the process of translation, in reaction to the linguistic approaches popular during the 1960s and 1970s. According to Malmkjær (1998, p. 2),

This trend has brought a great many new and valuable insights, but, in the process, advances in linguistics and applied linguistics, together with the question of how translators might most effectively be provided with the kinds of linguistic skills which will help them produce socio-functionally adequate texts in the most economic, quality-oriented manner possible,

¹ This article first appeared in *Babel: International Journal of Translation*, 47 (4).