

Whether Translation in Language Teaching can Promote Learners' SLA in the Second Language Classroom

Xiaouu Fu

The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Abstract: In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in translation in language teaching (TILT) as a pedagogical method for learning a second language, aiming to improve learners' second language acquisition (SLA) in the second language classroom. The study's main aim is to investigate whether TILT can promote students' second language acquisition, especially in the second language classroom. The paper was completed by previous arguments and challenging issues about TILT with research findings, relevant teaching theories and practical teaching experiences. The essential findings are that TILT plays a significant role in developing learners' SLA in the second language classroom. The results offer the relevant suggestions of TILT in second language classrooms and practical teaching approaches to applying TILT as a tool or skill in second language learners considering learners' requirements.

Key words: translation in language teaching (TILT); second language acquisition (SLA); second language teaching (SLT); second language classrooms

1. Introduction

As a tool for learning a second language and being introduced into foreign language classrooms, translation has aroused great interest of most second language teachers and second language learning researchers. With the development of language classrooms, learners will naturally translate the second language into an understandable first language and obtain its correct meaning. Teachers usually use interpretative translation to teach specific words or grammar content to avoid misunderstandings of relevant knowledge among learners. Therefore, pedagogical translation is an intermediary skill that requires the simultaneous operation of meaning transfer and other language skills in the classroom to promote learners' progress and understanding in the second language class.

However, there should be a more concrete practical boundary between the general concept of translation and the translation tasks used in the second language classroom. There is great controversy about the role of translation in language learning, mainly focusing on why translation can promote language teaching and what kind of translation methods can play the most significant role in language teaching. Translation tasks for language teaching should pay more attention to learners' translation process, participation and concentration, and adjust translation methods according to the teaching characteristics.

This paper presents supporting arguments about TILT, combining research findings in the literature, teaching theories

and practical teaching practices, which will provide relevant suggestions according to the possible needs of second language teaching in the future.

2. Translation as a Language Learning Skill

Translation can be cultivated and developed directly as a language learning skill. According to the relevant research, the concept of translation itself is narrow, professional and unique to a certain extent. Translation and teaching purposes can be integrated by observing learners' fundamental needs for the second language classroom and SLA. The evolution of translation in Spanish learning can make learners better cope with complex learning situations, improve their self-learning ability in SLA, and provide corresponding solutions according to different learning objectives so that learners can improve themselves in a short time.

It is restrictive and professional to look at translation without considering the language teaching environment. The concept of translation is to achieve the conversion between two different languages. Teachers tend to regard translation as a practical language learning tool, consistent with the central concept of SLA. Language learning is a multi-faceted challenge and requires learners to develop multiple skills simultaneously, and translation can be developed as the fifth essential language learning skill, improving learners' bilingualism and adapting to the variability and complexity of language in a globalized world.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners hold supportive attitudes towards translation as a language learning skill. A questionnaire was conducted among 95 college students who participated in EFL teaching training in English department to explore EFL learners' views on translation as a language learning skill at different second language levels, and how EFL students view the correlation between translation courses and teaching training plans. The results show that EFL learners have quite optimistic views on translation as a language learning skill, and they believe translation can help them better learn a second language. If the translation can be developed as a language learning skill in the classroom, it is beneficial to learners' second language acquisition.

3. Translation Training Can Provide Relevant Enlightenment

Studies on SLA have found that translation can help the teaching and practice of SLA. According to the research on the development of the introductory courses of interpretation in Spanish and English, interpretation is an integral part of language learning and development. Interpretation courses are also a highly developed language ability of the second language learners while integrating the learning of the second language cultural knowledge and improving the subject and strain ability. At the same time, with the improvement of the level of second language learners, personal understanding and vision of language learning will also be expanded.

In the second language teaching (SLT), which is competitive and responsible for the training of translation course, transfer can improve the second language learners' overall language ability and can help in their future communication and exchange, to get deeper communication. They deeply understand the multiple practice can evolve into the core of SLA, promoting the understanding of second language acquisition and development. Through intensive practice, second language learners can further improve their language level and second language learning ability.

4. Translation Training is Beneficial to SLT

By combining the research and practice of translation in pedagogy and the experience of using translation tasks, this paper aims to develop a communication framework based on practical tasks. However, the translation task is quite different from the communicative framework advocated by translation itself, so the traditional communicative framework of translation cannot support and strengthen the classroom practice activities needed in second language classroom.

Although translation and second language teaching are two different fields in the language learning system, they also share specific concerns, which are mutually beneficial. Due to the initiative of translation training in the practice activities of language schools, the application of translation in the classroom and translation teaching tasks will have a positive impact on second language acquisition.

In professional translation training and second language education practice, the nature and relationship between translation and second language learning are different, but their relationship is highly related and inseparable. The interdisciplinary nature of translation and language teaching is essentially an opportunity to further the study of the second language, potentially reconceptualizing translation and second language acquisition as previously understood.

5. Different Voices about the Use of TILT

Through qualitative interviews with university lecturers, it is found that most teachers regard translation as a helpful teaching or learning tool, which can be used as a supplement to existing second language teaching strategies. TILT received overall positive feedback from the study's lecturers. However, the actual use of TILT was somewhat ambiguous among the participants interviewed. Moreover, the use of translation in the second language classroom needs a principled theoretical framework as a teaching basis for implementation.

The role of translation in the second language classroom will continue to change with the controversy over translation in teaching. Through the study of teaching cases, it is found that the frequency of high school teachers using the first language in the classroom is relatively low, and the total amount of first language and second language output used by teachers and second language learners is not significant in classroom effect. Some code-switching causes conflict between students and teachers in the second language classroom, and teachers' personal beliefs about using code-switching go beyond their personal beliefs about promoting classroom practicality.

The current use of TILT in the second language classroom is not standardized or theorized, but this can be used as a direction for future research on the role of TILT in SLA. TILT was also used in the classroom in a somewhat stereotypical without creative teaching method, allowing teachers to tailor their teaching to the age of the second language learners, current language level, and background knowledge.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, TILT is beneficial to learners' second language acquisition in the second language classroom. The process of translation training can promote learners' second language acquisition, and EFL learners expressed a strong desire to continue learning the translation course to improve language proficiency. Translation in class can provide relevant enlightenment for second language learning which can promote the learning and teaching of the second language. Suggestions on how to improve the practicability of TILT in the second language classroom are put forward. Teachers should strive to develop a more standardized TILT theoretical framework to support translation in language acquisition. How to use translation to promote learners' acquisition in the classroom needs to evolve according to the development of the times, and it is necessary to pay attention to the proper use of code-switching in the classroom.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- [1] Lucía P.G. (2021). Translation in Language Teaching, Pedagogical Translation, and Code-switching: Restructuring the Boundaries. *The Language Learning Journal*, 49(2):219-239.
- [2] Carreres Á., Noriega-Sánchez M. (2011). Translation in Language Teaching: Insights from Professional Translator Training. *The Language Learning Journal*, 39(3):281-297.

- [3] Kelly N., Bruen J. (2015). Translation as a Pedagogical Tool in the Foreign Language Classroom: A Qualitative Study of Attitudes and Behaviours. *Language Teaching Research*, 19(2):150-168.
- [4] Colina S., Lafford B.A. (2017). Translation in Spanish Language Teaching: the Integration of a "Fifth Skill" in the Second Language Curriculum. *Journal of Spanish Language Teaching*, 4(2):110-123.
- [5] Murtisari E.T. (2016). Translation Skill in Language Learning/Teaching: EFL Learners' Point of View. *Studies About Languages / Kalby Studijos*, 29:102-113.
- [6] Biasetti G. (2016). Benefits of an Interpretation Course for Foreign Language Learning and Development. *Hispania*, 99(4):615-634.
- [7] Marinac M. (2018). Teachers' Attitudes toward and Use of Translation in the Foreign Language Classroom at Institutions of Higher Education in Croatia. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 8(8):906-915.
- [8] Macaro E. (2001). Analysing Student Teachers' Codeswitching in Foreign Language Classrooms: Theories and Decision Making. *The Modern Language Journal (Boulder, Colo.)*, 85(4):531-548.