

***Gender Approaches in the Translation Classroom:
Training the Doers***
edited by Marcella De Marco and Piero Toto (2019)
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The past decades have witnessed wide recognition of the interdisciplinary nature of translation studies and gender studies (Simon 1996; Corrius, De Marco and Espasa 2016). However, studies regarding awareness of gender-related issues in the translation classroom are still underrepresented. The volume *Gender Approaches in the Translation Classroom: Training the Doers*, edited by Marcella De Marco and Piero Toto, comes as a response to this gap of research in related fields. It presents a diverse range of innovative studies of gender-related issues in formal instructional contexts, aiming to raise students' awareness of gender issues in the translation classroom as well as to foster their critical perception of the sociocultural implications of translation activities.

The fundamental rationale for gender studies in the translation classroom resides in the conception of what is called gender mainstreaming, that is,

a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. (2)

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Such an advance of social perception necessitates the concomitant change of language use in translation activities, in particular when it relates to language that may engender disputes over sexism. As such, the authors believe that it is paramount to integrate gender training into translator training to ensure consistency of social perception and language representation. The classroom, as a major venue for training translators to date, is consequently the starting point of such an endeavour.

As the editors point out in the introductory chapter, a number of higher education institutions have begun to pay attention to integrating gender-inclusive agendas into their strategic plans; this is often done to showcase their inclusiveness and attract more potential students. It is manifested in the study by Montés (Chapter 5), which reveals the contradiction inherent in universities: claiming gender equality principles, yet failing to use gender-inclusive language in marketing campaigns (the study looks at two universities in Germany). Despite their attempts to present a gender-equality persona, some British universities (Chapter 6) impede the integration of feminist or queer pedagogy into translation courses because of their ignorance of the ideological dimensions of gendered perspectives. These two studies suggest the ineffectiveness of changing student awareness of gender issues and their social responsibilities at the university level and thus call for the pedagogy of raising such awareness at the classroom level.

Among the possible pedagogical practices, literary texts can be a means by which cultivation of gender awareness can be integrated into the classroom teaching process. In fact, three of the ten empirical studies in this volume describe the employment of literary texts to achieve the purpose of gender awareness in translator training. Among them, Barrós and Alcalde (Chapter 9) adopt the Irish-Canadian writer Emma Donoghue's collection of reimagined fairy tales *Kissing the Witch* as a backdrop and implement a three-phase methodology to raise gender awareness among third-year undergraduate students of an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) course. Similarly, Henry-Tierney (Chapter 3) employs contemporary women's writing to examine the institutional challenges in designing a lesson concerning gender and sexuality issues in translations. She also elaborates the role of virtual learning platforms in facilitating students' discussions and the solution of such sensitive issues. Santaemilia (Chapter 8) examines legal thrillers to question the 'androcentric logic underpinning the patronizing representation of women in the legal profession' (4).

Apart from literary texts, the use of real-life teaching materials is also recognised as an important means for raising students' gender awareness in classrooms. This is particularly true when employing 'authentic' materials or tasks that allow students to 'take full responsibility for their own learning process' (46) and 'be exposed to the complexity and the problem-solving

constraints' (ibid) a translator might encounter in everyday activities. Two studies in this book touch upon this topic. Specifically, Carrasco (Chapter 4) found that tasks designed for students to translate LGBT+ organisations' websites may promote them to critically reflect on their role as target text producers and their involvement in public engagement initiatives. Following this thought, Ranzato (Chapter 7) takes the 'inauthentic' representation of queerness in dubbed films and TV series to investigate students' awareness of and sensitivity to LGBT-related materials.

Overall, this volume offers a well-organised collection of empirical research that may help students to 'develop a critical and reflective translation process with a gender lens' (159). While the first chapter introduces readers to the broad field of translation studies and gender studies, the concluding chapter elaborates the practical considerations for applying a gender perspective in the translation process and calls for the specialisation of interpreters in gender perspective; and thus the editors integrate the chapters into a coherent and accessible volume. In addition, each chapter in the book is self-contained and readers can select chapters on the basis of their research interests.

It may be noted that this book covers limited research contexts, including the UK, Italy and Spain, which calls attention to the need for relevant research in other sociocultural settings. Having said that, this volume represents a courageous attempt at investigating the relatively underexplored field of cultivating the gender awareness of translators-to-be in formal instructional contexts and therefore is worth reading for researchers and practitioners in both translation- and gender-related fields.

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References

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