

## Sabbatical Report

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### Summary of Sabbatical Semester

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During my sabbatical semester in the fall of 2013, I was able to complete two important projects that have consolidated my research portfolio in the fields of applied linguistics and translation:

1. The first of these projects was the drafting and submission of a research article titled ***Private Speech During Problem-Solving Activities in Bilingual Speakers***. This article continued the innovative line of work that I started about ten years ago on the study of the bilingual mind by analyzing bilinguals' private speech during the activity of solving problems. With an improved methodology in the data collection process, this article was able to identify patterns on how bilinguals use their available languages during the thinking process.
2. The second project was the preparation of a proposal for a textbook titled ***Introduction to English-Spanish translation***. In my new role of Administrator of the Educators Division of the American Translators Association, I have realized that there is a lack of textbooks on this area. The ones available are outdated and rely too heavily on theory over practice. With this volume, I attempt to provide translation educators with a textbook that is current with the new technologies and the way translation is practiced nowadays. The textbook includes numerous activities, exercises, and translations that offer students a real-life approach to the translation profession.

The following section describes in more detail the scope of these two projects.

### Projects Overview

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The first project, the research article ***Private Speech During Problem-Solving Activities in Bilingual Speakers*** is based on the tenets of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. This research study investigated the private speech produced by 30 adult English/Spanish bilinguals while engaged in a problem-solving activity, with the objective of better understanding the regulatory role that each language plays in the bilingual mind. In order to obtain a spontaneous production of private speech, participants were unknowingly audio-recorded while working in a private room on 15 challenging questions in Spanish, which included problems of logic, mathematics, visual-spatial problems, and kinship questions. The 30 early bilinguals who participated were divided into three groups: The Spanish-dominant group, the English-dominant group, and the balanced group, who consisted of bilinguals who reported to be equally comfortable in both languages. Results showed that bilinguals' dominant language played an important regulatory role in their verbalized thinking while the other language provided a complementary set of cognitive resources and strategies that were employed when needed.

The second project, a proposal for a textbook titled ***Introduction to English-Spanish Translation***, integrates the latest developments in the translation profession with solid pedagogical practices. The main objective of the book is to increase students' translation competency, from English into

Spanish and vice versa, in a practical, meaningful, and contextualized way. “Translation competency” consists of a series of subcompetencies, which include knowledge about the languages and the cultures, understanding of translation as an activity and as a product, familiarity with a diversity of text types, expertise in the use of research tools, etc. During the process of gaining translation competency, students will encounter numerous exercises and activities that will increase their linguistic competency in both English and Spanish.

The book provides all the necessary components for the instruction of an introductory course on Spanish-English translation. Each lesson (except for the introductory lesson) is comprised of six sections: (1) important events in translation history, (2) the development of translation competency, (3) formal written conventions in English and Spanish, (4) contrastive features of English and Spanish, (5) information and translation research methods, and (6) translation practice. Each section of the book addresses one or more translation subcompetencies, providing ample practice through contextualized activities and exercises.

In comparison to the textbooks currently available, the proposed book contains the following distinctive features:

- In the current market, the existing alternatives rely too heavily on theory over practice. This book, on the contrary, has a very hands-on approach to translation, as it is based on the idea that translation competency is best developed and expanded through practice. Theoretical discussions are also included when appropriate, always linking them to practical examples and activities.
- It is written in Spanish, as it is intended for students with at least an intermediate level of this language. Only one of the four textbooks currently available in the market is also in Spanish. Although it might be challenging at times, reading in Spanish expands students’ lexical repertoire and their content-based knowledge, simultaneously increasing their understanding of more complex syntactical structures.
- In the last decade, the translation profession has experienced a radical change with the introduction of new technologies. This book provides students with the most up-to-date information in regards to current technological tools available during the translation process, accurately reflecting translators’ present use of technologies. Some of these tools include the use of online concordancers, terminology banks, corpus linguistics, automatic translation software, and translation memory systems, just to name a few.
- Translation skills increase with practice. For that reason, two texts (from English into Spanish and vice versa) are provided in each lesson for translation practice. Unlike the rest of the competitors, each text will be accompanied with a suggested translation (in the Answer Key section) annotated with comments concerning important aspects of the translation, such as translation problems, translation techniques used, references to information provided in the chapter, research methods employed, etc. These suggested translations can be shared with students or not, depending on the methodology used by the instructor. If students are provided with the annotated translations at some point in the process, these comments would play a critical role in facilitating the comprehension of the translation process for them.

- The book takes a global approach to translation by discussing the linguistic characteristics of a variety of dialects both in Spanish and in English. The texts that are provided for translation practice have also been selected to reflect the linguistic diversity of these two languages.
- As mentioned, each lesson contains many practical exercises that focus on the development of specific translation subcompetencies. Answers to these activities are offered in the Answer Key section of the book. Again, it will depend on the instructor if these answers are shared with students or not.
- Although the book has been designed for a typical fifteen-week semester course, in which a different lesson is discussed each week, the structure of the book allows for significant flexibility. For example, instructors may decide that they do not want to emphasize a certain section of the book, and instead spend more time on translation practice. Instructors will find that they can easily adapt the book content to their specific teaching preferences and course schedules (quarter courses, longer or shorter semesters, etc.).
- The book is visually attractive and modern in design, including a large number of pictures, tables, figures, diagrams, etc. This facilitates the reading, comprehension, and retention of the material, meeting the needs of students with diverse learning styles (Clark & Mayer, 2003)
- The book provides a solid pedagogical approach and numerous teaching resources that will be appealing to instructors. For instance, the large number of activities and exercises will allow instructors to focus on the practical aspects of class preparation (with no need to develop new or complementary materials). These exercises can be completed as part of students homework or in class (individually, in pairs, or in small groups). The provided Answer Key section can be shared with students, or not, depending on teaching preferences. If not, instructors can use this information for correcting and grading purposes. A sample syllabus will also be provided as part of the instructor's package, which will facilitate course development significantly.

### **Summary of Work/Outcomes**

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I am very grateful that I received this sabbatical, because I was able to accomplish my two objectives. On the one hand, I drafted and submitted the research article for publication. I am glad to report that the article has been accepted for publication in one of the leading journals in bilingualism, namely the *International Journal on Bilingualism* by Sage Publications. Although the article has already been published online, it will probably appear on the printed version of the journal in the spring semester of 2014.

For the proposal I have finalized three lessons of the book (approximately 120 pages), the table of contents for the entire volume, the Answer Key section for two of the lessons (the first one is an introduction to the topic), and the bibliography for all three lessons. Right now, the book proposal is being considered by Wiley publications. If accepted, I will be dedicated to the completion of the book for the next year or so.