

'TRANSLATION STRIKES BACK' - ITS CONTRIBUTION TO SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING TODAY

LIM BENG SOON, PhD.

SEAMEO, RELC, Singapore

This paper explores the interface between current trends and developments in translation studies and language learning. It will focus on the translation process, comparative linguistics and its pedagogical applications. The paper will hopefully counter some of the negative impressions of the role of translation in language learning and teaching. Hence it hopes to add a new twist and new applications to the understanding of the age old grammar-translation method in language teaching today.

In the course of the paper we will exploit the instruments of analysis of processes that take place during translation (namely through the use of the Think Aloud Protocols (TAP)) to explain how translators become aware of the choices they have made in their translations. It is the contention here that language learners and teachers can exploit TAP research in translation for its pedagogical implications for second language learning as it has been found that students prefer to revise translations into a foreign language rather than their own mother tongue as they have learnt the foreign language (and its terms) consciously. We will see if an awareness of the translation process improves the awareness of language use in the translator (and in the case of this paper, the foreign language learner as well) and empowers him to make informed judgements and evaluations of the language output.

This paper will illustrate the key points with an elaboration of problems in translating on the lexical, syntactic and discourse levels when two very different languages from two very different cultures constitute the source and target languages. Examples will be drawn from problems faced by advanced users of Malay and English. A focus on the following areas will be provided:

- 1) Lexical Issues
- 2) Fixed expressions & Idiomatic expressions
- 3) Grammatical non-equivalence

Selected Bibliography

- Alves Fabio (ed) 2003. *Triangulating Translation: Perspectives in Process Oriented Research*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Baker, M. 1992. *In Other Words: A Coursebook On Translation*, London: Routledge.
- Gass, S.M. & Selinker, L. (Eds) 1994 *Language Transfer in Language Learning*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins
- Lantolf, J. P. & Appel, G. (Eds) 1994. *Vygotskian Approaches to Second Language Learning*, USA: Ablex Publishing
- Menacere, M. 1994. *Translation As A Means of Foreign Language Learning*, Translatio 3-4: 279-293.
- Ruiz-Funes, M.T. 2002. *On Teaching Foreign Languages: Linking Theory to Practice*, London: Bergin & Garvey
- Snell-Hornby, Mary 1985 Translation as a means of integrating language teaching and linguistics. In Titford, C and Heike, A.E. (eds) *Translation in Foreign Language Teaching and Testing*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- . 1995. *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins
- Stern, H.H. 1984. *Fundamental Concepts in Language Teaching*, Oxford: Oxford University Press