

This is a post-print version of the following article:
Casas, Helena; Rovira-Esteva, Sara. 2008. «Chinese-Spanish translation studies in tertiary institutions in Spain: historical review and future perspectives». *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*, 2(2): 185-202. DOI: 10.1080/1750399X.2008.10798773

**Chinese-Spanish Translation Studies in Tertiary Institutions in
Spain: Historical Review and Future Perspectives**

HELENA CASAS TOST & SARA ROVIRA ESTEVA¹

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

Abstract. *Chinese is considered by many as ‘the language of the future’, offering endless opportunities for commercial markets and exchanges on many levels. Nevertheless, studies of Chinese, particularly in translation faculties, have not kept abreast of this new challenge. This paper offers a historical overview of undergraduate and postgraduate Chinese-Spanish translation studies in Spain. The two universities, in Barcelona and Granada, that teach Chinese-Spanish translation are described, as are the subjects that they offer on both their undergraduate courses. The postgraduate course in Barcelona is also outlined. The paper delves into lecturer and student profiles, teaching methodologies, materials available and methods of assessment. A brief analysis of the relationship between the labour market and university training in Spain is offered, and the current state of research in this specific*

¹ This article has received the support of TXICC (Chinese-Spanish/Catalan Translation Research Group), of the Department of Translation and Interpreting (UAB). We are also grateful to all the lecturers who have kindly answered the survey questionnaires as well as to O. Torres, A. Kuznik, A. Lozano, and G. García-Noblejas for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper. This paper has also benefited from suggestions made by the journal referees, including Alet Kruger.

language combination in translation is described. Data for this paper has been drawn from a survey of trainers and postgraduate students of Chinese-Spanish translation in Spain, from academic literature and from the authors' own experience as translators, trainers and researchers. To conclude, the merits and shortcomings both in training and research in Chinese-Spanish translation in Spain are highlighted, and future perspectives in the field are considered.

Keywords. Chinese-Spanish translation, Translation training, Spain, Research, Professional translation

Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to outline the development of Chinese-Spanish translation studies – both training and research – in Spain. At the same time, we will briefly look into the relationship between translation programmes and the market. In order to do so, we have gathered data from three major sources: lecturers' and postgraduate students' opinions through survey questionnaires;² academic literature; and last, from our own experience in four key areas, namely, as translation and interpreting graduates, as professionals with experience in the Spanish translation market, as trainers of Chinese-Spanish translators and, finally, as researchers in the field. We will focus on Chinese-Spanish translation training and research in Spain. While including data from elsewhere would certainly be of interest, this is beyond the scope of the present study and remains a topic for future research.

² The students' questionnaires were not specifically designed for this study; instead, we used previously gathered surveys designed to obtain feedback about their opinion on masters courses in Chinese-Spanish translation.

An important part of this study was a questionnaire survey conducted between September and November 2006, which was administered to all the lecturers teaching or having taught Chinese-Spanish translation at Spanish universities. The questionnaire comprised a total of eighteen questions, falling into six categories: personal information, educational background, professional experience, methodology and impressions about translator and interpreter training, personal engagement in research and future perspectives. The purpose was to gather data to be used as the basis for a better understanding of the current state of affairs.

Of the fifteen questionnaires that were sent out, eleven (73%) were completed and returned. Participants' experience in professional translation ranged from four to twenty-five years, with an average of twelve years. The four people who did not complete the questionnaire were no longer engaged in any Chinese-Spanish translation programme and their previous participation in such programmes was rather short-lived.

Brief history of Chinese-Spanish translation and interpreting training in Spain

Institutions

There are two institutions offering Chinese-Spanish translation training in Spain, namely the University of Granada (UGR) and the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB). It is worth mentioning that Spain still lacks a degree in Sinology or Chinese Studies and that the teaching of Chinese language in Spain has traditionally been linked to translation and interpreting schools, where Chinese is a second foreign language (C language).³ This

³ A Language: The student's native language. Translators and interpreters work into this

means that students start learning it from scratch as undergraduates and are therefore not expected to achieve a high level either in language skills or in translation competence. In this context, emphasis is placed on developing students' passive language skills and basic knowledge regarding the use of translation tools and techniques.

The University of Granada was the first institution in Spain to include Chinese in its translation degree in 1978, followed by the Autonomous University of Barcelona ten years later. At that time, these studies were part of a three-year programme (BA), which in 1992 was transformed into a four year programme (BA with Honours), in which students started translating from Chinese with a slightly better command of the language, although still not good enough to be competitive in the labour market on graduation. This transformation led to the creation of Translation Studies as a new field of study, along with Departments of Translation and Interpreting as well as Ph.D. programmes in Translation Studies.

As far as undergraduate degrees are concerned, since 2000 the supply of China-related studies has expanded and diversified into multidisciplinary programmes more related to social sciences than philology or translation. In the academic year 2004/2005 the Master of Arts degree in Professional Chinese-Spanish Translation and Interpreting⁴ offered by the Department of Translation and Interpreting of the Autonomous University of Barcelona appeared on the scene, filling a gap in provision of professional training, not only at the national level but possibly also at an international one, as can be

language. B Language: A language other than the student's native language, usually the first foreign language, of which they have perfect command, and into which they may work in translation and interpretation. C Language: The C language is a passive foreign language from which a translator or interpreter will work into the A language.

⁴ <http://www.fti.uab.es/pg.xines.chinese/Chinese%20Master/en/aims.html> <10/11/2006>

seen from the nationality and profile of the students wishing to enrol.

In sum, there has been a slight but significant increase as far as the provision of Chinese-Spanish translation degrees is concerned, particularly at the postgraduate level, as well as China-related studies, where the Chinese language is also taught. Consequently, in the mid- and long term, it is possible that postgraduate translation programmes will recruit students who do not hold degrees in translation and interpreting. It is also possible that such students will directly enter the translation market, since, despite the considerable increase in translation programmes throughout Spain, none of the new programmes includes Chinese in its range of C languages.

Students

The diversity of students' profiles makes any generalization difficult. However, we can draw some distinctions according to two main criteria: first, the students' mother tongue (i.e., Spanish or Chinese) and, second, their level of studies (i.e., graduate or postgraduate). We will now analyze students' profiles and the impact these profiles have on the students' studies, according to the above-mentioned parameters.

As mentioned above, undergraduate translation students take Chinese as a second foreign language. Since they start from scratch, their language level is a major determining factor when it comes to selecting materials and methodologies, in determining pace of progression, and in evaluating the quality of translations. Despite being highly motivated when they make their language choice, the fact that it is not compulsory for students to complete their studies abroad, together with a clearly inadequate Spanish grant system, means that only a few of them pursue their studies in China and eventually use the Chinese language professionally. All the lecturers surveyed confirm

that our graduates are not prepared to enter the job market without spending considerable time abroad. According to an internal report by UAB's Translation and Interpreting School,⁵ only one third of its graduates work as professional translators or interpreters in the long term, the proportion for those working with Chinese no doubt being lower still.

The entry requirements for the Master of Arts in Chinese-Spanish Professional Translation and Interpreting of the UAB⁶ have constituted a barrier, exerting a dissuasive effect on Spanish students. Most students enrolled on the programme have consequently come from China or Taiwan (around 75% the first year, 100% the second year and 90% at present), and only a few have had Spanish as their mother tongue.

This student make-up is due, on the one hand, to the lack of native Spanish-speaking students with the required level of Chinese because of the still limited opportunities to study Chinese in Spain and, in particular, because of the meagre opportunities they have to improve their Chinese language skills in China or Taiwan. Moreover, fees may also represent a stumbling-block, since they are expensive compared to the fees paid at BA level and particularly compared to other Spanish Masters degrees. Although these circumstances are gradually changing, it seems there is still a long way to go before the situation is reversed.

In contrast, the fact that most or even all students are of Chinese origin can be explained by the lack of similar provision with this language combination both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Furthermore, foreign Masters

⁵ Facultat de Traducció i Interpretació de la UAB (2004): "Resultats enquestes 2003 a estudiants graduats el 2001, 2002".

⁶ Chinese-speaking students are required to hold a degree in Spanish Language and Spanish-speaking students a degree in Translation and Interpreting plus at least one year of study in China. Special backgrounds not fulfilling these conditions are studied case by case.

degrees are highly valued in China and Taiwan and, compared with the fees of Masters programmes in other Western countries, Chinese and Taiwanese students find the fees of the UAB Master of Arts programme relatively affordable. However, the most relevant point is that even though this Master of Arts programme was not specifically designed for students of Chinese origin, the actual student composition to a great extent reflects the translation – and especially the interpreting – job market in Spain (and also in mainland China and Taiwan), where the mother tongue of most professionals is Chinese rather than Spanish, with the result that they are compelled to translate and interpret into their foreign language.

This student composition has posed challenges to the design of the curriculum in several ways, since changes have had to be made in order to meet the needs of the students. In the first place, most of them have a background in philology and have had little or no exposure to translation or interpreting before joining the programme. Consequently, courses are of necessity more introductory than originally intended. Secondly, instead of translating into their mother tongue, students translate mostly into Spanish, which has obliged lecturers to revise and adapt their materials, the level required, the methodology, etc. Finally, some subjects have been subdivided, allowing students to do translation both into Spanish and into Chinese in the same specialized area.

Generally speaking, both undergraduate and postgraduate students seem not to have a clearly defined goal before entering translation and interpreting programmes; nor is becoming translators or interpreters the most important reason for their choosing this postgraduate course. Usually, the aspiration to learn a new foreign language (in the case of undergraduate students) or to enhance language competence (in the case of our postgraduates) is the main

reason for their entering a translation and interpreting programme, as occurs elsewhere, for example, Hong Kong (Li 2002:516). In sum, whereas Spanish students make up nearly 100% of the undergraduate students in translation, due to their poor command of Chinese hardly any enter the existing postgraduate course, which chiefly recruits Chinese-speaking students. This situation has been favoured by social changes related to growing immigration flows and closer ties between China and Spain at all levels.

Curriculum design

As regards the subjects offered at graduate level, we have observed many discrepancies between UAB and UGR. Theoretically, provision at undergraduate level is much narrower at UAB (20 credits, 16 of which are compulsory) compared to UGR (54 credits, only 12 of which are compulsory),⁷ where students supposedly even have the opportunity to receive some training in conference interpreting from Chinese.

At the UAB there are four compulsory subjects in general C-A translation (labelled TC1 to 4 in Table 1) starting from the 3rd year and an optional 4th year subject called Translation Seminar devoted to the translation of economics texts drawn from the Press. In the UGR, on the contrary, according to the official syllabus there are only two compulsory subjects in C-A general translation studied during the 3rd year, all the rest being optional; namely, two subjects in scientific-technical translation (C-A and A-C), two subjects in legal-economic-commercial translation (C-A and A-C), one subject in A-C general translation, and one subject in conference interpreting (C-A).

⁷ Data obtained from the official syllabus as published at the Boletín Oficial del Estado (BOE): <http://www.uge.es/%7Efactrad/informacionAcademica/documentos/BOE2.pdf> <9/1/2007>

However, according to our informants at the UGR, due to the students' insufficient language level, in practice neither the two subjects in specialized translation into Chinese nor the interpreting subject are offered. Moreover, general translation A-C has been devoted to enhancing language proficiency and C-A specialized translation courses do not actually use highly specialized texts.

Table 1 shows a list of all the undergraduate translation and interpreting courses currently offered in Spain involving Spanish and Chinese.

Undergraduate students' training in translation practice (B-A) starts from the 1st year, so by the time they confront Chinese-Spanish translation they have already acquired some techniques and become familiar with professional resources that no doubt assist them in C-A translation. We wonder whether the students' level is good enough in the 3rd year to start translating from Chinese at all and whether, moreover, they are ready to tackle the difficulties of specialized translation in the 4th year. The conference interpreting option at UGR is even more surprising, since this degree has no mechanism to guarantee that students have the required level when they take the course (such as, for example, a compulsory study period of at least one or two years in China or Taiwan). One perennial student complaint is that they have to spend hours looking up vocabulary in the dictionary. From a pedagogical point of view, we wonder whether it might not be better to introduce them to C-A translation practice using more general or less specialized texts, which are usually less difficult, or whether we should perhaps recognize that the problem of vocabulary is inherent to Chinese and, thus, unavoidable.

Table 1. Undergraduate translation courses included in the official syllabuses of Spanish universities

Subject	University	Credits	Year	Type
TC1 (C-A)	UAB	4	3 rd year	compulsory
TC2 (C-A)	UAB	4	3 rd year	compulsory
TC3 (C-A)	UAB	4	4 th year	compulsory
TC4 (C-A)	UAB	4	4 th year	compulsory
Translation Seminar C (C-A)	UAB	4	4 th year	optional
General Translation 1 (C-A)	UGR	6	3 rd year	compulsory
General Translation 2 (C-A)	UGR	6	3 rd year	compulsory
Translation 3 (A-C)	UGR	6	4 th year	optional
Translation 4 (scientific-technical) (C-A)	UGR	6	4 th year	optional
Translation 5 (scientific-technical) (A-C)*	UGR	6	4 th year	optional
Translation 6 (legal-economic-commercial) (C-A)	UGR	6	4 th year	optional
Translation 7 (legal-economic-commercial) (A-C)*	UGR	6	4 th year	optional
Conference Interpreting (C-A)*	UGR	12	4 th year	optional

*These subjects have never been offered.

At the postgraduate level, as far as translation training is concerned, the only available programme is the above-mentioned Master of Arts in Chinese-Spanish Professional Translation and Interpreting offered at UAB. It currently consists of a total of fourteen subjects (44 credits), all of which are compulsory, as well as an optional seminar on professional orientation (8 hours). There are three subjects, with a theoretical bias, where the target language is of secondary importance (Theory and Practice of Translation, Cultural Transfer and Information and Communication Technologies Applied to Translation). Three have Spanish as their target language (Audiovisual Translation, Political Affairs Translation and Introduction to Conference

Interpreting). The remaining four subjects have been divided and are now offered both with Chinese and Spanish as the target language, namely, Consecutive Interpreting, Literary Translation, Administrative/Legal Translation and Commercial Translation.

Table 2. Generic postgraduate Chinese-Spanish translation courses available during the academic year 2006/07 at UAB

Subject	Credits	Type
Translation from Chinese into Spanish: Theory and Practice	3	compulsory
Cultural Transfer and Translation	3	compulsory
Information and Communication Technologies applied to Translation	3	compulsory
Introduction to Conference Interpreting (Chinese-Spanish)	3	compulsory
Audiovisual Translation (Chinese-Spanish)	3	compulsory
Political Affairs Translation (Chinese-Spanish)	3	compulsory
Consecutive Interpreting (Chinese-Spanish)	3	compulsory
Consecutive Interpreting (Spanish-Chinese)	3	compulsory
Literary Translation (Chinese-Spanish)	6	compulsory
Literary Translation (Spanish-Chinese)	3	compulsory
Administrative and Legal Translation (Chinese-Spanish)	3	compulsory
Administrative and Legal Translation (Spanish-Chinese)	3	compulsory
Commercial Translation (Chinese-Spanish)	3	compulsory
Commercial Translation (Spanish-Chinese)	3	compulsory

Lecturers

Generally speaking, two groups of Chinese-Spanish translation lecturers can be distinguished: those accessing the job through long and acknowledged professional practice (63%) and those having followed specific studies in translation (36%). These two groups correspond to two different generations, the former educated abroad in Chinese Philology at a time when Chinese could not be studied in Spain, and the latter graduates in Translation Studies.

Apart from Spanish professionals, there are also a few Chinese lecturers (with a background in Spanish philology), who may teach Spanish-Chinese translation, but who have also taught Chinese-Spanish translation, possibly due to the dearth of native Spanish-speaking professionals in the past.

There are fewer lecturers at the undergraduate than at the postgraduate level because of the number of courses offered, and because the level of specialization of the subject studied in the former is lower. Postgraduate courses are divided into specializations, and the teaching staff includes professionals not otherwise engaged in academic life, such as those teaching Interpreting and Information and Communication Technologies Applied to Translation.

All lecturers have professional experience in translation from Chinese into Spanish and devote part of their activity to professional translation. There is usually a correlation between lecturers' professional profiles or training backgrounds and the courses they teach. Moreover, surveys reveal that all lecturers apply their professional experience in the classroom in order to help students cross the bridge between academic training and professional

practice.⁸ More than 70% of the lecturers surveyed have written or are currently writing their Ph.D. theses on topics related to translation from Chinese or the Chinese language, thus having both an academic and professional profile. Li's (2000:128) claim that many lecturers have not been engaged in the practice of professional translation, which creates a "divorce of translation academics from the real translation world" is therefore not the case in Chinese-Spanish translation training in Spain.

Materials

Undergraduate and postgraduate courses are alike in that no textbook is used, the task of selecting and organising the texts that students work with falling entirely to the lecturer. This is not very different from what occurs in translation courses involving other language pairs, but it does differ from the apparently much more structured and systematic methods used in mainland China, where textbooks are the main tool in translation training. Mayoral (1999) argues that "[t]he teaching of translation is nowadays too personal an activity for textbooks. Further, there is currently not enough consensus on the nature of theoretical problems, which in any case have not been sufficiently elaborated in ways that can inform all the practical problems".

As a matter of fact, no textbook for Chinese-Spanish translation practice exists in Spain. The only existing textbook⁹ combines a contrastive linguistics approach with theoretical issues rather than a corpus of texts for students to translate at different stages of their instruction. Except for the subject called

⁸ Two lecturers even mentioned in a personal communication that their students are required to attach an invoice to their translated text.

⁹ Ramírez (2004).

Theory and Practice of Translation given by the author of the textbook mentioned above, courses do not follow any textbook, despite the fact that some lecturers may occasionally resort to textbooks in search of suitable texts.

As far as source materials for text selection are concerned, there is a clear tendency among lecturers to use a mixture of real and manipulated texts for authentic. According to data collected through the surveys, lecturers touch upon a wide range of topics and use a large number of sources when selecting texts for practice with students. Among the most popular we find: the internet, instruction booklets, textbooks, literature, films, the press, contracts, television programmes, recipes, street signs and advertisements, legislation, scripts, public speeches, certificates, etc. The level of difficulty and translation problems posed by texts account for the two main selection criteria on which lecturers base their choices (nine out of eleven of those surveyed). Obviously, the subject matter is also an important criterion (eight out of eleven). What can be drawn from the data collected is that a combination of the three prevails, whereas other factors, such as availability of parallel texts, for example, have proved to be of secondary importance.

Teaching Methodology

Through the multi-choice list we gave our surveyed lecturers, we realized that in-class correction of translations previously done at home by students is the most widely used teaching methodology (eleven out of eleven). The second most widely used method is practising unseen translation, i.e., translating a text in the classroom not previously seen or prepared by the students (seven out of eleven). Working with parallel texts, a comparison of student translations and published translations, as well as analysing published

translations, are also among the different popular approaches to translation training (six out of eleven). In our study, correcting published translations proved not to be among the methods used in translation training. Both in-class and out-of-class group assignments are rather rare (seven and eight out of eleven lecturers, respectively, do not use them). Finally, oral presentations by students are also relatively scarce among training approaches in our field (only five out of eleven).

According to our surveys, cultural referents (eleven out of eleven), vocabulary and pragmatics (ten out of eleven) are all very important aspects for the majority, if not all, of the lecturers when working with a text in the classroom. Next comes documentation (nine out of eleven), followed by terminology and grammar (seven out of eleven). Only five out of eleven call students' attention to encyclopaedic knowledge, which is rather surprising, given the importance of encyclopaedic knowledge to translators. These data are of course general trends, irrespective of the course given, since it is obvious that the balance towards one or the other may vary, depending on the type of text, subject matter, students' level, etc.

Within the framework of undergraduate translation courses, at UGR there is a balance between theory and practice, whereas at UAB courses focus more on the practical aspect of training. At the postgraduate level, data show that there is a balance between theory and practice.

As far as assessment is concerned, all the lecturers surveyed resort to more than one method to assess students' progress and achievement of the course objectives. Along the lines of the methodology used, the two most widely used methods are assessment of coursework and participation, and exams. Others include presentations, individual or group assignments, and mid-term exams, but they are less common and also account for a lower proportion of

the overall grade than the preferred methods.

The relationship between the Chinese-Spanish translation market and professional translation training

A thorough understanding of how the Chinese-Spanish translation market functions in Spain, of the profile that professionals have, and what share of the market remains open to our students will undoubtedly put us in a better position to gauge the appropriateness of our curricular design, as well as the adjustments required to improve both the prospects of our graduates entering the market, and the proportion of those who achieve professional success. Therefore, although it is not the aim of this paper to analyze in depth the Chinese-Spanish translation market in Spain, it is important to be aware of its general characteristics if we are to explain the reasons behind a number of paradoxes, so that they may be taken into account when designing translation and interpreting training syllabuses in the future.

We have observed that the majority of professionals engaged in Chinese-Spanish translation in Spain have not received formal training in translation, whereas, paradoxically, very few translation graduates are able to enter postgraduate programmes or the market.

Compared to other language combinations, the volume of translations from and into Chinese in Spain is rather small, and at present those who make a living in this field are still an exception. Consequently, professionals are obliged to be competent in a variety of specialized areas. Although a certain degree of diversification is advisable in coping with the uncertainties of dynamic translation markets, as some scholars, such as Pym (1998), argue for other language pairs, this is even more acute in the case of Chinese due to low

demand. Thus, an eclectic training, such as the one offered, probably constitutes the best choice to train professionals to be ready to adapt to any new situation and translation brief.

However, with China's irruption into the global arena from the beginning of this century, the volume of translations is likely to increase, especially in certain areas, such as tourism, culture, and probably technology. Proof of this is the growing demand for Chinese-Spanish translators working for public institutions (government, police, courts, etc.) and the implementation of official translator accreditation tests, both at national and regional level. Perhaps it would be useful to analyse current and future information flows and to identify the possible needs and asymmetries and try to reflect them in translator training. Although Pym (1998) argues that "demand for translations is not subject to unlimited expansion but will tend to give way to language-learning policies", which might be true for languages such as English, we believe this is unlikely to happen in the case of Chinese.

Mayoral (1999) points out that "[t]he labour market is undergoing change at an exponential rate. Spanish universities are finding it practically impossible to adapt to new needs". However, Master of Arts programmes aimed at training professionals for the workplace are, or at least should be, flexible enough to adapt their curricula to market requirements and shifts and be more responsive to the real working environment and conditions.

Besides, according to market requirements, a sound professional approach to translator training must go beyond linguistic competence and "bring together knowledge and skills that belong to different disciplines, such as documentation, terminology, desktop publishing, as well as some knowledge of specialized texts", since "would-be professionals are expected to have a broad knowledge of the subject matter of the text, to use a large number of

computer tools proficiently, and to be versatile in the sense that they can master all elements in the translation process” (Aula.int 2005:132). At undergraduate level, these skills are taught separately from the translation courses, but at postgraduate level they are addressed collectively and focus on the particularities of the speciality in question. Today, another important skill needed by professional translators is to be able to work with other translators (team work on large translation projects) and with other professionals (when documenting specific translation problems). This skill is not always prioritized at university and should probably be included among the competencies to be developed.

One of the most contentious issues dividing the academic and the professional spheres is the question of quality. Both universities and the market seem to be more demanding of Spanish professionals than of their Chinese counterparts. Despite Aula. int’s (2005:135) claim that “[c]lients have become stricter about the ‘quality’ of translations or, rather, about their own ‘criteria for quality’”, we doubt whether such an assertion can be applied to translations from Chinese. There is a gap between the criteria driving academic standards (basically, quality) and those governing the job market, where economic criteria and time constraints usually override all the rest. For example, in academia we typically recommend that translators always translate into their mother tongue, whereas in real professional practice we find that too frequently translations into Spanish are undertaken by Chinese. In the particular case of literary translation, because of time and economic constraints, Spanish translations of Chinese works are often translated from an intermediary language, such as French or English, rather than from Chinese.

At a time when the university system is increasingly compelled by society

and supra-national educational policies to satisfy market needs and to train professionals to directly access the market, we should ask ourselves whether we are doing something wrong. Perhaps we should come down to earth and reflect market features in our degree courses rather than pretending that translation practice takes place in an academic vacuum, free of such real-world priorities and constraints.

At universities we should probably consider the possibility of redistributing the weight of different aspects and skills when it comes to assessing students' translation assignments, considering quality in relative terms, i.e., taking into account such factors as time constraints, availability of reference materials or experts on the subject matter, function of the translation, etc. By introducing a more realistic mode of training that takes into account the abovementioned factors, translators who have been professionally trained should be expected to perform more efficiently while maintaining the quality of their work.

Although Spanish students have an insufficient command of the Chinese language to be competitive in the job market and are thus not eligible to enrol in Masters courses straight after graduation, we should ask ourselves if we are not neglecting other important aspects of translator competence that they have started to develop as Translation and Interpreting graduates, a competence that their Chinese and Taiwanese counterparts with only a linguistic and literary background do not possess. In short, if we consider that a large measure of Spanish graduates' weakness is their level of Chinese language proficiency, we would do well to work on this aspect from our own institutions, whilst continuing to encourage them to study abroad in order to improve their Chinese language skills. We might ask ourselves what could be done in our universities to enable Spanish students to enter specialized

postgraduate programmes that will equip them for and make them competitive in the job market.

Chinese-Spanish translation research

Besides training, university activity also includes research, a dimension which is vital for training quality and also crucial to making academic disciplines progress. In such a new area as Chinese-Spanish translation, we believe that special attention should be given to research to help it develop at the same pace as training. The beginning of academic research in the field of Chinese-Spanish Translation Studies in Spain can be dated as late as 1994, taking as a reference point the first Ph.D. thesis related to Chinese literature. Ever since, research has developed steadily, with the writing of numerous dissertations of different kinds.¹⁰

Although approximately half of the lecturers surveyed claim to pursue research in Chinese-Spanish translation, in fact the results of this research are not very visible in the form of academic publications, conference papers and other global indicators of research activity. If we take a closer look at lecturers' publications, it would appear that their research mainly takes the form of annotated translations.

The Master of Arts offered at UAB in the last couple of years has spurred research activities among all the professionals involved, culminating in 2006 with the establishment of the first research group on Chinese-Spanish/Catalan translation (TXICC) in Spain. Within this group, efforts are being made to consolidate research lines that have traditionally been studied individually and explore new ones that will contribute to the

¹⁰ See appendix for a list of BA, masters and Ph.D. dissertations in this field.

development of these studies, both in training and research. However, although many initiatives and projects are being carried out, there are major barriers to rapid development in this area in Spain, such as a lack of specialized journals, conferences, seminars and other groups with whom to cooperate. In this sense, there is still a long way to go until we can enjoy an ideal research environment, where research does not depend on scattered individual endeavours, but takes place in a context with definite and clear research interests and researcher networks, where individuals feel supported, groups can cooperate and thus make the discipline progress.

At postgraduate level, there has been a steady flow of Ph.D. students both national and foreign (mostly coming from Taiwan) doing their research in the field of Translation Studies with this language pair. Although the University of Granada makes similar provision, the programme of the Department of Translation and Interpreting at UAB has a bigger annual intake of Taiwanese (and increasingly Mainland) students, who are possibly attracted by the experience and success of their predecessors,¹¹ due to the lack of Ph.D. programmes in Translation Studies in their own countries, where their working languages may be both Chinese and Spanish.

Problems and future perspectives

Overall, there has been a notable improvement in the field of Chinese-Spanish translation studies since training and research in this discipline first made its appearance in Spain. As far as training is concerned, there has been a growing demand for China and Chinese-related studies, which has largely been met by increasing provision at the undergraduate level and, most importantly, at

the postgraduate level. Regarding research, significant advances have been made, most notably with the establishment of the first research group devoted to translation with this language combination as its object of study.

Despite these positive developments and the optimism shared by most professionals concerning the future of training and research in this area, a few issues need to be addressed to ensure further improvement and the solution of a number of persistent shortcomings in this field of study.

Firstly, a general remark needs to be made. Both graduate and postgraduate courses, regardless of their name, are in fact merely introductory – in the case of graduate students, because their language level is lacking, and in the case of postgraduate students, because currently they come mainly from Spanish philology studies and thus have no previous experience in translation. We must find ways to help our graduates improve their Chinese language level if they are to be able to enter the market on equal terms with their Chinese counterparts. Language learning therefore has to be further enhanced at undergraduate level, for instance, by offering a new undergraduate degree specifically in Chinese Studies, where the time devoted to language shows a substantial increase, or devising a system which includes compulsory study abroad as part of the curriculum design. Needless to say, all of these scenarios would ideally be accompanied by a programme of more and better grants. Our graduates would then be able to pursue their studies in postgraduate courses, providing them with more specialized preparation to enable them to meet the demands of the market.

Secondly, the experiences gained professionally by lecturers and other professionals should have a greater influence on students' training. The provi-

¹¹ Three Taiwanese Ph.D. students have already graduated and currently hold teaching posts in Taiwanese universities.

sion of Chinese-Spanish translation training in Spain is diverse but still scarce, and needs to improve in terms of adjustment to the market. On the one hand, we should do our best to reflect real working conditions to become a real bridge between classroom training and professional practice. On the other hand, we should try to guarantee that our graduates meet the standards to enter postgraduate courses, and offer more advanced translation and interpreting postgraduate courses to train more competitive professionals.

Finally, research requires further and steady development. Not only should more research (in terms of publications, theses, etc.) be done in this field, but a better working environment should be provided. There is an urgent need to improve the research tools available in Spanish universities and to offer forums where this research can grow and advance, such as seminars, academic meetings, etc.

In this paper we have examined the characteristics of the current state of Chinese-Spanish translator training and research in Spain, pointing out both its strong points and its shortcomings. We have concluded by suggesting methods that can contribute to filling the gaps in present-day Chinese-Spanish translator training in Spain, proposing ideas and elements that can inspire courses with similar aims elsewhere. Although we have also highlighted some of the discrepancies between the university and the market, we feel that this issue warrants greater attention and deeper analysis. To address it here would have led well beyond the boundaries of this study and we have therefore left it as a subject for future research.

HELENA CASAS TOST & SARA ROVIRA ESTEVA

Office 1018, Departament de Traducció i Interpretació, Edifici K, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 08193 Bellaterra (Cerdanyola del Vallès), Spain.

Helena.Casas@uab.cat / Sara.Rovira@uab.cat

References

- Aula.int. (2005) 'Translator Training and Modern Market Demands', *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* 13(2): 132-42.
- Gabr, Moustafa (2001) 'Toward a Model Approach to Translation Curriculum Development', *Translation Journal* 5(2), available at: <http://www accurapid.com/journal/16edu.htm> (last accessed 19 December 2006).
- Li, Defeng (2000) 'Tailoring Translation Programs to Social Needs: A Survey to Professional Translators', *Target* 12(1): 127-49.
- (2002) 'Translator Training: What Translation Students Have to Say', *META* 47(4): 513-31.
- (2005) 'Teaching of Specialized Translation Courses in Hong Kong. A Curricular Analysis', *Babel* 51(1): 62-77.
- Mayoral Asensio, Roberto (1999) 'Notes on Translator Training (Replies to a Questionnaire)', *International Symposium on Innovation in Translator and Interpreter Training*. Intercultural Studies Group, available at: <http://www.tinet.org/~apym/symp/mayoral.html>. (last accessed 1 December 2006).
- Pym, Anthony (1998) 'On the Market as a Factor in the Training of Translators', <http://www.tinet.org/~apym/on-line/market.html> (last accessed 17 December

2006).

Ramírez, Laureano (2004) *Manual de traducción chino-castellano*, Barcelona: Gedisa.

Tao, Youlan (2005) 'Translation Studies and Textbooks', *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* 13(3): 188-204.

Xu, Jianzhong (2005) 'Training Translators in China', *META* 50(1): 231-49.

Appendix

BA Honours dissertations relating to Chinese-Spanish translation in Spain (1994-2006)

- 1994 “Tres poemas de Du Fu” (UAB)
1994 “Traducción del chino al castellano de tres relatos del libro Beijingren, de Zhang Xingxing y Sang Ye” (UAB)
1995 “Zhongguo shenghua: Llegendes xineses” (UAB)
1995 “Poesía Menglong” (UAB)
1995 “Liaozhai: Cuentos fantásticos de Pu Songling” (UAB)
1995 “Traducción de Noche de luna y Las noches de Marsella, de Ba Jin” (UAB)
1996 “Relatos de Lu Xun” (UAB)
1997 “Com traduir els mesuradors xinesos al català” (UAB)
1997 “Herramientas electrónicas para la traducción del chino” (UGR)
1998 “Kong Yiji de Lu Xun: Proposta d’una versió en català” (UAB)
1998 “Traducción de la ambigüedad en seis poemas de la dinastía Tang” (UGR)
1998 “La partícula estructural de [en chino] y su traducción” (UGR)
1998 “Aspectos temporales de la traducción chino-español” (UGR)
1998 “Traducción y adaptación infantil de dos leyendas tradicionales” (UGR)

Masters dissertations relating to Chinese-Spanish translation in Spain (1994-2006)

- 1995 “La Jerga actual de Pekín: análisis y vocabulario chino-español” (UAB)
2000 “Lin Shu y sus traducciones: contexto social, impacto cultural e influencia literaria” (UAB)
2002 “Nuevos desafíos y perspectivas para la didáctica de la traducción en China, Hong Kong y Taiwán: la incorporación del español” (UAB)
2002 “Valores culturales predominantes en la traducción de marcas comerciales al chino” (UAB)
2002 “Translation as a site: translatability, translation studies and contemporary Chinese literature” (UAB)
2003 “La Traducció del xinès al català: del traductor especialitzat a l’expert en traducció” (UAB)
2006 “La Traducción al castellano de los términos Tian y Dao del Lunyu de Confucio” (UAB)

Ph.D. these relating to Chinese-Spanish translation in Spain (1994-2006)

1994 “Hacia una poética de la literatura china: El corazón de la literatura y el cincelado de dragones” (UGR)

1995 “Estudio comparativo del chino y el español. Aspectos lingüísticos y culturales” (UAB)

1997 “La Traducción del chino moderno: bases teóricas y dificultades contrastivas” (UAB)

2002 “El paper dels mesuradors xinesos en la pragmàtica del text” (UAB)

2002 “La traducción de la literatura del chino al castellano: Un relato de Gan Bao” (Universidad de Oviedo)

2002 “La influencia del pensamiento occidental y el papel de la traducción en el período de la nueva cultura en China” (UGR)

2003 “La influencia literaria y cultural de las traducciones de Lin Shu (1852-1924) en la China de finales del siglo XIX y principios del XX” (UAB)

2003 “La traducción castellana del libro chino “Beng Sim Po Cam - Espejo rico del claro corazón”, realizada por Juan Cobo c. 1590: estudio crítico y bio-bibliográfico” (UAM)

2005 “Embodying translation in modern and contemporary Chinese literature (1908-1934 and 1979-1999): a methodological use of the conception of translation as a site” (UAB)

2005 “Estudio desde una perspectiva lingüística y sociocultural para la traducción de marcas comerciales a la lengua china” (UAB)

2006 “La Traducción de los elementos lingüísticos culturales (chino-español): estudio de Sueño en las estancias rojas” (UAB)