Introducing Intercultural Communication into the Teaching of Translation

Cranmer, R.

INTRODUCING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION INTO THE TEACHING OF TRANSLATION

Robin Cranmer

University of Westminster, London, UK

Abstract

This article examines how the teaching of translation at university level can come to include the systematic development of intercultural skills. It will do this initially by presenting the methodology and outcomes of a European Union funded project entitled 'Promoting Intercultural Competence in Translators'. The precise aims, context, participants, timing and working methodology of the project will be clearly outlined. This will be followed by an explanation of key theoretical principles which underlay the project and which were embodied in a 'good practice guide' at its conclusion. The project produced three key outputs freely available on the project website aimed to help university lecturers in Translation to enhance the development of students' intercultural skills – a 'curriculum framework' (syllabus), teaching materials and assessment materials, for each of which the theoretical/pedagogical underpinning will be explained and examples provided. The article will conclude with an extended reflective section examining some of the limits of the project, areas in which it could be further developed or adapted to context, finishing with an indication of areas in which further research is needed.

Key words

Intercultural Communication, Intercultural Competence, Translation, Pedagogy, Curriculum Framework, Teaching Materials

Introduction

Interest in Intercultural Communication has grown considerably in recent decades across a wide range of communities and contexts and Translation is an important example of one such context. A significant number of researchers within Translation Studies as well as translators and teachers of Translation have developed interests in this 'intercultural dimension'. Within Translation Studies influential theorists like Bassnett (2014) and Baker (2011) have long presented Translation as involving subtle interplay between linguistic and cultural features and have as such recognised, at least implicitly, the intercultural dimension of the practice of translators. There have also been important attempts to improve our explicit understanding of the many intercultural aspects of translation processes (cf. Leppihalme, 1997 and Katan, 2004) and both conferences and PhDs are now being devoted to such themes. Similarly, many have come to recognise the importance of including an intercultural dimension in translator training. A clear example of this is the European Commission. In order for a Master's programme within the European Union to be officially recognised as a 'European Masters in Translation', the university offering it has to demonstrate that it systematically incorporates the development of intercultural competence in its programme (cf.http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/programmes/emt/key_documents/emt_competences_translators_en.pdf).

Equally, an increasing number of pedagogically orientated articles in this area are starting to appear (cf. Yarosh, 2015). The current article lies within this latter tradition as its main focus is pedagogical. It aims to contribute to debates on how the intercultural skills of students of Translation can best be developed. It will do this initially by explaining and presenting the findings of a European Union funded project which had exactly this aim - to improve the ways in which Translation students are taught intercultural skills. It will conclude with a review of the project and an analysis of ways in which its work might be taken further.

A European Project – Background, Methodology and Key Principles

The background framework of the project was as follows. In 2010 colleagues involved in the teaching of Translation in universities in six countries of the European Union, plus an international languages association co-ordinated from a seventh, came together with the

shared perception that intercultural aspects of translation were not being taught as effectively as they could be. They accordingly submitted a bid to the European Commission proposing to run a project which would be aimed at allowing any university teaching Translation to improve the ways in which it developed students' intercultural abilities. The bid was duly accepted and the two-year project entitled 'Promoting Intercultural Competence in Translators', abbreviated as 'PICT', commenced in 2011. What the project produced was then made freely available in seven EU languages on the project website (www.pictllp.eu). The core of what the project produced was a form of syllabus, termed a 'curriculum framework', for the teaching of Intercultural Competence to translators, materials to teach it and assessment materials for evaluating students' intercultural skills, all of which will be explained later.

Where methodology is concerned, the project involved more curriculum development than an attempt to arrive at original research findings as such. Nonetheless, it drew extensively on existing research as well as carrying out research of its own in order to make its contributions to pedagogy. The curriculum development process which the project followed derived from a carefully researched methodological formula which is well-established for EU pedagogical projects and which is also common in a range of other educational and professional communities of practice. This involves -

(1) trying to establish what students need to know, be aware of, be able to do etc. in the domain in question - in this instance, intercultural aspects of translation processes – and then formulating these needs into a series of learning dimensions and learning outcomes which together constitute a 'curriculum framework'

(2) producing teaching materials allowing students to develop along all of these learning dimensions

(3) producing assessment materials allowing students to be tested along all of these learning dimensions

At many stages prior research fed into this underlying process, research drawn most frequently from the broad fields of Intercultural Communication, Translation Studies and Pedagogy. Decisions taken throughout by the project team were, however, also informed by a 'situational survey' the design, implementation and analysis of which followed fairly standard canons of survey methodology (www.pictllp.eu/en/the-pict-project/the-starting-point) This constituted the first phase of the project and involved large numbers of teachers

3

and students of translation across the seven participating countries who were asked about wide-ranging aspects of (a) current practice in the teaching of intercultural aspects of translation and (b) what they would wish to see change. The curriculum framework was then formulated by the project team who went on to produce teaching and assessment materials corresponding to the curriculum framework. These were then piloted as rigorously as the constraints of the project permitted and carefully amended. Given, however, that the actual project partners, with their own perceptions and biases, were bound to have a major impact on the outcomes of the project, a project which was intended to produce pedagogical materials usable throughout the EU and beyond, a serious attempt was made at the outset to achieve some degree of 'representativity' within the project team. As a result European Union partners as geographically, and potentially culturally, diverse as possible were sought and the team eventually involved colleagues from Bulgaria and the UK on the Eastern and Western edges and Italy and Finland on the Southern and Northern – Poland, Germany and France then ran across the middle.

A number of key principles came to underlie the project which eventually came to be embodied in a 'good practice guide' for the development of intercultural competence when teaching Translation (www.pictllp.eu/download/Good_Practice_Report.pdf). Firstly, the crucial importance of teaching intercultural skills was naturally seen as fundamental and of teaching them *explicitly* – that is, (a) giving the teaching of intercultural skills both at theoretical and practical levels a formal place in courses, modules and syllabuses (b) making clear to students the importance of intercultural skills and the fact that they are being taught (c) assessing them and making it clear to students that intercultural skills are being assessed. A second principle was that these outputs should in every way possible be 'flexible' so that they could be easily adapted to extremely varied cultural and institutional contexts. A final principle, again deriving from the variety of context in which the project's outputs might be used, was to attempt to incorporate variety into the outputs of the project itself. Accordingly, the curriculum framework has both theoretical elements and very professional ones offering something both to Translation programmes at the theoretical and the more applied range of the spectrum. Similarly, the teaching materials range from those which are more theoretically-orientated and more likely to fit in with a lecture-based (teacher-centred) style to others more practical and text-based (student-centred), although it was also taken as a principle that any activity-based learning tasks should have clear theoretical underpinnings.

'Curriculum Framework' for Developing the Intercultural Competence of Translators

Amongst the things which the project produced and which constituted its core was a 'curriculum framework' underlying both the teaching and assessment materials. In essence it comprises two parts. Its first part tries to identify areas in which students of Translation need to develop themselves if they are to deal effectively with the intercultural challenges of being professional translators. These areas for development were seen as falling into the following three general categories (see figure a below) –

(1) *theoretical* – mastery of underlying concepts, principles and perspectives derived from Intercultural theory, Translation Studies and related disciplines

(2) *textual* – ability to make careful, interculturally aware, translation decisions when producing translated texts

(3) *interpersonal* – ability to make careful, interculturally aware, communication decisions when interacting through any medium with clients, colleagues etc. when working as a translator

Each general area or 'learning dimension' was then sub-divided into four smaller areas or 'learning sub-dimensions'. So dimension 2, the textual dimension, for example, has as its third sub-dimension 'Recognition of problems of non-equivalence and applying strategies to address them'.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK – INTERCULTURAL SKILLS FOR TRANSLATORS

1 dimension - theoretical	2 dimension – textual	3 dimension - interpersonal
1.1 Core concepts of the theory of intercultural communication (e.g. *culture*, *identity*, representations, etc.)	2.1 Comparative analysis of cultural issues from source and target audiences	3.1 Cultural awareness and empathy manifested in social exchange (e.g. when negotiating a translation brief with a member of the source culture)
1.2 Conceptual tools for analysing intercultural perspective (e.g. frameworks for cultural comparison, scales of cultural awareness etc.)	2.2 Comparative analysis of texts from an intercultural perspective – lexical and syntactic features, discourse patterns, visual resonance - and use of the analysis in the translation processes	3.2 Curiosity and pro-activeness in all forms of contact with other cultures (e.g. when interacting with colleagues or clients from the source culture)
1.3 Knowledge of the cultural context of translation (e.g. differences between professional translation practices in several countries, implications for translators, etc.)	2.3 Recognition of problems of non-equivalence and applying strategies to address them (e.g. explicitation, omission, substitution, etc.)	3.3 Sensitivity to affects and potential conflicts in communication (e.g. spoken, non-verbal etc.)
1.4 The links between intercultural communication theory and Translation Studies (e.g. cultural profiling and readership analysis, cultural subjectivity and translator's personal visibility)	2.4 Recognition and management of the impact of the translator's internalized culture and emotional reaction to elements of the source culture and text	3.4 Social positioning (e.g. deciding whether to conform, hybridize or deviate from the dominant social norms)

Figure a   (www.pictllp.eu/en/curriculum-framework/curriculum-framework-document)

The purpose of this first part of the curriculum framework should perhaps be clarified. It is *not* intended as a syllabus for a module in Intercultural Communication for Translation students, although it could be used as a basis for designing such a module. Rather, it is a list of areas which, in the view of the project team and drawing on the project survey, students need to develop *in some context* during their overall course of study of Translation. So the dimensions or sub-dimensions could be introduced across a range of modules in different years of their study. Equally, neither the dimensions nor sub-dimensions are intended to be sequential - different views may be taken on which should be taught first. Some might prefer to ensure students have a solid grounding in the theoretical dimension before passing on the concrete application of theory in translation or interpersonal processes - yet some might also prefer to raise issues of theory within the context of producing translated texts on the grounds that the relevance of theory was then easier for students to see. The dimensions and sub-dimensions are therefore meant to be a highly flexible pedagogical tool simply trying to articulate what might need to be taught, but to be implemented and adapted in ways that suit the context and vision of the staff involved.

This kind of curriculum framework will already be familiar to some as it functions in exactly the same way as a number of curriculum frameworks used in various communities of practice for language teaching, a highly influential example of which is the 'Common European Framework of Reference for Languages', produced under the auspices of the Council of Europe (www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf).
Linguistic competence is in contexts of this kind often divided up into Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (sometimes with additional components) each of which is an area or 'dimension' in which students need to develop. Equally, some curriculum frameworks divide these general areas or 'dimensions' up into smaller ones, into 'sub-dimensions' or 'sub-skills'. Listening might, for example, be seen as having the sub-dimension of 'reading for gist comprehension'.

It is perhaps worth devoting a little space to the rationale behind each of the three general learning dimensions. The rationale behind the theoretical dimension is fairly obvious. Not only did the survey prioritise this dimension, but project partners felt that without a good mastery of relevant intercultural theory translation students would be unable to deal with the intercultural challenges of professional practice. Central to this theoretical dimension would be the development of student awareness, making use of theoretical tools, of how cultural factors are intimately bound up with linguistic ones, of how translators are always influenced

by culture and work within complex cultural contexts. The rationale behind the textual dimension probably needs little explanation – translators need to produce a wide variety of written texts and clearly need to be able to deal, drawing on theoretical tools, with the huge range of intercultural challenges producing translated texts may involve. The final dimension – interpersonal – may surprise some. It is a response to the fact that translators always work in specific professional environments and have to interact constantly with other people as part of their work. The interactions might be with clients, agencies, in-house colleagues, editors or others and might take the form of spoken communication which is face-to-face or via telephone or skype conversations or written communication via text messaging, email or social media. Given the likely cultural variety of the participants in these interactions they will often constitute classic instances of intercultural communication. In some Translation programmes this 'professional' aspect of the translator's role will be judged to be an important part of the training students need to receive. Other programmes will place more emphasis on the theoretical dimension and others again on the processes of text production. Once more the curriculum framework is intended to be flexible and teachers of Translation will need to engage in adapting it to context.

If the first part of the curriculum framework involves an attempt to capture key areas in which students of Translation need to develop their intercultural abilities, the second part describes different levels of development they might achieve in these areas – as such it is closely linked to issues of assessment. Accordingly, every sub-dimension indicating a relatively specific area in which students need to develop interculturally has three corresponding 'descriptors' – that is, it has three descriptions of the level of competence students might have reached along that dimension. For example, corresponding to textual sub-dimension 2.3, referred to above, ('identification of problems of non-equivalence and the use of strategies for resolving them') are the following three level descriptors –

2.3 Recognition of problems of non-equivalence and applying strategies to address them (e.g. explicitation, omission, substitution, etc.)	has knowledge of some translation strategies for coping with intercultural problems but has difficulty choosing the appropriate ones to apply.	is able to apply some translation strategies but still at times relies mostly on intuition.	has a wide repertoire of translation strategies and is able to critically evaluate and justify their choice and applicability to each specific translation.

Figure b (http://pictllp.eu/download/curriculum/PICT-CURRICULUM_ENGLISH.pdf) p.10

8

The PICT curriculum framework again follows many communities of both educational and professional practice in describing achievement in this kind of way. Its approach, therefore, to achievement and assessment is once again close to that of the widely used Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, referred to above, which describes different levels of achievement for each of the broad areas (listening, speaking etc.) which it considers to be part of linguistic competence. The descriptors for the PICT project have two basic purposes. Firstly, they help to make it more precise for teachers of Translation, for each sub-dimension, what knowledge, awareness, skills etc. they should be trying to teach their students. In the second place, and more importantly, the descriptors can help in assessing students. The level descriptors are not, of course, precise enough to allow for the ascription of *specific* marks to students but, depending on how marks are ascribed within a particular institutional context, they can allow a description of competence for a given sub-dimension to be associated with a *range* of marks whether in characters or numbers. So, to take the table above, one might associate the first description of achievement 'has knowledge etc.' with the mark range 0-40, the second description 'is able to apply etc.' with 40-70 and the final column with 70-100 so that the table is at least a broad guide to assigning marks. It is, moreover, usually not difficult to amend the three level descriptors for each sub-dimension so that they become more if that corresponds better to institutional norms of assessment – an institution, for example, giving marks from 1 to 5 could modify the three descriptors from the PICT project to give five, a task which experience has already shown, tends to be relatively easy. Using descriptors of this kind can also play a role in helping to standardise marking between different teachers, across different teaching groups and across different academic years.

Teaching Materials

The project produced thirteen sample intercultural teaching materials, each in seven languages, which can be used freely by teachers of Translation (www.pictllp.eu/en/teaching-material). Each sample 'teaching material' actually comprises the following –

1.   A **lesson or 'session' plan** specifying –

- the precise sub-dimension(s) of the curriculum framework that the materials in question are intended to develop

- the stage of the students training at which the material might be used (1 – early, 2 – middle, 3 – late)
- the practical or resource preparation to be done by the teacher before the class
- a statement of whether the activities require students to work individually, in pairs/groups etc.
- the approximate time the lesson should take if all of the activities are used unadapted
- the 'background' theory with which the teacher needs to be familiar prior to the lesson. This includes reading suggestions which may also be incorporated into a reading list for students
- a description, for the teacher's benefit, of what each activity in the lesson involves analogous to what is commonly found in the 'teacher's book' that in some traditions accompanies a student text book for learning a foreign language.

2.   Actual **worksheets** or suggestions where to find them -

- activity worksheets to be given to students for use in class
- where appropriate, recommendations on the kinds of easily available text for translation the teacher would need to give to students in class

The sets of materials are available on the project website downloadable as Microsoft word documents as well as PDFs without any form of copyright restriction. It was mentioned in an earlier section that flexibility of all outputs was an underlying principle of the project. Microsoft word documents are easy to modify and allow materials to be rapidly adapted to context. Equally, in a number of cases, texts for translation have been recommended rather than provided (for example, the teacher will need to choose an appropriate recipe or tourist brochure). This is to allow the choice of text to be made relevant to context which includes the choice of source and target language – the student activities will, however, still be completely usable whatever text of the recommended type is chosen and whatever the source and target languages are. It is also intended that the suggested time for the sequence of activities can to an extent be adapted to what is usual in the institutional context in question by the omission/extension of some of the student activities. Likewise, a limited amount of work would be required to convert the sequence of activities into something more student-centred or teacher-centred.

To make all of this a little more concrete an example taken directly from the PICT website is included below about which I will make a few explanatory comments. The example taken is entitled 'Realia in Travel Brochures' (www.pictllp.eu/download/en/teaching-material/9_PICT-teaching_Realia-in-travel-brochures.pdf). The lesson/session plan for this starts, as can be seen below, by specifying the sub-dimension which the session and materials are intended to teach/develop, although the sub-dimension is there termed 'learning outcome'. In this case the focus is once again sub-dimension 2.3 within the textual dimension 'Recognition of problems of non-equivalence and applying strategies to address them'. It has though been made slightly more specific to context within the lesson plan by specifying that the focus will be on cases where 'culturally specific items' generate the linguistic non-equivalence which constitutes the intercultural challenge for the translator. The full lesson plan and worksheets, as they appear on the PICT website, are included below -

Session Plan: Realia in travel brochures

Learning outcomes
Textual: 3 (recognition of culture-specific items of one's own culture and knowledge of strategies to deal with them in translation)

Stage: I

Preparation needed
Travel brochure(s) in students' mother tongue of their hometown or other area in their own country. Tourism-oriented web pages can be used as well; in that case, sufficient amount of PCs is necessary.

Groups
Pairs or groups of three.

Time (total suggested time)
1.5 hours

Background for lecturer (bibliography, anticipated difficulties)

11

Central concept: realia

The term realia is Latin for 'real things' and in translation studies, is used to refer to concepts which are found in a given source culture but not in a given target culture (Leppihalme 2011:126). This is due to the fact that cultures construct reality in different ways. According to Leppihalme (2001: 139), "lexical elements (words or phrases) that refer to the real world 'outside language' ". Leppihalme, however, also points out that the distinction between extra- and intralinguistic is somewhat artificial, for when we deal with words, we necessarily also deal with language, even if the words themselves refer to the world outside" (Leppihalme 2001: 139).

According to Florin (1993: 123), realia are words and combinations of words denoting objects and concepts characteristic of the way of life, the culture, the social and historical development of one nation and alien to another. Since they express local and/or historical color they have no exact equivalents in other languages.

Parallel terms: culture-bound problems, culture-specific items, extralinguistic cultural references or culture-specific references.

Classification of realia provided by Nedergaard-Larsen (1993)
Extralinguistic culture-bound problem types
Geography etc
geography
meteorology
biology

        mountains, rivers
        weather, climate
        flora, fauna
cultural geography
        regions, towns
        roads, streets etc
History
        buildings: monuments, castles etc
        events: wars, revolutions, flag days
        people: well-known historical persons
Society
        industrial level: trade and industry,energy supply etc
        social organization: defence, judicial system,police, prisons, local and central authorities
        politics:state management, ministries,electoral system, political parties, politicians, political organisations
        social conditions: groups, subcultures,living conditions, problems,ways of life, customs,housing, transport, food, meals, clothing, articles for everyday use,family relations
Culture
        religion:churches, rituals, morals, ministers, bishops,religious holidays, saints
        education: schools, colleges, universities, lines of education, exams
        media: TV, radio, newspapers, magazines
        culture: leisure activities, museums, works of art, literature, authors, theatres, cinemas, actors, musicians, idols, restaurants, hotels, nightclubs, cafés, sports, athletes

Potential translation strategies for realia (Leppihalme 2001); examples from English into Finnish.

• Direct transfer: pub - *pubi*
•Calque: ginger beer - *inkivääriolut* (ginger 'inkivääri', beer 'olut')
•Cultural adaptation: Hyde Park Corner - *Esplanadinkulma* (Esplanadi is a park in Helsinki, corner, 'kulma')
•Superordinate term: Spotted dick - *jälkiruoka*, 'a dessert'
•Explicitation: the Blitz - *Lontoon pommitukset*, 'the bombing of London'
•Addition: translator's note, glossary, preface, etc.
•Omission: realia left out completely

These seven strategies for realia do not cover all the possible ways of dealing with realia in translation, but "offer quite comprehensive coverage". Leppihalme remarks that a combination of strategies is also possible. For example, direct transfer or a calque may be complemented by addition (2001: 145).
For more detailed accounts, see e.g.:

Florin, Sider 1993. Realia in translation. In: Zlateva, Palma (ed.) *Translation as Social Action***. Russian and Bulgarian Perspectives. London: Routledge, , 122–128.**

Leppihalme, Ritva 2001: Translation strategies for realia. In Kukkonen, P. & Hartama-Heinonen, R. (eds.) *Mission, Vision, Strategies, and Values: A Celebration of Translator Training and Translation Studies in Kouvola.***. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, p. 139–148.**

Leppihalme, Ritva 2011: Realia. In: Yves Gambier & Luc van Doorslaer (eds): *Handbook of Translation Studies.* **John Benjamins: Amsterdam. ss. 126–130.**

Nedergaard-Larsen, Birgit 1993. Cultural factors in subtitling. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology 2***, 207–241.**

Activities

1. Lead-in: 15 minutes

Students form 'marketing teams' and are asked to brainstorm and write down ten things that make their country/hometown sound special (see the student worksheet, task 1). Alternatively, students can be asked to list the items they would miss most if they were to leave their hometown/country for a long period of time. Once the lists are compiled, they are written on the blackboard or smartboard for everyone to see.

2. Discussion on the concepts of realia and culture-specific item, teacher-led, 15 minutes

The teacher introduces the concept as a possible instance of non-equivalence in translation and provides a few definitions for them. Examples of realia are sought out among the items listed on the blackboard. At this point, students are encouraged to consider these items from a certain target culture's point of view (see the student worksheet, task 2).

3. Analysing the brochure, time 30 minutes

Students are given a brochure for analysis. In small groups, students are asked to read it and pinpoint all instances of realia in them. This is done for the purpose of translating the text into a foreign language; thus, to be able to see whether an item is "culture-specific" or not, it must be reflected on the target culture in question. Students are also asked to ponder on the possible ways to translate those items into the target language(s, if there are several first foreign languages in the group). Tthe student worksheet, task 3.)

4. Discussion plus introduction of strategies, time 30 minutes

Group discussion on items found in the text and proposed ways of translating them. In the end, introduction of e.g. Leppihalme's translation strategies for realia. (The strategies can be introduced at an earlier point as well; however, this task is designed to encourage students' creative thinking and therefore, no ready-made categories are given beforehand.)

Adaptations for an integrated approach This exercise can be easily be integrated in a practical course of translation; after exercises 1-4, students are asked to translate the brochure (the same or another one) as homework.

STUDENT WORKSHEET: Realia in travel brochures

1. You are a member of a marketing team of your home region (town/country), planning to participate in an international tourism fair. You are at the initial stage of designing promotional material for the fair; to get you started, you are asked to brainstorm in a group and come up with TEN things that might allure tourists to your home region. Write the down in the box below.

2. Take a look at the items in your list and consider them from the translation point of view. Does any of the items pose of problem for translation into your first foreign language(s, if there's variation in the group)? You may make notes in the box below.

3. Now analyse the brochure you are given. What kind of instances of realia can you find in it? How would you translate them into your first foreign language(s)?

End of PICT sample material 'Realia in Travel Brochures'

Adaptation of these materials in a range of directions, whilst still focusing on the key sub-dimension of the recognition of non-equivalence and the development of strategies for dealing with it, is not difficult to carry out whilst maintaining the same theoretical framework. The version above is at the student-centred end of the spectrum, but a more teacher-centred presentation of Leppihalme's (or another theorist's) strategies for dealing with non-equivalence could be used as a first teaching phase whilst still concluding with setting a translation task full of challenges created by references to realia. The key point pedagogically about this session, from the point of view of the project, is, however, that it devotes time *explicitly* to the intercultural challenges of translation rather than picking up examples of intercultural challenges as they occur by chance in a range of texts which are being translated with a focus on other important skills which a translator needs to develop. In this session the focus is *exclusively* on intercultural challenges and translator skills.

Assessment materials

As we have just seen, the project produced samples of teaching materials to aid in the teaching of intercultural skills to Translation students, materials corresponding carefully to the areas of intercultural skill (sub-dimensions) identified in the curriculum framework. At the same time, the project also produced eight 'assessment' tasks designed to make it possible to assess the achievement of Translation students' intercultural abilities in these same areas (www.pictllp.eu/en/assessment-material). Each task could then be used, together with the relevant descriptors which form a part of the curriculum framework, to assign a student an approximate mark in relation to one or more of its 12 sub-dimensions.

In line with the teaching materials, each 'assessment material' comprises, in addition to an instruction sheet or text to be handed out to students, the following 'guidance notes for teachers' specifying –

- The sub-dimension(s) the task is meant to assess
- The stage of the students training at which the material might be used. It is also specified whether the assessment is 'formative' or 'summative' – that is, whether its main purpose is to provide students during a specific course with feedback on their progress highlighting where they need to improve or instead to assign them a mark for formal purposes at the end of the course.

- Whether the assessment task involves students working on their own or in a group

- The time students have

- The length of whatever they are expected to write

- What students are allowed to access (e.g. online or paper/book resources)

As with the teaching materials all assessment tasks are freely available on the project website and are downloadable as Microsoft word documents or PDF files. Once again, flexibility was viewed as paramount. In some cases types of texts for use as part of assessment tasks were recommended rather than provided so that the tasks would be viable whatever the source or target language. Equally where texts are supplied they could easily be replaced by something more suitable to context whilst maintaining the instructions as to what students are required to do with that text. The task and the time allowed could also be adapted to fit institutional norms and adaptation towards an exam-based version of the task or away from it could usually be made to fit with context.

As in the previous section I will try to clarify this by including below an example from the project website entitled 'Assessment Task – recipe' which involves translating part of a recipe from English into another language whilst paying particular attention to the intercultural challenges it poses and providing two forms of analytical commentary upon it (www.pictllp.eu/download/en/assessment-material/7_PICT-assessment_task-recipe.pdf). The guidance notes for teachers start by specifying the sub-dimensions the task allows to be assessed which are all within the textual dimension and one of which we encountered in the previous section 'Recognition of problems of non-equivalence and applying strategies to address them'. The full guidance notes for this assessment task plus the sheet to be given out to students follow -

Main competences assessed
textual 1, 2 and 3

Type
Formative (Assessment during the course, stages I and II) **x**
Summative (Assessment at the end of the course, stage III)

Student working format
Individual **x**
Pairs
Groups
Other (describe)

Task description
Translation with a commentary/text analysis for translation

Time
24 hours

Length (break down by task)
translation of a 130-word text chunk, translation commentary of appr. 250 words,
comparative analysis of specific features, appr. 300 words

Other constraints
Access to library (with cookbooks)

Assignment Task   The text below is a recipe from the book *English Food* (Penguin/Jane
Grigson 1992). Since British cooking has recently become a trend in your home country, the
book gets translated into your language, and you have been commissioned to do it. (Before
you start, browse the Internet for more information of the original work to get an idea of the
audience it is targeted at.)

1. Read the introductory part of the recipe (the bit before the list of ingredients). The
    paragraph is clearly targeted at a British reader. How would you modify the content
    for a reader in your country? Please translate the paragraph into your language. In
    addition, justify the modifications you choose to make due to cultural reasons in a
    short commentary (appr. 250 words).
2. Have a look at similar recipes in cookbooks written in your language (i.e. recipes of
    meat dishes with a target audience that is comparable to the one of the source text).
    Analyse and compare the following features of this recipe and the ones in your
    language: overall style, structure, and the level of precision, i.e. how detailed the
    instructions are. On the basis of your analysis, is there a need for modification *due to
    cultural reasons* with regard to these three aspects? Justify your answer with
    examples.
3. Cooking terminology is also a culture-specific issue. Identify at least five cooking
    terms or phrases in the recipe and translate them into your language. Ignore the
    introductory text and focus on the ingredients and cooking instructions.

BRAISED BEEF AND CARROTS

A GOOD VERSION OF BRAISED BEEF AND CARROTS that I had from a young Irish friend, Carmel O'Connell, who used to work with that splendid chef, Colin White. She recommended using brisket – I bought a piece of well-hung Aberdeen-Angus – but topside could be substituted, or that muscle that runs down the shoulder blade, sometimes called salmon or feather cut, if you can persuade your butcher to cut it for you. English butchers are loath to do this, preferring to cut across several muscles rather than removing and trimming one nicely shaped piece of meat, but people living in Scotland, or who are lucky enough to have a butcher who understands French cuts, may be able to manage it. If more convenient, the dish can be cooked in a low oven.

 For 6-8

2-2 ½ kilos (4-5 lb) piece rolled brisket
Lard
6-8 fine large carrots, peeled
Up to one litre (1 ¾ pts) poultry stock, unsalted
Generous sprig of thyme
Salt, pepper, chopped parsley

CHOOSE a flameproof pot that holds the meat closely. Brown the beef in a little lard and put it into the pot. Slice carrots thinly, in the processor or on a mandolin. Arrange a quarter of them around the beef. Pour in stock to come 5-7 cm (2-3") up the pot and tuck in the thyme. Bring to the boil and cover. The lid need not fit very tightly, as a certain amount of evaporation is desirable.

Keep the pot at a gentle bubble, checking it every half hour, adding the rest of the carrots in three batches and topping up the liquid level with more stock. After 2 hours it should be cooked, but be prepared to give it a further half hour. The dish will come to no harm if it has to be kept warm for a while, so allow plenty of time.

Transfer the beef to a hot serving dish, and surround with the drained carrots which will be extremely succulent. Season them, sprinkle with parsley and keep warm. Strain liquid into a shallow pan and boil down to concentrate the flavour. Season, pour a little over the beef and carrots, and the rest into a hot sauceboat. Boiled potatoes go well with this dish.

NOTE: The original recipe suggests cooking the dish one day and reheating it the next for an even better flavour. If you do this, chill the pot fast in ice cubes and water, refrigerate overnight and reheat thoroughly.

As with the teaching materials, adaptation whilst still focusing on the assessment of the same sub-dimensions, is not difficult to carry out. Most aspects of the task could, for example, be done under examination conditions although access to comparable recipes in students' first

language would need through some medium to be provided. The word guidelines are also easy to amend and the forms of comparative analysis and commentary justifying translation choices can be brought into line with local theoretical perceptions and institutional practices. It would also be possible to assess these sub-dimensions of intercultural competence at the same time as a whole range of other translation competences less intercultural in nature if students were asked to translate the whole text. A key principle of the project was, however, the belief that if the task is to be modified in this kind of integrated way a number of marks would still need to be awarded *specifically for intercultural performance* and that students should be made fully aware that they will be assessed for these specific intercultural skills at the same time as being assessed for other kinds of translation skill.

Potential limitations of the project's outputs

Having introduced the three core contributions of the PICT project I want to comment on some of the potential limitations of each which could impact on anyone wishing to make use of them.

Curriculum framework

This, as we have seen, identifies and prioritises three broad areas in which students need to develop interculturally. It is, however, inevitable that some of the enormously varied staff involved in teaching Translation in Higher Education in very different contexts will not have completely the same perception of what the key intercultural areas for their students are. Some may find that having only one dimension devoted to theory, and to the link with Translation Studies, is 'theoretically light'. Others, more focused on teaching Translation in a way that is heavily focused on practical skills needed in text production, may find the textual dimension thin. Both may challenge the need for the third 'interpersonal dimension' seeing it as not specific to the role of the Translator or as going too far in the direction of 'professional training'. Others, at the practical and professional end of the spectrum, may question how far students tend to be interested in theory. All of these concerns have already been expressed in one country or another about PICT.

There is no magic answer to these potential limits, only perhaps the following weaker type of response. It has been repeated throughout this article that it was always understood within the project team that there is huge variety in perception and practice in relation to the teaching of

21

Translation generally and to its intercultural element in particular. As a result, all of its key outputs were designed to be used flexibly and to be adapted to context. This could involve colleagues locally in selecting only those outputs or parts of them that work in their context. Someone, then, teaching on a programme at the theoretical end of the spectrum might simply omit the third interpersonal dimension of the curriculum framework judging it perhaps as an area to be developed once a Translator is working. More generally, any sub-dimension judged to be low priority can simply be omitted. The framework can also, of course, be refined or supplemented. Staff might, for example, feel that a key area of theory is missing in the PICT curriculum framework and add an extra sub-dimension within the theory to fill the gap. Equally, they might, as was discussed earlier under 'assessment', feel that four levels of achievement, rather than the three of the project, need to have descriptors provided for them, given the way their grading system works – the descriptors could then be adapted accordingly. Feedback on all of these aspects of the project has already suggested that such modifications are often neither time-consuming nor difficult to make.

But no less a limitation is the fact that the PICT curriculum framework, like any pedagogical document, carries its own inevitable forms of subjectivity. That subjectivity, naturally, is the product of a range of factors. One of those was the nature of the survey, the results of which were one element which fed into the shaping of the outputs of the project. Like any survey, the PICT survey of staff and students on Translation programmes concerning current and future priorities and practice in the intercultural realm had limits imposed by resources. As a result the survey only took place in seven EU countries and within a limited number of universities providing translator training within some of those countries, so representativity clearly had its limits even if, as described earlier, an attempt was made in creating the project team to incorporate diversity. Where the curriculum framework is concerned, the survey did ask staff and students to try to identify the areas of intercultural competence they felt to be most relevant to translator training and this fed into the creation of the curriculum framework. Yet such methodology itself has its limits. It can be particularly hard for students, with often very limited experience of professional practice as a translator, to identify what intercultural skills they would need when practising – such awareness only grows over time, often through intercultural education and professional or personal experience. This limited the impact the information generated by the survey was able to have on the formulation of the curriculum framework and placed more emphasis on the project team itself, on *their* perceptions of the intercultural dimension of translation and on the theorists and research to whom they were

inclined to turn – and this, naturally and unavoidably, created another layer of subjectivity. And, to cite just one more of the inevitable layers of subjectivity potentially affecting any international project, it was a simple reality that, even though the project's outputs were ultimately made available in seven languages, English was, as so often, the working language and all outputs were translated from English language base texts, with all the forms of bias this risks carrying.

None of these forms of subjectivity rob the project of its value. But they do mean that some institutions will have to do more by way of selection or modification of the PICT outputs than others. One example of this subjectivity and its consequences might be as follows. It has already been fed back, quite justifiably, that the PICT curriculum framework puts the emphasis heavily on skills at the expense of *knowledge*, making the framework less suitable to those who prioritise in their teaching up-to-date knowledge of the source and target cultures. If this is perceived to be the case then clearly the dimensions and sub-dimensions would need some local reworking although this is not necessarily very difficult to do – a new dimension could in fact be added entitled 'knowledge of source and target cultures' or something similar and tailored sub-dimensions could be provided.

A final potential limit to the curriculum framework is common to frameworks of this kind. It consists in the fact that resources have not permitted any systematic empirical confirmation of the PICT framework's accuracy – that is to say that the possession of a high degree of competence in relation to the identified intercultural sub-dimensions has not been fully shown to have an impact on translation quality within relevant professional contexts. It is not that this is methodologically difficult to do. But to look systematically at how far translators' professional performance is enhanced by possession of the intercultural competences identified in the curriculum framework would be resource intensive. And, as is very common with curriculum frameworks, such an investigation has not taken place. Once again, this does not deprive the framework of value – far from it – but it does constitute a potential limit to its accuracy.

Teaching materials

23

What potential limitations are there, then, to the PICT teaching materials? The underlying principle of the need for flexibility in their use has already been strongly emphasised – the likely need for contextual modification was always anticipated. The materials produced tend, as has already been mentioned, to be student-centred and activity or text-based rather than to be purely focused on theory delivered in a lecture format with less space for the practical application of that theory. This did reflect the survey findings and doubtless to some degree the overall orientation of the project team, two factors which, as with the curriculum framework, reflect the inevitable subjectivity of any project. And, here again, more work in terms of modification may be needed to be carried out by colleagues working in environments where this student-centred orientation goes against the prevailing pedagogical practice. A further limitation in relation to the teaching materials, which does not apply to the curriculum framework, is that they are conceived of as *sample* materials only – that is to say they are not conceived of as sufficing to teach fully all of the sub-dimensions of the curriculum framework. They are intended to give only an indication of what kind of materials might be used to do this.

Assessment materials

The assessment materials produced by the project suffer from parallel limitations. If the orientation of the teaching materials tends towards the student-centred, the orientation of the assessment materials is towards assessment via coursework, out of class tasks or portfolio-production, rather than assessment via tests or exams. The orientation is also towards assessing intercultural skills separately rather than towards assessing intercultural skills as just *one* assessed aspect amongst others when a student produces a translated text. Once again, those working at a greater distance from these pedagogical approaches will need to do more to modify the assessment materials than those working closer to them. And, as with the teaching materials, the assessment materials are samples only and would not suffice to allow evaluation of a student's level of skill in relation to all of the sub-dimensions in the curriculum framework. A final limitation of the assessment materials perhaps worth mentioning is the fact that whilst all of them were piloted and amended in the light of the piloting process, it proved much harder, for purely practical and logistical reasons, to carry out extensive piloting than with the teaching materials. As a result minor problems may occur in the use of the assessment materials which are less likely to occur with the teaching materials.

The project never had the incoherent ambition to produce a course in intercultural competence for translation students with universal applicability. As its title suggests, the project is concerned to contribute to *promoting* the development of intercultural skills in translators – with selective contextualised use, modification to suit local needs and supplementation or extension in line with institutional perceptions and practice, there is every reason to believe it can do this.

Conclusion

In this article I have tried to provide an introduction to the contributions an EU project has attempted to make to improving the teaching of intercultural skills to students of Translation pointing out, at the same time, some of the unavoidable limits these pedagogical contributions have and the consequent need to use them flexibly. I have also tried to explain the broad lines of the methodology used in producing those contributions, emphasising in particular the underlying pedagogical theory, principles and traditions of practice, within which the pedagogical outputs of the project are located.

As mentioned in the introduction, there are a number of signs within Higher Education in many countries that a significant number of researchers within Translation Studies and teachers of Translation have a growing sense of the importance of intercultural facets of translation processes and of the consequent need to make intercultural skills one explicit aspect of translator education and training. Where then does the main focus of research need in the near future need to be? Inevitably, opinions on this will differ. In my view, however, the most important area of research will not be directly pedagogical. I say this because, whilst translator education naturally has its pedagogical specificities, improvements in the pedagogy in this area will, I believe, come from the continued application of *general* pedagogical principles already established to the particular context of teaching intercultural skills to translation students. The PICT project in fact did no more than this. The pedagogical principles underlying the construction of the curriculum framework, plus the teaching and assessment materials, are common amongst many existing communities of educational and professional practice and were simply borrowed from language teaching and applied to the teaching of intercultural skills to translation students.

If the most pressing need is not then currently for pedagogical research in this area where should research in the short and mid-term be focusing? In my view everything turns around the refinement of the curriculum framework for whilst this is, in the context of the PICT

25

project, a central pedagogical tool it is *also* an extremely condensed summary of potential research findings – it is bound to have omissions in places and to lack detail or refinement in others. It attempts to capture very succinctly the range of ways in which cultures, and the ability of a translator to manage their relationship to those cultures, can affect all aspects of the professional performance of a translator. In reality, however, the range of ways in which this can happen, many of them very subtle and requiring extremely careful analysis, is only gradually being better understood. That research is likely to go hand-in-hand with more general research on intercultural competence but also with specific debates within Translation Studies of which attempts to articulate in what translation quality consists are just one example (cf. House, 2014, 2015). Such research needs however to move beyond *a priori* attempts to articulate in what intercultural competence in a particular professional domain consists. It needs also to have an empirical element in which the actual impact on translator performance, including translation quality, is ascertained so that articulated frameworks of intercultural competence of the kind which the PICT curriculum framework embodies actually have some solid confirmation.

The limits to such formal empirical confirmation take nothing away, however, from the more fragmentary evidence which underlies the increasingly widely-shared sense that intercultural skills are extremely important within the education of translators. It is as a contribution both to practice and debate within this area that both the PICT project and this article are conceived.

References

26

1. Baker, Mona (2011) *In Other Words: a Coursebook in Translation* Routledge, Abingdon (second edition)

2. Bassnett, Susan (2014) *Translation Studies* Routledge, Abingdon (fourth edition)

3. House, Juliane (2014) *Translation Quality Assessment – Past and Present* Routledge, Abingdon

4. House, Juliane (2015) *Translation as Communication across Languages and Cultures*, Routledge, Abingdon

5. Katan, David (2004) *Translating Cultures* St.Jerome publishing, Manchester

6. Leppihalme, Ritva (1997) *Culture Bumps* Multilingual Matters, Clevedon

7. Yarosh, Maria (2015) Translator Intercultural Competence: A model, learning objectives and level indicators. In: Cui, Ying and Zhao, Wei (eds.) *Handbook of Research on Teaching Methods in Language Translation and Interpretation* IGI Global, Hershey