

国外翻译研究丛书之四十一

DEVELOPING TRANSLATION COMPETENCE

翻译能力培养

Christina Schäffner

Beverly Adab



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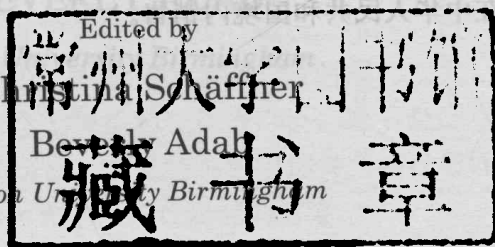
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出版说明

近年来，国内翻译研究取得了很大进展，有关翻译研究的丛书也出了多套。不过，长期以来，国内引进的原版翻译著作匮乏，不少研究都是根据二手资料；另外，学习翻译专业的研究生人数越来越多，这种状况若继续存在，将十分不利于学科的发展和翻译人才的培养。鉴于此，上海外语教育出版社约请了多名国内翻译研究著名学者分别开列出最值得引进的国外翻译研究论著的书目，并对这些书目进行整理、排序，最终确定了准备引进的正式书单。该丛书涉及的论著时间跨度大，既有经典，也有新论；内容的覆盖面也相当广泛，既有翻译本体的研究，也有跨学科的研究。这套丛书的引进将会满足翻译专业研究生教学原版参考书和翻译理论研究的需要。

上海外语教育出版社谨以此丛书献给我国的翻译学界。

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借鉴和创造 (代序)

上海外语教育出版社自成立以来一直是我国外语教育最优秀的后勤部和侦调部。因为它不但为我国各个层次（尤其本科与研究生层次）的外语教育提供了多种高水平的教材、教参和工具书，而且还出版了多学科、多语种和多系列的中文版和外文版的学术著作，比如“现代语言学丛书”、“牛津应用语言学丛书”、“美国文学史论译丛”、“外国文学史丛书”、“剑桥文学指南丛书”、“当代英语语言学丛书”以及列入国家及教育部规划的人文社科重点项目的外国语言文学、文化等方面的图书等。为了适应我国现代化建设和教育改革的需要，还出版了一批国际金融、对外贸易、涉外保险、国际经济法、国际新闻和管理科学等方面的教材与专著。这些著作在外语的学科建设与学术研究以及复合型人才培养等方面都在发挥着强有力的侦察、调研和指导作用。这是外语界有口皆碑的。

随着中外文化交流的纵深发展以及我国现代化建设对人才的需求，对比语言学和翻译学近些年来在我国有了较快的发展，最突出的证据就是①外语类硕士博士点上研究对比与翻译方向的学生在逐年迅速增多，而且我们的高校已经有了翻译学院和翻译系（当然还太少）。②外语专业的学生考中文、法律等其他人文社科专业的硕士、博士以及反方向的走向已经起步。这种跨学科的人才已成为人才资源竞争的最主要对象，因此发展趋势定会看好。上海外语教育出版社为适应这种高层次人才培养和新学科建设的需要，不但积极出版国内关于对比研究和翻译研究的专著和论文集，最近又推出了原版“国外翻译研究丛书”，这套丛书时间跨度从古代到现代，所选书目皆为译学发展史上有里程碑作用的名家名著，堪称译学经典。他们计划分批出版，以满足读者的需求。

这套丛书的出版首先可以解决国内翻译教学原版参考书多年匮乏的困难，真可以说是我国翻译教学与理论研究的及时雨。我想学习和关心这个学科的师生和其他人士定会对这套书的引进为之欢呼，为之祝贺。

这套丛书的价值还在于能大大促进我国翻译学科建设的发展。译学学科的发展依赖于研究者在三个方面的深入研究和结合。一是对本国译学的继承性研究；二是对外国译学的借鉴性研究；三是对翻译实践和翻译教学中新问题的探索性研究。只有这三者研究深入并结合好了，才可能从经验与技巧逐步升华为具有科学性的译学理论。这三个方面的研究，改革开放以来，在我国已取得了很显著的成就，这是有目共睹的。翻译学在我国已于20世纪80年代末有了独立学科的初级形态，90年代又有了新的发展，对学科的独立性以及理论体系的结构与功能有了更多的探讨。依照学科建设的规律和研究现状，我们尚需在上述三个方面加大研究力度，而这套丛书就是借鉴性研究的主要资源。从这个角度讲，这套丛书的引进也是我国文化基本建设的重要工程之一。

在新的世纪，文化（包括各类科学技术）会多方面快速深入人类的日常生活，各国之间的交流会空前深广，因此翻译的功能会逐步扩大，实用性翻译人才的需求量定会空前增加。这就要求我们除了做好高层次研究型人才的培养以外，还应十分重视实用性人才的培养和应用译学的研究。我想出版社一定会关注和引导译学建设的理论研究与应用的发展趋势。

杨自俭

青岛海洋大学六三居室

2001年3月28日

Developing Translation Competence: Introduction

CHRISTINA SCHÄFFNER AND BEVERLY ADAB

Aston University Birmingham

Translation as Performance

Translation as an activity leading to a product has a tradition reaching far back to the beginnings of recorded history and beyond that to the oral tradition. It has always been essential for trading and also a fundamental component of classical education. The movements and trends dominating this activity through the ages, particularly in Europe, are well documented, see, for example, Delisle and Woodsworth's (1995) account of the contributions of important individual translators; Robinson's (1997) anthology of theoretical reflections on translation; and Pym's (1998) study into translation methods through the ages.

It was not, however, until the second half of the twentieth century that developments in Translation Studies led to a more systematic view of the attempts to develop a theory of translation. This also led to a study of the way in which it could best be taught, in order to enhance the different skills acquired in one or more foreign languages and cultures, in relation to and in conjunction with the mother tongue, for the purpose of more effective communication. Systematic training of translators, as opposed to co-opting of competent linguists to perform the activity of translation, also began to be undertaken as a serious objective in the 1940s, with the establishment of programmes aimed at training professional translators and/or interpreters at the University of Geneva, Switzerland, in 1941, Vienna, Austria, in 1943, Mainz-Germersheim, Germany, in 1946, Georgetown, USA, in 1949, for example. Since then, the number of programmes offering such training has grown considerably worldwide. One result of this mushrooming of programmes, in response to the demands of globalisation of communication and the internationalisation of business, has been the move towards a more formalised approach, specifically aimed at training translators and interpreters. This training has come to see as fundamental to its success the achievement of certain objectives relating to

comprehension, transfer and message production from a socio-cultural perspective. The emergence and rapid progression of the field of Translation Studies has gone hand in hand with this development, the one making demands on the other and both co-existing in a symbiotic state of interdependence.

As we move into the twenty-first century, there is clearly a consensus amongst experts in Translation Studies that their object of study, i.e. translation, is a complex activity, involving expertise in a number of areas and skills. In order to fulfil their task, translators need to have knowledge of what is required, they need to have the skills: in a word, they need to be competent to perform the task.

Contemporary Translation Studies has established its credentials over the past few decades; it is also a discipline which is continually seeking to develop principles and research methods in different areas of relevance to those who study the discipline. Research activity in these different areas is intercultural in its focus, sometimes innovative, interdisciplinary and of course international. Organisations such as the European Society for Translation Studies (EST) seek to promote an exchange of scholarly views and research, mainly at the level of established researchers but also seeking to promote the work of new scholars. Papers in different international journals offer a wide range of foci reflecting the diversity of interests of Translation Studies scholars.

Optimal performance of any action, for example, driving a car, is based on a global competence which relies on the interaction of different subordinated competences, which are, of course, interrelated. Translation as a purposeful activity (e.g. Nord 1997) requires a unique competence which has thus far proved difficult to identify, let alone to quantify. There has not yet been a specific research focus within Translation Studies on how translation competence can be defined and developed, although the aspect of translation competence has been addressed more generally by scholars (for example, Wilss 1996, Risku 1998, and the contributions in Kelletat 1996). Nor has much been published on the organisation of translator training and how the systematic evaluation of translation competence, once defined, can be built into such programmes. The questions which this volume seeks to address, are therefore as follows:

What is translation competence?

How can it be built and developed?

How can the product of the performance be used to measure levels of competence?

These questions will be addressed with specific reference to the training situation. The individual contributions are arranged in three sections: Defining Translation Competence (Part I), Building Translation Competence (Part II), Assessing Translation Competence (Part III). Given the interdependence of these three aspects of the question, there will inevitably be some cross-references to one or more sections in any paper.¹

Defining Translation Competence

Just as with other complex performance tasks, in order to explain this unique competence, scholars tend to break translation competence down into a set of interrelated sub-competences, which can be studied in isolation, as well as in combination with others. A first priority is, therefore, the need to define more clearly the different sub-competences involved in the translation process, in order to try and identify a set of principles which could form the basis for a solid foundation for training in translation. Only then will it be possible to work on the interrelationship of these principles and finally to incorporate these into a programme designed to enable translators to achieve an overall (desired) level of translation competence.

The papers in the first section focus on the identification of such sub-competences. Among those sub-competences most frequently identified there is a consensus that language competence, whilst essential and fundamental, is not in itself sufficient. Translation competence is clearly seen as demanding expertise in various areas: these will include at least knowledge of the languages, knowledge of the cultures and domain-specific knowledge. *Albrecht Neubert* describes as many as five parameters, or sub-competences of translation competence: language competence, textual competence, subject competence, cultural competence, transfer competence. In other papers some of these, and other, sub-competences are discussed more specifically. *Marisa Presas* looks at aspects of bilingualism and at the relationship between bilingual competence and translation competence. She argues that, contrary to popular belief by lay persons, untrained bilingual competence is not sufficient to guarantee translation competence. On the other hand, translation competence is not simply an improved bilingual competence. *Jean-Pierre Mailhac* illustrates the importance of an awareness of the role of register, for the language-pair French and English, in the light of a contrastive analysis based on the translation of an English text. From this he draws consequences for translation strategies. *Janet Fraser* analyses the work of professional translators in everyday working life, by tapping into mental processes, using

Think Aloud Protocols. Based on the requirements of practising translators she draws conclusions regarding how these competences can be incorporated into translation programmes. *Gunilla Anderman and Margaret Rogers* also consider the requirements of the professional environment as the starting point for a training programme, illustrating how this approach is taken up in other countries by reference to the European POSI project (practice-oriented curriculum for the training of translators and interpreters).

In discussing translation competence and its sub-competences, the term *competence* is often linked to other concepts and qualities seen to be requisite for the task of translation, most prominently to the following: *knowledge, skills, awareness, expertise*. The term *competence*, thus, acts as a superordinate, a cover term and summative concept for the overall performance ability which seems to be so difficult to define. It encompasses a number of different elements or abilities to do specific (detailed) things, which are in turn based on knowledge. This knowledge (i.e. declarative knowledge, *knowing what*) is applied on the basis of an evaluation of various factors affecting the translation situation, e.g. awareness of the communicative situation, of the purpose of the (translational) activity, of the communicative partners, etc. (i.e. operative knowledge, *knowing why and how to*). The ability to make use of this knowledge and to apply it is linked to awareness, which could also be described as conscious decision-making or transfer competence.

Building Translation Competence

There is widespread agreement that developing translation competence is a fundamental objective of any translation programme and that competence can indeed be developed. However, questions to be addressed in this respect include the dynamic nature of the learning process, an open-ended process which it is difficult to quantify. As a result, consideration is needed of not only *how*, but also *when*, translation competence can be developed, and through what stages.

The contributors agree that translation competence is most effectively developed at an academic institution. Different types of academic institutions provide courses leading to professional qualifications. Depending on socio-cultural constraints, their curriculum and syllabus may focus on translation theory, practical translation skills and more often than not, a combination of the two. Across Europe the question of how best to prepare translators for their future careers has been addressed quite specifically by means of a proliferation of different kinds of programmes purporting to prepare

translators for the professional environment. Thus, some countries offer undergraduate programmes specifically designed to train translators, others prefer to leave specialist training for postgraduate programmes.

When planning a programme intended to achieve the ultimate aim of developing translation competence as something far more complex than simply improving performance, the overall structure of the curriculum, the stages of progression and development of different sub-competences, the choice and timing of specific modules, components and courses all need to be taken into account. However, despite such programmes, in some countries companies continue to entrust translation tasks to people who have had no specific translation training. For example, in the UK, translation agencies prefer to employ graduates with a degree in a language. This is perhaps a reflection, as well as a result, of the situation for translation training in the UK, where very few universities teach translation on the basis of a theoretical approach to a professional task requiring specific translation competence (on this subject, see Sewell and Higgins 1996).

It would therefore be useful and relevant, in the interests of the profession as much as in the interests of those participating in the training process, not only students but also academics, to look more closely at current practice in the different institutions around the world which offer translation programmes, to see if some fundamental principles can be found which underly programme development. The papers in this second section discuss some of these issues relating to translation training in the academic environment in some (mainly European) countries. Some of them focus on the developmental stages in the learner, others on how best to guide the student's learning process.

Andrew Chesterman argues that the learning task for translator trainees is to internalise concepts and to become experts in applying these appropriately. The challenge for teachers is to create conditions under which this internalisation can take place and to raise trainees' awareness of fundamental conceptual tools. In his hierarchy of stages, based on Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986), students progress from the *novice* stage to that of *advanced beginner*; from there they move to the *competence* stage (characterised by conscious decision-making), then on to the *proficiency* stage, culminating in the *expertise* stage. These stages could be related to the design of a translation training programme. For Jean Vienne, the most important skills for a translator are, firstly, the ability to analyse a variety of translation situations, and secondly, the ability to decide on a strategy for resource research which is adapted to the translation situation. He illustrates a training method which imitates real-life situations. In a similar attempt to anchor learning in a real-life environment, Agnes Elthes also looks at the different didactic phases of the translation class,

from pre-translational exercises, such as text analysis, to comparing different possible translation decisions and critically evaluating solutions. *Olivia Fox* shows how developmental aspects of the process of acquiring translation competence are captured in students' diaries. Diary writing and peer conferencing are elements of a process-oriented translation methodology which is learner-centred and needs-based.

Catherine Way considers wider questions relating to the structure of specialised translation courses, such as the degree of specialisation, the choice of fields, and the choice of genres and texts at different stages of the training process. *Christina Schäffner* outlines fundamental principles for the design of a translation programme at undergraduate level in the UK context. She argues that it is in fact possible and advisable to develop basic transfer competence concurrently with language and cultural competence. *Dorothy Kelly* discusses criteria for text selection in the learning process, illustrated with text types of the tourist sector. She relates the demands of the professional environment, especially the need for a high-quality finished product and the imposition of time constraints, to the actual learning process. *Ronald Sim* concurs that studying the translation situation in the African context has a specific contribution to make to the development of our understanding of translation competence. In Kenya, for example, translator training is integrated into theological training institutions, due to the importance of Bible translations into African ethnic languages. Thus, specific linguistic and cultural constraints need to be considered in the training programmes.

Most contributors to this volume agree that trainee translators need not only to understand theoretical principles of TS but also to develop an awareness of different types of translation strategies which can be applied to different text types for different domains and/or for varying purposes. Decision-making should be driven by an understanding of the way in which the intended purpose of the target text relates to the target reader's assumed knowledge, thus by extension, decision-making depends on perceived target reader needs. The rapidly mushrooming field of information technology offers an increasing range of powerful tools which, if properly used within a systematic approach to translation, can enable a non-specialist translator to work competently and reliably in different semi-specialised domains, provided that training has been given in how to use these tools to best advantage. The relevance of information technology tools for the development of translation competence is referred to implicitly in several papers, although none focus specifically on this aspect.

The final question that this volume seeks to address is how to assess effectively the different aspects of translation competence and the students' progress in acquiring these.

Assessing Translation Competence

Most papers discuss how to develop competence, but an equally important issue is the question of how to find out whether the aim has been achieved and where best to look for evidence of this. Translation competence can be studied from two perspectives: from the perspective of the product (i.e. the target text, its quality, its appropriateness for the specified purpose), or from the perspective of the process (i.e. the efficacy of the decision-making process). Most papers in this volume look at the product, considering which criteria can be applied to the product and how such criteria would exemplify an understanding of the definition of translation competence. If this is an abstract concept only measurable through performance, the question is whether it is in fact possible to take the product of the performance, i.e. the target text, and evaluate it on the assumption that it is direct evidence of a given level of competence. In other words, can we assume that the concept of translation competence is a valid notion, as is the case in translation criticism, for example in evaluating the product of a professional translator to determine commercial usefulness? Alternatively, is it possible to quantify the development process itself? Can we measure progress at different stages on the way to achieving translation competence? *Janet Fraser's* focus on processes of decision-making is one way of doing this.

The papers in this section refer to the evaluation of the product in relation to (more or less) pre-determined or expected levels of translation competence. Based on a comparison of target texts, produced firstly by translator trainees and secondly by general language students with no specific translation training, *Allison Beeby* offers evidence that a training programme which targets specific sub-competences can help students to achieve better results (i.e. more appropriate texts). *Mariana Orozco* aims to bring new insights to the process through which students acquire translation competence. She outlines a project to build and test measuring instruments for translation competence acquisition at each stage. *Beverly Adab* argues for a clearly defined set of criteria for evaluation, which would also form the basis for decision-making, providing a training in awareness of choices and selection of translation strategies, leading to increased critical judgement as part of transfer competence and overall translation competence. *Gerard McAlester* links assessment and evaluation to

basic standards for professional accreditation. He argues for a criterion-referenced evaluation framework for translation, and he identifies revision time as a highly important criterion in this respect.

In Conclusion

In any professional environment, performance is judged according to certain clearly defined objectives and needs, which demand a specific type of competence - the translation environment should be no exception. Highly competent translators are essential in order to meet the rapidly evolving requirements of the professional environment. There is agreement in all contributions that universities have a responsibility to train specialists in translation. Aims and objectives, as well as programme structure and content, should be designed in such a way that the demands of the profession are fully met. This volume shows that there is awareness across nations and cultures of the need for a core of principles which can inform and guide translator training. All contributors are active translation scholars and translation trainers. This allows a comparison of what is done in various countries and/or institutions, mainly in Europe, but also in an African country. The papers focus strongly on the lessons to be learned from academic practice, accompanied by personal recommendations based on experience. The aims are to present a methodology for discussion, to share experience and good practice and to offer individual, tried and tested teaching methods for discussion, as well as in order to permit further testing and evaluation of the wider implications.

This volume presents therefore the concrete experience of different contributors in curriculum design and delivery of translator training. This overview highlights common aspects and identifies common concerns, as well as pointing to differences. The individual chapters reflect the fact that the authors come from different backgrounds and represent various approaches to translation. Since the discipline of Translation Studies is characterised by a variety of approaches, arguments and concepts, we, as editors, have made no attempt to homogenise the individual contributions.

This volume seeks to stimulate debate. It illustrates how theory and practice are interdependent in the field of Translation Studies. Not only does it demonstrate that practice requires reference to theory to provide a supporting conceptual framework: it also shows that theoretical studies can incorporate findings of empirical studies into ongoing research relating to the processes of translation and explains how translation competence, as a cognitive tool, defines and is defined by these processes. Translation theory feeds into