



HÖGSKOLAN
DALARNA

Examensarbete

Avancerad nivå

Contemporary Approaches to Translation in the Classroom

A Study of Students' Attitudes and Strategies.

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Termin: Vårtermin 2011

Program: Lärarprogrammet

Ämne/huvudområde: Pedagogiskt arbete

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the strategies and attitudes of students towards translation in the context of language learning. The informants come from two different classes at an Upper Secondary vocational program. The study was born from the backdrop of discussions among some English teachers representing different theories on translation and language learning, meeting students endeavoring in language learning beyond the confinement of the classroom and personal experiences of translation in language learning. The curriculum and course plan for English at the vocational program emphasize two things of particular interest to our study; integration of the program outcomes and vocational language into the English course - so called meshed learning – and student awareness of their own learning processes. A background is presented of different contrasting methods in translation and language learning that is relevant to our discussion. However, focus is given to contemporary research on reforms within the Comparative Theory, as expressed in Translation in Language and Teaching (TILT), Contrastive Analysis and “The Third Space”. The results of the students’ reflections are presented as attempts to translate two different texts; one lyric and one technical vocational text. The results show a pragmatic attitude among the students toward tools like dictionaries or Google Translate, but also a critical awareness about their use and limits. They appear to prefer the use of first language to the target language when discussing the correct translation as they sought accuracy over meaning. Translation for them was a natural and problem-solving event worth a rightful place in language teaching.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- CAD – Computer Aided Design
- CA – Contrastive Analysis
- CAT – Computer Aided Translation
- CEF – Common European Framework
- CLL – Communicative Language Learning
- CLT – Communicative Language Teaching
- DM – Direct Method
- GMT – Grammar Translation Method
- GT – Google Translate
- GY 11 – The new Upper Secondary School Reform
- LCC – Life Cycle Calculation
- SGT – Swedish Google Translate
- SLA – Second Language Acquisition
- TILT – Translation in Language and Teaching

INTRODUCTION

The idea for this paper came to me after I was asked to translate a research paper on “calculating LCC of hydrodemolition”. Even though the task was from the target language Swedish into the first language English, a lot of the language was technical and unfamiliar. This comparison between my first and second language triggered a path to a new awareness of my own language learning. I had also noticed how many students in the classes I taught had turned to Google Translate (GT) for better understanding in translation. This issue was discussed with other colleagues who saw a similar pattern among their students. However, objections were made that GT was a substandard tool providing an easy way out for students wanting to avoid the learning process. Instead, colleagues promoted the traditional use of the dictionary and established Second Language Acquisition (SLA) methods like the Direct Method (DM) and Communicative Language Learning (CLL) focusing solely on using the target language or the traditional Grammar Translation Method (GTM). Second Language Acquisition has often meant for me relying heavily on speaking and listening, in other words the Direct Method or Communicative

Language Learning. However, the learning experience of translating the research paper into my mother tongue affected my attitude towards translation in language learning.

The oldest method of language learning focuses on reading and writing; the Grammar Translation Method (GMT), which is characterized by translation work and analysis of literary text with a strict control of accuracy and understanding. This method, however, was by an large abandoned in favor of the Direct Method (DM), both out of a fear that students would learn wrong grammatical rules and its inhibiting free speaking. DM is characterized by focusing on listening and speaking and maintaining that the target language (preferably by a native speaker), is spoken in the classroom at all times.

Today, however, there is an emphasis on comparing languages based on the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Cook, 2010), an emphasis on the process of translation to find meaning and understanding and less on accuracy (Leonardi. 2011). This is what makes the method of Translation in Language Teaching (TILT) seem suited in the classroom, because of its natural and problem-solving potential for debate and discussion and seems therefore ideal for educational purposes. Students are also expected to be aware and involved in the process of their own learning, which is why TILT is suited for translation of larger amounts of text.

In this study, I will explore students' responses and attitudes to translation in language learning. The study will be done with the background of various opposing theories on translation in language teaching and in the context of current curriculum trends and debatable translation tools in the classroom.

2. THESIS STATEMENT

This study sets out to explore the strategies and attitudes of some vocational training students towards translation in language learning.

3. THESIS QUESTIONS

What strategies do the students use in working with translation in the classroom?

What attitudes do they express towards translation as a language learning process?

4. DISCUSSION OF RELEVANT THEORIES

The Grammar Translation Method (GMT) has traditionally held a deep rooted place in second language learning and dominated language teaching up to the 1960s (Brown, 2007). GMT is characterized by translation and analysis of literature, but with a strict control of understanding and accuracy. Cook (2010), in a recent study, has suggested that from the 1960's (GMT) translation was villainized and thrown out in favor of what is called the Direct Method (DM). The Direct Method is characterized by maintaining that the target language (preferably by a native speaker), is spoken in the classroom at all times. Naturally as with all theories, over time the strengths and weaknesses of the method are put aside to make room for a new one (Saville-Troike, 2008). As the ever changing needs of migration fluctuate in a globalised world, language needs appear, according to Cook (2010), to be shifting back to Translation in Language Teaching (TILT). In other words, translation is 'back in fashion', but with a revised version of Lado's Contrastive Analysis (Saville-Troike 2008), where meaning and language awareness receives the focus instead of accuracy (Leonardi, 2010). This pedagogical use of translation means students are allowed to contrast and compare sections of literature and technological texts back into their first language, bilingualism.

This paper sets out to look at the attitudes and strategies students show towards Translation in Language Teaching. It will be done with the new reforms at the Swedish Upper Secondary School (GY 11) in mind, particularly its emphasis on language needed for specialized technological knowledge within the relevant programs - so called meshed learning (*infärgning*). Firstly, I present the relevance of the study to the curriculum guidelines for the English courses, the schools policy and guidelines and the emphasis from GY 11 on meshed learning. Secondly, I discuss the different approaches to teaching English; DM -the Direct Method, GTM- Grammar Translation Method, Lados' Contrastive Hypothesis Theory, namely CAT –Contrastive Analysis and Translation and how these approaches can be applied to Translation in Language Teaching (TILT). The final section will discuss Kramersch's terminology "looking for the third space", making clear some contemporary cultural boundaries within the classroom as they relate to students strategies in translation and language learning (Kramersch 1996, Tornberg 2009, Cook 2010).

4.1 The Steering Documents

The steering documents for the Upper Secondary School stipulate that the school should promote an international perspective and prepare the community for globalization and internationalization (Lpf04). There is an emphasis on the functional use of language that serves the objectives of the students' vocational training. Likewise, the Common European Framework

(CEF) - a basis for steering documents and language education within EU - presents seven different language competences emphasizing a holistic approach to language learning (Andered in Ferm & Malmberg 2001). Furthermore, the CEF emphasizes the use of new technologies and the student developing awareness of his/her own learning processes. Similarly, the curriculum and course plans for Upper Secondary English A stipulates a number of points relevant to our study that students orientate themselves through the large quantity of technical developments in their chosen field of studies, develop an insight into their own way of learning, get familiar with new technologies, develop analytic ability, critically examine and assess what they see, encourage students to try different ways and structures of working and finally develop an awareness of technical developments (Lpf 94).

Meshed learning (*infärgning*) is particularly emphasized in the new reform for Upper Secondary education (GY11), where the course English 5 should adapt the teaching to serve the outcomes of the vocational programs. The Swedish National Agency for Education has provided some information about the goals of meshed learning on its website (Skolverket 2011). To summarize, it involves cross-curricular activities, often carried out in the form of project work together with other subjects, where students deepen knowledge in areas such as Math's, CAD and other technical skills. Written and spoken communicative language skills are required for this process primarily in the first language which in this case is Swedish. One of the implications is that, according to the ethical principles of teachers, teachers are obliged to provide opportunities for students to develop knowledge and understanding in their field of study (Lärarens Handbok, 2006). This means that students develop a vocabulary, which includes a more in depth lexical knowledge and understanding of recent technological terms. Each program has their own specifications for the area of knowledge within their own particular field. This study relates to the objective of the Construction Program (BP), (Skolverket 2011). Here are some examples of vocabulary or collocations from the technical text in the area of construction which would require background knowledge both in Swedish together with hand on experience; *load transference, solid structure, sub-structure, brickwork, block work, concrete, low-rise buildings, framework, skeleton structure*. The question is how students are expected to understand these terms without first having a deeper knowledge of the practical uses in their first language.

The policy document and school's mandate requires that students are to develop *critical awareness* to cultural changes in society (Lpf 94). One such change relating to translation in language learning is the all present mobile phone and use of new technologies like Google Translate. What attitudes do students show to this and are they in line with school policies and praxis? On the

other hand, are expectations too high on students to use outdated dictionaries, pool their combined knowledge and experience and discuss their way forward to a new and correct understanding of sometimes complicated new techniques in construction?

4.2 Translation in Language Learning and GTM- focus on writing

Historically the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) has been the dominant form of second language acquisition (SLA) throughout history, traditionally used by monks in translation of the bible, followed by missionaries for the spread of the Bible into every language (Cook 2010). GTM is characterized by translation, the analysis of literature with a strict control of understanding and a focus on grammatical accuracy (Tornberg 2009). With the influence of behaviouristic and cognitive psychology on language teaching, mainly personified in Lado and Chomsky, GTM was considered an old-fashioned and bad habit forming method of language learning (Brown 2007). Cook (2010) even suggests that GTM got a bad reputation, was 'villainised' and thrown out from modern language teaching in the 60s and 70s in favour of the Direct Method (DM). The reason for this development, according to Cook, was a result of hasty and unproven conclusions made from the theory of Lados' Contrastive Analysis (CA).

Lado's Contrastive Analysis suggests a way of explaining why some aspects of second language learning are more difficult than others. CA is an approach to the study of second language acquisition which involves predicting and explaining learner problems based on a comparison of first and second language to determine similarities and differences (Saville-Troike, 2008:34). Influenced by Skinner's behaviorism, Lado emphasized the formation of right habits in language learning. Therefore, the contrastive analysis of the target language, whether in translation work or other grammatical exercises, was strictly controlled to prevent the students from transferring errors and interference of their first language (Tornberg, 2009:80). For CA, accuracy of the target language free from interference of the first language was of essence.

The Contrastive Analysis was rejected by the early 1970s as Behaviorism gave way to Mentalism and focus on the cognitive processes in language learning. Research proved that first language transfer played only a limited role in language acquisition and that it rather followed the language development of a child, the innate capacity of the learner (Saville-Troike 2007). Noam Chomsky's Transformational-Generative Grammar set the tone for language teaching in the following decades, where cognitive understanding played the vital part in language acquisition. Chomsky meant that the language learner is an active and creative participant in the acquisition process rather than a passive recipient of language stimuli. Instead of focusing on differences between languages, Chomsky suggested a search for universal grammatical similarities (Brown,

2007:29). Based on these theories, Corder (1981) developed the method of Error Analysis (EA), which regards the errors learners make as a source of insight into the learning process, rather than a bad habit to be eradicated. Corder rejected the emphasis on accuracy in GTM and CA, because he meant it hindered the process of language development. Influenced by Corder, Selinker (1994), developed the term “Interlanguage” (IL) to refer to the intermediate states of a learner's language as it moves towards the target language (Saville-Troike, 2007:40). Selinker takes a positive approach to translation back and forth between first and second language without fear of negative transfer. He sees this interlanguage as a necessary process towards language acquisition (Törnberg, 2009:80).

As Translation in Language Teaching was strongly associated with the theories and methods of GTM and CA, translation was thrown out of the language classroom from the 1970s, states Cook (2010:9). Though the standards for accuracy in GTM might have become too high for the average student and more suitable for advanced students and translators, Cook argues that translation from target language to first language was wrongly assumed to promote interference and negative transfer. Pointing out that very little research has been done over the past decades on the effect of translation exercises in language acquisition, Cook (2010:90) suggests that the baby might have been thrown out with the bathwater. Both Leonardi (2011) and Cook (2010) argue for a revised contrastive analysis with a focus on understanding and the process of developing language awareness, as the learner compare target and first language. Furthermore, Törnberg (2009:36) suggests that translation as a problem solving strategy is suitable for some students. Contrasting the target language with the first language through translation can help the learners to develop an increased awareness about how the languages are constructed and in which ways they differ.

The guidelines of CEF recommend that students should communicate with holistic competence not just linguistic. The students in our study were able, without the knowledge of language learning theories, to manage and find patterns for grammatical structures without perhaps knowing the correct theoretical name, demonstrating an awareness of negative transfer – accuracy in linguistic skill.

4.3 Translation in Language Learning and DM – focus on speaking.

The paradigm shift in language teaching of the 1970s moved from literature based focus on reading and writing to a communication based focus on listening and speaking (Brown, 2007:18. Cook, 2010:23). The Grammar Translation Method and Contrastive Analysis gave way to the Direct Method (DM), influenced by Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. The Direct Method (DM) is characterized by favoring native speakers as teachers and maintaining that the target language is spoken in the classroom at all times. DM, in polemic with the GTM, emphasizes the need to teach the language, not about the language. DM came about as a result of migration and globalization where circumstances for the learner dictate finding strategies to learn a language quickly and out of necessity in order to enter the market. This style of language learning, which is also known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), focuses on communication and it does not focus on the study of archaic language of literature (Tornberg, 2009:37). Another emphasis in the DM is that language learners are supposed to be familiarized with the sound of language first, emphasizing accent and intonation and focusing on mastering native speaking in the classroom. As GTM focused to accuracy in writing, the focus in DM is on accuracy and eloquence in speaking; the former favoring students skilled with the pen, the later students skilled with the tongue. Guy Cook (2010:24) criticizes DM's focus on completely excluding using the learner's mother tongue in the classroom, as it hampers understanding. Sapargul and Sartor (2010) raise another argument against DM that certain groups of students show resistance to Communicative Language Teaching, as it does not fit cultural mores where silence, not assertive talking, is a virtue. As less academic students were disfavored within the GTM, so less outspoken students find themselves disfavored within Communicative Language Teaching. The bilingual processing in Translation in Language Learning does not fit within the frames of the Direct Method and Communicative Language Teaching. Yet it could meet a need in certain language learners and help students to better reach certain course objectives.

The Common European Framework, Lpf94 and GY2011 call for a holistic approach in language teaching where all students are facilitated to their best ability to reach the course objectives. Cook (2010:95) argues for a reassessment of old teaching method in regard to translation and suggests that TILT is taken a step further, from the professional translator, into the classroom where it can assist in language development and the quest for meaning.

4.4 Translation in Language Learning and the quest for meaning.

The core in the reassessment of the Grammar Translation Method and Contrastive Analysis that Cook calls for is the move from a focus on accuracy to seeking meaning and understanding.

Comparing with the first language for a better understanding is a natural and necessary procedure of learning according to Leonardi (2011). She points out that it is in the discussion and negotiation around the translation exercise that students are able to pool and share knowledge.

Whether translation is back in fashion or just reappeared, as Leonardi and Cook suggest, Translation in Language Teaching has taken on a new format which may not have fully surfaced.

Language Awareness is a term used today which focuses, not so much on accuracy, but on an awareness of how the first language works by comparing it to the target (Tornberg, 2009:147).

Bilingualism and code switching between target language and first language should be part of the discussion towards understanding in the classroom, as students today have different needs and uses for acquiring a new language (Cook 2010:37,44). He also suggests that TILT should not focus so much on accuracy and literal equivalence, but as a tool in teaching that focuses instead on communication, creating meaning and understanding. Cook claims it is important to see foreign language learning as an evolution, not that we are getting better and better at languages, but that we are adapting and changing equipped for the changes in society (2010).

These theories are not without problems and there are different methods of teaching translation.

The question is what strategies and attitudes students show when faced with understanding a text. Tingbjörn (1994) discusses the importance of Contrastive Language awareness so that students are aware of how their own language works in comparison to the target language.

Contrastive Analysis in teaching means that students are allowed to contrast and compare pieces of literature back into their first language. In order for there to be better understanding, bilingualism and code switching must take place. A clarification searching for meaning back and forth between the two languages develops the language awareness in the student. Cook (2010:46) points out that the prevailing approach to language teaching at a school often determine if own language use is possible in the classroom.

4.5 Searching for “The third space”

Affirming the fact that the language classroom does not have monopoly on language learning, various researchers have explored language learning beyond the classroom (Brown, 2007:147). To instill an awareness of strategies for language acquisition that the student can use in a natural environment becomes, therefore, an important part in the teaching. “The Third Space” is a much debated term that originally was put forward by Kramsch (1996:233-258). Tornberg (2009:71)

describes this as a place where two cultures meet and explains that “the third place” in the school situation is created between the classroom and the students’ culture outside the school. Changes in society include changes in the development of language and the tools now available. In this study, we look at two areas of third space; Computer Aided Translation (CAT) and Meshed learning.

Meshed learning in the context of an Upper Secondary School is the adaptation of the English course content to the outcomes of the study program in which the English course is taught, something emphasized in steering documents of GY2011. This is particularly relevant for vocational programs, where the students are expected to develop language skills that will be relevant for the needs in their future employment. Hence, technical English and language expressing the reality of the students’ vocational profession enter the lessons, often bringing eloquent teachers with literature background out of their comfort zone. Faced with the reality of teaching vocabulary and concepts that they sometimes do not even know in their first language, the quality of meshed learning is sometimes compromised. However, using translation as a teaching method is particularly useful in this area, where students’ pre-knowledge of the subject enhances their confidences in their learning ability.

In a previous study I did of students' opinions about teaching strategies they encounter in the classroom (see appendix), they filled in a questionnaire ranking 13 of what they regarded as the most and least effective lesson styles. Translation came up consistently in the middle on number 6 as least significant, which is interesting from a statistical point of view. It highlights the indifference, or the lack of impression, translation made on the students. Another explanation could be that translation basically is not a naturally occurring event in the classroom.

Areas where many students show little confidence and interest, is the use of the dictionary, which is a handicap as dictionaries by definition are linked to translation work. The past decade has seen rapid developments in the area of computer aided teaching and learning tools – a cultural change where students' knowledge of the new technologies often surpasses the teachers'. The development of Computer Aided Translation (CAT) is replacing traditional translation tools because of its speed and effectiveness. The parameters of this study have been narrowed down to focus on the students’ natural choice of the translation tool Google Translate (GT). However, GT is a controversial tool in TILT. Former UN translator Claude Piron (2007) believes that CAT never will be able to do the same job as a human translator, which is applying judgment and flexibility in dealing with ambiguities in a text, sometimes demanding the skill of a detective tapping into all areas of knowledge. Furthermore, teachers argue that GT is a substandard tool

for language learning and should not be used in the classroom. At the same time, they recognize that dictionaries also fall short of correctness and accuracy and that they need to be used with a critical mind. Therefore, they argue for more teaching in the right use of a dictionary.

Nevertheless, more and more students seem to turn to the use of the debated Google Translate (GT) as a tool for translation, the natural choice in their own language learning process. The tool is at hand in their mobile phone (if the teachers allow the students to keep them on) and words are found much faster than with a dictionary. Moreover, GT is more updated with the latest technological words and whole phrases can also be translated. If it is true, as Leonardi (2011:119) claims, that translation is an innate and naturally occurring event, a problem solving activity, and that translation back to the first language is a natural event in language learning, why would students make such 'bad choices' for translation tools? With the development of Computer Aided Translation, it can be predicted that GT or similar tools will play an inevitable role in Translation and Language Teaching in the future. Like with the dictionary, the question is what training is needed to handle it correctly. According to the steering documents of Lpf94 and GY2011, students are expected to be aware and involved in the process of their own learning and to show a critical awareness of cultural shifts in society.

5. METHOD

The method I chose for this study was the collection of data through a written attitude questionnaire and through observation of the students group work, using observation charts (see appendix 6). Individuals used in this case study were limited to the students of two classes in the construction program, but selected randomly for collaborative group work.

The variables included in this experiment were the use of two different kinds of texts, one abstract and one technical for translation. The first text was lyrics from a popular song; the second was a text about structural forms in construction. The students were free to use whatever strategies they deemed suitable for the exercise; pooling information from each other, working individually, using translation like Google Translate or the printed Oxford school dictionary. I and the class teachers were non-participating observers during the case study.

The study was limited to male students of the building program, individuals with whom I have had little or no contact. Forty-six individuals from two classes studying English were selected randomly for collaborative group work of four or five individuals in each group.

The groups all participants were asked to translate a piece of text where they would respond by answering open-ended questionnaires. The first class translated abstract text of the lyrics of a popular song during one occasion and the second class a technical text on construction at a different occasion. Time was limited to one translation per classroom session of 60 minutes.

The bright and comfortable classroom had 32 seats, providing plenty of space for the group work that easily could be monitored. The participants were well familiar with the classroom and working in groups, which excluded any negative affect from the environment on the work of the participants. My presence as a stranger in the classroom and the low key role and sometimes absence of the class teacher did not seem to inhibit the participants in their work. As the classes were normally used to the Direct Method, English medium only, in the classroom, some students expressed apprehension over the level of difficulty of the text to be translated. The apprehension ceased when they realized that they were free to use both their first and target language during the exercise and that any translation tool was allowed, including CAT.

5.1 Ethical Considerations

An ethical self-assessment of the method used in this study was made in line with the university's instruction for scientific research. Even though all points in the assessment turned out negative and the participating students from the vocational program being of age, a written consent form was collected from each participant, (see appendix 1). The letter explained that the integrity and anonymity of each participating students would be kept at all times. The class teacher and the headmaster assessed that the study would have scientific validity, that the consent of the participants was collected adequately and that the study could not be foreseen to causing any damage to students' integrity. On the contrary, they considered the study helpful for the participating students reflection over their own way of learning (language awareness), both during the study and upon receiving the results. Moreover, the study would support the ongoing effort for pedagogical development at the school in regards to GY2011 and meshed learning.

5.2 Implementation of collection of data

Collection of data took place through observation following an observation chart (see appendix 6) and a written attitude questionnaire. The Questionnaires were distributed to both groups after students had worked collaboratively on translating a text and then made comparisons with GT text (see Appendix 1 & 2).

1. Underline any unusual differences you see between the translated Swedish lyrics and the original English lyrics:

2. Compare the English text, your text and the GT text. Comment on any of the differences.
3. What do you think is the general attitude about GT?
4. How did you find doing a translation exercise in the English lesson?

6. RESULTS

Here are some general remarks about the results of the study. The results of the questionnaire have been accounted for in the form of written response to each question after collaborative group work on lyrics text. Students were given the opportunity to respond in either English or Swedish. Half of the questionnaires were answered in English, half in Swedish. All Swedish comments have been translated into English.

Students were asked how many used GT. 90 % said that they used GT as a dictionary for looking up words on their mobile phone; 60 % used a printed dictionary sometimes.

Students showed critical approaches to Google Translate and were aware of grammatical errors. Although they had difficulty expressing what areas of grammar, they generally felt that GT did a bad job, that it translated too literally.

The discussions that went on were mainly in Swedish, but some amount of time was spent switching back and forth between English and Swedish in order to get the translation they felt happiest with. There were sometimes heated discussions amongst students as they debated the grammatical errors and choice of words. In terms of group work, most worked well together pooling background knowledge about the text and artist. They were not able to finish the translations in a 60 minute session. The students expressed that they were not used to translation exercises in the English lesson, but saw it helpful as it brought about understanding, both about the meaning of the texts and being able to contrast the two languages.

6.1 Group Translation of Abstract Text

The groups were enthusiastic and worked in a concentrated way during the process with discussion. The text that the students translated was Eminems lyrics from the song “When I am gone” (see appendix 3). Students often referred to background information about the music video for clarification of the meaning of the text.

Students mostly translated the text literally, preferring not to use the dictionary, but asked each other or other students in other groups. A number of students underlined most of the Swedish

GT text as being problematic. Some students were disappointed when they saw the complete Swedish Google translation. Some found the translation strange and amusing.

1) Compare the English text, your text and the GT text. Comment on any of the differences.

The general attitude from the class was that GT gave the right literal translation, but not always an appropriate interpretation. Students were easily able to pick out grammatical problems, such as endings, choice of vocabulary and sentence order. When it came to choice of vocabulary GT gave, most students were not satisfied

Here are some of their comments.

“e.g. play” is translated as “spela”- it would be more suitable with “lek”

“eg Shady made me – Shady fick mig”

“Sentence order is often wrong”

“Endings are incorrect”

“Meaning is lost / distorted”

“It is all wrong, the whole text is ridiculous”

“Rap / Slang is too complicated to translate”

2) What do you think is the general attitude about GT?

There were mixtures of responses from indifference to belief in improvement in a good service. The students expressed that they were discouraged by teachers to use GT, but used it anyway- under the desk!

“GT will probably get much better in the future at this though”

“Although you don’t learn anything if GT does it for you”

“Teachers don’t like it”

“To be honest I don’t really know”

3) Do you use GT- if so how often, and in what situation?

90 % of the students said that they used GT because it is quick. A few of the students said they had considered using GT for whole text translation. Some used GT to get a better understanding in their first language of the text. Some said that they would use it in the future when it gets better perhaps for larger amounts of text. They expressed a critical attitude to the tool, realizing its advantages and limits.

“It is quicker and easier to use”

“Helped understand bigger text better” (meaning large amounts of text)

“Saves time”

“GT is not good for translating sentences”

4) How did you find doing a translation exercise in the English lesson?

The exercise was new to them as they were used to the Direct Method and Communicative approach to teaching. The students expressed excitement over the exercise as it was to some a familiar but difficult text. They expressed language awareness as they contrasted the two languages, something they found helpful.

“It was fun.”

“We have never done it before in class”

“Now I understand better what Eminem means with his song”

“If I translate literally, it might be wrong or strange.”

“Does it sound Swinglish when I try to speak English?”

6.2 Group Translation of Technical Text

Students were asked to work in groups and translate a technical text (Appendix 4). The first part of the task was to translate first section with a dictionary. At first, students found translation using the dictionary slow and unhelpful. The texts they produced with the dictionary did not use the correct technical terms. Half way through the translation task, they were ‘given permission’ to use GT on their phones’. They worked faster and were more effective and the texts they produced with the help of GT were more coherent and used latest updated technical vocabulary, collocation, phrases for words such as, *Load transference Solid structure / sub-structure Brickwork Block work Concrete Low-rise buildings, Framework, Skeleton structure.*

Compared to the abstract text, they underlined a lot less text as being incorrectly translated. They generally prefer to use GT on their mobile phone (hidden under the table), rather than use a dictionary or computer for looking up single words of vocabulary.

Students showed a critical approach to Google translate and were well aware of grammatical differences. Although they had difficulty expressing what areas of grammar, they generally felt that GT translated too literally.

1) Compare the English text, your text and the GT text. Comment on any of the differences.

"It doesn't translate the correct forms"

"Good translation"

"Most of the vocabulary was correct" vocabulary is usually good

"Correct translation of phrases, vocabulary"

"Good understanding of the text"

"grammar is bad" "grammar is wrong"

2) What do you think is the general attitude about GT?

This is what some students thought about teacher's opinion of GT:

"It's easy to use"

"Students think it's good, teachers think it's bad"

"Teachers and students think that it's bad"

"Teachers hate it, students love it"

"Teachers don't like it I think because they don't think students make an effort"

"Students think it is handy and easy but teachers are skeptical because they don't think students learn anything"

This is some students own opinion about GT

"It's handy because it gives you a better understanding of the text"

"It's a handy tool"

"It can translate a whole sentence but sometimes word for word"

"It is quicker than a dictionary"

"I think it works well"

3) Do you use GT- if so how often, and in what situation?

"I use it when I don't understand a word on a website but I never use it for grammatical translations"

"I don't use GT because I think there are a lot of grammatical faults"

"I use it for homework but only the odd word"

"I don't use it to translate whole text only words"

"Yes sometimes but I only use it when I don't know words...not for long meaning"

"Yes I translate whole texts to try to get an overall understanding of the text"

"Advantages are that you can look up sentences that are hard to translate"

"Always use G T"

4) How did you find doing a translation exercise in the English lesson?

The students recognized that translation within meshed learning is helpful.

"We have never done it before."

"It's good for all this technical stuff"

"Doing translation of vocational language is boring and a pain with just the dictionary, as many words are missing."

"It's helpful to see that direct translation doesn't work, that we have to interpret the text to get it right"

"We need to do it more often"

6.3 Summary of the Results

In short, the results of the study show the students using the following strategies in translation:

- Readily using Google Translate, whether endorsed by the teacher or not.
- Pooling information from each other in the process of getting the best translation.
- Willingly sharing information with each other.
- Altering using Swedish and English in the discussions.
- Searching for understanding in the first language.
- Tending to firstly turn to the teacher for translation of words and expressions.

- Seeking accuracy in translation.
- Avoiding having to use the dictionary.

The following attitudes towards translation in the English lesson were expressed:

- A critical attitude towards the translation tool Google Translate.
- A critical attitude towards the dictionary.
- A desire to be effective in the translation work.
- Accuracy in translation was sought.
- A general positive attitude towards translation exercises' was expressed.
- Surprise over being allowed to speak Swedish during the process.
- Surprise at being allowed to use Google Translate.
- Confidence in team working.
- Frustrated over not being able to translate accurately.

7. DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

7.1 Discussion of Method

Individuals used in this case study were limited to the students attending the Construction Program. I chose this group because of a need for more knowledge in the area of GY 11's focus on meshed learning. The study could of course have been carried out in any of the Sixth Form programs. It would be interesting to see if there would be the same results in other programs.

Due to the choice of method, I decided to work with students with whom I had no previous contact. As the collection of data was to be in the form of a written attitude questionnaire and observation, it felt important not to influence opinions so that students felt free to give their opinions. Students often feel speaking stressful and, in order to reduce stress, students worked collaboratively and were given the choice with which student they would like to do the group work.

In the first class, most students, even though they had agreed to being recorded, were not at ease and therefore I felt it was appropriate to give opportunity for written group response in the second class. An individual verbal response may have affected results in a different way, but

although the comments I received were short, they provided the information I needed. I felt students gave open and thought through written responses.

7.2 Validity and Reliability

There were several variables included in this study, which could have been altered or changed and may have affected the outcome. I had initially considered a classical poem as the text that the students should translate. However, translation requires focused concentration and I did not want to risk losing students motivation or interest as I had chosen to work with a class to which I had no prior relationship. It felt especially important to find the right kind of text, one that they had background knowledge of, so that there would be enough time for them to also focus on making the comparison between the two texts. This may not have been so important in the long run as some believe, not the text in itself, but what you do with the text that is important. I think the choice of music lyrics were appropriate in this situation.

Another factor that may have affected results was that students have not worked with the translation of larger amounts of text before. On the other hand, the selection of technical text was not as successful in creating discussion around the process of translation. This may have been due to either the dry technical language or the difficulty of the text. The original choice was a text about hydrodemolition, but as I was uncertain if the class were familiar with the terms, I decided against this and instead chose a text from the programs handbook about structural forms. The idea was that students should have background knowledge and experience and, therefore, they would have been familiar with some of the terms.

I chose to let students translate target language into first language, because of the different language levels of the students. A possible alternative would have been to reverse the task from first to target language and to see what effect that would have.

Students were given just one lesson to complete the task. There was not enough time to finish translation of a text in one sitting. Time is often a limitation in the school situation and it seemed relevant to. The translation took longer than I had planned and most students would have liked more time to continue. It would perhaps have been better to have given them a text with fewer words or spread it out over two lessons.

7.3 Discussion of Result

7.3.1 Attitudes and strategies expressed towards accuracy in translation.

There are usually two main paths to take when translating a text; 'faithful' or 'free' translation (Cook, 2010. Leonardi, 2011). A faithful translation would mean a more literal translation, word

by word. Students who worked with abstract text expressed frustration at not being able to find the exact translation. They created a target or skeleton text with literal translation, which was quite similar to Google Translate. There is no reason that, had the students been given more class time for the exercise, this could not have been refined, worked on more and developed and in the process the students would have developed greater language awareness. Worth noting, even though the translation exercise with the abstract lyric text invited to good discussions of its meaning, the students still sought accuracy in the translation. To the frustration of the students, literal translation did not serve that purpose.

In the case of the technical text, after students were given permission to use GT on their phones, they worked faster and were more effective, showing a clear difference in how they worked. This time the texts they produced with GT were more coherent and used latest updated technical vocabulary, collocation and phrases like; *load transference solid structure / sub-structure Brickwork Block work, concrete low-rise buildings, framework, skeleton structure*. It was more important to get the accurate word and GT provided faster and better alternatives than the Oxford school dictionary. In both situations, they strove to find as accurate a translation as possible and found it difficult to use free translations.

Like the rationale behind the Grammar Translation Method that served faithful translation of Classical works, the need of accuracy in professional and vocational English is clear. There is no room for vague interpretation of exact which screw or piece of timber that should be used at a particular phase in a construction or how the instructions in a manual should be understood. Accuracy is of essence. Therefore, within meshed learning, the needs of the future profession of the students need to steer the language teaching, no matter how much out of the comfort zone the English teacher must feel.

When it comes to grammatical awareness, the role of the school dictionary did not live up to the task. GT proved better for providing collocations, phrases and although students showed Language Awareness and gave a few examples of grammatical differences. It is hard to know what use this was to their particular area of study or for future studies. GT proved less useful for providing grammatical solutions.

7.3.2 Attitudes and strategies towards meaning in translation

The students were initially asked to maintain the target language in the discussions in line with the Direct Method they were used to in class. However, the discussion around the translation became stifled. Therefore, they were pleased when they were free to use their first language, resulting in students sometimes using code switching, sometime only the first language. More

importantly, lively discussions arose, particularly around the lyric translation involving analysis of the text as its real meaning was sought.

The students used Contrastive Analysis as they discovered the meaning of different grammatical structures and how unsuitable literal translation sometimes could be. Google Translate was particularly helpful in this process of language awareness, not because of its accuracy, but because of inaccurate, sometimes comic, translation. Still, the students found that Google Translate gave a general gist of the meaning of the text that they then could work on.

Particularly with the lyric text, the students were more concerned with understanding, the meaning of the text, whether they used GT, a dictionary or pooled their knowledge. They worked at trying to find a satisfactory solution, avoiding transfer errors and, as Leonardi (2011) points out, making the translation a natural problem solving event. Thus, the students showed, what Vygotsky (Saville-Troike, 2006:112) would describe as, holistic sociocultural competence in their interpersonal interaction, enhancing their understanding of the language.

7.3.3 Attitude and strategies expressed towards “Third Space”.

In my experience, sometimes the teacher is expected to function as an exhaustive concordance, dictionary or an expert in the area of technological information. Instead, the course plans of English at Upper Secondary School encourage students to *develop an awareness of their own learning process* and *develop strategies* in their learning process. They are also encouraged to pursue *areas of interest* which happens to be mobile technology.

The steering documents affirm “The Third Space”, the cultures of the students outside the classroom and their role in language teaching. The study points to the possibility that Google Translate is a culture as most students are using GT as a natural solution to understanding text.

GT’s main function for the abstract text was that it saved time looking up words. Why search for words in a school dictionary that takes four times longer, when the answer is at hand in the mobile phone? GT, then, enhanced the discussion around the translation as the groups could focus on understanding the lyrics over a tedious work searching for words in the dictionary.

For the group who worked with the technological text, it became apparent that GT proved more useful for working on collocations, phrases and technological words. To facilitate meshed learning Computer Aided Translation like GT is an important support, as outdated school dictionaries often fall short on information about the latest technology.

Sanchez (2011) in a recent article in Times Magazine, states that “Google’s new android plan-world dominance”. Although intended to be somewhat ironic, it may be an indication of a paradigm shift taking place in the approach to Computer Aided Translation. Today, we have round the clock access to free, easily available, online information by means of Google Search via a variety of mobile phone telecommunication services. One objection to the use of GT, either in or outside the classroom, is that it translates inaccurately. Aiken and Balan (2011) point out that such an objection lacks support in research. They show in their study that accuracy in translation with GT between Western languages is good, while translation between Asian languages generally is poor.

The students in our study showed a critical attitude and awareness of the limits of GT, but embraced its usefulness. They were either already aware or became aware of advantages and disadvantages. They found it simply a useful, easy and readily available tool. As the students sought strategies to find solutions to language difficulties in translation, they did not seem confident that these were considered legitimate strategies.

Embracing “Third Space” in language teaching is not unproblematic. Once the mobile phone is openly brought into the classroom, similar issues likened to the use of computer in the classroom, open up. How distractions such as social networks, s.m.s and phone calls should be handled is beyond this study. However, expelling computers and mobile phones from the classroom is not consistent with calls in GY2011 for teaching to keep abreast with modern technologies. The students in our study showed a mature attitude to the distractions.

One of the implications of the fact that students do use GT is that this may reflect on the traditional form of grading homework, compared with work done in the classroom. Teachers are faced with the question of plagiarism, cheating and the goals of second language acquisition. The use of Computer Aided Translation will inevitably affect the way the teacher construct and assess students assignments, a work that should be a natural part of all educational quality assurance.

8. CONCLUSION

The attitudes and strategies in translation that the students in this study displayed show that translation is a natural problem-solving event. It can serve language teaching that focuses on both accuracy and meaning; teaching methods characterized by Comparative Analysis, Grammar Translation or cognitive approaches focusing on communicative strategies specified by the Common European Framework. Translation exercises focusing on comparative analysis and

allowing the use of first language stimulated debate and discussion, showing the usefulness of collaborative translation exercises. The students showed that they could think abstractly and compare grammatical differences. Google Translate as a tool surpassed the traditional dictionary as a support, particularly in meshed learning, due to its quickness and accuracy for modern technological words and collocations. The students showed a critical awareness to the translation tool and increased awareness of their own learning processes. Hence, translation as a natural problem solving event ought to receive its rightful place among other teaching strategies in the language classroom.

9. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

I suggest further research on translation exercises that can be used within meshed learning at vocational programs. This would support educational development within the new GY 2011 framework, which headmasters call for.

Training in using translation tools like the dictionary is integrated in most English courses. However, very little is researched on the right use of Google Translate, how it constructively could be used within the language classroom. Research within this area would address a contemporary issue in the language classroom.

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APPENDIX 1. Letter of consent



Dear Student,

My name is Elaina Josefsson and I am doing research at Högskolan Dalarna. I am interested in translation and what strategies students use when correcting mistakes generated by Google Translate, compared to

strategies used in normal translation. Translation is an old method of learning which researchers say has becoming popular again. It is thought that it is an effective tool for learning English in today's globalised world.

I would like to test this theory on you. To do this I would like to record you as you discuss and work in groups on a translation. Of course, I need your permission and you are free to refuse. All information will be anonymous and the personal integrity of all involved will be kept safe.

I would really appreciate your help in this translation exercise

Thank you

Elaina Josefsson

I agree to participate in the recording of the translation exercise and feel free to drop out at any time

Name

APPENDIX 2- Abstract text.

“When I’m gone” - Lyrics by Eminem

Have you ever loved someone so much, you'd give an arm for?

Not the expression, no, literally give an arm for?

When they know they're your heart

And you know you were their armour

And you will destroy anyone who would try to harm 'her

But what happens when karma, turns right around and bites you?

And everything you stand for, turns on you to spite you?
What happens when you become the main source of her pain?
"Daddy look what I made", Dad's gotta go catch a plane
"Daddy where's Mommy? I can't find Mommy where is she?"
I don't know go play Hailie, baby, your Daddy's busy
Daddy's writing a song, this song ain't gonna write itself
I'll give you one underdog then you gotta swing by yourself
Then turn right around in that song and tell her you love her
And put hands on her mother, who's a spitting image of her
That's Slim Shady, yeah baby, Slim Shady's crazy
Shady made me, but tonight Shady's rocka-by-baby...

[Chorus]

And when I'm gone, just carry on, don't mourn
Rejoice every time you hear the sound of my voice
Just know that I'm looking down on you smiling
And I didn't feel a thing, So baby don't feel my pain
Just smile back
And when I'm gone, just carry on, don't mourn
Rejoice every time you hear the sound of my voice
Just know that I'm looking down on you smiling
And I didn't feel a thing, So baby don't feel no pain
Just smile back...

Free-translate into Swedish

Google translated -now compare *your translation* with *GT*

Har du någonsin älskat någon så mycket, du skulle ge en arm för?
Inte uttrycket, nej, bokstavligen ge en arm för?
När de vet att de är ditt hjärta
Och du vet att du var deras pansar
Och du kommer att förgöra alla som skulle försöka skada "henne
Men vad händer när karma, vänder precis runt och biter dig?
Och allt du står för, vänder på dig att trots du?
Vad händer när du blir den viktigaste källan till hennes smärta?
"Pappa titta vad jag gjort", går pappa måste ta ett plan

"Pappa var är mamma? Jag kan inte hitta Mamma var är hon?"

Jag vet inte gå att spela Hailie, baby, din pappa är upptagen

Daddy's skriva en låt, den här låten är inte ska skriva själv

Jag ska ge er en underdog då du måste svänga själv

Sväng sedan höger runt i den låten och säg att du älskar henne

Och sätta händerna på hennes mor, som är en porträttlik hennes

Det är Slim Shady, yeah baby, Slim Shady är galet

Shady fick mig, men ikväll Shady's rocka-by-baby ...

[Chorus]

Och när jag är borta, fortsatt bara, inte sörjer

Gläd dig varje gång du hör ljudet av min röst

Vet bara att jag ser ner på dig ler

Och jag kände inte en sak, så barnet inte känner min smärta

Bara le tillbaka

Och när jag är borta, fortsatt bara, inte sörjer

Gläd dig varje gång du hör ljudet av min röst

Vet bara att jag ser ner på dig ler

Och jag kände inte en sak, så barnet inte känner någon smärta

Bara le tillbaka ...

Underline any unusual differences you see between the translated Swedish lyrics and the original

English lyrics:

e.g.

Slang /phrases

Sentence order

Verbs / tenses

Choice of words (vocabulary)

Definite articles

Singular / plural

1. Compare the English text, your text and the GT text. Comment on any of the differences?

2. What do you think is the general attitude about GT?
3. Do you use GT- if so how often and in what situation?
4. How did you find doing a translation exercise in the English lesson?

APPENDIX 3 – Technical Text -Structural Forms

There are three basic types of structure, each one of which uses the strength of the material used and combines it with shape to obtain load-transference.

1. Solid structure

Solid structures are also known as mass wall construction. The walls are usually constructed of either brickwork, blockwork or concrete. They form a stable box like structure, but are normally limited to low-rise buildings. The loads are transferred to and spread through the walls to give a distributed load to the substructure.

2. Framed or Skeleton Structure

The skeleton structure is made up of an inter-connected framework through which the loads are concentrated and transferred to substructures. Frames made of steel, concrete or timber are often pre-made in a factory as separate units, which can be quickly and easily erected on site. Framed construction can be used for a wide range of buildings, both high and low rise.

3. Surface Structure

Surface structures consist of a thin material that has been curved or folded to obtain strength, or a thin material that has been stretched over a supporting framework. Surface structures are often used for large clear span buildings with a minimum of supporting structures

OBSERVATION CHART - ATTITUDES & STRATEGIES IN TRANSLATION

	A.1	A.2	A.3	A.4	A.5	B.1	B.2	B.3	B.4	B.5
1						X	X	X	X	X
2	X	X	X	X	X					
3	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	
4	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
5										
6	X	X	X	X	X			X		X
7						X	X		X	
8		X		X						X
9	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
10										
11	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Observation 1: The students are translating a technical text.

Observation 2: The students are translating contemporary lyrics.

Observation 3: The students are discussing translation, pooling information from each other.

Observation 4: The students discuss in Swedish.

Observation 5: The students discuss in English.

Observation 6: The students show interest in the exercise.

Observation 7: The students show a lack of interest in the exercise.

Observation 8: The students use the dictionary.

Observation 9: The students use Google Translate.

Observation 10: The students are satisfied with the Google Translate's translation.

Observation 11: The students are critical to the Google Translate's translation.

Class A. 24 students.

Class B. 22 students.

