

Teaching English Through Translation

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Abstract: Translation is the art of using language in both forms: into a foreign language and from a foreign language. While translating, students can think not only in their native language but also in a foreign language. The pedagogy of teaching English is not based on only the method of teaching English through English. It can be also possible through their mother tongue. Using their own language gives them more confidence and it gives a sense of security while learning a foreign language. Translation is the method of using a mother tongue as a resource for the promotion of language learning. Translation develops three qualities essential to any language learning: accuracy, clarity, and flexibility. So it has been served as an effective tool for learning a foreign language. The present paper focuses on the use of translation in helping learners to acquire, develop and strengthen their knowledge and competence in the English language. Translation is an effective pedagogical tool for language learning which consists of the four activities such as listening, reading, speaking and writing. While translating into another language, students are able to learn the vocabulary, the difference in the structure of various languages and the common phrases and idioms in every particular language. There was a controversial statement regarding translation telling that it should be banned from the classrooms of English Language Teaching. But it seems now that the general attitude towards translation has begun to change: The findings of the research suggest that translation is a good tool in the English language learning process which aims at enhancement of students' foreign language skills.

Keywords: Language, Translation, Language Teaching, Language Skills

I. INTRODUCTION

Translation has been considered as a fantastic tool for teaching language skills, but at the same time it has been the primary controversial field ever since the technique has been used by the language learners. Translation as a language learning activity was considered as being unsuitable within the context of foreign language learning (Brown, 2002). It is really considered as a task of converting the meaning from one language to another. Traditional grammar translation method was the most effective tool used by the language learners from the early days. This method is considered to be closely associated with the language translation from native language to foreign language and vice versa. It is not only a mechanical linguistic meaning conveyance but also is a legitimate pedagogical tool especially in a language learning environment. In the present scenario of the pivotal point of foreign language teaching, translation has been banned from

the language classroom for quite a while. Moreover, it has been a frequent object of ridicule by those eager to demonstrate their uncompromising allegiance to modern ways. The attitude towards this method has begun to change and now a days it has got a vital place in the language classrooms. This paper focuses on the possibility of using translations as an effective tool for language learning and its scope of using this tool in language classrooms.

II. THE NEED OF TRANSLATION

“Translation happens everywhere, all the time, so why not in classroom?” Duff (1989:6) Learners of a foreign language do refer to their mother tongue to aid the process of acquisition of another language. In light of this, translation into a second language can help them systematize and rationalize a learning mechanism that is taking place anyway.

Many researchers support the idea that translation is a motivating activity. Carreres (2006) conducted a questionnaire and came to the conclusion that learners overwhelmingly perceive translation exercises as useful for language learning. Consequently, it was in response to student feedback that he decided to introduce translation more substantially in language classes. He added that translation, by its very nature, is an activity that invites discussion and students are only too happy to contribute to it, often defending their version with remarkable passion and persuasiveness. Furthermore, Lavault (1985) pointed out that one of the reasons quoted by teachers to explain their use of translation in the classroom was that students asked for this exercise and enjoyed it, too. Similarly, Conacher (1996) reported excellent student response to a translation course. Hervey et al. (2002) also gathered enthusiastic feedback from the students attending her translation course at the University of St Andrew's in Scotland. However, it suffices to say that teachers should constantly bear in mind that in a language learning environment, the first language ought to be employed prudently.

III. THE HISTORY OF TRANSLATION IN TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Translation was the root of language teaching for a very long time, and then rejected as new advanced methodologies started to appear. It was a key element of the Grammar Translation Method, which was derived from the classical method of teaching Greek and Latin. This was not a positive learning experience for many: as well as learners memorizing huge lists of rules and vocabulary, this method involved them translating whole literary or historic texts word for word. Unsurprisingly, new methodologies tried to improve on this. The Direct or Natural Method established in Germany and France around 1900 was a response to the obvious problems associated with the Grammar Translation Method. In the Direct Method the teacher and learners avoid using the learners' native language and just use the target language. Like the Direct Method, the later Audio-Lingual Method tried to teach the language directly, without using the L1 to explain new items. Subsequent 'humanistic' methodologies such as the Silent Way and Total Physical Response and communicative approaches moved even further away from the L1, and from these arise many of the objections to translation.

IV. ARGUMENTS AGAINST TRANSLATION

According to Carreres, Translation is an artificial exercise that has no place in a communicative methodology. Also, it is a restrictive method of teaching which is confined to only two skills: reading and writing.

- ✓ Translation is counterproductive in that it forces learners always to view the foreign language through their mother tongue; this causes interference and a dependence on native language that inhibits free expression in the foreign language.

- ✓ Translation is a purposeless exercise that has no application in the real world, since translators normally operate into and not out of their mother tongue.
- ✓ Translation, particularly into a foreign language, is a frustrating and de-motivating exercise in that the student can never attain the level of accuracy or stylistic polish of the version presented to them by their teacher. It seems to be an exercise designed to elicit mistakes, rather than accurate use of language.
- ✓ Translation is a method that may well work with literary-oriented learners who enjoy probing the intricacies of grammar and lexis, but it is unsuited to the average learner.

It is also a widely held view that translation is not a suitable exercise in the initial stages of learning (Marsh, 1987). It is argued that, before learners can tackle translation productively, they need to have acquired a significant level of proficiency in the foreign language. They need to have moved beyond beginner's level.

According to Owen (2003) the rationale against using translation is founded on accommodating learners to share their precious languages; this is not a productive use of the opportunities given by the class.

V. ADVANTAGES OF TRANSLATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Translation as an aid to learning is likely to be favored by analytically oriented learners. With the growing importance of learner-centered language teaching, it is argued that anything that helps the learner in his or her own way is surely an asset. Translation is highly important for foreign language teaching merely because it allows conscious learning and control of the foreign language, and as a result, it reduces native language interference. Using translation can make learning meaningful because the learner is an active participant in the process. It is the process which is regarded as the development of multi-linguistic competence. Many researchers support the idea that translation is a motivating activity. Translation into the native language is just a tool and a very effective one to help learners grasp a particular foreign language structure. When the students try to translate from one language to another, they learn the culture of both the languages and the variations in the structure of different languages. Many studies suggested a positive and facilitative role of translation (Newmark 1991; Husain 1994; Kern 1994; Omura 1996). Recent research in pragmatics also suggests that greater awareness of the first language helps in the more effective communicative use of a foreign language. Translation is a means by which both languages can be assessed. Rather than being seen as an obstacle to real language use, translation might more effectively be viewed as a way of fine-tuning the language to be used in given situations and conditions (Owen, 2003). The mode of teaching language using this method can be different from any other methods that can be used in a language class room. The translation method can inculcate the talent of using multi language skill at the same time. Liao (2006) summarizes the positive aspects of using translation:

- ✓ it can help students comprehend the foreign language

- ✓ it can help students to check whether their comprehension is correct
- ✓ it eases memory constraints in memorizing more words, idioms, grammar, and sentence structures;
- ✓ it can help students develop and express ideas in another language
- ✓ it can help reduce learning anxiety and enhance motivation to learn a foreign language

VI. CLASSROOM APPROACHES

Translation is a difficult activity to set up and can go badly wrong, producing some of the disadvantages described in the above passages. There are many aspects to designing and executing the task. Firstly, it is necessary to plan carefully, and to identify the right kinds of teaching aids. Ensure that your source material really does focus on these, and has not been introduced just because you like it. Try to integrate translation with other skills and to practice wherever possible. Make sure the learners have dictionaries and other usage sources available. In this advanced technological era, they can even use online resources which help the development of vocabulary power. It is important to recognize the problems associated with traditional approaches to translation and find solutions to these problems, such as ensuring these tasks are made simple, always working in groups, and maintaining the element of a communication gap at possible areas.

As there are many advantages for using this methodology rather objections above showed, learner perception of this activity is key. It is useful to explain your aims and discuss any concerns that your learners have; many activities use materials that can be generated by learners, which can have positive impact on motivation and dynamics. Avoid activities which require your learners to use their native language a lot if you don't have a consensus in your class. Think about the possibilities and pitfalls of this kind of work in a multi-lingual group discussion and comparison of idioms and phrases may be very rewarding task. Finally, if you have interested

learners, encourage them to explore translation further by themselves - it is a fascinating, complex and worthy process.

VII. CONCLUSION

Translation as a language learning tool is still under research and is one of the most controversial topics in the language teaching and learning area. From the above study it has been found that translation is a useful tool for learning a foreign language. It is useful to learn not only the lexical resources of a language but also to learn its grammar and syntax in an easy way. When this method is integrated into daily classroom activities, it can help students to develop their four language skills- Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. It is an effective tool for language learning and can be used in higher level students' classrooms to improve the skills of English language.

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