

## INTERLINGUAL MEDIATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Ekaterina Zvereva<sup>1</sup> and Kamo Chilingaryan<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assoc.prof. Dr., RUDN University, The Russian Federation, [frakatr@yandex.ru](mailto:frakatr@yandex.ru)

<sup>2</sup>Senior Lecturer, RUDN University, The Russian Federation, [chili1@yandex.ru](mailto:chili1@yandex.ru)

\*Corresponding Author

### Abstract

In the era of non-stop and fast pace globalization, involving multiculturalism and polylingualism of relations in society, the skills of language mediation and translation gain particular attention. The article discusses the role of pedagogical translation as an active type of activity when teaching a foreign language. The authors analyze in detail both the negative and positive aspects of the translation in the classroom for learning a foreign language.

The authors believe that translation (and, as a result, linguistic mediation) can be a significant source of communicative tasks in training activities in a foreign language. The article presents possible models for the use of pedagogical translation in the classroom. It concludes that it is necessary to specify descriptors about the tasks and competencies of linguistic mediation.

**Keywords:** pedagogical translation, learning tools, linguistic mediation, communicative activity, communication skills, and competencies.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

One can hardly find anything more controversy in the history and modern methods of teaching a foreign language than the opinions on need and possibility of using translation in language teaching. The assessments vary from positive to negative.

Translation has been an essential part of learning a foreign language for an extended period. With the emergence and then the complete prevalence of communicative methods of teaching a foreign language, the translation method was forgotten, along with other "traditional" methods and techniques of teaching, such as dictation, reading aloud and training exercises. It had an utterly understandable explanation: besides "memorizing" whole pages of new words, the students had to translate these texts literally. New methods tried to force the translation out of the learning process, thus, eliminating the apparent problems associated with it.

For many years, the arguments that various theorists and practitioners brought against using pedagogical translation in a language classroom, its using as one of the methods for acquiring language skills were very different (Pedagogical Translation, PT): "the time that can be devoted to obtaining other skills"; "there may be negative consequences in the form of linguistic interference"; "development of exclusively written skills", and others.

Despite the diversity, all these arguments may be associated with the monolingual approach to teaching the

language that protects the teaching, carried out exclusively on L2, namely a foreign language, not native to the students or in a language which is the subject of study. However, in our opinion, this approach suggests some idealization, and abstraction. In many cases, the student's L1 (understood here as the mother tongue or the language, dominant in the group that most students speak) was used as a learning tool to facilitate learning by explaining language contrasts, and sometimes teachers do it unconsciously, covertly or not publicly in the use of translation for learning. It is necessary to add that students inevitably approach to translation as a cognitive or communication strategy, which is also used to give some examples. That is why the role of the PT over the last thirty years has been undergoing a profound process of revision and, therefore, renewal. Such authors as Lavault 1984 [14], Hurtado Albir 1988 [11], Duff 1990 [6] were among the founders of the methodology and practice of using the translation for educational purposes. Later, their ideas were developed by other innovators in this field. Here the authors cite the works of such researchers as Newmark 2001 [17], De Arriba Garcia, Cantero Serena 2004 [4], Gamboa 2005 [7], Gonzalez Davis 2007 [9], Cook 2010 [3], Leonardi 2010 [16], Galindo Merino 2013 [18], Laviosa 2014 [15], Alcarazo 2014 [1], Widdowson 2014 [20], Sanchez 2015 [19], Trovato 2016 [21], House 2016 [10].

## **2. MATERIALS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The authors of the article have nearly thirty years of classroom experience as teachers of foreign languages, and over the years we have tried a variety of techniques to help the students most effectively master the essential language competencies. Of course, we also used pedagogical translation in our practice. Based on the accumulated experience, it can be concluded that pedagogical translation has both negative and positive sides.

Let us consider the negative aspects of translation as a tool for learning a foreign language.

Translation does not teach students how to use the language. It does not help students develop communication skills. Translation encourages students to use their native language in a foreign language class, while the goal of modern learning is to exclude the native language from the process of learning a foreign language. Competence and skills of the translation may not be suitable for all categories of students. Perhaps the translation is perfect for students with an analytical mindset or for students who prefer verbal-language learning strategies. However, the translation will be an unacceptable teaching method for younger students or students with low language command. Students may not evaluate the translation method as an activity that will help them learn a foreign language.

On the contrary, they will treat it as a highly specialized and challenging activity, since when performing, in translation it is necessary to take into account not only the meaning of words but also several other aspects, including inflection, grammar, style, idiomatic expressions. What negative aspects do the teachers face, using translation as a means of teaching a foreign language in the classroom? Translation as an effective type of learning activity is rather difficult to organize, and the process of preparing exercises on translation takes much time. Teachers of a foreign language should be fluent in both native and foreign languages, as well as know the culture of native and foreign languages. Without this knowledge, translation can create more problems than good. This kind of competence level is almost impossible in a multilingual audience. When performing translation in a foreign language, the teacher uses his/her native language, which, in turn, can undermine all efforts to maintain a foreign language atmosphere in the classroom. Students will inevitably consider the teacher as a source of the mother tongue, and the mother tongue will prevail over the foreign language in the classroom. Translation usually includes two more skills: reading and writing, which can lead to a lack of time in the classroom.

All these facts, in turn, requires the teacher's ability to properly and efficiently organize and plan translation in classrooms. What are the positive aspects of translation in teaching a foreign language? Effectively organized classroom translation can promote four skills. In terms of communicative competence, translation requires students to be accurate, responsive, and flexible. According to Alan Duff, "translation teaches the student to find (flexibility) the most appropriate words (accuracy) to convey the meaning of the translated text (clarity)," [5]. Translation, performed in groups can stimulate students to discuss and choose the meaning of words; they come to understand the text, being translated by selecting equivalents in a foreign language. According to Alan Duff, "teachers and students today use translation to learn a foreign language; translation has clear communicative and cognitive goals. Translation demonstrates a high level of motivation of students and can lead to high communicative results." [6] Translation is a practical, natural activity that is increasingly needed in the modern world space. Many students who live either in their home country or abroad need to translate the language daily both formally and informally. With the growth of online information, translation takes on even greater significance. Whether we like it or not, translation is a frequently used foreign language learning strategy. Moreover, if we recognize this fact, we need to develop and implement effective

exercises in teaching translation skills and abilities as a means of teaching a foreign language. The most recent teaching models, such as the second generation communicative method, and the target approach include other methodological principles that can facilitate and/or accelerate foreign language learning: the concept of a communicative task, generating a structure of linguistic practice and attentional processes to form, tools that promote perception and assignment of language code characteristics. In this context, pedagogical translation (PT) can play a vital role: translation (and, as a result, linguistic mediation) can be an equally important source of communication tasks that serve to organize training activities in a foreign language. On the other hand, language teaching should take into account the new configuration of society and communication processes. This fact was noted in connection with the use of PT by a number of factors: first, the inclusion of written and oral mediation skills in the Common European Framework of Reference [2], (the European system of foreign language proficiency levels) in the list of communication activities carried out by users of foreign languages. Undoubtedly, this fact marked a change of view on translation in educational practice and initiated methodological research in this area. However, in those mentioned above Unified European system of competencies, it was not possible to define in detail all the factors that these skills implied from a non-professional point of view. Therefore it is necessary to mention and specify descriptors about the tasks and competencies of linguistic mediation [18]. Secondly, communication in modern society is determined by new parameters, such as the frequent multilingual nature of language interaction resulting from globalization, and a deeper knowledge of foreign languages by native speakers, as well as wider access to tools that facilitate access to information in another language, such as online dictionaries, automatic statistical translators, subtitles, and others. It is possible that in the nearest future, speakers of a foreign language will not have to create texts in L2, but can give meaning to the translation, which any computer tool will create for them for texts in the native language, L1. Finally, the post-methodological era should be mentioned (or the "post-methodical condition," according to Kumaravadivelu [13]. Kumaravadivelu, in his methodological works, defends the fact that language teaching methods should not be imposed on a real audience, but various methods should be used, adapted to the needs and requirements in the context of teaching and learning, provided that the effectiveness of these methods will be demonstrated empirically. According to the above, interlanguage written mediation skills (along with other intercultural, and intralingual oral mediation processes) should be considered as another element in the process of teaching a foreign language. In addition, their development cannot be viewed as a consequence of the development of other linguistic skills: although, of course, it should be recognized that the translation is based on the understanding of reading and written expression, any practice that students implement to acquire this skill will prepare them to use interlanguage mediation skills in the future. At this stage, it should be noted that the return of PT technologies to the classrooms should be carried out systematically and thoughtfully. To reach it, it is necessary: 1) that at each particular moment it should be clear which aspect of the training is considered at this stage, since it is necessary to distinguish the use of the PT as a communicative task, in which students should receive and translate the information into another language, from the spot and one-time use of the translation for explanation purposes.

2) For PT to apply the numerous achievements of linguistic didactics that have emerged in recent decades, such as cooperative learning or teaching on the so-called content modules (la enseñanza por contenidos, according to the Spanish term of Sánchez [19]. Undoubtedly, the PT must be associated with Translation Pedagogy, that discipline, which is designed to prepare future professionals in the field of translation, but the main source of its development should be considered linguistic didactics because the purpose of it should be improving the overall communication of students' competence.

It should be noted that PT assumes a broader field of activity for students, where they can both develop new competencies and strategies and activate those that they already possess [9], [12]. This potential can be categorized in the following three areas: 1) PT as a communicative activity: various types of interlingual mediation. It is necessary to train students for language mediation skills that they will undoubtedly need as users of a foreign language. Just as in the classroom, we direct our actions to ensure that they develop reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, as well as we must promote their mediation skills. However, it is not enough to simply put a task of mediation in front of a student. It is necessary to equip students with what Spanish teachers successfully call "andamiajes", borrowed from the construction area. That is, to provide them with particular pedagogical and communicative scaffolding, some necessary support for the implementation of mediation. We will give some examples of the use of PT.

1) To prepare a written translation for students so that they can control the interpretation, carried out by their colleagues in the classroom, that is: one student is prepared in advance by making a written translation, while the second translates spontaneously. The first one has to "catch" his mistakes. Alternatively, suggest a task for fragmented listening (split-listening), in which students take notes to translate the information to their

groupmates further.

2) PT as a text operation: working through the translation process. Translation implies a series of strategies and techniques through which students can be trained, both implicitly and explicitly. Besides, these strategies can be transferred to other skills. As an example of such use of PT can be a consideration on different translation techniques (modeling, transposition, and others) based on translations made by students, which can also improve the communicative competence of a written expression carried out directly on L2.

3) PT, as a cognitive and communicative strategy: a learning tool. Translation can serve as a learning strategy to stimulate the process of communication between students or a tool that facilitates the implementation of input or control over output. As an example of such use of PT could be the selection and search for L2-equivalent linguistic resources to carry out an interaction, or contrastive analysis, combined with the techniques of attention.

## **CONCLUSION**

With any method of teaching, assignments on educational translation do not form a closed system, since educational translation must organically form an integral part of the overall scheme of assignments for practical foreign language courses for foreigners. For this purpose it is necessary: a) full compliance of the tasks on educational translation with the goals and content of the lesson; b) the complementary role of academic translation concerning monolingual speech practice.

According to the study, students with a low level of proficiency in a foreign language, better perceive information in their native language, which they can later translate. Discussions on the similarities and differences between the two languages during the translation process help students understand the interaction and interconnection of the two languages. Translation also helps students understand the strengths and weaknesses of their native and foreign languages, for example, when comparing idiomatic expressions, metaphors. The teacher can concentrate the translation activity to achieve specific highly specialized goals, such as the practice and training of particular vocabulary, grammar rules, styles of translated texts.

Moreover, finally, for many students, the development of translation skills is a natural and logical part of achieving a high level of foreign language skills. Thus, translation as part of a communicative approach in teaching a foreign language is still a controversial issue and causes serious discussions.

## **3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This publication has been prepared with the support of RUDN University 5-100 program.

## **REFERENCE LIST**

1. Alcarazo, N., López N, (2014). Aplicaciones didácticas de la traducción pedagógica en la clase de ELE, redELE, No. 24. // <https://sede.educacion.gob.es/publiventa/redele-n-24-revista-electronica-de-didactica-de-espanol-como-lengua-extranjera/ensenanza-lengua-espanola/15815>
2. Consejo De Europa (2002). //Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas: aprendizaje, enseñanza, evaluación. // [https://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca\\_ele/marco/cvc\\_mer.pdf](https://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca_ele/marco/cvc_mer.pdf)
3. Cook, G. (2010), Translation in Language Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
4. De Arriba García, C., F. Cantero Serena (2004). Actividades de mediación lingüística para la clase de ELE, redELE, No. 2. // <https://sede.educacion.gob.es/publiventa/redele-n-2-revista-electronica-de-didactica-espanol-como-lengua-extranjera/ensenanza-lengua-espanola/20266>
5. Duff, A. (1990). Bringing translation back into the language class -Oxford: Oxford University Press.
6. Duff, A. (1994). Translation. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
7. Gamboa, L. (2005). Del valor de la traducción como destreza de mediación en la construcción de una competencia plurilingüe y pluricultural en el estudiante de ELE, y de la influencia del concepto de plurilingüismo en el Marco común europeo de referencia para las lenguas, // <http://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/educacion/mc/redele/biblioteca->

virtual/numerosanteriores/2004/memoriamastrer/2- semestre/gamboa-b.html

8. Galindo Merino, M<sup>a</sup> Mar (2013). La lengua materna del aprendiz en el aula de ELE, en Actas del Encuentro Práctico. Barcelona: International House y la Editorial Difusión. Disponible en [www.encuentro-practico.com/pdf13/dosier-pdf](http://www.encuentro-practico.com/pdf13/dosier-pdf).
  9. González-Davis, M. (2007). Translation: Why the Bad Press? A Natural Activity in an Increasingly Bilingual World, *Humanising Language Teaching*, n.º 2. [http://newperspectives.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/files/2017/05/TP\\_St\\_Andrews\\_2017\\_web\\_version.pdf](http://newperspectives.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/files/2017/05/TP_St_Andrews_2017_web_version.pdf)
  10. House, J. (2016). *Translation as Communication across Languages and Cultures*. Oxon, Nueva York: Routledge.
  11. Hurtado Albir, A. (1988). La traducción en la enseñanza comunicativa, // [https:// Hurtado Albir dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6930024](https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6930024)
  12. Kerr, P. (2014). *Translation and Own-language Activities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
  13. Kumaravadivelu, B. (1994). The Postmethod Condition: (E)merging Strategies for Second/Foreign Language Teaching, *Tesol Quarterly*, vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 27-48  
<http://bkumaravadivelu.com/articles%20in%20pdfs/1994%20Kumaravadivelu%20Postmethod%20Condition.pdf>
  14. Lavault, E. (1984). *Fonction de la traduction en didactique des langues*. París: Didier Érudition.
  15. Laviosa, S. (2014). *Translation and Language Education. Pedagogic approaches explores*. Londres y Nueva York: Routledge.
  16. Leonardi, V. (2010). *The Role of Pedagogical Translation in Second Language Acquisition. From Theory to Practice*. Berna: Peter Lang.
  17. Newmarc P. (2001). About translation, *Multilingual Matters LTD* <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/forum-topic/speaking-students-native-language>
  18. North B. (2016). eveloping CEFR illustrative descriptors of aspects of mediation, *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET)*, 3(2).132-140. <http://iojet.org/index.php/IOJET/article/view/125/131>
  19. Sánchez Cuadrado, A. (2015). *Aprendizaje formal de ELE mediante actividades cooperativas de traducción pedagógica*. Colección Monografías ASELE. (Tesis doctoral) 2015. Madrid: ASELE.
  20. Trovato, G. (2016). *Mediación lingüística y enseñanza de español/LE*. Cuadernos de Didáctica del español/LE. Madrid: Arco/Libros-La Muralla.
  21. Widdowson, H. (2014). «The Role of Translation in Language Learning and Teaching» // *Translation: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Ben-Daya, M., Darwis, M. and Ertogral, K. (2008). The joint economic lot sizing problem: Review and extensions. *European Journal of Operational Research*, vol. 185.
- Goyal, S. K. (1977). An integrated inventory model for a single supplier-single customer problem. *International Journal of Production Research*, vol.15.