THE ROLE OF TRANSLATION IN DEVELOPING STUDENTS' CREATIVITY

Andreea Năznean, "Al. Ioan Cuza" University of Iași

Abstract: reveal the fact that a good relationship between students and teachers can bring only positive results in a translation class and the strategies presented in this article are a proof in this respect. I will also try to illustrate a few methods by means of which teachers can contribute to the development of their students' flexibility, imagination and creativity.

Keywords: translation, creativity, improvement, language, method

A conventional hypothesis in language teaching has been that translation as a **skill** is considered essential just by a minor part of students who are taught to be professional translators and interpreters. This calls attention to the fact that opinions for and against translation in language teaching estimate it simply as **a means** sooner than **an end** and many researchers have come to the conclusion that it is not persuasive. But as Guy Cook states in *Translation in Language Teaching* "… in a world of constant cross-linguistic and cross-cultural global communication, there are reasons to see translation as being widely needed in everyday situations, and not as a specialized activity at all". (2010: 109)

Translation teachers should always concentrate on the best ways of how to improve their teaching methods because each lesson which brings something original, ground-breaking, is undeniably a success. In a translation class, students have their own ways of translating, each of them tries to develop and improve that particular method which he/she feels is suitable for him/her.

In "The Theory behind the practice, Translator Training or Translator Education?", Silvia Bernardini refers to the profession of education students: "… educating a student takes time and effort, but one can trust that she can then go out and learn the rest for herself." (2004: 19)

In translation classes the teacher has to be very attentive when he selects the texts he wants the students to work on. "These texts must be long enough that the students can have experience with a variety of translation problems but at the same time short enough so that the teacher can deal with those problems with the students." (Preložníková and Toft, 2004:90) One solution teachers usually use is to give the students a full text but ask them to translate only a certain fragment.

Unfortunately, nowadays there are very few textbooks which include translation exercises, but we can make use of other books which were used in the teaching of foreign languages in the past. One of the most well-known books is *English with a key*, *Engleza cu cheie*, written by Lidia Vianu and published by *Editura de Vest* Publishing House in 1992. This book includes a lot of translation exercises whose aim is clearly stated from the very beginning because each chapter mentions in the title the specific grammar part it is going to focus on: the

BDD-A22352 © 2014 "Petru Maior" University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-18 21:59:51 UTC)

tenses, the passive voice, the modal verbs, the noun, the adjective. It also includes literary texts based on the novels written by Mircea Eliade, Camil Petrescu and Marin Preda and translations of different texts written by John Galsworthy and James Joyce.

I will illustrate the way in which the literary texts can be introduced in translation classes and translated with the help of this book, thus contributing not only to the development of the students' vocabulary, but also of their creativity. The literary texts are excerpts from different novels written by famous Romanian writers: Mircea Eliade, Camil Petrescu and Marin Preda. The teacher can make copies of these excerpts, divide the students into groups or pairs, allow them time to translate and then they can compare the translation provided by their classmates with the ones provided by the book. I use these exercises for my students in the 11th and 12th grades studying Philology Bilingual English in 5 English classes each week. This is an example selected from a worksheet that I worked on with my students:

Se lăsă o tăcere. Fetiţa deschise uşa şi fără ezitare o luă încet spre maică-sa. Matilda se ridică şi dispăru în bucătărie. Copilul veni atunci la mine şi se aşeză, cuminte, în fotoliu. Prezicerile lui Ben Alexandru nu se adeveriseră, cu toate că Matilda se predase cu totul fetiţei. Silvia îşi vedea cuminte de mica ei viaţă şi era aproape în mod egal ataşată de maică-sa şi de mine, deşi Matilda nu se bucura câtuşi de puţin cînd o vedea că mi se urcă veselă în braţe: se predase, dar şi pusese stăpânire pe ea şi nu-şi ascundea iritarea că Silvia descoperise o a doua fiinţă în viaţa ei, căreia îi spunea „tata" şi care o lua aproape zinic la plimbare în oraş. Încerca s-o oprească, „acum trebuie să te culci", „afară e frig şi n-am chef să te văd că începi să tuşeşti." O lăsam să meargă pe jos, până o auzeam că-mi spune foarte curând că o dor picioarele şi atunci o luam în braţe. Era o şmecherie, nu vedea nimic de jos, n-o dureau picioarele, vroia în braţe, sus, şi atunci ghiceam că era stăpânită de o curiozitate avidă şi tăcută. (1992: 118)

The translation provided by the author is the following one and it can be found in the key section of the book, but it is only intended as an example because there are many other ways of translating the same text as my students have proven so many times before.

There was silence. The little girl opened the door and went to her mother without the least hesitation. Matilda stood up and vanished into the kitchen. The child came to me, then, and sat down quietly in the armchair. What Ben Alexandru had foretold had not come true, although Matilda had totally surrendered to the child. Silvia went about her own little life quietly and was almost equally attached to her mother and to me, although Matilda was not in the least happy when she saw her coming cheerfully into my arms: she had surrendered, but she had also mastered her, and did not hide her irritation at the fact that Silvia had found out there was one more being in her life, whom she called 'daddy', and who took her out for a walk daily. She would try to stop the girl, 'you must go to bed now' or 'it is cold outside and I don't want you to start coughing.' I would allow her to walk, until, very soon, I heard her say that her feet hurt, and then I would take her in my arms. It was a trick, she could see nothing from where she was, her feet did not hurt, she wanted to be carried high up, and then I guessed she was mastered by an avid and quiet curiosity. (1992: 274)

After the students are ready with the translation they have written in their group, they read it for the whole class and in the end we can choose the best translation, the one which has managed to render the original meaning in the most faithful way and also to provide an

BDD-A22352 © 2014 "Petru Maior" University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-18 21:59:51 UTC)

appropriate form. After this stage is completed we compare the students' translation with the one provided by the author of the book. But most of the time the conclusion is the same: there are many possible ways of translating the same text and all of them are equally appropriate.

Another motivating assignment that we can make use of in class is that students explain the translations they have written as homework and use them to create a translation developed in small groups. Throughout the students' reflection on the best translation, we notice that they sustain their own options through justification of the methods they used to achieve their own conclusion.

The teacher monitors the whole activity, helps the students with suggestions or draws their attention to possible mistakes they might have made. Preloznikova and Toft affirm in "The role of Translation Studies within the Framework of Linguistic and Literary Studies" that after the students have completed different translation tasks, the teacher asks questions which are not aimed at reaching high-quality translations, but at establishing:

- "the difficulties that students found whilst preparing the translation;
- how those problems were solved or need to be solved
- what implications they have for dealing with future texts." (2004:93)

Discussions about the differences and similarities throughout the translation activity can facilitate students' comprehension of the interaction of the two languages and the difficulties produced by their native language. It can also facilitate students' appreciation of the advantages and disadvantages of the source language and the target language, for instance in relationship with idiomatic language such as metaphors. There are idioms which are not easily recognized and give the impression that they are too complicated to be comprehended in the contexts they are used. In this situation, the language teacher should teach them cautiously and help the students make out their connotation by providing considerable contexts.

Some idioms are unfamiliar and cannot be identified as idioms so easily. I used the following idioms from *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms*, published in 1998 by Cambridge University Press, and my students in the 10th grade found them difficult to translate without a proper context. But they worked in pairs and managed to find proper meanings of these idioms, suitable for their mother tongue. All the students used their creativity and inventiveness to find the most suitable meaning of the idioms and also a proper form to render them. When all the students finished their translations, we listened to all the options and in the end we selected the most suitable ones, but reached the conclusion that more than just one translation of the same idiom can be taken into consideration.

1. "be up in arms": to be very angry

The students are up in arms about the standard of teaching at the college.

Local traders are up in arms over the effect of the new parking regulations on their businesses. (1998: 10)

2. "Keep your own counsel": to not tell other people about your opinions or plans.

He was a quiet man who kept his own counsel. (1998: 81)

3. "Sit on your hands": to do nothing about a problem or a situation that needs dealing with.

Every day the crisis worsens and yet the government seems content to sit on its hands. (1998: 176)

BDD-A22352 © 2014 "Petru Maior" University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-18 21:59:51 UTC)

4. "Be on the line": if something is on the line, it is a situation in which it could be lost or harmed.

I didn't know his job was on the line. (1998: 230)

5. "The jewel in the crown": the best or most valuable thing in a group of things; (often + **of**)

The island of Tresco, with its beautiful tropical gardens, is the jewel in the crown of the Scilly Isles. (1998: 207)

6. "The meat and potatoes": the most important or basic parts of something

They stuck to the meat and potatoes of broadcasting – sports and news. (1998: 249)

7. "Somebody's name is mud": if someone's name is mud, other people are angry with that person because of something they have done or said.

Well, he'd better turn up tonight or his name will be mud. (1998: 265)

8. "A pillar/tower of strength": someone who gives a lot of support to someone else who is in a difficult situation.

Roger was a tower of strength when my parents died. (1998: 375)

9. "Change your tune": to change your opinion completely, especially because you know it will bring you an advantage.

He was against the idea to start with, but he soon changed his tune when I told him how much money he'd get out of it. (1998: 404)

10. "Well and truly": completely

Many people remained in their hiding places until they were sure the war was well and truly over. (1998: 420)

In *Multiple Voices in the Translation Classroom* Maria Gonzales Davies emphasizes the fact that the teacher should be skilled at guiding the students towards making motivated choices, more precisely of helping them to acquire the next means of advancement correctly:

" – Awareness-raising through setting a theoretical framework and practicing with texts.

- Exposure to potential translation problems and solutions.
- Decision-making in which both the source text and the translation assignment are taken into account.
- Justification of choices: the students have to discuss their selected translation option with other students and justify it, as well as evaluate their peers' choices.
- Rendering of a final product that is the result of careful thought and through discussion.
- Development in the students of a self-concept as translators." (2004: 37)

The means to success in our society are creativity, inventiveness and originality. Teachers must cultivate students' creativity with the purpose of preparing them for work and life in the 21st century. And the most influential way to develop students' creativity is to be a role model. In addition, it is imperative to encourage students to express their opinions habitually during the class; consequently the teacher stimulates them to speak and share their opinions using the foreign language. This should also provide them the opportunity to turn out to be creative, imaginative and capable of control, to prepare them for their future lives as dynamic members of society. It should make it possible for students to react confidently to different prospects, challenges and duties, to take care of diverse topics and cope with change and problems.

BDD-A22352 © 2014 "Petru Maior" University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-18 21:59:51 UTC)

In "Creativity, Its Place in Education", Wayne Morris draws attention to the fact that when students are creative in the classroom, they are likely to:

- "question and challenge. Creative pupils are curious, question and challenge, and don't necessarily follow the rules.
- make connections and see relationships. Creative pupils think laterally and make associations between things that are not usually connected.
- envision want might be. They imagine, see possibilities, ask "what if?", picture alternatives, and look at things from different viewpoints.
- explore ideas and options. Creative pupils play with ideas, try alternatives and fresh approaches, keep open minds and modify their ideas to achieve creative results.
- reflect critically on ideas, actions and outcomes. They review progress, invite and use feedback, criticize constructively and make perceptive observations." (2006: 4)

Teachers should teach creatively if they want their students to be creative, which may be explained as teachers using inventive approaches to make learning more attractive, appealing, stimulating and efficient, making use of methods of teaching that are aimed at developing students personal creative judgment and behavior.

In translation, students should have a constructive approach as far as their assignment is concerned as Kussmaul states in "Training the Translator": "The emotions favorable for creative thought suggest that self-confidence is also one of the prerequisites for creative translation." (1995: 51) It is very important to like the text which has to be translated and also the process of translating. Teachers should select texts with an appropriate level of difficulty for the specific stage of translator education.

Even though teaching can be complicated and sometimes too demanding, it is essential that teachers discover methods to bring wonder, enjoyment and enthusiasm into the classroom. By establishing a good relationship and connecting with students, teachers have the chance to feel connected with the reward of teaching. These rewards are mutual; when the teacher has enjoyable classes and takes pleasure in teaching, the students will enjoy learning and get involved more in all the translation activities.

Translation should be used in classes each time the teacher tries to encourage the students' natural ability to understand the information in the target language by means of their native language. This activity is very natural because it can contribute not only to the improvement of the foreign language but also to the development of the students' self confidence.

Bibliography

Adab, B. (2000) "Evaluating Translation Competence" " in C. Schäffner and B. Adab (eds.), *Developing Translation Competence*, Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John

Bassnett, S. (2002), *Transaltion Studies*, London and New York: Routledge

Bernardini, S. (2004) "The theory behind the practice: Translator training or translator education?" in K. Malmkjaer (ed), *Translation in Undergraduate Degree Programmes*, Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins

BDD-A22352 © 2014 "Petru Maior" University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-18 21:59:51 UTC)

Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms, (1998), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Chesterman, A. (2000) "Teaching Strategies for Emancipatory Translation" in C. Schäffner and B. Adab (eds.), *Developing Translation Competence*, Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins

Cook, G., (2010), *Translation in Language Teaching*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Davies González, M. (2004), *Multiple Voices in the Translation Classroom. Activities, tasks and projects*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins

Harmer, J. (2007), *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (4th edition), Harlow, England: Pearson Education Limited

Kussmaul, P. (1995), *Training the Translator*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company

Munday, J. (2008), *Introducing Translation Studies, Theories and Application* (2nd edition), London and New York: Routledge

Neubert, A. (2000), "Competence in Language, in Languages and in Translation" in Schäffner, C. and Adab B. (eds.), *Developing Translation Competence*, Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins

Nida E. A. and Taber C. R. (1982) *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, Leiden: E. J. Brill

Preloznikova, S. and Toft, C. (2004), "The role of Translation Studies within the Framework of Linguistic and Literary Studies" in K. Malmkjaer (ed.) *Translation in Undergraduate Degree Programmes*, Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins

Schäffner, C. (2000) "Running before Walking? Designing a Translation Programme at Undergraduate Level" in C. Schäffner and B. Adab (eds.), *Developing Translation Competence*, Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins

Stern, H.H. (1983), *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vianu, L,. (1992), *English with a key*, *Engleza cu Cheie*, Timişoara: Editura de Vest

***

Encouraging Students to use their Imagination, available on line at http://suite101.com/article/encouraging-students-to-use-their-imagination-a82347 viewed on 3rd September 2012

Developing Students' Creativity Skills for 21st Century Success, available on line at http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/education-update/dec08/vol50/num12/Developing-Students'-Creative-Skills-for-21st-Century-Success.aspx viewed on 11th November 2011

How to develop Student Creativity, available on line at *http://ozpk.tripod.com/000000creat* viewed on 3rd September 2012

Imagination in Teaching and Learning, available on line at http://www.sfu.ca/~egan/ITLintro.html viewed on 15th May 2012

Morris, W. (2006), *Creativity, Its Place in Education*, available on line at http://www.jpb.com/creative/Creativity_in_Education.pdf viewed on 23rd August 2014

BDD-A22352 © 2014 "Petru Maior" University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-18 21:59:51 UTC)