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## The importance of translation in language learning

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### Abstract

Translation and education are tremendously important and sensitive sectors to work in, as it involves shaping someone's knowledge and experience. The right approach, method, direction and environment are all elements that need to be taken into account for a positive impact. With all its ramifications, sectors and groups of audience (in terms of age, level of expertise, generation, etc.), translating in the education sector is one of the least straightforward sectors, requiring detailed information to match the original intentions.

At Today's Translation, we have a vast experience of working in the Education sectors, having successfully translated brochures, training programs, research reports and also textbooks with very diverse target audiences. Our efficiency in this sector has been ensured by a very stringent selection of our professional translators for each project, who are not only native speakers and experts in the field, but also have a significant experience of at least 5 years. They always actively advise on best approaches, potential scenarios and tips for success.

In this paper, I would like to have a look on the role of the translator as a mediator between cultures. Rather than merely supplanting one form of words for another, the translator has the capacity to enhance our understanding of development issues and indigenous cultures by mediating ideas across cultural and national boundaries. The article presents case studies where translation has played a crucial role in bringing new learning and wider understanding to rich, indigenous cultures in the world thereby enabling languages to become more widely 'utilized and promoted through education, working towards formal protection by the respective state constitutions and curricula.

**Keywords:** Enhance of understanding, mediating cultures, new learning

### Introduction

In this paper, I would like to deal with the long standing issue of the role of translation in language learning. Previously, it has been ruled out as, at best, inapplicable and, at worst damaging. Recent researches have tried to refuse these arguments proving how that for a language learning process, translations can be so useful. This paper utilizes the existing researches and proposed models, however sporadic and scattered as they are, as well as the my experiences in the fields of EFL and translation teaching. A language-learning-centred-translation practice is pressed for as the need for a clear description to highlight the applicability of translation in language teaching is immediate. After studying the existing work and correlating it to findings through experience, it can be concluded that translation when made recourse to in a proper language learning setting and within a well-set framework, can be very useful.

We cannot deny the fact that both translation and foreign language learning share a common goal, namely, communication. One, thus, may wonder why translation cannot be used as an aid to L2 learning. The validity of using translation activities in the language class has been controversial and widely debated. The use of translation as a pedagogical tool in the foreign language class has been discredited for a number of reasons, such as being distinct from the four language skills, time-consuming, an impediment to learner's thinking in L2, ineffective gauge of learner's language skills, and interference in L2 learning (Malmkjaer 1998) [7]. However, after many decades of being shunned from language learning, translation is gradually being re-introduced as a viable activity in the language class. The distinction between the use of translation exercises for the purpose of learning a foreign language and for preparing for a professional career as a translator has been investigated by many linguists world-wide. These linguists represent a range of cultural backgrounds and teach foreign languages in many different countries. The large majority of those involved in the debate are

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in favor of using translation in the language classroom, such as Titford and Newmark they believe that the prevailing argument is that the problem does not lie in the use of translation but in how to effectively use translation in an EFL classroom. What is required, therefore, is a coherent and methodological approach to the use of translation in the language class; an approach which needs to be compatible with L2 learning. It is interesting to note that some linguists have gone to the extreme by calling for translation to be the „fifth“ skill in L2 learning, such as Newmark (1991:62), Ross (2000), and Leonardi (2009) [8, 2]. Similarly, learners, particularly beginners, have reported the use of translation as a language learning strategy (O'Malley 1990) [3], also found in his questionnaire study, that 88% of the students „regarded translation as very important for their learning“.

On the other hand, there have been voices that have discredited translation as a viable pedagogical mechanism in L2 learning and testing, such as Newson (1988, Owen (2003), Newson (1988) [4, 5], for instance, holds the view that translation causes interference, restricts the L2 learner to think in one language and transfer to another, preventing both the teacher and the student to use L2 only, and misleading the student to believe that there is a one-to-one equivalence in meaning between L1 and L2. More importantly, it does not encourage speaking in L2. And he claims that translation is counter-productive as it leads to interference; it is an unrealistic and purposeless activity which has no place in either the

Communication methodologies or in the real world. On the same lines, Owen (2003) [5] states translation can waste the valuable time of L2 students. The aim of the paper is, therefore, to argue for and present a methodological approach for using translation as a pedagogical tool in the foreign language classroom.

### **The scenario of the demise of using translation in L2 teaching**

Allen (2009) [7] provides an informative overview of grammar translation method how it became ancient scholastic method's modified version at the end of the 18th century. This reaction to the scholastic teaching method was primarily due to „the rapid increase of practical needs“... and „a potential ambiguity involved in the term itself“... which „commonly and intuitively meant performing a written translation of a (literary) text“ (Muskat-Tabakowska 1913:131). The grammar-translation method, which was used to teach Greek and Latin, used artificially made up decontextualized sentences to discuss grammatical features through word-for-word translation from and into L2. The foreign language was taught through word lists; it was contextualized, and no communicative interaction took place between the teacher and the students and/or among the learners in the classroom. Such a flawed pedagogical practice led Bloomfield (1933) to state that this method „had misled the learner“. The grammar-translation method has kept alive the pedagogical focus of scholastic method on grammar and the text and it continued until 20<sup>th</sup> century as a form of foreign language teaching and learning. The pedagogical shortcomings of this method were observed by the Reform Movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century led by Sweet (1899/1664) and Jespersen (1901/1904). Subsequently, the use of translating activity in the language classroom was doomed as a consequence of the demise of grammar translation-method, becoming the proverbial case of the

baby being thrown out with the bath water. Critical assessments of the grammar-translation method and the rise of behaviorist and cognitive schools of thought in language learning led to the emergence of new foreign language teaching methods such as the „audio-lingual method“, the direct method, and the natural method during the 20th century (Vermees 2010:86) [1]. All these methods frowned on the use of L1 in the classroom. Similarly, the communicative approach of the 1970's and 1980's, with its focus on developing learners' communicative competence, discouraged the use of L1 in the language classroom.

Although the grammar-translation method has been discredited as an educational tool for foreign language learning, we believe that the arguments of the structural linguists and behaviorists that 1) translation disguises the differences which are present in between the linguistic systems of L1 and L2; and 2) it fails to reinforce the correct language behavior (Vermees 2010) [1], need to be revisited. Our observation and long experience in both language and translation teaching indicates the benefits of using translation for teaching-learning foreign languages. Also, research evidence from several linguists about the success of employing translation as a pedagogical tool in the language class, (Dagiliené 2010) points to its potential usefulness for foreign language learning. We are of the opinion that the methodological discussion of the similarities and differences between L1 and L2 through well-selected translation activities can reduce L1 interference (negative transfer) and intervention. Also, as will be shown in the second part of the paper, the discussion of cultural items and the contextualized discussion of vocabulary in L2 authentic texts can help raise the students' cultural awareness, and, thus, effectively reinforce the correct L2 behavior.

### **Shift in position**

A shift in position towards the use of translation in language teaching has recently taken place. As mentioned earlier, translation has now been called the „fifth“ language skill by some linguists (Newmark 1991) [8] and Pym (2000) translation can be used as a useful back-up tool within a communicative approach. Translation, when administered appropriately, can develop the learner's communicative skills from and into the foreign language. While there is growing evidence of the value of using L1 in the classroom it is believed that the methodological and systematic phasing in of translation activities should not be equated with the use of L1 per se in teaching L2. We also agree with Popovic (1999) [13] claims that “teachers should constantly bear in mind that in an EFL situation, L1 ought to be employed judiciously”. L2-learning-based translation activities can develop the student's inter-language competence rather than creating inter-language interference. For instance, one of the translation activities in foreign language teaching is the use of contrastive analysis through which the translation exercise can highlight areas where interference occurs in terms of grammatical structures in L1 and L2 (see below for a practical example). Translation, we believe, can be an effective teaching aid to eliminate inter-lingual interference through various translation activities based on textual analysis that aim to highlight the grammatical and stylistic patterns, the cohesion system, the lexical patterns, and the lexical voids of L1 and L2.

Translation exercises in the language classroom can develop the learner's cognitive awareness of L2 since it is a creative,

learner-centred, challenging and natural communicative activity. Such activities based on authentic texts can play a positive role in improving the student's L2 cultural awareness. Vienne (1998) <sup>[6]</sup> supports the use of translation for this particular purpose.

Through the different translation activities presented in the second part of the paper, we argue that translation is conducive means for teaching a foreign language and can create an active classroom interaction. Thus, the L2-learning-based translation approach we are proposing is a bridge between the comprehension approach and the communicative approach. For Ross (2000) <sup>[2]</sup>, translation can be used as a useful back-up tool within a communicative approach. Now, in the second part of the paper, we turn to presenting a methodological approach for using translation in the foreign language classroom. But first, we need to distinguish between the purpose and methodological approaches for using translation for foreign language teaching and to prepare learners to become professional translators.

### **Distinct purpose, distinct mechanism**

When the purpose is distinct, two types of translation can be distinguished. Based on the difference in purpose, the methodological approach to the L2 text will be distinct, too. A clear distinction must be developed between two types of translations both of them have different pedagogical aims:

- L2-learning-based translation (pedagogical translation or classroom translation). The learner's language skills, structural differences and similarities between L1 and L2, contextualization of vocabulary items, and L2 cultural awareness will be the prime target of the teaching process. Well-selected authentic text types should be used. From my point of view, journalistic texts have produced impressive results in improving language skills, vocabulary, and cultural awareness.

### **The pedagogical objectives are**

1. To enable the L2 learner improve his/her language proficiency in terms of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills,
  2. To enable the L2 learner improve his/her grammatical awareness of L2 through comparative and contrastive discussion of L2 and L1,
  3. To make the L2 learner aware of the cohesion system and stylistic features of L2 as distinct from L1,
  4. To encourage the L2 learner contextualize the vocabulary items selected from the text,
  5. To elevate the learner's cultural awareness of L2 through classroom interaction and speaking about the cultural matters raised in the text.
- Market-based translation (real translation or market translation). The learner's translation skills and proficiency will be targeted. The methodological approach aims to improve the student's practical translation skills based on translation theory, through putting theory into practice on various authentic text types (journalistic, legal, instructional, scientific, descriptive, and narrative). The pedagogical objectives are:
    1. To enable the would-be translator improve his/her market-bound translation skills from and into L2,
    2. To improve his/her practical translation competence for a professional career,

3. To enable students master the encoding and decoding of the source text,
4. To get to grips with the theory-based translation approaches,
5. To enable students improve their textual analysis techniques,
6. To enable students elevate their stylistic and rhetorical writing techniques in the target language, and source language.
7. To focus on translation as process and as product.

Having set up the above pedagogical objectives of the two distinct methodological approaches, we argue that in L2-learning-based translation, there is no need for a translation course book. However, such a course book is of value to the market-based translation.

L2-learning-based translation activities can develop the student's inter-language competence rather than creating inter-language interference. For instance, one of the translation activities in foreign language teaching is the use of contrastive analysis through which the translation exercise can highlight areas where interference occurs in terms of grammatical structures in L1 and L2. Translation, we believe, can be an effective teaching aid to eliminate inter-lingual interference through various translation activities based on textual analysis that aims to highlight the grammatical and stylistic patterns, the cohesion system, the lexical patterns, and the lexical voids of L1 and L2. There are various translation related exercises through which a teacher can promote the learner's language skills such as grammar, listening, reading, and vocabulary building. As mentioned earlier, it is unfair that translation tasks have been withdrawn from the foreign language classroom as a result of its association with the grammar translation approach.

The present discussion does not propose an argument for a foreign language class where the Classical Method, i.e., the Grammar Translation Method, is employed. One cannot argue that foreign language proficiency can be achieved through the teaching of grammar as a means to translate from and into the mother tongue. However, in foreign language teaching the use of translation can promote the learner's critical thinking through the contrastive analysis of language at various levels. Thus, conscious learning is developed. The learner would be made to realize that there is no one-to-one equivalence of meaning between the foreign language and his/her native tongue especially when the two languages are linguistically and culturally incongruent. It can, therefore be argued that the use of translation can minimize negative linguistic interference (negative transfer) experienced by the learner of a foreign language that is dissimilar to his/her mother tongue.

One also cannot deny the fact that during the learning of a foreign language, the learner undergoes what we call „cognitive translation“ through which foreign language information is mapped against that of the mother tongue. Foreign language information includes linguistic and paralinguistic data. The mapping cognitive process requires comparative and contrastive analysis of the data discussed in the class. However this doesn't make the use of translation as a pedagogical mechanism of promoting language proficiency co-extensive with bilingualism. Translation into the mother tongue can be introduced as a useful activity for oral classroom interaction (see below). In this way;

translation can be integrated into the communicative approach to foreign language teaching. Thus, translation can be of significant value to the development of the speaking skills. Our claim, therefore, is contrary to that made by Duff (1994)<sup>[1]</sup> in which translation is confined to the learning of reading and writing and that it is not a communicative activity as it does not involve oral interaction. The first part of the paper outlined a brief history of use of translation in the foreign language classroom as well as the various benefits of using translation activities for language learning. A distinction was also made between using translation for L2 development and for preparing professional translators. In the second part of the paper, we present major aims of using translation in the classroom, as well as considerations for text selection and some sample classroom activities.

Translation can be considered a positive pedagogical tool in teaching a foreign language through which learners can comprehend, internalize and develop communication skills, learn different foreign language skills, understand the syntactic, semantic, stylistic, and cultural contrast between L1 and L2, and eventually be able to use English in context more effectively. This is not to argue that translation will be the sole language activity; rather, it can be integrated with the teaching of other language skills. Translation can consolidate the teaching of 8 other skills during the process of foreign language acquisition. The aims of using translation in the foreign language classroom are:

1. To integrate translation and reading and pronunciation skills,
2. To integrate vocabulary practice and writing,
3. To raise awareness of context, culture, and meaning,
4. To integrate contrastive-comparative analysis between L1 and L2, and
5. To raise awareness of the cohesion system, lexical cohesion, and genre types through textual analysis.

### **Text selection**

The above aims can be achieved through the textual analysis of the source text (henceforth ST). In other words, translation can be employed as a vigorous tool to develop the learning of a foreign language through a systematic analytical and contrastive analysis of the source text where grammatical, semantic, stylistic, pragmatic, cultural similarities and differences can be highlighted. However, for such a pedagogical tool to be sharp enough to deliver the desired foreign language learning goals, the primary task lies in the careful selection of authentic source language texts. During the selection of the authentic source language texts, the teacher needs to look for a text that can display some of the textual elements through which he/she can lead the learners to undertake further comparative and contrastive investigation between the source language and the target language. Thus, our approach is not based on random source language discourse. Instead it is based on careful selection of authentic texts of different genres to expose the learners to selected structural, stylistic, semantic, and cultural features of the foreign language. We do not recommend translating isolated fragments of English texts into a target language. In this regard, although we agree with Alena suggestion (2008) that the teaching „material must be interesting and varied, covering a full range of styles and registers“, we disagree with her argument that it is „suitable“ for the language teacher to deal with „the translation of expressions of sentences out of context“.

### **Methodological techniques**

The section will explore what translation can be used for. In order to integrate translation activities into the L2 classroom, well-selected authentic L2 texts can be systematically phased in to boost the reading, writing, speaking, and listening language skills as well as in language development activities which aim to promote L2 learner's proficiency in grammar, vocabulary use, and cultural awareness. The use of authentic texts will enable the learner to contextualize L2 effectively. As for the L2 genre, we suggest the use of journalistic discourse which deals with media reports of interest such as political and socio-cultural matters. Such media reports have a motivating impact on the learning process especially when the news reports are relevant and taken from the same day or the same week newspaper. However, media reports should be well-selected in terms of language level of the learners. What follows is our insightful view on how translation can be integrated in the L2 classroom which has been borne time and again in our teaching.

### **Reading**

Not very much unlike the many other activities that require reading for comprehension, translation is even more so as at its core lies in the act of reproduction which involves the representation of the original. Analysis of the source text involves not only a cursory look at the text but reading it at a very deep level to reach its meaning and bring out to the surface its latent characteristics which may impact the way it should be translated. A great deal of attention should be devoted to the reading of the ST in order to translate it correctly. Learners will have to develop their critical reading skills in order to question the ST. Both form and meaning will have to be analyzed and assessed in order to decide what gets translated and how. At this juncture, focus will be laid on both linguistic and extra-linguistic features which, most of the time, are only superficially dealt with or completely ignored in traditional language teaching settings (Leonardi: 2010: 82).

As a learning process, transfer supports the learner's selection and remodeling of input structures as he progresses in the development of his inter-language knowledge. As a production process, transfer is involved in the learner's retrieval of this knowledge and in his efforts to bridge linguistically those gaps in his knowledge which cannot be side-stepped by avoidance. (Kohn 1986: 22)

Giving the text to the students in advance and asking them to read it in their own time could very well help the smooth progress and usefulness of the class. At this stage, depending on their proficiency level, students will have had a basic dictionary grasp of the new vocabulary and somehow understood the subject matter of the text. At the beginning of the class the instructor may ask the students to read the text aloud and correct their performance, particularly tackling pronunciation and intonation. Worksheets dealing with comprehension issues are then distributed among students who are encouraged to work in pairs or groups to answer the given questions. The worksheets should ideally be prepared to ensure complete comprehension of the text in order to avoid misunderstandings or misinterpretations. The whole class then discusses the questions and their answers. The instructor then finishes off this stage by reading the text aloud in front of the whole class, paying particular attention

to pronunciation, giving students enough time to internalize and repeat the correct pronunciation. After this the instructor may opt for a final check by randomly asking students to read the text again. If done accordingly, there would be no discernible difference between the reading activities normally found in FL classes and those approached from a translation point of view. Here inquisition and critical reading take precedence over fact-finding and passing familiarity. Within a translational context texts are read to be interpreted and understood for what they say, how they say it and why they are said in the ways opted for by the author. In such context reading occurs with the end in sight, i.e. the production of a target text that is both faithful to the ST and clear, and thus the first step towards this goal, namely reading, has got to be treated with great care. By way of helping students to arrive at a better understanding of the original text, Leonardi (2000) <sup>[2]</sup> provides the following sample critical reading form:

- Main topic
- Main issue(s) and problem(s) addressed
- Solution(s)
- Conclusion(s) reached
- Author's reasons for his/her statements
- Author's explanation is based on theory or fact?
- Main keywords
- Neutral or biased language?

Such questions and the discussion that ensues will go a long way towards a more aware act of reading. It goes without saying that alongside this thematic discussion the deliberation over the linguistic features of the text with the purpose of dealing with them in translation in sight will solidify the students' comprehension to a great extent.

### Writing

Translation from L1 into L2 can also develop the learner's writing skill and largely improve the appropriate usage of L2 grammatical structures, cohesion system, association patterns, and idiomatic expressions. We agree with Popovic (1999) <sup>[13]</sup> that translation from the native language into L2 helps rather than hinder the L2 learner's writing skills. However, our approach to developing the writing skills of L2 students is different from that advocated by Friedlander (1990:110-113) where learners are asked to draft a passage in their mother tongue and then translate it into L2. Our approach recommends the use of an L1 text which students translate into L2 keeping in mind the L2 linguistic, contextual, and cultural norms of L2. Students can also be advised by the teacher to write a summary of the L1 text in English, to provide a headline/title that sums up the theme of the text, or to provide the major points in the text. Riazi (2000) have observed that there are not so many models available of L2 writing and very few have been framed with aim to "account comprehensively for the complexities of educational circumstances". Furthermore through L2 ST Analyses students get exposed to different writing styles and text building techniques. In-depth analysis of the ST coupled with extensive exposure will surely enrich the repertoire on which students draw when writing and thus immensely improve the quality of their future production of L2 texts.

### Listening

This skill is tied up with the skill of reading as the peer readings of the text and most importantly that of the instructor's will surely play a role in improving their

listening ability. Consequently, they will pay more attention to the correct pronunciation of words and other related phonological phenomena. We can also suggest that ST be read and recorded, preferably by a native speaker of L2, for students to listen to. The instructor can make a number of listening comprehension questions for students to answer based on this listening task.

### Speaking

Authentic L2 texts are useful teaching materials for the development of the speaking skill. They can be introduced through the discussion of the major theme of the text to be translated, e.g. a media report dealing with a hotly debated topical issue from a certain standpoint. The discussion of the reporters' point of view and whether students agree or differ with it, the culture-specific aspects dealt with, and the discussion of how different countries tackle such issues, will all contribute to lively and impassioned classroom interaction. Such an activity will in turn play a major role in vocabulary development and speaking ability of the students. What is unique in the translational context we are proposing is that this type of discussion and the ideas it generates will be borne and directed by the production of L2 text. Reciprocally it will also affect such production and the ideas that students will bring to bear on it. There are also many speaking drills and techniques used in L2 teaching classes that instructors can have recourse to make their classes even more conducive to refining the students' speaking ability. Barlow (1998) reports about his Chinese, Spanish, and Italian learners of English don't mistake in accent in L2 English at different levels of L2 accent proficiency and it is true for "both normal / non constructive contexts with the nuclear accent and default right most position and in which L2 learners have to move the nuclear accent from right most position onto a non-final word". Cutrone (2009) reports that the Japanese L2 language learners do have language anxiety in L2 classes as compared to other classes due to cultural deviations, teachers' attitude and difficulty in interpreting terms because of their contradictory results. Some of the researchers suggest that a certain amount of anxiety help the foreign language learners' performance in the class, however it has debilitating effect on L2 performance. In addition to these basic four language skills translation can also further L2 development in respect to significantly impacting vocabulary development.

### Vocabulary development

Using translation seems more appropriate when teaching lexis. Since the 1980s, interest in the Lexical Approach to foreign language teaching and learning and in techniques of vocabulary acquisition has increased Phelps (1987) <sup>[10]</sup>. Translation activities can play a pivotal role in the building of the L2 vocabulary stock. The new vocabulary items can be employed in contextualized situations based on the occurrence of words and idiomatic expressions in the authentic text. Well-selected authentic L2 texts can significantly enable the learner to immensely develop his/her stock of very useful lexical items: words, collocates, expressions, phrasal verbs, formulaic phrases and idioms.

### To use or not to use translation in language teaching

From the turn of the twentieth century onwards, it has been generally assumed that L2 should be taught without

reference to the learners' L1. It has become a popular belief among teachers that the translation of L1 gets in the way with the acquisition of L2.

Newson (1988) <sup>[4]</sup> argued that using translation as a teaching and testing tool has four disadvantages. Translation (1) encourages thinking in one language and transferring to another, with accompanying interference; (2) deprives teacher and learner of the benefit of working within a single language; (3) gives false belief of the idea that there is a perfect one-to-one correspondence between languages; and (4) does not facilitate achievement of generally accepted aims such as emphasis on the spoken language.

Additionally, Allen (2006) <sup>[7]</sup> put forward some arguments against using translation as a language teaching tool:

Translation is an artificial exercise that has no place in a communicative methodology. Also, it is restrictive in that it confines language practice to two skills only: reading and writing.

Translation into L2 is counterproductive in that it forces learners always to view the foreign language through their mother tongue; this causes interferences and a dependence on L1 that inhibits free expression in L2.

Translation into L2 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 L2, is a frustrating and demotivating 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. It is argued that, before learners can tackle translation productively, they need to have acquired a significant level of proficiency in the L2 language. They need to have moved beyond beginner's level.

According to Owen (2003) <sup>[5]</sup> the rationale against using translation is founded on obliging learners to share their precious L2 use time with the L1; this is not a productive use of the opportunities given by the class. Despite the previous arguments against teaching translation, there are strong arguments for teaching translation. The following section will refute the arguments against teaching translation.

From an opposite perspective, translation, misconceived and overused, could be seen as a victim of the grammar-translation method, rather than the source of its evils. The problem was not translation as such, but a teaching methodology that separated language from its communicative function. Indeed, translation itself as it takes place in the real world is essentially linked to a communicative purpose. As Duff (1989: 6) puts it, "translation happens everywhere, all the time, so why not in the classroom?"

The consequence of the violent reaction against the grammar-translation method in teaching languages was a complete discredit of translation itself as a teaching tool. What was wrong with this method was not that translation was made use of, but that it was used badly.

Learners of a foreign language do refer to their mother tongue to aid the process of acquisition of L2 or, in other words they "translate silently" (Titford 1985: 78). In light of this, translation into L2 can help them systematize and rationalize a learning mechanism that is taking place anyway.

As for the contention that learners will never need to translate into L2 in their practical life, in many cases this is the expression of an ideal situation rather than a description of actual practice. It is arguably true that one needs native command of the target language when translating a text. However, in reality EFL learners need to translate into L2 to prepare them for what they might find outside the classroom.

Many researchers support the idea that translation is a motivating activity. Allen (2006) <sup>[7]</sup> 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) <sup>[8]</sup> 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) <sup>[11]</sup> reported excellent student response to a translation course. Hervey also gathered enthusiastic feedback from the students attending her translation course at the University of St Andrew's in Scotland.

As for the point of limiting the use of translation to advanced levels only, views translation activities as forming a continuum between the extremes of literal, explicative translation and that of communicative translation as it takes place in the professional world. In the former, translation into L1 is merely a tool--and a very effective one--to help learners grasp a particular L2 structure. As such, stylistic considerations are set aside. In the latter, the focus is on the communicative value of a given text. Learners are then expected to produce a text that could function in the L2 culture. Both approaches, provided they are carefully applied, have their place in the languages classroom and they should be viewed as mutually enhancing rather than exclusive.

The way translation is taught makes a difference. Allen (1998) argues that translation, if taught in a way that resembles the real life activity of translating, can bring into play the four basic language skills and yield benefits in L2 acquisition. He adds that some recent thinking on language learning has stressed the potential of translation as a means of language learning, if the process is regarded as the development of multi-linguistic competence. From a local point of view, Abdullateef (2001) <sup>[9]</sup> consider translation extremely important for foreign language teaching simply 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. Translation has also been used to teach grammar. In this respect, teachers can show students equivalent and non-equivalent structures between L1 and L2.

## Conclusion

Many studies suggested a positive and facilitative role of translation recent research in pragmatics also suggests that greater awareness of L1 helps in the more effective communicative use of L2. 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. In addition that Liao (2006) [6] summarizes the positive aspects of using translation are such as:

1. It can help students comprehend L2;
2. It can help students to check whether their comprehension is correct.
3. It eases memory constraints in memorizing more words, idioms, grammar, and sentence structures;
4. It can help students develop and express ideas in another language.
5. It can help reduce learning anxiety and enhance motivation to learn L2. In summary, the arguments for using translation in the language classroom outweigh the arguments against it.

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