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Some Principles on the Practice of the Receptive and Productive Skills in Teaching Translation

Yekhlef Zoulikha
University of Oran-Algeria
Yekhlef72@yahoo.fr

Abstract: *This current paper deals with some principles on the practice of the receptive and the productive skills in teaching translation. The integration of the four skills is based on two basic elements. The first is based on the language whereas the second covers the major points in the application of the skills. Thus, our interest in this paper takes, s into account the focus on the language. We try to outline the basic linguistic aspects such as grammar, function, vocabulary and pronunciation. Moreover, we focus on the integration of the receptive and the productive skills during translation process. So, to what extent can a successful methodology be fruitful and helpful in facilitating the task in the application of the four skills adequately?*
Keywords: *Receptive skills, productive skills, teaching translation, speaking, writing, listening, reading, focus on language, grammar, function, vocabulary, classroom management.*
Résumé : *Cet article traite de quelques principes sur la pratique des compétences réceptives et productives dans l'enseignement de la traduction. L'intégration des quatre compétences repose sur deux éléments de base. Le premier est basé sur la langue alors que le second couvre les points majeurs de l'application des compétences. Ainsi, notre intérêt pour cet article tient compte de l'accent mis sur la langue. Nous essayons de décrire les aspects linguistiques de base tels que la grammaire, la fonction, le vocabulaire et la prononciation. De plus, nous nous concentrons sur l'intégration des compétences réceptives et productives au cours du processus de traduction. Alors, dans quelle mesure une méthodologie réussie peut-elle être fructueuse et utile pour faciliter la tâche dans l'application des quatre compétences de manière adéquate ?*
Mots-clés : *compétences réceptives, compétences productives, enseignement de la traduction, expression orale, écriture, écoute, lecture, concentration sur la langue, grammaire, fonction, vocabulaire, gestion de classe.*

1. Introduction

People or the competent language users have a number of different abilities. They possess the four basic skills of writing, speaking, listening and reading. Writing and speaking involve language production and are, therefore, often referred to as productive skills. Listening and reading, on the other hand, involve receiving messages and are, therefore, often referred to as receptive skills.

Hence forth, the practice of the four skills cannot concern only the language class but, also can be exercised and achieved through the different steps when the language teacher or the translation teacher tackles the translation task in the classroom. It is the teacher's role to be more strategic in supplying a variety of successful procedures and approaches in the achievement of such classroom purposes.

2. Some Basic Principles

Translation as a transfer process develops three qualities to all language learning; accuracy, clarity and flexibility. It allows (translation) the learner to search (flexibility) for the most appropriate words (accuracy) to convey what is meant (clarity). Duff (1989.7)

o Accuracy

Language competence is two-way not one –way system. We need to be able to communicate in both ways: into and from the foreign language i.e., knowledge of such a language use is knowledge of knowing how to use the language appropriately in the right circumstances. Appropriateness, therefore, depends on many different factors that affect how someone can choose the words one intends to use such as setting (where we are when we use the language?) purpose (why are we using language and what is the purpose of the speaker or the writer?) the topic (what are words about, the subject matter). Thus, all these factors influence the users in their choice of words.

o Discourse Structure

Communicative competence involves not just language competence (vocabulary, grammar), but also knowledge of how language is used appropriately and also, how language is organized as discourse. Hence, the ability of structuring discourse is very important in the competence of language use. It requires not only knowing how to say things in such a language but also how do we organize the point we wish to make.

Thus, learners should be encouraged to work on the way they organize what they say and write. They should be trained to recognize discourse structure (the achievement requires a lot of practice). Clearly, students need to be aware of the different way language is used in different situations.

o Importance of Meaning

Students need to be aware of language and how it is used: Grammar, vocabulary, etc. Grammar, for instance, should be taught or presented through structural patterns. Teachers may introduce grammar which can easily be explained and presented in different skills and activities to raise the student's awareness about appropriate use of language. Grammar should be explained in detail, using grammatical terminology; because very often, the students find the grammatical concepts difficult. Thus, meaning might be the organizing principle of most vocabulary learning, and the teacher will proceed to explain the meaning of words in a way:

- That solves the immediate problems of comprehension for the learners
- Enables them to relate the new words to words already known. (Candlin & Widdowson 1990. 45)

3. Focus on Language

The objective of the translation theory is related with the aim of formulating methodological translation principles to investigate translation problems and to explore more about translation procedures, strategies and techniques which in turn must be applied to teaching translation. The suggestions made about methods and approaches are to outline a range of possibilities from which the teacher and class can choose, rather than a set of rules which must be respected and adhered to.

In fact, the issue of teaching methodology is very old and very complex. All the suggestions made, methods and theories were just to recapitulate a range of possibilities in sort of solutions and points of views to be taken into consideration in translation field. And, here, we can say that translators who are not skillful and competent on foreign languages can never succeed in translating any message correctly.

Hence, teaching methodology, therefore, is related to the status of the teacher. The translation teacher should possess at least the following qualifications:

- An interest in translation teaching.
- A strong enough knowledge about translation theory, translation science, translation teacher problems…etc.
- The ability to adapt learning theories to the field of translation Teaching. In other words, he should be a real and good didacticien and pedagogue.
- A comprehensive transfer competence. (taken from Wilss, 1982).

Accordingly, language teachers and /or translation teachers should focus on language on the basis of the following points:

o Focus on Syntax

The ordering of words and ideas in translation should as closely as a possible match the original text, the discipline of translation consists in searching the given text for the smallest possible units that can admit of adequate matching. In other words, very frequently a word has to be matched with a phrase. However, differences in languages and structures often require changes in the form and order of words.

Yet restructuring the message entails adjustments at different levels, grammatical and semantic. Therefore, the translator should be aware of the divergences of the two languages in terms of voice, word classes, connectors, etc. the Arabic sentence structure, for instance, favors the use of the active form than the passive. That is why we more often change the active Arabic sentence into the passive when translating into English.

o Focus on Function

Good translation depends on the translator's experience and knowledge. Yet, the quality of writing has to be judged in relation to the author's intention and/or the

requirement of the subject matter which helps in the choice of the suitable method. Accordingly, if the text is well written on the basis of syntax and lexis within the appropriate use of words as important as the matter, it is necessary, then, to consider every nuance of the author's meaning. Yet, language rules and prescription have nothing to do with good writing. The translator's task and role is to translate a text in the best style that should correspond to the style and the manner of the original one.

Ungrammatical sentences make ambiguous sentences. Thus, writing requires efforts of organized sentence structure and connecting sentences to ensure, both trough the choice of sentence structure and the way sentences are linked together and sequenced that writing or the text produced can be interpreted appropriately. On the other hand, the language teacher and / or translation teacher should clarify the meaning of some words and how they are used in such texts such as adjectives word order adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, etc. during the teaching process.

- **Focus on Vocabulary**

In translation, learners need to learn the lexis of language. They need to learn what words mean and how they are used appropriately in different contexts. They should be aware of the vocabulary they need for their learning for translation purpose. Thus, the first thing to realize about vocabulary items is that they frequently have more than one meaning. When we come across a word, then, and try to decode its meaning we will have to look at the context in which it is used. What a word means can be changed and can be limited according to the aim and the objective of its use. But how it is used, this is something students need to know. Extensive, thorough and focused in L2academic vocabulary, grammar and discourse is essential for developing L2written proficiency. Hinkel (2004.7)

- **Focus on Pronunciation**

As a matter of fact, language teachers and / or translation teachers or teachers who are concerned with translation class might integrate and make this point into practice (classrooms tasks). For instance, when reading the texts; teachers can explain and clarify the meaning of some key words or words which seem difficult and new to learners. Therefore, when applying this step adequately, teachers might repeat the pronunciation of some words (on a purpose) which they cannot recognize their pronunciation as well easily. Teachers might use the board in order to explain such points throughout the use of phonetic transcription such as syllables, stress, types of vowels, etc.

4. Focus on Skills

- **Focus on Receptive Skills: Listening and Reading**

Any reader or listener employs a number of special skills when reading or listening. Their success at understanding the content of what they read or hear depends to a large extent on their expertise in these special skills. Henceforth, the

receptive skills develop communicative efficiency in pronunciation. The learners need to understand how sounds are produced and how stress is made (listening). This is something the teacher can do with students through explanation since the teacher is the language model for the students. Sometimes, however, we read and listen to a great deal of language not because we like reading or listening but for two basic principles: interest and usefulness. That is, the way we read texts that are useful and find interesting texts containing something we want or need to know. As a matter of fact, we find it so interesting to give importance to the teaching of receptive skills for translation purpose with the use of specific methodology and material design.

Consequently, being able to understand a piece of text does not necessarily mean that students are able to understand its comprehension. Receptive skills, then, should involve students in reading or listening where they are capable of using the language sufficiently at least, to extract meaning, to have an idea or the main points of the text.

Tasks require the participants to function primarily as a language user in the sense that they must employ the same kinds of communicative processes as those involved in real activities Ellis (2003.3). The teacher's role is to train students in a number of skills they will need for the general understanding of reading and listening texts. As put by Widdowson (1985.233) that methodology is not a matter to be taken lightly. Only when a great deal of research has been carried out on psycholinguistics, matters of the acquisition and learning in« Methodology is not a matter to be taken lightly. Only when a great deal of research has been carried out on psycholinguistics, matters of the acquisition and learning in general, or specific learning style in particularly or institutional and individual attitudes to language learning on the relationship between exclusive needs and real expectations on every aspect of classroom management, will have the tools for the adequate implementation of specific contents.

As far as the students of translation are concerned, the teaching methodology of the receptive skills (reading and listening) can be divided into two parts.

In the first part, the students for instance, are asked to read or listen to a text in treatment. When taking it for the first time, they should be asked to look at the general picture, i.e., the general idea, the main idea of a text, extra specific information, the purpose of the text, etc.

In the second part, and after students have performed the first step, they tackle the second step that involves detailed analysis and comprehension of the text. such as the study of vocabulary, the discourse analysis, identification of discourse markers, analysis of speaker's or writer's opinion and attitudes, the type of style used (direct or indirect), etc. Listening skills certainly shares many similarities with reading skills. But differences also exist between the two. May be, they are similar, since they are both receptive.

A spoken text differs from a written text in the way presented to the students. A written text can be consumed at the speed of the reader. It can be read and read

again whereas, a spoken text if it is on video or audio tape, it can certainly be repeated.

Accordingly, concerning the significance of use of materials in classroom, Sheldom (1987.3) points out that the seriousness and validity of a course will rest upon the solution and faithful application of a relevant course tome. Most learners will evaluate progress in a linear, cover-to-cover way and will probably prefer not to dip into a text book here and there or to use selections from a variety of printed courses. Moreover, the discrete hand-outs and photocopies which typify teacher-generated materials have to be 'sold' as valid educational exercices. Many leavers feel that the 'sampling' methods which are corollary of the communicative approach evince teacher disorganization and lack of sure, expert course direction.

- **Focus on Productive Skills: Speaking and Writing**

The mere command of certain number of vocabulary items and sets of grammatical rules does not mean a command of that language. It is, therefore, quite natural and necessary that the following part should shift from linguistic competence to communicative competence, from accuracy towards fluency.

If, for instance, someone has been taught how to write a traditional five paragraph essay, one has to develop a thesis and support it with evidence Graff, Birkenstein (2007). In writing, there is a greater need for logical organization like coherence, cohesion and pronunciation. The difference between speaking and writing skills consists in the different types of exercises which focus on different aspects of language and require different levels of correctness. Speakers, for instance, can rephrase what they are saying, they can speed up or slow down, they can vary their intonation and stress, whereas, writers cannot.

This is compensated for by a greater clarity and by the use of grammatical and stylistic techniques. Since, however, our particular concern in this research is with translation and language teaching.

In communication we tend to combine skills in variety of ways. Indeed, for learners to achieve some acceptable degree of communicative competence is not so easy to realize. Much practice material in (EFL) courses is tightly controlled and sometimes differ from one teacher to another according to the linguistic level of the learners and also the purpose. Therefore, materials in developing speaking and writing skills for communicative competence in general use depend on the teacher. Each teacher should provide useful materials according to the learner's needs. Of course, this is related to the teacher's duty and roles. However, for specific use of English (ESP) in translation materials should involve a variety of dialogues and texts including scientific and technical discourse for instance. If we consider a standard procedure for practice and presentation in classroom, dialogues, successfully practice the integrated skills; speaking, listening and reading. Discourse, that is combining and relating of sentences and utterances to produce units of language which are sequenced in a structured way, however, involves rules and conventions

by which sentences relate to each other and for larger units such as paragraphs and texts.

There are varieties of ways in which classroom activities may be organized. The most common teacher interacting with all students as a class (Hatch 1992.93). Consequently, course materials should implicitly or explicitly bring learners to particular points for successful learning. In short, significantly, the aim of a course should not simply be to teach the learner produce (write/speak) grammatically correct sentences but also to develop an awareness of how sentences are organized together in English for communicative purposes.

Collaborative learning also helps to provide teachers with a methodology to enable them to achieve such significant goals and those can be applied in a variety of curriculum settings. It enables focused attention to particular lexical items, language structures and communicative functions through the use of interactive tasks and, provides apportunties for learners to develop successful learning and communication strategies. Richard and Rodgers (2001.193)

Thus, we sum up the suggestive stages in the application of the four skills in translation class in the following table as follows:

A Sample on the practice of the four skills

Skills		**Teacher**
Receptive skills	*Focus on Listening Skills*	Introducing the subject matter: the topic of the text, the general idea, text typology, the nature of the text. By introducing the subject matter, the teacher can focus on their attention efficiently. Teachers need to help the students recognize and deal with these featuresin several ways.
	Focus on Reading Skills	**When the language teacher/ translation teacher reads the text (as 1st step to do before translating) can makethe students listening more attentively.** **The teacher should give an opportunity to students read the text and listen to themselves and to each other.**
Productive Skills	*Focus on Speaking Skills*	When reading the teacher tries to correct the student's incorrect pronunciation of some words. when discussing the whole context of the text. when discussing the content and the form of the text. when discussing and analysing the key words and their general/ specific meaning.

	Focus on Writing Skills	**Since translation is a written activity it requires skilful and good writing abilities so that it develops students' writing skills such as: understanding, analyzing, synthesizing, and assessing.**

5. Conclusion

When we are teaching a language, we are teaching "What" for example, a grammar point, a function, or a vocabulary, and the aim of the lesson is to introduce and practise new language. When we teach skills, we are teaching how to listen in a more focused way, how to read more quickly and effectivlly, how to speak more fluently or how to write and translate particular types of texts more appropriately Hadfield (2008. 72). Thus, instruction in L2 vocabulary and grammar improves learner's receptive and productive skills and provides important means of expanding their lexical and syntactic repertoires necessary in L2 reading, translating, constructing academic texts, listening and other fundamental facets of functioning and using the language in more appropriate way.

Yet the differences between L1 and L2 writing are so extensive that they can be identified in practically all aspects of written texts and discourse. This is the case for translation, it requires a good linguistic background in both languages as well as translation proficiency and translation competence. Henceforth, a good teaching methodology and good classroom management help learners to be more skilful (receptive and productive). Moreover, effective translation –based tasks raise students' awareness in terms of collaborative learning, interaction and motivation which facilitate the task to the students to be more flexible and more strategic in coping with translation difficulties adequately.

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