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**Laviosa, Sara (2014). *Translation and Language Education. Pedagogical Approaches Explained*. New York and London: Routledge, pp. 174, \$43.95 (pbk), \$145 (hbk). ISBN: 978-1-138-78989-0 (pbk), 978-1-138-78981 (hbk), 978-1-315-76454-2 (ebk).**

**T***ranslation and Language Education. Pedagogical Approaches Explained* by Sara Laviosa, published by Routledge as part of the 'Translation Theories Explained' series, is an attempt to establish a dialogue between Translation Studies and foreign language learning and teaching. It consists of nine chapters, eight appendices, the bibliography and the index, and it is aimed at foreign language and possibly also translation educators, researchers and teacher trainers. Drawing upon convergences between the two disciplines, the author investigates the presence and practical use of translation in a foreign language classroom. Based on her research and experiences in multilingual learning environments, she proposes her own holistic model whereby translation is re-established as a valid and beneficial tool for foreign language teaching.

Chapter one presents a historical overview of the place and role of translation in second language education since the grammar-translation method of the 18<sup>th</sup> century until the advent of the communicative method in the late 1960s. Brief overviews of each of the methods, their purposes and the educational contexts in which they were developed are presented, with a focus on the application (or lack of it) of translation as a tool aiding foreign language learning. The author draws attention to the ebb and flow of various forms of translation-related activities as well as first and/or second language instruction within these approaches. Other than the grammar-translation method and the communicative method, the chapter covers the reform movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and relevant pre-reform approaches, the direct method, the oral method, situational language teaching, structural language teaching and the audio-lingual method.

In chapter two, the author draws attention to the renewed interest in translation as part of language pedagogy, especially in higher education contexts. The chapter discusses the theoretical underpinnings of the reintroduction of translation into a foreign language classroom and examines the results of various experimental and survey studies into the effectiveness of translation in foreign language learning and teaching. It traces the comeback of translation to the foreign language classroom to Alan Duff's 1989 book *Translation*, where translation is presented as a valid language learning activity, alongside other activities and techniques such as literature, conversation or role-play, marking a shift from thinking about translation as a discrete skill in its own right to using it as a resource in language learning. While both have a valid place in university education, it was noted that translation activities help to develop communication skills and cultural awareness, which are crucial for proficiency in a foreign

language. Laviosa emphasises that the revival of translation as part of language training has to a large extent been supported by empirical research, which has given rise to some pedagogical proposals focused on the design of teaching and learning procedures and activities.

Chapter three brings the reader a step closer to Laviosa's own proposal by discussing what she calls the 'ecological' approaches that have recently emerged both in language pedagogy and in Translation Studies. The novelty of these approaches, as she emphasises, lies in the focus on the dynamic, non-linear interaction between the human subjects and their environment, contingent on their position in time and space. The chapter discusses the metaphor of language as an ecosystem and its implications for the understanding of the symbiotic relationship between language and culture.

In chapter four, the author proceeds to discuss in more detail Claire Kramersch's ecological approach to foreign language pedagogy. The focus of this approach is on the symbolic power of language and the importance of developing the symbolic competence as a crucial aspect of the formation of multilingual subjects. The approach is based on the notion of the self as a symbolic entity that is constructed by engaging in a dialogue with the environment. As a result of an increased awareness and enhanced utilisation of these self-constructing processes in a foreign language classroom, learners can develop their intercultural communicative competence which involves being able to see similarities and differences between languages and cultures and to act as mediators between them. To this end, as the argument goes, language learning should consist in wholly engaging with the Other, both cognitively and emotionally.

Chapter five carries the idea of ecological understanding of the relation between language and culture onto the field of Translation Studies by discussing Maria Tymoczko's holistic approach to translation of culture, based on the notions of representation, transmission and transfer. Laviosa points out the analogy between Tymoczko's approach and Kramersch's symbolic competence in that, among other things, they are intended to empower translators and language learners respectively to cope with cultural asymmetries and, subsequently, become more competent linguistic and cultural mediators. She suggests that both the theoretical underpinnings and the practical, pedagogical dimension of Tymoczko's framework can be successfully incorporated into an ecologically oriented, multilingual pedagogy.

In chapter six, Laviosa analyses an example of a language learning, literary translation and creative writing experience to lend further support to the claim that Tymoczko's holistic translation and Kramersch's symbolic competence can work together as two related principles of good pedagogic practice. Laviosa's own proposal for language pedagogy is based on the idea that a multilingual language classroom should be transformed into a cooperative learning environment

where developing symbolic competence and adopting holistic translation methods are essential interrelated processes in the education of the language professional of the future, who needs to grow into a self-reflective, interculturally competent and responsible meaning maker in our increasingly multilingual world (105).

Chapters seven and eight, entitled “In the Italian language classroom” and “In the English language classroom” respectively, illustrate the proposed pedagogy by discussing three examples of learning experiences implemented in Italian and English undergraduate and graduate language classes in the US and Italy. The actual activities were preceded by a short survey aimed at finding out the students’ language profiles. The general objective of the activities was “to explore the creation of meaning through the interplay of different forms of communication, including translation” (108). The activities themselves involved working with multimodal messages that consisted of music, images and words and translating parts of the verbal message into either English or Italian. For instance the students would read a text superimposed on a series of images and listen to a soundtrack. Then they would explore the meaning of the message by reflecting on the feelings and emotions it evoked. Eventually, they would analyse the composition of the verbal message and carry out its translation: either in class with the instructor explaining the contextual meaning of some words and expressions or at home (with the different versions then compared and discussed in the following class).

The concluding chapter summarises the most current research into translation for educational purposes and identifies possible areas for further development in this area. The volume also includes appendices with various questionnaires used by the author during her research and with some of the materials employed during the teaching sessions.

Laviosa’s book and approach is a refreshing view on two disciplines, language pedagogy and translation, that are intrinsically related, yet for various reasons came to be seen as distinct, as indicated, for example, by the increasing separation of modern languages and translation degrees (as opposed to the traditional philology degrees that normally combined elements of both). The value of this work lies in the explicit identification of the synergies between the two disciplines and in foregrounding the theoretical and practical potential of exploring these synergies in the foreign language classroom.

There are also some important questions that this volume prompts the reader to ask. For example, the experience Laviosa analyses in chapter six is based on translation of literature which gives rise to the question whether, how and to what extent it is viable to incorporate her approach in, for instance, LSP (languages for specific purposes) teaching. Also, the participants in the activities discussed came from modern languages and literatures (or related) programmes, i.e. they were people whose linguistic

knowledge and sensibility made them keen and able to engage with the meaning-exploration type of activities that Laviosa proposed. As the researcher admits herself, her approach revealed “the merits of holistic language and translation pedagogy with *advanced learners who are familiar with educational and professional translation*” (140, my emphasis), therefore it would be very interesting to see how this approach can be applied in programmes catering for students with different profiles and motivations.

All in all, this is a much welcomed and important contribution to the field of language learning (and, but perhaps somewhat more indirectly, translation) that goes a long way to empower language teachers by giving them tools that will allow them to include the more holistic approach to languages and cultures in a foreign language classroom. A must-read for teachers and researchers, this book has a great potential to open new avenues of theoretical and experiential exploration of the role of translation in the development of proficient foreign language users.

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