Current Practices in Translation and L2 Learning in Higher Education: Lessons Learned

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This paper examines current practices that embrace the union between foreign language (L2) teaching and translation in higher education (HE). The rejection of monolingualism and prescriptive principles in favour of bi-, multi-, or plurilingualism; a diversified interdisciplinarity; new sociocultural realities characterised by greater international mobility; different needs and challenges in foreign language teaching; and an openness of translation studies, are only some of the reasons why the link between both areas remains pertinent. However, while the advocacy of integrating the use of translation in language teaching seems to be gaining steady ground in the last decade, specific ways of introducing translation into the L2 curriculum are not always clear. This paper discusses issues related to the design and implementation of a module that would tackle L2 learning while serving as an exploratory course on translation within a degree in languages in HE. The discussion aims to add to the debate on practical issues by explaining the rationale of the module, as well as any difficulties prior to designing the module, and those encountered in the implementation phase.

ECOLOGY: EMBRACING THE UNION BETWEEN L2 TEACHING AND TRANSLATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

An increasingly consolidated interest in the pedagogical value(s) of translation in L2 teaching has emerged from advances in research and practice including L2 research, teacher training, and translation studies. In this article I will discuss the latest trends in the field of translation and L2 teaching that inform a practical proposal where I develop the connection between L2, translation, and mediation. To pursue this, I will first outline the theoretical and educational frameworks that underpin the bond between them, and I will then present a case study where L2 teaching and translation are applied in a higher education (HE) context. This research, theoretical and practical in nature, hopes to illustrate how theory may feed into practice, while contributing to advances in the pedagogical value of translation in L2 education and expanding the body of case studies—as suggested by Pintado Gutiérrez (2018a, 2020).

A strong case raised in L2 teaching is the effort to align interests between monolingual norms and multilingual realities, explored by Levine (2011); its aim is to provide a framework, which outlines the multiple codes operating in the L2 classroom, both at a conceptual and a curricular level (p. 3). It also serves as a reflection tool focusing on the choice of code(s) in the classroom in order to provide students with affordances in language learning. Levine advocates an approach which treats "the language classroom as an authentic social environment in its own right" (2011, p. 4); a site of "complex, dynamic human activity" (p. 8), which is also multilingual (see Cook, 1999, 2001). This is in stark contrast to the traditional conceptualisation of the language classroom with its linear acquisition of linguistic and sociocultural items. Consequently, the complexity of language learning and teaching space has

been described as ever-evolving ecology (Kramsch, 2002; van Lier, 2004), leading to significant advances in understanding L2 learning. New advances in cognitive approaches to L2 acquisition, which site the multi- and plurilingual classroom, are in effect advantageous to knowing more about language learning. Levine's proposal to develop a multilingual approach to code-choice in the classroom is based on key theoretical principles and models centred in Vygotskyan sociocultural theory, ecological approaches to L2 learning, and intercultural communicative competence. Thus, the use of different codes and, therefore, code-choice in the L2 classroom is one of the tenets of the framework outlined in this article for teachers and learners to negotiate the use of L1, L2 (van Lier, 1996, p. 2) or additional languages (AL).

A second approach that is key to ensuring sound foundations for this framework is that of Laviosa (2014) on translation and language education, whose perspective is rooted in the ecological approach to language education (sociocultural theory, ecology, and semiotics) as well as the translation approaches of Tymoczko (2007). In her proposal, Laviosa makes a case for a convergence between the ecological approach to L2 learning developed by Kramsch (2002), van Lier (2004, 2010) and Levine (2011), and Tymoczko's holistic approach to translating culture. The two approaches complement each other: "Tymoczko's approach offers a notion of translation as representation, transmission and transculturation that complements Kramsch's view of translation as a rethinking of one context in terms of another and as a process that unearths the cultural differences in the relationship between language and thought" (2014, p. 88). This combination is one that helps to rethink the role of translation in the L2 curriculum and harmonises language and translation education as mutually enriching—as demonstrated in the empirical evidence that Laviosa provides on transcultural practice (2014, p. 107-140). A third ecological approach key to the framework outlined in this article is that of González-Davies, who advocates for an integrated plurilingual approach (IPA) to language learning where she promotes the use of all languages in the classroom—including the L1 and heritage languages. Her chapter in *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Education* (2020) provides a detailed overview based on the notion of the so-called translation for other learning contexts (or TOLC), understood as "translation to acquire linguistic and intercultural mediation skills in fields other than translator training, and translator and interpreter training proper, that is, translation to acquire professional translator competence" (González-Davies, 2020, p. 434). The idea of using mediation skills to enhance plurilingual and intercultural competence helps to make a case for reconciling related disciplines, and for the use of L1/L2 related-practices in an informed way. This is perfectly illustrated by Wilson and González-Davies (2017), where they spotlight how "the plurilingual paradigm continues to gain momentum and voices are increasingly heard in favour of the use of the students' first language (L1) in informed ways, through different manifestations, from translanguaging to pedagogically based code-switching and translation [PBCS][1]" (2017, p. 2). As two different plurilingual approaches, TOLC and PBCS become a valuable resource to the AL learner who can naturally resort to their language repertoire, and transfer proficiency between languages (based on Cummins' interdependence hypothesis (1984) and on the work of Cenoz and Gorter (2013) focusing on plurilingual competence in AL learning).

This development and adoption of ecological perspectives and practices could not have taken place without a profound shift in pedagogical principles, but also notable changes in the realities in which we operate such as globalisation and multilingualism, and a commitment from practitioners to create better teaching and learning experiences. Some recommended changes informed by ecological perspectives that validate the revision of the tie between translation and language education are the rejection of monolingualism and prescriptive principles in favour of bi-, multi-, or plurilingualism; the questioning of the model of the native speaker; a diversified

interdisciplinarity where fields relating to linguistics, psychology, and neuro-cognition feed into L2 pedagogy; new socio-cultural realities characterised by greater international mobility; and different needs and challenges in L2 teaching. It is with these ecological frameworks in mind, that I propose that rather than justify a connection between L2 and translation, we embrace this union—in this particular case within higher education (HE).

THEORETICAL AND EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORKS TO TRANSLATION IN L2 TEACHING

This section examines some of the most prominent theoretical and educational frameworks to integrating translation in L2 teaching. The discussion of theoretical approaches, frameworks or even educational policies on this matter will give a fuller picture of how and why translation and translation-related tasks have been or are being introduced in L2 teaching. As the reader may anticipate, the discussion that follows and that aims to reveal the potential of translation in L2 teaching draws attention to valuable resources for L2 teachers.

Fully operative conceptualisations of translation in L2 teaching, both theoretical, practical or a combination of both, have been developed over the last two decades. Scholars and practitioners in L2 research and in translation studies have advocated for solid frameworks to favour translation in L2 teaching under various approaches. For the purpose of this article, I will refer to some of the most prominent practical works that have marked a turning point in integrating translation in L2. Such is the case of González-Davies' *Multiple Voices in the Translation Classroom* (2004), where she addresses the most pressing challenge: language pedagogy and translation remained unconnected practices. This work filled a pedagogical void by offering a wide array of translation tasks that can be included in the L2 classroom and reimagined the learning context as a forum integrated by teachers and students, who scaffold together the acquisition of transferable translation skills. The volume, which is eminently practical, leads us through interactive activities, tasks and projects that cover translation and cultural studies, degrees of fidelity, linguistics skills, and encyclopaedic knowledge, among others.

Leonardi (2010) and Laviosa (2014), for their part, began the dialogue between translation and L2 learning by highlighting some of the commonalities they share discussing the pedagogical frameworks and a sampling of practical tasks. Leonardi (2010) aims at illustrating how translation may be used as a legitimate tool in L2 learning. She presents an approach grounded on L2 research, applied linguistics, and translation, and provides sample activities based on what she terms the "pedagogical translation framework" through pre-translation, translation, and post-translation tasks (2010, p. 87-118). Laviosa's contribution to the field in 2014, which has been explained earlier in this article, and highlighted as a key pillar, proposes "holistic pedagogic translation" as a translation-based approach to L2 education under the new light of an ecological perspective.

Mundos en palabras (2018), authored by Carreres, Noriega-Sánchez and Calduch proposes an informed use of translation in the Spanish (L2) classroom. This volume, based on the latest pedagogical trends in L2 and translation, "is predicated on a natural and positive exchange between translation studies and language pedagogy within the plurilingual paradigm in language teaching and learning" Pintado Gutiérrez (2018b, p. 323). The handbook, divided in different working units, contains a wide range of translation tasks that include relevant linguistic and cultural features for advanced L2 learners, and is predominantly practical, student-centred, and emphasizes the negotiating principles of the translation process.

While the sources mentioned above represent some of the most salient discussion and illustrative methodologies on translation and L2 learning, and at the risk of oversimplifying, there are three other publications that provide an extensive pool of resources with activities and tasks that include translation and L1/L2/AL use in the L2 classroom. These are Butzkamm and Caldwell's *The Bilingual reform* (2009); Deller and Rinvolucri's *Using the Mother Tongue* (2002); and Kerr's *Translation and Own-language Activities* (2014).

Additionally, the work of the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) of the Council of Europe over the last two decades is also worthy of mention; in particular, three publications that range from a cautious recognition of translation in L2 teaching to a greater recognition of the role of translation-related competencies, activities and strategies in different communicative contexts, mostly under the label of "mediation". These publications include: *The Common European Framework of References for Languages* (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001); *The Common European Framework of References for Languages Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2020); *Enriching 21st century language education: The CEFR Companion Volume, examples from practice* (Council of Europe, 2021). By providing a comprehensive basis to develop curriculum guidelines, designing teaching and learning materials, as well as recommending on the assessment of L2 proficiency, these frameworks intend to align best teaching practices. Furthermore, they have worked towards developing the notion of mediation as one that helps professionals to recognise the increasingly plurilingual and pluricultural nature of their settings. This is especially true in the languages classroom where there may be many other languages and cultures operating in the one space in addition to those of the L2 s/he is learning. Research has shown that a L2 learner "does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language (...) interrelate and interact" (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4), which means that learners have a repertoire as bi- or plurilingual agents. While mediation in the 2001 CEFR was presented as one of the four key communicative activities (along with production, reception and interaction) its scope remained rather limited and focused primarily on the notion of accessing meaning of written or spoken texts, along with the processing and production of texts (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 145-146). This conceptualisation of mediation was vague and underdeveloped especially when comparing it to the more developed concepts associated with translation and L2 research. Much greater value and scope has been afforded to mediation in the CEFR *Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2020), the latest update to the framework. The addendum defines the language learner more globally focusing not only on their linguistic and sociocultural repertoire but also their own agency in their learning, personal experience and development: that is, it establishes the language user as a social agent (see Piccardo, 2012). In an attempt to open an honest conversation—rather than a comparison—between the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) and the CEFR *Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2020), Pintado Gutiérrez determines that:

> The extended notion of "mediation" leads naturally to a much richer landscape, where language users and language learners embrace a holistic spectrum of language use, where a full network of interactive agents is revised. What had been a nearly exclusively linguistic focus on mediating activities in the 2001 CEFR [...] has gradually become multifaceted where notions generate a more comprehensive paradigm [...] (2019, p. 31).

Between the publication of the CEFR and its 2020 addendum, the Council of Europe issued an essential complement to existing European language policy instruments, and in particular

to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001): *The Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (FREPA) (Candelier et al.) in 2012. The authors explain that FREPA is based on pluralistic teaching approaches as a central element of the plurilingual and pluricultural education including: (1) the awakening to languages; (2) an intercomprehension between related languages; (3) integrated didactic approaches to different languages studied; and (4) an intercultural approach (2012, p. 6). The FREPA framework contains an exhaustive record of descriptors and resources that refer to competences related to notions of plurilingual and intercultural competence, as conceived by Coste, Moore, and Zarate (1997, p. 12). Plurilingual and pluricultural competence are therefore understood as "a competence encompassing the full range of the languages available to [the user]" rather than "a collection of distinct and separate competences to communicate depending on the languages [the user] knows" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 168). Candelier et al. claim that although plurilingualism and pluriculturalism are key issues in language education policy and the terms appear in many national curricula, they rarely do so with specific proposals outlining content for plurilingual education in official guidelines (2012, p. 251)—although the ECML has in fact a full repository for resources on plurilingual education.[2]

It is also important to note positions on translation and L2 learning beyond the European landscape. In their introduction to a special issue on current challenges and benefits of translation and L2 teaching and learning, Carreres, Noriega-Sánchez and Pintado Gutiérrez (2021, p. 3-4) consider the positions of institutions devoted to professional networking, development and research, including the Modern Language Association (MLA) in the United States, and policy making institutions in Australia. The MLA indicates that a fuller understanding across communities is in order. Language, understood as a quintessential element to human cognition, is central to acquiring deeper transcultural competence. This suggests the need to promote multilingualism among Higher Education students in the United States (Modern Language Association 2007, p. 9). In fact, one might say that both Canada and the USA lead some of the most state-of-the-art research on language L1/L2 use, AL learning, and translation as a result of the fluid realities that they face, under the framework of plurilingual pedagogies (see for instance Cummins, 2017; Galante et al., 2019; Galante et al., 2020; García & Li Wei, 2014; García, 2009). In Australia, translation was reinstated in the language curriculum in 2014. The reestablishment of translation involved a redefinition of the notion of translation as "a real-world activity of mediating the intercultural exchange of meaning in the context of linguistic and cultural diversity, and where it expands access to new worlds through language use and languaging" (Scarino, 2016, p. 482), which was considered also by Carreres, Noriega-Sánchez and Pintado Gutiérrez (2021, p. 3-4).

One field that has been particularly fertile in including engaging, innovative practices in L2 teaching and learning in the last two decades is that of audio-visual translation (AVT). Incalcaterra McLoughlin, Lertola, and Talaván Zanón (2020) present the wide variety of research on different AVT types and pedagogical angles through current research in the field, and how it provides an important mosaic of possibilities. Explorations ascribed to specific AVT modalities and other approaches include subtitling in L2 learning (Talaván Zanon 2006, 2010; Incalcaterra McLoughlin & Lertola, 2014), student interaction with audio description tasks in the L2 classroom (Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2013), or the promotion of plurilingual and pluricultural competence (Baños, Marzà and Torralba, 2021).

Another area which is gaining steady ground is that of translation as an inclusive tool, particularly in primary and post-primary education—although the theoretical frameworks are of wider importance. Some of the latest advances include those made by González-Davies

(2021) and Floros (2021). The first author, based on the premise that "an inclusive society starts in inclusive schools" (González-Davies, 2021, p. 7), explores the development of learners' plurilingual competence and plurilingual identities in highly complex schools, and how teachers can be empowered to promote such developments. Results reveal that this approach [IPA] supports social integration while recognising plurilingual identities. Floros (2021), on his part, explores the affordances of translanguaging as an approach to educating emergent bilinguals in mixed classrooms in schools. Translation is presented as a rich space where the use of translanguaging with emergent bilinguals fits particularly well.

The discussions, frameworks and policies included in this section, most of which combine theoretical discussions and praxis, encapsulate some of the key tenets for using translation or translation-related tasks in language teaching and learning, whether at national curriculum level or as a part of local practices. While much of the discussion in this section included theoretical and educational frameworks, that describe or indicate the principles of translation in L2, it is up to the professionals to enact the pedagogical approaches so that their students reach the expected outcomes. The marriage between theory and praxis, and an emphasis in tools that aim at helping the teachers to bring the latest research to the L2 classroom in a meaningful manner, is a much welcome and needed leading global trend.

TRANSLATION AND L2 TEACHING: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH FOR A CASE STUDY

While the previous sections serve as an introductory framework for this case study, the rest of the article will explore hands-on features of the study proper. This section of the paper addresses more specifically the creation and implementation of a first year module that combines translation and L2 language teaching at an Irish university. The discussion that follows aims to explore practical issues by explaining the curricular needs of the degree, the nature of the module, and the challenges encountered while designing the module due to its interdisciplinary nature. I will then explain the task design with reference to specific resources and particular examples, which will be followed by a brief analysis of the teachers' perceptions to give a better understanding of the issues related to teaching mediation skills and potential challenges to address in the future.

In showing the full process, from the needs analysis to the creation of the module and post-implementation reflections, I hope to provide an overview of the module intent, implementation, and impact that offers an integrated approach to translation in L2 teaching and learning.

Explanation of the Case Study: Module Creation

This particular case study is set against the backdrop of a programmatic review of an undergraduate degree in applied language and translation studies in a HE context. The module, designed for first year students, was taught for the first time in the Spring term of 2020 and draws on the latest theoretical and educational frameworks previously discussed. Students who participate in this module have a B1 level in French, German and/or Spanish. The course emerged as a direct response to both a curricular reassessment of the degree and in light of recent advances in the research on the value of translation in L2 pedagogy.

The revision of the curriculum was undertaken based on a framework of reference for translator training and translation competence in academic settings and in the language

industry, published by the European Masters in Translation Network (2017). In this project the Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) of the European Commission and various European universities collaborate with the aim of guaranteeing the provision of high quality trainee translators. Adopted from 2018 to 2024, the framework sees translation as "a process designed to meet an individual, societal or institutional need" (2017, p. 4) and outlines five areas of competence: language and culture; translation; technology; personal and interpersonal; and service provision. Although initially aimed at the competences that must be acquired by MA students of translation, the framework was used to explore which competences were covered in this undergraduate programme in order to detect which competencies were not being fully developed by students. This opportunity to review the degree was a very useful exercise not only from the point of view of analysing how students develop translation competencies in their undergraduate degree across all modules taught but also to revisit the students' first experiences with translation practice in Higher Education.

The new module included in the first year on translation practice addresses aspects pertaining to language, (trans-)cultural and translation competence. It is built upon the (socio)linguistic and the (trans-)cultural knowledge and skills that will pave the way towards acquiring translation competence (European Commission, 2017, p. 6). Following this line of thought, the integrated plurilingual approach (IPA) that González-Davies proposes (2018, 2020) provides affordances for language learners to make use of their plurilinguistic and pluricultural repertoire on the one hand, and to become mindful of what translating involves, on the other. Most first year students tend to relate the practice of translation to more traditional rote and memorisation practices associated with the grammar-translation methodologies and strategies prominent in secondary education.

The pedagogical approach that lies at the core of this module is based on the principle of integrating translation into L2 language learning to develop mediation competence. It builds on the idea of González-Davies' Translation for Other Learning Contexts (TOLC) understood as "a continuum that spans elementary language learning and advanced language services and, so, many of its features may also cover language learning and intercultural mediation as a key aspect of translator training" (2020, p. 434). In this particular context, learners will acquire linguistic and intercultural mediation skills through translation as exploratory exercises or a series of tasks. In follow-up courses, students will gain translation training proper, that is, translation to acquire professional translator competence.

Aims and Learning Outcomes

The module in question revolves around three interconnected items: L2 learning, translation, and communication skills. It aims to provide the learners with an opportunity to engage in how language and communication interrelate in a meaningful way. Simultaneously, the module also helps students to acquire a basis for general translation practice where learners explore the boundaries of communication through translation. Tasks in this module are designed to be open-ended whereby learners delve into key concepts such as equivalence, creativity, and language use in context through intra- and interlingual activities and projects. Also, the module is designed so that the learning is student-led and directed by student outcomes. This socio-constructivist approach is further diversified by placing greater value on their L1, L2, and AL repertoire as language users. The learning objectives (LOs) of this module are in line with the development of the learner's plurilingual and pluricultural competence, and develop student agency:

1. Analyse and describe nuances that affect meaning in L1 and L2.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of transferring meaning across L1 and L2.
3. Translate a variety of short texts into L1 and L2 using different resources.
4. Identify and provide solutions to translation difficulties in an adequate manner, and apply creative solutions, if necessary.
5. Reflect on theoretical and applied aspects on language, linguistics, and translation.
6. Demonstrate sustained engagement in projects based on collaborative translation through practice.

Indicative Content, Learning Activities, and Assessment

Students learn to construct meaning and establish correspondence(s) between texts in the source language and the target language in multiple directions—that is, from L1 to L2 and *vice versa*. Other AL are also introduced in if/when relevant, or to flag a particular aspect in specific tasks, for instance activities devoted to equivalence (this includes both languages that students are learning for the degree like Chinese, French, German or Japanese, and other languages like Portuguese or Italian).

Tasks range from exploratory activities to hands-on translation-related research projects and practices. They revolve around different contents that can be classified in five main strands: (1) raising L1/L2/AL awareness and reflecting activities; (2) understanding (the general concept of) translation; (3) delving further into the principles of translation; (4) researching translation resources; and finally (5) translation practice. The contents addressed are progressive—for example, translation practice will follow understanding what translation entails, exploring key aspects of translation and the translating process, and looking at translation resources. Seminars do not reproduce the once archetypical master class model "which often result[ed] in the following sequence: the students translate a text at home, they present their translation in the classroom, some other student might suggest another possibility of translation, the teacher analyses the possibilities, rationalizes why they are right or wrong and usually finishes by showing the whole class his/her own translation which the students inevitably take as *the ideal* translation" (Pintado Gutiérrez, 2012, p. 182). Seminars become, by contrast, an open space for discussion and learning—further analysis on this will follow in the section titled "Exploratory discussion of the case study".

Examples of the contents included and the tasks developed will give a better idea of the module and how it introduces students of Spanish to translation practice. The examples below revolve around the five strands explained above. Selected readings to reflect on language and translation matters, and translation-related tasks (from problem solving activities to translation proper) are an integral part of the tasks and are included gradually.

1. Raising awareness and reflection tasks:

The start of the module invited students to think of themselves as multilingual speakers, and reflect on how they perceive the languages they speak, and how these languages relate to their lives. The teacher invites them to work on a language portrait where learners draw a body silhouette and colour or write the languages they use, including other language varieties, attaching them to the areas of the body that they relate such languages with—heart, head, hands, etc. The aim of this exercise is that learners think of themselves as multilingual subjects, as well as to question the relationship they have with each of the languages they use or are learning. While this is only an appetizer to the module, it invites learners to think of and map their linguistic and sociocultural repertoire. That is, they learn to reflect on the meaning of

their L1, L2, heritage language, home language and they also learn to position themselves as multilingual subjects—fuller research on language portraits can be found in Busch (2012), Kusters and De Meulder (2019), or Krumm and Jenkins (2001). This exercise with language portraits could be naturally followed by an exercise based on Kramsch's 2003 study where FL learners describe their own experience(s) learning languages through metaphors (for a detailed discussion of this interesting practice see Kramsch 2003; 2009, p. 57-66). Even though the exercise with the metaphors was not included due to the exploratory nature of the module, it will be incorporated in future sessions due to the way in which it could contribute to enhancing the value of students as L1/L2/AL users and learners.

Discussion between students on the language portrait gave rise to a reflection on the concept of "communication": what it is, what it implies, and how it works (or not) across languages and cultures, based on their own beliefs, perceptions, and personal experiences. Examples of the readings that were used to guide students to reflect on issues around communication and language use/users include contexts of "receptive multilingualism" or how communication without words works. Both articles discuss how communication crosses boundaries and our perceptions (as humans) on these matters. This journey on communication next brought learners to watch a clip of the sitcom *Friends* in English followed by the same clip in Spanish, where they looked at the effect of humour in translation, the different voices (actors acting *versus* actors dubbing) and voice sync issues, analysing how humour may (or may not) survive in translation.

Reflecting activities included Irish journal articles that question myths around bilingualism and gender and the language learner—in relation, for instance, to bilingual babies and whether gender determines how easy or challenging language learning is. The fact that the articles were published in local journals also meant that students could draw parallels between the topics and their own reality.

Table 1.
Sample of Practices Strand 1.

Strand 1. Raising awareness and reflecting Tasks	
Tasks	*Examples*
Language Portrait	https://bit.ly/3xPmBnm
Reflective Readings:	
• Receptive multilingualism	https://bit.ly/39A2fp6
• Communication without words	https://bit.ly/2I1DSW9
• Bilingualism	https://bit.ly/36vuPpW https://bit.ly/39yUH64
Humour in translation:	
• English	https://bit.ly/2VcbsyO
• Spanish	https://bit.ly/37uNjpx

2. Understanding concepts relating to translation:

This series of activities sought to engage students with a deeper understanding of the concept of "translation", and the tasks included are a little tour that brought them from small research exercises on the history of translation to specific translation theories.

The introduction to the origins of translation was delivered through specific examples such as that of the Rosetta Stone, which is then contrasted with some of the latest intuitive tools based on Artificial Intelligence. Students were then presented with key readings, that alternated between scholarly and non-fictional works on translation such as selected chapters from David Bello's *Is that a Fish in Your Ear? Translation and the Meaning of Everything* (2011) and Juliane House's *Translation as Communication across Languages and Cultures* (2015). They both played an important role as key resources that guided students and helped them to organise their thoughts. Jakobson's (1959) classification of translation (intralingual, interlingual, and intersemiotic, also proposed in the 2018 volume by Carreres et al.) led students to delve in greater depth into the nuance of translation, the importance of decoding information adequately in order to re-code (that is, to translate), and the communicative implications both in the L1 and in the L2. Colourful examples were given to stimulate debate and reflection on the basis that translation implies understanding, interpreting and communicating (Carreres et al., 2018, p. 17). For instance, students were presented with a picture of professional contexts where they had to interpret adequately who was who: who was the doctor or the nurse, depending on the colour of the scrubs they were wearing, where they stood, or even based on our own preconceptions of gender, and the spatial disposition in our own cultures (for research on the cultureme model as an aid in L2 teaching, see Kocbek (2014)).

Table 2.
Sample of Practices Strand 2.

Strand 2. Understanding concepts relating to translation	
Tasks	*Examples*
Translation artefacts:	
• Origins of translation: The Rosetta Stone	https://bit.ly/3op1YJO
• IT	https://bit.ly/2L9hNpR
Readings:	
• Scholarly work	*Translation as Communication across Languages and Cultures* (House, 2015)
• Non-fictional work	*Is that a fish in your ear? Translation and the meaning of everything* (Bello, 2011)
Intersemiotic translation	https://bit.ly/39EtoHC

3. Tasks on equivalence and translation:

A third set of activities revolved around equivalence as a central pillar to translation, and one around which students tend to demystify by gaining a better understanding of the complexities and challenges that retaining or establishing equivalence entail. Students were first invited to reflect on equivalence with ludic exercises, like a clip of Tarantino's film *Pulp Fiction* (1994) where two of the main characters, Vincent Vega and Jules Winnfield, discuss some of the

differences between life in the United States and Europe—in particular the name, measures and the nature of food in McDonald's:

> [Vincent] …But you know what the funniest thing about Europe is?
> [Jules] What?
> [Vincent] It's the little differences. A lotta the same shit we got here, they got there, but there they're a little different.
> [Jules] Example?
> [Vincent] Alright, when you .... into a movie theatre in Amsterdam, you can buy beer. And I don't mean in a paper cup either. They give you a glass of beer. And in Paris, you can buy beer at MacDonald's. And you know what they call a *Quarter Pounder with Cheese* in Paris?
> [Jules] They don't call it a Quarter Pounder with Cheese?
> [Vincent] No, they got the metric system there, they wouldn't know what the fuck a Quarter Pounder is.
> [Jules] What'd they call it?
> [Vincent] They call it *Royale with Cheese*.
> [Jules] Royale with Cheese. What'd they call *a Big Mac*?
> [Vincent] Big Mac's a Big Mac, but they call it *Le Big Mac*.
> [Jules] Le big Mac! Ahhaha, what do they call *a Whopper*?
> [Vincent] I dunno, I didn't go into a Burger King.

Discussions on equivalence brought about an analysis of loan words, false friends, translation problems, translation strategies and mistranslations through amusing English-Spanish examples of flawed translations. Students also engaged in translating general and literary excerpts: some of the texts chosen were closer to Irish culture, like *Angela's Ashes* (1999), while some texts were more exotic, like *The God of Small Things* (1997, proposed by Carreres et al. 2018, p. 28). A final component included, which aimed at practicing creativity in translation were comics, like Asterix. In *Asterix in Spain* (1971), for instance, Iberians are portrayed as dark-skinned *matadors*, aggressive but proud and noble. Through resources drawn from these comics in translation (the Spanish version corresponds to *Asterix en Hispania* (1969)), students had to draw on their own resources to discuss the translation of the names of the characters, onomatopoeia, and Latin expressions and greetings, and propose a different translation if they deemed it necessary.

Table 3.
Sample of Practices Strand 3.

Strand 3. Equivalence and translation	
Tasks	*Examples*
Culture(s) through translation (food, measures)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Pkq_eBHXJ4
Mistranslations	https://bit.ly/3onGOvD
Literary translation (EN):	

• Domestic (Irish)	*Angela's Ashes* (McCourt, 1999)
• Foreign (Indian)	*The God of Small Things* (Roy, 1997)
Comics in translation	Asterix and Obelix *Asterix in Spain* (1971)*, Asterix en Hispania* (1969)

The rationale behind choosing literary texts in the first instance is so that students translated a text where they were not constrained to textual formalities. Literary texts are generally culture bound, and language and literary devices may give way to ambiguities. Learners had the opportunity to apply their judgement beyond grammar and syntax rules and vocabulary restrictions and recreated the narrative of the source text. Working with comics, on the other hand, forced learners to comply with a source that combines image and text. These types of tasks present a number of challenges that require the use of specific strategies. Space limitation, puns, and humour, to mention but a few, allow the student to reconstruct stories through language, sounds, etc. and reinforces the numerous communicative channels operating in multimodal texts.

4. Analysing resources tasks:

In the fourth block, students analysed the resources they use while they read, write or translate in the L2. They explored the tools they resort to, how the tools differ, and the dangers of using such resources inadequately. Google Translate, Linguee, paper dictionaries, thesauri and other sources were analysed and discussed by looking at how different words, segments and sentences are translated, contrasting the outcomes, and finding out the challenges and advantages of such tools.

5. Translation tasks:

The fifth and final block involved translation practice. Students had acquired some knowledge and experience of translation and translation-related tasks. They had reflected on translation matters such as equivalence, explored translation techniques and translation resources, and carried out small translation tasks. At this stage, students had developed enough levels of competency to engage in more substantial tasks that focus on translation L1<>L2. Students translated different text genres, in particular two cooking recipes (an Irish shepherd's pie, and a Spanish omelette), and the fairy tale of *Little Red Riding Hood* and the Spanish version *Caperucita Roja*. Texts containing cooking recipes are a genre with very specific features, and as long as the conventions are embedded in the recipe, they will be acceptable. In this task, the learners were challenged by different cooking techniques or even tools or ingredients they were not familiar with. The fairy tale, on the other hand, is a literary text that all students are familiar with. The challenges, on this occasion, were linguistic and also involved textual conventions for this particular sub literary genre.

Table 4.
Sample of Practices Strand 5.

Strand 5. Translation Practice	
Text genre	*Examples*
Food recipes:	

- Shepherd's pie (local recipe) https://bit.ly/36KnQtb
- Spanish omelette https://bit.ly/3lPrpCP

Fairy tales:

- *Little Red Riding Hood* https://bit.ly/36NOSzP
- *Caperucita Roja* https://bit.ly/3ourvkV

EXPLORATORY DISCUSSION OF THE CASE STUDY

The blossoming of ecological approaches in L2 teaching, a purposeful bilingualism in the classroom, plurilingual pedagogies based on newly shaped societies, and advances in L2 pedagogies, applied linguistics and translation studies have given way to pluralistic teaching and learning practices. Simultaneously, the reconceptualisation of mediation as a multifaceted notion leads to a whole new and much richer landscape that favours not only translation in L2 learning, but also advances the establishment of a continuum between translation and L2 teaching and learning. Furthermore, this shift allows for the development of mediation-related activities in a variety of educational contexts—another good indicator that provides scope to the neighbouring areas of translation and L2. This pedagogical turn transforms the beginner's translation classroom into a space where students explore different ways of understanding and constructing meaning, and by definition it gives scope for students to explore "alternative ways of representing themselves and the preconceived notions they bring with them to the study of the foreign language" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 205).

The module discussed and delivered to first year students is their first experience with translation practice in the degree. Its purpose is to enhance the continuum between L2 learning and some of the principles relevant to mediation, with an emphasis on translation skills. The module, in effect, allows learners to act as mediators as they facilitate communication through reconstructing meaning in line with the four dimensions that North and Piccardo propose: linguistic, cultural, social, and pedagogical mediation (2016, p. 9-11). The social agency of language learners/users becomes a central pillar in this module where the reconstruction of meaning is not limited to the linguistic dimension of translation but is rather largely based on Kramsch's notion of "third space", particularly in relation to the effort(s) needed to translate different perspectives or situations (1993, p. 237). This space allows learners to operate beyond twofold realities and makes them aware that different frames of reference exist. The classroom becomes a learning space where building meaning arises from a variety of understandings and different perspectives which will hopefully liberate the learner from the (self-)imposed bonds to grammar and words. This in turn encourages learners to explore culturally-bound connotations, acquire a wider scope by looking at the nuances inherent to non-binary errors (see Pym, 1992), develop multileveled skills –from the lexicon to pragmatics– and negotiation principles. These elements, as Pintado Gutiérrez points out, "lead to the foundation of a space for intuition, self-confidence, auto-criticism and creativity" (2009, p. 330).

Reassessing the role of translation in L2 within mediation practices also encourages us as teachers to consider how best to optimise the dynamics of teaching and learning while creating a collaborative environment between the students, the teacher and the translation tasks. The role of the teacher and the concept of the classroom are, therefore, essential to contribute to creating a successful learning environment. The multilingual approach that Levine proposes, favours the idea of creating a relaxed atmosphere with room to use L2 but also L1 and AL like home/heritage languages, based on the assumptions that: a) the classroom

does not try to re-create multilingual environments; b) practices of code-choice may enhance L2 learning; c) optimal L2 use in the classroom supports L2 learning; and d) the classroom is understood within a framework of principled, meaning, and task-based approaches (2011, p. 5-7).

The classroom ideally becomes a flexible space dedicated to interaction through discussion and debate, and where there is scope for intuition and mistake making. The teacher would therefore act as a guide rather than an instructor to allow sufficient space for the students to gain agency, while monitoring the progress of the learners and mentoring in their progress (see Pintado Gutiérrez, 2012, p. 181-182).

CHALLENGES

The single fact that the core of this module aims at serving as a bridge (between translation and L2 learning) could signal a number of issues. Firstly, it aims to capture the attention of learners who have just advanced from secondary education and are introduced to new areas of knowledge, as well as competences and skills. Secondly, there is a tendency among secondary students to have a narrow view of what translation is. Last but not least, the limits or indeed the fluidity between mediation, translation, and L2 does not always facilitate developing tasks around these contents. In fact, González-Davies raises that:

> Translation is a key mediation skill whose complexity is not usually dealt with even in (well intentioned) plurilingual approaches to language learning, where the students are asked simply 'to translate'. This may be (unconsciously) in accordance with the extended belief that bilinguals may engage in 'natural translation'[3] effortlessly.
> González-Davies (2020, p. 445)

This means that it's hard for students to position themselves as mediators. While generating rich debates, reflections on the students own linguistic and cultural repertoire can be difficult as they are not used to deploying critical analysis on their own previously acquired knowledge. This has a direct effect in the classroom: (a) while some learners (whose parents come from different countries) acknowledge that they have a home language which is not English, the vast majority of Irish students do not claim to have a heritage language[4]; and (b) experience tells us that the classroom is multilingual where students have different levels of competence both in Spanish and English. Furthermore, translation skills are also multileveled. While a lack of homogeneity does not represent a challenge *per se*, the outcome of tasks ranging from awareness to "translation proper" might be somewhat skewed. Table 5 gives a clearer picture of the profile in the classroom.

Table 5.
Sample of a Classroom.

Sample of a classroom: 20 students, 1 teacher	
Students	*Repertoire: L1 and home language(s) or AL*
15 from Irish secondary education	L1 English: 10 subjects L1 English+home language: 4 subjects Home language: 1 Ukranian; 2 Romanian; 1 Spanish

	L1+home language Polish: 1 subject
5 visiting Erasmus	L1 German: 3 subjects L1+home language German and Spanish: 2 subjects
Teacher	
1 teacher	L1 Spanish; AL English, French, Italian

With a view to test the perception and the level of acceptability to teaching this new module, instructors were interviewed. The results reveal that teachers involved in creating and teaching this module (subject 1 and subject 2) were trained language teachers and trained as translators, and had experience as HE L2 teachers and freelance translators.

The greatest challenges noted related to the design and the implementation phases. Subject 1 records that the greatest challenge in *designing the module* was the eminent practical approach to translation s/he initially had while lacking knowledge about theory on this specific field. Subject 2, on the other hand, found it difficult to integrate tasks that range from L2 and AL awareness to mediation, and how to transition to translation proper. Another challenge for subject 2 in this phase was the design of engaging activities for the students. With regards to the *teaching phase*, subject 1 found it difficult to make time to cover all the content adequately, as well as finding the right moment(s) to explain L2 matters together with content more focused on translation. For subject 2, it was not easy to find a teaching roadmap, how to progress in the teaching of skills transversally, or combining smoothly guidelines, theory and practice from different sources: the CEFR *Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2020), academic articles and books, etc. In the teachers' view, the module was most relevant in teaching reading, writing and translation skills, as well as negotiating meaning. It also contributed to the learners' general advances in L2, and more specifically in the acquisition of vocabulary and expressions. Overall, the module was perceived as stimulating, thought-provoking, challenging and inspiring. However, a better knowledge of advances in plurilingual pedagogies, and particularly one that supports mediation, L2 learning and translation, would help in the design and implementation phases, as noted by subjects 1 and 2.

FINAL REMARKS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

We have come a long way since works like that of González-Davies (2004), where she predicates good practice between the L2 learner and the translator. Particularly relevant to this article is her chapter "From foreign language learner to translator", where she explores a pedagogical reflection on the different stages that the students follow in their learning journey, and that the module outlined above intends to cover to a lesser extent: the *unconscious incompetence* stage, the *conscious incompetence* stage, the *conscious competence* stage, and the *unconscious competence* stage (González-Davies, 2004, p. 40). This module serves, to a larger extent, as a pre-specialisation module to translation; as such, we can argue that the added value of the exploratory nature of the activities lies in encouraging flexibility across various skills, becoming aware of resources available, and testing what translation and mediation entail. Students will realise that mediation, and indeed translation, are not as straightforward as one may think—and certainly, they understand that they cannot depend on word-for-word transfers, which is

part of the *unconscious incompetence* stage. Once the learner has explored the dimension of language, communication and translation, s/he is ready to discover the knowledge acquired and to engage in a type of trial-and-error process, taking a leap forward to the *unconscious competence*, and gearing gradually towards the follow stage of the *conscious competence*, where learners "make out the similarities, differences and translation patterns that can be established concerning the knowledge acquired up to this point" (González-Davies, 2004, p. 40).

While the advocacy of integrating the use of translation in L2 teaching and learning seems to be gaining ground in the last decade, specific ways of introducing translation into the L2 curriculum by means of examples are still scarce. This lack of evidence on what effective practice of translation in the L2 may look like has a direct impact on curriculum development and pedagogical practices that perpetuate histories of factional enmity between L2 learning and translation (Pintado Gutiérrez, 2019). Some excellent examples of translating tasks aimed at L2 students include works by Carreres, Noriega-Sánchez and Calduch (2018); González-Davies (2004, 2014); Kerr (2014); Laviosa (2014); Muñoz Basols (2019); or Wilson and González-Davies (2017). In some of these works, tasks are presented as examples, or even teaching units, that draw from theory. In other cases, tasks appear as part of a volume, sequenced in different chapters, or organised around curriculum-related issues.

The innovative nature of the research lays on presenting the fine points of an introductory module on translation practice through the lens of an integrated plurilingual approach that roots in ecological grounds. The views from instructors involved in designing and delivering the module confirm the initial suspicion—and the general (false) assumption—that a firm belief in and commitment to translation in L2 teaching is not sufficient to avoid issues in teaching and learning through mediation tasks.

I hope that the discussion of this particular case study under the plurilingual framework will help to illustrate current challenges and (mis)conceptions in this field, which is sometimes presented as an "inbetweener". It aims to bring the debate on translation and L2 teaching further and reimagine the shared space of L1/L2/AL and mediation against the backdrop of a divided entity. The reality is that translation in language teaching has traditionally reflected the divide between translation studies and L2 pedagogy, but in recent years there has been a tendency to bridge the gap between both fields (see Carreres, 2014; Pintado Gutiérrez, 2019).

Despite discrepancies between the conceptualisations of mediation, translation, and principles of plurilingual and intercultural education, there are clear efforts in channelling the commonalities between these fields and offering an evidence-based response to implementing translation in L2. Foregrounded in plurilingual pedagogies, and also in advances in integrating translation in L2 teaching, this article expands on the latest developments that will help to have meaningful teaching and learning experiences beyond the anecdotal. Attempts to present the main tenets to depict a revisited, solid landscape of translation in L2 teaching and learning, the analysis and the follow-up discussion of a study case integrating translation practice in an Irish HE context, aim at contesting unfounded criticism against this practice, while offering some curricular guidance on developing curricular resources. There is no doubt that improvements and further research are needed, however, the opportunities that this field offers are plentiful.

NOTES

[1] For a comprehensive explanation of "translation for other learning contexts" and the "pedagogically based code-switching" see Corcoll and González-Davies (2016).

[2] https://www.ecml.at/Thematicareas/PlurilingualEducation/Resources/tabid/1672/language/en-GB/Default.aspx

[3] González-Davies refers to one of the different levels of translation competence proposed Harris (2017), and which are developed in various contexts. These levels are: natural translators (those who translate without training and are guided by intuition); native translators (those who have translation skills after experience in informal contexts); expert translators (trained translators who do not have experience in the industry); professional translators (those whose profession is to translate, whether they have been trained formally or whether they are advanced native translators).

[4] All students in secondary education in Ireland must learn Irish between the ages of 6 to 16 as part of the curriculum.

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