

# Teaching News Translation to Undergraduate Students: Towards An Integrated Model<sup>(1)</sup>

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## **Abstract:**

This paper attempts to present an integrated model of teaching news translation to undergraduate students. The model, which tries to integrate two apparently disparate pedagogical approaches to translation teaching, builds on two closely affiliated translation theories that help regulate the work of both teachers and learners: norm theory and skopos theory. Based on recent research work on the pedagogical aspect of translation, and actual experimentation on students' practical work, it attempts to present an integrated framework and its theoretical basis, and to ultimately explain the rationale behind this framework.

**Keywords:** News translation – skopos theory – norm theory – Translation teaching model – undergraduates - ICD – PBL – TBA

## **المخلص**

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقديم نموذج لتدريس الترجمة الصحافية لطلاب مرحلة ما قبل الليسانس. لا يقوم هذا النموذج على تبني نظرية واحدة من النظريات المختلفة في هذا المجال بقدر ما يعمل على دمج العديد من العناصر المكونة لهذه النظريات بغية التوصل إلى إيجاد نموذج متكامل يعمل على تلبية احتياجات الطلاب التعليمية والنفسية، وفي الوقت نفسه يؤهلهم لتعلم المهارات الأساسية المطلوب توافرها في القائمين على هذه المهنة.

## **Introduction**

The recent shift in translation teaching and translator training in

Western academia from the teacher-centred transmissionist approach to the student-centred collaborative one is a natural corollary of the current pedagogical developments, and the concomitant emphasis on the social constructivist approach to knowledge and to acquiring knowledge. The last, which perceives knowledge as constructed by learners through active learning, not as transmitted by an all-knowing teacher to passive students, has been gaining solid ground in all disciplines. In many Egyptian universities including Cairo University, the teaching of translation still wavers on the unsure results of individual experimentation which in general lacks an acknowledged approach especially on the undergraduate level. Applying set strategies to technical problems still lacks an

integrated approach that takes into consideration the students' needs. The teacher-centred "WTNS" (who-will-take-the-next-sentence) approach<sup>(2)</sup> - in which a student reads out a single translated sentence from an assigned passage to be discussed and finally judged and corrected by the teacher according to largely subjective or vaguely defined criteria – is yet mostly prevalent, though there are a few exceptions. Recent academic research on the pedagogical aspect of translation, however, is moving towards the opposite direction: "[t]he sage on the stage model," points out Szczyrbak, "is a thing of the past, giving way to the guide on the side approach empowering students and motivating them to generate knowledge rather than merely receive it." (2009:129; qtd. in Szczyrbak 2011:81). If the student-centred collaborative

approach has proven successful in most disciplines, applying it to the domain of translation teaching, which involves and invests in the creative abilities of both teachers and learners, seems to promise rewarding results. D. C. Kiraly stresses the dynamic nature of translation as opposed to the teaching of general rules and fixed strategies (2000:16). This is a further indication of the need for such an approach<sup>(3)</sup>.

In spite of this shift in translation teaching, this model does not strictly adopt the shift; rather it seeks to integrate the two pedagogical approaches in order to cater for the needs of the students in Egyptian universities. Integration as a controlling principle also applies to the eclectic approach to translation theory (norm theory and skopos theory) on which the model builds. This paper, therefore,

attempts to present an integrated model of teaching news translation to undergraduate students. It starts by presenting the three stages of the model explaining the reasons (both practical and theoretical) which call for work on it, and then provides a quick reference to the theoretical grounds. This is followed by presenting details related to its provisional implementation in a three-month course (60 hours) for first year students, showing that the inherent flexibility makes it easily adaptable to varying types of courses on news translation with diverse kinds of students in different circumstances. It finally rounds off by explaining the pedagogical rationale behind the model.

### ***Why an integrated three-stage model?***

Espousing theory to practice, the model is based on three main stages that are designed to guide

the students' work on a systematic basis. Each stage is carefully designed to develop certain skills that the following stage fully exploits to build on. In the first stage the focus is on building macro-level scaffolding for the students to guide and support their work through the second stage. In the second stage the students' work aims at consciously acquiring transfer and decision-making skills on the macro and micro levels; while the third seeks to contextualize students' collaborative learning experience through their work in a real-life situation. Practical work on this model started by identifying problem areas in the teaching/learning process, mainly through assessment of students' performance. Most of the problems identified at first were related to the word and sentence levels as this was the focus of the set objectives

of the courses I taught. This was followed by a survey of available research work and accessible teaching material. Preparing course work by designing new or adapting existing material relied on the examination of how it actually provides solutions for the problems encountered by the students while working on assigned tasks, their response and the degree of progress achieved. As handling problems on the word and sentence levels is highly influenced by other factors (to be mentioned later) that the students need to learn about in order to facilitate their work and make the learning experience more meaningful, it became clear that ignoring these factors affects the students' progress negatively<sup>(4)</sup>.

Through years of reflective teaching, endeavours to practically

apply in the classroom recent research work on teaching translation<sup>(5)</sup>, analysing the reasons that led to or that hindered students' progress, and trying to reach an integrated approach that would enhance a systematic progress of the students' performance, the researcher was able to incorporate the basic constituents required for constructing a model for teaching news translation. As indiscriminately applying existing models<sup>(6)</sup> proved impractical, the guiding principle at work either in modifying and adapting or devising solutions for the problems encountered was the data collected from the students' work. Obviously experimentation through the different stages of working within this framework usually followed the same steps that comprise the basic process of action research which has been gaining ground recently in

academia in general, and in relation to translation teaching in particular. These steps start by identifying an area of focus, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting data, and developing a tentative action plan (Mills. 2003:20). The paper however does not attempt to demonstrate the repetitive steps of such procedure in relation to specific points of focus, but to present the final framework and its theoretical basis, and to ultimately explain the rationale behind this framework.

Recent research on the topic of translation teaching, though an enormous bulk with diverse entangled theoretical approaches, largely lacks an integrated approach especially on the undergraduate level. Back in 1995, Kiraly incisively noted the substantial pedagogical gap between "classroom practice and a

detailed understanding of translation processes and competences" as found out by all "scholars who have considered the state of translation teaching" and suggested important research questions to be considered on the possibility of:

- 1- developing a model of translation processes as a frame of reference for teaching and training
- 2- identifying the *components* of "competence" to be *targeted* for pedagogical intervention and development
- 3- identifying the steps needed to fill in this pedagogical gap (36; my emphasis).

Attempting to work within the broad parameters of the research questions posed by Kiraly, and seeking to integrate both the teacher-centred transmissionist and the student-centred collaborative approaches for plausible pedagogical

reasons, this model aspires to positively contribute to the practical advancement of the students' performance in undergraduate translation courses. The integrated approach, while prioritizing the active role of the student in the learning process, does not override the important part played by the teacher. The first reason for this integration is that the model gives precedence to familiarizing the students with the textual and cultural norms and conventions of news translation which requires a top-down approach. Through this approach the model seeks to impart specific foundational and procedural knowledge through the gradual development of the different stages of the model. Another is that according to the theoretical approaches<sup>(7)</sup> to translation adopted in this model, the centrality of the role of the

teacher is demonstrated in providing for the students the guided work they need in order to be able to make the micro-level decisions of detail in relation to the choice of words or other technical problems in light of the macro-level considerations of purpose, communicative situation and basic textual features and also in providing formative feedback which is essential in the initial stages. A third reason is that the model generally addresses the needs of undergraduates including freshmen with practically no adequate knowledge or experience in translation. One of their expectations is that the teacher knows better and should tell them, show them and guide them; the centrality of the role of the teacher, therefore, is required and expected by the students who need to be trained to work independently.

Finally, Maria Gonzalez-Davies, in addressing the point of methodology, prefers an eclectic approach to translation pedagogy in general, laying particular emphasis on assessing the students' needs and arguing that in our 'post-method condition' our focus should be on *responding to the needs of learners* rather than espousing a particular approach (2004:6; my emphasis; qtd. in Carreres and Noriega-Sanchez, 2011:289). It is teaching them to think, to interact with the text and the context and to interact with each other, to exert effort in reading, researching and making decisions, to invest in their creative abilities in translation that would turn them into self directed learners, and ultimately into successful translators.

The significance of the model emerges from the fact that most of

the literature on translation teaching and translator training is basically addressed to students with some experience. Gonzales-Davies in a notable article entitled "Minding the Process, Improving the Product: Alternatives to Traditional Translator Training" points out that "[b]ooks on training are mostly addressed to mature students, either in postgraduate courses or carrying out academic research, or to professional translators. Training at the undergraduate level has received little attention" (2005:69). She further criticises undergraduate translation courses pointing out that in general "traditional translation classes seem to lack pedagogical guidelines and a motivating component" (70). She stresses the fact that there are important variables related to undergraduate students that should

be taken into consideration: their "age, educational background, --- expectations and the myths they hold about translation and translation studies" (69).

The main problem with teaching translation for undergraduates is whether to consider a translation course as part of a language programme and therefore translation as a language teaching device or to regard translation as a discipline in its own right and therefore a translation course should go beyond the question of language to provide students with the required professional skills. In a model developed for undergraduates in the English Department, Faculty of Arts, the two aspects mentioned here need to be given special attention. Developing students' language is needed and expected

by both teachers and students especially freshmen. And it is indispensable for any translator. Besides, a great deal of research on the pedagogical aspect of teaching translation comes within linguistics particularly TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) and FLA (Foreign Language Acquisition). Also, developing professional skills, which has been largely ignored on the undergraduate level, cannot be overlooked any longer in the new millennium. Christiane Nord consciously emphasizes and deplores the fact that "if translation is taught too early before the students have reached a sufficient command of language and culture, [which is the case with most of our undergraduate students], translation classes will *degenerate* into language acquisition classes without the students or the teacher

even realizing" (2005:30; my emphasis). The problem with our students is further aggravated by the fact that most of them are not interested in, and therefore are not exposed to the news and the language of the press either in English or in Arabic, especially as related to economics and politics which means that depending on activating prior knowledge here might simply be a failure. The students need to be assisted by means of practical scaffolding that can help them sustain their efforts through a prerequisite stage of extensive, systematic and guided exposure.

Now translation is "firmly established as an academic discipline," as Malmkjaer points out in *Translation in Undergraduate Degree Programmes* (2004:1). Yet still, it is the professional prospect that actually "gives people with an

interest in and talent for languages a good reason to pursue" a systematic study of the discipline (2). Though obviously true, this statement, assuming interest and talent in students, disregards the diversity of their learning abilities, motivation and level of language. The students' assumed knowledge and actual language competence should be precisely gauged in order to allow the teacher to respond to practical needs, to set an appropriate level of challenge and above all to set properly attainable objectives within the unavoidable constraints imposed on both teachers and learners and the gap between theory, professional practice and classroom exercise as pointed out by Kiraly earlier. One way of avoiding this gap is to ensure that the courses and programmes designed for undergraduates have "face validity" for both

professionals and students. From a professional perspective, "some of the knowledge and skills necessary for success in the profession" are naturally required; from a students' perspective, they "need to feel reasonably confident" that they will be properly equipped "for a career either in the translation industry itself or in related fields involving cross cultural communication and text editing" (2). Addressing students' "confidence" goes much further beyond the traditional teaching methods currently applied. In *Beyond the Ivory Tower*, the same point is emphasized, "traditional translation teaching fails to address the extra-linguistic qualities that are increasingly prized within the contemporary language industry such as flexibility, creativity, resourcefulness, professionalism and the ability to work in teams" (Baer and Koby, 2003:211). This implies

that the focus of translation teaching should be developing professional skills only. Gonzales-Davies does not, however, overrule the value of translation as a tool in FLA: "Translation as a pedagogical *tool* and translation as a professional activity can be reconciled in classes where a theoretical background is directly applicable to practical translation" (2005:72).

### ***The place of theory in the model***

Accordingly, there seems to be a pressing need for introducing theory in so far as it informs and develops practice. Translation theory, however, is usually frowned upon by most professional translators and generally dismissed as being only fit for theoretical research in academia, but not for professional training, especially training in the field of news translation where working under

terrible constraints of meeting tight deadlines and other restraining conditions does not give room for the luxury of theory. Most undergraduate students, also, feel overwhelmed by and unhappy about theoretical terms and concepts because they have a hard time grasping their complexity and reconciling it to practice at such an early stage. Proven to be of little value for junior students with hardly any practical experience, therefore, most teachers and students feel that being enmeshed within the labyrinth of theory at an early stage takes away valuable practice time and yields results much below the desired level. Yet still, unlike professional translators who usually shy away from theory, experienced teachers realize the importance of working within a theoretical framework that enhances the systematic progress of

the learning process regardless of whether theory should be actually taught to students or not<sup>(8)</sup>. This model, therefore, draws on two closely affiliated translation theories that help regulate the work of both teachers and learners: norm theory and skopos theory.

Norm theory in translation, according to Andrew Chesterman, provides an explanatory hypothesis that exploits the collective "social" consciousness that is "accessible" to the individual (1997:54), and usually comprises two main types of norms: expectancy norms and professional norms. The first type encompasses a wide variety of norms that range from the reader's expectations, established cultural traditions, prevalent scenes and frames, power relations to discourse conventions and other textual features. The second

includes only three sub-types: accountability (loyalty to relevant parties: original writer, commissioner, target reader), communication (optimizing communication between involved parties), and relation norms (maintaining appropriate relations between source and target texts) (64-9). Norms and conventions are also addressed by Christiane Nord in their relation to functional translation (1991:53-9). The importance of norm theory in translation teaching is pointed out by Rita D. Snel Trampus who believes that studying norms "contributes to our knowledge about societies, and to that of trans-cultural and therefore translational behavior," thereby leading to better awareness of "quality differences in both source texts and translations" (2002:53). Building on the results of recent empirical studies, she

adds, "it seems more than advisable to deal with aspects of norm theory in the classroom" (38-9) and her conclusion proposes further research work on norms:

The field which is apparently going to be of practical interest in the near future of teaching translation seems to be comparative research on norms and conventions with regard to translations out of and into as many languages as possible (52-3).

Though studying the norms of translation is usually the point of more advanced work than that assigned to freshmen, the students according to this three-stage model are supposed to imperceptibly acquire in the first stage basic information related to these norms through carefully guided task-based activities. They also have to understand the role of the

translator which is typically dictated in both cultures by the norms and conventions of news writing/reporting and news translation (sometimes called trans-adaptation or trans-editing: editing, cutting, reformulating, clarifying and adapting to a variety of newspaper style preferences, etc) .

Skopos theory sees translation as a purposeful action of communication that is "conditioned by the constraints of the situation-in-culture" (Nord, 1991:1), thereby focusing mainly on the function of the text and the translation. Functionalism, in general, "makes use of descriptive methods --- to locate and compare the communicative norms and conventions valid in various culture communities"(2); hence its strong affinity with norm theory. Skopos theory offers a model of translation oriented text analysis. The model as

developed by Christiane Nord is "intended to be applicable to translation teaching" (140). Though Nord mainly considers the training of professional translators, she does not totally disregard translation teaching for undergraduates as part of a language program. She states that her model is also designed to provide criteria for the selection of text material for translation classes, the systematization of translation problems and procedures, the monitoring of learning progression, and for the evaluation and assessment of translations (140).

Widely applied and tested as a working theoretical framework in many translation courses, Nord's functional model for translation and source text analysis seems to provide practice with a solid, substantial basis that establishes the required guidelines for

systematic work. Based on her life-long "attempt to teach translation on a systematic basis," the model is supposed to "provide students with a 'tool' for preparing translations not only for the classroom but also later in their professional life" (iii). The value of Nord's functional model is pointed out, over and again, by many scholars who advocate the teaching of translation in a situated action environment: "translation as it takes place in the real world is inextricably linked to a communicative purpose and therefore learners certainly benefit from contextualized, real life translation tasks" (Carreres and Noriega-Sanchez, 2011:282). Bielsa and Bassnett in *Translation in Global News* (2009) advocate the use of skopos theory in examining news translation because it focuses on purpose and function rather than accuracy or faithfulness within the

context of the restraints imposed by globalization and localization – a point that is further stretched and discussed in relation to more recent research by Robert Holland (2013:332-5).

### ***Pedagogical considerations***

Designing working course material that is based on this theoretical framework calls for an awareness of the components of the learning process, and an attempt to integrate these components in a practical way that considers the specific constraints imposed by the students' current level, the target level, the time limitation, and the overcoming of technical problems encountered.

In *Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses*, L. D. Fink provides a taxonomy of significant

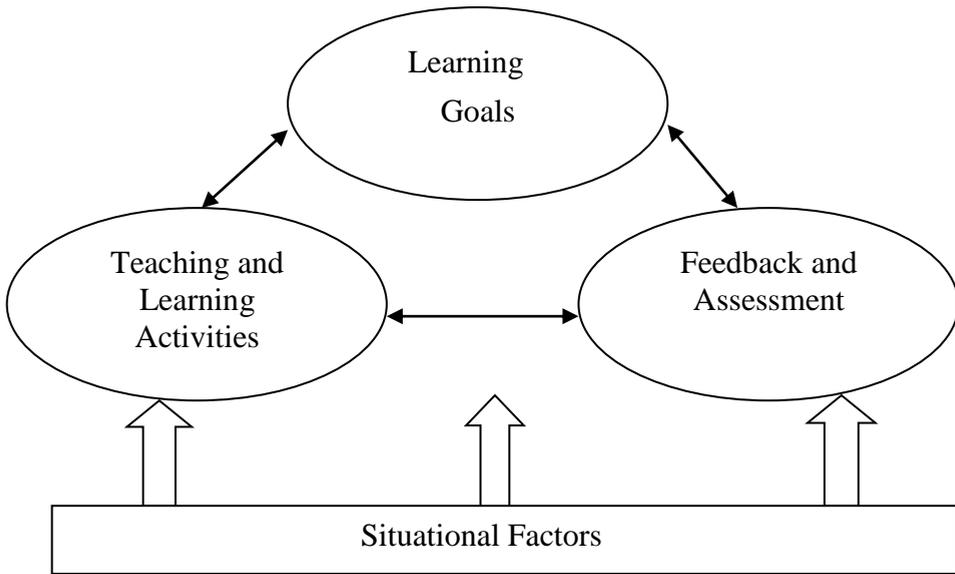
learning that considers six elements:

- 1- Foundational knowledge (relates to the content).
- 2- Application (the know-how, or what is known as procedural knowledge).
- 3- Integration (connecting / relating, comparing / contrasting).
- 4- The human dimension.
- 5- Caring.
- 6- Learning .

As the last 3 factors are inter-related, they are considered here in conjunction as the human factor (it relates to fostering student-teacher relationship with the aim of promoting students' personal and social skills, identifying and satisfying or developing their intellectual abilities, feelings, motivation, life values, learning goals and habits so that they could

eventually become self directed learners) (2003:27-59). This means that Fink deliberately builds

on the importance of the human element that decides on and shapes the other components.



**Figure 1: Key components of integrated course design (Fink, 2003:62).**

ICD (Integrated Course Design), as elucidated through the diagram, is based mainly on the analysis of situational factors which prioritizes the students' age, level, assumed knowledge, learning styles, expectations, educational background, (learning)

experiences, interests, challenges, feelings and motivation as well as their number, contact hours and the learning environment. This means that the way a teacher designs and teaches a certain course (in this case, news translation) definitely changes according to any changes in the

situational factors. Also, these factors help teachers to decide on the learning goals which in turn shape the way they design their activities and ways of assessing students' achievement and giving them the required feedback.

***What do first year students in the English Department expect to learn in a translation course (students' perspective<sup>(9)</sup>)?***

- 1-Develop L2 skills.
- 2-Increase their repertoire of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions.
- 3-Improve the quality of their TT (end product).
- 4-Increase their awareness of cultural differences.

***What do first year students need to learn in a translation course (teacher's perspective)?***

- 1- Foundational knowledge
- 2- Procedural knowledge

### ***Foundational knowledge***

Foundational knowledge is (related to the content of the course: key concepts, terms, vocabulary, etc.) The following questions should be posed when considering foundational knowledge: Are there any *rules / concepts / basic information* to learn (related to the subject matter)? What? When? Why? How (methodology)?

### ***What?***

#### **Students need to learn:**

- 1-basic concepts related to the theoretical approaches adopted: norm theory and skopos theory (Nord's concept of purposeful translation and source-oriented text analysis as related to the text types used during the course).
- 2-the main functions, sections and types of articles in a newspaper.

3- basic norms in news translation (expectancy norms and professional norms like accountability, communication and relation norms) and how these norms influence the choice of translation strategies)

4- the role of the translator in adhering to / breaking norms (trans-editing: editing, cutting, adding, reformulating, clarifying and adapting to certain style preferences; purpose: simple, readable language and basic message should be stated directly and clearly).

### ***When?***

Acquiring this kind of knowledge should come in the first stage in the course preceding actual work on specific transfer problems. Through this initial stage, the students are expected to acquire general knowledge about

news, relate concepts, compare and contrast norms and conventions. This is supposed to be achieved through guided and focused goal oriented practice. At this point the assessment of the end product of a complete translated text should be based on general criteria related to this kind of knowledge without focusing on particular problems of transfer on and above the word level.

### ***Why?***

This kind of foundational knowledge is supposed to provide the students with the necessary scaffolding they need to proceed with their work in a more enlightened way. Nord emphasizes the fact that "students should be made aware of the norms and conventions of communication before they start translating structure-by-structure or word-by-word" (2001:31); "students should

gain 'insight' into 'aspects' of general text competence" (32). It has been empirically proven that acquiring this kind of "text competence" makes a great deal of difference in students' performance at this initial stage.

### ***How?***

The students need to work on extensive reading assignments of news items and different (selected in case of time constraint) types of news articles in both English and Arabic with guided focused tasks and immediate feedback that relates to the areas of focus determined by the teacher. Reading assignments and translation tasks at this stage are supported by graphic organizers that are especially designed to help them focus during the reading comprehension and analysis process on the required textual aspects. Graphic

organizers are modifications of D. P. Ausubel's work in the sixties on what he termed then advance organizers (Stone, 1983:194). While Ausubel's research work focused mainly on pre-reading organizers as a way of helping students read in a more effective way, graphic organizers can be used as a pre-, while or post-reading means of helping students organize and retain knowledge in a particular way (Merkley and Jefferies, 2001:351). Their importance in relation to developing textual competence lies mainly in the fact that they can be used to enhance students' awareness of relationships, patterns of textual organization and basic text features; further, they can be designed to serve different purposes like learning new vocabulary and developing sense relations (350), which are particularly relevant to the work of the translator. They

were also found to be highly effective in helping students find their way quickly and easily through long reading material which saves much of the time needed for practice, and reduces the tediousness of having to do this frequently with different tasks (Robinson, et al., 2003:25). Providing parallel texts and background texts is expected to set up the students for dealing with specific topics and specific text types in both English and Arabic. Translation at this stage does not focus on *accuracy* as much as it does on practically *acquiring the basic textual features, norms and conventions*.

### *Procedural knowledge*

Procedural knowledge is related to the skills that the students need to acquire/ develop in relation to this particular domain, translating the

news. As pointed out by Bielsa and Bassnett, "the main objective of news translation is the fast transmission of information in a clear way so that it can be communicated effectively to the readers" (2009:63). Practically speaking this process of effective transmission usually involves one or more of the following procedures: modifications in the text, elimination of unnecessary information, change of title and lead, adding background information, change in the order of paragraphs and summary of elaborate information (64). Helping students acquire/develop real professional skills in news translation therefore requires special attention to real-world specialized context. This means that the students need to learn, practice and develop skills within the professional constraints imposed in real-world situated practice. These professional constraints are partly dictated by limitation of resources

and lack of time, but more importantly by the prevailing cultural and linguistic norms (Gile, 2009:247).

Academic considerations entail dealing with the thorny concept of the translator's assumed "competence" which has been widely discussed and variously defined by many theorists<sup>(10)</sup>. The professional skills required are relayed through Kiraly's second proposed research question in relation to translation pedagogy: identifying the *components* of "competence" to be *targeted* for pedagogical intervention and development. For the practical purpose of this paper, developing students' translation competence as used in this model comprises the three crucial areas pointed out by Gonzales-Davies in *Multiple Voices in the Translation Classroom* (2004): linguistic skills,

encyclopaedic knowledge and transference skills. These three areas are precisely the same that Nord specifies in the didactic applications of her model of translation (1991:150). Rendered into more elaborate classroom terms, both academic and professional considerations in relation to news translation require the students to develop the following related component skills:

- 1- Comprehension and analytical skills.
- 2- Transfer skills.
- 3- Research skills.
- 4- Editing and evaluation skills.
- 5- Team work and collaborative learning skills.

The model proposed in this study is founded on a *cyclical progressive* course that starts and ends with the macro-level

considerations of the translation process. It develops along *three* main *stages* with different *focal objectives* in order to provide the students with a *real-world learning experience* that helps achieve in a limited period of time an assumed level of competence. This level is to be defined by a set of criteria that are based on assessing and developing students' needs within the constraints of specific situational factors. Consequently, the time allocated for each stage here is only tentative, derived from the researcher's personal experience and the constraints resulting from the analysis of the given situational factors, and can therefore easily be adapted to different factors. Besides, the different stages can be extended and slightly modified to form separate modules in an

undergraduate programme. The last stage (project-based learning) is a learning process in its own right and not just a means of providing further controlled practice. Many institutions now provide courses that are built solely around completing a set project that provides the pivot of the learning process. Finally, it is crucial to point out that the inevitable overlap of work in the different stages of the model is normally organized through live interaction with the students during the teaching / learning process.

📖 **Stage one:** (30 contact hours)

➤ ***Focal Objective:***

building a macro-level scaffolding that underscores the basic norms and conventions of news writing and translating for the students to guide their work through the learning process.

➤ **Learning Outcomes:**

A- developing textual competence.

B- building a specified level of 'encyclopedic' knowledge (related to the prevailing cultural and linguistic norms of news translation).

➤ **Activities:**

A- doing extensive reading assignments from newspapers in English and Arabic and providing summary translations, translating headlines, lead paragraphs or other assigned sections of news articles with specific focus on certain rhetorical features and functions.

B- comparing and /or contrasting parallel texts in both languages.

➤ **Sub-objectives:**

by the end of this stage of the course, the students should:

1- be familiar with the newspaper:

A- main functions: informing, interpreting and analyzing the news, providing services and entertaining.

B- sections: home, world, economics, culture, sports, (classified) ads, etc.

C- types of news articles: soft news, hard news, column, feature story, editorial, reviews of books, movies, restaurants, etc.

2- acquire and / or develop the skills of reading and analyzing newspaper articles in order to be able to identify (and then transfer):

A- the purpose of the article (informative, persuasive, appellative).

B- the main message of the writer (identifying thesis, point of view and supporting details).

C- the value of news in terms of grounding.

D- facts and opinions.

3- acquire basic information related to the norms of news translation and understand the role of the translator when handling news translation (sometimes called trans-adaptation or trans-editing: editing, cutting, reformulating, clarifying and adapting to newspaper style preferences).

4- be able to translate (parts of) articles related to various topics on the national and international levels: politics, economics, sports, social life, education, arts and entertainment, etc.

5- be able to relate what they learn in this course to the writing and reading courses and benefit from these courses in their work on news translation

6- develop language skills and acquire core vocabulary related to the current affairs.

📖 **Stage two:** (25 contact hours)

➤ **Focal Objective:**

refining transfer skills on the macro and micro levels

➤ **Learning Outcomes:**

A- developing conscious decision-making strategies.

B- identifying and solving transfer problems on and above the word level.

➤ **Activities:**

TBAs (task-based activities) focusing on specific problem areas on and above the word level (usually based on students initial work in the first stage)

➤ **Sub-objectives:**

by the end of this stage of the course, the students should:

1- be able to make strategic decisions based on conscious analysis

2- be able to identify and handle specific transfer problems related to translation on and above the word level

3- be able to edit and revise their own translations

4- be able to compare their translations to parallel texts in order to assess their choices as well as others'

📁 **Stage three: PBL** (Project-Based Learning: 5 contact hours)

➤ ***Focal Objective:***

contextualizing students' collaborative learning experience through their work in a real-life situation.

➤ ***Learning Outcomes:***

consolidating basic skills acquired

➤ ***Activities:***

developed to help students move smoothly through the stages of the planned project.

***Selected examples of possible projects:***

The main objective in this stage is to give the students the chance to go through a simulation of real life professional work by providing specific details related to the function of the translation, the target reader, the textual features, style preferences, time and space constraints, etc. The following examples could be used to illustrate the kind of projects that could be successfully implemented by students in this stage:

- Students work on a foreign press review of an assigned or chosen topic(s) of interest by translating (parts of) selected articles (English → Arabic)

- Students work on a local press review of an assigned or chosen topic(s) of interest by translating (parts of) selected articles (Arabic → English)
- Students design and produce the front page of a selected (or imagined; general or specialized; Arabic or English) newspaper by translating (parts of) selected articles
- Students work on producing a single section (politics/ economics/ arts and entertainment / sports, etc. in English/ Arabic/ both) by translating (parts of) selected articles
- Students produce an issue of a newspaper (English/ Arabic/ both) with different sections and types of articles by translating (parts of) selected articles.

***Why is the project important?***

The project addresses the basic components of Fink's taxonomy:

application, integration, collaboration, and the human dimension. It gives priority to the development of skills (e.g. the learning of strategies, problem solving techniques, and decision making), to the integration of practice and to collaborative work as life learning goals rather than to the final product. Assessing the project therefore should include set criteria for evaluating these important skills. Encountering real linguistic and extra-linguistic problems in a real-world working situation and attempting to solve them independently is crucial in the learning process and enhances the creative abilities of the students. Empirical research in cognitive psychology and social constructivism stress that the "knowledge and strategies acquired in the process of solving

a problem are learned more easily, retained longer, and more frequently applied to future problems than the same knowledge and strategies taught in the abstract" (Markham, et al., 2005: 584). This is where the value of the theoretical basis of Nord's adapted model of purposeful translation and functional text analysis (in relation to the basic acquired skills and the norms and conventions of news translation) becomes most perceptible in the work of the students. Besides, the project, by giving the students the chance to work and organize themselves in teams, allows them to acquire/develop the necessary skills needed to manage the particular challenges of teamwork – an invaluable professional

requirement for news translators. Another important asset is the empirically verified fact that "the quality of the work they produce in teams may indeed surpass the quality of the work they do individually" (Ambrose, et al., 2010:93). The last point has to do with the fact that by reaching this stage the students will have already gained the level of confidence needed to make them enjoy their independent work and see value in their own collaboration. Again the level of independence and the degree of interference of the teacher during the implementation of the project depends on the level of competence reached by the students and the degree of difficulty of the assigned project.

### ***The Rationale behind this Model***

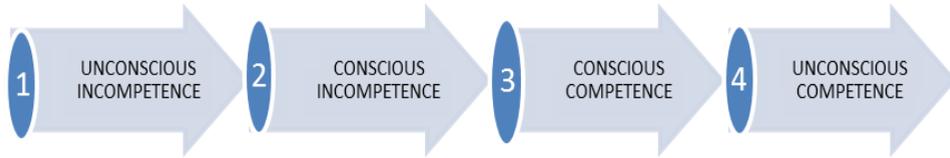


Figure 2: Stages in the development of mastery 1 (Ambrose, et al., 2010:97)

The figure which presents the stages of developing mastery is taken from a highly instrumental work on applying theoretical and empirical research to common and recurrent problems in actual teaching/learning situations (Ambrose, et al., 2010)<sup>(11)</sup>. The diagram demonstrates that the process of acquiring competence in a certain domain develops through four main stages: usually "novice students are in a state of *unconscious incompetence*" which means that they are not aware of their need to learn and develop competence (96) – a state which is believed to affect general

motivation negatively. Gaining some knowledge and a limited level of competence makes them aware of their own incompetence: "*conscious incompetence*" which normally increases motivation for learning. Success in performing tasks and reaching the assigned goals marks a new stage of "*conscious competence*" which is followed by the final stage of mastery – reached by the more distinct ones and not necessarily by all learners:

as students reach the highest level of mastery, they move into a state of *unconscious competence* in which they exercise the skills and

knowledge in their domain so automatically and instinctively that they are no longer consciously aware of what they know or do (97).

Obviously *competence* here develops in a "linear way;" *consciousness*, however, first "waxes and then wanes," which means that "novices (in stage one) and experts (in stage four) operate in a state of relative unconsciousness, though for very different reasons" (97). This is almost akin to Andrew Chesterman's five-stage model of

acquiring mastery in translation. According to Chesterman, a translator goes through a first "novice" stage, a second "advanced beginner" stage, a third "competence" stage, a fourth "proficiency" stage and finally the "expertise" stage (1997:148-9). According to the diagram, the "proficiency" stage comes in between the two stages of "*conscious competence*" "*unconscious competence*", where the latter describes the final "mastery" or "expertise" stage.

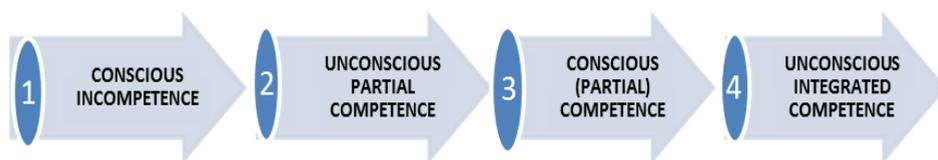


Figure 3: Stages in the Development of Mastery 2

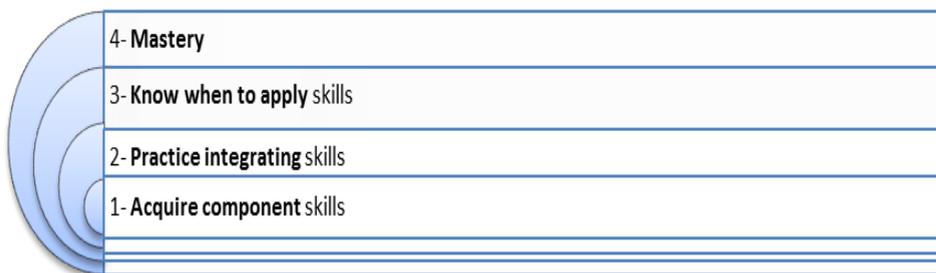
(adapted from Ambrose, et al., 2010:97)

This figure, adapted for the purposes of the model, and based on practical experience with

students' assumed knowledge and actual work in class, obviously demonstrates a change in the stages illustrated by the previous

diagram. The first stage in this diagram is *conscious incompetence*. As methodical work entails experimenting with aspects of this model, I deliberately start by assigning tasks that are particularly challenging to first year students in the English Department, in order to make them conscious of their incompetence, thereby increasing their motivation. Working on an appropriate level in challenging students is crucial in arousing curiosity and increasing motivation. If the task is too demanding, however, it might be frustrating and therefore dismissive. As they struggle to proceed successfully with their tasks and assignments, they discover (become conscious of) their lack of knowledge: foundational and procedural (they do not know how). By the end of

the first stage of the model, they unconsciously acquire some knowledge, but they are not aware of how exactly it works: they develop *unconscious partial competence*. In the second stage, I assign equally challenging tasks where they consciously learn about problem solving and decision making strategies and learn/develop their own working techniques. At this stage they can make their choices and account for their own decisions; they become aware they have developed a certain level of competence: *conscious (partial) competence*. The last stage, *unconscious integrated competence*, is one of mastery that undergraduate students are not expected to achieve except if the given proper criteria that define an appropriate level of mastery are met.



*Figure 4: Elements of mastery 1 (Ambrose, et. al., 2010:96)*

According to S.A. Ambrose, et al., the basic principle at work here is: "[t]o develop [a certain level of] mastery, students must acquire component skills, practice integrating them, and know when to apply what they have learned" (95). Professional translators, however, demonstrate various levels of mastery without necessarily adhering to that principle as illustrated in this diagram and the preceding one. Translation is even thought by many professional translators who show a high level of mastery, probably without doing any courses on the

undergraduate or postgraduate level, to be a creative talent or a gift and not just component skills to be acquired and integrated as demonstrated in the diagram<sup>(12)</sup>. The professional translator's mind in processing information and working out a target text has often been compared to the Black Box; no one can really explain how the process proceeds. The creativity of the act of translation is believed to be primarily personal, and therefore is not easy to impart through teaching. However, as the difference between the performance of professional experts and that of novice students in a certain domain

is largely attributed to the way they organize and access knowledge, schema theory and cognitive theories that account for patterns of knowledge organization can be practically useful in explaining this difference. The pedagogical implications for this are clearly pointed out,

we need to provide students with appropriate organizing schemes or teach them how to abstract the relevant principles from what they are learning. In addition, we need to monitor how students are processing what they are learning to make sure it gets organized in useful ways (58).

Organizing knowledge in a way that is easily accessible, that is matched to the task being performed and that highlights the density of interrelationships, therefore, is believed to be highly "effective in supporting learning

and performance"; and part of successful teaching is to help students recognize existing patterns and develop their own "effective knowledge organizations"(65). This is exactly what the students are expected to achieve in the first stage of the model.

The model therefore starts by working on the unconscious level by setting up the scaffolding framework which helps the students unconsciously organize the knowledge they acquire through learning the basic norms of news writing and news translation or what came to be known as trans-editing. Freshmen in particular, because they are not yet equipped to handle complex concepts related to the critical analysis of discourse or to contrastive rhetoric, cannot consciously attain such organized schemes. Acquiring and organizing

this kind of knowledge, thought to be invaluable for acquiring translation competence, can be achieved through goal-oriented tasks accompanied by graphic organizers that focus the students' attention on the required organizing patterns. The first stage therefore is based on extensive exposure to the language of the press in both English and Arabic, the kinds of newspaper articles, basic textual features, etc. The overall objective here is to be able to recognize, understand (analytically) and then on the whole reproduce target texts

that retain the general textual features without stressing specific micro-level problems of transfer at this stage. It is in the second stage, after the students have already acquired a great deal of knowledge that these problems can be consciously introduced, and translation as a process made up of component skills based on decision making and problem solving crystallizes. The following diagram, also adapted for the purpose of the model, illustrates the basic change from the previous one quoted from Ambrose:

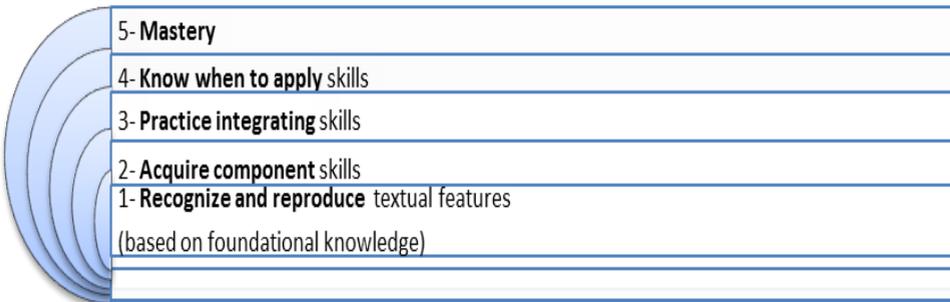


Figure 5: Elements of mastery 2 (adapted from Ambrose, et al., 2010:96)

### **Conclusion**

The demanding and straining field of news translation requires specific qualifications that cannot be disregarded in an academic course on news translation. The question of whether to work on the linguistic level or the professional skills level creates a needless split situation for work in undergraduate courses. This calls for a novel approach that integrates the two levels and addresses both the students' needs and the constraints imposed by the learning environment in order to provide a successful learning experience with optimal results. This model therefore seeks to integrate the two levels mentioned above, as well as the theoretical and pedagogical approaches discussed in the paper. The integration creates a desired level

of flexibility in the model which is demonstrated through the fact that it can be easily adapted to changing situational factors. The analysis of these factors, as established by Fink, aims at making the learning experience as relevant as possible to the students.

Consequently, the model is built around two main principles: the first is identifying the needs of the students, and the second is identifying the components of translation competence to be targeted for development as pointed out by Kiraly (1995:36). It attempts to practically provide the steps needed not only to fill in the pedagogical gap between actual translation teaching and professional translation practice, but also to respond to the students' real problems and to reconcile

their expectations to those of their teachers. The three stages of the model are designed in a cyclical way that guarantees a systematic development of the students' performance and facilitates handling technical problems in a conscious way. The importance of the last stage lies in the fact that it gives the students the chance to enjoy collaborative work in a relatively independent way. Though formative feedback for the guided activities in the first two stages is essential for evaluating students' performance and providing the necessary help needed for making progress, the assessment of the students' work in the project in the last stage aims at evaluating the learning process as a whole and the students' degree of involvement and not only the end product.

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### *Notes*

- 1- This paper was presented in the 32<sup>nd</sup> CDELT Symposium, Ain Shams University, 2014.
- 2- Kiraly uses this term to refer to the dominant approach which is generally used in translation teaching and which he also calls "performance magistrale" (2005:1101).
- 3- This approach started to take precedence in teaching translation since the nineties with the appearance of works by Hurtado Albir (1999), Allison Beeby (1996) and Gonzalez Davies (2004) and their call for a task-based approach that empowers the role of students as learners. According to Carreres and Noriega-Sanchez their work "made a very valuable contribution in taking the leap from telling us how to teach

- translation to actually showing us how to do it, by means of a rich selection of carefully designed classroom activities" (2011:285).
- 4- Christiane Nord's functional model of translation offered helpful insights here.
- 5- Two important works provide great guidance on applying research work on teaching methods: the first is S. Colina, *Translation Teaching: from Research to the Classroom*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2003; and the second is Ambrose, S.A. et al. *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010.
- 6- See for example Gile, D. *Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2009.
- 7- These approaches as will be explained later are norm theory and skopos theory. Nord explicitly states that her model of source text analysis and purposeful translation based on skopos theory adopts a midway between learner-centered and teacher-centered approaches (1991:146).
- 8- The attempt to bridge the gap between theory as formulated in academia and professional practice and the impact of all this on translation teaching and translator training has been the subject of a huge bulk of recent research. González-Davies points out that "[i]n order to reach an optimal standard in translator training, an understanding between theorists, practitioners and teachers is needed" (2005:79).

9- These points are actually based on feedback frequently taken from students in different courses. The researcher always makes a point at the beginning of any course she teaches to ask the students about their expectations during and at the end of the course in order to reconcile, modify or sometimes completely change those expectations and psychologically prepare the students for the work to be done during the course.

10- Carreres and Noriega-Sanchez (2011) in an interesting article that tries to show how translation can be effectively used in language teaching through a task-based communicative approach mention numerous sources that address the question of the translator's competence. (The more recent examples cited

include: PACTE "Investigating translation competence: conceptual and methodological issues." *Meta* 50, no. 2. 2005. 609–619.

<<http://www.erudit.org/revue/META/2005/v50/n2/011004ar.html>>;

Kelly, *A Handbook for Translator Trainers: A Guide to Reflective Practice*. Manchester, UK: St Jerome, 2005. P.32–33;

Beeby, "Language learning for translators: designing a syllabus."

In *Translation in Undergraduate Degree Programmes*, ed. K.

Malmkjar, 39–65. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.2004. 44 – 45;

Hurtado, *Ensenar a traducir*. Madrid: Edelsa 1999: 42 – 44;

Neubert, "Competence in translation: a complex skill, how to study it and how to teach it."

In *Translation Studies: An Interdiscipline*, ed. M. Snell-Hornby, F. Pochhacker and K.

Kaindl, 411–420. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.1994; Bell, *Translation and Translating*. London: Longman.1991. 35- 43). Kelly comprehensively defines the main subcomponents of translator competence as follows:

- Communicative and textual competence in at least two languages and cultures.
- Cultural and intercultural competence.
- Subject area competence (basic knowledge of specialised fields).
- Professional and instrumental competence (use of documentary resources).
- Attitudinal or psycho-physiological competence (self-concept, self-confidence, attention/concentration, memory, initiative).
- Interpersonal competence (team work, negotiation skills).

- Strategic competence (organisational and planning skills, problem-solving,
- monitoring, self-assessment and revision). (Kelly 2005: 32–33; qtd. in Carreres and Noriega-Sanchez, 2011:284).

11- Addressed to faculty members, faculty developers and instructional designers, this work, which is entitled *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*, tries to bridge the gap between research on learning/teaching and actual practice by presenting authentic scenarios of faculty problems in the teaching process and presenting strategies derived from research work.

12- The PACTE group in the model of translation competence developed in the late nineties state that the transition from

"novice" to "expert" can happen naturally or through guided acquisition (i.e. through the process of teaching / learning) and a basic part of the project is to try to investigate the acquisition of translation competence empirically; distinguishing between competence as the underlying system of knowledge and performance as the act of translating, they try to categorize the sub-competences identified in their model into either declarative or procedural knowledge). PACTE. "Building a Translation Competence Model". In: Alves, F. (ed.). *Triangulating Translation: Perspectives in Process Oriented Research*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2003.

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