

## IS IT POSSIBLE TO TEACH TRANSLATION IN THE CLASSROOM?

Assistant Instructor Khalida Hamid Tisgam\*

### Abstract

Many translators, though flattered at being invited to teach a course at a university, are hesitant to accept the position due to their lack of pedagogical knowledge. Many problems regarding teaching translation arise from the fact that a great number of experienced and skilled translators who have been asked to teach beginner translators believe that translation is learned by experience and personal intuition and can by no means be taught in the classroom. Many of them also believe that translation theories are all of no use. On the opposite extreme are people who argue that translation is or (can) become an exact science like any other.

Accordingly, one can ask the following questions: Is translation teachable at all? It is better to first define what the real nature of translation is; is it a science, an art or a craft? (Because it is only then that one can decide whether it is something to be taught in the classroom like any other field of study and with the same existing teaching methods.) Do translators need to be taught in the art or science of translation? Is it possible to train a translator in a classroom?

The present study deals firstly with some theoretical reflections on the translation process and the various approaches to teaching translation. Secondly, it attempts to answer the above questions. Then, a course for translation is designed and described. Besides, it suggests some guidelines concerning how to design a translation course that is based mainly on the university students' needs, the best way to choose such a course and the errors that may be made by a course designer. Finally, it tries to identify the suitable procedures in the translation process and in the translation course itself in order to hopefully lead to more understanding of the learning and teaching of translation and gives the possible recommendations in this respect.

### Introduction

Experts of diet say that good-quality food is much more digestible when served in small, well-dosed quantities. It is also much more appetizing in that way. The present study will adopt this kind of strategy. The reason behind that goes to the fact that the notion of 'paragraph' has

---

\* College of Education for Women – Baghdad University.

gained considerable circulation and a measure of respectability as a mode of presenting ideas on translation (Venuti, 1991: 15) The study should therefore be seen as no more than a series of paragraphs on the theme of teaching translation in the classroom.

### **What Is Translation?**

Throughout history, human beings have tried hard to take advantage of different methods of communication in order to make use of the knowledge of other nations and endeavor to preserve this knowledge for the coming generations. Being the most effective method of communication, language has been employed to satisfy the need of communication. It seems that the obstacle in the way of communication is the fact of dissimilarity of languages all over the world. But in today's world, translation has played a vital role in making communication between different nations with different languages feasible. According to Benjamin (1923: 95), the twentieth century has been called the age of 'reproduction' or, as Jumplet (1923:16) points out 'the age of translation' (cited in Newmark, 1988a:1).

Translation, whose beginning can be traced back to the Tower of Babel (Finlay, 1971:17), is defined as "a process of communication whose objective is to import the knowledge of the original to the foreign reader?" (Lewis,1964:148.) Similarly, Savory (1968:37) believes that translation is made possible by an equivalent of the idea that lies behind its different verbal expressions. For Reiss (1971:161), it is "a bilingual mediated process of communication which ordinarily aims at the production of a TL text that is functionally equivalent to a SL text". As for Houbert (1998:1), "translation is to be understood as the process whereby a message expressed in a specific source language is linguistically transformed in order to be understood by readers of the target language".

Most translation theorists agree that translation is understood as a transfer process from a foreign language—or a second language—to the mother tongue. As for translators, they have acted as bridges for conveying knowledge and ideas between cultures and civilizations.

### **What Is Teaching?**

Teaching is a profession that can yield something amazing when the right ideas and beliefs are implemented in the classroom. It is believed that the purpose of teaching is not to teach students how to memorize facts, or how to know all the correct answers. The purpose of teaching lies in getting students to truly understand the concepts being examined (Fry, 2003: 121). However, teachers may facilitate their own task and that of their students if they take advantage of the appropriate tools and

strategies. Therefore, "a translation teacher has to have knowledge and experience in translation and the ability to teach" (Laszlo 2000: 2). Delisle (1981: 54) illustrates what a subtle form of torture teaching translation is: "teaching translation is an arduous job that mortifies you, puts you in a state of despair at times, but also an enriching and indispensable work, that demands honesty and modesty. "

Teaching translation to students who are learning the target language at the same time necessitates taking into account two major issues: first of all, the fact that learning how to cope with translation-related problems is not exactly the same as learning the language itself, although they go hand-in-hand. Second, it is vital to decide which teaching translation method is better to be used along with the method adopted for translation (Larson, 1986: 67).

So, in order to be successful in teaching translation, teachers should be able to merge the teaching techniques they may deem best for their students with those of teaching translation. The techniques adopted for teaching translation should be chosen with attention to both sides of the nature of translation: first its objective and theoretical principles and second the subjective part which is mainly related to the student's intuition and creativity.

### **What Is the Effective Learning?**

There are many studies on learning styles, personality types and teaching styles (Watson, 1913:17), each one showing that not everyone likes to learn in the same way. Accordingly, it seems likely that the reluctance of students to participate in non-lecture styles of learning probably comes from their experience if all they know is the style where the teacher knows all and 'feeds' this knowledge to the students who restate it in exams. Being taught in a different style can be uncomfortable at first and that can lead to lack of cooperation. (Frank, 2005: 32) asserts 'in order for learning to occur, students must be actively constructing the experience in their own minds'. She also outlines three factors that are necessary to effective learning:

1. Communicating high expectations.
2. Encouraging active learning.
3. Providing assessment and prompt feedback.

Finally, it is taken for granted that things are best remembered if they are repeated and practiced. Confucius (c. 450 BC) asserts that:

I hear and I forget.

I see and I remember.

I do and I understand.

### **Who Is the Good Teacher?**

All students have had hundreds of teachers in their lifetimes. A very few of these teachers they remember as being exceptionally good. What are the qualities that combine to create an excellent, memorable teacher? Why do some teachers inspire students to work three times harder than they normally would, while others inspire students to skip class? Why do students learn more from some teachers than others? Brain (1990: 33) asserts that the essential qualities that distinguish exceptional teachers are as follows:

#### **1. Knowledge of the Subject**

The teacher must be an expert in his field if he is going to be a good teacher at a university. This is a prerequisite.

#### **2. Communication**

It is a common misconception at the university level that knowledge of a subject is all that's required to be a good teacher. The teacher's job is to take advanced knowledge and make it accessible to the students in order to allow students to understand the material and understand what it means (because it is one thing to understand how nuclear bombs work, but quite another to understand what nuclear bombs mean). Besides, he clears the subject to the students as well as exerting more effort to find innovative and creative ways to explain complicated material.

#### **3. Interest**

The best teacher then makes the class interesting and relevant to the students. Knowledge is worthless unless it is delivered to the students in a form they can understand. But the effort expended making the material understandable is wasted if the students are asleep when it is delivered, or if the students can see no point in learning the material. So, the good teacher goes far beyond this: he makes students want to learn the material by making it interesting.

#### **4. Respect**

The good teacher has a deep-seated concern and respect for the students in the classroom. The creation of a good course requires an immense amount of work. By spending time with his students, the teacher can learn about holes in their understanding and he fits them.

### **Qualities of the Teacher of Translation**

Teachers of translation must be very proficient translators themselves, as well as capable instructors since "the most adequate and competent teachers at university are those who, apart from their teaching positions, are also practicing professionals in the subject they are teaching" (Sainz 1994: 139). Needless to say, not everyone can teach, regardless of how well they know their subject matter. As for teaching

translation, it is a very labor-intensive process, since each student's weekly assignments have to be evaluated in great detail and with extreme precision. In addition, the teacher of translation should not repeat the course materials because the translation profession changes too quickly to allow last year's translation texts to be used more than perhaps a couple of years. Having students work on texts from five years ago may mean they will not learn the currently accepted format and will deny them much needed current terminology and subject knowledge.

Translation teachers must as a result have considerable time and enthusiasm for their subject, as well as intimate familiarity with the current state of affairs in the business of translation (Nogueira, 1998: 42). This does not mean, however, that teachers should be working professionals who just happen to teach a few classes here and there. Students require and deserve full-time attention, meaning that teachers at best should be doing part-time work as freelance translators.

### **Literature Reviewed**

People who do not speak or read a foreign language often have false beliefs about the nature of translation. Many tend to regard it as a more or less mechanical process which resembles decoding. The problem with this view is that it fails to recognize how crucial the context in which a word occurs. Moreover, it oversimplifies the process of translation; for it envisions a gigantic word-list (i.e., a dictionary) by reference to which someone can readily know which word to correlate with the foreign word—just as by reference to a memorized Morse-code chart one knows what letters to put in place of the combinations of dots and dashes (Robinson, 2000: 45). They consider the translator as a living dictionary, taking a text in a foreign language and turning it into something a little more accessible to the target audience.

According to Aly (2007: 18), the review of the foreign literature revealed that there has been much interest in the translation process itself not the teaching of it (Seguinot, 1999: 15). Many studies in Europe and some in America and England have been conducted in this respect, such as: Tirkkonen-Condit 1987 (Finland), Wilss 1990 (Germany), Bantas 1991 (Romania), Daro 1992 (Italy), Lorscher 1992 (Germany), Matrat 1992 (United States), De Schaetzen 1993 (Belguim), Shreve et al. 1993 (United States), Nord 1994 (Denmark), Bentinck 1995 (United States), Honig 1995 (Germany), Kunzli and Tissot 1995 (Switzerland), Fraser 1996 (United Kingdom), Culic 1997 (Croatia), Reinke 1997 (Germany), Rey and Tricas 1998 (Spain), Hansen 1999 (Denmark), Rehal 1999 (Bulgaria), Pierini 2000 (Italy), and Seguinot 2000 (Netherlands).

## Is Translation Science, Art or Craft?

Is translation a scientific study or an artistic endeavor, a branch of linguistics or of literature? Being used as a bridge between two cultures, translation seems to be a complicated and multi-faceted activity or phenomenon. However, the constant debate as to whether translation is an art or science has a long history. Accordingly, it is better to have a look at a side of this debate.

### I. Translation as A Science

Newcomers to translation sometimes proceed as if translation were an exact science — as if consistent, one-to-one correlations existed between the words and phrases of different languages, rendering translations fixed and identically reproducible. Such novices may assume that all that is needed to translate a text is to "encode" and "decode" equivalents between the two languages, using a translation dictionary as the "codebook." (Touy, 1982:7). Some scholars may argue that translation is a process of creative thinking; consequently, it is subjective and cannot be systematized by laws (Karra, 2000:39). One can call something a science only if it has scientific rules that work all the time with precision and predictability. These rules are so fixed and precise that they are not called rules anymore, but laws. For example, water boils at 100 (Berkeley, 1991: 66).

Although translators use scientific data and theories, they do it in a way that gives free hand to individual taste, bias, imagination, and temperament. Translation problems may be similar that a creative translator may find a new solution on the spot, but it is impossible to devise a scientific equation that would work in the same way, every time. This means that it is not teachable if it is considered as a science.

### II. Translation as an Art

Some believe that anyone who can speak a foreign language well can be a translator but few realize the amount of time translators pour into their work. Translation is much more than substituting words of one language into another; it's an art, i.e.; a teachable one ((Pienemann, 1989: 67)). Since it has a lot in common with arts, it sometimes becomes highly dependent on the idiosyncrasies and intuition of the translator. Like composers and painters, translators often find their own moods and personalities reflected in their work. Zaixi (1997:339) confirms that "translation is a process, an operation, an act of transferring. It is mainly a skill, a technology that can be acquired. In the meantime, it often involves using language in a creative manner so that it is also an art. However it is by no means a science." Chukovskii (1984:93) confirms that, "translation is not only an art, but a high art."

### III. Translation as a Craft

Since translation has something in common with both art and science, therefore, one must choose the category that is most congruent, or at least most convenient and workable. That category is craft. Newmark (1988b:7) describes translation as "a craft consisting of the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language." Savory (1957:49) does not tend to consider translation as a science since he claims that "it would almost be true to say that there are no universally accepted principles of translation, because the only people qualified to formulate them have never agreed among themselves". He considers it as a craft, i.e., a teachable one.

### Course Requirements

There is agreement among researchers, translation teachers and those concerned with training students to be translators on core subjects that must be covered in the materials prepared for translation courses (Bell, 1994: 67). These requirements include bilingual and bicultural competencies, subject competency, translation strategies, teamwork, communication and research skills, exposure to real-life situations and knowledge of the history of translation. Besides, Bell (1994: 69) emphasizes the importance of materials and asserts that:

1. Materials should be authentic in terms of texts and tasks. This will be a great help for the students if they face real-world texts and tasks.
2. Materials should stimulate interaction. If students are accustomed to discussing translation problems in class, it is likely that they are more critical in evaluating their translation when they work as translators.
3. Materials should allow students to focus on formal aspects of the language. Therefore, students should be trained to decide how they should restructure the same message in different styles.
4. Materials should encourage students to develop learning skills and skills in learning-how-to-learn. The class discussion in discussing the assignments are meant to provide students with efficient translation strategies: how to cope with the problem of long sentences, how to choose words etc.
5. Materials should encourage students to apply their knowledge to work as translators. It is assumed that students will know how to cope with problems of translation after they finish the course.
6. Materials and the teaching methodology are used with the goal that students are ready to become translators after they take the course.

### **How to Design the Right Course?**

As far as designing translation course is concerned, there must be a sort of balance between theory and practice although it is preferred to lean a little bit on practice, because it is practice that actually produces a good translator (Samudra, 1993: 53). Accordingly, the translation course has to be designed in such way that students who take this course will practice translating as much as possible. So:

1. Talk to the current students and recent graduates to see what they say about the course. Make certain you are not getting mistaken by talking to a few people. Read articles about the profession in general so that you can ask intelligent questions and understand the answers you are given.

2. Talk to the teacher and administration and interview them, and the best way to avoid disappointment and frustration in the future is to ask the bold questions. Query them about every aspect of the course: admissions requirements, graduation requirements, teacher backgrounds, continuity in the teacher, and statistics on what graduates are doing. Do not accept vague generalizations like "our teachers are very committed." Look for specific answers like "Professor X has taught here for three years after fifteen years in technical translation" and "All of last year's graduates are now employed."

3. Consider the structure and nature of the course. How long does it take? What kind of degree or certification do you receive at the end? Is that degree or certification respected in the profession? What classes will you take? Does the coursework reflect your interests while giving you the training you need to succeed in the translation profession?

4. Weigh carefully the benefits of the course. Try to figure out if the course truly advances your students' ability enough to justify the investment of time and efforts. A translation course should prepare future translators, do you reach that end?

### **Errors by a Course Designer**

Stern and Payment (1995: 79) argue that one of the errors that can be made by a course designer is that it includes too much information to be covered, so that:

- \* It's too complicated to understand all at once.
- \* There is too much for students to learn.
- \* There's no time to practice new information.
- \* Students don't get enough time to "own" the new material.
- \* They only remember fragments of the information".

Besides, Harris and DeSimone (1994: 22) argue that there will be many other pitfalls that require close scrutiny to be avoided. These pitfalls include:



- \*Disregard of individual learning styles of students.
- \*Motivation is undermined.
- \*The course is too brief, too slow, or reactive.
- \*The content is too shallow or too deep.
- \*Resource materials are inappropriate to the whole group.
- \*Curriculum is not adapted to students' needs or not matched with the skills and experiences of the student.
- \* Discussion of certain issues is not allowed.
- \* Inadequate course objectives.
- \* Course materials are irrelevant to the needs of students.
- \* No assessment tools included.
- \*No possibility to make immediate correction during the course or plan future developments to improve the course.

### **Objectives of the Course**

The objectives of the course, as Bialystok (1986: 86) asserts, are as follows:

- \*To develop the student's insight into the nature and significance of translation as such.
- \*To stimulate an intellectual and linguistic challenge in the student.
- \*To offer a forum for constructive dialogue and exchange of ideas and experiences.
- \*To broaden the student's competence in the mother tongue and the foreign language.
- \*To show the student how to balance the competing claims of accuracy and fidelity to the source on the one hand, and appropriacy and idiomacity in the target language on the other.
- \*To train students to be future translators by teaching them real-life work translations.

### **Requirements of the Teacher of Translation**

Gabris (2000) argues that translation teachers need to attend formal training in language and translation teaching, and should have some sort of certification or accreditation attesting to their ability to translate. This requirement is also supported by Barcsak (1996, 174): "It seems that teachers must be trained in teaching translation". As for Gouadec (2000: 4), he argues that as a start, the teacher should spend at least one month in working in a translation firm either as a translator or a reviser. As for the requirements needed from the teacher to get best results of the course are as follows:

- \*Sound knowledge of the SL and the TL, translation theory, transfer procedures, cognition and methodology.
- \*Comprehension of what translation is and how it occurs.

- \*Permanent interest in reading various kinds of texts.
- \*Ability to communicate ideas clearly.
- \*Capacity to create, foster and maintain a warm work environment, i.e., an atmosphere of sympathetic encouragement.
- \*Capacity to foster search and research.

### **A Translation Course**

Teachers and course designers seem to be convinced that a more student-centered, creative and flexible teaching system motivates students. They also see the necessity to adapt teaching methods to the revised curricula and methodologies.

It seems that many undergraduate students come to university with the aim of gaining a qualification because that is a passport to getting a job. The actual usefulness or relevance of what is learnt to future employment is not a question that is often asked. Thus it seems that what is learnt in the classroom is not expected to be relevant to real-life work. It seems, therefore, that in the mind of many people in education is not supposed to be useful except in that it gives qualifications which make the holder more likely to be successful in the job market (Nogueira, 1998: 74). The method of teaching is often very teacher-centred, and students expect to take notes which they then learn in order to reproduce in the exam. There is no real engagement of the critical faculties of the brain. Hence, teachers are authority figures whose word is law and who must not be embarrassed by questions.

In addition, some students tend to an attitude that anything written in a book must, necessarily, be true, and the possibility of disagreeing with anything they read is a foreign concept. So, again, an uncritical approach is adopted. Unfortunately, even worse, the majority of the students regard translation as a minor subject compared with poetry, the novel, or drama. Since the class does not have textbooks, or even handouts, they assume that there is nothing to study, and all they have to do is learn vocabulary by heart and just attend and write down whatever translations the teacher may dictate. Worst of all, many of them apply the rule of 'parroting' (Mildred, 1984: 11), in other words, they learn by heart whatever translations the teacher may propose.

Moreover, Kroehnert (2000: 78) argues that "the teaching process involves communication with the students, not at them. Any form of presentation should be a two-way communication and must allow for interaction between the student/teacher and student/student" (Kroehnert, 2000: 9). When the student is engaged in communication with one group, say the good ones, the other, that is the weak, will be completely shut out, and vice versa. In such a case, class participation is undermined because only 'more proficient and confident' students can interact with the

student/teacher and engage in discussion.

### Assignments

The first point to consider in choosing the assignment is the students' background, expectation, experience, knowledge about translation and their interest in it. All of these can be asked through a simple questionnaire distributed in the beginning of the semester. If the teacher knows about students' knowledge and experience in translation, he can consider the level of difficulty of the text assignments. If they do not have any experience in translation, probably the first text chosen is not as difficult as when they already have some experience.

A translation course may include literary (prose, poetry, theatre), journalistic (economics, politics, current news), technical, legal, and scientific texts so students are able to manage different kinds of texts both into and out of their native language. It is useful to translate, at the beginning, short sentences in order to be able to build a longer paragraph and deepen the structure of the single phrase later on (Soedjatmiko, 1988: 23).

As a first approach, students are given short texts to translate, then their translations are evaluated by their teacher, and finally the translations are discussed in great depth and detail among all the students in the class and the teacher.

Besides, by comparing texts of different sources but belonging to the same genre, for example an article from an Iraqi political magazine and an English one about the same topic (i.e., *Al-Usbouiyya* ↔ *Newsweek*), students discover not only a different vocabulary, but also a different style. Students must keep a glossary, which they continuously update. Writing down words in a notebook allows the student to exercise his memory.

Besides, having all the students work on the same assignment often results in the students collaborating to produce their individual translations. While this situation is not inherently bad, it does limit how well the teacher can judge individual student's ability and progress, not to mention creating problems in grading. It is better that translation assignments be similar to real-world assignments, that the teacher makes his students work on a large document, with each student translating a portion of it. So, the students can still share the burden of terminology and background research but at the same time can meet the challenge of crafting a good translation on their own.

All assignments should be discussed in class. The discussion of the first assignment will be done by the teacher. The rest will be presented by the students in front of the class, or done in group beforehand. The teacher will explain important points which are not covered by the

students, especially the ones concerning theory or guidelines of translation.

In essence, translation course depends on giving students plenty of time to do very short translation assignments, then analyzing those assignments in every detail, and ultimately discussing the nature of their work, often with an extreme focus on student errors, in great depth. In other words, students get to make mistakes that have no ramifications in their professional careers, and presumably they learn from their mistakes, as well as acquiring familiarity with terminology and various kinds of source material.

Besides, students must be introduced to the purpose and nature of translation. According to Newmark (1988a:9): "What translation theory does is, first to identify and define a translation problem; second, to indicate all the factors that have to be taken into account in solving the problem; third, to list all the possible translation procedures; finally, to recommend the most suitable translation procedure, plus the appropriate translation."

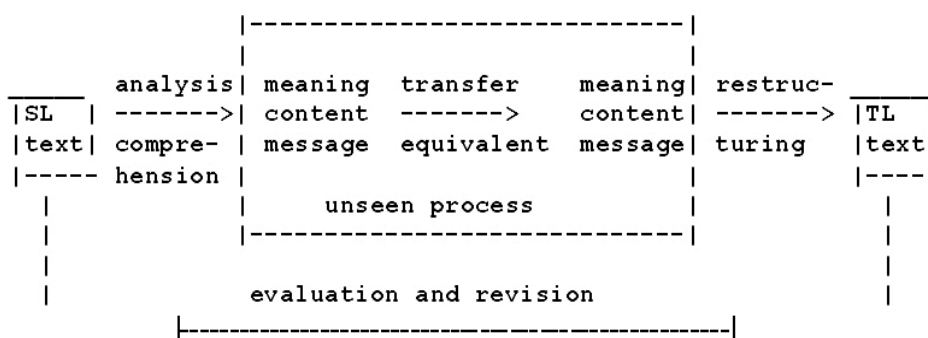
To avoid literal translation, it is important to direct students' attention away from grammar and lexis towards whole-text and translation-task issues. This includes getting students to provide a summary of a foreign text as a briefing to someone visiting the foreign country for a specific purpose; this helps to focus attention on relevance and appropriateness of material, on the information needs of the target audience, as well as the style of students' English version; this activity might be especially useful for first-year students.

According to my own experience in teaching translation, I find it very important to train students, for a lecture or two, on the necessity of discerning the major theme and the minor ones in their source language, i.e., Arabic. This is done by giving them long sentences with many coordinate clauses. Students are asked to start with the main verb of the sentence and its subject and leave the coordinates later. This procedure teaches them to avoid literacy by paying greater importance to their understanding and to translate according to the structure of the target language not the source from which they started.

### **How to Teach Translation in the Classroom?**

With the title '**Process of Translation and Criteria of Good Translation**', students can be shown that what is important to be transferred in translation is the content of the text, not the form. This important fact can be explained by the diagram below (Suryawinata, 1989: 61) which must be copied and hang on the blackboard.

**Process of Translation and Criteria of Good Translation**



From this diagram students can see clearly that it is the content that is transferred, not the form. The example used is usually the sentence "I cut my finger." If it is translated in Arabic, it will be "جرح إصبعي". The active form becomes passive in Arabic. If the active English sentence is no changed into passive in Arabic, then the meaning will be different. The English sentence does not give a connotation that the action "cut" is done on purpose, while the Arabic does. To omit the connotation, the active must be changed into passive.

Based on this diagram also, students are given strategies in the analysis and restructuring of a text, as well as examples to evaluate their own translation. All of these examples are given when assignments are discussed in class discussion.

What is emphasized in this course is that translation is for communication. It is not supposed to hinder or destroy communication. Therefore, students are allowed to use dictionaries in order to consult them if they have difficult words: two monolingual dictionaries (English-English and Arabic-Arabic) and one bilingual (English-Arabic).

After the midterm, students can be given readings on the theory of translation or can choose the readings by themselves and consult them first to the teacher. They can present in front of the class. In addition, they can choose whether they want a final project which is translating a chapter of a book or just a final test which is translating two paragraphs of a text. If they choose the final project, then there will be no final test and the translation will be discussed in class. If they choose the latter, the final test will not be discussed in class, because it is not too different with the weekly assignments.

**Rules of Translation Quality**

There will never be any completely fixed standards that can be laid down for ensuring a particular level of quality. Of course, these rules are in themselves not a magic solution for producing top-quality translations, but if other conditions are met—including the right choice of translator

and his innate ability to translate—the odds that extremely good translations will be produced are very high. However, here is a set of rules that will provide a reliable starting-point for the translators themselves if followed consistently. They are as follows:

### 1. Read

Students are advised to read the whole text thoroughly before embarking on a translation. However, they should not just read a text passively; they should be active and critical readers. This means that they should be asking questions such as the following:

- \*Why does this sentence or paragraph come first?
- \*Is there any reason for having this long sentence in the first paragraph, or these very short sentences?
- \*Does it matter if I merge sentences in my translation?
- \*Does it matter if I split long sentences?
- \*What will be the effect if I do this?
- \*Is this a text you're actually competent to translate? (If not, don't move onto the next stage unless you're working under supervision.)
- \*Is the text complete? (is there anything missing?)

### 2. Research

\*Research the terms and concepts appearing in the text. This is where language tools can also help to end up with a term list containing the unknown terms (remembering that terms can have completely different meanings/equivalents, depending on the context).

\*Don't start translating until you have established all the missing equivalents in the target language.

### 3. Reconstruction of Meaning

Moreover, Students have to be shown that translation is not about simply transposing items from one language to another at the level of lexis and syntax, but that it is about conveying meaning. In general, they need to see the translator as a mediator between cultural worlds, as someone who helps those unfamiliar with a particular culture to understand and appreciate all the cultural nuances of the original text.

### 4. Correcting a Translation

It is a good idea to ask students to correct an inaccurate translation which, depending on their proficiency, can be at a simple factual level or may include idiom, collocation, metaphor, etc. This can be an excellent source of discussion. The task can be varied by using an incorrect translation alongside a 'correct' one, but not telling students which is which.

### 5. Revise

Students of translation should revise their own work, irrespective of whether it is then going to be revised elsewhere. Revising the text means reading it through and examining it firstly for formal errors:

sentence or word missed out; superfluous words; spelling mistakes, and so on. This is then followed by a second check for content errors: has everything been understood and translated correctly? Has the terminology been correctly applied?

### **6. Responsibility**

It is important to remember that you, as the translator, are responsible for your work. You are responsible for ensuring that the text has been translated adequately and honestly.

### **Translation Strategies**

"Strategy" is a term which has been used to refer to both conscious and unconscious procedures. (Seguinot, 1991:82) A translation strategy is a potentially conscious procedure for the solution of a problem which an individual is faced with when translating a text segment from one language into another (Lorscher, 1991:67). Translation strategy concerns the translation act which revolves around such questions as "why translate," "what to translate," and "how to translate."

Past translators generally adopted the whole-text strategy which means a type of translation with no drastic change of ST sequence and any additions and omissions above sentence level (Dollerup, 1995: 73). It is the traditional and most common form of translation practice. Present translators follow the policy of combining whole-text strategy with part-text strategy. The part-text translation means a type of translation of a heterogeneous nature, which may be the translation of a part of ST, or the editing/ summarizing and then translating of several STs, or the full-text/ partial-text translation together with paraphrase/ narration/ comment/ writing.

### **The Theory of Dynamic Equivalent Translation**

Teachers of translation developed the theory of "dynamic equivalent" translation to spell out in detail the differences between form and meaning, the differences between different languages, and the kind of practices that lead to sound translation (Nida, 1964: 18). Central to the theory was the principle of translating meaning in preference to form. Thus, "dynamic equivalence" means choosing an expression that yields equivalent meaning in the target language. "Formal equivalence," by contrast, means choosing an expression that has one-to-one matching forms in the target language, regardless of whether the meaning is the same. The standard theory of dynamic equivalence thus advocates translating meaning rather than form.

This theory encourages translators to concentrate on what is important, and to restructure the form when it is necessary to convey the meaning. Such an emphasis is especially helpful in a situation where

communication is difficult, because it is better to transmit at least a minimal content than to produce a formal equivalent that does not work at all.

Dynamic equivalence theory is particularly important when a teacher is training students who start out with a naive understanding of language. Their impulse is often to translate mechanically, word for word, especially when they have a very imperfect grasp of one of the two languages with which they are working.

Accordingly, if one does not teach students the basic skills of translation, they will not be able to do this. They have to understand texts before attempting to translate them. But when they open a dictionary, they don't know that they should check all the meanings of a word, and choose the best one according to the context, they simply use the very first meaning given. For example, a single word like "dog" or "trunk" in English reveals vast complexity. One dictionary lists no less than four distinct words "dog." It has only one entry for "trunk," but six distinct senses listed under it (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 1987). Besides, they must deal with the meaning of whole phrases, sentences, and paragraphs, not simply isolated words. Each word in a sentence contributes to the meaning. One must translate the message, the meaning of the whole, not simply words in isolation.

It is worth mentioning that students must also be taught on how to read a dictionary, including the phonetic alphabet in order to learn the exact pronunciation. They usually undervalue the resources provided by a dictionary and often glance at it superficially. They are advised to use of both bilingual and monolingual dictionaries as well as checking online dictionaries and investigate on the Internet, where they can verify the actual and current use of a word, because English is continuously changing.

## **Translation Procedures**

### **I. Group preparation**

The teacher chooses a portion of an English text and put students into pairs. They underline any structures they think are going to be problematic in the target language and circle any vocabulary they do not know (Nunan, 1988: 19). They then get into fours and pool their suggested translations. Finally, the groups are brought together for plenary discussion. Vocabulary can be shared on an overhead or a blackboard. If students come up with, say, three acceptable ways of translating a particular expression, they should all be listed. The same procedure is followed with structures. The text is then set for homework. When conducted with dictionaries, the exercise can further be used to teach good dictionary skills – e.g. never simply to use a word from



English.

### **Advantages of Group Preparation**

According to Larson (1986: 83), there are many advantages for the group preparation. They are as follows:

- \*Knowledge is pooled.
- \*Everyone has a chance to produce a different piece of work therefore increasing motivation amongst even the weaker ones in the group.
- \*Students are faced with alternatives, and selecting the most appropriate is an invaluable learning process.
- \*The weaker students benefit from collaborating with their more able peers.
- \*Marking time is reduced so that the teacher gives his students more time to practice and enables both teacher and student to focus on specific areas of weakness.

### **II. The Workshops Procedure**

This procedure attempts to develop some workshop activities for the translation process as a cooperative activity with the students in order to increase students' motivation, productivity and the quality of their work (Kusmaul, 1995: 75).

1. The teacher makes a selection of the material to be translated. Texts must be chosen according to previously defined objectives for translation practice, taking into account the degree of difficulty of the texts, the topic, and the translation problems to be solved.

2. The students should read the whole text at least twice to become acquainted with the topic and to understand the original, always bearing in mind that meaning is context-determined.

3. The teacher then divides the text into as many segments as students in the group. Depending on the degree of difficulty and the length of the text, these segments may be paragraphs, columns, pages or even whole chapters. Then, each student is assigned a fair portion of the text. The segment distribution order should rotate so that a different student begins a translation unit every time.

4. If the topic is familiar to the students, they do a preliminary translation. As this is the first approach to the text, it will probably lack naturalness, since students tend to transfer SL units of translation to TL units of translation. This first approach can often be made orally and suggested annotations may be written in the margins.

5. If the topic is completely unknown to the students, they should consult their sources of knowledge, especially texts which are similar in nature and style in the language of the original. This allows them to

achieve a deeper understanding of the topic under study.

6. Once the "one-to-one" version is accomplished, the students do a second version of their own translation—this time a written draft—handling the most suitable translation strategies and procedures and being faithful in the transfer of ideas.

7. With the original text in front of him and being careful to follow the same correlative order of the SL text, each student reads out his own version of the translated text, making the necessary pauses between sentences.

8. The students and the teacher follow the reading of each text attentively. As a monitoring activity, everybody should feel free to stop the reading at the end of a given sentence and have the reading of the segment repeated, when the situation warrants comments, suggestions, questions, contributions, etc. The students have to "defend" their work against criticism.

9. Students should then be encouraged to take notes and discuss the (in)convenience of the contributions and comments arising from this analytical reading of each one of the different versions proposed.

10. The students, assisted by the teacher, analyze the translation strategies and procedures used, and discuss the reasons taken into account in the choice of each analyzed criterion: "The ability to discuss translations in an objective way is central to a translator's competence", (Kusmaul, 1995:98).

11. The students hand in the final version of their revised segments, which have already been amended in the light of the whole text.

12. The teacher makes a final revision, gives formative evaluation and makes comments, emphasizes findings, solutions and creative acts, on the one hand, and analyzes failures and weaknesses in the process, on the other.

## Conclusion

Since the twentieth century has been called the age of translation, translators, like all professionals, must undergo permanent training since their capacity is not measured in terms of pages, words or hours done, but rather the quality of the output or finished work. To reach that goal the present study tried to shed some light on the teaching of translation in the classroom.

Teaching is a very difficult task since imparting knowledge and experience to another person requires not only mastery of the subject matter, but also mastery of the communication of knowledge. As for teaching translation in classroom, it is, as Delisle (1981: 54) argues, an arduous job that mortifies teachers, puts them in a state of despair at times. In order to be successful in teaching translation, teachers should be

able to merge the teaching techniques they may deem best for their students with those of teaching translation. Besides, it is a real problem since one has to teach translation skills, techniques, and doing translation practice, both oral and written, within a limited time span. Even worse, the majority of students regard translation as a minor subject compared with poetry, the novel, or drama. Since the class does not have textbooks, or even handouts, they assume that there is nothing to study, and all they have to do is learn vocabulary by heart and just attend and write down whatever translations the teacher may dictate.

Having students of different levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities requires developing a training course that works for all of them. It should cover their needs by exceeding the training requirements in terms of levels of basic skills and knowledge. Consequently, the course must not be too easy or too difficult for the students. The course materials must be appropriate to all of them because if not they will easily lose motivation. In such a case, learning will not occur.

Teachers of translation must be very proficient translators themselves, as well as capable instructors since the most adequate and competent teachers at university are those who are also practicing professionals in the subject they are teaching.

There are people who believe that skill in translation cannot be learned and, especially, cannot be taught. Behind this attitude is the assumption that some people are born with a gift of being good translators or interpreters, whereas others simply do not have the knack; in other words, skill in translation is a talent: either you've got it or you haven't.

The other conclusion that is drawn from the present study is that translation is teachable because it is a craft and consequently teachable as are other crafts. Believing that translation is a teachable craft, teachers should help their students get an insight into the nature of translation and recognize that it is vital for them to pay attention to translation theories while sharpening their translation skills. They should also be aware that ignoring the above-mentioned points leads to students' confusion, lack of motivation, and loss of interest in the curriculum.

As far as designing a translation course is concerned, the present study finds that it has to be designed in such away that students who take this course will practice translating as much as possible. It must aim, at least, at developing the student's insight into the nature and significance of translation as such, as a result of the confrontation between the mother tongue and the foreign language while searching for equivalence in meaning and broadening the student's competence in the mother tongue and the foreign language.

Finally, there is a saying, "Give me a fish and I eat for a day, teach

me to fish and I eat for a lifetime." This is the philosophy of teaching. Give your students an answer and they can solve one problem, but show students the techniques needed to find the answer for themselves and they can become self-sufficient in the field. Students need to be shown how to apply the new techniques you teach to problem solving.

### Recommendations

Finally, it is hoped that the present study provides some insight into the issues surrounding the teaching students in the classroom to be translators. Accordingly, it reached the following recommendations:

1- Teachers of translation in the classroom should encourage the students to frequently use the dictionaries.

2- They should deal with various topics, i.e. literary, scientific, social, economic, political and religious. This procedure helps the students to have more practice in the different kinds of material and styles.

3- They should focus on the development of the students' vocabulary more than of grammar, because the former is already a more problematic language component.

4- They should deal with sentences and topics of different levels of difficulty according to the students' abilities.

5- They should give the opportunity to the students to develop their translation skills according to a systematic order and sequence of materials, starting from the first year to the fourth.

6- They should have a balance between practice and theory, with very little theoretical guidelines. That is to say, much time should be spent on the students' practice in translation.

7- A systematic educational translation course should be used instead of the scattered materials and handouts usually collected from newspapers.

### References

1. Aly, M. Abdul-Sadeq (2000). *Translation Strategies of EFL Students-Teachers: A Think Aloud Protocol-Based Case Study*. Benha: Egypt, Faculty of Education.
2. Bell, Roger T. (1994) *Translation and Translating*. Longman Group UK Ltd.
3. Benjamin, W. (1923) "The translator's task". in H. Andret (Ed.), *Illuminations*. London: Cape.
4. Berkeley, R. B. (1991) *The craft of public administration*. UK: Brown Publishers.

5. Bialystoke, E. (1986) *Factors in the growth of linguistic awareness*, Child Development, 57, pp. 498-510.
6. Black, D. Alan (1993) *Teaching and Learning in the Next Century*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Company.
7. Brain, M. (1990) *On translation and translators*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
8. Chukovskii, K. (1984) *The art of translation*. London: Oxford University Press.
9. Crosby, P. B. (1979) *Quality Is Free*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
10. Delisle, Jean. (1980) *Analyzing Methods of Translation*. Ottawa : University of Ottawa.
11. Dollerup, C. & Appel, V. (Eds) *Teaching Translation and Interpreting*. 3. New Horizons. Papers from the Third Language International Conference, Elsinore, Denmark 9-11 June 1995. (Vol. 16). (pp. 171-174). Amsterdam /Philadelphia: Benjamins.
12. Finlay, I. F. (1971) *Translating*. Edinburgh: The English University Press.
13. Frank, Christine. (2005) *Teaching and Learning Theory: Who Needs it?* College Quarterly 8(2).
14. Fry, Heather, et al. (2003) *A Handbook for Teaching & Learning in Higher Education*. London: Kogan Page.
15. Gabris, Laszlo (2000) *Teaching Translation and Interpretation*. <http://www.fut.es/~apym/symp/gouadec.html>
16. Gouadec, Daniel (2000) *On Innovation in Translator and Interpreter Training: Notes on Translator Training*. <http://www.fut.es/~apym/symp/gouadec.html>
17. Harris, D. M. & DeSimone, R. L. (1994) *Human Resources Development*. TX: The Dryden Press.
18. Houbert, F. (1998) *Translation As A Communication Process*. <http://accurapid.com/journal/05theory.htm>
19. Karra, M. (2000) *Science or Translation*. <http://accurapid.com/journal/11sci.htm>
20. Kroehnert, G. (2000) *Basic Training for Trainers* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). Australia: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
21. Kussmaul, Paul. (1995) *Training the Translator*. London: John Benjamins Publishing Co.
22. Larson, d. (1986) *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
23. Lewis, M. M. (1974) *Language in Society*. London: Nelson.
24. Lorscher, Wolfgang (1991) *Translation Performance, Translation Process, and Translation Strategies: A Psycholinguistic Investigation*. Tübingen, Germany: Gunter Narr Verlag.

25. Mildred, L. (1984) *Meaning-based Translation: A Guide to Cross-Language Equivalence*. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America,).
26. Newmark, P. (1988a) *A Textbook of Translation*. Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall.
27. \_\_\_\_\_ (1988b) *Approaches to Translation*. Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall.
28. \_\_\_\_\_ (1991) *About Translation: Multilingual Matters*. Clevedon, Philadelphia, Adelaide: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
29. Nida, E. A. (1964) *Towards A Science of Translation*. Leiden: Brill.
30. Noe, R. A. (1986) *Trainee's Attributes and Attitudes: Neglected Influence on Training Effectiveness*. *Academy of Management Review*, 11, 736-749.
31. Nogueira, D. (1998) *The Business of Translating*. <http://accurapid.com/journal/06xlat1.htm>
32. Nunan, David. (1988) *Principles for Designing Language Teaching Materials*. *Guidelines*, 10, 1-24.
33. Pienemann, M. (1989) *Is language teachable?* *Applied Linguistics* 10, 1:52-79.
34. Reiss, K. (1989) *Text Types, Translation Types and Translation Assessment*.
35. Robinson, D. (2000) *Becoming A Translator*. London and New York.
36. Sainz, M. J. (1994) "Awareness and Responsibility: Our Students as Partners". In Dollerup, C. & Appel, V. (Eds). *Teaching Translation and Interpreting 3*. New Horizons. Papers from the Third Language International Conference, Elsinore, Denmark 9-11 June 1995. (Vol. 16). (pp. 137-144). Amsterdam /Philadelphia: Benjamins.
37. Samudra, J. (1993) *Proposed Guidelines for Translation Instructors of the Sarjana Program at English Departments*. Tubingen, Germany: Gunter Narr Verlag.
38. Savory, T. (1969) *The art of translation*. London: Jonathan Cape Ltd.
39. Seguinot, Candace (1991) "A Study of Student Translation Strategies" in: Tirkkonen-Condit, Sonja (ed.): *Empirical Research in Translation and Intercultural Studies*. Tubingen, Germany: Guntere Narr Verlag.
40. Soedjatmiko, W. (1988) *Linguistic and Cultural Analysis of American Written Verbal Humor and Its Pedagogical Implication*. Adelaide: Multilingual Matters Ltd

41. Stern, N. & Payment, M. (1995) *101 Stupid Things Trainers Do To Sabotage Success* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). California: Richard Chang Associates, Inc.
42. Suryawinata, Z. (1989). *Translation*. Jakarta: Department of English.
43. Toury, G., (1982) *Translation Across Cultures*. New Delhi: Bahri Publications.
44. Venuti, Lawrence (1991) *The Translator's Invisibility — A History of Translation*. New York, Routledge.
45. Watson, J. B. (1913) *Psychology As the Behaviorist Views It*. *Psychological Review*, 20, pp. 158-177.
46. Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1987).
47. Zaixi, A. (1997) *Reflections On the Science of Translation*. *Babel*, 43 (4), 332-352.

## هل يمكن تدريس الترجمة في الصف؟

المدرس المساعد خالدة حامد تسكام  
كلية التربية للبنات – جامعة بغداد

### الخلاصة:

يتلقى كثير من المترجمين دعوة مغرية لتدريس كورس (وحدة دراسية) في الجامعة لكنهم يترددون بقبول هذا المنصب بسبب افتقارهم إلى المعرفة التعليمية. وتنشأ كثير من المشكلات التي تخص تدريس الترجمة من حقيقة مفادها أن عدداً كبيراً من المترجمين المتمرسين والمهرة الذين طلب منهم تدريس المترجمين المبتدئين يرون إمكانية تعلم الترجمة بالخبرة والحس الشخصي ولا يمكن تدريسها في الصف إطلاقاً. كما يرى كثير منهم أيضاً أن لا طائل من نظريات الترجمة على الإطلاق. وعلى النقيض من هؤلاء ثمة من يرى أن بمقدور الترجمة أن تكون (أو أنها فعلاً) علماً مثل أي علم آخر.

وعليه، يحق لنا أن نطرح الأسئلة الآتية: هل بالإمكان تدريس الترجمة أصلاً؟ هل الأفضل أن نبدأ بتعريف ماهية الترجمة حقاً؟ أهى علم أم فن أم حرفة؟ (لأننا في هذه الحالة فقط سنقرر ما إذا كان بالإمكان تدريسها في الصف مثل أي حقل دراسة آخر وبطرق التدريس الموجودة نفسها). فهل أن مترجمي المستقبل بحاجة إلى أن يدرسوا علم الترجمة أم فنها؟ وهل يمكن حقاً تدريب المترجم في الصف؟

تتناول الدراسة أولاً بعض التأملات النظرية التي تخص عملية الترجمة ومختلف المناهج لتدريسها. وتحاول ثانياً الإجابة عن هذه الأسئلة ثم تشرع بتصميم ووصف مفصل لكورس في الترجمة يركز بالدرجة الأساس على احتياجات الطالب الجامعي، كما تقترح بعض الإرشادات بخصوص كيفية تصميم مثل هذا الكورس بأفضل شكل وتعرض للأخطاء التي قد يرتكبها مصمم الكورس. وتحاول في النهاية التعرف على أفضل الإجراءات في عملية الترجمة وفي كورس الترجمة نفسه بغية الوصول إلى الفهم المنشود لتعلم الترجمة وتدريسها، كما تقدم التوصيات الممكنة في هذا الصعيد.