

## **Translation in teaching and learning a foreign language: A methodological approach**

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### **Abstract**

*In this article, we 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 rebut these arguments proving how that for a language learning process, translations can prove to be quite helpful. This paper utilizes the existing researches and proposed models, however sporadic and scattered as they are, as well as the authors' 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 prove very useful.*

**Keywords: Pedagogical Translation, Language Learning and Teaching, Grammar Translation, Direct Method, Language-learning-centred-translation**

## **Introduction**

One 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 1998:6). However, after many decades of being shunned from language learning, translation is gradually being re-introduced as a viable activity in the language class (Pym and Malmkjaer et al., 2012:1).

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 in favour of using translation in the language classroom, such as Muskat-Tabakowska (1913), Widdowson (1978:18), Titford (1985), Duff (1989:6-7), Harmer (1991:62), Newmark (1991:61-64), Ellis (1992:46), Bowen and Marks (1994:93), Ur (1996:40), Shaffner (1998 and 2002), Malmkjaer (1998:8), Ross (2000), Lesznyák(2003), Liao (2006), Pariente-Beltrán (2006), Leonardi (2009), Vermes (2010), Slepchenko (2011), Shiyab and Abdullateef (2011), and Popovic (1999). 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 (2000:61), Leonardi (2009), and Pym, Malmkjaer, and Plana (2012:3). Similarly, learners, particularly beginners, have reported the use of translation as a language learning strategy (O'Malley and Chamot,1990:127).McDonough (2002:408) 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 Bloomfield (1933:505), Newson (1988, cited in Mogahed 2011), Owen (2003), and Carreres (2006). Newson (1988), 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. For Carreres (2006), 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) 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 paper has a two part structure. The first part begins with a literature review and provides a brief historical background and reasons for translation falling out of favour with language teachers. A recent shift in the position regarding the role of translation for teaching-learning foreign languages is then described along with major benefits of using translation in the language classroom. The second part of the paper presents a methodological approach, through sample activities and texts, which propose translation is an activity that becomes very helpful in teaching and learning of foreign languages.

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

Based on Hell (2009), Vermes (2010:85-86) provides an informative overview of grammar translation method how it became ancient scholastic method's modified version at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> 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-Tabakowska1913:131). The grammar-translation method, which was used to teach Greek and Latin, used artificially made up decontextualised sentences to discuss grammatical features through word-for-word translation from and into L2. The foreign language was taught through word lists; it was contextualise, 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 (1933:505) 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 behaviourist 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 20<sup>th</sup> century (Vermes 2010:86). 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 behaviourists 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 behaviour (cf. Vermees 2010:86), 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, (Dagilienė 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 contextualised discussion of vocabulary in L2 authentic texts can help raise the students' cultural awareness, and, thus, effectively reinforce the correct L2 behaviour.

### **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 1991:62; Ross 2000:6); and Pym and Malmkjaer et al., 2012:3). For Ross (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 (e.g., Kavaliauskienė and Kaminskienė 2007, Mattioli 2004, Schweers 1999), we believe 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) 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) 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), 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:

- (i) L2-learning-based translation (pedagogical translation (Klaudy (2003: 133) or classroom translation (Schäffner 1998: 131-2)): The learner's language skills, structural differences and similarities between L1 and L2, contextualisation 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 our experience, 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 contextualise 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.
- (ii) Market-based translation (real translation (Klaudy 003:133) or market translation (Schäffner 1998: 131-2)). 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
- (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 realise 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 minimise 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) 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, internalise 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

other skills during the process of foreign language acquisition. The aims of using translation in the foreign language classroom are:

- (i) to integrate translation and reading and pronunciation skills,
- (ii) to integrate vocabulary practice and writing,
- (iii) to raise awareness of context, culture, and meaning,
- (iv) to integrate contrastive-comparative analysis between L1 and L2, and
- (v) 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 Štulajterova's 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 contextualise 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 in different settings. However, a fairly more fleshed out model for pedagogical translation in L2 classes can be found in Leonardi (2010: 88).

### **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 analysed 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 remodelling 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 internalise 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 (2010: 93) 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) 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. Cumming and Riazi (2000:56) 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's 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 (Muskat-Tabakowska 1913:134). Since the 1980s, interest in the Lexical Approach to foreign language teaching and learning and in techniques of vocabulary acquisition has increased (Meara 1980; Bahrack and Phelps 1987; Nation 1980 and 1990; Oxford and Crookall 1990; Lewis 1993 and 1997; Joe 1995; Hunt and Beglar 1998; McLean and Hogg et al. 2013; McLean and Lee, 2013). Translation activities can play a pivotal role in the building of the L2 vocabulary stock (Dagilienė 2012: 128). The new vocabulary items can be employed in contextualised 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. Students are asked to:

- (1) provide synonyms and antonyms to specific words in their L1
- (2) Identify idiomatic expressions,
- (3) use them in an appropriate and meaningful context,
- (4) Identify the foreign culture-bound words,
- (5) Paraphrase in English some general meaning words, and

(6) Find the appropriate collocates of a certain word in L1.

Thus, a two-track technique is adopted: students are encouraged to practise speaking, and are also introduced to new vocabulary in context. The contextualization of words through translation is of paramount importance to their learning process, particularly when L2 authentic texts are used, as it ensures the idiomaticity of their linguistic development. Students are asked to provide synonyms to the underlined expressions, to discuss the collocation of words, idiomatic expressions, and the contextualised usage of cultural expressions, as in the following text from the Daily Mail:

**“999 call handler is sacked ‘after getting the giggles’ with man who phoned to report a member of his own family for drunk-driving**

- Sue Heeney ‘got the giggles’ when caller got the phonetic alphabet wrong
- He told her that suspected drunk-driver might have been in a hit-and-run
- Wrongly graded call as ‘suspicious circumstances’ rather than ‘non-stop road traffic collision’
- She took no steps to start an immediate investigation into the claims
- Driver in question was involved in two hit-and-runs that evening
- Essex Police says that she ‘failed to grasp the seriousness of the situation’
- Mother-of-two, 38, could have put lives at risk, discipline hearing told

By Simon Tomlinson

Daily Mail, 25 October 2013

“A 999 operator who ‘laughed and sniggered’ throughout a call from a man reporting that a suspected drink-driver may have been involved in a hit-and-run has been sacked for gross misconduct. Sue Heeney failed to ‘grasp the seriousness of the situation’ after joking with the caller when he made a mistake while giving her the registration of the car. A disciplinary hearing was told that she ‘got the giggles’ and from then on ‘failed to deal with the conversation in a sober and professional manner’. She then graded the call with the incorrect heading ‘suspicious circumstances’ rather than ‘non-stop road traffic collision’. Miss Heeney, 38, who worked for Essex Police, had been told by the caller that a member of his own family may have been drink-driving. But she did not take immediate steps to start an investigation or gather evidence that could have helped with the search for the suspect or victims.”

“It was only when a dispatcher realised the seriousness of the incident that more immediate action was taken. The adjudicator said: ‘It is extremely fortunate that the dispatcher who picked up this incident, reviewed and reassessed its nature and urgency and took effective action.’ The driver in question was found to have been involved in two collisions that evening and failed to stop at both of them. One of the victims was a cyclist who was lucky to escape serious injury, it was heard. Dismissing her for gross misconduct, the adjudicator ruled her actions ‘could have potentially put lives at risk and adversely affected public confidence’. Speaking after the hearing, she said: ‘I was told I was being too jolly, laughing and happy on the phone. Miss Heeney - who had worked at police HQ in Chelmsford, Essex, for four years before the incident - has now launched an appeal against her sacking. Paul Turner, who said it was an

agonising decision to make the call, was shocked to learn Miss Heeney had been sacked. He said: ‘I was very nervous about making the call but through her professionalism I was able to tell her everything that happened and all the details. ‘If she had not been so good, or if I’d had someone blunt and rude, I would have hung up.’ A police spokesman said: ‘Essex Police can confirm the civilian member of staff was dismissed from the force for gross misconduct following an allegation of negligence. ‘An appeal against the dismissal has been made and it would be inappropriate to comment further at this time.’”

Based upon the above authentic media report, we can teach the following to develop vocabulary acquisition:

**Collocation of words** (to grade the call, suspicious circumstances, non-stop road traffic collision, investigation into, car registration, disciplinary hearing, work for, search for, to escape serious injury, public confidence, launched an appeal, agonising decision)

**Idiomatic expressions** (to get the giggles, drink-driver, drink-driving, hit-and-run, put lives at risk, 999 call handler, 999 operator, gross misconduct, take action, Mother-of-two, to hang up, police spokesman, civilian member of staff, an allegation of negligence)

**Synonyms** (light-hearted = jolly; to sack = to dismiss) which have occurred in the same text.

Very germane to vocabulary development is that of learning not only the words but also the assimilation of expressions. Collocation and idioms often go hand in hand (Lewis 2000; Hill 2000). Collocation can be introduced through semantic fields. For instance, a semantic field of an English word can be compared to the semantic field of the students’ native language. For example, in English, the adjective (heavy) has the following collocations (i.e., the semantic fields):

Head word	Collocates
Heavy	artillery
	losses
	fighting
	shelling
	bombardment
	casualties
	fire
	rain

However, in Arabic, for instance, (heavy) collocates only with (artillery) to obtain (madfa’iyyah thakeelah). It is worthwhile to note that it would be incorrect to translate (heavy rain) into Arabic as (matar thakeel), (heavy losses) as (khasaa’ir thakeelah), (heavy fire) as (naar thakeelah), and (heavy fighting) as (kitaal thakeel). Instead, these expressions should be translated as (matar ghazeer),

(khasa'ir fadihah), (neeraan mukaththafah)<sup>1</sup>, and (kitaal aneef/dhaari) respectively. Thus, through this exercise the students would learn that 'what is perfectly acceptable collocation in one language may be unacceptable or even nonsense in another' (Larson 1984:146).

Although the translation process is a psychologically more complex skill than reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills (Lado, 1964:54), students do not have to master the second/foreign language before they are introduced to translation activities. We have found in our teaching that the use of authentic translation exercises can be introduced to students at an intermediate level. Hence, we disagree with Popovic's argument that "translation activities can be applied at all levels and ages" (1999). Also, translation is an integral part rather than different from the four language skills. Based on our experience, the language skill-based translation activity is neither time consuming nor unnatural. Also, it neither misleads the student nor produces interference between L1 and L2 (cf. Malmkjaer, 1998:5). In contrast, the pedagogical strategies proposed by Bello (1991) such as 'back-translation, comparison of students' translations with published versions, collaborative translation where students compare their translations' are irrelevant to L2 learning-based translation method. Such strategies, we believe, are of value to market-based translation training courses only.

## **Conclusion**

The grammar-translation method has suffered a negative stereotype in language teaching. "What was wrong with this method was not that translation was made use of, but that it was used badly" (Muskat-Tabakowska, 1913:132). There needs to be a distinction between the use of translation as an L2 learning aid in a second language learning setting and the use of translation in vocational courses. There appears to be an increasing conviction among a large number of linguists and practitioners in the field of L2 language teaching that the L2-learning-based translation has a necessary and facilitating role in the development of the student's language proficiency. Translation can be a useful pedagogical tool in foreign language teaching if methodologically phased in. L2 learning-based translation activities can reduce inter-language and cross-linguistic influence of L1.

Although the translation process of any language is psychologically more complex than writing, listening and speaking skills (Lado, 1964:54), students do not have to master the second/foreign language before they are introduced to translation activities. Also, translation is an integral part rather than different from the four language skills. Based on our experience, the language skill-based translation activity is neither time consuming nor unnatural. Also, it neither misleads the student nor produces interference between L1 and L2 (cf. Malmkjaer,

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<sup>1</sup>It is worthwhile to note that Arab students can also be informed that the noun (fire) occurs in the singular in English but it should be changed to the plural (*neeraan*) in Arabic.

1998:5). The use of translation for language learning is interactive, learning-centred, and fosters creativity and autonomy. Translation is a communicative activity; thus, L2 learning-based translation can be employed purposefully in a communicative context. Hence, translation can develop the L2 learner's language skills and competence in terms of the use of L2 and cultural awareness.

Muskat-Tabakowska (1913:138) rightly concluded, almost a hundred years ago, that the total rejection of translation as a teaching-tool would deprive the teacher of a device which, when used appropriately and in accordance with the principles and requirements of modern methodology, can prove very useful. We have argued for and demonstrated in this paper how in the language learning process, more room for language translation can be found.

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