

THE ROLE OF LITERARY TRANSLATION IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS
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TEXT FOR ACADEMIC STAKEHOLDERS

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.