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Book Review

Cognitive Linguistics and Translation: Advances in Some Theoretical Models and Applications

Edited by Ana Rojo and Iraide Ibarretxe-Antuñano
Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2013. 420 pages. Paper $24.95. ISBN 978-3110484786.

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This collection of scholarly studies consists of a Foreword by Mona Baker, an Introduction by the editors, thirteen essays apportioned into five major parts, and several helpful indices (author information, author and subject, language). In this overview, I will simply list the titles of the various chapters along with their authors and cite several significant insights or applications from each one. In my opinion, this is one of the most important texts in the field of translation studies to appear in recent years for two principal reasons: (a) all authors write from the perspective of cognitive linguistics, which in my opinion as a translation practitioner and consultant offers the best theoretical foundation for this discipline; and (b) the writers do not muddy the waters by delving into arcane metaphorical extensions of the concept of translation, which is unfortunately a rather common practice nowadays.[2]

In her Foreword, Mona Baker provides a helpful summary of what readers may expect to find in *Cognitive Linguistics and Translation* (CLT): "The current volume represents one of the few sustained attempts to explore the interface between Cognitive Linguistics and Translation Studies from a range of perspectives; it brings a wide range of voices to bear on this important area of enquiry and features a series of detailed theoretical expositions and case studies" (xi). These clearly interdisciplinary explorations often combine linguistic, literary, cognitive, social, and/or political issues and concerns.

In their introductory essay (3–30), Ana Rojo and Iraide Ibarretxe-Antuñano present a broad survey of "Cognitive Linguistics and Translation: Past, Present and Future." They overview the varied relationships between linguistics and translation from the 1970 to the "21st century and beyond" (9). This leads to a summary of essential CL principles (language as cognition, symbolic, and motivated in "our bodily, physical, social, and cultural experience," 11) and their relevance for translation studies, for example: "The search for equivalence would no longer be the search for identifiable linguistic features, but the search for a complex set of links in the translator's mind, and the aim of translation theory would be to explain aspects related to how these links are cognitively represented or cognitively processed" (13) during the activity of re-creating (or re-conceptualizing) a source text in another language and sociocultural setting.[3] The individual essays of this volume are summarized in terms of five main research issues or areas that are foregrounded in CL studies: theory, meaning, "constructions,"[4] culture, and psycholinguistic investigation (14). Salient related topics are also referenced: the role of the translator as intercultural mediator (19),[5] conceptual metaphor and metonymy

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[1] A review by Wendland of this same book *Cognitive Linguistics and Translation* by Ana Rojo and Iraide Ibarretxe-Antuñano has also appeared in 2017 in the *American Journal of Academic Research* 2(1).

[2] For some documentation, see for example, chapter one, "Translating 'translation,'" in www.academia.edu/11318453/survey_of_translation_studies_3rd_edition.

[3] Celia Martín de León adds: "Because meaning is not something inherent to the symbol system, equivalence cannot be absolute; it can only be defined in relation to some aspect of the communication process: it can be conceived of, for instance, as formal, dynamic, denotative, connotative, pragmatic, or functional" (103). We note, however, throughout this book the continued use of the concept of "equivalence" to discuss the many different issues that pertain to translational communication involving a "source language" and "target language."

[4] Construction Grammar "does not assume a strict separation between syntax and the lexicon but instead views them as a continuum…. In this view, grammatical constructions are also capable of evoking semantic frames. With respect to translation, a constructional view of language is advantageous because grammatical constructions (pairings of forms with meanings) can function as a *tertium comparationis* that make it possible to compare and contrast similar types of constructions across languages" (Boas, 137).

[5] On this particular subject, it is hard to beat the study of David Katan, *Translating Cultures: An Introduction for translators, Interpreters and Mediators*, 2nd ed. (Manchester: St Jerome, 2004).

(21), the symbolic character of grammar (22), cognitive frames, rhetorical style, the fundamental role of culture (23), experimental lexical semantics (24), bilingualism and second language acquisition (25).

Part I of CLT consists of three articles that focus on cognitive linguistics and translation theory. In the first study (33–73), Sandra L. Halverson summarizes her view of the "Implications of Cognitive Linguistics for Translation Studies." She begins with theory development and a CL reinterpretation of such key notions as discourse (35–37), contrastive linguistics (38–41), equivalence (42–45), translation shifts (46–48), and translation universals (49–50). This is followed by an overview of the implications of CL for methodology (54) and epistemology (59), including some prominent approaches to defining "translation" (62). In sum, "…a cognitive linguistic theory of translation…takes the cognizing translator as the locus of the situated event—the individual translator is taken as the source of the translated text, and the theory [and presumably its practice as well][6] must then account for the ways in which the text emerges as a contextualized interpretation of an anterior text and a re-expression of it using alternative forms" (65). One wonders, however, what happens then to the cognitive world referenced by the original author of the anterior text using the source language; in the case of high-value texts such as sacred scriptures (whether Jewish, Christian, or Muslim), we are faced with a conceptual corpus that cannot be casually ignored or decontextualized during this interlingual, cross-cultural communication process.

In "More than a Way with Words," Ricardo Muñoz explores "The Interface between Cognitive Linguistics and Cognitive Translatology" (75–97). Translatology is the technical term denoting to the theory and practice of translating and interpreting, sometimes more informally referred to as "translation studies."[7] In the first part of his essay Muñoz surveys several of the major contributions of cognitive linguistics to cognitive translatology (76), including helpful discussions of prototype semantics (76), conceptual metaphor theory (80), and frame semantics (81), concluding: "Adopting a cognitive perspective implies precisely changing the focus of attention from the text to the processes involved in its production and interpretation" (83, citing Rojo). However, in the case of such a multifaceted and often sensitive activity as translation, is it really possible to focus on just one of the many factors involved—thus, not only the "translator/interpreter" (xi, 65), but also the original source text and context, the contemporary target audience and setting, the medium of communication, and so forth? Rather, the center of one's attention must continually shift from one facet or feature to another, also including the perspectives of other persons who are somehow involved in the overall communication process. In part two of his study Muñoz suggests "what cognitive translatology may do for CL" (84), for example, with respect to translation universals (85) and the nature of interference, or "translationese" (87). The ultimate hope is that CL will provide the necessary "cognitive scaffolding to develop [*deeper, thicker, more well-defined*] descriptions and explanations of the cognitive aspects of translation and interpreting processes" (90).

In the third essay of Part I, Celia Martín de León poses the rather strange query: "Who cares if the cat is on the mat?" to introduce her study of "Contributions of Cognitive Models of Meaning to Translation" (99–122). She first considers the "classical paradigm" of meaning, which is viewed as "arising from the syntactic combination of abstract symbols" (100). Next, connectionist approaches such as prototype theory and frame semantics, are considered, which view cognition as "the creation of dynamic patterns of activity in a network of interconnected units" and patterns of information (104–110). In the final section, embodied and socially situated approaches are explored—for example, image schemas, conceptual metaphor, and *Skopostheorie*—which ground meaning in bodily experience and socially situated functional actions (111–116).

Part II of CLT zeroes in on the notion of meaning in relation to translation. First, Hans C. Boas "examines how insights from Frame Semantics can be applied to translation, both by humans and computers" (125–158), with special reference to the application of cognitive frame analysis in the creation of translation resources such as electronic dictionaries (125). After a brief introduction to the theory of frame semantics,[8] Boas introduces readers in some detail to the FrameNet project (http://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu), which is an approach to lexicography that "identifies and describes semantic frames and analyzes the meaning of

[6] Bracketed insertions within quotations from the text of CLT are my own.
[7] https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/translatology.
[8] "A 'frame' is a cognitive structuring device, parts of which are indexed by words associated with it and used in the service of understanding" (126, citing Petruck).

words by appealing directly to the frames that underlie their meanings" (128). This CL-based methodology is then explained in greater detail with considerable exemplification, that is, "using semantic frames for translation purposes" (137), with special reference to "profiling particular aspects of semantic frames" (138), "differences in lexicalization patterns" (141),[9] "divergent translation equivalents and zero translations" (144), as well as so-called "'universal' and 'culture-specific' frames" (149). Boas concludes that "the frame-semantic approach to lexical organization makes it possible to relate words across languages in a systemic way" (152).

We turn then to a CL discussion of metaphor in the study by Eva Samantiego Fernández titled, "The Impact of Cognitive Linguistics on Descriptive Translation Studies: Novel metaphors in English-Spanish newspaper translation as a case in point" (159–198). After an introduction explaining the difference between prescriptive and descriptive types of norms within DTS, the issue of metaphor translation in translation studies is overviewed, since metaphor in the wider sense, i.e., including metonymy (162),[10] is "a kind of ultimate test of any theory of translation" (161, citing Holmes). A consideration of the relative degree of translatability of a metaphor by means of various translation procedures (162–167), leads to the author's main focus on cognitive approaches to metaphor translation based on conceptual metaphor theory (168) as influenced by specific cultural models (169) and translator-focused factors (170).[11] Through the application of various CL analytical strategies, it turns out that "metaphor is not a case of untranslatability, but a challenging phenomenon in terms of un-packing SL information and re-packing it in the TL and culture" (173). The author then proceeds to document the nature and results of her detailed case study, which dealt with "the role of novel metaphors in the translation of newspaper texts" from English into Spanish (175–176). She concludes that "by studying the strategies and the reasoning behind the way translators deal with metaphors, and most of all, by analysing the effect and impact that specific transfers have on target cultures, TS can greatly benefit from a descriptive approach to metaphor translation" (190–191).[12]

The third essay in CLT's section that focuses on meaning is "Translating (by means of Metonymy)" by Mario Brdar and Rita Brdar-Szabó (199–226). In their first major section, the authors clarify the distinction between metaphor and metonymy in CL studies, detailing five marked points of difference (200; cf. the preceding article). The principal distinction is that "a metonymic mapping occurs within a single [conceptual] domain, while metaphoric mappings take place across two discrete domains" (202). A sub-distinction within metonymy is also helpfully pointed out: "Metonymization…involves the use of a lexical item to evoke the sense of something that is not conventionally linked to that particular lexical item," while "Facetization, on the other hand, is the heightening of different facets or domains in a domain matrix…readings within senses…conventionally activated by one and the same lexical item" (203). The rest of this article is then devoted to an illustration of "how and why something could/should be translated by means of metonymic expressions" (205), with many illustrations provided when translating from English into German, Hungarian, and Croatian. Special attention is devoted to "translating a metonymy by means of a different metonymy" (212) and when "a metonymy [is] not translated by metonymy" (215). In conclusion, "it was shown that the degree of difficulty in translating utterances with metonymic expressions may be linked to the type of metonymy in question as well as to the degree of its regularity" (224).

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[9] Of particular interest in this section is a discussion of the "distinction between satellite-framing languages in which the image schemas are included in verbs of motion as in English (e.g., *[find] way + in; [find] way + out*), and verb-framing languages such as Spanish, in which image schemas are indicated separately from verbs (e.g., *entrar* 'enter', *salir* 'leave'…" (141).

[10] This point is disputed in the next article (Brdar and Brdar-Szabó, 200–204).

[11] Jiří Levý's concept of the *minimax* strategy (1967) is briefly assessed for possible relevance in accounting for "certain unexplained (or inexplicable) shifts in the renderings of metaphors and how they may reshape the cognitive universe in the target culture…. As applied to TS, it refers to possible [translational] solutions which guarantee a maximum of effect [contextual effects] with a minimum of effort [processing cost]" (171, cf. 193).

[12] The descriptive approach thus differs greatly from a prescriptive one, in which "[a]ny TT that does not bear a faithfulness-based relationship of equivalence [however defined] to its ST should not be called a translation but something else (adaptation, recreation, etc.)" (191). As a translator of the documents of scripture, I would maintain my strong preference for the prescriptive, or less pejoratively, perhaps, "controlled" translation method, whereby the interlingual communication process is motivated and directed by the contextually-determined semantic-pragmatic potential, or inventory, of the sacred source text.

The three essays constituting Part III of CLT consider constructions and translation. In the first study, Elzbieta Tabakowska investigates "(Cognitive) Grammar in Translation: Form as Meaning" (229–250). In her opening preliminaries, the author reviews some of the outstanding issues that confront translators as they approach their work from a cognitive and culturally-sensitive perspective, with special reference to the vital activity of visualization, especially where poetic figurative language is concerned (231). The subject of conceptual imagery is then discussed from a CL perspective,[13] namely, the dimensions, or viewing arrangement, involving level of specificity, figure-ground arrangement (trajector—landmark), and perspective (point of view, subjectivity) (232–236). The remainder of this essay is dedicated to a detailed comparative analysis of a short English poem by Emily Dickinson ("A Bird came down the Walk") and its Polish translation by Stanislaw Baranczak. This study "is an attempt to substantiate two claims: firstly, that much of the meaning of a poem resides in its grammar, and secondly, that the poetry of imagery is built on the prose of grammar" (237). In conclusion, "since grammar is choice and style is choice, grammar is style" (248)—and, as CL has demonstrated, such grammatical-stylistic form is eminently meaningful, hence also of significance during the translation process.

Next, Iraide Ibarretxe-Antuñano and Luna Filipovic consider "Lexicalisation Patterns and Translation" (251–281) with the aim of illustrating "the strategies translators follow when adapting texts from languages belonging to different as well as similar lexicalization patterns" (252),[14] with special reference to the differences in varied discourse contexts, e.g., narrative versus exposition. The point is that "translators are the ones in charge of adapting the rhetorical style of source languages onto that of target languages" (251). After an overview of prescriptive versus descriptive approaches in TS (252) and the principles of semantic typology in relation to lexicalization patterns (254), the authors embark upon the main focus of their study, which concerns the expression and translation of motion events (258), as exemplified specifically in records of witness interviews (268). A number of concrete examples from the two language types are explicitly analyzed: *satellite-framed* (English, the main SL, also Dutch, German, Russian, Serbo-Croatian) and *verb-framed* (French, Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, Hebrew, Turkish). The factor of dynamicity in translation is given particular attention (272). One notable conclusion with regard to rhetorical style is that "verb-framed translators, guided by the restricted Manner vocabulary in their languages, tend to avoid Manner information in the target texts unless the context requires it, but that even in these cases, the information they provide is poorer, less expressive than that in the source text" (276). It would be interesting for researchers to test these results, especially in comparison with those attributed to satellite-framed translators, who are said to "do the opposite"—who "need more vivid and expressive Manner information, and consequently, they add it up" in their TL renditions (276).

The third study of Part III focuses most specifically on its general theme of constructions:[15] "Constructing Meaning in Translation: The Role of Constructions in Translation Problems" by Ana Rojo and Javier Valenzuela (283–310). The authors begin with a statement on "the centrality of meaning" that is rather disparaged in TS literature nowadays, but one which I thoroughly subscribe to: "Translation is about communicating meaning. Independently of less central modes of translation, the most basic definition of translation posits that engaging in translation involves deciphering the meaning from a source text and recoding it into a target text using a different linguistic code… [thus] recreating the process of meaning construction undergone by the audience of the source text, in order to activate a similar process in the audience of the translated text" (284). Of course, the re-constructed "meaning" will never be the same, for this will always differ for TL respondents due to various reasons—the quality of translation, its communicative purpose (Skopos), world-view disparity and the associated cognitive environment evoked by

[13] "The basic principle that underlies CG states that the human mind has the ability to construe the scene, that is, the situation that is *conceived*, in alternative ways. This ability is called *imagery*" (232).

[14] For example, "speakers of verb-framed and satellite-framed languages differ in their rhetorical styles when describing the same motion event. Satellite-framed speakers tend to provide dynamic descriptions of motion events, loaded with expressive details about directionality and Manner of motion, whereas verb-framed speakers are said to provide static descriptions with less details about Manner and directionality" (251).

[15] "A 'construction' is defined as any pairing of form and meaning, which can range from simple structures, such as morphemes (-s) or lexemes (cat), to more abstract and complex syntactic configurations" (287), such as sentences and presumably larger constructions like paragraphs, etc. The theoretical point is that in CL there is no strict separation between linguistic form and meaning; they are always analyzed and interpreted together, in conjunction with one another.

the translated text, the sociocultural setting of reception, and so forth. This article goes on to explore variations in the degrees of linguistic and semantic equivalence (284) that are manifested in specific relation to constructional mismatch (289).[16] An empirical way of testing for such translational incongruity is described by the authors, namely, through eye-tracking techniques (291), and the outcome of their limited experimentation is then documented with special reference to the general hypothesis (and three corollaries) "that the problems caused by constructional mismatch in translation would [result] in effortful cognitive processing" (295) and the application of different translation strategies (304).

Part IV of CLT includes two essays devoted to the subject of culture and translation. In the first, Enrique Bernárdez presents one of the most insightful studies of this collection on the subject of "A Cognitive View on the Role of Culture in Translation" (313–338). The problem with many "key cultural words…is not finding a more or less equivalent in another language, but transmitting their cultural content" (313–314). One wonders then if the term "equivalent" in any sense can be used in such cases. Bernárdez overviews some of the main strategies for dealing with conceptual metaphors in translation (315–316), which leads to a consideration of several special cases, namely, the actual cultural "non-equivalence of (apparently) equivalent metaphors" (316) and the implicated cultural values or "conditioning" of figurative language (319). Under the theme "culture is also present in the grammar," a crucial assumption concerns "the presence of (identifiable and falsifiable) cultural elements in language, especially in linguistic structures and, still more precisely, syntactic structures" (322),[17] for example, the comparatively higher level of metaphoricity (metaphor and metonymy) found in English than in Chinese (323). While one would agree that this is a linguistic as well as a cognitive issue, it may be debated as to whether we are dealing strictly with a syntactic as opposed to a purely lexical feature. An interesting case study considers the abundant use of personal pronouns in English and Esperanto (which is "very much based on a few Western European languages," 324) in comparison with Eastern and Southeastern Asian and Oceanic languages such as Chinese, Japanese, and Indonesian in which "personal reference is usually kept to a minimum" for the sake of politeness (324–329). In conclusion, the author underscores the pervasiveness of cultural influence in language usage (330–333), which leads to the principle that in both the SL and TL "different cultural domains have to be distinguished, and it is within these domains that translators have to take their decisions" (334) with respect to figurative as well as more literal texts.

The second article devoted particularly to cultural issues is "Cultural Conceptualisations and Translating Political Discourse" by Farzad Sharifian and Maryam Jamarani (339–371). Following the approach of cultural linguistics,[18] the authors underscore the perception and sensitivity that is required when facing "the complexities involved in translating key concepts in international politics," first of all with special reference to how terms such as "concession," "compromise," and "jihad" are understood and translated in Persian as distinct from their conception in English (340). The point is that "words and their translations are not just interchangeable labels denoting some given immutable feature of the world but keys opening the door to different configurations of the world… [including] connotations from the socio-political environment in which they are used" (341, citing Cohen). The authors then direct their attention to more problematic language for translators to deal with, such as metaphors of conflict (350) and figurative language used in political discourse (352)[19]—Iranian political discourse in particular (354), for example, the "US deserves a punch in the mouth" (363). In conclusion, "since language is socio-culturally and politically situated, the use and translation of figurative language in international political discourse may entail considerable risks or produce substantial rewards, depending on the context of translation" (368)—and of course the purpose for which it is intended.

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[16] The two basic lexical-syntactic forms tested were resultative versus predicative constructions in the rendering from English (a satellite-framed language) into Spanish (a verb-framed language) (290, 294).

[17] This has reference to so-called "ethnosyntax—broadly defined as the study of connections between the cultural knowledge, attitudes, and practice of speakers, and the morphosyntactic resources they employ in speech," encompassing also the "diverse range of grammar-culture effects" (322, citing Enfield).

[18] "Cultural Linguistics shares with Cognitive Linguistics the premise that language is grounded in human conceptualisation, but it places a particular emphasis on the *cultural* nature of conceptualisations" (340).

[19] In such CL analysis the notion of "frame" and "framing" is important, that is, with reference "to use of a particular word to evoke a particular schema," thus "mediating," or "shaping, pounding, distorting, and/or constraining, the message for the audience" (353).

Part V of CLT consists of two articles that were apparently difficult to categorize in one of the four preceding sections. In the first, "Experimental Lexical Semantics at the Crossroads between Languages" (375–394), Michele I. Feist aims to "investigate issues of meaning and equivalence with respect to spatial relational terms…because this domain is pervasive in human communication," and therefore "virtually every translator will need to translate terms from this domain" (376).[20] As shown by many studies in the semantic typology of spatial language, "spatial relational terms are among the most difficult to control" (376) during interlingual communication because they "vary across languages not only in the distinctions that they lexicalize along a given dimension…and in kind…but also in the dimensions that are important to their meanings" (378). Feist then reports the results of some elaborate experimentation across a number of different languages with respect to "the multi-componential nature of the meanings of the English prepositions *in* and *on*" (380). The challenge posed is that "because the meanings of spatial relational terms draw on multiple semantic components, the meanings of potential translation equivalents may align along some, but not all dimensions, resulting in subtle but important differences in meaning" (382). The author's experimental model then begins to "provide a foundation for comparing the meanings of terms drawn from multiple languages grounded in concrete choices to use the terms as descriptions of reality" (391), thus indicating a potential translational continuum ranging between closer equivalence and complete non-equivalence.

In the book's final essay, Anna Hatzidaki presents "A Cognitive Approach to Translation: The Psycholinguistic Perspective" (395–414). In this study the author contrasts various past and present "empirical and experimental methodologies used to examine translation and comments on their weaknesses and merits,"[21] including a review of "a number of psycholinguistic studies where different approaches to translation have been employed" (395). She then surveys experimental psycholinguistic techniques that explore "the role of translation direction in language representation and processing" (399) as well as the "effects of linguistic and extra-linguistic factors in conceptual and lexical access during translation at the *lexical* level" (401) and also the *sentential* level (404). In a final section, the author reports on several experimental methods that probe "what brain activity can tell us about cognitive processes involved in translation" (407). Her conclusion is that "translation is not only an adequate research field that offers ample opportunities to investigate Cognitive Linguistics postulates and test psycholinguistic assumptions, but also fairly ideal to explore from a psycholinguistic perspective to enrich the field of Translation Studies itself," for example, with respect to salient factors such as the scope of translation units, textual pragmatics, equivalence, text register, and bilingualism (410–411).

While the various articles of this volume do not offer those who have carefully kept up on translation theory and practice a great deal of *new* information about the importance of cognition and culture in their craft,[22] they do present a great deal of what we already know from the perspective of cognitive linguistics, which to my mind offers the best contemporary framework for explaining translation in a cogent and coherent manner. There is a certain amount of repetition among the individual presentations, but such re-expression is not necessarily a detriment to the book, since this complex theory, in some of its deeper aspects at least, does benefit from varied formulations along with different examples to increase one's comprehension. In addition, the many disparate languages used for detailed exemplification and case studies significantly enhance the value of this collection of well-composed scholarly enquiries. I can therefore strongly recommend CLT as an essential reference text for use in translation courses at the intermediate level and above—as well as required reading for all secular and as well as scripture-based translation teachers and consultants.

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[20] "The job of a translator involves the extraction of meaning from a source language text and the recreation on meaning in the target language" (376). This statement is later nuanced in more suitable CL terms to read: "The translator's task, then, becomes to reconstruct [as precisely as possible] the 'representation of reality conceived of by [the] author' of the source language text" (376, citing Hu)—through the use of equivalent (the most appropriate) linguistic forms of the TL.

[21] "The point of departure is the earliest psychological tool, *Think Aloud Protocol* (TAP), according to which the mental processes that undergo the translation task may be revealed by being explicitly uttered" (395–396).

[22] Indeed, the key factors of cognition and culture complemented the many linguistically-oriented books and articles of Bible translation pioneers of the mid-twentieth century, e.g., periodic studies that appeared in the journal *Practical Anthropology*. For some differing, but often complementary, pedagogical perspectives on these central issues in more recent times, see for example, Harriet Hill, Ernst-August Gutt, Christoph Unger, Rick Floyd, *Bible Translation Basics: Communicating Scripture in a Relevant Way* (Dallas: SIL International, 2011); Timothy Wilt and Ernst Wendland, *Scripture Frames & Framing: A Workbook for Bible Translators* (Stellenbosch: Africa Sun Media, 2008). It remains for CL theorists now to put together a well-crafted didactic text that can teach basic principles and procedures for translation.