

# The challenges of teaching translation

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**Abstract:** A thorough awareness of context, cultural quirks, and languages is necessary for translation. Effective translation education requires a comprehensive approach that combines academic knowledge, practical experience, and critical thinking abilities. This study covers several challenges and approaches to teaching translation so that educators can gain valuable insights to enhance their methods.

**Keywords:** Translation studies, teaching, challenges, strategies

## 1. Introduction

Translation is an act of conveying “a message from one language to another” (Nida, 1964, p. 3) and “the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style” (p. 12). Nida defines translation as the process of translating a speech or text from one language into another while keeping its original style and meaning. The original text’s cultural and contextual allusions, in addition to its words, must be translated. Translation is crucial for creating communication, promoting cross-cultural exchange, and eliminating language barriers in a number of disciplines, including academics, business, diplomacy, and literature. There aren’t many comprehensive, standardized techniques for teaching translation, despite the importance of the field and the growing need for it across numerous industries. This creates challenges for educators who wish to give their pupils the skills and knowledge necessary to become competent translators. This essay attempts to address this problem and provide educators with useful knowledge to enhance their teaching strategies. It seeks to bridge the gap between theory and practice by offering guidance on how to develop critical thinking abilities, language competency, cultural competency, and effective use of technology in translation education.

## 2. Content

### 2.1. Historical Overview of Translation Teaching Methods

With the development of technology, linguistic theories, and our understanding of the translation process, the teaching of translation has changed significantly throughout time. This section offers a succinct historical synopsis of translation teaching techniques, emphasizing significant methodologies that have influenced the area.

\*Grammar-Translation Approach

The Grammar-Translation Method, which first appeared in translation education in the 19th century, is among the oldest approaches. With a focus on translating literary texts, this method’s main focus was on the examination of vocabulary and grammatical structures (Popova et al., 2014). In order to enhance language learning, students were obliged to remember lists of vocabulary words and grammar rules. They also completed translation activities. Nevertheless, this approach sometimes overlooked the improvement of communication abilities and cultural awareness.

\*Contrastive Analysis

The Contrastive Analysis technique became popular in translation instruction about the middle of the 20th century. With an emphasis on linguistic patterns and cultural subtleties, this approach sought to discover and address the differences and similarities between the source and target languages (Sukirmiyadi, 2018). It highlighted the significance of comprehending the unique difficulties presented by various language pairings and gave students the resources to address these difficulties.

\*Communicative Approach

The teaching of translation also witnessed a change towards a more communicative approach in the 1970s with the advent of communicative language instruction (Pica & Falodun, 1993). This approach placed a focus on the improvement of writing and spoken communication abilities, with translation being utilized to raise linguistic and cultural competence. It encouraged pupils to communicate honestly and to take into account different cultural and contextual aspects of translation.

\*Task-Based Approach

The Task-Based Approach has become more well-liked in translation instruction in recent years (Alenezi, 2020; Rezvani & Bigdeli, 2012). This approach focuses on practical translation assignments

and issue-solving exercises that replicate real-world translation contexts. To encourage critical thinking and decision-making, students are given actual materials to evaluate, translate, and modify. In order to prepare pupils for the needs of the digital era, this method also incorporates technology and translation tools.

The historical review offered here demonstrates the development of translation teaching techniques, showing how the emphasis shifted from grammar and vocabulary to a more communicative and task-based strategy. Teachers can learn more about the benefits and drawbacks of various strategies by comprehending the historical evolution of translation teaching techniques. This information can guide their pedagogical decisions and assist them in creating efficient teaching plans that take into account the demands of their pupils.

## **2.2. Challenges in Teaching Translation**

Teaching translation is a difficult task that requires finding solutions to several problems. This essay looks at the challenges teachers have when teaching translation from five different angles: managing student expectations and motivation, linguistic and cultural differences, specialized fields and technical vocabulary, time constraints and deadlines, and the subjectivity and ambiguity of translation. By being aware of these challenges, teachers can develop ways to enhance the process of teaching and learning in translation studies.

### **\*Ambiguity and Subjectivity in Translation**

The inherent disparities across languages create uncertainty and subjectivity in translation. Words and phrases may have several meanings or lack direct counterparts, making it difficult for students to choose the best acceptable translation equivalent. Teachers must stress the significance of context, cultural quirks, and the expectations of the intended audience in order to help students negotiate this uncertainty. Students may improve their decision-making abilities in translation by encouraging critical thinking and offering plenty of practice opportunities.

### **\*Addressing Linguistic and Cultural Differences**

Significant difficulties in translating arise from linguistic and cultural disparities. The source and target languages, as well as grammar, vocabulary, idioms, and cultural allusions, must be well understood by the students. Through immersive activities like reading genuine literature, participating in debates, and researching cultural resources, educators should concentrate on helping students enhance their language skills and cultural competency. Students'

comprehension of cultural subtleties can also be improved by encouraging them to participate actively in the community speaking the target language.

### **\*Handling Specialized Fields and Technical Vocabulary**

Specialized fields and technical vocabulary, such as those found in legal, medical, or technical publications, are frequently involved in translation. To achieve accurate and efficient translations, educators must provide students with the vocabulary and subject-specific information they need. Students can get more familiar with specialist language by incorporating domain-specific information, guest lectures from business executives, and practical activities. To prepare students for real-world translation issues, instructors should also stress the need of lifelong learning and remaining current with industry developments.

### **\*Handling Time Limits and Deadlines**

The translation industry frequently encounters difficulties with deadlines and time limits. To assist students learn effective time management techniques, educators must imitate real-world settings by giving them translation jobs with time constraints. Students' capacity to meet deadlines without sacrificing the quality of their translations can be improved through instruction in work organization, prioritizing, and the efficient use of translation technologies. To guarantee that pupils can handle the pressure brought on by time limits, instructors should also emphasize the value of self-discipline and stress management difficulties with translation.

### **\*Managing Student Motivation and Expectations**

Successful translation learning is greatly influenced by student expectations and motivation. Some students could have irrational expectations about how simple and quick translation will be, which can cause dissatisfaction and demotivation. To assist students assess their progress, educators should establish clear learning objectives, explain realistic expectations, and offer frequent feedback. By demonstrating the actual uses of translation abilities, including different and interesting translation activities like real-world projects or group assignments, can improve student motivation. It is thus essential to stimulate critical thinking, offer immersive language and cultural experiences, include specialized domain knowledge, simulate real-world settings, and manage student expectations.

## **2.3. Effective Strategies for Teaching Translation**

Concerning the difficulties such as ambiguity and subjectivity, linguistic and cultural variations,

specialized fields, time restraints, and student expectations, teachers need efficient teaching strategies.

**\*Developing Language Proficiency in the Source and Target Languages**

Teachers may motivate students to interact with the source and target languages by having them read, listen, and talk in natural situations. Then, to improve students' language proficiency and knowledge with idiomatic phrases and linguistic subtleties, they might provide a variety of translation activities, including both written and spoken work. Assign real books to students to help them learn vocabulary, grammar, and language understanding in general.

**\*Improving Intercultural Communication and Cultural Competence**

To help students better comprehend the cultural settings in which translation takes place, teachers might include cultural studies into the curriculum (Sachinis, 2011). In order to increase their students' cultural awareness and sensitivity, teachers should also encourage them to interact with a variety of cultural materials, such as books, movies, and internet resources. Additionally, it is beneficial to provide students the chance to communicate with native speakers of the target language through virtual language communities or language exchange programs.

**\*Fostering the Capabilities of Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving**

In order to help students analyze the linguistic, cultural, and environmental elements that affect translation decisions, teachers might present them with real-world translation challenges. Additionally, teachers could give students assignments that require them to explore theories and methodology in translation, encouraging critical thinking and self-reflection. To facilitate peer review sessions and critical analysis, teachers could provide students with constructive criticism on their translations.

**\*Making Effective Use of Technology and Translation Tools**

Tools and software for translation might be introduced by teachers. Educating students about CAT tools, machine translation, and other pertinent technologies, for instance, can improve accuracy and productivity. Teachers should also instruct students on how to choose and use the right translation tools, making sure they are aware of their advantages and disadvantages. Using technology-based assignments is another effective strategy. One example is giving

students translation jobs that demand them use technology and translation resources efficiently.

**\*Incorporating Real-World Translation Tasks and Authentic Materials**

To expose students to real-world translation issues, teachers might use a broad variety of authentic materials, such as newspaper articles, legal papers, and business reports (Albir, 2015). By working with businesses or developing simulated projects, real-world translation projects can assist provide students the chance to complete practical translation jobs. Additionally, lecturers urge students to take part in translation contests, go to conferences, and interact with professional translation groups in order to expose them to real-world translation jobs and keep them abreast of business developments.

These techniques can be used by educators to provide a thorough and productive teaching strategy for translation studies. Students need the skills and knowledge to succeed in the field of translation, and developing language proficiency, improving cultural competence, fostering critical thinking, using technology effectively, and incorporating authentic materials and real-world translation tasks are key components.

### **3. Conclusion**

A combination of theoretical knowledge, practical skill, and pedagogical insight is required in the dynamic field of teaching translation. Through the application of effective strategies and problem-solving techniques, teachers can prepare their students to become competent and self-assured translators who can navigate language and cultural boundaries in an increasingly interconnected world. It is hoped to shed some light on how to empower teachers to create a supportive and interactive learning environment, give them plenty of opportunities for practice and feedback, and incorporate real-world translation tasks in order to prepare students for the challenges they may encounter in their future careers. By addressing these issues, this study hopes to further the field of translation education and produce competent and gifted translators.

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