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DIRECTIONS IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

TRANSLATION TEACHING

From Research

to the

Classroom

A HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

Sonia Colina

GENERAL EDITORS: JAMES F. LEE AND BILL VANPATTEN

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Arizona State University



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TRANSLATION TEACHING: From Research to the Classroom: A Handbook for Teachers

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General Editors: James F. Lee and Bill VanPatten

Directions in Second Language Learning

Primarily for students of second language acquisition and teaching, curriculum developers, and teacher educators, *Directions in Second Language Learning* explores how languages are learned and used and how knowledge about language acquisition and use informs language teaching. The books in this strand emphasize principled approaches to classroom instruction and management as well as to the education of second language teachers.

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by Sonia Colina (Arizona State University)

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Primarily for scholars and researchers of second language acquisition and teaching, *Perspectives on Theory and Research* seeks to advance knowledge about the nature of language learning in and out of the classroom by offering current research on language learning and teaching from diverse perspectives and frameworks.

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DEDICATION

To my parents

A mis padres

CREDITS

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sonia Colina is Associate Professor of Spanish Linguistics and Translation at Arizona State University, where she teaches a wide range of courses in professional translation as well as in linguistics. She received her PhD in Spanish Linguistics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1995. Her research areas are pedagogy of translation, translator training, and the connection between communicative translation, language teaching, and second language acquisition. In addition to translation studies, she also specializes in Spanish phonology and phonological theory. She has published many articles in edited volumes and prestigious journals such as *Linguistics*, *Lingua*, *Target*, and *The Translator*.

FOREWORD

The growing interest in the study of language, in addition to the study of literature and culture, has led to growth in undergraduate offerings in linguistics and translation. Perhaps the most popular notion of a translator is the one who works for the United Nations as a simultaneous translator of oral speech. Another popular notion of a translator might be the court translator, since in the United States we maintain the right of citizens to understand their rights before and during all legal proceedings. In academic settings we have always been aware of courses that offer a national literature in translation. For example, the Greek dramatists are not typically read in the original language but in translation. Undergraduate courses in Humanities that explore the masterpieces of world literature do not have multilingualism as a prerequisite, so that the *Quijote* and *Cien años de soledad*, for example, are read in translation.

Whereas a talented few among the academic ranks might become self-taught translators of literary and cultural productions, the majority, and especially undergraduate students who are not fully bilingual, would benefit from systematic instruction in the professional field of translation. *Translation Teaching: From Research to the Classroom: A Handbook for Teachers* by Sonia Colina is designed for teachers of translation, no matter their background. Professor Colina's long-term commitment to translation studies, both as translation expert and professor of translation, has culminated in this work. The reader is invited to peruse the Table of Contents and then the References. The Table of Contents clearly demonstrates the appropriateness of the book's title. Chapters 1 and 2 examine the research base from which Professor Colina draws the suggestions for a course on translation. She approaches the issue of classroom instruction across three chapters: course design, designing teaching materials, and issues in assessment. Perusing the References, a teacher new to translation studies will find a breadth of works available as background reading and an experienced teacher of translation studies will find a useful list of works that demonstrates the scholarly endeavor at the root of translation studies.

The McGraw-Hill Second Language Professional Series publishes works that are grounded in research and/or theory. Colina's work fits this require-

ment perfectly and is a very welcome addition to the series. We hope that her book stimulates professionals to design and offer courses that aim to inculcate “translation competence” in language learners.

James F. Lee
Bloomington, IN
October 2002

What Is This Book About? What Are Its Objectives?

This book is about the teaching of translation. Translation, however, means different things to different people. Here we are concerned with translation as a communicative activity, mostly practiced by professional translators and motivated by the need of a source audience to communicate with a target audience that speaks a different language. A target (translated) text is therefore always produced for a particular reader or readers, with a particular purpose, and in a particular place and time. We refer to this type of translation as communicative translation. Translation in this book is not a language exercise or a means to improve or demonstrate someone's knowledge of a second language.

As the number of translation courses and translation programs grows, so does the need for a pedagogy of translation. This need is particularly acute in the United States, where the teaching of translation courses has traditionally been in the hands of either professional translators, with little knowledge of translation research and pedagogy, or academics, with little knowledge of professional, nonliterary translation. This book is about meeting that need. Moreover, this book attempts to respond to the ever more frequent demands from teachers and educational administrators for a consistent, principled teaching methodology, as well as to those from global markets, always in need of well-trained professional translators.

In writing *Translation Teaching: From Research to the Classroom* we had the following objectives in mind:

- To connect theory and research to teaching practice through a pedagogical framework that serves as the basis for teacher education and preparation.
- To explain relevant theoretical and empirical research to nonresearchers, translation teachers, and translation professionals, with the ultimate purpose of bringing research closer to the classroom and establishing teacher training programs for translation.

- To lay the foundation for a systematic methodology of translation teaching that will replace the anecdotal recounts of classroom experiences and case studies that have dominated the pedagogical scene up to today.
- To serve as a handbook (either self-help or as part of a training program) for the training of translation teachers; that is, to train teachers of translation in the development and creation of teaching materials according to solid methodological criteria.
- To increase knowledge and awareness of translation and translation studies among language teachers and researchers.

In order to accomplish these objectives, this book explores the following topics:

- The importance of theories of translation that incorporate contextual factors in accounting for translation solutions (Skopos Theory)
- The importance of empirical data on translation behavior and translator competence in the development of a pedagogy of translation
- The relevance of research in related fields for a methodology of translation teaching
- Examples of syllabi and lessons based on a principled methodology
- Testing and evaluation in translation teaching
- The role of students and teachers in a communicative translation classroom

What Is Different About This Book?

Translation Teaching: From Research to the Classroom is a novel contribution to translation studies (TS) work on various fronts. First, it examines an area of pedagogy rarely studied in translation (teacher training), and it does so in an entirely new fashion, with a strong pedagogical emphasis. Second, this text is also a contribution to applied translation studies, in particular to the almost inexistent area of research applications (for example, teaching methodologies and teacher training programs). Third, this text proposes a new approach to teaching that replaces the use and production of numberless textbooks to match numberless variables of teaching contexts and language combinations with teacher training materials and teacher-designed lessons. This book guides teachers through the preparation of lessons, activities, and tests, while showing how methodological and pedagogical decisions relate to existing theoretical and empirical evidence on translation and translational competence.

What Is The Approach Used?

The approach used is determined by the type of translational activity to be taught. Although the methodology lends itself to various translation contexts, the main focus of the book is on professional, nonliterary translation. Our methodology is based on the results of empirical research in translation, mainly through think aloud protocols (TAPs) and error analysis, and in related areas such as second language acquisition (SLA) and reading research; on the theoretical plane, the framework used is Skopos Theory, that is, functionalist ap-

proaches to translation, (see Mänttari 1984; Reiss and Vermeer 1984; Nord 1991, 1997) and descriptive translation studies (DTS) (Toury 1995). The motivation behind the choice of theoretical model lies in the success it has encountered in translator training programs in Europe as well as in its ability to account for the constraints and factors involved in the practice of professional translation today. In a pedagogical context, the text *Translation Teaching: From Research to the Classroom* follows models and methodology proposed by Kussmaul (1995), Kiraly (1995), Shreve (1997), and Cao (1996), among others.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that there exist alternative approaches to translation teaching. Our objective is not to argue for one particular framework but for the need to base teaching decisions and methodology on research findings. The point that this book tries to make is that the choice of a particular methodological framework must be justified through the empirical study of, for instance, its instructional effects and explanatory power, the nature of the acquisition of translational competence, and so on, and not through subjective and personal impressions on its usefulness in the classroom.

Who Is This Book For?

This book is geared toward teachers of translation, teacher trainers, and program administrators. This text will be a useful tool for all teachers of translation, although it addresses more specifically nonliterary translation. It should be of use not only to those already engaged in translation teaching who are in search of a methodological basis for their practice but also to those without teaching experience in translation (professional translators, foreign language teachers). *Translation Teaching: From Research to the Classroom* serves a wider audience than translation textbooks, since it is not aimed toward a particular language combination but toward the explanation of pedagogical principles that are common to all communicative translation activity. Translation scholars in the areas of pedagogy, translational competence, and applied translation studies will also find issues of interest in this text.

Special Features

This text includes various features that complement and reinforce its pedagogical value. At the end of each chapter is a summary and a list of key words that serve to review the content and concepts presented. A Beyond the Chapter section invites the reader to do further thinking about relevant issues and to apply the knowledge acquired to specific problems and/or tasks.

How Is This Book Organized?

Chapter 1. Translation Teaching: From Research to the Classroom

This chapter summarizes the topics and goals of the book, its purpose, and the needs it responds to. In addition, we situate the book within the field of TS and explain how it contributes to the development of the discipline.

Chapter 2. Research Foundations

We review the theoretical and empirical research that constitutes the basis of our study and the justification of the methodology. Motivation for the selection of a particular framework is also presented. In addition, reference is made to methodological implications to be developed in further detail in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3. Designing the Course

This chapter examines syllabus design and course components in an introductory translation course with the purpose of illustrating the application of the methodology and research findings. Related issues such as teacher and student roles in the traditional and the communicative classroom are also presented.

Chapter 4. Designing Teaching Materials

This chapter provides guidance in the design of lessons and activities for the teaching of communicative translation. Sample texts and accompanying lessons, to be used as blueprints for designing translation instructional materials for particular teaching contexts, are presented as illustrative examples and explained in detail with notes for the teacher. Although the chapter focuses on nonliterary translation, some notes are also provided on the design of lessons for literary texts.

Chapter 5. Evaluation and Errors

After looking at the deficiencies of testing and assessment in translator training, we propose a process-based communicative approach to testing. This proposal is based on recent work in testing in foreign language teaching, on theoretical and empirical models of translation pedagogy (see Chapter 2), and on recent studies within translation studies (Kussmaul 1995; Cao 1996; Hatim and Mason 1997). The writing of adequate grading criteria, their application, and the writing of exams are other topics in this chapter.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ALM	Audio Lingual Methodology
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
(F)LT	(Foreign) Language Teaching
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
ST	Source Text
TAPs	Think-Aloud Protocols
TS	Translation Studies
TT	Target Text

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