The Translation Turn: Teaching Language Through Translation

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Plan for the session

Some context:
  • A very brief history of translation in LT
  • Translation: a means or an end in LT?
  • What do we teach when we teach translation?
  • A note on directionality

Sample tasks

Discussion

Useful references and resources
A very brief history of Translation in LT

The love affair: the grammar-translation method

Communicative approaches: estranged partners, or how communication killed translation

Currently: reassessment and revival
[The rejection of translation was] “a case in which the baby was […] thrown out with the bathwater” (Atkinson 1987:242)
Translating authentic texts for a purpose is a communicative activity. Indeed, it is more natural and necessary than are many of the activities invented for language learners. (Beeby 1996: 13)
Is translation in language teaching...

a means

[a tool to aid language acquisition]

or

an end?

[a key skill]
The two roles of translation—as a means and as an end—need not be kept apart, as they have been traditionally. Learning to translate is not a special purpose or an add-on to general learning, but should be an integral part and a major aim of language learning—to operate bilingually as well as monolingually. (Cook 2010:55)

For the successful language learner, bilingual knowledge is always implicated in monolingual use, and it makes little sense to think that one can exist without the other. For these reasons I do not accept a neat division between translation as a means and an end. (Cook 2010:xx)
What do we teach when we teach translation?

- Lexical and morphosyntactic accuracy and range
- Contrastive awareness of the two languages involved
- Awareness of conventions linked to genre and text type
- Pragmatic and intercultural competence
- Close-reading skills and text analysis
- Stylistic awareness
- Dictionary and documentation skills
- Creativity
- Problem-solving
- Autonomy and collaboration
Sample tasks

1. De-verbalisation as a translation technique
2. Intralingual translation
3. Audio description
4. Speed translation: use of the article
5. Alternative translations
6. Phonic aspects: onomatopoeia, interjection, and portmanteau words
7. Translating metaphor in political speech
8. How film titles travel
Useful resources


Useful resources

Translators in Schools
http://translatorsinschools.org/

Clipflair project
http://clipflair.net/

Duolingo
https://www.duolingo.com/
Grazie!

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