

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## Second Language Pedagogy and Translation: The Role of Learners' Own-language and Explicit Instruction Revisited

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### ABSTRACT

Translation has been a core of controversies on whether it can be a valid and effective instrument in second language (L2) teaching. This work advocates the movement that tries to restore translation as a practical and efficacious pedagogical tool. In order to do so, the reasons why translation was rejected are presented with a focus on the ban of the L1 use in L2 educational settings. However, this study also presents some contemporary debates about the use of L1 in language pedagogy and its productive role in language teaching. Therefore, drawing on ideas from discussions on the role of L1 and the explicit instruction, this work tries to review the status of translation, and also states that its use is pertinent in L2 teaching and learning in a justified, organic and contextualized manner.

**KEYWORDS:** Translation; Own-language; Explicit instruction; Language teaching.

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## INTRODUCTION

The practice of translation is long established, and, according to Munday (2012, p. 13), writings on this process go long back in history, as it was crucial for cultural and religious dissemination. In the first century BCE, for example, Cicero and Horace already used to discuss the possible manners of translating a text. However, the study of translation as field only came to light later in the twentieth century and, also in line with Munday (2012), before that, translation had the minor position of just an element of language teaching. In that regard, Cook (2010, p. 14-15) points out that, until 1960s (and beyond), language learning in secondary school in many countries had come to be severely influenced by what is known as *Grammar-Translation Method* (henceforth GTM). *Per contra*, this method, detailed in our next section, was a target of grave criticism and fell into disrepute with the rise of new alternative forms of second language (henceforth L2) teaching, such as, the *Direct Method* or the *Communicative Approach* (Cook, 2010), for instance. This process led, as a consequence, to the discard of translation in the scenario of language teaching and learning. In this sense, as reported by Brown (2001), translation as a learning activity started to be considered unsuitable within the context of L2 learning. However, in the late 1980's, the status of translation in L2 teaching started to be reviewed.

As follows, the non-stopping quarrel on the use of translation in language teaching has enlisted linguists, methodologists, teachers and translation theorists in a long-standing scrutiny of reasons in favour and/or against its use. While some argue against the use of translation as a pedagogical tool in the language classroom (e.g. Lado, 1957; Gatenby, 1967), on the other hand, some scholars have argued in favour of translation in L2 teaching (e.g. Bonyadi, 2003; Colina, 2003; Petrocchi, 2006; Pariente-Beltran, 2013). As we may notice, and as pointed out by Cook (2010), it is only relatively recent that there has been a move to restore translation to language teaching, and the present article advocates such movement or, in other words, that only translation is not detrimental for L2 students as it is an effective pedagogical tool.

To Popovic (2001), for instance, translation has been a frequent object of ridicule by those eager to demonstrate their allegiance to modern ways and times, and we, following Ellis (1992) and Ur (1996), promote that translation is a legitimate instrument for language pedagogy. Therefore, in a nutshell, our main goal is to provide a basic resource for translation theory to L2 teachers of various levels, and to present some well-established arguments in order to try to demystify the persistent social imaginary that translation should be avoided in L2 teaching, mainly due to its close relation with the use of learners' first languages (henceforth L1), or, according to Hall and Cook (2013), the use of their own-languages. In order to do so, this paper draws on ideas from Developmental Psychology and Applied Linguistics, focusing on the benefits of the use of the own-language and of the explicit instruction in L2 teaching. At this point, it is valid to point out that the scope of this article is the written translation rather than oral translation (interpreting or interpretation) even though overlaps make a clear distinction impossible (Gile, 2004; Munday, 2012).

## 1. TRANSLATION: THE VERY BASICS

It is not our aim to introduce the reader to major concepts and models of Translation Studies; rather, we want to deliver a brief introduction to the field. Following that fashion, in an abbreviate manner, Baker (1998, p. 273) conceptualizes translation as the ability of specific meanings from one language to be transferred to another without great changes. Moreover, Klein-Braley and Franklin (1998, p. 56) point out that translation is the transference of a given content from one culture to another, in other words, that not only the structural linguistic aspects are at stake in the translation process, but also the original and target *zeitgeists*.

In agreement with Carbonell (2006), translation is “a form of communication and a means of achieving things. However, in translation the original communicative act is relocated to a different setting, where different actors perform for different purposes: there is a mediation mechanism which qualifies the whole act at different levels” (2006, p. 48). In addition, Zabalbeascoa (1996) points out that translation is always imperfect as the humans and even the social activities are not perfect. According to the author, translation is an act of communication and a human social activity; however, as there is no communication or human activity that is perfect, it is no tragedy do admit that perfect translation is also not perfect (1996, p. 175).

Etologically, according to Munday (2012, p. 08), the term *translation* – first used in 1340 by Richard Role in the preface of his *Psalter* (Oxford English Dictionary, online) – is a derivation product from either the Old French (*translation*) or from the Latin (*translation* – ‘transporting’). Additionally, the term today has different meanings, for example, (i) the field of study, (ii) the product of rendering, and (iii) the process of rendering a text.

With regard to translation as a process between two languages, according to Munday (2012), it implies the modification of the original text or *source text* (ST) in the original language or *source language* (SL) into a new text or the *target text* (TT) in a new language the *target language* (TL). Therefore, if we are translating a text from American English (AmE) into Brazilian Portuguese (BP), the SL is the AmE and the TL is BP. Accordingly, as stated by Snell-Hornby (1988),

[t]ranslation is a complex act of communication in which the SL-author, the reader as translator and translator as TL-author and the TL-reader interact. The translator starts from a present frame (the text and its linguistic components); this was produced by an author who drew from his own repertoire of partly prototypical scenes. Based on the frame of the text, the translator-reader builds up his own scenes depending on his own level of experience and his internalized knowledge of the material concerned. (1988, p. 81)

By way of contrast, translation does not only involve two different languages. According to Jakobson (2004), translation might be divided into three different categories: (i) intralingual translation, (ii) interlingual translation, and (iii) intersemiotic translation. The first variety of translation – intralingual – sometimes is not even noticed or regarded as a real translation product/process due to the involvement of only one given language/code.

In other words, both ST and TT belong to the same linguistic code/SL (SL=TL). Also according to Jakobson (2004), this type of translation is also regarded as “rewording” or the interpretation of signs through different signs from the same language. For example, when we produce an abstract of a scientific paper in the same language, or when we transform a highly complex text on Engineering with specific jargon of the field into something that might be published in a newspaper and intelligible by readers not acquainted with the Engineering terminology, we are facing the results of the intralingual process of translation.

Conforming to Jakobson (2004), the intersemiotic translation, also addressed as *transmutation*, is considered an interpretation of verbal/linguistic signs by means of non-verbal sign systems (2004, p. 139) or vice-versa. One simple example of this category is a film adaptation of a book to the cinema, that is, from written language into motion pictures. Munday (2012) signalizes that intersemiotic translation might also occur, for example, when a written text is translated into other modes, such as music or painting.

At last, interlingual translation is considered the “proper” translation, as it consists as an interpretation of linguistic signs of a given language by verbal signs of a different one (Jakobson, 2004). This is considered to be the most common sort of translation seen and is also the focus of the present paper. Therefore, even though intralingual and intersemiotic translation would have value in second language teaching, we are not considering both of them in this theoretical analysis.

## 2. THE “RATIONALE” UNDER THE ABOLITION OF TRANSLATION

As stated in our introduction, translation does not hold a pleasant reputation in L2 teaching and learning due to its intimate link to Grammar-Translation Method (GTM). Therefore, to deliver an overview about such method is of a paramount importance so that we may understand the abolition process of translation.

Firstly known as the Prussian Method in the United States, due to the book named *The Ciceronian or the Prussian Method of Teaching the Elements of the Latin Language* by Sears (1845), according to Lake (2013), GTM dates back to the 1500s, and, to Richards and Rodgers (2001), it dominated European and foreign language teaching from the 1840s to the 1940s, and is still being used in some countries in its standard form despite all criticism.

Applied to Classical Latin and Greek and then to modern foreign languages, this method centred on the rote study of the grammatical rules and structures of the languages involved in the translation process. However, according to Howatt (1894 apud Richards; Rodgers, 2001, p. 04), “it was not necessarily the horror that it critics depicted it as”. Conforming Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 04), the excess were introduced in this method “by those who wanted to demonstrate that the study of French and German was no less rigorous than the study of classical languages”. Language learning was a tedious activity as grammar rules were both practiced and tested by the translation of a series of usually unconnected and artificially constructed sentences exemplifying the structure(s) being studied (Munday, 2012, p. 13).

The FL classes in the light of this method were commonly conducted in the students' own-language, who had learned vocabulary and grammar rules from the instructors or from the books, and practiced it by doing drills and translation exercise both into and from the TL (Lake, 2013). Therefore, translation is the key to this method as it focuses on the written language with little or no space at all to listening and speaking activities/practice. To Richards and Rodgers (2001), this method has no advocates and no theory underlying its assumptions, offering rationale to its machinery. In that period's scenario, nothing would be more coherent as there was no specific theory on language, what only came to light in 1916 with Ferdinand de Saussure's posthumous publication of the *Cours de Linguistique Générale*. Thus, a language was seen as a complicated yet simple structure, and to learn a given language was equivalent to just learn its structure (Kupske, 2009). As a consequence, translation was taken as the act of changing a text from one structure into another.

As stated in Santoro (2011, p. 148), GTM remained a major method until 1940s although there were dissenting voices that highlighted the need to give greater emphasis to orality. This demand mainly came from the Protestant religious spheres, as the need for geographical expansion and the desire to gain followers in different regions also demanded the oral knowledge of foreign languages.

In that fashion and in agreement with Hall and Cook (2013), within the ELT studies, GTM had been rejected in the late 19th century, criticised to bring into line exclusively accuracy and writing in detriment of fluency and speaking, and for being authoritarian and unintelligent. According to Randaccio (2012, p. 10), "the effectiveness of the GTM was initially brought into question on theoretical grounds by adherents of the Reform Movement, among whom Sweet and Jespersen may be included". This reform movement was based on three fundamental principles, each of which ran counter to the GTM of teaching: (i) the primacy of speech; (ii) the importance of connected texts in teaching and learning; and (iii) the priority of oral classroom methodology. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), the reformers turned their attention to naturalistic principles of language learning.

As pointed out by Cook (2010), Western European and North American methodologists promoted monolingual or intralingual teaching (e.g. Stern, 1992, p. 279-299), based around the principle that only the L2 should be spoken in language classrooms. In effect, claims against GTM were used as evidences against any and all own-language use within language teaching (Cook, 2010, p. 15). For instance, Lado (1957) recommended that translation should not be used as it was not a substitute for language practice. Translation would be more complex than, different from, and unnecessary for speaking, listening, reading, or writing.

GTM, also known as *Indirect Method*, as a matter of fact, during its whole existence, has faced moves and reaction against its postulates. Those reactions, the Reform Movement, gave birth to what is known as the *Direct Method* (DM), as it stands in a complete opposite pole when compared to GTM.

Instead of lexical and grammatical syntactical rules memorization, DM posits situational dialogues as its main scope, suggesting an emphasis on the everyday life. Instead of deduction (from the rule to the example), DM



focuses in the induction (from the example to the rule), and instead of the literary text, with rendering exercises, there are texts that try to encapsulate people's everyday lives (Leffa, 2012). "This Natural Method argued that languages could be taught without translation or the use of the learner's native language if meaning was conveyed directly through demonstration and action" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 09).

Now, in such a way, the focus is turned completely on the use of the L2, not necessarily contextualized, with the assumption that students must be able to learn to think in this given language. According to Leffa (2012), the use of students' own-language ought to be avoided in order to give room to an exclusive L2 use so that the latter might turn into a habit and flows naturally. Teachers have to encourage direct and spontaneous use of the L2 to induce grammar rules; in addition, speaking began with a systematic attention to pronunciation. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 10), scholars that DM principles was usually "counterproductive since the teachers were required to go great lengths to avoid using the native tongue, when sometimes a simple brief explanation in the student's native tongue would have been a more efficient route to comprehension".

With regard to the DM, also according to Leffa (2012, p. 397), unlike GTM, which has always had many detractors, this method is characterized by the large number of defenders, including established names like Harold Palmer, Otto Jespersen and Emile Sauzé. At the turn for the 20<sup>th</sup> century, DM was made official in several countries in Europe, with its use being mandatory in public schools.

Thus, the majority language teaching methods has adopted an avoidance of the use of the L1 after the Reform Movement. A strong rejection to the use of the learners' own-language was also crystal clear in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the spread of audiolingual teaching<sup>1</sup> principles that were indeed based on the tenets of the DM and had the Structural Linguistics as its underlying theory of language. The Audiolingual Method came to light in the United States and later was released to the outside world on the basis of important names like Bloomfield, in the area of Linguistics, Skinner in Psychology, and Fries and Lado in the area of Applied Linguistics. In this period, language phenomenon in general was influenced by the Structuralism that had as a corner stone tenet the oral language as the primary medium. Then, L1 started to be seen as a complete negative influence in any language curricula. It has become a popular belief among foreign language teachers that translation and use of L1 would get in the way with the L2 acquisition. In agreement with Cook (2001, p. 01), in that light, "recent methods do not so much forbid the L1 as ignore its existence".

Along these lines, after GTM and DM, the biggest impact in language teaching comes from what is conventionalized as *Communicative Approach* (henceforth CA) or *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT) in the latter part of the 1970s. CLT, according to Richards (2006), sets as its goal the teaching of communicative competence. To Pardo (2013), this approach focused on

<sup>1</sup> This paper does not aim to over all the methods and/or approaches. For more information and for a full timeline language teaching method see Richards, J. C. & Rodgers, T. S., 2001. *Approaches and methods in language teaching: A description and analysis* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

the natural ability of learners to acquire a L2 and attempted to represent the daily routine in classrooms focusing on spoken language instead of using sentences that were out of context. As a consequence, this new approach entailed the rejection of the translation in its classic form.

Furthermore, Cook (2001) points out that CLT, at least at its beginning, has no necessary and clear relationship with the L1. "The main theoretical treatments [...] do not for example have any locatable mentions of the classroom use of the L1 (Nunan, 1999; Skehan, 2001). Most descriptions of methods treat the ideal classroom as having as little of the L1 as possible, essentially by omitting any reference to it" (Cook, 2001, p. 02). According to Santoro (2011, p. 151), from the communicative approach establishment, the space for literature and translation in classes with students who wanted to learn a modern foreign language started to shrink, because such approach did not provide nothing but the so-called communicative situations and was based on dogma according to which students need to be presented to (also so-called) real situations.

Following what was presented so far, and as pointed out by Owen (2003), the most robust rationale against the use of translation is founded on obliging learners to use the L2, as their own-language would not be productive in a L2 settings/classes. For example, Heltai (1989, p. 292) argues translation would be a dangerous task, since it would enhance the interference from the learner's own-language. Furthermore, Ridd (2004, p. 07), in a sort of agreement, points out that at early levels the amount of interference by the L1 increases. Moreover, Mallikamas (1997, p. 29) states that, in recent times, the conclusion that translation and the use of L1 bring negative transference to the L2 is no longer strongly supported, as we are going to discuss in the next section.

Translation was most avoided due to the "forbidden" use of one's own-language, as just seen in the Traditional and Natural Methods as well as at the beginning CLT when such approach was arbitrary. However, the rejection also has to do with the fact that in recent past reading was not always seen as a communicative and/or interactive process. According to Nunan (1999, 2004), for instance, reading is the Cinderella skill in L2 learning, too often overlooked by its elder sister, writing. Actually both listening and reading are usually seen as secondary. As some authors say (e.g. Nunan, 1999; Brown, 2001), no one asks you if you can read or listen in a given L2, people usually demand if you are able to speak it. Most of the strength in L2 teaching then was put into those abilities with more prestige and considered "more communicative" than, for example, reading and, therefore, translation. This idea is, as anticipated earlier, based in a structural perspective to language. Structuralism would assume that speech had a priority in language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 49). Furthermore, Motta-Roth (2000) points out that the traditional approaches to reading would take the learners as completely passive in the process of reading. Such view just started to be revisited in the last three decades, according to Motta-Roth (2000), when both the teaching and the research on reading in L2 have been focused interactive models of reading processing.

As we may perceive, arguments against the use of translation in language teaching were initially raised in the nineteenth century and were largely

reiterated in the 1960s and 1970s by those who admitted the direct, natural, and/or communicative methods of language teaching (Randaccio, 2012). In such scenario, some of the main disadvantages of translation as a teaching and testing tool in an L2 teaching situation have been clearly illustrated by Newson (1998). According to Newson (1998), translation:

- i. encourages thinking in one language and transference into another, with accompanying interference;
- ii. is independent of the four skills which define language competence: reading, writing, speaking, listening;
- iii. deprives teacher and learner of the opportunity to benefit from accruing advantages of working within one language;
- iv. it gives false credence to the naïve view that there is such a thing as simple word-to-word equivalence between languages;
- v. does not allow or facilitate the achievement of such generally accepted L2 teaching objectives as:
  - emphasis on fluency in spoken language,
  - attention on the controlled introduction of selected and graded structures (1960s style) or communicative competence strategies (1990s style),
  - attention to controlled introduction of and mastery of selected and graded lexical items, – the use of situationalized, contextualized language,
  - communicative language use,
  - learner-centred language learning,
  - absence of observable learning effect, either of new vocabulary or structural items.

So far in this paper, we were able to follow some of the core reasons that gave translation a secondary status in L2 teaching and learning. In the next section, on the other hand, we are going over some studies that not only posit the L1 might be used in a L2 class but also that it should be used in some specific cases, and, in that regard, translation would be an efficient tool.

### 3. REVISITING THE PLACE OF TRANSLATION

According to Celce-Murcia and Dornyei (1997, p. 141), CLT has reached a turning point, in which explicit elements are gaining significances in teaching L2 abilities and skills. Spada (2005, p. 01) points out that

for quite a few years now, words like *balance*, *integration* and *equilibrium* have appeared in the CLT literature, indicating that most L2 educators agree that CLT is undergoing a transformation – one which includes increased recognition of and attention to language form within exclusively or primarily meaning-oriented CLT approaches to L2 instruction.

As we are able to see, concerning L2 teaching, the problems emphasized against GTM were not regarding translation as such, but teaching methodologies that would separate language from its communicative function. Translation itself as it takes place in the real world is essentially related to a real communicative purpose. As Duff (1989, p. 06) points out, “translation happens everywhere, all the time, so why not in the classroom?”



In that light, according to Santoro (2011, p. 152), a distorted view of communicative approach spread the idea that aspects of real life are just those relating to current and utilitarian communication situations and, even today, in the light of what has been propagated, this conviction dominates. However, our real life does not consist only in such situations and are not rare occasions in which our language needs go far beyond the formulas or fixed structures through which we can, for example, ask for something or speak of what we do for the day. Therefore, in the 1980s, translation slowly reappeared in language classes when the experts realised that they could also use translation as one of their communicative techniques and activities. Gradually, translation once again found a suitable and consistent place in the L2 class, where its use was recommended by specialists, such as Celce-Murcia and McIntosh (1979), Rivers (1981) and Larsen-Freeman (1986).

Many studies suggested a positive and facilitative role of translation (Omura, 1996). Shiyab and Abdullateef (2001), for instance, consider translation extremely important for L2 teaching simply as it allows conscious learning and control of the target language in an explicit manner, and as a consequence, it would reduce language interference. Using translation can make learning meaningful, as the learner is an active participant in the process. In this prism, current studies in pragmatics also point out that greater awareness of the own-language helps in the more effective communicative and productive use of any L2. According to Owen (2003), for example, translation should be taken as a path of fine-tuning the target language to be used in various situations, as in the translation process both L1 and L2 must be accessed. In other words, a translation is a suitable manner to include explicit language teaching in the L2 class.

In this regard, Liao (2006) states some positive aspects of the use of translation in L2 teaching:

- a) it might help students to comprehend the L2;
- b) it might help students to evaluate whether their comprehension is correct;
- c) it eases memory barriers in learning new items, idioms, syntactic structure and grammar in general;
- d) it may help students to develop and express ideas in the L2;
- e) it can reduce learning anxiety and improve motivation to learn L2.

For instance, Schaffner (1998) also points out that the translation and related exercises could be beneficial to L2 learning as it tends:

- a) to improve verbal agility;
- b) to expand students' vocabulary in L2;
- c) to develop their style;
- d) to improve their understanding of how languages work;
- e) to consolidate L2 structures for active use;
- f) to monitor and to improve the comprehension of L2.

Moreover, Danchev (apud Randaccio, 2012) adds another dimension to the debate in favour of translation as an organic process. It has often been pointed out that learners tend to translate anyway, regardless of the teaching method they are subjected to. The author reports to the fact that classroom

experience and observations have shown that learners, especially adults, tend to translate from the L2 into their own-language even when asked not to do so.

With regard to the use of the L1, usually taken as a problem in the translation practice in L2 teaching, specifically, one reality of the L2 classroom is that learners bring their own-language strengths into it. Denying the use of a student's own-language denies the learner access to an important learning instrument: the other learners. Allowing the students to use their own-languages enables them to check their understanding of what they have been asked to do, for example, or what another member or the instructor has said and/or demanded. They can also help each other to organize their thoughts or to select a more adequate lexical item to portray their wills to the others. This informal use of translation might become a bridge for learning, enforcing language and vocabulary while students are drawing on each other's knowledge (Atkinson, 1987). Learners of a L2 refer to their own-language to support the process of L2 acquisition or, in other words, they "translate silently" (Titford, 1985, p. 78). In light of this, translation into L2 can help students to systematize and rationalize a learning mechanism that is taking place anyway.

According to Tang (2002), the use of the own-language by both teacher and learners can be beneficial in the process and, sometimes, may even be needed for an increased understanding and acceptance of the L2 by the learners. However, the author states that the use of the learners' own-language is for clarifying purposes and must not be the primary means of communication in the L2 educational settings. Again, as stated by Spada (2005), *balance* must be achieved. In that fashion, Meyer (2008) states that the amount of learners' own-language use and how it should be employed vary depending on classroom environment. According to the author, "the L1 provides scaffolding that should be gradually dismantled as the students' progress. Not enough and affective filters may be raised, too much and progress is slowed. The L2 should be used as much as possible" (Meyer, 2008, p. 147).

Furthermore, regarding translation in general, as reported by Mogahed (2011), many researchers advocate that translation is a motivating activity. Carreres (2006), for instance, collected data with a questionnaire and concluded that learners overwhelmingly understand translation exercises as effective for L2 learning. Lavault (1985) signalizes that one of the rationale quoted by L2 teacher to justify their use of translation was that students asked for this sort of activity and enjoyed doing it. In the same context, Conacher (1996) pointed out excellent student response to translation courses. Hervey *et al.* (2002) also received a good feedback from the learners attending translation courses in the United Kingdom.

In addition, Malmkjaer (1998, p. 08) defends that translation is impossible without reading, writing, speaking and listening, it is "in fact dependent on and inclusive of them, and language students who are translating will be forced to practice them", even though, admittedly, teaching a language through translation may not always be the most time-efficient means. Malmkjaer (1998) also argues that the way translation is taught makes a difference. If taught in a way that resembles the real life activity of translating, the activity can bring into action the four basic language skills and yield great

benefits in L2 learning. The author also states that some recent studies on language learning have emphasized the potential of translation as a means of L2 learning, if the process is regarded as the development of multi-linguistic competence. In the same matter, according to Leonardi (2011), translation as a pedagogical tool can be successfully employed at any level of proficiency as an enriching and creative teaching aid to support, integrate and further strengthen the four traditional language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening (Dagilienė, 2012). However, according to Randaccio (2012), like any other teaching methods, translation for pedagogical purposes ought to be applied within a principled theoretical framework. Learners must decide whether to preserve as in the source text or to change for the new audience the individual style of the author, the conventions, format and traditions of the genre, culturally specific items, and the referential facts given in the text.

Useful activities in successful translation should also explore areas of language through contrasts between L1 and L2 features. Among the most relevant areas, there are:

- i) common colloquialisms, for which a number of translations might be used, depending on the context; ii) ideas rooted in traditional source culture or in source local folklore, which may be rendered in a number of ways, by attempting a communicative translation, by replacing the cultural denotation with a near equivalent in the target culture, or by opting for explanation; iii) grammatical patterns which differ in the two languages, thus providing insights into divergent linguistic structures. (Randaccio, 2012, p. 12)

In this concern, following Costa (1988, p. 288), the more dissimilar the structures of L1 and L2 are, the more frequent the need for translation will be at elementary levels of L2 learning. The author also explains the benefits of oral and written translation separately, stating that the former is a direct way of expressing the meaning of certain items, as well as identifying learners' difficulties, which might pass, unnoticed. As for the latter, it permits the L2 teacher to examine the learner's writing skill, vocabulary comprehension, syntax, idioms and the use of different registers

As we may perceive, research has shown that, if properly designed, translation activities can be employed to enhance the four skills and develop accuracy, clarity and flexibility (Duff, 1989, p. 07). In that fashion, also regarding the use of translation, Albir (1999, p. 18-20), points out the most common mistakes made by L2 teachers. According to the author, (i) the lack of clear criteria in the selection of texts for translation, which tend to be literary, is the first problem. Where the criteria are made explicit, these are thematic or grammatical. The second mistake described is (ii) the lack of procedural guidance. That is, instructions to the learner are often limited to the injunction "translate", and learners are not presented with a method to avoid falling into the same pitfalls. The third question brought is (iii) the lack of differentiation between direct and inverse translation, assuming that the objectives and methodology are the same in both cases. Finally, (iv) the lack of integration of the theory and the practice of translation. They seem to assume that operative knowledge (how to translate) will derive mechanistically from declarative knowledge.

Following the presented arguments; we believe that translation is still an effective component of language teaching. Learners' own-language might be used in an effective way as soon as it is not applied without justification. Translation, apparently, is a valid tool for applying the L1 in a controlled and rational way. Therefore, a well-planned translation activity is capable of encapsulating the benefits of L1 use and explicit language instruction as well as stimulating other communicative competence. L2 teachers just need assess their objectives, but also the objectives of all participants in the language teaching and learning process and, then, to elaborate a balanced, organic and integrated activity applying translation as a pedagogical tool.

## FINAL REMARKS

We are facing a post-method era in which language teaching does not exclude, but admits the differences and possibilities. According to Leffa (2012), L2 teaching in the present is characterized by the substitution of a communicative approach, as one unified proposal for L2 teaching, for a series of diversified strategies that aim to meet the learning requirements of the learners, the reality of the teacher and the context in which all this is happening. In this sense, we are not chained to any classical method. As Brown (2001) points out, today we are mature enough to know that the best teacher always takes a few calculated risks in the classroom, trying new activities here and there. As Nunan (1999) points out,

it has been realized that there never was and probably never will be a method for all, and the focus in recent years has been on the development of classroom tasks and activities which are a consonant with what we know about L2 acquisition, and which are also in keeping with the dynamics of the classroom itself. (Nunan, 1999, p. 228)

Therefore we should be mature enough to know that the diversity of language learners in so many different contexts demands an eclectic blend of tasks, each tailored for a particular group of learners, in a particular place, studying for particular purposes. According to Brown (2001), we have grown enough to learn that one's own-language and explicit instruction have room in L2 classroom. Of course, not just for analogy but also from what was discussed so far, translation has also a place in the current L2 teaching scenario, as it would be a valid way to apply both L1 and explicit learning.

As we managed to see, most of the objections made on translation are justified only if translation practice is just a regular combination of grammar rules with rendering into the target language as the (only) principle practice technique. If well incorporated, by qualified professionals, translation has proved to be an effective pedagogical tool, encapsulating the benefits of the use of the learners' own-languages and the explicit work with both L1 and L2 structure in many levels. Anyhow, there are still few works on how to incorporate translation in current L2 teaching practice, but there is also a great stigma still to be torn before translation can be actually brought to the L2 classroom in a more robust way. We just hope this article has contributed to that.

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