Bridging Theory and Practice in Translation Pedagogy:

Doing to Learn

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CHAPTER 1

FOUNDATIONS OF TRANSLATION PEDAGOGY

1.1 Translation in Language Education: An Overview

The role of translation in language education has a long and complex history, fluctuating in response to evolving teaching philosophies. For centuries, it was considered indispensable, a sine qua non of language learning, most notably within the Grammar-Translation Method that dominated the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this approach, students first learned grammatical rules, then applied them by translating sentences or literary passages between the target language and their mother tongue (Richards & Rodgers 2014: 3–5; Cook 2010: 16). Rooted in the teaching of Latin and Greek, it prioritized reading and writing skills over speaking or listening. Classes were conducted in the students' native tongue, with heavy focus on explicit grammar explanation and bilingual word lists (Howatt & Widdowson 2004: 151–153). A typical exercise was to translate sentences or passages into and from the target language (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson 2011: 27). Mastery of the language was equated with the ability to parse sentences and produce accurate translations, and success was measured by reading comprehension of foreign texts. By design, communication in the target language was not the goal; unsurprisingly, graduates of this method often struggled to actually use the language in real contexts (Howatt & Widdowson 2004: 152–154). As Richards and Rodgers observe, by the mid-20th century this method had "no advocates" in linguistic or educational theory – it persisted in practice but lacked a contemporary theoretical justification (Richards & Rodgers 2001: 7). Grammar-translation was criticized for producing students who knew a lot about the language (grammar rules and vocabulary) but could not communicate in it (Cook, 2010: 114; Butzkamm 2003: 31–33). Eventually, this approach came to be seen as a dead end, a method "for which there is no theory", in the words of Richards and Rodgers (2001: 7).

By the late 19th century, reformers in Europe began to rally against the grammar-translation paradigm, giving rise to what became known as the

Direct Method (also called the "Natural Method"). Influential linguists and educators such as Wilhelm Viëtor and François Gouin argued for teaching in the target language and focusing on use rather than analysis of language (Viëtor 1882: 15; Howatt & Widdowson 2004: 170–173). The Direct Method, which gained prominence around 1900, insisted that classroom instruction be conducted exclusively in the target language – no use of the learners' native tongue was permitted (Richards & Rodgers 2014: 13–18). Instead of translation exercises, teachers used objects, pictures, and actions to convey meaning, and taught concrete vocabulary through demonstration and context. Lessons were built around everyday spoken language dialogues; grammar was taught inductively, meaning learners would internalize rules through repeated exposure to examples rather than through explicit explanations (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson 2011: 35). This approach marked a radical break: it treated language learning more like first language acquisition, immersing students in L2 input and forbidding any translation or switching to L1. The goal was fluency and intuitive command of the foreign language, cultivating "thinking" in the target language without reliance on the mother tongue. The Direct Method thus embodied the first strong wave of what has been called the monolingual approach or "monolingual orthodoxy" in language teaching – the belief that the target language should be learned without reference to learners' L1 (Howatt & Widdowson 2004: 172; Cook 2010: 17). While the Direct Method achieved some success (and methods derived from it, such as Berlitz's schools, became popular globally), it also faced practical limitations. Critics noted that excluding the native language entirely could be inefficient or frustrating for adult learners who benefit from some explicit contrastive explanations; moreover, the method demanded teachers who were native-speaker fluent, which was not always feasible (Richards & Rodgers 2014: 17–18). Nevertheless, the Direct Method established a lasting principle in language pedagogy: that translation should generally be avoided in class, a tenet that would dominate much of the 20th century's mainstream approaches.

Subsequent methodologies in the early to mid-20th century continued to marginalize or outright ban translation from the classroom. The Audio-Lingual Method of the 1950s–1960s, rooted in behaviourist psychology and structural linguistics, drilled students in pattern practice and dialogues with the aim of forming new habits in the L2 – using L1 or translation was thought to interfere with habit formation (Richards & Rodgers 2014: 53–59). Similarly, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emerged in the 1970s and became broadly influential by the 1980s, stressed authentic communication, meaning negotiation, and immersion in the target language. In the communicative framework, translation was often viewed as counter-

productive – a throwback to older techniques that did not fit the spirit of communication (Littlewood 1981: 19; Richards & Rodgers 2014: 63–70). CLT advocates argued that students learn to communicate by communicating, not by translating. The ideal classroom became a monolingual environment where the target language was both the object and medium of instruction. This "monolingual bias" was so strong that the use of students' L1 came to be seen as a taboo in many educational contexts (Cook 2010: 14–25). Translation exercises were largely eliminated from language textbooks in the late 20th century, except perhaps in the form of occasional "functional translation" activities or comparisons of short texts for advanced learners (Richards & Rodgers 2014: 77). In many university language programs, especially for modern languages, explicit translation was absent from curricula for decades (apart from programs training professional translators). The prevailing view was that translation, if used at all, was only a means to illustrate linguistic form or to test reading comprehension, not a valid learning activity (Howatt & Widdowson 2004: 179; Butzkamm 2003: 33–34). Indeed, translation in language teaching acquired something of a stigma: it was associated with rote learning, lack of creativity, interference from L1, and an "old school" academic style of teaching.

And yet, translation never truly vanished from language classrooms. In some educational traditions and regions, the Grammar-Translation legacy persisted well into the late 20th and early 21st centuries due to entrenched exams or lack of exposure to newer methods (Smentek 2017: 22). Even teachers who claimed to follow communicative approaches often found themselves occasionally relying on the learners' L1 or on transfer activities to explain difficult concepts, manage the class, or clarify meaning (Cook 2010: 105). In recent years, there has been a modest but growing reappraisal of this practice as a pedagogical tool. Researchers and practitioners have begun to question the strict L2-only ideology, arguing that judicious use of the mother tongue and cross-linguistic tasks can aid language learning rather than hinder it (Cook 2010: 105–110; Butzkamm 2003: 35–36). For example, contemporary applied linguists point out that such exercises can raise learners' awareness of subtle differences between languages, build vocabulary through contrastive analysis, and develop mediating skills that are increasingly valued in a globalized, multilingual world (Council of Europe 2020: 30). A "back to basics" movement, led by figures like Guy Cook, has advocated reintegrating translation into language education in principled ways. Cook (2010: 105–110) argues that the blanket rejection of it was never empirically justified but rather born of historical fashions and oversimplified theories of interference. He calls for a "reassessment" of translational activity, seeing it as a potentially enriching practice that can

deepen understanding of both L1 and L2, if used appropriately. Likewise, others have emphasized that in an era of multilingual communicative competence, the ability to mediate between languages (including through interpreting and translating) is a valuable skill, and that entirely avoiding the learners' other languages may squander a useful resource. This shifting perspective is reflected in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) updates and European language education policy documents, which now include "mediation" activities (translation and interpretation of meaning) as part of plurilingual competence (Council of Europe 2001: 6–7; 2020: 30). In short, the pendulum is swinging away from the extreme monolingual stance, towards a more nuanced view that acknowledges interlingual mediation as one of many tools in the language teacher's toolkit.

From a historical vantage point, it becomes clear that the role of translation in language education has waxed and waned. It has been at times the cornerstone of pedagogy and at other times the outcast. As Kelly (1969: 363) observed in his sweeping history of language teaching, many ideas in language education are cyclical or perennial: "the total corpus of ideas accessible to language teachers has not changed basically in 2000 years." One such idea is translation, a "universal" technique that has endured through eras of favour and disfavour. Even when not explicitly acknowledged, it has often operated "underground" in classrooms. Smentek (2017: 25) describes it as the cross-linguistic technique *par excellence* and notes that despite its long-established use, its pedagogical function has been the subject of long-standing controversy which has "permanently divided" language teaching opinions. Understanding this historical debate is crucial, since it underpins much of contemporary translation pedagogy.

Kelly (2005: 6–9) stresses the need for clarity of purpose in translator education, distinguishing between its use as a classroom tool for language learning and its development as a professional competence in its own right. Cook (2010: 55) reinforces this duality, noting that bilingual knowledge always entails transfer across languages, making it both a means of acquiring language and an end product of training. This tension continues to shape debates about whether such practices should be treated primarily as a pedagogical aid or as a professional skill, with the answer depending largely on the objectives and philosophy of the educational program.

What is clear is that the practice has survived all attempts to abolish it, a testament to its fundamental connection with how we interpret and learn languages. In the following sections, we turn from the general language-learning context to the specific domain of translator education, and consider

how the discipline, when studied in its own right rather than as a learning aid, has evolved into a distinct academic field.

1.2 Translation Pedagogy as a Discipline

The teaching of translation as a specialized activity, aimed at preparing individuals to become translators, has matured into a clear sub-discipline of both translation studies and language education. While ad hoc practices in this field are undoubtedly as old as the activity itself, with apprentices learning under master scribes or interpreters centuries ago, translator pedagogy in the modern sense began to take shape in the mid-20th century and gained momentum in the following decades. Holmes, in his seminal paper *The Name and Nature of Translation Studies* (1972/1988), explicitly included translator training as one branch of applied translation studies, thereby formally recognizing that research into how translators are taught is a legitimate part of the discipline (1988: 77). For much of the 20th century, however, translator training was not systematized. It was often assumed that one simply learns to translate by translating, and that a skilled professional would emerge from practice and exposure without the need for a defined pedagogy. Early training in academic settings tended to be teacher-centred and based on a master-apprentice model. As Kelly (2005: 13–15) notes, traditionally "early training did not approach instruction in a pedagogical way": students would attempt tasks on their own, then the teacher, typically an experienced translator, would provide a corrected version for the students to imitate and learn from. The underlying assumption was that competence would be absorbed through exemplary corrections and repetition rather than explicitly taught. This mentor-mentee approach, while valuable for passing on individual expertise, often lacked a coherent curriculum or clear objectives beyond producing a good version like the teacher's.

Starting in the 1980s, there was a push to professionalize and academicize translator education. Pioneering scholars like Jean Delisle began developing systematic approaches and objectives for teaching translation. Delisle was among the first to publish a comprehensive set of teaching objectives for translator training programs (1988: 25–31). In his work in the 1980s and early 1990s, he proposed a list of specific competencies and sub-skills that translator students should acquire – ranging from understanding translation metalanguage and methods, to developing research skills, to overcoming lexical and syntactic difficulties in texts (1993: 45–50). This represented a shift from the old master-apprentice model to an objectives-driven model: the idea that a translation course should have explicit learning outcomes and

content (e.g. how to use dictionaries and documentation, how to analyse a source text, how to revise a draft). Around the same time, translation began to be seen as an academic subject suitable for university curricula. Throughout the 1990s, many universities in Europe and elsewhere established dedicated translator-training programs, often at the postgraduate level (such as Master's degrees in Translation). This institutionalization went hand-in-hand with the emergence of Translation Studies as an academic field – as translation theory and research blossomed, it also informed new ways of thinking about how to teach translation.

Kelly (2005: 13–20) provides a useful overview of how approaches to translator training have evolved. She explains that over the years, translator education has moved "from a teacher-centred approach to a student-centred paradigm." In earlier decades, the instructor was the authority who imparted knowledge (often in the form of corrected translations or prescriptive rules), and students were relatively passive receivers of this expertise. Modern approaches, by contrast, emphasize active student involvement, collaboration, and the development of the learner's own decision-making abilities. This mirrors broader trends in education and reflects the influence of constructivist learning theories. The shift also acknowledges that translating is a complex cognitive skill that learners build over time through practice, reflection, and feedback – not something that can simply be transmitted by the instructor. Nevertheless, Kelly observes that in some places the old mindset persists: "unfortunately, in many contexts the early approach to translator training is still present nowadays" (2005: 15), meaning some programs still rely on teachers handing down their translations as models for students to emulate, without sufficiently engaging students in the problem-solving process.

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, an expanding body of literature addressed translation pedagogy. New theoretical frameworks were applied to translator education: for example, functionalist theory (Nord 1991: 29–35) emphasized teaching students to analyse the purpose (skopos) of an assignment and make decisions based on the intended function of the target text. This led to classroom practices focusing on briefs, audience considerations, and adaptation strategies, moving beyond literal equivalence. Elsewhere, cognitive approaches examined the mental processes involved in translating, suggesting the need to teach strategic skills and self-awareness to student translators (Shreve 1997: 120–123). Perhaps one of the most significant pedagogical shifts was introduced by Kiraly (2000), who argued for a collaborative, project-based model of translator education. Kiraly drew on social constructivist learning theories, which hold that

knowledge is constructed by learners (not just transmitted by teachers) and that learning is most effective in social contexts where learners actively participate and reflect. He proposed that courses should simulate real projects, with students working in teams, assuming roles akin to industry (translator, reviser, project manager), and learning through experience and guided "scaffolding" by the teacher. In this model, the instructor becomes more of a facilitator or coach rather than an all-knowing oracle (2000: 18). The goal is to empower students to construct their competence and confidence through hands-on work and peer collaboration, closely mirroring professional practice.

By the early 21st century, the discipline of translation pedagogy had established itself, with dedicated conferences, journals, and a community of scholar-practitioners. The launch of the journal *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer* in 2007 attests to the growing research output specifically on translator education. As Kelly (2010: 281–283) notes, topics of particular interest include curriculum design, classroom methodology, the integration of technology, assessment of skills, and the psychological dimensions of translator pedagogy.

The field has also become increasingly interdisciplinary, drawing on findings from general education, psychology, linguistics, and professional studies. For instance, notions from educational psychology (like reflective practice and self-regulated learning) have been applied to help translation students learn more effectively and become autonomous professionals. There is also an emphasis on action research in the classroom – many translation teachers research their own classes to find better ways to teach, aligning with what Kelly (2010: 286) terms the essentially applied and empirical nature of translation didactics.

In summary, translation pedagogy has transformed from an implicit art to an explicit science (or at least a scholarly craft). It is now recognized as a distinct discipline within translation studies, one that systematically explores how translators are best trained and what competencies they need. This area has produced various models, frameworks, and methods that guide translator educators. Crucially, it has established that teaching the subject is not just about giving students difficult texts and correcting their errors; it involves a whole ecosystem of curricular planning, methodological choices, and theoretical underpinnings.

The maturation of translation pedagogy means that today's trainer can draw on a rich literature for guidance — from Delisle's teaching objectives, to

Kelly's curriculum design principles, to Kiraly's collaborative projects — rather than starting from scratch. As we move to the next section, we will delve into one of the cornerstone concepts that emerged from this pedagogical research: the notion of translator competence, what it means to be a competent professional, and how this concept has shaped teaching practices.

1.3 Translator Competence and Didactic Implications

A fundamental concept in modern pedagogy is translation competence. It designates the set of knowledge and skills that a person must acquire in order to translate effectively. Since the 1990s, defining and modelling this competence has been a major focus of research in translation studies, with direct implications for teaching. In contrast to the older assumption that bilingualism alone suffices, empirical studies have shown that it extends well beyond general language proficiency (Neubert 2000: 4).

One of the most influential contributions in this area has been the work of the PACTE research group, based in Barcelona, which conducted a series of empirical studies on translation competence. PACTE (2003) defines translation competence as "the underlying system of knowledge, abilities and attitudes required to be able to translate" (PACTE 2003: 48). This model conceptualizes competence as both procedural and declarative knowledge: translators not only need to know facts about language and culture, but also how to mobilize this knowledge in the dynamic activity of translating. PACTE's model distinguishes several sub-competences, each of which contributes to the overall ability to translate. These include bilingual competence, extra-linguistic competence, knowledge-about-translation, instrumental competence, and strategic competence, together with a set of psycho-physiological dispositions that support performance (PACTE 2005: 610–615).

The bilingual sub-competence refers to proficiency in the working languages, involving the ability to understand the source text and produce a fluent and accurate target text (PACTE 2003: 50). Extra-linguistic sub-competence covers world knowledge, subject-matter expertise, and cultural awareness, all of which play a decisive role in enabling translators to interpret meaning and adapt content to the target context (PACTE 2005: 611). Knowledge-about-translation entails an understanding of translation theory, awareness of strategies, familiarity with genre conventions, and an appreciation of ethical dimensions of the profession (Hurtado Albir 2015: 258–260). Instrumental sub-competence concerns the ability to use tools

and resources for translation, such as dictionaries, corpora, terminology databases, or computer-assisted tools, as well as research strategies (PACTE 2003: 51). Finally, strategic sub-competence acts as the central regulating component: it is the decision-making capacity that orchestrates the others, enabling translators to plan, identify problems, evaluate options, and ensure the coherence of the overall process (PACTE 2005: 613).

In addition to these, PACTE includes psycho-physiological factors such as attention, memory, creativity, and motivation, which may not be taught in the same way as declarative knowledge, but which significantly affect performance (PACTE 2003: 52). These components underscore that translating is not simply a linguistic exercise but a highly complex cognitive activity requiring both intellectual and affective capacities.

The pedagogical implications of this competence-based model are profound. If translation competence is multifaceted, then translator education must aim to develop all its components in an integrated and balanced fashion. It is insufficient for such programs to concentrate only on language proficiency or only on technical tools; rather, curricula must be designed holistically. For example, the recognition of instrumental competence means that students must be trained in research and technological skills, such as conducting terminology searches or using translation memory software, areas often overlooked in earlier decades (Bowker 2002: 13). Similarly, the acknowledgment of extra-linguistic competence highlights the importance of domain knowledge, suggesting that courses should expose students to specialized texts in fields such as law, medicine, or technology, or at least provide strategies for rapid acquisition of new subject matter (Kelly 2005: 32). Strategic competence, meanwhile, requires teaching problem-solving skills and decision-making strategies. In practice, this often translates into exercises where students analyse source texts, anticipate challenges, and justify their translation choices in group discussions or reflective commentaries (Göpferich 2009: 20).

Competence-based training, as it is often called, has therefore become a central paradigm in translator education. Rather than relying on repetitive practice or imitating the teacher's corrections, courses are increasingly structured around tasks and projects that simulate real translation scenarios, thereby engaging multiple competences simultaneously (Hurtado Albir 2015: 257–258). For instance, a classroom assignment to translate a technical manual using CAT tools in a group setting compels students to activate linguistic skills, technological abilities, teamwork, and strategic planning in ways that closely mirror professional practice.

This competence-oriented model also affects assessment. Instead of evaluating students solely on the linguistic accuracy of a final product, programs are encouraged to assess other aspects such as process management, resource use, adherence to a client brief, and reflective analysis of decision-making (Massey 2013: 160). Consequently, assessment methods have diversified, incorporating portfolios, translation commentaries, diaries, and project presentations alongside traditional exams.

Although PACTE's model is one of the best-known, other frameworks have also influenced translator education. The European Master's in Translation (EMT) competence framework, first developed in 2009 and revised in 2017, articulates a similar but slightly broader set of competences, including language, intercultural, technological, thematic, and service provision competences (EMT Expert Group 2009: 3). The emphasis on service provision, for example, reflects the professional dimension of translation, acknowledging that translators must not only produce texts but also manage relationships with clients, handle project logistics, and observe professional ethics.

The notion of translation competence has also influenced debates about the relationship between this pedagogy and second language teaching. Some scholars suggest that translation can be considered a "fifth skill" alongside reading, writing, listening, and speaking, particularly because it integrates multiple aspects of linguistic and intercultural ability (Cook 2010: 114). While this view is more relevant to general language instruction, it resonates with translator education in highlighting the distinctive cognitive and communicative processes involved in moving between languages.

In sum, the competence framework has provided translator educators with a roadmap for curriculum design, teaching methods, and assessment practices. It clarifies what it means to be a competent professional and shows how this expertise can be fostered systematically in education. Most importantly, it underlines the idea that proficiency in translation is not an innate talent but a structured set of competences that can be taught, practiced, and refined. This has not only professionalized the teaching of translation but also empowered students, who can identify their strengths and weaknesses across different sub-competences and work to improve them. As Hurtado Albir (2015: 258) argues, competence-based pedagogy anchors every aspect of teaching, from objectives and materials to methods and assessment, around the development of these competences, ensuring that graduates leave with the toolkit required to face the complexities of professional practice.

1.4 Aims of this Book and the *eDOcation* Approach

This book is motivated by a dual aim: on the one hand, to synthesize foundational insights about translation in language education and the formation of translators; and on the other hand, to present a new pedagogical model - the ***eDO****cation* framework - as a guiding reference for teaching translation. The term *eDOcation* combines "education" and "doing," and encapsulates a view of translator learning as a process in which learners engage actively with practical tasks while reflecting on theoretical principles. The objectives of this chapter, and of the volume as a whole, are therefore both retrospective and prospective. Retrospective, because the discussion has traced the historical and theoretical foundations of translation pedagogy, from its early role in language teaching through its evolution into a discipline and the elaboration of competence models. Prospective, because the book advances an original contribution in the form of a coherent teaching philosophy, elaborated and tested in the author's own courses, and offered here as a framework for current practice in the field. One central aim is to bridge the often-perceived divide between translation as a tool in foreign language learning and as a professional competence in its own right. Traditionally, as the historical overview has shown, these two domains have been treated separately, even in opposition: the pedagogical use of translation was relegated to an inferior position in language teaching, while professional training emerged as an autonomous academic field (Kelly 2005: 14). Yet a more integrated vision, which recognizes the continuities and complementarities between these spheres, can enrich both.

The book is addressed not only to translator trainers, but also to language teachers who wish to incorporate translation activities into their pedagogy. While students of translation may also benefit from the activities and examples provided, the primary audience is educators — both professional trainers and classroom teachers — who can adapt the framework to their own contexts. Although the examples presented here are drawn mainly from English–Italian material, the approach is conceived as a flexible and replicable method that can be applied to other language pairs and teaching settings, with materials adapted accordingly.

At the same time, the book aims to provide a coherent narrative that links the historical debates, the institutional development of translation pedagogy, and the models of competence that inform curriculum design, so that the rationale for the proposed approach is firmly grounded in scholarship and experience.

This approach reflects a learner-centred, experience-based, and holistic view of education. The very coinage of the term signals its philosophy: the capitalized "DO" within "education" underscores the conviction that the craft is best learned through active engagement, by doing rather than by passively absorbing theory. It posits that students acquire competence by tackling authentic or simulated tasks, reflecting on their strategies, and engaging in collaborative discussion, thereby internalizing principles through practice. In this sense, the approach is aligned with the tradition of experiential learning (Dewey 1938: 25; Kolb 1984: 41), but adapted specifically to the field of translation.

In practice, students are placed at the center of the learning process: they work on assignments that mirror professional challenges, analyse their choices, and receive feedback that encourages reflection. The motto "learning by doing, not just studying," which has been a constant principle in the author's courses, epitomizes this orientation.

Reflection, however, is no less important than action. As Schön argued in his notion of the "reflective practitioner" (1983: 49), professional growth arises from the ability to critically analyse one's own performance and derive general insights from experience. Accordingly, the model incorporates systematic moments of reflection: learners revisit their translations, compare them with peers' solutions, and articulate the reasoning behind their decisions. In this way, difficulties and errors are reframed not as failures, but as opportunities for learning. In the author's classes, students are encouraged to cultivate self-awareness and creativity, becoming not merely proficient translators but reflective and critical ones, capable of lifelong learning.

Although practice is central, the framework does not reject theory. On the contrary, it recognizes theory as a valuable lens for understanding and systematizing practice. What distinguishes the approach is the sequence: theory is introduced through practice rather than imposed beforehand. In other words, learners are confronted with translation problems first, and theoretical concepts are then brought in to explain, justify, or expand on the solutions they have attempted. This "just-in-time" pedagogy, which resonates with constructivist views of knowledge (Kiraly 2000: 16), ensures that theory is anchored in concrete experience and therefore retained more effectively. In this way, the book models a pedagogy where theoretical sections are consistently tied to practical examples, avoiding the abstraction that often alienates students from academic discourse.

Collaboration and interaction are also central pillars. Translation is not only an individual cognitive act but also a social practice. Professional translators often work in teams, consult colleagues, and share resources. The eDOcation approach reproduces this reality in the classroom, emphasizing collaborative projects, peer review sessions, and group discussions. Through interaction, students articulate their thought processes, compare strategies, and build a shared repertoire of solutions. This mirrors the community-of-practice dynamic described by Lave and Wenger (1991: 29), where learning is understood as participation in a social world rather than as isolated acquisition. The classroom thus becomes a microcosm of the profession, preparing students for the collaborative and networked nature of contemporary practice.

The "e" in eDOcation also highlights the importance of electronic tools and multimodal tasks in translator education. As professional activity has been transformed by digital technology, so must the pedagogy that supports it. The approach incorporates the use of computer-assisted tools, online corpora, and collaborative platforms, not only because they are indispensable in today's professional practice, but also because they enrich the learning-by-doing environment. Students might, for example, use terminology extraction tools to prepare for assignments, engage in subtitling tasks that combine linguistic and technical skills, or practice dubbing with dedicated software to simulate professional practice. Integrating technology in this way situates learning in the digital realities of the profession and ensures that students graduate with both conceptual knowledge and operational competence.

The originality of this pedagogical model lies in the way it combines theoretical synthesis with empirical grounding. Implemented in courses on literary, technical, audiovisual, and song translation, it has generated concrete outcomes — student responses, classroom discussions, and translation products — that are discussed in the later chapters. In this sense, the model is validated in practice as well as articulated in theory. At the same time, it draws on established pedagogical traditions — experiential learning, social constructivism, reflective practice, and situated learning — and weaves them into a cohesive strategy tailored to translation. While drawing on insights from Dewey's experiential learning, Schön's work on reflection, and Kiraly's collaborative pedagogy, the eDOcation model is presented here primarily as a practical framework for translator education. Its value lies in the way these ideas are translated into classroom activities that emphasize active participation, interaction among peers, and the use of digital tools. The approach is validated through tasks drawn from different

genres and domains, enabling students to confront authentic challenges of translation and to reflect on their strategies in practice. In this way, eDOcation aims not only to develop technical competence but also to encourage autonomy, intellectual curiosity, and motivation, qualities that sustain learners as they move toward professional practice.

In practical terms, the chapters that follow embody the eDOcation philosophy. They combine analysis with guided exercises, illustrating principles in action rather than merely describing them. The expectation is that readers – whether students, teachers, or trainers – will not only understand the concepts presented but also apply them, experiencing the approach for themselves. In this way, the book enacts its own pedagogy: it invites active engagement rather than passive reception, consistent with its central motto of learning by doing.

The approach draws on established educational theories but offers an original synthesis and branding specifically for translator education, foregrounding learning-by-doing, reflection, collaboration, and digital tools. Its originality also lies in its systematic incorporation of digital technologies as a pedagogical pillar, and in its deliberate branding as a replicable model that can be adapted across languages and contexts. This combination of theoretical lineage, practical validation, technological integration, and clear pedagogical identity ensures that the model contributes something distinctive to the field, beyond the sum of its influences.

In light of this, the aims of the book are threefold: to provide a scholarly yet accessible account of the foundations of translation pedagogy; to dispel persistent misconceptions about translation in the classroom by situating it within historical and theoretical debates; and to introduce and elaborate this approach as an original contribution to translator education. The ultimate goal is to inspire educators and learners to embrace a pedagogy that is experiential, reflective, collaborative, and technologically attuned, fostering not only competent translators but also engaged, autonomous, and lifelong learners.

CHAPTER 2

GENRES, MODES, AND DOMAINS: FOCUS AREAS FOR THE *eDOCATION* MODEL

This chapter addresses some of the central issues in the theory and practice of translating different genres and domains. The purpose here is twofold. First, to present a scholarly overview of the theoretical debates and challenges posed by specific genres of translation, such as humour, audiovisual material, song lyrics, idioms and proverbs, poetry, and technical texts. Second, to establish the conceptual groundwork for the didactic applications that will follow in Chapter 3, where these same genres will be treated in a more practical, classroom-oriented perspective. In this way, the present chapter functions as a bridge between translation theory and translation pedagogy: by discussing the complexities of each text type from an academic standpoint, we provide the necessary background for understanding the rationale behind the teaching strategies, exercises, and case studies developed in the subsequent lessons.

2.1 Audiovisual Translation (AVT)

Audiovisual Translation (AVT) has developed into one of the most dynamic and visible subfields of translation studies. Unlike literary or technical translation, AVT deals with multimodal texts that combine verbal, visual, and acoustic channels, requiring translators to negotiate meaning across semiotic systems as well as between languages. This multimodality makes AVT both a rich site for theoretical inquiry and a practical challenge for translator training. The prominence of AVT has grown substantially since the late twentieth century, largely due to the global circulation of films, television programs, and digital content, which has made translated audiovisual products a pervasive part of everyday life.

The two most widespread modes of AVT are subtitling and dubbing, though other forms such as voice-over, surtitling, audiodescription, and subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing are increasingly relevant. Each mode imposes specific constraints that shape translation strategies. Subtitling involves rendering spoken dialogue into written text on the screen, usually

under strict temporal and spatial restrictions: a subtitle cannot exceed a certain number of characters per line and must remain visible only for a limited time. Consequently, subtitlers frequently condense speech, omit redundancies, and reformulate expressions to maintain readability and synchronization with the spoken track. Dubbing, in contrast, replaces the original dialogue with a translated spoken version. Here the challenge lies not only in semantic accuracy but also in synchrony at three levels: content synchrony (semantic equivalence), isochrony (timing), and lip synchrony (matching the movement of the actors' mouths). These technical constraints require creative solutions and demonstrate that AVT is not a matter of literal translation but rather of adaptation and multimodal coordination.

The study of AVT has developed alongside broader theoretical frameworks in translation studies. A descriptive and functionalist orientation has dominated much of the research, focusing on norms, skopos, and audience reception. For instance, Gottlieb (1992: 164) argued that subtitling constitutes a form of constrained translation, as the translator operates under limitations of space, time, and multimodality. Toury's theory of norms (1995: 53-69) has also been influential in AVT, with scholars examining how different cultures establish conventions of dubbing versus subtitling and how these conventions affect the translation strategies chosen. For example, in countries with strong dubbing traditions such as Italy, Germany, or Spain, audiences expect natural-sounding target-language dialogue that conceals the foreign origin of the film, while in subtitling countries like the Netherlands or Scandinavia, viewers are accustomed to abbreviated but authentic renditions of the source text.

One recurring issue in AVT is the tension between domestication and foreignization. Venuti's influential framework (1995) can be applied here to highlight the choices translators make in rendering culture-specific elements. In subtitling, where brevity is essential, translators may opt for domestication strategies to ensure comprehension within the subtitle's short lifespan. Dubbing, however, often pushes further towards domestication, as the need for smooth, natural-sounding dialogue favours target-culture adaptation. Yet, there are contexts where foreignization is preserved, particularly in subtitling of art films or festival cinema, where authenticity and fidelity to the source culture are valued.

The pedagogical implications of AVT are significant. As Díaz-Cintas (2008: 91) emphasizes, subtitling can serve as a powerful didactic tool in language education, encouraging learners to pay close attention to linguistic detail, pragmatics, and cultural references. Translating subtitles fosters

awareness of register, idiomaticity, and intercultural communication. Similarly, dubbing exercises allow students to explore oral expression, prosody, and creative adaptation under technical constraints. The use of AVT in the classroom thus intersects directly with the eDOcation approach: it is experiential, practical, and reflection-based. Students learn by attempting to subtitle or dub, reflecting on their solutions, and comparing strategies. In Chapter 3, this dimension is developed through practical activities where students dub selected film scenes. These exercises illustrate how theoretical concerns such as synchrony, naturalness, and cultural transfer are experienced directly in practice, giving learners the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of different strategies under authentic conditions.

Another important area of AVT research and practice is accessibility. Subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (SDH) and audiodescription for the blind have expanded the scope of translation beyond interlingual transfer to intralingual and intersemiotic forms. In SDH, the subtitler must provide not only dialogue but also relevant sound information such as music, background noises, or tone of voice. Audiodescription involves producing verbal descriptions of visual elements for visually impaired audiences. Both practices illustrate how AVT intersects with issues of inclusion, accessibility, and social responsibility, themes that have gained prominence in translation studies more broadly (Orero 2004: IX–X). For translator training, these developments underscore the importance of preparing students for diverse professional roles, beyond traditional film subtitling or dubbing.

The digital revolution has profoundly reshaped AVT. Online streaming platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+ now release content globally, often with dozens of language versions produced simultaneously. This industrial scale of AVT requires highly organised workflows, standardized quality assurance, and extensive use of technology. Cloud-based subtitling platforms, collaborative translation environments, and machine translation tools integrated into subtitling software are becoming standard. As Chaume (2018: 87-90) notes, the industry is increasingly characterized by speed, efficiency, and technological competence, placing new demands on translator training. In this sense, the activities proposed in Chapter 3 - where students are introduced to professional subtitling and dubbing tools - provide a controlled but realistic entry point into industry practices. Learners not only engage with language transfer but also acquire technological literacy, a key skill for professional development.

Scholars have also emphasized the role of reception studies in AVT. The ultimate measure of success in subtitling or dubbing is not only accuracy but also audience response. Perego et al. (2010: 258-265) highlight that subtitling impacts viewers' cognitive processing and reading strategies, raising questions about readability, eye movement, and comprehension. These findings reveal that AVT is not merely a linguistic transfer but a multimodal communication act that directly affects how viewers perceive and enjoy audiovisual products. In training contexts, this means students benefit from feedback not only from instructors but also from peers acting as test audiences, providing insight into how translation decisions shape reception. This practice is also reflected in Chapter 3, where peer evaluation of dubbing projects is used to replicate the audience's role in assessing the naturalness and effectiveness of AVT solutions.

From a theoretical standpoint, AVT challenges traditional dichotomies in translation studies, such as source-oriented versus target-oriented, because audiovisual texts are already polysemiotic and collaborative products. Chaume (2012: 16) argues that the semiotic cohesion of audiovisual texts means translators must operate with an integrated understanding of images, sound, and words. This semiotic complexity complicates the very notion of fidelity: should the translator be faithful to the linguistic form, the visual context, or the multimodal effect? In many cases, equivalence must be sought at the pragmatic or communicative level, rather than at the level of literal translation.

In educational contexts, AVT has increasingly been used as a tool for language learning. Subtitling and dubbing exercises expose learners to authentic materials and require them to process language actively while adapting to strict temporal and technical constraints. By working in this way, students engage with challenges that resemble those of professional practice but in a form suited to the classroom. AVT therefore functions as a bridge between language learning and translator education, while also illustrating the value of experiential approaches to teaching.

In conclusion, AVT illustrates the interplay of linguistic, cultural, technical, and pedagogical dimensions in translation. Its multiple modes - subtitling, dubbing, voice-over, and accessibility - show how translation adapts to the constraints and possibilities of multimodal texts. The field has matured into a robust area of research and professional practice, with profound implications for both industry and pedagogy. For translator training, AVT offers not only a professional specialization but also a didactic laboratory where learners can engage in meaningful practice, experience constraints,

and reflect on their strategies. Framed within the eDOcation approach, AVT represents a powerful arena for "learning by doing," where students develop translation competence while simultaneously enhancing their awareness of multimodal communication and intercultural mediation.

2.2 Song Translation

The translation of songs occupies a unique and particularly complex niche within translation studies, since it demands a negotiation between linguistic meaning, musical structure, cultural resonance, and performance. Unlike prose or technical texts, adapting lyrics cannot be judged solely on semantic accuracy. Instead, it requires the careful alignment of verbal and musical dimensions: rhythm, rhyme, stress, and melodic contour must harmonize with the adapted text (Low 2005: 185). This fusion of verbal and musical semiotics means that song adaptation has long been regarded as one of the most demanding subfields of the discipline, straddling literary translation, performance studies, and applied linguistics.

Historically, song versions were often treated pragmatically rather than theoretically. Hymns, opera arias, or popular songs were reworked to be sung, and practical considerations outweighed scholarly reflection. Only in the late twentieth century did scholars begin to systematically analyse the particular challenges of translating songs. Low (2005: 186) and Franzon (2008: 376) were among the first to articulate models for lyric adaptation that acknowledge the multiplicity of constraints. They argued that successful work in this domain requires compromise, as it is impossible to preserve all dimensions—semantic fidelity, prosodic alignment, rhyme, and singability—simultaneously. Instead, the translator must prioritize certain aspects depending on the context and purpose of the task.

A key theoretical contribution to the field is Peter Low's "Pentathlon Principle," which proposes five criteria for song translation: singability, sense, naturalness, rhythm, and rhyme (Low 2005: 192). The metaphor of the pentathlon emphasizes that while no version can win "gold" in every event, a good outcome should perform adequately in all five. Singability is non-negotiable in pieces meant to be performed, since awkward prosody or mismatched stress will render the song unsingable. Sense concerns semantic fidelity, but must often yield to rhythmic or melodic demands. Naturalness refers to idiomaticity and fluency, while rhythm and rhyme ensure compatibility with the musical structure and stylistic coherence. This framework has proven influential both in theoretical debates and in

pedagogical contexts, offering students a heuristic to analyse and produce song versions.

Franzon (2008: 379) further systematized strategies for song translation, distinguishing between three primary options: (1) translating the lyrics for singing (singable translation), (2) translating them for reading or understanding (nonsingable translation), and (3) leaving them untranslated but providing paratextual support (such as program notes or subtitles). This typology highlights the role of function, echoing functionalist approaches to the field more generally. A singable rendering of an opera aria demands different strategies from a literal version provided in a bilingual songbook. From a didactic standpoint, introducing students to Franzon's framework allows them to appreciate the multiplicity of purposes that song translation can serve, and the necessity of tailoring strategies to communicative function.

The cultural embeddedness of songs presents additional challenges. Popular music often carries cultural references, idioms, or sociolects that are deeply anchored in their original context. Lefevere (1992) argued that in literary translation, rewriting inevitably reflects the poetics and ideology of the receiving culture; this holds equally true in song translation, where cultural adaptation is often required to make a piece resonate with a new audience. For example, in dubbing musical films, references may be localized to enhance accessibility, even at the cost of fidelity. Kaindl (2005: 237) stresses that songs are multimodal texts: meaning arises not only from lyrics but also from music, performance, and visual elements. Adapting songs for musicals or films therefore involves coordinating with broader semiotic systems, an insight that broadens the scope of translation pedagogy beyond text-centred concerns.

Pedagogically, song translation exemplifies the eDOcation principle of "learning by doing." Asking students to translate lyrics for performance forces them to confront competing priorities in real time. For instance, when students attempt to fit translated lines into a melody, they experience firsthand the conflict between preserving sense and achieving singability. Classroom exercises can involve comparing literal renderings with singable ones, reflecting on the compromises made, and experimenting with different solutions. This experiential process highlights that translation is not simply about substituting words, but about making informed, creative decisions under constraint. As Low (2017: 19) observes, teaching song translation is particularly effective in cultivating students' awareness of translation as an act of problem-solving and negotiation.

In Chapter 3 of this book, this principle is put into practice: students are asked to select a song of their choice, translate it, and then perform the translated version. The performance serves a diagnostic function, as it allows them to test whether their translation respects not only the melodic contour but also the temporal duration and metrical structure of the original composition. By singing their versions, students directly perceive where syllable counts, stresses, or prosodic patterns misalign with the music, and they are encouraged to revise accordingly. This activity provides an embodied understanding of the constraints that govern song translation and fosters reflection on the balance between fidelity, functionality, and performability.

In addition, the reflective aspect of pedagogy becomes particularly salient in song translation. Schön's notion of the reflective practitioner (1983) resonates strongly here: students benefit from analysing why a particular line "works" musically or fails to match stress patterns, and from articulating the trade-offs involved. For example, replacing a culturally specific metaphor with a more general image may sacrifice nuance but preserve singability. Discussing these decisions fosters critical thinking and self-awareness, qualities that extend beyond the classroom to professional translation practice.

Song translation also intersects with AVT, particularly in contexts like subtitling musical films or producing karaoke subtitles. Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007: 195) note that subtitling songs introduces additional complexity: the subtitler must balance legibility, timing, and respect for the musical beat, often under severe spatial constraints. Unlike dubbing, subtitling cannot alter the source lyrics, but it can provide the viewer with an approximation of meaning or even reproduce rhyme and rhythm visually. Exercises in subtitling songs provide another valuable didactic application, exposing students to multimodal translation challenges and deepening their appreciation of the interplay between word, sound, and image.

A further pedagogical benefit of song translation lies in its motivational power. As Gorlée (1997: 254) suggests, songs are emotionally engaging texts that resonate with students on a personal level. Incorporating songs into translation classes can thus enhance learner engagement and foster intrinsic motivation. For example, asking students to translate a song they already know and love can trigger enthusiasm while simultaneously confronting them with linguistic and cultural difficulties. This aligns with communicative and task-based language teaching principles, where meaningful, affectively charged tasks lead to deeper learning (Kiraly 2000: 16).

It is also worth noting that song translation contributes to intercultural competence, a key component of translator training. Songs frequently encapsulate cultural identity, social issues, or historical memory. Translating protest songs, for instance, requires understanding their sociopolitical context, while rendering traditional folk songs involves sensitivity to cultural heritage. Nord's (1997: 45) skopos theory underscores the importance of purpose: a translation of a folk song for academic study will differ radically from one meant to be performed on stage. By navigating these contexts, students develop not only linguistic skill but also intercultural awareness, a central objective in translation pedagogy.

From a broader disciplinary perspective, the translation of songs exemplifies the interdisciplinary character of translation studies. It draws on musicology, performance studies, poetics, and linguistics, making it an ideal site for interdisciplinary pedagogy. Kaindl (2005: 236) argued that the field benefits from crossing disciplinary boundaries, and this domain, with its multimodal and intersemiotic dimensions, demonstrates this vividly. Engaging with songs in this way can therefore expand students' horizons, encouraging them to think beyond words and consider how meaning is shaped by sound, rhythm, and performance.

In conclusion, this subfield represents a microcosm of translation studies: it foregrounds the impossibility of total equivalence, highlights the need for creative decision-making, and embodies the tension between fidelity and function. Theoretical frameworks such as Low's Pentathlon Principle and Franzon's typology provide analytical tools, while pedagogical applications illustrate how working with songs can cultivate reflective, competent, and motivated learners. By situating this activity within the eDOcation approach, we emphasize that students best learn these lessons not by abstract theorizing but by attempting versions, testing them against musical constraints, reflecting on outcomes, and thereby internalizing insights. In this way, engaging with songs not only enriches translator training but also reminds us of the inherently artistic and experiential dimensions of the discipline itself.

2.3 Literary Translation with a Special Focus on Poetry

Literary translation occupies a central position in the field of translation studies because it foregrounds questions of style, interpretation, creativity, and cultural transmission. Unlike technical or specialized forms, where accuracy and functionality are prioritized, this branch is oriented toward preserving the aesthetic qualities of texts while rendering them

comprehensible and meaningful for new audiences. The stakes are not confined to linguistic transfer but extend to issues of voice, rhythm, metaphor, and intertextual resonance. Literary texts create their own worlds, shaped by stylistic choices and cultural contexts, and translators must reconstruct those worlds in another language.

Scholars have long debated whether this category is fundamentally distinct from other modes of practice. Lefevere (1992: 14) argued that the rendering of literature is never neutral but always a process of rewriting shaped by ideological and cultural factors. Venuti (1995: 19) reinforced this view by highlighting how translation mediates cultural visibility, often privileging fluency and naturalness in the target language at the expense of the foreign text's strangeness. From this perspective, literary work is not a transparent window into another literature but a form of cultural production that can domesticate or foreignize texts depending on prevailing norms.

This general framework applies to the translation of both prose and poetry, though the two present distinct challenges. Prose often requires the preservation of narrative voice, characterization, and cultural specificity. The translator must attend to pragmatic elements such as deixis, discourse markers, and register shifts, which contribute to the texture of narrative. Sensitivity to pragmatic cues is essential because they shape how readers construct meaning and how texts position them within interpretive horizons. A change in deixis or a shift in register may alter narrative perspective, undermining the subtle effects that an author intended.

Stylistics plays a crucial role in this process. Translators must attend to the rhythm of prose, its syntactic variation, and the recurrence of motifs. These elements, while less formally constrained than in poetry, contribute significantly to the literary quality of a text. In *Translating Ralph Pite* (2025: 18-19) I stressed that stylistic awareness is not only an analytical tool but also a practical competence, enabling translators to identify which features of a text are foregrounded and must therefore be prioritized in translation. In narrative fiction, for example, the repetition of key words or the deliberate use of parataxis can signal thematic concerns, and these stylistic markers require careful treatment in translation to preserve the author's voice.

When moving to poetry, the challenges intensify. Poetry is defined not only by meaning but also by form. The translator must grapple with rhyme, meter, lineation, and sound patterns, all of which interact with semantic content. Jakobson (1959: 238) famously argued that poetry is "by definition

untranslatable" because of its reliance on formal devices. Yet he also acknowledged the possibility of what he called "creative transposition," whereby translators reconstruct the poetic function in new forms. This perspective has been foundational for debates in the field.

More recent theorists have sought to articulate frameworks for poetry translation that move beyond the binary of translatability versus untranslatability. Holmes (1988: 25) proposed that work with verse entails a spectrum of strategies, ranging from formal imitation to content-oriented rendering. The translator must decide whether to preserve meter, rhyme, and line length, or whether to prioritize semantic accuracy at the cost of form. No single solution is universally valid, since the purpose of the target text and the expectations of its audience will determine the appropriate balance.

In my study of Poe's *The Raven* (2018) I demonstrated how competing priorities shape poetic transfer. Some translators attempted to reproduce the poem's rhyme scheme and refrain, which required significant departures from the literal meaning of the text. Others opted for semantic fidelity, sacrificing the musicality that defines Poe's style. The study underscored that each choice reveals a hierarchy of values: whether the translator considers rhythm and sound to be essential or whether meaning should take precedence. This case study illustrates the broader principle that translating poetry is always a negotiation of losses and gains.

The pedagogical implications of literary practice are considerable. Teaching prose allows students to engage with issues of style, pragmatics, and narrative technique, while poetry projects introduce them to the heightened challenges of form. Within the eDOcation framework, these challenges are addressed through project-based and task-based learning. Students are not passive recipients of theory but active participants in assignments that culminate in tangible outcomes. Every year, students in the course are asked to translate contemporary English poems, which are then collected and published in a volume presented both in class and at literary festivals. This practice exemplifies experiential learning: students work collaboratively on authentic tasks, reflect on their strategies, and see their efforts recognized in a public forum.

The experience of publishing such work has profound pedagogical value. It raises the stakes of classroom activity, motivating students to consider not only their own interpretations but also how their texts will be received by a real audience. It also allows them to engage with the ethical and professional dimensions of the craft, since their work becomes part of the cultural