

A PROPAEDEUTICS OF TRANSLATION STUDIES IN THE CONTEXT OF TEACHING LANGUAGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Book Review:

Bednárová-Gibová, K., Gavurová, M., Gresty, J. A Propaedeutics of Translation Studies. Prešov: University of Prešov Press, 2024. 194 pp. ISBN 978-80-555-3302-5 (print) EAN 9788055533025. ISBN 978-80-555-3294-3 (online)

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The review assesses the scientific, methodological and didactic potential of the textbook “*A Propaedeutics of Translation Studies*” (2024) edited by Klaudia Bednárová-Gibová, Miroslava Gavurová, and Jonathan Gresty. The content of the textbook is compared to current expectations regarding the conceptual approach, scope of subjects, structure, didactics of translation studies which includes presentation of fundamental points, as well as theoretical and practical content of the subject matter. The review demonstrates that the textbook provides an overview of Translation Studies as a complex and multifaceted academic field and systematically presents selected theoretical approaches, analytical tools, and practical aspects of translation. Special attention is paid to the treatment of translation shifts, models of translation competence, the role of technology in translation practice, and selected aspects of professional translation activity, as presented in the textbook. The structure of the volume, including chapter sequencing, summaries, and practice-oriented tasks, is described as supporting gradual familiarisation with core concepts and methods relevant to university-level translation training. This review concludes that the textbook on translation methods is methodology-wise and didactically sound for Bachelor’s degree programs in translation and can be considered useful for Master’s degree programs. The limitations imposed by the propaedeutic nature of this textbook are discussed, such as the relatively limited presentation of translation studies theories and empirical research. This textbook may overall be regarded as an

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educational resource designed for Translation Studies courses taught at universities.

Keywords: *higher education, theory and practice of translation, translation studies, translation training.*

In the modern academic environment of language education in higher education institutions, Translation Studies occupies a strategically important place at the intersection of linguistics, applied language research, cultural analysis and professional training. The rapid technologicalization of translation practice, often combined with the growing demand for market-oriented competencies, places an increased responsibility on university textbooks: they are thought to function not only as repositories of knowledge, but also as structured pedagogical tools. In this context, *A Propaedeutics of Translation Studies* (2024) deserves careful expert analysis in terms of theoretical validity, didactic effectiveness and suitability for sustainable use in academic curricula.

The textbook was originally conceived as a propaedeutic edition, which is emphasized both in its title and in the authors' methodological position. Such positioning has direct implications for the depth, volume, and sampling of the material. Unlike encyclopedic reference books or advanced theoretical monographs, this publication is aimed at introducing students to the conceptual foundations of translation studies with simultaneous preparation for practical translation activities. From the point of view of the expert reviewer, this dual task is both an essential advantage and a potential source of limitations.

In terms of structure, the book consists of ten chapters, built in the logic of the transition from historical and conceptual foundations to modern applications and professional realities. Such a sequence reflects a training-oriented logic that is well consistent with the construction of courses typical of bachelor's translation programs. The initial chapters devoted to the history of translation and the formation of translation studies as an academic discipline can provide students with the necessary disciplinary self-awareness. It is important to note that the historical review is not purely descriptive, but is presented as a narrative of paradigm shifts, thereby implicitly helping to form students' understanding that the theory of translation is not static, but develops in response to social, cultural and technological changes.

From a theoretical point of view, the textbook demonstrates a conscious desire for a balance between competing traditions in Translation Studies. Linguistically oriented approaches based on

equivalence and textual analysis are presented alongside functionalist, sociological and cognitively oriented perspectives. Such pluralism has considerable pedagogical potential, as it prevents premature canonization of a single theoretical model and encourages students to view theory as an instrumental set rather than a prescriptive doctrine. At the same time, expert assessment requires noting that the presentation of theoretical approaches is mainly descriptive. While this corresponds to the introductory status of the book, it can also mean that theoretical contradictions are more often labeled than critiqued. As a result, priority is given to the formation of theoretical literacy, rather than theoretical discussion.

One of the most powerful sections of the textbook is the one devoted to translation as metacommunication and textual analysis. Consideration of the standards of textuality, discursive models and translation shifts is distinguished by methodological accuracy and relies on recognized scientific sources. The use of charts, models and comparative tables contributes to the cognitive processing of information and increases the educational value of the publication. For use in higher education, in particular in the Theory and Practice of Translation courses, these chapters can provide a solid analytical framework that can be involved in classroom work. Nevertheless, from an expert point of view, the analytical apparatus would benefit from the inclusion of more detailed, authentic translation cases demonstrating the functioning of theoretical categories in complex real texts.

The chapters on translation methods, techniques and solutions represent an important link between theory and practice. The authors manage to systematize the traditionally fragmented field of translation pedagogy, presenting methods and techniques as decision-making tools, rather than as rigid rules. This approach corresponds to modern competence-oriented models of translator training. At the same time, it should be noted that in some cases it can lead to simplification, especially when the contrasted methods are presented without sufficient consideration of contextual constraints. Therefore, students with advanced skills in translation may need additional literature to fully understand the boundaries and conditions of applicability of individual methods.

A particularly valuable contribution of the textbook is the consideration of translation competencies and professional roles of the translator. Based on recognized competency models, the authors place

translation in a broader professional context that includes ethical responsibility, technological literacy, and interpersonal skills. This approach is largely in line with modern European and international standards for the training of translators and helps to increase the relevance of the book for higher education institutions which prefer to be focused on the modernization of current curricula. At the same time, the discussion of competencies remains largely normative. Empirical data obtained in studies of translation activities are used only indirectly, which somewhat limits the analytical depth of this section.

The following chapter on modern translation tools is one of the most practice-oriented parts of the book and directly reflects the realities of the modern translation market. A systematic review of digital resources, CAT tools and machine translation technologies allows students to get familiar with the necessary basic knowledge of contemporary translation tools that are used in modern translation agencies. It is important to emphasize that the authors do not take an uncritical techno-optimistic position, but recognize both the advantages and limitations of technological intermediation. Such a balanced position increases the pedagogical reliability of the book allowing to grasp a comprehensive view of the topic. At the same time, taking into consideration the quick pace of technological changes, this section may become outdated and will require regular updating to remain relevant and up-to-date.

Consideration of literary translation and new directions in Translation Studies further confirms the authors' desire to present translation studies as a diverse and developing discipline. The inclusion of localization, audiovisual translation, and corpus studies broadens students' perceptions of contemporary translation. However, the coverage of new interdisciplinary approaches, including ecological and biosemiotic perspectives, remains somewhat fragmented. Although justified within the propaedeutic approach, this fact marks the boundary between introductory familiarization and in-depth scientific analysis.

The final chapter, devoted to the practical aspects of freelance translation, stands out both in content and style. Unlike traditional academic textbooks, which often ignore professional pragmatics, this section covers the legal, financial and organizational aspects of translation activities in an accessible form. For higher education students, this material can have significant motivational potential, since

it connects academic learning with real career trajectories. It is clear that the inclusion of this chapter enhances the applied orientation of the textbook, although binding to certain jurisdictions may limit its direct applicability in individual national contexts, which should be taken into consideration by an educator themselves.

From a didactic point of view, the textbook is carefully designed to support active learning of Translation Studies. Chapter summaries, reflection questions and practical assignments help to consolidate knowledge and intensify classroom interaction. The integration of multimedia resources is in line with the blended learning methodologies which become increasingly used in higher education institutions. These elements significantly increase the suitability of the book as a textbook, not just a theoretical reference.

From the point of view of compliance with the thematic focus of the collection *Teaching Languages in Higher Education Institutions*, the textbook demonstrates a high degree of relevance. Translation is generally regarded as an advanced language skill integrating language, culture and cognition. This book makes a great contribution to achieving the goal of training multilingual interpreters who perform interlingual and intercultural mediation. The book can serve as the textbook for courses such as “Theory and Practice of Translation”, “Introduction to Translation Studies” and “Theory of Translation” taught in translation training programs.

Comparative positioning among translation studies textbooks

In comparative perspective, *A Propaedeutics of Translation Studies* occupies a well-defined niche in the existing array of textbooks on translation studies. In contrast to the widely used fundamental works focused mainly on theoretical mapping of the discipline, the publication in question has a pronounced teaching-oriented and pedagogically structured orientation. Its key distinguishing feature is the systematic consideration of the needs of entry-level students, who simultaneously develop in-depth foreign language competence and initial professional translation thinking.

Where some textbooks focus on semantic-pragmatic analysis and others on theoretical typology, *A Propaedeutics of Translation Studies* integrates theory, method and profession into a single didactic trajectory. This integration is not formal, but functional: theoretical concepts are consistently correlated with specific translation solutions, competence descriptors and training tasks. As a result, the textbook

does not compete with canonical theoretical editions, but complements them, acting as a preparatory platform for the subsequent development of more complex scientific literature.

Integration into curricula and compliance with higher education standards

From the point of view of curriculum design, it demonstrates a relevantly high degree of compatibility with modular higher education programs in the field of translation and applied linguistics. Its internal structure allows flexible use of the material within one- or two-semester courses, primarily at the bachelor's level. Individual chapters can be directly correlated with typical training modules, including translation history, translation theory fundamentals, textual analysis, translation strategies, and professional practice.

Importantly, the shift from conceptual frameworks to applied professional contexts reflects the principles of results-based learning. Initial chapters support the formation of cognitive learning outcomes, while subsequent sections are increasingly focused on the development of skills and competencies, such as analytical decision-making, technological awareness, and professional self-management. This alignment of the material makes the textbook particularly suitable for courses developed in accordance with the requirements of modern accreditation standards of higher education. At the master's level, the book can serve as a reference or diagnostic tool, helping educators to identify gaps in the preliminary training of students. In this sense, its propaedeutic function goes beyond primary education and can contribute to ensuring continuity between educational cycles.

Evaluation design and learning outcomes

The pedagogical apparatus of *A Propaedeutics of Translation Studies* has been presented consistently throughout the textbook. The chapter summaries, reflection questions and exercises for formative assessment correspond to the material presented in each section. Unlike many other translation studies textbooks, the exercises in *A Propaedeutics of Translation Studies* are designed primarily to engage students' analytical skills, make them distinguish between different concepts and reach decisions on translations on the basis of sound reasoning, rather than to ask them to paraphrase or copy out theory in one specific word or phrase. Such a design contributes to the verification of both declarative knowledge and procedural competencies, which is fundamentally important for translation

education. Assignments can be adapted for classroom discussions, written papers, or portfolio-oriented assessment, supporting a variety of control formats used in higher education. At the same time, the textbook assigns to educators the responsibility for supplementing the assessment with detailed translation projects and analysis of empirical data, since the tools of large-scale summative control go beyond the propaedeutic manual. This restriction is methodologically justified and does not reduce the educational value of the publication.

Final estimate

In conclusion, *A Propaedeutics of Translation Studies* represents a rigorously structured and pedagogically grounded contribution to Translation Studies education. Its key value lies in the ability to serve as a bridge between abstract theory, applied methodology and professional practice within a holistic learning model. Despite the conscious rejection of in-depth theoretical polemics and empirical discussions, this approach is methodologically justified by the target audience and the educational function of the textbook.

Fully corresponding to the thematic focus of *Teaching Languages in Higher Education Institutions*, the textbook can be confidently recommended as the main or additional manual for the courses of theoretical and practical Translation Studies. Its contribution can not be limited to the transfer of content, but extends to the structuring of curricula, the development of competencies and the design of assessment in the system of modern higher education.

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ПРОПЕДЕВТИКА ПЕРЕКЛАДОЗНАВСТВА В КОНТЕКСТІ ВИКЛАДАННЯ МОВ У ЗАКЛАДАХ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ

Рецензія на видання:

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У рецензії оцінено науковий, методологічний і дидактичний потенціал навчального посібника *A Propaedeutics of Translation Studies* (2024) за редакцією Клаудії Беднарової-Гібової, Мирослави Гавурової та Джонатана Гресті. Зміст посібника проаналізовано з огляду на сучасні вимоги до концептуального підходу, кола проблематики, структури та дидактики перекладознавства; розглянуто, зокрема, виклад базових положень, а також теоретичні й практичні аспекти навчального матеріалу. У рецензії показано, що посібник розглядає перекладознавство як складну й багатовимірну академічну галузь та системно представляє окремі теоретичні підходи, аналітичні інструменти й практичні аспекти перекладу. Особливу увагу приділено висвітленню перекладацьких зсувів, моделей перекладацької компетентності, ролі технологій у перекладацькій практиці та окремих аспектів професійної перекладацької діяльності в межах змісту посібника. Структуру видання, зокрема послідовність розділів, наявність підсумків і практико-орієнтованих завдань, охарактеризовано як таку, що сприяє поступовому засвоєнню ключових понять і методів, релевантних для університетської підготовки перекладачів. У рецензії зроблено висновок, що навчальний посібник є методологічно та дидактично обґрунтованим для освітніх програм з перекладу бакалаврського рівня та може бути корисним у межах магістерських програм. Зазначено обмеження, зумовлені пропедевтичним характером посібника, зокрема відносно звужене представлення теорій перекладознавства та емпіричних досліджень. Посібник є структурованим і методично обґрунтованим внеском у навчання перекладознавства, який поєднує теоретичні засади, прикладні аспекти та професійну підготовку. Він може бути рекомендований як основний або додатковий навчальний матеріал для дисциплін із перекладознавства в закладах вищої освіти.

Ключові слова: вища освіта, перекладознавство, підготовка перекладачів, теорія та практика перекладу.

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