

Learning to translate, translating to learn

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[See table of contents](#)

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As we celebrate decades of translation scholarship, we also acknowledge centuries of language teaching and translator training, and thousands of years of diplomacy, commerce, scholarship and cultural exchange between speakers of different languages. We have seen enormous advances in the evolution of theories concerning the processes, products and potential of translation as well as its impact and implications, and great strides have been made in the tracing of a history of translation and translators. Technology continues to be developed, from primitive attempts at machine translation to the sophisticated software of Computer-Assisted Translation tools and other resources aimed at facilitating the task of the translator, as well as devices such as those used in eye tracking and the complex machinery for recording electrophysiological observations which allow us to see what goes on inside the translator's head. The progress is undeniable. But how much have we learned and how much has it changed in practice?

Throughout the 20th century, translation in language teaching was theorized extensively by applied linguists as part of the monolingual philosophy underlying "communicative" methods that gave priority to the spoken word in "real" contexts. Nonetheless, while exchange between speakers of different languages is often spoken live and can thus be considered "real," communicative teaching methods do not always address the linguistic concerns of the millions who do not need to speak a second language, but rather wish to gain access to knowledge written in a foreign language. In that sense, the purpose for many students of foreign languages today is the same as it has been for centuries: to translate. This paper speculates what might be different on translation's horizons while recognizing that many of us continue to learn to translate so that we can translate in order to learn, and that how we learn remains essentially the same.

Anna Maria D'Amore is a lecturer and translator at the Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas in Mexico. She currently teaches English reading comprehension courses to students in the Literature and Linguistics undergraduate programme, as well as running the occasional literary translation workshop. She is involved in various translation-related research projects and activities in several departments of the university, with the help of both undergraduate and postgraduate students. She is the author of *Translating Contemporary Mexican Texts: Fidelity to Alterity* (2009) and is the editor/translator of the Spanish-English bilingual anthology *Voces Zacatecanas/Zacatecan Voices* (2012), a collection of short stories and poems written in Zacatecas, Mexico.