

Byrne, Jody. (2012). *Scientific and Technical Translation Explained: A Nuts and Bolts Guide for Beginners*. Oxon & New York: Routledge, pp. 229, \$39.95. ISBN: 978-1-905763-36-8.

Olohan, Maeve. (2016). *Scientific and Technical Translation*. Oxon & New York: Routledge, pp. 253, \$39.95. ISBN: 978-0-415-83786-6.

Jody Byrne and Maeve Olohan have both published textbooks for Scientific and Technical Translation. This review examines both books, comparing content, pedagogical approaches, and appropriate deployment of the two texts for various levels of training. The overall conclusion is that the two books present such a wealth of information that they should ideally both find a home in the global context of a translator training program.

1. Introduction

Teaching Scientific and Technical Translation (STT) should incorporate theoretical and scholarly literature into the syllabus for any serious professional course, but in the absence of any single text book, instructors have had to collect materials (technical standards, professional and scholarly articles, and book chapters) to support discussion and to orient students to the language industry. Although a handful of scholarly works have existed (Pinchuck 1977; Wright and Wright 1993; Byrne 2006, for instance), they have not always been suited for classroom work. Others (e.g., Hahn 2004 for German-English-German scientific and engineering texts) have been designed for a specific language pair and direction, and are therefore not universally applicable. The current question posed by the existence of two worthy texts is: which one should an instructor use? The purpose of this comparative review is NOT necessarily to answer such a question – indeed, they were both featured in my most recent STT course. This review focuses on strengths of both texts.

2. Overall approaches

Byrne addresses the role of STT as one sub-function of technical communications in terms not just of textual content, but also of narrative style and presentation. To quote from the author's website (Byrne 2012b), it appears he has followed his own advice to "weed out excessive text, dialogue or detail [...] to keep the scenario as lean and streamlined as possible." His treatment clearly meets students at an introductory stage and provides the background to proceed at a professional level.

Olohan's work addresses post-graduate STT courses. At times, it commands a higher degree of concentration and offers an elevated level

of metadiscourse, particularly with regard to academic linguistics. Her list of outcomes-style objectives also reflects industry expectations, promising a greater understanding of the STT environment, STT text analysis and translation, translation evaluation, and the mastery of field-specific metalanguage as a means for understanding and justifying choices made during the translation process.

Given the apparent scaffolding of *beginner* and *post-grad* levels, the two works are not necessarily articulated from an undergrad (nuts and bolts) to an MA level of discourse, although perhaps that was the publisher's original intent. Despite some overlap in content, the two works complement and supplement one another, but they could be used separately in a program that offers specialized courses for both levels.

The challenge of this kind of book is that STT classes are offered at BA/BS and MA/MSc levels in a variety of languages and countries, although worldwide, given the hegemony of English as the language of science, $en \rightarrow n //$ and $n \rightarrow en$ comprise a significant pair of translation directions, where n is a placeholder for virtually any other language. As a consequence, any textbook written in English is likely to be used in courses not only throughout the Anglophone diaspora (UK, North America, Australia, South Africa, India, etc.), but also anywhere English is the primary Language B of instructors and students

Such courses may be offered as stand-alone workshops, translation-oriented add-ons for generic language degrees, or as modules in Translation Studies curricula (e.g., the European Master's in Translation (EMT) and respected MA programs in the Americas, Australia, China, etc.). Teaching goals (formative exercise vs. professional competence) can vary, as can teaching staff, with some courses taught by 'foreign language teachers' and literary translators, with others taught by seasoned STT practitioners.

As a result of this diversity, some students (and instructors) may need instruction in theory, industry practice, and translation tools, but their curricula may also have provided adequate background. Both Byrne and Olohan take pains to address this varied global audience, with the caveat that they also both reflect Hyberno-British perspectives when citing standards and relevant regulations. As a consequence, instructors may want to seek out their own national or regional standards and related materials.

3. Structure and presentation

Olohan's introductory chapters posit a framework for genre-specific chapters that follow, grounding her discussion in the "translation landscape," and focusing on text genre, text type and communicative

purpose. She orients her analysis to the *translation brief*, or from the industry perspective, the *translation project specification*, citing Melby's Translation Parameters taken from the ISO/TS 11669 (2012) standard, and originally, US ASTM F2575 (2014). Byrne also orients students to a project-specific translation brief, and provides a breakdown of the actors in the translation/localization environment. Taken together, the presentations clarify industry-oriented team approaches.

Both textbooks focus on terminology collection/extraction and management, with Byrne offering a number of discussions and exercises. Not surprisingly, given her strong background in corpus linguistics, Olohan introduces corpus creation tools and methods as an approach to terminology management. This methodology provides an alternative to the specialized (and often expensive) term-extraction solutions featured with translation tools. Importantly, this chapter provides information on compiling terminological resources based on parallel and supportive corpora as a first step in the translation of scientific and technical texts. In addition to available terminology management tools, she also cites the ISO/TerminOrgs (Lisa) TBX standard (ISO 30042, 2008) for the interchange and interoperability of terminological data.

As noted, both authors organize their chapters around text types and text genres, notably: technical instructions and manuals, technical data sheets, brochures, scientific articles of academic nature, and popular science. Byrne includes technical case studies, and Olohan explores patents, outlining the parts of a patent, patent terminology and prescriptive style. Both authors provide excellent English language examples of their selected text genres, together with illustrative analyses.

Where Byrne offers pragmatic information and advice, even LSP (language for specific purposes)-related lists of useful terms, Olohan cites important background resources, with emphasis on translation and tech writing standards. She also leans toward detailed discourse analysis, addressing issues pertinent to each genre, and introducing metadiscourse associated with particular communities of practice. For students and non-specialist translator trainers with limited experience translating these kinds of texts for industry or publication, her presentation provides a wealth of information concerning industry norms, stylistic variation across languages, genre-specific knowledge elements, and cues concerning possible language or cultural factors affecting translation choices.

For instructors who do not already have a repertoire of STT texts (my standard line-up matched up almost seamlessly), a viable course of action would be to find similar texts to accommodate their language direction. Olohan teases out characteristic features and differences between, for instance, scientific research articles and popular science, focusing on culture-specific adaptation and transcreation aspects that may prove

specifically relevant at both the micro- and macro-contextual levels. Her meticulous analysis of the individual samples is both a strength and a caution – students may not have time or patience to read every detail.

4. Pedagogical methodology

Both authors embed suggested in-class activities and exercises in each chapter. Byrne's special strength is his introduction of a template for what he calls "Your document profile," which encourages the analysis and documentation of individual student assignments and provides a roadmap for formulating a translation brief, offering structural support for those students who sometimes find it difficult to express themselves reflectively about the process.

Byrne also introduces his own template for translation assessment. Similar in some respects to the summative ATA Framework for Standardized Error Marking (American Translators Association 2016), Byrne's model is more formative in structure in that it offers opportunity for evaluators to provide feedback within the assessment instrument itself. In keeping with a student-centered approach, he presents the assessment model as a tool for students to use to support self- and peer-assessment, and invites them to add rubrics of their own. Of course, instructors could use this or a similar framework themselves. Not only is the system more student-oriented than the ATA framework; it is also simpler to understand and apply than Colina's more comprehensive "Translation Quality" approach (Colina 2015: 220 ff). There is no particular reason why Byrne's template or his detailed introduction of translation error types needs to be applied specifically to STT – it can be employed for more generic introductory translation courses as well.

5. Recommendations

As noted above, close examination of the two works treated by this review indicates that both texts are extremely valuable as supplements for training modules addressing Scientific and Technical Translation. Anyone teaching courses involving such texts (even if they only comprise a component of more generic introductory courses) should be familiar with both presentations and should sort out the aspects of each text most likely to benefit the appropriate instructional level and specialization for a given course. It is highly unlikely that any instructor is so experienced in the field that there will not be valuable information or useful pedagogical techniques that can enhance the training environment. Furthermore, even if there is insufficient time during a given course or module to cover every chapter in both books, the information is so valuable that students intending to pursue careers as translators will benefit immensely from reading and rereading both texts on their own, and from having them on

hand for future reference. Together they represent a fine contribution to the literature supporting translator training.

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