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The Translation Continuum: From Theory to Pedagogy

Translation suffers from a bad reputation in the context of language learning. Rigidly defined as a process of transfer which transforms an original Source Text, written in a given Source Language, into a derivative Target Text, written in a Target Language, translation is perceived as a 'difficult' task, focusing on terminological and grammatical accuracy, and best reserved for specialist training. Yet practices of translation are much more fluid and pervasive than such rigid views suggest.

In this talk, I will propose a different notion of translation, based on a continuum of practices which allow users – including learners – to move between languages and cultures. I will use examples taken from research in learner's self-perception as well as from classroom teaching and on line learning environments to explore how translation can move from the margins of language acquisition to the centre of our pedagogical practices.