

Cross-Cultural Communication: Perspectives from Translation Studies and Applied Linguistics

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Abstract

This paper has emerged out of the conviction that linguistic theory has more to offer to translation theory than is so far recognized and vice versa. One reason for the relative separation between the two fields is, perhaps, the domination of formal approaches to language study for a considerable period of time. But, with the spread of functional linguistics in the last three decades, there have been growing hopes for establishing links between linguistics and translation studies. Accordingly, the discussion, in the present study, proceeds primarily from the perspectives of “Translation Studies” and “Applied Linguistics”. One major goal is to show the interrelationships between linguistics and translation, and how they benefit from each other. The basic underlying theme, here, is that “inside or between languages, human communication equals translation. A study of translation is a study of language” (Bassnett-McGuire, 1980: 23). In addition, both translators and linguists deal with two linguistic systems, each with, perhaps, a different cultural system. So, if we agree that ‘all communicators are translators’ (Bell, 1994), we must remember that the role of the translator is different from that of the ‘normal communicator’: the translator is a bilingual mediating agent between monolingual communication participants in two different language communities.

On the other hand, there has been a great focus on using English only as a medium of instruction in all courses taught in the UAE University. Accordingly, the second goal of this study is to try to answer the questions, “How much translation from L₁ is permitted in FL teaching?” and “What are the factors that determine the quantity to be used?”. The view adopted in the present study is that disregarding L₂ learners’ mother-tongue and considering it “a bogey to be shunned at all costs” is a myth. And, providing maximum exposure to the foreign language may help in learning that language (Krashen, 1982, 1985), but, sometimes, at the expense of understanding and intelligibility.

Key words Communication across languages, Translation, Applied Linguistics.

Statement of the Problem

One of the goals of the present study is to consider the impact of linguistics on the work of the translator and vice versa, and to look for areas where the theoretical study of language can continue to bring insights to the translator’s task. This paper has emerged out of the conviction that linguistic theory has more to offer to translation theory than is so far recognized, and vice versa. Perhaps one reason for the relative separation between the two fields is the domination of formal approaches to language study over modern linguistic thinking and research for a considerable period of time. Formal approaches to language, with their focus on structure and confinement to the sentence boundaries, are of limited benefit to translation theory and practice, for which a textually-oriented approach is more appropriate. With the spread of functional linguistics in the last three decades, there have been growing hopes for establishing links between linguistics and translation studies. Although there have been a number of contributions in this direction, much work is still possible, and still required, to help establish such links (Halliday, 1994; Al-Wahy, 1999; Hatim & Mason, 1990; Baker, 2006; Chesterman, 2006).

The translation theorists, almost without exception, have made little systematic use of the techniques and insights of contemporary linguistics (the linguistics of the last twenty years or so) and the linguists, for their part, have been at best neutral and at worst actually hostile to the notation of a theory of translation (Gutknecht, 2001). This state of affairs seems particularly paradoxical when one recognizes the stated goal of translation: the transformation of a text originally in one language into an equivalent text in a different language retaining, as far as is possible, the content of the message and the formal features and functional roles of the original text. It does seem strange that such a process should, apparently, be of no interest to linguistics, since the explanation of the phenomenon would present an enormous challenge to linguistic theories and provide an ideal testing ground for them. Equally, it is difficult to see how translation theorists can move beyond the subjective and normative evaluation of texts without drawing heavily on linguistics. The need for access to and familiarity with the accumulated knowledge about the nature and function of language and the methodology of linguistic enquiry must become more and more pressing and less and less deniable if translation theory is to shake off individualist anecdotalism and the tendency to issue arbitrary lists of 'rules' for the creation of 'correct' translations and set about providing systematic and objective description of the process of translation. This paradox has arisen as a result of a fundamental misunderstanding, by both translation theorists and linguists, of what is involved in translation; which has led, inevitably, to the failure to build a theory of translation which is at all satisfactory in a theoretical or an applied sense (Ibid, p. 693).

Rationale:

In his book, "The Science of Linguistics [In] the Art of Translation: Some Tools from Linguistics for the Analysis and Practice of Translation", Malone (1988) explains that the use of the preposition 'in' meant to convey that linguistics is being put at the service of translation. He, further, claims that "it would be equally legitimate and important to study the interface of both on an equal basis or to subordinate translation to linguistics" (p. 1). According to Hatim & Mason (1990: 22), the emergence of linguistics as a new discipline in the twentieth century brought a spirit of optimism to the pursuit of language study, a feeling that the groundwork was at last being laid for a systematic and scientific approach to the description of language. Insights into the way language functions as a system might be expected to shed light on the kinds of language problems experienced in social life. Many areas of social life called for investigation from a linguistic standpoint: the teaching of modern languages, the treatment of language disorders, the role of language in education, the status and treatment of minority languages, language planning policy in emergent nations and, of course, translation. Hatim & Mason (1990) suggest some of the reasons why earlier developments in linguistics theory were of relatively little interest to translators. Structural linguistics sought to describe language as a system of interdependent elements and to characterize the behaviour of individual items and categories on the basis on their distribution. Morphology and syntax constituted the main areas of analysis, largely to the exclusion of the intractable problem of meaning, which was either ignored or else dealt with purely in terms of the distribution of lexical items: The statement of meanings is therefore the weak point in language study, and will remain so until human knowledge advances very far beyond its present stale' (Bloomfield, 1933: 140). In their evaluation of this issue, Hatim & Mason (1990: 25) argue that "since meaning is at the very heart of the translator's work, it follows that the postponement of semantic investigation in American linguistics was bound to create a gap between linguistics and translation studies. Quite simply, linguists and translators were not talking about the same thing" (see Cobley, 2011; Delabastita et al., 2006).

In addition, linguistic description was in general limited to single language systems. For the translator, every problem involved two language systems, a statement of the distribution of an item in one language is of no particular value. However, structuralist theories of language were, nevertheless, influential in translation theory and there were some serious attempts to apply structuralist notions to translation problems (Catford, 1965). As a result of Catford's work with its

emphasis on contextual meaning and the social context of situation in which language activity takes place, translation theory becomes a branch of contrastive linguistics, and translation problems become a matter of the non-correspondence of certain formal categories in different languages. This has led to an investigation of “equivalence probability”: “an attempt to arrive at a statistical calculation of the degree of probability that a given SL category will, in any given text, be rendered by an equivalent TL category” (Hatim & Mason, 1990: 26). According to Nida (1964), the non-correspondence of grammatical and lexical categories is the main source of information loss and gain in translation. The influence of contrastive structural linguistics has made itself felt in translation teaching methodology. Many published manuals of translating devote separate sections to the translation of verbs, objectives, pronouns, prepositions (Astington, 1983).

Among the insights brought by Chomsky and others to language analysis was the distinction between ‘surface structure’ and ‘deep structure’; that is “the notion that the arrangements of elements on the surface of discourse, ‘the words on the page’, so to speak, mask an underlying structural arrangement, reflecting the actual relations between the concepts and entities involved” (Hatim & Mason, 1990: 31). In this regard, Nida (1964: 68) went as far as to suggest that the activity of translating involved (1) breaking down the SL text into its underlying representation or semantic ‘kernels’; (2) transfer of meaning from SL to TL ‘on a structurally simple level’, and (3) generation of ‘stylistically and semantically equivalent expression in the TL. Moreover, in its insistence on according priority to the investigation of ‘competence’, over the investigation of ‘performance’, transformational grammar drew attention away from language as communication, the very substance of the translator’s work.

It was Dell Hymes (1971) who questioned the limitations of the notion of grammatical ‘competence’ as narrowly conceived within Chomskyan linguistics. Hymes recommends that linguistics addresses itself to accounting for the fact that children acquire the ability to produce utterances which are not only grammatical but also appropriate. They, in other words, acquire “communicative competence”. This concept is directly relevant to translation studies. As Hatim & Mason (1990: 33) point out, “the translator’s communicative competence is attuned to what is communicatively appropriate in both SL and TL communities and individual acts of translation may be evaluated in terms of their appropriateness to the context of their use”. In this regard, Widdowson (1979) makes a useful distinction between “usage” defined as a “projection of the language system or code” (p. 8), and ‘use’ defined as the actual use of language in communication. As Hatim & Mason (1990: 33) claim, the preoccupation in translation studies with non-correspondence of grammatical categories in individual languages was an exercise in usage rather than in use, in language-as-system rather than in language-as-communication.

In recent years, the scope of linguistics has widened beyond the confines of the individual sentence. Text linguistics attempts to account for the form of texts in terms of their users. If we accept that meaning is something that is negotiated between producers and receivers of texts, it follows that the translator, as a special kind of text user, intervenes in this process of negotiation, to relay it across linguistic and cultural boundaries. In doing so, the translator is necessarily handling such matters as intended meaning, implied meaning, presupposed meaning, all on the basis of the evidence which the text supplies. The various domains of sociolinguistics, pragmatics and discourse linguistics are all areas of study which are germane to this process (Hatim & Mason 1990: 33).

In their evaluation of all these developments, Hatim & Mason (1990: 35) said that “Taken together, all of these developments have provided a new direction for translation studies. It is one which restores to the translator the central role in a process of cross-cultural communication and ceases to regard equivalence merely as a matter of entities within texts.

What is Translation? : Two Definitions / Two Issues

The study of translation has been dominated, and to a degree still is, by the debate about its status as an art or a science. The linguist inevitably approaches translation from a 'scientific' point of view, seeking to create some kind of 'objective' description of the phenomenon. It could, however, be argued that translation is an 'art' or a 'craft' and therefore not amenable to objective, 'scientific' description and explanation. Translation can be defined as "the replacement of a representation of a text in one language by a representation of an equivalent text in a second language" (Meetham & Hudson, 1969). The authors continue and make the problem of equivalence very plain: "Texts in different languages can be equivalent in different degrees (fully or partially equivalent), in respect of different levels of presentation (equivalent in respect of context, of semantics, of grammar, of lexis, etc.) and at different ranks (word – for – word, phrase – for – Phrase, sentence – for- sentence" (p. 10). Total equivalence is a chimera. Languages are different from each other; they are different in form having distinct codes and rules regulating the construction of grammatical stretches of language and these forms have different meanings. To shift from one language to another is, by definition, to alter the forms. Further, the contrasting forms convey meanings which cannot but fail to coincide totally; there is no absolute synonymy between words in the same language. Something is always 'lost' in the process and translators can find themselves being accused of reproducing only part of the original and so 'betraying' the author's intentions (Bell, 1994).

Equivalence is probably the most controversial notion in Translation Studies. Some translation scholars reject this notion outright, arguing that by retaining 'equivalence' in the vocabulary, translation scholars sidestep the issue that "it is difference, not sameness or transparency or equality, which is inscribed in the operations of translation" (Hermans, 1998: 61). This view is also expressed in current approaches that are inspired by postmodern theories and Cultural Studies, which argue that texts do not have any intrinsically stable meaning that could be repeated elsewhere (Arrojo, 1998; Venuti, 1995). For Venuti, the target text should be "the site where a different culture emerges, where a reader gets a glimpse of a cultural other" (Venuti, 1995: 306). The translator has the option, then, of focusing on finding formal equivalents which 'preserve' the context – free semantic sense of the text at the expense of its context – sensitive communicative value or finding functional equivalents which 'preserve' the context – sensitive communicative value of the text at the expense of its context – free semantic sense. The choice is between translating word-for-word (literal translation) or meaning for-meaning (free translation). As Bell (1994: 5) points out, pick the first and the translator is criticized for the 'ugliness' of a 'faithful' translation; pick the second and there is criticism of the 'inaccuracy' of a 'beautiful' translation. Either way it seems, the translator cannot win, even though we recognize that the crucial variable is the purpose for which the translation is being made, not some inherent characteristic of the text itself.

According to Hatim & Mason (1990), there is a problem concerning "the use of the term 'equivalence' in connection with translation. It implies that complete equivalence is an achievable goal, as if there were such a thing as a formally or dynamically equivalent target-language (TL) version of a source-language (SL) text. Accordingly, they argue that the term 'equivalence' is usually intended in a relative sense, and the concept of 'adequacy' in translation is perhaps a more useful one. Adequacy of a given translation procedure can then be judged in terms of the specification of the particular translation task to be performed and in terms of users' needs". (p. 8). Nida (1964) made a distinction between formal and dynamic equivalence. Formal equivalence refers to the closest possible match of form and content between (SR) and (TT), whereas "dynamic equivalence" refers to the principle of equivalence of effect on reader of (TT). By making this distinction, Nida shifts attention away from the sterile debate of free versus literal towards the effects of different translation strategies. Nida (1964: 160) claims that 'the present direction is toward increasing emphasis on dynamic equivalence'. In this connection, Newmark (1981: 39) prefers the terms 'semantic' and 'communicative' translation. Hatim & Mason (1990: 7) maintain

that “useful as these concepts are, however, they are beset with problems. On the one hand, all translation is, in a sense, communicative. Similarly, a translator who aims at formal equivalence usually has good reasons for doing so and the formally equivalent version may well, in fact, achieve equivalence of reader response. Consequently, it seems preferable to handle the issue in terms of equivalence of intended effects, thus linking judgements about what the translator seeks to achieve to judgements about the intended meaning of the ST speaker/writer. Here we are in the domain of pragmatics” (see Field, 2011; Goddard & Geesin, 2011)

Closely related to ‘the literal versus free issue’ is the debate on the primacy of content over form or vice versa. The translator is here faced with what amounts to a conflict of interests. The ideal, according to Hatim & Mason (1990) would be to translate both form and content, but this is frequently not possible. According to Nida (1964), the overriding criteria are (1) type of discourse, and (2) reader response: “the standards of stylistic acceptability for various types of discourse differ radically from language to language” (p. 169). Thus, adherence to the style of the source text may, in certain circumstances, be unnecessary or even counterproductive. In this regard, Hatim & Mason (1990) maintained that “the term ‘style’ seems to have become a kind of umbrella heading, under which are lumped together all kinds of textual/contextual variables..... ‘style’ may be seen as the result of motivated choices made by text producers” (p. 10). This means that ‘style’ in this sense, is not a property of the language system as a whole but of particular languages users in particular kinds of settings (see Gregorious, 2011; Hermans, 2006).

In addition, there are two very different kinds or rule which control behavior, (1) those which regulate an already existing activity and (2) those which define an activity which neither pre-exists the formulation of the rules nor can be thought to have any existence without them. The ‘rules’ and ‘principles’ promulgated for translation have, for centuries, been of this first, normative, regulatory type. Translators have been told what to do “prescriptive rules) and what not to do (proscriptive rules). The ‘rules’ discussed in linguistics, on the other hand, seek to be of the second, descriptive, constitutive type. The contrast between what people ordinarily assume ‘grammar’ to mean and this, descriptive, orientation of the linguists is clearly paralleled in translation theory; the frequent assumption that the purpose of a theory of translation is to devise and impose prescriptive rules as a means of both regulating the process and evaluating the product (Gutknecht, 2001).

A.F. Tytler, whose *Essay on the Principles of Translation*, first published in 1971, was the first whole book in English devoted to translation studies, propounds the ‘laws of translation’: (1) That the translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work; (2) that the style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original, and (3) that the translation should have all the ease of original composition (Tytler 1907: 9). A more recent formulation of the ‘basic requirements’ of a translation are to be found in Nida (1964: 164): (1) making sense; (2) conveying the spirit and manner of the original; (3) having a natural and easy form of expression, and (4) producing a similar response. Nida suggests that correspondence of meaning should, in the last resort, have priority over correspondence of style. An alternative definition, given below, makes a second crucial point by distinguishing ‘process’ from ‘result’. According to Meethan and Hudson (1969), translation is the process or result of converting information from one language or language variety into another. The aim is to reproduce as accurately as possible all grammatical and lexical features of the ‘source language’ original by finding equivalents in the ‘target language’. At the same time all factual information contained in the original text.... must be retained in the translation. There are, in fact, three distinguishable meanings for the word “translation”. It can refer to: (1) translating: the process (to translate; the activity rather than the tangible object); (2) a translation: the product of the process of translating (i.e. the translated text); (3) translation: the abstract concept which encompasses both the process of translating and the product of that process. A theory of translation, to be comprehensive and useful, must attempt to describe and explain both the process and the product. Given that the process crucially involves language, we need to draw on the resources of linguistics and, more precisely, those branches of linguistics which are concerned with the psychological and social

aspect of language use: psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics (see Hua, 2011; Hung, 2005; Kimmel, 2010; Lathey, 2006).

Translator's Competence

'What is the translators' need to know and be able to do in order to translate?' We are seeking, in other words, a specification of 'translator competence'. In this regard, Bill (1994) argues that the professional (technical) translator has access to five distinct kinds of knowledge; target language (TL) knowledge; text-type knowledge; source language (SL) knowledge; subject area ('real world') knowledge; and contrastive knowledge. This means that the translator must know (a) how propositions are structured (semantic knowledge), (b) how clauses can be synthesized to carry propositional content and analyzed to retrieve the content embedded in them (syntactic knowledge), and (c) how the clause can be realized as information bearing text and the text decomposed into the clause (pragmatic knowledge). Lack of knowledge or control in any of the three cases would mean that the translator could not translate. Without (a) and (b), even literal meaning would elude the translator. Without (c), meaning would be limited to the literal (semantic sense) carried by utterance which, though they might possess formal cohesion (being tangible realizations of clauses), would lack functional coherence and communicative value (Bell, 1994). As Raskin (1987) argues, given the goal of linguistics to match speaker's competence, an applied linguistic theory of translation should aim at matching the bilingual native speaker's translation competence. This would necessarily involve seeking an integration between the linguistic knowledge of the two languages with specific and general knowledge of the domain and of the world via comparative and contrastive linguistic knowledge (see Leeuwen, 2011).

One approach would be to focus on the competence of the 'ideal translator' or 'ideal bilingual' who would be an abstraction from actual bilinguals engaged in imperfectly performing tasks of translation... but (unlike them) operating under none of the performance limitations that underlie the imperfections of actual translation (Katz, 1978). This approach reflects Chomsky's view of the goal of the linguistic theory and his proposals for the specification of the competence of the 'ideal speaker-hearer'. Accordingly translation theory is primarily concerned with an ideal bilingual reader-writer, who knows both languages perfectly and is unaffected by such theoretically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention or interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying this knowledge in actual performance. An alternative to the 'ideal translator' model would be to adopt a less abstract approach and describe translation competence in terms of generalizations based on inferences drawn from the observation of translator performance. A study of this type suggests an inductive approach: finding features in the data of the product which suggest the existence of particular elements and systematic relations in the process. We would envisage a translator expert system (Bell, 1994). A final alternative would be to deny the competence-performance dichotomy and redefine our objective as the specification of a multi-component 'communicative competence' which would consist, minimally, of four areas of knowledge and skills; grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, discourse competence and strategic competence (Swain, 1985; Hymes, 1971). This approach would lead us (adapting Hymes' definition of communicative competence) to attempt to specify 'translator communicative competence': The knowledge and ability possessed by the translator which permits him/her to create communicative acts – discourse – which are not only (and not necessarily) grammatical but...socially appropriate (Halliday, 1985). A commitment to this position would make us assert the translator must possess linguistic competence in both languages and communicative competence in both cultures (see LoCastro, 2011).

The issue of the impact of both native language and culture on L₂ learning as a whole, and on translating, in particular, is of theoretical and pedagogical significance, not only for linguists and language teachers, but also for translators, as well. The second goal of the present study, then, is to examine this controversial issue. The following review will examine the mother-tongue's effect on L₂ learning according to (1) the contrastive analysis hypothesis, (2) the error analysis

hypothesis; (3) interlanguage framework, (4) markedness hypothesis, (5) Chomsky's universal grammar, (6) sociolinguistic framework, and (7) the cognitive theory. My review of these hypotheses or frameworks is not meant to provide a complete account of them, but rather to highlight how L_1 is conceived, and how much influence it has on shaping L_2 learners' performance. Both linguists and translators must consider the results of such a research (See Anne Brooks-Lewis, 2009; Moutner, 2011).

Communication: Translation Studies Perspective

Communication between different individuals and nations is not always easy, especially when more than one language is involved. The job of the translator and/or interpreter is to try to bridge the gap between two foreign languages. This can also include translation problems arising from historical developments within one language (Gutknecht, 2001). We are all involved in translating all the time, if not between languages, then between dialects, registers and styles. Translating was and is a profession, with its own codes of conduct and criteria of performance, not accessible to all. In short, inside or between languages, human communication equals translation. A study of translation is a study of language (Bassnett-McGuire, 1980).

Translation and interpreting as activities have existed for many centuries, and there is a long tradition of thought and an enormous body of opinion about translation (Delisle & Woodsworth, 1995; Robinson, 1997). But it was not until the second half of this century that Translation Studies developed into a discipline in its own right (Holmes, 1998; Snell-Hornby et al., 1992). Although at first conceived as a subdiscipline of applied linguistics, it has taken on concepts and methods of other disciplines, notably text linguistics, communication studies, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, pragmatics, comparative literature, and recently, cultural studies. Instead of a unified theory, we have a multiplicity of approaches, each of which focuses on specific aspects of translation, looks at the product or the process of translation from a specific angle, and uses specific terminology and research methods (Chesterman, 2000; Gentzlaer, 1993; Schaffner, 1997 a, b; 2004). Some researchers postulate an autonomous status for translation studies, arguing that these studies bring together work in a wide variety of fields, including literary study, anthropology, psychology, and linguistics. Others claim that the domain of translation studies is an important sub-branch of applied linguistics. Proponents of both opinions would have to admit, however, that the field of translation studies has multidisciplinary dimensions and aspects (Owens, 1996; Sofer, 1997; Baker, 1997). Hatim & Mason (1990) points out that the gap between theory and practice in translation studies has existed for too long. Thanks to work being done in several different but related areas, there is an opportunity to narrow that gap. Recent trends in sociolinguistics, discourse studies, pragmatics and semantics, together with insights from the fields of artificial intelligence and conversation analysis, have advanced our understanding of the way communication works. The relevance to translation studies of all this is obvious as soon translation is regarded not as a sterile linguistic exercise but as an act of communication (see Numan, 2011).

In the course of its development, the focus of Translation Studies has, thus, shifted markedly from linguistic towards contextual and cultural factors which affect translation. Major inspiration for the development of the discipline has also come from research conducted with the framework of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), aiming at the description of translating and translations "as they manifest themselves in the world of our experience" (Holmes, 1998: 71). Research here includes and received, identifying regularities in translators behavior and linking such regularities to translation norms which operate both in the social event and the cognitive act of translation (Toury, 1995). DTS and postmodern theories thus define translation as norm-governed behavior (Toury, 1995) and / or a cultural political practice (Venuti, 1996: 197). Modern translation studies sees itself increasingly as an empirical discipline, aiming to describe translations (both as products and processes), to explain why translators act in certain ways and produce target texts of a specific profile, and to assess effects of translations. The question, then, is what is it that the translation can characteristically bring to the linguist's work which should not continue to be

ignored? On the one hand, as linguists, there is an opportunity of seeking the universal through the particularity of languages, drawing on the comparisons and equivalences sought by the translator in professional work. Much more than this, however, if only translation research would focus more on it, is the opportunity translation (or more exactly, translating) gives to the linguists in understanding how it is that we do construct texts and how we do go about making meanings. In short, it concentrates our attention on the process in a very tangible and goal-directed way (Gutknecht, 2001). Translators as applied linguists do have certain obligations to the furthering of our understanding of language and of our ability to explain the acts of communicating in which we are continually engaged. As Candlin (1990: viii) points out, when we read or hear any language form the past, or when we receive as human beings any message from any other human being, we perform an act of translation. Such an act involves (1) an understanding of the cultural and experimental words that lie behind the original act of speaking or of writing, ways into their schemata; (2) an understanding of the potential of the two semiotic systems in terms of their image-making; (3) a making intelligible of the linguistic choices expressed in the message; (4) an opportunity to explore the social psychological intentions of the originator or the message matched against one's own, and (5) a challenge to match all of these with our appropriate response in our semiotic and linguistic system, and our culture.

There has been an influence on linguistics of work done in the area of translation studies. The use of translating as a tool in language teaching has been of interest to many in applied linguistics (Widdowson, 1979), while psycholinguistics and the study of bilingualism are concerned with the evidence provided by 'natural' or spontaneous translation. In this regard, Candin (1990: ix) maintains that "translation allows us to put language into perspective by asserting the need to extend beyond the opposite selection of phrases to an investigative exploration of the signs of a culture, and to the social and individual motivations for particular choices. It offers the possibility of unraveling the complex of human and conceptual relations which go the make up the contexts in which we communicate. As such, it is as much social as linguistic It offers a broader conception of what it means to understand".

Translation is a useful test case for examining the whole issue of the role of language in social life. In creating a new act of communication out of a previously existing one, translators are inevitably acting under the pressure of their own social conditioning while at the same time trying to assist in the negotiation of meaning between the producer of the source-language text (ST) and the reader of the target-language text (TT), both of whom exist within their own, different social frameworks. In studying this complex process at work, we are in effect seeking insights which take us beyond translation itself towards the whole relationship between the language activity and the social context in which it takes place (Hatim & Mason, 1990: 1). They further, argue that translation is a "Communicative transaction taking place within a social framework" (p. 2). As Robinson (2005: 142) points out, 'a useful way of thinking about translation and language is that translators do not translate words; they translate what people do with words. Translation is, after all, an operation performed both on and in language' (see O'Keeffe & Clancy, 2011).

Applied Linguistics Perspective: Focus on Native Language and Culture

Most SLA research in the 1960s was conducted within the frame work of Contrastive Analysis. As noted by James (1980: 27), constructivists see it as their goal to explain certain aspects of L₂ learning; their means are descriptive accounts of the learner's L₁ and L₂ to be learned, and techniques for the comparison of these descriptions. In other words, the goal belongs to psychology while the means are derived from linguistic science. In fact, there have been at least two significant approaches in the analysis of learner difficulty in acquiring L₂. The first approach is Contrastive Analysis (CA). The second approach is Error Analysis (EA).

The behaviorist view of learning provided the psychological bases of the CAH. Behaviorism assumes human behavior to be the sum of its components and language learning to be the acquisition of all these elements. It viewed language acquisition as the formation of habits.

Similarly, the structural approach provided the theoretical linguistic bases for the CAH. Structural linguists assume that the comparison of the descriptions of the two languages in questions would enable them to determine valid contrasts between the two languages. In the course of the controversy over the viability of the CAH, two versions of this hypothesis have emerged: “The strong vs. the weak” or “predictive vs. explanatory” versions as proposed by Wardhaugh (1970). The idea of the strong version is that it is possible to contrast the system of one language with the system of L₂. On the basis of the result of this contrast, investigators can discover the similarities and differences between the two languages in question so that they can make predictions about what will be the points of difficulty for the learners of other languages. According to the strong version, wherever the two languages differed, interference would occur. That is, language transfer is basis for predicting which patterns of the target language will be learned most readily and which will prove most troublesome. This version relies on the assumption that similarities will be easier to learn and differences harder.

In his evaluation of the strong version of CAH, Wardhaugh (1970) points out that although some writers tried to make this version the basis for their work, it is quite unrealistic and impractical. He made the following points: “At the very least this version demands of linguists, that they have available a set of linguistic universals formulated within a comprehensive linguistic theory which deals adequately with syntax, semantics, and phonology” (1970: 125). The weak version relies on two assumptions. First, EA may help investigators know, through errors the learners make, what the difficulties are. Second, investigators may realize the relative difficulty of specific errors through the frequency of their occurrence (Schachter 1974). The weak version may be easier and more practical than the strong version on the basis that it requires of the linguist that he use this linguistic knowledge to explain the observed difficulties in L₂ learning. It seems to me, however, that the CAH is not a reliable enough approach to be used in the analysis of learner difficulty in acquiring L₂. Neither the strong version nor the weak version can be used as an effective predictor of the difficulties of L₂ learning. L₁ is no longer considered the only reason for the errors made by L₂ learners. In neither child nor adult L₁ performance do the majority of the grammatical errors reflect the learner’s native language according to a number of researchers. Scott and Tucker (1974) refer to the reason that the usefulness of the CAH has remained limited: no language has been well enough described, and it has become increasingly apparent that not all L₂ errors have their source in the mother tongue (See Dekeyser, 2003; Mangubhai, 2006; Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Robinson & Ellis, 2011).

The assumption that similarities between the native and the target languages will be easier to learn and differences harder is rejected by a group of scholars. Pica (1984), for example, maintains that the divergent areas between the learner’s L₁ and the target language do not represent the greatest learning difficulties may be attributable to those areas which share considerable similarity. Some differences between languages do not always lead to significant learning difficulties. More than this, language transfer can be a constraint on the acquisition process. Schachter (1983) sees that the learner’s previous knowledge is available for use in further L₂ learning. Another serious challenge for any contrastive description is the interaction of linguistic subsystems. As Sanford and Garrod (1981) and Bock (1982) point out, psycholinguistic research has demonstrated a strong interdependence among discourse, syntax, phonology and other subsystems in the comprehension and production of language.

The second approach in the analysis of learner difficulty in acquiring L₂ is Error Analysis (EA). This approach is based on the assumption that the frequency of errors, according to Brown (1988), is proportional to the degree of learning difficulty. As has been mentioned before, many of the errors could not be explained in terms of L₁ transfer. The point which should be clear is that the EA can be characterized as an attempt to account for learner errors that could not be explained or predicted by the CAH. Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977) have pointed out that it is difficult to be certain precisely what type of errors L₂ learner is making or why the learner makes it. The reasons for errors made by L₂ learners are numerous. In this regard, Taylor (1975) found that the early

stages of language learning are characterized by a predominance of interlingual transfer, but once the learner has begun to acquire parts of the new system, generalization within the target language is manifested (See Ellis, N. 2002, 2005; Sebba et al., 2011; Segalowitz, 2011).

On the other hand, many studies have shown that developmental factors provide another explanation for some of the errors made by L₂ learners. Felix (1980) presents the theoretical assumption of the developmental nature of L₂ acquisition. As long as L₁ learners produce ungrammatical structures before they achieve adult competence, L₂ learners appear to pass through developmental stages which reflect general regularities and universal process of language acquisition. These developmental stages are not determined by the structural properties of the learner's L₁. The same idea is presented by Pica (1984) (See. Sharwood-Smith, 2004; Tyler, 2011).

As a reaction to the “product” orientation of the morpheme studies and EA, and the feeling that a more “process” oriented approach was needed, researcher began to work according to the interlanguage framework, which was developed in the late 1970s and 1980s. So, rather than focusing on the first or the target language, researchers began to develop data analytic procedures that would yield information about the dynamic qualities of language change that made the interlanguage a unique system; both similar to and different from the first and target languages. The next section will discuss the interlanguage framework, and the how the issue of native language influence was analyzed by researchers working according to it.

The term “interlanguage” was coined by Selinker (1969: 1972) to refer to the interim grammars constructed by L₂ learners on their way to the target language. The term won favour over similar construct, such as “approximate system” (Nemser, 1971) and “transitional competence” (Corder, 1967). Since the early 1970s “interlanguage” has come to characterize a major approach to L₂ research and theory. Unfortunately, the term has taken on various meanings, some authors using it as synonymous with L₂ learning generally. Generally speaking, the term “interlanguage” means two things: (1) the learner's system at a single point in time, and (2) the range of interlocking systems that characterize the development of learners over time. The interlanguage is thought to be distinct from both the learner's L₁ and from the target language. It evolves over time as learners employ various internal strategies to make a sense of the input and to control their own output. These strategies were central to Selinker's thinking about interlanguage. Specifically, Selinker (1972) argued that interlanguage was the product of five cognitive processes involved in L₂ learning (1) language transfer from L₁; (2) transfer of training process used to teach L₂; (3) strategies of L₂ learning; (4) strategies of L₂ communication; and (5) overgeneralization of the target language linguistic material. The development of the interlanguage was seen by Selinker as different from the process of L₁ development because of the likelihood of fossilization in L₂. Fossilization is the state of affairs that exists when the learner ceases to elaborate the interlanguage in some respect, no matter how long there is exposure, new data, or new teaching. Selinker maintained that such fossilization results especially from language transfer.

In contrast to Selinker's cognitive emphasis, Adjeman (1976) argued that the systematicity of the interlanguage should be analyzed linguistically as rule-governed behavior. Whereas Selinker's use of interlanguage stressed the structurally intermediate nature of the learner's system between the first and the target language, Adjeman focused on the dynamic character of interlanguage systems, their permeability. Interlanguage systems are thought to be by their nature incomplete and in a state of flux. In this view, the individual's L₁ system is seen to be relatively stable, but the interlanguage is not. The structure of the interlanguage may be “invaded” by L₁ when placed in a situation that cannot be avoided, L₂ learner may use rules or items from L₁. Similarly, the learner may stretch, distort, or overgeneralize a rule from the target language in an effort to produce, the intended meaning. Both process Adjeman saw to reflect the basis permeability of the interlanguage. A third approach to the interlanguage notion has been taken by Tarone (1979) who maintained that the interlanguage could be seen as analyzable into a set of styles that are dependent on the context of use. Tarone proposed capability continuum, which

includes a set of styles ranging from a stable subordinate style virtually free of L_1 influence to a characteristically superordinate style where the speaker pays a great deal of attention to form and where the influence of L_1 is, paradoxically more likely to be felt. For Tarone, interlanguage is not a single system, but a set of styles that can be used in different social contexts. In this way, Tarone added to Adjeman's linguistic perspective a sociolinguistic point of view (See Echevarria et.al., 2004; Ellis, R., 2006; Jiang, 2007; Walker, 2011).

Researchers working according to the interlanguage framework began to examine transfer as a process, not as a product. For example, Keller-Cohen (1979) found that a Japanese, a Finnish, and a German child acquired the English interrogative in roughly the same developmental sequence, but that the Finnish child acquired the use of yes/no questions much slower than the other two children, presumably because of the lack of correspondence between L_1 and L_2 structures. The end result was the same, but the process differed because of differences in L_1 . Another difference in the developmental process that is due to L_1 influence is the observation that speakers of some languages take longer to learn certain forms than do speakers of other language because their own first languages have similar forms. Thus Schmann (1982) reported that "no + verb" forms are more difficult to eliminate from the interlanguage of Spanish speakers than they are from the interlanguage of other speakers learning English because of the existence of this pattern in Spanish. Gass (1984) tells us that in addition to showing that transfer results in learner's taking different developmental paths to target-language mastery or makes it more difficult to learn certain constructions, recent work on transfer has looked at the following phenomena: (1) transfer of typological organization; (2) avoidance; (3) overproduction of certain elements; (4) language facilitation, and (5) modification of hypotheses.

It can be seen from the above examples, as Gass (1984) maintained, that the concept of transfer has taken on a number of different meanings for researchers and that in much of this research the influence of L_1 would have gone unobserved if the traditional, product-oriented definition of transfer used (See Saeidi & Chong, 2003; De Bot et al., 2007).

Markedness and Native Language Influence

The notion of markedness dates back to the Prague school of linguistics. Originally, it was used to refer to two members of a phonological opposition, one of which contained a feature lacking in the other. The phoneme carrying the feature was called marked; the other unmarked. In L_2 acquisition research, the term was used by Kellerman (1979, 1983) to predict when transfer is likely to occur from L_1 . Kellerman has argued that transfer should be looked on as a cognitive process in which decisions are made on the basis of (1) the learner's perception of the similarity between L_1 and L_2 structures, and (2) the degree of markedness of L_1 structure. More marked structures are those that the person thinks of as irregular, infrequent, and semantically opaque. Transfer is predicted to occur when the perceived similarity between the two languages is great and when the structures involved are unmarked. A number of studies (Gass, 1979; Rutherford, 1982) support these predictions. Other authors distinguish marked or unmarked structures according to their degree of complexity. Unmarked forms are thought to be less complex than marked. Specifically, Zobl (1984) proposed that one reason for transfer from L_1 is that L_2 rule is obscure. There are two main reasons suggested for this obscurity: (1) L_2 is typologically inconsistent in that it violates a universal implicational pattern, or (2) the rule is itself typological variable, so that there are a large number of possibilities. In either of these cases, learners are likely to fall back on their L_1 and L_1 influence will be found in the interlanguage. Kellerman (1979) reported that learners initially transfer both marked and unmarked features from their L_1 , but that in the more advanced interlanguage, they resist transferring marked features. This not to imply that beginners will necessarily transfer marked features from their L_1 . In this regard, Zobl (1984) noted that L_2 learners at all stages of development tend to avoid transferring marked L_1 rules. Eckman (1985) has argued that transfer occurs principally where L_1 feature is unmarked and L_2 feature is marked. According to Eckman's Markedness Differential Hypothesis, those areas of the target that will be

the most difficult for L₂ learners are those that are both different from L₁ and relatively more marked. (See Ellis, R. et.al. 2001; Han, 2005).

In recent Chomskyan thought, the rules of the core grammar are thought to be unmarked and those of the peripheral grammar are marked. Core grammar refers to those parts of the language that have “grown” in the child through the interaction of the Universal Grammar with the relevant language environment. In addition, however, it is assumed that every language also contains elements that are not constrained by Universal Grammar. These elements comprise the peripheral grammar. Peripheral elements are those that are derived from the history of language, that have been borrowed from other languages (Cook, 1985). Rules of the core grammar are seen to be easier to set than are rules of the peripheral grammar, which are thought to be outside of the child’s preprogrammed instructions. (See Han et.al. 2005; Izumi, 2002).

To conclude, the shift from a product to a process orientation has drawn attention to the more subtle and non-obvious effects of L₁ on interlanguage development. It has become apparent that L₁ does affect the course of interlanguage development but this influence is not always predictable. In addition, as McLaughlin (1988: 81) points out, “more recent work on transfer has made apparent the folly of denying L₁ influence any role in interlanguage development. He, further, maintains that “the bulk of the evidence suggests that language acquisition proceeds by mastering the easier unmarked properties before the more difficult marked ones” (See Wong, 2004; Hoey, 2007; Poole, 2003; Lyster, 2004).

Cognitive Theory and L₁ Influence

Cognitive theory is based on the work of psycholinguistics and psycholinguistics. Individuals working within this framework apply the principles and findings of contemporary cognitive psychology to the domain of L₂ learning. According to McLaughlin (1988), the theory is, in this sense, derivative. That is, it represents the application of a broader framework to the domain of L₂ research. Within this framework, L₂ learning is viewed as the acquisition of a complex cognitive skill. To learn L₂ is to learn a skill, because various aspects of the task must be practiced and integrated into fluent performance. Learning is a cognitive process because it is thought to involve internal representations that regulate and guide performance. In the case of language acquisition, Lightbown (1985) pointed out that L₂ acquisition is not simply linear and cumulative, but is characterized by backsliding and loss of forms that seemingly were mastered. She attributed this decline in performance to a process whereby learners have mastered some forms and then encounter new ones that cause a restructuring of the whole system: “[Restructuring] occurs because language is a complex hierarchical system whose components interact in non-linear ways. Seen in these terms, an increase in error rate in one area may reflect an increase in complexity or accuracy in another, followed by overgeneralization of a newly acquired structure, or simply by a sort of overload of complexity which forces a restructuring, or at least a simplification, in another part of the system” (Lightbown, 1985: 177).

In their discussion of native language influence SLA theorists have argued whether bilingual individuals have two separate stores of information in long-term memory, one for each language, or a single information store accompanied by selection mechanism for using L₁ or L₂ (McLaughlin, 1984). In this regard, O’Malley, Chamot and Walker (1987) pointed out that if individuals have a separate store of information maintained in each language, they would select information for use appropriate to the language context. To transfer information that was acquired in L₁ to L₂ would be difficult because of the independence of the two memory systems. An individual in the early stages of proficiency in L₂ would either have to translate information from L₁ to L₂ or relearn L₁ information in L₂, capitalizing on existing knowledge where possible. A contrast to this argument for separate L₁ and L₂ memory systems, Cummins (1984) has proposed a common underlying proficiency in cognitive and academic proficiency for bilinguals. Cummins argues that at least some of what is originally learned through L₁ does not have to be relearned in L₂ but can be transferred and expressed through the medium of L₂. L₂ learners may be able to

transfer what they already know from L_1 into L_2 by (a) selecting L_2 as the language for expression, (b) retrieving information originally stored through L_1 but presently existing as non-language-specific declarative knowledge, and (c) connecting the information to L_2 forms needed to express it. Learning strategy research (O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper and Russo 1985a, 1985b) indicates that students of English as L_2 consciously and actively transfer information from their L_1 for use in L_2 (Basturkmen et.al2004, Sheen, 2005).

L_1 Culture and L_2 Written Discourse

In addition to L_2 learners' L_1 as an influencing factor, their overall culture has been suggested to be of an enormous effect on students composing in L_2 . There has been a significant revolution in our thinking about writing in recent years, and it has come from learning to view writing as a process that is embedded in a context. In this regard, Hull (1989: 109) maintains that "To say that writing is embedded in a context is to acknowledge that what counts as writing, or as any skill or any knowledge, is socially constructed. It depends for its meaning and its practice upon social institutions and conditions. According to this view, writing does not stand apart from people and communities....And, this new understanding carries with it different notions of how writing is acquired and by whom". It has been recognized that writers from different cultures have learned rhetorical patterns that may differ from those used in academic settings in the United States and that are reinforced by their educational experience in their specific cultures (Purves, 1988). Kaplan (1966) attempted to analyze how one's native thinking and discourse structures manifest themselves in the writing of ESL students. Influenced by the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, Kaplan argued that his subject revealed evidence of culturally –influenced styles of thought development that emerge in their writings in ways that can be structurally stylistically described. In fact, the notions that cultures express concepts and develop perceptions of the word and of relationships of various kinds in different ways are not new. What is new, as Heath (1983) suggests, is the current attempt to integrate the study of languages and their uses in society in such a way as to reflect differences in cultural habits and differences in styles of expression in various contents including that of written text. In certain cases, cultural traditions may encourage or discourage certain types of thinking, and those cultural patterns may be reinforced by the structural characteristics of a particular language. It has been widely recognized that culture and language are interrelated and that language is used as the main medium through which culture is expressed (Montgomery and Reid-Thomas, and Reid -Thomas, 1994, El-daly, 1991).

To sum up, both the content and the language to express this content are culturally determined. To be effective, writers have to learn what is expected of them within their own culture. Consequently, differences in cultural expectations are an obstacle for those who are learning to write/or translate in a foreign language. Under the influence of the norms within their own culture, they may deviate from the norms of the foreign culture in what kind of material are to be included in a particular variety of written discourse, what style is appropriate, and how the discourse is to be organized (Cooper & Greenbaum, 1988). Purves (1988: 19) points out that "the differences among rhetorical patterns do not represent differences in cognitive ability, but differences in cognitive style. When students taught to write in one culture, enter another and do not write as do the members of the second culture, they should not be thought stupid or lacking in higher mental processes". Recently, Al-Samawi (2004) attempted to find out the erroneous redundant terms in the English writing of Yemeni students at the university level, and to trace their possible causes. Al Samawi found out that 58.3% of the errors were due to L_1 transfer. The rest were a sign of either ignorance of concerned English rules (27.8) or overgeneralization (13.9). These results seem to be compatible with Hago (1998); Osman (2002); Al-Gadi (2000), Al-Hardalow (2001), and Gasmallab (2001).

Views on the Place of Mother-tongue in FL Teaching and Translation

The issue of the place of mother-tongue in FL instruction is one of the controversial topics in the field of foreign language teaching. Many arguments have been raised and the various language teaching methods (conventional and non-conventional) hold different fluctuating opinions. Some recommend while others condemn the use of mother-tongue in the FL classroom. There are two extremes which are represented by the Grammar Translation Method and the Direct Method. The former, as its name suggests, makes liberal use of mother-tongue. It depends on translation and considers L_1 a reference system to which the foreign language learner can resort so as to understand the grammatical as well as the other features of the foreign language. The latter (the other extreme) tries to inhibit the use of mother-tongue. It depends on using the foreign language in explanation and communication in the language classroom and excluding L_1 and translation altogether. Those who condemn mother-tongue use view that optimal FL learning can be achieved through the intralingual tackling of the various levels of linguistic analysis as this helps provide maximum exposure to the foreign language. It is true that providing maximum exposure to the foreign language helps a lot in learning that language, as the following discussion will demonstrate.

During the late 1970s Stephen Krashen put forward an account of SLA first known as the Monitor Model after its main claim about the role of monitoring in language learning (Krashen, 1979). In the early 1980s this was expanded into a broader-based model, described in Krashen (1981; 1982). The aspect of the model that became most developed was termed the Input Hypothesis, the title of Krashen's major theoretical book (Krashen, 1985). The question that concerns us here is the linguistic aspect of Krashen's views. According to the Input Hypothesis, humans acquire language in only one way-by understanding messages or by receiving 'comprehensible input' (Krashen, 1985, p. 2). To be useful to the learner, the input must be neither too difficult to understand nor too easy. This is conceptualized by Krashen in terms of the learner's current level, called i , and the level that the learner will get to next, called $i+1$. As Cook (1993) points out, for the learner to progress rather than remain static, the input has always to be slightly beyond the level at which he or she is completely at home: the gap between the learners i and the $i+1$ that he or she needs is bridged by information drawn from the situation and from the learner's previous experience. Moreover, comprehensible input relies on the actual language forms being incomprehensible, not the total message. Learners have to struggle to derive meaning for the parts they do not understand rather than understanding the sentence completely (White, 1989). The question which imposes itself is why is not acquisition equally successful for all L_2 learners, even when they receive apparently identical comprehensible input?. According to Krashen (1982: 66), comprehension is a necessary condition for language acquisition but it is not sufficient: "something more than comprehensible input is needed". For acquisition to take place, the learner has to be able to absorb the appropriate parts of the input. There can be 'a mental block that prevents acquirers from fully utilizing the comprehensible input they receive for language acquisition' (Krashen, 1955, p. 3). This block is called "the affective filter". That is, the acquirer may be unmotivated, lacking in self-confidence, or anxious. If the filter is 'up', comprehensible input cannot get through; if it is 'down', they can make effective use of it. In this connection, Krashen (1985) argues that the reason why younger learners are better at L_2 acquisition over the long term is that 'the affective filter gains dramatically in strength at around puberty' (Krashen, 1985, p. 13). In Krashen's words, 'comprehensible input and the strength of the filter are the true causes of second language acquisition' (1982, p. 33).

On the other hand, confining oneself to the foreign language only, may be done at the expense of understanding and intelligibility or in a routine and non-creative way. With careful and functional mother-tongue use intelligibility can be achieved and the time saved (by giving the meaning in the mother-tongue) can be used for practice. So, mother-tongue use does not mean wasting time that can be better used for providing maximum exposure to the foreign language. Disregarding the mother-tongue and considering it "a bogey to be shunned at all costs" is a myth.

Those who recommend nothing but English in an English lesson neglect many important facts. First, they have forgotten that FL learners translate in their minds and think in their own language and this cannot be controlled: “The teacher who says: I forbid the use of the pupil’s own language in my class; nothing but English in the English lessons is deceiving himself. He has forgotten the one thing he cannot control what goes on in the pupil’s mind, he cannot tell whether, or when, his pupils are thinking in their own language. When he meets a new English word, the pupil inevitably searches in his mind for the equivalent in his own language. When he finds it, he is happy and satisfied, he has a pleasurable feeling of success”. (French, 1972: 94). Supporting this idea, Finocchiaro (1775: 35) says: We delude ourselves if we think the student is not translating each new English item into his native language when he first meets it. Second, they have also forgotten that “the unknown (L₂ pattern) cannot be explained via something less known (the L₂)” (Hammerly, 1971). This idea was supported by Seleim (1995). Third, they have forgotten that the mother-tongue is first in terms of acquisition and proficiency and so FL learners cannot escape its influence: “The mother-tongue is so strongly ingrained that no amount of direct method drill can override its influence. Therefore, according to this line of thought it is better to capitalize on the students’ knowledge of (mother-tongue) than to pretend it is not there”. (Grittner, 1977: 165). Fourth, they have forgotten that there are individual differences among students and that the weaker students may have difficulties in grasping a point in the foreign language (See Lee, 2000, Lyster & Mori, 2006).

In a study conducted by Latke-Gajer (1984), she tried to look for a solution for what she observed while teaching English. The problem is that students, to understand an utterance in the foreign language, translate each word separately and then add together the meaning of individual words. This is harmful as it does not enable students to grasp the meaning of more complex statements, especially those that contain idiomatic expressions. She decided, in this study, to introduce English-English explanations of new words and expressions. She started the experiment with her advanced students by giving them a list of words to be explained in English at home and then they compared their explanations with the definition in Hombly’s dictionary. Although the experiment proved successful, especially with advanced students, it was not possible to totally eliminate Polish (as a mother-tongue) from the lessons. It was necessary to use it to explain several difficult and complicated grammatical patterns so that the weaker students could understand. With the beginners it was impossible to use this same method. For them, she suggests using different ways such as: opposition, describing pictures and using games.

It becomes then clear that the mother-tongue cannot be totally excluded or disregarded. There are many situations in which a few words in the mother-tongue will help clarify something students may not have comprehended in English. It is a myth to believe that “the best criterion for effective target language teaching is the absence of the mother-tongue in the classroom. Although the need for a target language environment in the classroom is controvertible, this does not imply, however, that the mother-tongue has no role to play in effective and efficient language teaching. Where a word of Arabic can save Egyptian learners of English from confusion or significant time lost from learning, its absence would be, in my view, pedagogically unsound” (Altman, 1984: 79). Absence of the mother-tongue may result in meaningless and mechanical learning situations. This contradicts the recent research findings which stress that the two-way type of communication should be the ultimate goal of instruction and the tool which ensures better teaching results. With total exclusion of the mother-tongue the teaching-learning situations may degenerate into a mechanical process in which “one may memorize (learn how to repeat) a phrase or a sentence in a foreign language, without knowing what it means. In such a case, one could say the person knows it (knows how to say it), but we could also say that the person does not understand what he or she is saying (comprehend its meaning)” (Soltis, 1978: 55).

Concluding Remarks

It is pedagogically important to emphasize the element of meaningfulness in the teaching learning process. Students become motivated and active if they understand what is involved and if they know what they are doing. So, it is important not to disregard the learners' need for the comprehension of what they learn or exclude the mother-tongue because it is their right that they should make sense in their own terms of what they are learning. It is also important to use the learners' native language so as to avoid misunderstanding and achieve intelligibility. The reasons for using the native language to get meaning across is that it prevents any misunderstanding, saves time and makes the gradation of the language free from physical demonstration (see Poole & sheorey, 2002).

Mother-tongue plays a vital role in diminishing or at best eliminating the psychological factors that have an inhibiting effect on FL teaching and learning. It has been noticed that the non-conventional methods of language teaching make use of the mother-tongue and translation in FL/SL teaching and learning. They emphasize that mother-tongue employing removes the fear of incompetence, mistakes and apprehension regarding languages new and unfamiliar. One point is that, to overcome the problems of dissatisfaction and avoidance, FL teachers should permit some mother-tongue use. Students, having linguistic inadequacies, can get confused and become hesitant about their oral participation. They may abandon a message they have started because a certain idea or a thought is too difficult to continue expressing in the foreign language. To overcome the feeling of dissatisfaction and psychological avoidance, FL learners should come to terms with the frustrations of being unable to communicate in the foreign language and build up, cognitively and effectively, a new reference system which helps them communicate an idea. This reference system is the mother-tongue which is indeed very important for enhancing the FL learners' feeling of success and satisfaction. Another point is that mother-tongue use helps create a climate that alleviates the learners' tension, insecurity and anxiety. It makes the class atmosphere comfortable and productive and helps establish good relationships between the teacher and his students. In one of the most recent research, Anne Brooks-Lewis (2009) challenges the theory and practice of the exclusion of the adult learners' first language by reporting learners' overwhelmingly positive perceptions of its incorporation in foreign language teaching and learning. However, it must be kept in mind that mother-tongue should be used as little as possible, but as much as necessary. MT should be rule-governed and not be freely or randomly used: "The individual is able to switch from one language to another... in a rule-governed rather than a random way" (Bell, 1978: 140-41)

It is important to emphasize the fact that mother-tongue should not be used in the wrong way. It is desirable in cases where it is necessary, inevitable and where otherwise valuable classroom time would be wasted. We do not want the FL teacher to use the mother-tongue freely and to automatically translate everything on the learners' book. This unlimited use is so harmful that it discourages the learners from thinking in English (the language they are learning) and so it will not be taken seriously as a means of communication. "Translating can be a hindrance to the learning process by discouraging the student from thinking in English" (Haycraft, 1979: 12). Students in most cases think in their mother-tongue and lean too much on it. This makes them acquire and develop the habit of mental translation. They interpose the mother-tongue between thought and expression developing a three way process in production and expressing their intentions: Meaning to Mother-tongue to English Expression. They always think, while trying to express themselves (in the foreign language), in their mother-tongue and all their attempts to communicate in the foreign language are filtered through the mother-tongue: "The mother-tongue is not relinquished, but it continues to accompany - and of course to dominate the whole complex fabric of language behavior.... all referent- whether linguistic or semantic - are through the Mother-tongue. (Grittnerm 1977: 81). This is pedagogically dangerous as it makes the FL learners believe that, to express themselves in the foreign language, the process is mere verbal substitution of words of the mother-tongue to their equivalents in the foreign language and this is an extremely a tiring way to produce correct sentences in the foreign language and creates no direct bond between

thought and expression. The nonexistence of this bond results in hindering fluency in speech and proficiency in productive writing. Interposing the mother-tongue between thought and expression hinders the intralingual associative process which is necessary for promoting fluency and automatic production of FL discourse. “The explicit linkage of a word in one language with a word in another language may interfere with the facilitative effects of intra-language associations. Thus, for instance, if a student repeats many times the pair go: aller, the association between the two will become so strong that the French word will come to the student’s mind whenever he uses the English equivalent and inhibit the smooth transition from “go” to the other English words, a skill necessary for fluent speech (Anisfield, 1966: 113-114).

FL teachers should guard against mental translation. This can be achieved by permitting the learners to express themselves (in speech or writing) within their linguistic capacities and capabilities. This means that the student, for instance, should first practice expressing given ideas instead of trying to fit language to his free mental activities and if he is freed from the obligation to seek what to say, he will be able to concentrate on form and gradually acquire the correct habits on which he may subsequently depend. It is important to familiarize the learners with the fact that no word in one language can have or rightly be said to have the same meaning of a word in another language. FL teachers should provide more than one native equivalent for the FL word, give the meaning on the sentential level and in various contexts. According to Byram et al. (1994: 18), cultural learning positively affects students’ linguistic success in foreign language learning. Culture can be used as an instrument in the processes of communication when culturally-determined behavioural conventions are taught. Tavares and Cavalcanti (1996), further, claims that “culture shouldn’t be seen as a support to language teaching but that it should be placed on an equal footing with foreign language teaching”. Post and Rathet (1996) support the use of student’s native culture as cultural content in the English language classroom. In fact, a wide range of studies has shown that using content familiar to students rather than unfamiliar content, can influence student comprehension of L_2 (Anderson and Barnitz, 1984; Long, 1990). In other words, unfamiliar information can impede students’ learning of the linguistic information used to convey the content. So why overburden our students with both new linguistic content and new cultural information simultaneously? If we can, especially for lower-level students, use familiar cultural content while teaching English, we can reduce the “processing load” that students experience (Post and Rathet, 1996: 12). In this regard, Tavares and Cavalcanti (1996) argue that the development of people’s cultural awareness leads us to more critical thinking as citizens with political and social understanding of our own and other communities.

To conclude, the problem does not lie in whether mother-tongue has a place in FL, teaching/learning or not, but in how much of it is permitted. In this respect, it can be said that there are many factors determining the quantity to be used. The quantification will differ according to the maturity level of the learners and their linguistic level. It also depends on the competence of the teacher, the material to be taught and the availability of teaching aids. Another point is that it is the individual teacher who sensitizes when to switch codes and when not to. It is also the teacher who can decide the pragmatic quantity to be used because what is workable in a certain class may not be so in another.

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