

EXCERPT, MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, "Foreign Language and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World"

Continuing Priorities

The time is right for this transforming approach to language and culture study in higher education. Classroom study and study abroad should be promoted as interdependent necessities: the classroom is an ideal place for structured learning that first sets the stage and later reinforces and builds on learning absorbed in study abroad. Yet the language deficiency that is prevalent in the United States cannot be solved at the college level alone. While learning another language is possible at any age, learning languages other than English must be included in the earliest years of the K–12 system if the United States is to have a citizenry capable of communicating with educated native speakers in their language. To these ends, we continue to advocate the following priorities for language departments and programs:

- Promote alliances between K–12 educators and college and university faculty members to strengthen language learning at all levels and to foster collaboration.
- Develop programs for gifted learners, especially in the precollegiate years. Push for enriched, intensified programs for those learners on college campuses.
- Broaden the range of languages taught. In particular, add locally spoken languages to the curriculum. Seek out heritage learners and design a curriculum that meets their needs. Encourage heritage speakers to learn additional languages.
- Adopt and promote best practices for heritage-language teaching such as those developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Develop programs in translation and interpretation. There is a great unmet demand for educated translators and interpreters, and translation is an ideal context for developing translingual and transcultural abilities as an organizing principle of the language curriculum.
- Develop intensive courses and, whenever possible, language-intensive or immersion semesters during which students take multiple courses in the major simultaneously.
- Insist on study abroad whenever possible and require courses in the target language. Push administrators to develop financial aid support for study abroad. Provide appropriate courses for students returning from abroad.
- Increase the number of guest speakers on campus who lecture in languages other than English.
- Make sure campus media centers feature television programs and newspapers in languages other than English. Feature (subtitled) foreign language films for broad campus audiences.
- Through a language center or other structure, develop a forum for the exchange of ideas and expertise among language instructors from all departments. Such structures prove invaluable in boosting the morale of teachers and improving the quality of professional and intellectual life.

COURSE DESCRIPTION, UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

This course offers an introduction to the history of translation practices through a study of critical essays from Jerome and Dryden to Benjamin and Derrida, as well as comparative analysis of English-language translations. . . . One of the goals of the course is to make students aware of central issues in the burgeoning field of translation studies, including the social and economic factors that come into play whenever we ferry texts between languages, cultures, and eras. The methods and procedures that we study will lead to discussion about gender, poetics, ideology, class, and nation. We will devote particular attention to the changing valences of the key concept of *equivalence*. Over the course of the semester we will explore the practice and consequences of literary translation, learning about the role translations play in the interpretation and consecration of literature. (Wittman and Windon 451)

THINKING FRENCH TRANSLATION, 2ND ED.: CONDENSED TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Translation as process: intralingual; gist
 2. Translation as product: degrees of freedom; translation loss
 3. Cultural issues in translation
 4. Compensation: degrees of freedom; cultural issues
 5. Textual genres and translation issues
 6. Formal properties of texts: phonic/graphic and prosodic issues in translation
 7. Formal properties of texts: grammatical and sentential issues
 8. Formal properties: discourse and intertextual issues
 9. Literal meaning and translation issues
 10. Connotative meaning and translation issues
 11. Language variety: translation issues in register, sociolect and dialect
 12. Scientific and technical translation
 13. Legal and financial translation
 14. Translating consumer-oriented texts
 15. Revising and editing translated texts
 16. Contrastive topic: nominalization
 17. Contrastive topic: adverbials
 18. Contrastive topic: "absolute" constructions
 19. Contrastive topic: propositions
 20. Summary and conclusion
- Post-script: a career in translation?

WORKS CITED

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- Venuti, Lawrence. "Translation and the Pedagogy of Literature." *College English* 58, no. 3 (March 1996): 327-44.
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TEXT FOR ACADEMIC STAKEHOLDERS, Salzburg Global Seminar 461, Working Group on Translation in the Academy

The ever accelerating interaction among cultures and economies in our globalized world has increased the need for translation exponentially. We ignore that need at our peril. It is therefore imperative that translation be given a central position in the educational process. The translator is a scholar, the translator is a writer, the translator is a mediator; the translator preserves linguistic diversity by enabling people to continue to express themselves in their own language while reaching broad audiences. Thanks to the translator we gain access to information, ideas, and works of art that would otherwise be closed to us. We therefore call upon educational policy makers to recognize the value of translation and to accord it the place in the curriculum it deserves. To that end we make the following recommendations:

1. That translation be introduced into the university curriculum at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

- Courses in translation profit students in numerous ways: they will make them more conscious and hence more skillful writers of their native tongue; they will stimulate them to enroll in advanced language courses and increase their facility in the language; they will promote the development of close reading and literary analysis.
- Introductory courses combine theory and practice At the more advanced level courses in the theory and/or history of translation will be offered alongside courses in translation practice.
- Students of literary translation are encouraged to translate works of different genres (poetry and drama as well as prose) and periods; students of scholarly translation in the humanities and social sciences will be encouraged to translate texts in the fields they are studying.
- Courses in translation give students practical training in a field they may eventually turn into a profession.
- Besides hands-on translation practice, activities in the translation class can include the comparison of multiple translations of a single work, the critiquing of published translations, etc.
- Translations of appropriate texts with an appropriate scholarly apparatus can be considered valid dissertation material.

2. That the academy recognize translation as an integral part of scholarship and evaluate it as such.

- The new and flourishing field of translation studies, that is, the study of translation as a social, political, cultural, and even economic phenomenon has already been accepted as an important branch of cultural studies, while the recognition of translation itself lags behind. Indeed, the academy often discourages, even denigrates the practice of translation by its members. Yet translation is an exacting art that demands philological precision, minute knowledge of historical contexts, and a nuanced sense of style in both the source language and the target language.
- The product enriches society aesthetically as well as intellectually.
- Every translation is an interpretation and as such requires the same powers of research and analysis as the most rigorous scholarship.

3. That translation be integrated into the curriculum even in courses not directly dealing with translation.

- Translation can help students learn to write their native language even without the use of another language. For example, instructors may ask students to “translate” a scholarly text into a more colloquial one or vice versa, a text with archaisms into a more contemporary text, and so on.

- Translation can serve as an assignment in creative writing courses. For example, instructors may ask students to “translate” a prose passage into verse or vice versa or an act in a play into a short story.
- The translation of primary or secondary materials can form an integral part of a research project in such fields as comparative literature, history, philosophy, sociology, cultural studies, etc.

4. That translation be integrated into activities outside the classroom.

- If students in a translation course work on a play, they can invite students learning to be actors to give a reading of their work. The two groups can work together to improve the translation.
- Students can produce an on-line translation journal showcasing their work.
- Students can form a translation society to continue on their the kind of work they do in their translation courses, to invite translators to speak about their work, to deliver papers on translation that they have written for courses or that form part of their dissertations.
- Students can constitute a translation bureau to translate documents immigrants have brought with them from the home country or local documents they need to understand.

5. That translation from the foreign language into the native language be used as a tool for advanced language learning.

- Comparing source language and target language, the very core of the translation process, points up differences between languages at the most basic cognitive level, the level at which we conceptualize our physical and mental worlds. Every choice of lexical item or syntactic construction forces the translator to grapple with those differences.
- Students can go into the schools and offer workshops in bilingual poetry and story writing for children who have a home language that differs from the local language. They can direct bilingual plays for them.

6. That instructors teaching courses in which students read authors in translation highlight the fact that the works have been translated and discuss the translations along with the works themselves.

- Students need to be made aware of the cultural and linguistic diversity underlying the texts they study.
- If instructors know the language involved, they can read passages from the original aloud and point out how the translation deals with interesting stylistic problems. If students know the language involved, they can do the same.
- Instructors can also bring translation to their students’ attention by alerting them to the existence of translations other than the one the class is using. They can quote and analyze parallel passages from several translations.

7. That literature in translation be introduced into elementary- and secondary-school literature anthologies and into courses training elementary- and secondary-school teachers to teach literature.

- Foreign cultures come alive in the literature of their countries of origin. Not only literature textbooks but textbooks of history and geography will profit from including works of translated literature.
- Countries with more than one official language or with substantial minorities speaking a language other than the official language will derive special benefit from highlighting works of literature representing local cultures in their own terms.

8. That educational institutions establish links with local cultural institutions so as to offer and to seek expertise in translated literature as well as to encourage the reading of translated literature beyond the school years.

- Many larger cities have translation centers, municipal cultural centers, and foreign cultural centers (such as the Alliance Française, the British Council, the Confucius Institute, the Goethe-Institut, the Instituto Cervantes, the Istituto di cultura italiana, etc. as well as the cultural departments of consulates) that can support the teaching of literature in translation or use the help of universities and schools to implement and popularize their programs.
- Adult education literature courses can include literatures of a variety of cultures as a part of outreach to local communities.
- Public libraries can play a pivotal role by highlighting books in translation in their displays, sponsoring groups and/or offering seminars for readers who are reading a given book in translation.
- Private book groups, readers groups, Internet groups and the like can be encouraged to choose translations among the works they discuss.

Prepared by Michael Henry Heim (UCLA), working group leader, Salzburg Global Seminar 461,
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EVALUATING TRANSLATIONS AS SCHOLARSHIP: GUIDELINES FOR PEER REVIEW

The guidelines that follow are intended to help departments and institutions develop appropriate procedures for evaluating translations in personnel decisions related to hiring, retention, merit awards, promotion, and tenure.

Translation has been an indispensable component of intellectual exchange and development throughout recorded history. Today, the ever-accelerating interaction among cultures and economies in our globalized world is exponentially increasing the need for translation. As more and more postsecondary institutions incorporate translation studies and translator training into their curricula, there is a growing need for faculty members who are scholars and practitioners of translation. Moreover, the translation of a work of literature or scholarship—indeed, of any major cultural document—can have a significant impact on the intellectual community, while the absence of translations impedes the circulation of ideas.

More and more academics are therefore undertaking translation as a component of their professional activity and as a natural extension of their teaching. Whether they translate literary or scholarly works or other cultural documents, they are engaging in an exacting practice, at once critical and creative, that demands lexical precision; detailed knowledge of historical, political, social, and literary contexts; and a nuanced sense of style in both the source language and the target language. It goes without saying that the machine-translation programs available online are woefully inadequate to cope with such demanding texts.

Every translation is an interpretation; each one begins with a critical reading, then expands and ultimately embodies that reading. Given the importance of the endeavor and the expertise required to do it justice, a translation of a literary or scholarly work or another cultural document should be judged as an integral part of the dossiers submitted by candidates for academic positions and by faculty members facing personnel decisions. Institutions thus need to ensure that translations are subject to peer review on the same basis as monographs and other recognized instances of scholarly activity.

For a thorough and equitable evaluation, a translation should be read by at least one reviewer who has mastery of both the source language and the target language and who can thus compare the translation with the source text. Where feasible, this reviewer will also be a specialist in the academic field to which the translated text belongs. If no one on the review panel has the appropriate qualifications, the chair should enlist an outside reviewer.

Guidelines for the Candidate

A candidate presenting a translation for peer review will take responsibility for documenting and illuminating the creative, critical, and scholarly work involved in the project. In addition to relevant material that may already be available (readers' reports, published commentary, reviews, interviews, conference presentations, and so on), the candidate will prepare a statement providing background information about the author and the work and addressing the following considerations, among others:

- the importance of the source text as a work of literature or scholarship or as a cultural document, and its potential impact
- any useful information about the publisher or the series in which the translation appears, along with information about the publisher's review process and any special requirements imposed by the publisher
- any differences between the source-language audience and the target-language audience that call for adjustments or adaptations
- any theoretical considerations that influenced the translator's overall strategy
- any special challenges posed by the form, style, or content of the source-language text, along with examples and explanations of the solutions adopted in the translation process

Guidelines for Reviewers

All reviewers can to some extent assess the translation's readability, stylistic qualities, scholarly value, and overall interest to its target audience. In principle (the qualifier is necessary because editors sometimes intervene), every sentence, every word, every punctuation mark represents a deliberate choice by the translator in the attempt to capture not only meaning but also structure, idiom, diction, rhythm, tone, voice, and nuance. A translation must occasionally violate the norms of Standard English in order to convey the characteristics and idiosyncrasies of the source text. Reviewers who are not in a position to compare the translation with the source text can nevertheless consider questions such as the following:

- Do the translator's supporting materials and the introduction and critical apparatus accompanying the published work, if any, shed light on the translation challenges involved and on the solutions adopted?
- In a work of fiction, does the discursive register correspond to the context? For example, in dialogue, does the tone shift to represent different characters' voices?
- In a work of nonfiction, is there evidence that the translator has appropriately adapted the work to the frame of reference of its new audience? Has the translator sought out and referred to existing English editions of foreign works cited in the source text?
- If the work has been translated before, how does the new translation compare with the earlier one(s)? Does it offer new insights or emphases?

Since there are neither absolute standards nor readily applicable metrics by which to measure translation quality, the assessment of a translation must turn on the purpose and audience for which it is intended. This point can best be illustrated by examples:

One scholar has been invited to translate a collection of poems for a prestigious series highlighting the best new poets writing in Spanish. This scholar focuses on re-creating the poetic effects of the source text (rhyme, assonance, meter, imagery, and so on), thereby sacrificing literal meaning, at least in part, as well as scrupulous adherence to the syntax of the source text. Another scholar has been asked to use the same set of poems in a bilingual edition aimed primarily at people who read or are learning to read Spanish. This second translator chooses to adhere closely to the syntax of the source text and to highlight the referential content, sacrificing meter, rhyme, and other poetic devices. The two translations differ dramatically, yet each is entirely appropriate to its intended purpose and new context.

A third scholar has been invited to translate an eight-hundred-page book on Roman history. The editor has instructed this scholar to select sections of the source text for cutting or condensation, to reduce the volume by twenty-five percent. The translator, working through the remaining text, is likely to find it necessary to add bridging material and clarifying information and will also have to modify syntax, eliminate repetitions, track down and document citations, supplement the notes, and make other changes in order to meet the expectations of a target-language readership whose presuppositions and cultural background may differ significantly from those of the text's original audience.

Reviewers who read both the source language and the target language can address the complex question of the translation's "faithfulness" to the source text. A good translation will contain few outright misreadings. Yet success or failure in translation ultimately depends not so much on the literal transposition of discrete meanings as on an interpretation of the myriad traits and dimensions of the source text. Reviewers need to recognize that readability and argumentative comparability at the level of large-scale discursive structures (paragraphs, chapters, entire books) are legitimate objectives that may create the appearance of a departure at the level of words and sentences. Translators use a wide variety of techniques to compensate for structural differences between languages and to minimize loss: expansion, condensation, displacement, borrowing, exegesis, generalizing, particularizing, transposition, and so on. An apparent error or deviation may turn out to be an apt rendering of a provocative or anomalous passage in the source text; just as significantly, it may be an artifact of the translator's decision to rephrase, reorder, condense, or expand in order to convey

meaning more clearly or more idiomatically in the target language.

Acknowledgment. Sections of this document have been adapted with permission from the following sources: a statement prepared in February 2009 by Michael Heim and the academic working group of Salzburg Global Seminar 461; a statement by the American Literary Translators Association, titled “Translation and Academic Promotion and Tenure”; guidelines for book reviewers prepared by Michael Moore and the PEN American Center Translation Committee.

http://www.mla.org/ec_guidelines_translation