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A New Look at Translation: Teaching tools for language and literature

Anne Fountain
San Jose State University, anne.fountain@sjsu.edu

Catherine Fountain

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Catherine Fountain
Appalachian State University

Anne Fountain
San José State University

Abstract

Does translation have a place in the modern language or literature classroom? This article argues that as long as translation is recognized as a distinct skill rather than a path to language acquisition it can and should play a role in language instruction. The rising popularity of Web-based machine translation (WBMT) sites among students points to a need to help foreign language learners better understand the translation process. Along with a discussion of how instructors can minimize inappropriate use of WBMT, the article provides examples of how translation in the proper context can be used productively to teach both language and literature. It also shows that teachers have much to gain by supporting translation and interpretation as professional options for advanced language learners. Examples are given in Spanish.

Background

For those who study second language acquisition and foreign language teaching, the thought of translation often conjures up outdated classroom methods or unsuccessful learning strategies. Nonetheless, it is important that language instructors not view translation as uniformly negative in modern language education, particularly since professional translation can be a rewarding career option for language majors. This article proposes that there are, in fact, many language learning situations in which translation can play a part. Once it is recognized as a skill separate from but complementary to language acquisition, translation can be introduced into the classroom as part of a dynamic and effective language curriculum. Translation-based activities can help students appreciate the complex interaction of language, culture, context, and literary production. Integrating translation-based activities can introduce students to professions in translation and interpretation, though it is important to clarify that the term translation is usually used to refer to written work and interpretation to the oral transmission of meaning, and that this article deals only with translation. While the examples given here deal with translation into and from English and Spanish, many of the problems

they illustrate are relevant to other languages as well.

The first part of this article deals with translation in the modern language classroom and specifically with the impact of Web-based machine translation (WBMT), online translation services, and students' use of such services to complete classroom assignments. The article describes how teachers can respond to this trend and argues that Internet translations can introduce advanced language students to the process and profession of translation. The second part describes how examples of translation challenges gleaned from the literature of Spain and Latin America can be used to enhance learning in Spanish language and literature courses. Finally, the article calls upon language teachers to promote the professional work of translators and interpreters and suggests that following best practices means that instructors should not seek to supplant the commercial translator's role. Giving translation its due also gives respect to all who make language expertise the focus of their work.

Translation in the Language Classroom in the Internet Age

For centuries translation and language learning went hand in hand as the grammar translation model used to teach Latin, principally for reading knowledge, was applied to the teaching of modern languages. A growing recognition of the disconnect between grammar translation models and theories of second language acquisition led to the development of communicative approaches to language learning and teaching during the last half of the 20th century. This recognition does not mean that translation has disappeared from the classroom, however. Wilkerson (2008) shows that even when teachers aim to use the target language, English is often employed to translate classroom dialogue. While the place of the first language in the language classroom is the subject of ongoing debate—see, for instance, Rell (2005)—the activities and teaching strategies outlined here are intended to encourage student reflection on the translation process and on the differences between languages and not to replace communicative teaching in the target language.

While translation is largely absent from modern teaching methodologies, the practice and profession of translation is alive and well. With globalization has come a growing need for the translation of texts ranging from employee handbooks to television sitcoms. At the same time, advances in natural language processing and the growth of the Internet have introduced into the world of translation a new tool: Web-based machine translation (WBMT). These automatic online translators, which include Babel Fish, Google Translate, and FreeTranslation.com, were originally designed to give users a basic translation of Web pages or short texts written in another language; and most focus on the translation of English texts into other languages. In recent years, however, WBMT has found a new user in the foreign language student. While little research has been done into students' use of these translation services, Williams (2006) notes that "anecdotal evidence points to widespread use of WBMT for homework and writing assignments" (p. 566).

Advances and Limitations in Machine Translation

Most language professionals are aware of the shortcomings of all types of machine translation (MT) as expressed succinctly in Barreiro and Ranchhod (2005): "the most obvious failure of MT is that it is unable to render publication-ready text" (p. 3). Nonetheless, recent advances in MT mean that early evaluations showing its shortcomings may need to be revisited. For instance, Schairer (1996) compared the output of machine translation with that of professional translators, using various commercial translation software programs to translate an English-language survey into Spanish. A group of bilingual English-Spanish speakers then evaluated the results. For the question "During the past year, do you believe the level of crime in your neighborhood has increased, decreased, or remained about the same?" the machine translation judged most natural by the evaluating group was "En el año pasado le hace toca ese crimen en su barrio ha aumentado, menguante, o quedó acerca del mismo cuando estaba antes de?" (1996, p. 99), a sentence that is only barely intelligible. If we compare this output with the free translation provided by the WBMT service Google Translate in June 2008, *Durante el último año, ¿usted cree que el nivel de delincuencia en su vecindario ha aumentado, disminuido o permanece igual?* (translation realized June 23, 2008, at <http://translate.google.com>), it becomes clear that MT has made substantial progress in the last 12 years. In particular, Google Translate uses a translation system that relies on a large corpus of professionally translated texts and looks for equivalences, a system that it believes holds more promise than the traditional rule-based MT systems that rely on increasingly more extensive dual-language dictionaries.

Despite these advances in machine translation, no WBMT claims to be a replacement for a   professional translator. Indeed, as the Google Translate FAQ page explains,

> Even today's most sophisticated software [. . .] doesn't approach the fluency of a native speaker or possess the skill of a professional translator. Automatic translation is very difficult, as the meaning of words depends on the context in which they're used. While we are working on the problem, it may be some time before anyone can offer human quality translations (Google Translate FAQ 2008).

Williams (2006) cites various examples of erroneous English-French translations produced by WBMT, all related to problems of lexical ambiguity and interpretation of the source-language syntax. Indeed, while MT has seen great advances in these two areas–evidenced by comparing the 1996 and 2008 translations cited above–it is still easy to confound WBMT systems. To give a very simple example of lexical ambiguity, the English phrasal verb *look up* can be translated a number of ways in Spanish depending on the context. Two of the most common verbs used to translate *look up* are *mirar*, to look in a certain direction, and *buscar*, to search for a fact or piece of information.

Even in very simple sentences where the choice is clear given the context, Web-based translators have a difficult time choosing the correct equivalent. For the English phrase "I looked up the word in the dictionary," both Google Translate and Free Translation erroneously choose *mirar*. Google Translate gives the translation *Miré la palabra en el diccionario*, which means "I looked at the word in the dictionary," a grammatically correct sentence that fails to convey the meaning of the original. Free Translation makes the additional mistake of translating *up* as a preposition rather than part of a phrasal verb, and thus produces a grammatically impossible sentence in Spanish, *Miré arriba la palabra en el diccionario* (translations realized June 23, 2008, at <http://translate.google.com> and <http://www.freetranslation.com>).

The accuracy of machine translation in the interpretation of syntax and cases of lexical ambiguity may improve, but there are other aspects of translation that MT developers have not even considered. Hatim and Mason (1995) speak of advances in MT and professional translation as separate developments. In the field of translation theory, there are numerous variables to be contended with beyond syntax and vocabulary, including social and regional variation; the register, tone, and genre of discourse; and meaning in its social and cultural context. Without taking these variables into account, contend Hatim and Mason, a translation "puede ser fiel al reflejar el significado denotativo y, sin embargo, no llegar a reproducir la convicción del texto original" [can be faithful in reflecting the denotative meaning and yet not be successful at reproducing the conviction of the original text] (1995, p. 77). In the teaching and evaluation of professional translation, it has been noted that not only machine translation systems commit this type of error; Chesterman (1996, p. 4) comments that "trainee translators often seem to translate like machines, carefully processing every word of the original into a grammatical target-language form."

A few simple examples can serve to illustrate the complexity of the interaction of these variables. Take the English sentence *His office is on the first floor.* A speaker of American English will take this to mean that the office is located at street level. Both Google Translate and Free Translation translate the sentence into Spanish as *Su oficina está en el primer piso* (translations realized June 26, 2008, at <http://translate.google.com> and <http://www.freetranslation.com>) and speakers from Spain and much of Latin America would interpret this translated sentence as meaning that the office is located one floor up from street level; British English speakers would interpret the original sentence the same way. Translation may also require explicit explanation of culture-specific concepts. For instance, the Spanish version given by Google Translate for the phrase *The student must have an overall GPA of 2.75 or higher* is *El estudiante debe tener un GPA de 2,75 o superior* (translation realized June 26, 2008, at <http://translate.google.com>). Although this translation does a fairly good job of rendering the English sentence in Spanish, if the reader does not know that the acronym *GPA* stands for *Grade Point Average* or is not aware that the GPA is calculated on a 4-point scale in the United States, this phrase will still not make much sense.

It is important to note that there are MT researchers who have recognized the need to take these pragmatic aspects of translation into account. Romanov et al. (2003) go so far as to describe the idea of high-quality machine translation as "naive and romantic" (p. 216), because its theoretical underpinnings lie in the work of Chomsky and others who consider human language to be "a kind of calculus" (p. 216). They propose a model of machine translation that integrates a communicative-pragmatic operator, although they are fully aware that this sort of model cannot currently be developed: "Of course, at present, this task cannot be fulfilled on the full scale, since the psycho-physiological nature of this operator is not clear yet" (p. 215).

Web-based Machine Translation in the Language Classroom: Problems and Solutions

While the shortcomings of MT may be clear to those who work in the language profession, the typical language student has little knowledge about the process of translation and may not possess the linguistic proficiency to evaluate source-language outputs produced by WBMT. This lack of knowledge can make WBMT a dangerous tool for students, who believe it to be a quick and easy way to complete essays and homework assignments. In addition, while students are aware that copying text from the Internet constitutes plagiarism, for many the use of WBMT is a gray area. Again, while there are currently no quantitative studies of student attitudes towards WBMT, individual students have likened the use of online translation services to the use of online dictionaries, showing that they may not fully understand the ethical implications of using WBMT to complete assignments. The wider issue of cyberplagiarism is addressed by Atkins and Nelson (2001) and Urbina Ramírez (2004); and Luton (2003) speaks specifically to cyberplagiarism and the use of WBMT.

Confronted with the incursion of WBMT in the language classroom, what can the instructor do to prevent misuse of online translators? A good first step is to institute a policy banning their use, either on a class-by-class basis or at the departmental level, and to explain to students why their use constitutes plagiarism. However, the existence of free WBMT also presents teaching opportunities. Williams (2006) discusses how specific classroom activities using online translators can serve to focus students' attention on certain target-language structures and to improve electronic literacy. Building on this idea of turning a potential problem into a teaching aid, teachers can use WBMT to bring translation back into the classroom–not as a technique for language learning but as a skill in its own right. Providing students with an appropriate introduction to translation can help to clarify for them the difference between translation and language acquisition and may even point some students toward further study and career paths in translation and interpretation. According to Carreres (2006, p. 8), students favor inclusion of translation instruction within modern language degree programs. Although the study was small, 100% of the language majors surveyed responded in the affirmative when asked whether translation should be taught as part of a modern languages

undergraduate degree.

Activities that focus on translation as a skill may not be appropriate for every level of language instruction, however. While WBMT services may be misused by students at any level of instruction, novice and lower intermediate-level learners are not likely to have the language skills needed to benefit from activities that involve analysis of translated texts or actual translation. These students can benefit from seeing carefully selected examples of the limitations of WBMT and from explicit instruction about how language acquisition differs from translation. However, most of the translation activities outlined below are designed for advanced-level courses in grammar and composition, as they require a relatively high level of proficiency in the target language. At any level, using WBMT as a starting point for a discussion of translation has the added benefit of making students aware of the limits of such programs.

There is great potential for developing activities around WBMT that introduce students to key concepts of translation. An instructor could use either of the English examples provided above, *His office is on the first floor or The student must have an overall GPA of 2.75 or higher.* Instructors can also create activities that have students translate phrases and then reflect on their own process of translation. While some in the profession may object to the practice of having students translate into their second language (L2), Carreres (2006) points out that in practice even professional translators often are asked to translate into their L2.

A Model Activity for Teaching about Translation and WBMT

In this section, we will outline in some detail one model activity in order to give the reader an idea of the sort of translation activities that we envision for the advanced language classroom. The model activity both demonstrates the deficiencies of WBMT and introduces students to the translation profession, as one element is a comparison of a machine translation and a professional translation. The activity also asks students to engage directly with a main source of online translations by choosing a text from Google Translate's own page of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), found at <http://www.google.com/help/faq_translation.html>. This Web page contains some 20 questions and answers and has a corresponding version in Spanish, which can be found at <http://www.google.com/intl/es/help/faq_translation.html>. While this sample activity involves English-Spanish translation, it could be modified for use with other language pairs.

The first step in this activity, which can be assigned as homework or realized in class as long as each student has access to a computer, is to have students choose one of the questions and answers from the English-language FAQ. The students can either cut and paste both question and answer into a word processing document to be printed out or write them out on a separate sheet of paper. Students will then access the main page of Google Translate, <http://translate.google.com>, paste or type the full text of their question and answer in

the box provided, and have the program translate this text into Spanish. The student should copy the machine-translated text into the same document as the original English version and, if assigned as homework, print out the texts to bring to class. Students should also be instructed to read over both the original and translated versions of the text and to note any problems they see in the translation.

The second part of the activity can again be assigned as homework or completed in class if computers are available to students. Once the students have examined both the English version and the Spanish translation of their chosen text, the instructor can provide them with the URL of Google Translate's Spanish-language FAQ, <http://www.google.com/intl/es/help/faq_translation.html>. Each student should then compare the machine translation with the text that Google actually provides for its Spanish-speaking visitors. Students likely will be surprised at how different the two Spanish-language texts are. To illustrate this point, we will reproduce the three texts that the students would see were they to have chosen the original question *What is statistical machine translation?* from Google Translate's FAQ. First, here is the original text from the English-language Google Translate *FAQ*:

What is statistical machine translation?

Most state-of-the-art, commercial machine-translation systems in use today have been developed using a rule-based approach, and require a lot of work to define vocabularies and grammars.

Our system takes a different approach: we feed the computer billions of words of text, both monolingual text in the target language, and aligned text consisting of examples of human translations between the languages. We then apply statistical learning techniques to build a translation model. We've achieved very good results in research evaluations.

Here is the Spanish-language translation produced using the Google Translate application (translation realized February 13, 2008, at <http://translate.google.com>):

¿Qué es la traducción automática estadística?

La mayor parte del estado de la técnica, comercial máquina-sistemas de traducción en uso hoy en día han sido desarrolladas utilizando un enfoque basado en normas, y requieren una gran cantidad de trabajo para definir vocabularios y gramáticas.

Nuestro sistema adopta un enfoque diferente: que alimentan el ordenador miles de millones de palabras de texto, tanto monolingüe texto en la lengua de destino, y alineado de texto que consta de ejemplos humanos de las traducciones entre los idiomas. A continuación, se aplican técnicas de aprendizaje estadístico para construir un modelo de traducción. Hemos conseguido muy buenos resultados en las evaluaciones de investigación.

For the sake of comparison, here is the same question and answer from

Google's Spanish-language FAQ site, Preguntas frecuentes sobre el Traductor de Google:

¿En qué consiste la traducción automática estadística?

La mayoría de los sistemas de traducción automática de última generación que se comercializan hoy en día se basan en un conjunto de reglas y requieren mucho tiempo y esfuerzo por parte de lingüistas para elaborar vocabularios y gramáticas.

Nuestro sistema funciona de forma diferente. Introducimos miles de millones de palabras y texto en el sistema, tanto monolingüe en el idioma al que se traduce, como texto alineado compuesto de traducciones elaboradas por traductores profesionales en ambos idiomas. A continuación, aplicamos técnicas de aprendizaje estadísticas para crear un modelo de traducción. Según estudios realizados en este campo, los resultados que hemos obtenido son más que satisfactorios.

Even though students may not understand all of the subtle differences between the machine translation and the professionally translated version, they certainly can see that the two texts are very different. With the help of the instructor, they can begin to appreciate the relative fluency and natural flow of the professional translation and discover that translating word for word or phrase for phrase, as WBMT programs generally do, produces a text of inferior quality. Finally, they will discover that Google does not use the translation software it has developed to translate its own Web pages. This realization serves as a powerful reminder that online translation services are not designed to produce high-quality documents but to give the reader a general idea of the content of the original text.

Translation and the Teaching of Literature

Before we discuss the potential role of translation and translations in the literature classroom, it is important to appreciate that literature can take many forms, can be found in everyday examples such as short poems, and can be taught at virtually every stage of language learning. Thus a discussion of techniques for teaching literature can be relevant for the language classroom as well. As Comerio (2008) notes,

Literature can be considered 'language in situation'— authors mold and accommodate language, scattering their writing with silences, pauses, and deviations which represent the complexity of the human world. The reader can savor the diversity of meanings in a language, and can delight in the beauty of word harmony (p. 22).

Simple examples from and about the works of Spanish American writers such as Isabel Allende, Pablo Neruda, and José Martí can be used to build student investigative skills, to focus on grammar, and to reveal the complexity of vocabulary and the importance of cultural and historical context. In both beginning and

advanced classes, examples of translation can help students develop an appreciation for the distinctive qualities of a language and the challenges in conveying accurate versions in English.

Translation and Context

Earlier in this article we mentioned the significance of context in translation, and examples of mistranslation in literature can serve to highlight its importance. A 2001 paperback copy of Isabel Allende's *Retrato en sepia* has on the back cover, along with an elegant photo of the author, a credit to the photographer, Allende's husband William Gordon, and a caption that reads *Fotografía del autor* (photograph of the author). The word *autor* clearly indicates a male author in Spanish, whereas the appropriate word for the female author, Isabel Allende, would be *autora*. Someone in the book production process neglected to connect the photo and the statement.

An example from Pablo Neruda's poem "Vienen por las islas (1493)," part of *Canto general*, is intriguing right from the title. What does *por* mean in this instance? At least one translator, Merwin, has decided that *por* is "for" and has conveyed the title in English as "They Come for the Islands (1493)" (Neruda, 1990, pp.194-95); but another meaning is possible if one takes into account the context of *Canto general.* Neruda's epic of Latin American history in verse gives a sweeping account of the conquest and its consequences, a saga in which the islands of the Caribbean were but a first step. Perhaps Neruda meant "through" the islands, a word that suggests the rapacious and continuing pattern of conquest. Another poem, "X", of *Alturas de Macchu Picchu* [sic] begins with the line "*Piedra en la piedra,*" and a reader must decide how to interpret *en.* Does it mean "Stone within stone" as translated by Tarn (Neruda, 1990, p. 189), or should it be "Stone upon stone," as conveyed by Eisner (Neruda, 2004, p. 85)? *Por* and *en* are basic prepositions in Spanish that are usually taught in a first-year course. However, in Neruda's poetry they take on new significance when viewed from the perspective of translation.

Sometimes a translation can reveal a failure to understand historical context. In 1891 José Martí gave a rousing speech to Cubans in Tampa, and in the course of building patriotic feeling, he recounted the misdeeds of Latin American tyrants. In Martí´s discourse he mentioned "el Paraguay lúgubre de Francia" (Martí, 1963-73, vol.4, p. 270). The translation was ". . . the lamentable Paraguay of France" (Martí, 1999, 134), as if the reference were to the country of France and not to Paraguay's dictator, Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia, known as Dr. Francia.

Translating from a Translation

What happens when one translates from a translation rather than seeking and using the original text? A curious editing mistranslation appears in an entry in the "Members in the News" section of the May 2008 Newsletter of the American Literary Translators Association. The reference lists Margaret Sayers

Peden as the translator of "El sumo de nuestros días," in what appears to be a word-for-word rendering of the title as translated into English *The Sum of Our Days* (p. 12). *Sumo*, however, is an adjective that means "utmost"; and Spanish usage favors the definite article *los* instead of the possessive pronoun *nuestros*, as is evident in the original title in Spanish, *La suma de los días* (Allende, 2007). It should be noted that in this latest work Allende lauds Peden's skill as a translator and her ability to find and correct items that the author had not noticed (Allende, 2008).

　　　Students in literature classes may find that a comparison of translations and of translations made from translations can reveal literary origins as well as nuanced differences. The term *retranslation* refers to a new or second translation of written material. For example, a work such as *Don Quixote* has been translated into English numerous times over the centuries. However, when translations are produced based on translations, the process is called *backtranslating*, such as the example in the preceding paragraph. When a translation goes from one language (say English) to another language (say Spanish) and then from the second language (Spanish) back to the original language (English) the end product is a "doubled back" version. Taking a brief phrase or selection and showing either retranslations or backtranslations would give an idea of the linguistic challenges inherent in moving from one language to another. Edgar Allan Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum" has been translated into Spanish by Argentine author, Julio Cortázar, and the first lines of Cortázar's translation include the phrase ". . . y cuando por fin me desataron" (Poe 1992, vol. 1 p. 74). A translation from the Spanish translation back into English, rendered "when they finally untied me," is faithful to the Spanish translation but quite different from Poe's original ". . . when they at length unbound me" (Poe 1991, p. 184). This example of backtranslation highlights the difficulty of recreating Poe's distinct word choices of "at length" and "unbound."

　　　For a brief assignment with a focus on style, an instructor can ask students to read two distinct renderings into English of a short literary passage and then ask groups or individuals to compare these translations. The assignment could be further developed by providing a backtranslated version of each of the English translations and asking students to compare the different versions. An example might be to compare the language and style in translations of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* over the centuries. How would a passage from Shelton's 1612 English version of the first part of *Don Quixote* compare with the same passage taken from Edith Grossman's newly translated *Quixote* (2003)? Were both of these English translations to be translated back into Spanish, how would each compare with Cervantes' original Spanish text, and what variations and possible errors are brought to light?

　　　Mistakes in translation can sometimes be highlighted by doubling back. For example, many of José Martí's verses from his book of poetry written in the Catskill Mountains in 1890 are sung in versions of the popular song *Guantanamera*. As a result, many people believe that Martí wrote a work called *Guantanamera* or that he is the creator of a song popularized by folksinger Pete Seeger. In the table of contents of *The Cuba Reader* (2003), a book that presents documents of Cuban

literature and history in translation, there is a listing for "Guantanamera" by José Martí. However, the lyrics of the song *Guantanamera* are taken from various poems in Martí's 1891 work, *Versos sencillos*, and the idea to combine a popular Cuban song with lines from poems by Martí did not occur until the middle of the 20th century (Martí, 2005, p.12). Assigning students the task of locating the poem "Guantanamera" is an excellent way to let them discover that the title does not exist among Martí's original works.

For Spanish teachers, translation can play a unique role in Hispanic literature of the United States. For example, how would one translate a dual-language poem like Gustavo Pérez Firmat's "Bilingual Blues" (*Triple Crown,* p.164)? What can be gleaned from a contrast of the two, quite different, translations into Spanish of García's Cuban American novels, *Dreaming in Cuban* (1993) and *The Agüero Sisters* (1997), one written in the Spanish of Spain and one with a more distinctively Cuban flavor? How would portions of these novels read when translated from Spanish back to English? What happens to slang, to sound, to meter, to rhyme, and to the musical effects of verse when translated and later doubled back (Frame, 1989, p. 71)? Translation can instill a respect for close reading of text, and translation exercises often provide an insightful examination of the essential qualities of literature.

The Curious Case of the Popol Vuh

Another text that provides an unusual set of circumstances for teaching about translation is the *Popol Vuh*, the sacred book of the Maya Quiché of Guatemala. This work was written in the 16th century in the Mayan language with Roman letters. It was discovered in 1701 by a Spanish priest, Francisco Ximénez, who preserved the transcribed Mayan version and wrote a translation into Spanish. In 1854 the manuscript was rediscovered by a French cleric (Brasseur), who translated it into French (*Popol Vuh: Libro sagrado de los Mayas*, 1999, p.7). The version of the *Popol Vuh* produced in Spanish by the Guatemalan author Miguel Ángel Asturias was based on a French version by Georges Raynaud, with whom Asturias studied in Paris (Chang Rodríguez & Filer, 2004, p 365). Tedlock's translation into English is described by Castro-Klarén as masterful with its "invaluable interdisciplinary introduction and an ethnohistorical glossary and notes… [that] has no equivalent in Spanish" (2005, p.18), perhaps due to the fact that he took the text of the *Popol Vuh* to Mayan–speaking communities, where oral narratives and the comments of a native Quiché reader informed the translation and provided a cultural context (*Popol vuh* 1996, pp.13-18).

Tedlock's technique raises questions for Spanish teachers. As Castro-Klarén (2005) notes, Departments of Modern Languages and Departments of Spanish often insist that Spanish-language sources be used in courses dealing with Spanish America even if a text's origin is in another language and even if, as in this case, the language imposed is that of conquerors and colonizers who did much to destroy Mayan texts. Tedlock's techniques also help students appreciate the important role of authentic cultural sources.

Translators and Translation in the Language Professions

The need for qualified translators and the number of professionals being trained to meet that demand have grown considerably since the founding of the American Translators Association (ATA) in 1959. Writing nearly 20 years ago as president of that organization, Hammond (1990, pp. 137-138) speaks to a growing professionalism within the translation community, noting that "social position and payment levels have risen." As one indication of the profession's growth since the early 1990s, she cites the membership of the ATA at over 3,000 (1990, p. 138); the ATA Web site lists a membership of over 10,000 in 2008. The organizers of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing planned for more than 5,000 translators and interpreters with services in more than 50 languages, highlighting the role that translation and interpreting play on the world stage ("Five Thousand Translators for Beijing Olympics" 2008, June, p. 19). In the United States, field-specific texts such as *Common Phrase Translation: Spanish for English Speakers - For Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Speech Therapy* (Thrash, 2006) reflect the need for translation aids designed for those who interact in the growing Latino population in the United States.

The demand for translation and interpreting services by government agencies, businesses, volunteer groups, and international organizations, makes professional translation a career option for many language majors. While full translator training requires specialized study, exposure to translation and its complexity in more general language and literature courses can be a first step for students interested in pursuing translation as a career.

As the demand for translation grows it is not without problems, particularly the use of machine translation and the requirement that untrained individuals or volunteers produce translations as part of their job or volunteer work. It is important that teachers as well as translation professionals emphasize that simply speaking another language or having a bachelor's degree in a foreign language is not enough to qualify someone as a translator, and the activities presented in this article can serve to drive this point home for students. Students interested in pursuing translation or interpretation will find a growing number of textbooks, courses, and degree programs designed to train language-proficient individuals for professional careers, including *Handbook of Spanish-English Translation* (Aranda, 2007) and *Translation Teaching: From Research to the Classroom* (Colina, 2003).

Conclusions

Examining translation and translations can be a useful pedagogical tool. When assignments demonstrate deficiencies in automatically-generated translations, students realize the importance of what they are learning in a language classroom and the temptation to borrow on-line translations diminishes. Examples from literature can be employed at virtually every level to highlight the distinctive qualities of a text, difficulties that translators face, the significance of words, and

the vitality of elements of style. Even mistakes and misunderstanding revealed during translation have an important role in foreign language teaching. By presenting translation as a unique skill that must be developed with practice and study, language teachers recognize the important work of their colleagues who are professional translators. As long as translation is presented as a skill separate from language acquisition but useful in its own right, both students and teachers can benefit from its inclusion in the foreign language curriculum.

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