

# Designing a foreign language course for trainee translators

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## Abstract

Language learning for translators, like any other learning process, can only be discussed meaningfully in context. The general context of the proposal presented in this chapter is language learning as a part of an undergraduate degree designed to train professional translators. The main difficulty in designing this kind of syllabus is to combine very specific learning objectives at each level within a meaningful, communicative, discourse approach. This paper proposes a three-stage process to design a syllabus for different learning situations: 1) A translation-based pre-syllabus; 2) A translation-oriented, discourse-based pre-syllabus; 3) A genre and task-based syllabus integrating stages one and two.

**Key words:** training translators, specific objectives, translation competence, translation market, discourse, genre, contrastive rhetoric.

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## Resum

L'aprenentatge de llengües per part dels traductors, com qualsevol altre procés d'aprenentatge, només es pot abordar d'una manera vàlida en context. El context general de la proposta presentada en aquest capítol és l'aprenentatge de llengües com a part d'uns estudis universitaris pensats per preparar traductors professionals. En dissenyar aquesta mena de programa d'estudis, la principal dificultat és conjuminar uns objectius didàctics molt específics en cada nivell amb un enfocament discursiu, comunicatiu i significatiu vàlid. Aquest article proposa un procés en tres fases per a dissenyar un programa per a situacions d'aprenentatge diferents: 1) un preprograma basat en la traducció; 2) un preprograma basat en el discurs i orientat vers la traducció, i 3) un programa basat en gènere i objectiu que integri les fases 1 i 2.

**Paraules clau:** formació de traductors, objectius específics, competència traductora, mercat de la traducció, discurs, gènere, retòrica contrastiva.

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## Summary

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## Introduction

Language learning for translators, like any other learning process, can only be discussed meaningfully in context. The general context of the proposal presented in this chapter is language learning as a part of an undergraduate degree designed to train professional translators. Basic guidelines for teaching language for translators can be established within this general context, but in practice, each teaching situation presents a different set of priorities and restrictions. These priorities and restrictions vary according to the country, the institution, the other subjects in the degree programme, entry requirements for students, the language being taught and the final skills required. For example, in the Facultat de Traducció i d'Interpretació of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, English is taught as a B language, which means that the students use English in direct translation (English  $\Rightarrow$  Catalan/Spanish), inverse translation (Catalan/Spanish  $\Rightarrow$  English) and consecutive and simultaneous interpreting (English  $\Rightarrow$  Catalan/Spanish). They have studied English at school and have passed an entrance exam in their A and B languages and English language for translators is only taught in the first two years of the four-year degree course. On the other hand, Chinese is taught as a C language, which means that the students start as beginners, study Chinese intensively throughout the four years and only start direct translation (Chinese  $\Rightarrow$  Catalan/Spanish) in the third year. They know they will have to spend a couple of years in a Chinese speaking country if they are to use their Chinese professionally. Obviously, the priorities and restrictions for teaching these two languages are very different.

The author proposes a three-stage process to identify specific objectives for each learning situation and to design a syllabus. The first stage is to identify the elements of a translation-based, student-oriented pre-syllabus. The second stage is to identify the elements of a discourse-based, translation-oriented pre-syllabus. The third stage is to design a genre and task-based syllabus that integrates the contents of the first two stages, with very specific objectives for each task.

## Background

Very little has been written about language learning for translators. Berenguer's pioneer proposal (1996) is based on the skills she considered to be important for a translator, applied to German as a C language. She proposed exercises to develop five main skills: 1) Reading comprehension exercises based on *deverbalisation* (Delisle, 1980) and translation-oriented discourse analysis (Nord, 1991 and Elena, 1990). 2) Exercises to separate the two languages in contact that focus on differences in: writing conventions, vocabulary, grammar and text types. 3) Exercises to develop documentation techniques. 4) Exercises to develop cultural expertise in the foreign culture. 5) Exercises to develop translation awareness. Berenguer's proposal is important because it clearly situates language for translators as a language for special purposes within the applied branch of translation studies (Holmes, 1972).

Other publications on language learning for translator training tend to concentrate on one aspect of the learning process. Brehm (1997) focuses on reading for translators and incorporates useful insights from studies in reading acquisition in first and second languages. Séguinot (1994) points out the usefulness of teaching technical writing to trainee translators and Koltay (1998) defends including technical and academic writing in translation curricula. Both authors stress the learning of genres and documentation needed for technical writing as being important for translators. The idea that language learning should be situated in a general framework of translation training is implicit in all these publications.

The genre-based approach to teaching languages which has emerged from Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993) and contrastive rhetoric (Connor, 1994), seem to provide a methodology that is particularly appropriate for learning languages for translation. However, in order to design a genre-based language syllabus for translators, the course content should first be established through a translation-based, student-oriented pre-syllabus that will help to draw up a discourse-based, translation-oriented pre-syllabus.

### **Stage 1: A translation-based, student-oriented pre-syllabus**

If the purpose of a degree programme is to train professional translators, then learning objectives should be based on a concept of professional translator competence: what we can know, or discover, about professional translators. There are at least two ways of finding out more about professional translators. The first is to study the translation market to see who translates, what and how. A few surveys have been carried out (Grindrod, 1986; Mackenzie, 2000; McAlister, 1992, etc.) and they show that conditions vary greatly from country to country. For example, inverse translation, translation into the foreign language, is very rare in the UK, very common in Finland and quite common in Spain (Beeby, 1998). Furthermore, the profession is in a state of constant change and these surveys need to be brought up to date periodically.

Without doubt, new technologies have revolutionised the way translators work and agencies may only hire translators who know how to use the latest model of a certain translation memory. However, when establishing degree programmes, a balance has to be kept between teaching the latest technology (which may be obsolete the following year) and learning to become expert bilingual, bicultural readers, writers and translators. Brian Mossop (2000) takes a rather extreme view on this:

In my view, the function of a translation school is not to train students for specific existing slots in the language industry, but to give them certain general abilities that they will then be able to apply to whatever slots may exist 5, 10, 15 or 25 years from now. In other words, I think university-based translation schools must uphold the distinction between education and training. They must resist the insistent demands of industry for graduates ready to produce top-notch translations in this or that specialised field at high speed using the latest computer tools.

While sympathising with this point of view, it does seem that the technological changes in the last twenty years have been so great that not only the process but also the product may be qualitatively different.

The second way to find out about how translators work is through process studies of translators at work.<sup>1</sup> This is what we are doing in PACTE (Proceso de Aprendizaje en la Competencia Traductora y Evaluación).<sup>2</sup> One of the most interesting results of the PACTE exploratory tests with professional translators has been to see the differences in the translation process between a young translator who works for a translation agency and was using electronic translation aids throughout the whole process, and an older freelance translator who only used the Internet as a source of documentation at the end of the process.

PACTE works with a translation competence model that is divided into six sub-competencies: communicative competence in two languages, extra-linguistic competence, transfer competence, instrumental and professional competence, psycho-physiological competence and strategic competence.<sup>3</sup> The model allows for and expects that the importance of different competencies will vary in different translation situations. For example, declarative and procedural knowledge of new technology is part of the professional/instrumental sub-competence and the importance given to this aspect of training will depend on contextual variables. However, all questions related to the translation brief, which is another aspect of this sub-competence, will always be central to any professional translation or professional translation training.

In order to decide which sub-competencies should be given priority in the foreign language class, the language teacher should know what the students are learning or are going to learn in other classes and what the objectives of the translation and interpreting classes are at different levels. Taking a professional translation competence model does not mean that an expert level should be an objective, even in the final year of the degree. Acquiring translation competence is best described in terms of a continuum from *novice* to *expert* (PACTE, 2000: 103-105). The degree of expertise aimed at in the language class will depend on the final objective for a particular language at a particular time and place in the whole degree programme. This knowledge will help us to provide progression in the language class.

The teacher needs to be aware of what kind of knowledge the students should be acquiring at each stage of training. Is it theoretical or practical, conscious or automatic, *declarative* or *procedural* knowledge? One type of knowledge does not exclude the other, they may co-exist in a learning situation, or, as novice becomes expert, declarative knowledge may give way to procedural knowledge. The PACTE

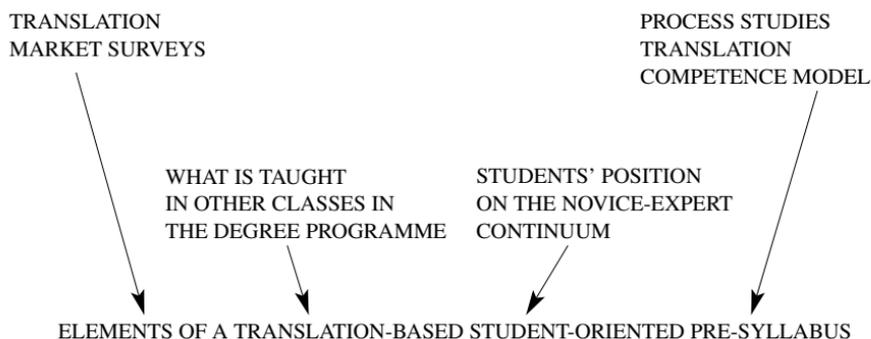
1. For bibliographical references to empirical research in the translation process, see Fraser, 1996 and PACTE, 2000.
2. The PACTE group is led by A. Hurtado and includes A. Beeby, M. Fernández, O. Fox, N. Martínez, W. Neunzig, M. Orozco, M. Presas, P. Rodríguez. For a description of the PACTE project, see PACTE 2000 and Beeby 2000.
3. For a detailed description of the sub-competencies, see PACTE (2000: 101-102).

hypothesis is that expert translation competence is essentially procedural knowledge in which the strategic component is primordial. Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) characterise expert knowledge as non-reflective or automatic. In introspective translation studies, the automatic nature of expert, procedural knowledge is illustrated by the difficulties expert translators have in verbalising their mental processes (Kiraly, 1995). Therefore, declarative knowledge about contrastive rhetoric may be acquired in the first and second years, but may not become fully procedural until the translator has been working for several years. For example, an Egyptian student who is writing his thesis on legal genres in Spanish and Arabic at the UAB is very knowledgeable about genre differences in Spain and Egypt (declarative knowledge). However, he still finds it very difficult to avoid using rhetorical patterns that are popular in Arabic when writing his thesis for a Spanish university (procedural knowledge). He finds it difficult to avoid starting a chapter by quoting all the «experts» who have written anything on the subject to show that he is in good company, rather than presenting his own individual argument and supporting it when necessary with a quote from an expert. When this is pointed out, he can see it immediately and recognises that this is an Arabic rhetorical device that would begin «Behold! ...».

The PACTE translation competence model, like any other theoretical model, is one way of segmenting reality, and we are already thinking of adjusting it in the light of our experimental results. However, it provides a useful checklist for designing any translation-related syllabus. Priorities can be established in relation to which competencies are going to be worked on in other classes, and in relation to the students' position on the novice-expert continuum at different stages of the degree programme.

It seems obvious that language for translation teachers should have experience as translators, should understand the language skills needed by a translator, should be aware of what translation is, not only from reading about translation competence research models, but also from their own experience. Unfortunately, this is not often the case and this may be one reason why there has been so little research in language for this special purpose.

Attempts to define this awareness of what translation is, that translators translate texts/cultures for a purpose, always seem too obvious, too simple. However, in practice, every time I teach first year students, or talk with people who have no translation experience, I realise that it is not so obvious or simple. For many people, understanding translation requires a totally new way of looking at words, language and the world and it takes time to introduce new schemata and change existing ones. Mariana Orozco (2000) has studied the development of translation awareness amongst translation students in five faculties in Spain. Although the principle purpose of her research was to test the validity of her measuring instruments, her results suggest that the development of this awareness does take time and is related to the methodology used in translation classes. As Berenguer (1996: 10) suggests, if language teaching is translation-oriented, much precious time can be saved in the translation class.



**Stage 1.** A translation-based student-oriented pre-syllabus.

## **Stage 2: A discourse-based, translation-oriented pre-syllabus**

Of course, the apparent simplicity of translation awareness is deceptive, because there are so many aspects of translation that the «ordinary» reader/writer is not conscious of. Experienced translators who have not «studied» translation, may incorporate all these elements without being conscious of them. Procedural knowledge may be developed without passing through a declarative stage. Nevertheless, all these elements should be made explicit to trainee translators so as to speed up the process of acquiring this procedural knowledge. The problem for the teacher is how to highlight the parts of what is really a holistic process, that is, to define very specific learning objectives.<sup>4</sup>

The change caused by applying translation awareness to language teaching for trainee translators can be compared to the revolution caused in linguistics by discourse analysis: «The moment one starts thinking of language as discourse, the entire landscape changes, usually for ever» (McCarthy; Carter, 1994: vii). Discourse approaches to second language teaching face the same problem of integrating top-down and bottom-up elements of discourse analysis.<sup>5</sup> Fortunately, a great deal of research has been put into finding solutions to this problem in second language acquisition. As our first priority general objective is going to be communicative competence in the foreign language, we can draw on this research. Furthermore, there is no conflict with the theoretical basis of the translation-based pre-syllabus, because translation competence models like the PACTE model owe a great deal to the revolution caused by thinking of language as discourse and translation as discourse.

Recent research into textual genres for second language learners seems to suggest very useful ways for integrating specific objectives and real language in use. Most of the research is based on English, so English language teachers still

4. See Martínez Melis (2001: 188-189).

5. Hoey (2001) *Textual Interaction* is particularly useful for language for translation teachers as he often provides insights from contrastive rhetoric.

have a great advantage over teachers of other languages. However, the field of contrastive rhetoric is another relatively young field of research that is producing invaluable material for translator trainers (Connor, 1996). Until very recently there was very little research into Spanish genres, but new studies are beginning to appear (Simpson, 2000). McCarthy and Carter (1994: 180) provide a good guide to some ways of applying discourse and genre research to language teaching:

Ours is also an integrative view, wherein the over-arching perspective of language-as-discourse will affect *every* part of the syllabus, including any conventional «system» (lexico-grammatical) components and functional speech act components, however they are treated, whether as a series of layers of language, or as realisations within general specifications of discourse strategies.

It is difficult to select and classify discourse elements for a translation-oriented pre-syllabus without reference to a specific learning situation, therefore the classification proposed in this section has been based on English as a B language for Spanish trainee translators. Furthermore, it has been thought of for first year students who need their English for direct translation in the first and second years and inverse translation in the second year. Therefore, the emphasis will be on written texts. The second-year syllabus has to cover the oral discourse skills needed for interpreting classes in the third and fourth years, and these are not included here. Despite the narrow framework of the classification, I hope it will serve as a guide for other classes.

As was suggested above, one of the greatest difficulties for the teacher is to formulate clearly-defined learning objectives that can be presented to the students at the beginning of each task without losing sight of discourse and translation as communication when teaching language for translation. Martínez Melis (2001) insists on the need for a close relationship between precise learning objectives and evaluation criteria. It is not sufficient to present the students with a programme that has only very general objectives.

Furthermore, learning objectives have to be formulated in terms of the students' behaviour. Thus the objectives formulated for EFL trainee translators in Spain are quite different from the objectives formulated by Campbell (1998) for ESL trainee translators in Australia. In fact, Campbell does not talk about teaching objectives, but about linguistic/textual features that indicate translation competence (ibid: 62-23). Campbell was working with Australian immigrants and most of them had learned English through exposure to informal registers. Therefore, he included features that distinguish spoken from written language. Some of these features are: (TL) text length, (LVR) lexical variety ratio, (AWL) average word length. The number of these formal features found in a student's inverse translation indicated a degree of textual/translation competence. Spanish students, on the other hand, learn English at school, often through written texts, and the influence of their mother tongue (which has an even stronger tendency towards these same formal features) on their written English can be a sign of weak textual competence.

Writing is not often taught explicitly in Spanish schools, but most students reach university with a few fixed ideas about style. One of these is that more is

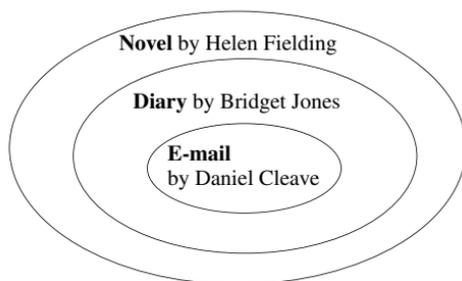
better than less, so quantity may be seen as making up for quality (TL). Another is that variation is better than repetition, so they may use synonyms in English texts where clear reference through repetition is more important than using an «elegant» style (LVR). Finally, they tend to use «long» words with a Latin origin that are similar to a Spanish word and avoid «four-letter» words (AWL). Therefore, one of my objectives in the language class is recognition of which English genres prefer brevity, clarity and clear reference. Another objective is to realise that the use of too many words of Latin origin can distort the tenor of a text. Simpson (2000) reviews studies of Spanish-English rhetorical contrasts that confirm these features. Her own study is a comparative analysis of the topical structure of academic paragraphs in English and Spanish. The results of this study confirm other differences between Spanish and English writing, particularly questions of coherence and cohesion, that I found in studying parallel texts (Spanish and English originals of the same genre) for inverse translation class (Beeby, 1996a: 215-230).

The pre-syllabus discourse elements have been classified into four sections: 1) textual interaction, 2) textual organisation, 3) contrastive rhetoric and 4) genres. In the following two charts, the left-hand column lists the selected discourse elements and the right-hand column lists the translation sub-competencies that could be developed by working creatively with these aspects of discourse. Obviously, all the discourse elements should contribute to the students' communicative competence in the foreign language. The problem-solving aspect of learning by tasks, particularly tasks that require analysis and synthesis, should help develop some aspects of the elusive but essential strategic competence. Therefore, these two competencies could be included for every task.

### 1. Textual interaction

<b>Aspects of discourse</b>	<b>Translation competence</b>
Texts say different things to different people in the same culture: different versions of the same event (matrix).	People in different cultures <i>Communicative, Extra-linguistic, Transfer, Strategic</i>
The communicative situation: signals from writer to reader	Translator/TT reader <i>Transfer</i>
Text as a site for interaction amongst writer and reader	Translator/TT reader <i>Communicative, Extra-linguistic</i>
Purposes of interactions amongst writer and reader	Translation brief <i>Instrumental-professional</i>
Inferring information about the situation from the text	Reasoning, creativity <i>Psycho-physiological</i>
Forming hypotheses about texts, predicting	World views <i>Communicative, Extra-linguistic</i>

A text that could be used to introduce textual interaction is the following extract from *Bridget Jones' Diary* by Helen Fielding. This gives us a good example of genres within genres, each with its own linguistic features:



The first part of the text is particularly useful for inferring information about the situation from the text, forming hypotheses and predicting. Students are asked to infer explicit information from what is implicit.

Thursday 5 January

9st 3 (excellent progress – 2lb of fat spontaneously combusted through joy and sexual promise), alcohol units 6 (v.g. for party), cigarettes 12 (continuing good work), calories 1,258 (love has eliminated need to pig out)

**11 a.m. Office.** Oh my God. Daniel Cleave just sent me a message. Was trying to work on CV without Perpetua noticing (in preparation for improving career) when Message Pending suddenly flashed on top of screen. Delighted by, well, anything – as always am if is not work – I quickly pressed RMS Execute and nearly jumped out of my skin when I saw Cleave at the bottom of the message. I instantly thought he had been able to tap into the computer and see that I was not getting on with my work. But then I read the message:

Message Jones

You appear to have forgotten your skirt. As I think is made perfectly clear in your contract of employment, staff are expected to be fully dressed at all times.  
Cleave

### Implicit information

9st 3 (excellent progress – 2lb of fat spontaneously combusted through joy and sexual promise)

alcohol units 6 (v.g. for party)

cigarettes 12 (continuing good work)

calories 1,258 (love has eliminated need to pig out)

### Explicit information

This morning I weigh 9 stones 3lbs, which is very good because I have lost 2lbs since yesterday morning when I weighed 9 stones 5lbs. I probably burnt up those 2lbs thinking about having an affair with Daniel Cleave.

I only drank 6 glasses of wine, which is very good, considering that I went to a party last night and I usually drink much more.

I only smoked 12 cigarettes, which is less than I usually smoke, so I can be considered to be in the process of giving it up.

I only ate 1,258 calories, which is very good. I've probably lost my appetite because I'm in love.

The use of abbreviations and omissions continue in the second part of the diary and these can be exploited to consider the language features of a diary as well as a straightforward language exercise, centred on tenses and articles.

Daniel Cleave (has) just sent me a message. (I) Was trying to work on (my) CV without Perpetua noticing (in preparation for improving (my) career) when Message Pending suddenly flashed on (the) top of (the) screen.

The third part of the text, Daniel Cleave's E-mail leads to discussion about the language features of electronic correspondence in general and the new genres that have emerged as a result of the Internet. Finally, this is a good example to illustrate the fact that genres develop from an institutional setting, that the formal register (the tenor) is because Daniel is Bridget's boss, but that the humour makes it a hybrid genre.

## 2. Textual organisation

<b>Aspects of discourse</b>	<b>Translation competence</b>
Culturally popular patterns of text organisation (mapping)	<i>Communicative, Transfer,</i>
Signals of text patterns	<i>Extra-linguistic,</i>
Coherence	<i>Instrumental-professional,</i>
Cohesion	<i>Psycho-physiological</i>

As an introduction to text structures, mapping and writing summaries, the following examples of genres produced by junior school children illustrate very basic aspects of text organisation. One broad distinction between text 1 and text 2 is that the first is organised non-chronologically and the second chronologically. Text 2 is in the past tense and text 1 in the present. Text 2 is more personal and individualised (*a kangaroo* is unique, whereas in text 1, *the shark*, or *sharks* serve to generalise. As they include common mistakes made by children, they can also be used for punctuation, spelling and grammar exercises.

**Text 1:** «Sharks!» When people think of sharks they think of harsh, savage fish that attack at sight as a matter of fact they are completely wrong. Although there has been reports of shark attacks these are very rare. Most sharks won't even come near the shore so people swimming near the shore can consider themselves almost guaranteed safe. Sharks have special sense organs that can sense things up to one mile away. The shark uses fins to balance itself and it has to keep swimming or else it will sink. The shark's teeth are razor blade sharp and although you can only see two layers of teeth there are many in the jaw. Usually smaller fish follow the sharks around in hope of gathering up scraps that the shark may leave.

**Text 2:** A long time ago there was a kangaroo who did not have a tail and all the animals laughed at him and that made him sad. How did he get it back? He got it back by dipping his tail into lolly-pop syrup. The animals started to like him and then they played with him. Would you like it? I would not because it would be most annoying.

The End.

Decide which characteristics are true for each text and justify your choice:

1. Organisation: Chronological/Non-chronological?
2. Time: Specific/unspecific?
3. Actors: individual/generic?

**Text 3:** The blood [in the egg] is full of food from the yolk. The tiny chick begins to grow. It is called an embryo. All animals are called embryos when they first begin to grow.

The following linguistic features are characteristic of scientific genres. Can you find examples of any of these characteristics in the above text?

1. The universal present tense
2. The impersonal passive
3. The verbs identify experiential processes
4. The sentences are asserted (rather than framed as questions) and contain verifiable propositions.

Are these characteristics limited to scientific discourse?

Are these characteristics present in similar Catalan or Spanish genres?

### 3. *Contrastive rhetoric*

Several authors have pointed out the ideological pitfalls related to using contrastive rhetoric and genres in second language learning and learning to write at school. The problems, related to globalisation, social exclusion, multiculturalism and ethnocentricity are very clearly laid out in Cope and Kalantzis (1993: 1-21, 38-89). However, their arguments in favour of a genre-based approach to teaching language are even more convincing and they claim that «lending consciousness does not require cultural and linguistic assimilation» (Ibid. 18). Only by unlocking the secrets of the seemingly transparent and democratic discourse of globalisation, can outsiders learn to use the system and become insiders, or reject the system and fight against it.

Therefore, it is useful for students to understand the origins of Kaplan's expository (or informative) essay, known in US schools as the five-paragraph essay. Paragraph 1: Tell the reader what you are going to write about – develop the topic with one point in the following three paragraphs – Final paragraph: Tell the reader what you have written. Spanish readers often find US/UK writing incredibly obvious and simple. It is enlightening on this point simply to compare the layout of US/UK/Spanish textbooks.

The ideological questions are interesting, but in language for translators, whether or not to learn about standardised genres and contrastive rhetoric is not really at issue.

This information is essential for their professional practice. Certainly, it is also important for them to realise that even standardised genres are dynamic and develop as the institutional practices they represent change. The business letter in Latin America and the Eastern European countries illustrates this point well, as changing business practices bring about changes in commercial correspondence. Another area where genres are changing fast is on the Internet. Predicting the effects of globalisation on language use is an uncertain business, but trainee translators need to be aware of static and dynamic genres. Some stereotypes still function even among European cultures. Knowing the norms will help students to interact with English texts for translation oriented discourse analysis for direct translation and to produce pragmatic English texts of the kind in demand in the inverse translation market.

### CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC

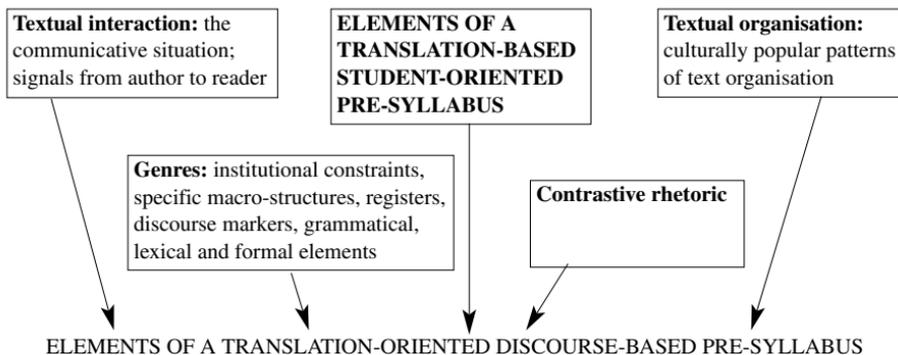
Contrasting cultures

Contrasting genres

Contrasting language systems

#### 4. Genres

The choice of genres for the language class will again depend on many factors, both pedagogical and professional. Which genres are most useful for illustrating textual interaction and organisation? Which genres are most useful for illustrating cultural, textual and language contrasts? Which genres best illustrate the use of specific macro-structures, registers, discourse markers, grammatical, lexical and formal features of English? Which genres are most useful for translation classes? Which genres are most useful for developing documentation skills and are most commonly translated? Which genres are likely to motivate the students and develop the cognitive skills and psychological attitudes that they are going to need as translators?



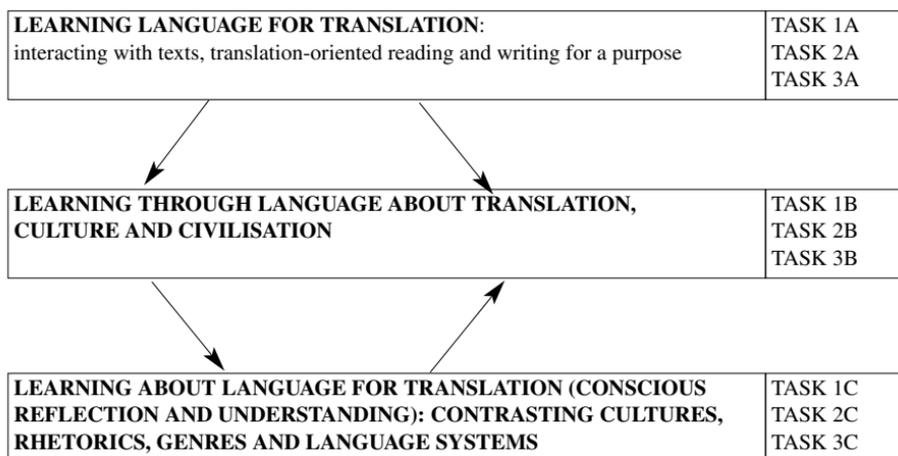
**Stage 2.** Discourse-based translation-oriented pre-syllabus.

### Stage 3: A genre and task-based syllabus integrating stages 1 and 2

Experience in the translation class of using parallel texts of original genres in both languages has shown the usefulness of starting with genres to teach text strategies and features of language. Recent research in discourse analysis, genre studies and contrastive rhetoric suggests that we are beginning to be able to list discourse and language features in standardised genres. Although it is true that we are still far from a comprehensive discourse-based description of any language, it seems to be the most fruitful line of research for teaching writing, second language acquisition and, in particular, language for translators. Contrasting the linguistic features of the genres worked on in the language class with the same genres in the mother tongue gives students invaluable translation insights.

Halliday (1987) suggested a three-part division of emphasis for learning languages: 1) Learning language: the acquisition of the appropriate rules and conventions for using that language; 2) Learning through language about culture and civilisation; 3) Learning about language: conscious reflection and understanding of the way language works. I have adapted this division to design a genre and task-based syllabus integrating the translation and discourse elements defined in the pre-syllabuses.

1. Learning language for translation: interacting with texts, translation-oriented reading and writing for a purpose (procedural knowledge).
2. Learning through language about translation, culture and civilisation (declarative knowledge).
3. Learning about language for translation: conscious reflection and understanding about the way language works for translation through contrasting cultures, rhetoric, genres and language systems (declarative knowledge).



**Stage 3.** Genre and task-based syllabus integrating stages 1 and 2.

In the past, teaching B English at the FTI/UAB, we have used a process-based communicative methodology. This approach can work with small groups and unlimited time, but the pressures of numbers and limited time have shown us that it is an inefficient use of the students' time. Practical skills have to be learnt by doing, but if the doing is not focused, it will take a very long time. It is essential to make a reasoned choice of priorities. Furthermore, if students with intermediate-to-advanced language skills do not have very clearly defined learning objectives, it is very difficult for them to realise that they are making progress. Therefore, they are in danger of losing motivation, which is the most precious of all the elements in a learning situation. The syllabus design proposed here has been used to create teaching units and genre-based tasks on the three levels described above for the English language classes, incorporating the different skills required in direct and inverse translation, specialised translation and interpreting as the student progresses through the degree programme. An example of the material tested this year with first year students is given below. The teaching unit is based on *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*.

### *Task Sheet 1. Learning language for translation*

TEXT: *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Chapter 1: «The boy who lived»

#### *Pre-reading activity (Group work)*

1. What do you know about the Harry Potter series, J.K. Rowling and whom she was writing for?
2. What do you expect the first chapter is going to be about from the title?

#### *Reading activities (Individual work)*

1. Read the text once and then skim pages 7-11 looking for vocabulary that describes what it means to be a Dursley and what it means to be «as unDurleyish as it was possible to be». Make two contrasting lists and give a title to each that sums up the main characteristics.
2. Identify the different genres in the text. Identify two linguistic clues that helped you to identify the genres. Which tenses are used most frequently in the different types of writing?

**GENRE**

**CLUES**

**TENSES**

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3. Compare the verbs used to report speech in the Dursley and the unDursley dialogues.<sup>6</sup>
4. Is the 'normal' English SVO word order maintained in all the sentences on page 7? List the subjects of all the sentences and identify the cohesive strategies used by the author.<sup>7</sup>

*Writing activities* (Pair and individual work)

Think of a recent event that was strange or mysterious:

1. Tell your neighbour about it.
2. Together, write about the event in the form of a brief news bulletin (100 words) for the BBC six o'clock news.
3. As homework, write about the event in a paragraph that is going to be the introductory paragraph for *one* of the following: a romantic story in a women's magazine, a science fiction novel, a detective novel, an article in a scientific journal, an article on the first page of the *Sun*, an article in the *Sunday Times* Colour Supplement.

*Task Sheet 2. Learning through language about translation, culture and civilisation*

*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Chapter 1, «The boy who lived»

*Cultural and translation awareness* (Group work)

1. Identify cultural differences:
  - Where do you think the Dursley's live?
  - What is their house like?
  - What and when do they eat?
2. Which translation method would you choose if you were asked to translate *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* into Catalan or Spanish for a Barcelona publishing house?

METHOD:

6. This is a useful exercise for the students to recognise and start to use the great variety of 'verbs of saying' that are so characteristic of this genre in English: *chuckled, muttered, faltered, hissed, sobbed, murmured, chortled, grunted, mumbled, snapped*.
7. This is a «textbook» example of English cohesive devices and simple co-ordination. The S-V-O word order is maintained throughout and the sentences are linked by conjunctions such as *and, then, but*. It is an excellent «model» for students to follow.

3. Identify five culturally bound references in the text: objects or activities that have no obvious equivalent in Catalan or Spanish. Which strategies would you follow to choose an appropriate translation technique for each one?

REFERENCE	STRATEGIES	TECHNIQUES

*Task Sheet 3. Learning about language for translation*

Read this extract from Harry Potter in the four versions: UK, US, Spanish, Catalan.

1. Identify and try to explain *any* differences between the UK and the US versions (format, punctuation, vocabulary, etc.).
2. Compare the Spanish and the Catalan translations and identify different translation techniques (format, punctuation, vocabulary, etc.).
3. Do you think the translators followed the same translation method?
4. Do you think that they would have the same effect on the readers?
5. Do you think that they are representative of the norms of translating children's literature into Spanish and Catalan?

<p><b>UK:</b></p> <p><b>HARRY POTTER</b></p> <p><i>and the Philosopher's Stone</i></p> <p>J.K. ROWLING Triple Smarties Gold Award Winner</p>	<p><b>US:</b></p> <p><b>Harry Potter</b></p> <p>AND THE SORCERER'S STONE</p> <p>J.K. ROWLING</p>
<p><b>SPANISH:</b></p> <p>J.K. ROWLING</p> <p><b>Harry Potter</b></p> <p><b>y la piedra filosofal</b></p> <p>salamandra</p>	<p><b>CATALAN:</b></p> <p><b>Harry Potter</b></p> <p><i>i la pedra filosofal</i></p> <p>J.K. ROWLING</p> <p>EMPÚRIES</p>

## HOGWARTS SCHOOL OF WITCHCRAFT AND WIZARDRY

### Uniform

*First-year students will require:*

1. *Three sets of plain work robes (black)*
  2. *One plain pointed hat (black) for day wear*
  3. *One pair of protective gloves (dragon hide or similar)*
  4. *One winter cloak (black, silver fastenings)*
- Please note that all pupil's clothes should carry name tags*

### Set Books

*All students should have a copy of each of the following:*

- The Standard Book of Spells (Grade 1) by Miranda Goshawk*  
*A History of Magic by Bathilda Bagshot*  
*Magical Theory by Adalbert Waffling*  
*A Beginners' Guide to Transfiguration by Emeric Switch*  
*One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi by Phyllida Spore*  
*Magical Drafts and Potions by Arsenius Jigger*  
*Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them by Newt Scamander*  
*The Dark Forces: A Guide to Self-Protection by Quentin Trimble*

### Other Equipment

- 1 wand*  
*1 cauldron (pewter, standard size 2)*  
*1 set glass or crystal phials*  
*1 telescope*  
*1 set brass scales*

*Students may also bring an owl OR a cat OR a toad.*

**PARENTS ARE REMINDED THAT FIRST-YEARS ARE NOT ALLOWED THEIR OWN BROOMSTICKS**

## HOGWARTS SCHOOL of WITCHCRAFT and WIZARDRY

### UNIFORM

First year students will require:

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  4. One winter cloak (black, silver fastenings)
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### COURSE BOOKS

All students should have a copy of each of the following:

- The Standard Book of Spells (Grade 1) by Miranda Goshawk*  
*A History of Magic by Bathilda Bagshot*  
*Magical Theory by Adalbert Waffling*  
*A Beginners' Guide to Transfiguration by Emeric Switch*  
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### OTHER EQUIPMENT

- 1 wand  
 1 cauldron (pewter, standard size 2)  
 1 set glass or crystal phials  
 1 telescope  
 1 set brass scales

Students may also bring an owl OR a cat OR a toad.

**PARENTS ARE REMINDED THAT FIRST-YEARS ARE NOT ALLOWED THEIR OWN BROOMSTICKS**

## COLEGIO HOGWARTS DE MAGIA

## UNIFORME

Los alumnos de primer año necesitarán:

- Tres túnicas sencillas de trabajo (negras).
- Un sombrero puntiagudo (negro) para uso diario.
- Un par de guantes protectores (piel de dragón o semejante)
- Una capa de invierno (negra, con broches plateados)

*(Todas las prendas de los alumnos deben llevar etiquetas con su nombre.)*

## LIBROS

Todos los alumnos deben tener un ejemplar de los siguientes libros:

*El libro reglamentario de hechizos* (clase 1), Miranda Goshawk.

*Una historia de la magia*, Bathilda Bagshot.

*Teoría mágica*, Adalbert Waffling.

*Guía de transformación para principiantes*, Emerick Switch.

*Mil hierbas mágicas y hongos*, Phyllida Spore.

*Filtros y pociones mágicas*, Arsenius Jigger.

*Animales fantásticos y dónde encontrarlos*, Newt Scamander.

*Las fuerzas oscuras. Una guía para la autoprotección*, Quentin Trimble.

## RESTO DEL EQUIPO

- 1 varita
- 1 caldero (peltre, medida 2)
- 1 juego de redomas de vidrio o cristal
- 1 telescopio
- 1 balanza de latón

Los alumnos también pueden traer una lechuga, un gato o un sapo.

**SE RECUERDA A LOS PADRES QUE A LOS ALUMNOS DE PRIMER AÑO NO SE LES PERMITE TENER ESCOBAS PROPIAS**

## ESCOLA DE BRUIXERIEA HOGWARTS

Uniforme

*Els alumnes de primer necessitaran:*

- *Tres conjunts de roba de treball sense guarniments (negra)*
- *Un barret punxegut sense guarniments (negre) per a ús diari*
- *Un parell de guants protectors (antidrac o similars)*
- *Una capa d'hivern (negra, amb cremallera platejada)*

*Recordeu que totes les peces de roba han d'anar marcades amb el nom de l'alumne/a.*

Llibres

*Tots els alumnes han de tenir un exemplar dels llibres següents:*

*Llibre d'encanteris* (nivell 1), de Marina Fetillera

*Història de la màgia*, de Dolors Plorós

*Teoria de la màgia*, d'Albert Xarramecu

*Introducció a la transfiguració*, de Xavier Mudancer

*Mil i una herbes i bolets màgics*, de Rosa Rosae

*Pocions i beuratges màgics*, d'Arsenic Calze

*Bèsties fantàstiques i on trobar-les*, d'Ernest Salamàndric

*Les forces del mal: guia per a l'autodefensa*, de Pere de Tramolar

Material divers:

- Una vareta màgica*
- Una marmita (de peltre del número 2)*
- Un joc de flascons de vidre*
- Un telescopi*
- Un joc de pesos de llautó*

*Els alumnes poden portar un mussol o un gat o un gripau.*

**US RECORDEM QUE ALS ALUMNES DE PRIMER NO ELS ESTÀ PERMÈS TENIR ESCOBRA VOLADORA**

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