

*La mediazione
linguistico-culturale*

Voci e istanze dall'accademia

a cura di Maria Chiara Ferro

IL SEGNO E LE LETTERE

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dell'Università degli Studi 'G. d'Annunzio'*

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PEDAGOGICAL TRANSLATION AS PART OF A COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Elena Nikolaevna Chramcova

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ABSTRACT

The communicative approach in teaching a foreign language involves students in performing a wide range of meaningful, realistic, and achievable communicative tasks and thus develops their communication skills in this language. Translation can be used in the teaching process and become a means of developing vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics and cross-cultural potential, on the one hand, and in improving speaking, listening and writing skills, on the other hand. However, on its own translation cannot become a fully fledged communicative tool, since it would completely transform the process of teaching a language into a process of teaching how to translate. Nevertheless, as it possesses enormous potential, translation remains one of the methods within the communicative approach to learning.

Keywords: communicative approach; GTM; language teaching; linguistic identity; pedagogical translation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of translation as a pedagogical tool in foreign language teaching has provoked opposite reactions. In the former Soviet republics, including Belarus, the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) prevailed in schools until the 1960s. Inherited from the classical method of teaching Greek and Latin, its goal was for the learner to understand the text and translate it rather than develop speaking skills¹. Methodologists and teachers later

¹ See Pul'kina 1962, 51.

sought to create new methods and more efficient ways of language teaching, eliminating the discredited GTM, and removing what they considered to be the immediate culprit, that is the mother tongue.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The introduction of the Direct Methods (DMs) of teaching prohibited the use of the mother tongue (or the first language) in the classroom, a trend that became widespread and later ingrained in the practice of foreign language teaching. The basis for this, on the one hand, was the assumption that while mastering the mother tongue we do not resort to the help of any other language. Thus, J.J. Asher, who developed the strategy of Total Physical Response², points out that this method “simulates at a speeded-up pace the stages an infant experiences in acquiring its first language”³.

However, since the goal of foreign language learning has always been to master it at the level of native speakers, in this learning process the initially stated functional goal of any language as a means of interaction faded into the background, as the perfect level of the speaker’s language competence was considered far more important. This, according to V.J. Cook who severely criticizes the idolization of the principle of the native speaker, leads to “shadows” of native speakers, not users of the second language in their own right⁴. It follows that the widespread prejudice against the use of the first language in class could not but affect translation and translation-based techniques in language learning, which were treated as absolutely undesirable and useless. At present, the reinterpretation of “the native speaker construct” has already begun and the author agrees with E. Llorca who points out that “behind the apparently innocent term ‘native speaker’ lurks a stigmatization of individuals who do not fit the socially established pattern of the ‘ideal native speaker’”⁵.

The negative attitude to translation also arose because of the discovered differences between the functional system of translation and that of speech activity in the native language. The psychologist and educator A.N. Leont’ev explained this, saying that bilingual children, who speak

² Asher 1965, 292-299.

³ Asher 1986, 17.

⁴ Cook 2001, 404.

⁵ Llorca 2016, 54.

two languages equally, can never translate from one of these languages to the other. This fact directly proves that here we are dealing with two different functional systems, so despite the ability to speak and understand speech in the two languages, the translation functional system in such children will never develop at all⁶.

Later several scientists, who supported this opinion, came to a complete rejection of translation-based teaching. In some European countries there appeared the so-called direct method or natural method of teaching foreign languages which aimed at establishing an immediate and audio-visual association between experience and expression, words and phrases, idioms and meanings, rules and performances through the teachers' body and mental skills, without any help of the learners' mother tongue⁷.

Similar views on teaching a foreign language might have arisen from the behaviourist theory of general education which was prevalent at the time and R. Lado's comparative analysis, introduced in his book *Linguistics across Cultures* (1957). The researcher saw the difficulty in mastering a second language using the learners' mother language, as the two languages are structurally completely different and the use of one hampers the acquisition of the other.

Together, these two theories led to the emergence of controlled bilingualism with the desire to keep the two language systems separate, not connected, so as not to interfere with both teaching and learning a foreign language. Accordingly, the hypothesis which Cook argues against stated that: "if the major problems in L2 learning come from the L1, then let us eliminate it as much as we can"⁸.

In this way, the traditionally cited argument against the use of translation in foreign language teaching, namely the notorious GTM, and the popularity of the intra-lingual method, focusing entirely on the target language, led to the complete oblivion and disappearance of any attempts to use both the native language and translation in language learning. Moreover, the instructional material for foreign language teaching was created strictly according to this tendency and many teaching techniques avoided the mother tongue in language teaching⁹. This trend could not but affect Eastern European educators like the outstanding methodologist E.I. Passov, an ardent defender of the intra-lingual approach, who severely

⁶ Leont'ev 1977, 7.

⁷ Passov, 1977, 48.

⁸ Cook 2001, 402-403.

⁹ Cook 1999, 201.

criticised translation-based teaching, calling it “a passion, which, unfortunately, had not yet cooled down”¹⁰.

At that time, a paradoxical situation was created in which, on the one hand, most educators stigmatized translation in language teaching, and on the other hand, some teachers continued using it in the teaching process. In some cases, the total expulsion of translation from language teaching and learning led to the fact that the learners soon were not able to switch from one language to another during a conversation on the same topic, i.e. the technique of “non-translation” teaching began to give results opposite to those that were expected.

The emergence of communicative linguistics in the 1970s and psychological activity theory changed the attitude to language and its purpose. However, this understanding did not immediately lead to great changes in teaching foreign languages. The basic teaching unit became the unit of communication, in other words a speech act, as a means of conveying verbal intent through language. Nevertheless, it was quite impossible to make a rapid change in language teaching after the long reign of firstly GMT and then DMs. The new methodological views postulated the use of spoken language and focused only on communicative situations, making this a dogma. Spoken language was considered to be more communicative in comparison with reading, writing, and even listening, not to mention translation¹¹. As a result, most efforts were focused on training speaking skills, which did not allow translation to become a means of teaching speech. Later, D. Newson¹² argued against translation, pointing out that it fosters interference and encourages thinking only in one language. He stated that it is in no way related to the four language competencies of writing, speaking, reading, listening. Moreover, it prevents learners from achieving fluency and communicative competence, and does not make them aware of the learning progress.

However, in recent years translation has reappeared in language learning and it has been raised to the rank of interlingua and cross-cultural communication¹³, in the light of the reinterpreted idea of the communicative approach in language teaching as well as the shift to the communicative value of translation. The modern view on the process of teaching foreign languages has, in fact, completely changed the attitude of scholars

¹⁰ Passov 1977, 61.

¹¹ See Brown 2001, 247.

¹² Newson 1998, 63-64.

¹³ See Komissarov 2004, 49.

and practitioners to the role of the mother tongue in mastering a foreign language, and therefore to the use of translation as a language learning and teaching technique. Many methodologists and educators have thus concluded that with a proper organization of the learning process, translation can serve a purpose as a communicative technique and activity. Researchers have identified many positive aspects in translation. It can strengthen the learners' motivation and become a means of conscious learning and control. According to Kupske "translation can make learning meaningful, as the learner is an active participant in the process"¹⁴ while Afzal states that it can become "a way of scaffolding for both the students and teachers to learn and teach" a foreign language¹⁵. While methodologists once warned teachers "to ban the use of the mother tongue", and then to "minimize" it, some educators now advocate "enabling the use of the mother tongue and maximizing the use of the foreign language"¹⁶. Thus, if properly designed, translation-based activities can enhance and facilitate the process of language learning and become indispensable teaching tools.

While exploring the problem, the term translation requires clarification. Methodologists distinguish between translation as a professional activity and "pedagogical translation" as a means of foreign language teaching, i.e. as an auxiliary technique. Thus, the development of professional translation skills is beyond the scope of teaching a foreign language and is not covered in this paper. The term "pedagogical translation" may seem inadequate as it can denote both its oral and written forms. Though its two forms can be efficiently applied within the communicative approach to language teaching, the oral form (interpreting) has a greater communicative potential.

Although translation is generally thought to be the process of conveying the meaning of what is written or said in one language by means of another language, researchers have provided different definitions of this skill which note its different characteristics and thus complement each other. A. Pym and H. Turk¹⁷ use the notion of "translatability", that is the ability of specific meanings from one language to be transferred to another without great changes, while to C. Klein-Bradley and P. Franklin¹⁸ translation is understood as the transference of a given content from one

¹⁴ Kupske 2015, 59.

¹⁵ Afzal 2013, 1846-1854.

¹⁶ Timor 2012, 14.

¹⁷ In Baker 1998, 273.

¹⁸ Klein-Bradley - Franklin 1998, 56.

culture to another. These two, in many ways common, interpretations of translation point out its two main characteristics:

1. Focus on meaning. Whatever the purpose of translation is, it cannot be reduced to a mechanical search of linguistic correspondences.
2. Focus on the specific situation of communication and its cultural background, its participants, and the preservation of all the other pragmatic features in the process of translation, such as the aim, place, communicators, style, and subject of communication.

In translation, the texts in two languages are equated, which opens up broad opportunities for comparing and identifying the linguistic peculiarities of the target language at all levels. No less important, in the process of such learning, is the familiarization of students with the historical and regional characteristics of the countries whose language they learn.

In our opinion, the benefits of translation in teaching foreign languages are, therefore, obvious. It helps perceive, adjust and automate the process of transferring skills and abilities from the native language to the target language, thus developing such bilingual skills as de-verbalization, which means generating a sense in the process of linguistic decoding, transformation and switching from one language to another. Due to translation, it is possible to deconstruct the internal translation and transform it from intra-verbal into mental. Thus it completely disappears from speech and is replaced by thinking in a learned language. As a result, fluent language proficiency emerges¹⁹.

We also consider the concept of “language” in methodology not as a “language in itself”, but as a “language in action”. In this regard, learning a foreign language is not just language acquisition with the help of certain teaching methods, but, above all, forming skills to use the language in action in any type of interaction. Language, in our understanding, contains all the fixed and potential possibilities of its use as a tool of communication. The process of translation allows us to perceive a language as a communicative tool when students see the variability of its elements depending on the purpose of communication. That is why language learning through translation is not confined to memorizing certain layers of vocabulary and grammar, which may also be consistent with the goal of the learning process.

In combination with other teaching methods, pedagogical translation contributes to the formation of linguistic consciousness in students,

¹⁹ See Popović 2001.

which I.I. Chaleeva calls secondary linguistic identity²⁰. These advantages of translation, coupled with its above-listed characteristics, such as an emphasis on the semantic component and the situation of communication, make translation desirable in foreign language teaching, especially in terms of the widespread communicative approach.

The communicative potential of translation is consistent with the communicative teaching methodology, which aims at bringing the learning process as close as possible to the real communication process. Training is carried out by modelling the situation of communication, i.e. there is a constant focus on the sphere of communication, speech situation and the intentions of the speakers. Ultimately, it is designed to develop students' reactions to the response of the interlocutor, i.e. unprepared speech. The imitation of the natural learning process with the help of communicative situations causes students to discuss them, thus increasing the motivation to learn.

Other principles of the communicative method include orientation to speaking, focus on individual characteristics and interests of students, functionality, situationality, and novelty. Among other important factors, one should mention the interrelation of function and form, oral and written communication, the authenticity of materials and situations of communication displaying a true system of relationships between native speakers, i.e. foreign language culture.

3. EXAMPLES OF LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

On the basis of the author's own experience of both teaching English as a foreign language and teaching translating, it is possible to emphasise the close connection between these processes and highlight some features of using translation as a teaching technique. Firstly, translation elements can be used at any level of language teaching and learning: from the use of the mother tongue to clarify certain linguistic material at an early language

²⁰ The definition of "linguistic identity" was first used at the beginning of the 20th century by the linguist V.V. Vinogradov in *On Artistic Prose* (Vinogradov 1930), and was also used at the turn of the 20th century by Jan Baudouin de Courtenay. In the scientific discourse, the concept was introduced by Ju.N. Karaulov (1987). Within the linguodidactic approach to the problem, I.I. Chaleeva introduced the concept of a "secondary linguistic identity" (Chaleeva 1989).

stage to much more complicated translation-based tasks at an advanced level. However, we regard the translation principle to be a more successful teaching tool at intermediate and advanced stages, at which students have had sufficient language training, i.e. they have acquired sufficient knowledge in the field of the form, grammar, style, and idiomatic expressions. Secondly, the author agrees with L. Barchudarov²¹ who already in the second half of the previous century pointed out the differences between translating from a foreign language into the native tongue and vice versa and stated that the two techniques affect the process of learning foreign languages in different ways. In the first case, the ability to understand a foreign language is developed, which means that meaningful perception occurs, that is the analysis of what has been heard. In the second case, the ability to create speech – synthesis – is developed. Thirdly, despite the desire to constantly maintain the atmosphere of foreign language communication in class, translation, being a natural activity that is becoming more and more popular in today's global world, can stimulate students to create dialogue, debate and speech production. Finally, translation undoubtedly has cognitive and communicative goals, and it forms the students' communicative competence, demanding from them accuracy and clarity, thus making it possible to use it as part of the communicative approach in teaching a foreign language. It is common knowledge that translation facilitates cognition so translation techniques may facilitate language learning by helping the learners be aware of the language they are learning and contrast it with their native language. It is clear that when learning a foreign language, especially at the initial stage, the learners tend to copy their mother tongue since it is the only example and mental pattern of a language they have. As S. Deller and M. Rinvoluceri figuratively speak of it: "It is from this womb that the new languages are born in the student's mind"²².

In practice, the principle of translation can be widely applied to the study of linguistic features and help enrich the students' target language vocabulary. Thus, in teaching English, translation seems to be especially helpful in mastering the synonymy of the language and the polysemy of lexical units with very vague or broad semantics. The translation clarifies the difference between synonyms and meanings of a polysemantic word, showing their use in various contexts. For example, *to surprise*, *to amaze*, *to astonish*, *to shock*, *to petrify* are translated into Russian by the verb удивлять (*udivljat'*) with the following clarifying words:

²¹ Barchudarov 1966, 82.

²² Deller - Rinvoluceri 2002, 10.

to surprise – удивлять;
to amaze – удивлять, поражать;
to astonish – удивлять, изумлять;
to shock – удивлять, шокировать, потрясать;
to petrify – удивлять, приводить в оцепенение.

Another example is the omnipresent English desemanticized word *thing*, which in each particular utterance receives its specific contextual meaning and is rendered into Russian by a lexical unit with a narrower meaning.

Things look promising.

Дела обстоят прекрасно / Ситуация многообещающая.

Translation pursues the goal of extending the learners' vocabulary to enrich and diversify the students' speech. Students could be asked to find native language equivalents of foreign proverbs, sayings or idioms, for example:

You can't have your cake and eat it.

На елку влезть, и не уколоться.

To make a mountain out of a molehill.

Делать из мухи слона.

Offering their word for word translation into the two languages increases the learners' awareness of the different collocation patterns, and facilitates understanding of their communicative potential in the different cultures.

In addition to mastering the lexical peculiarities of the target language, translation can be a means of mastering its grammar. However, here we do not mean the above-mentioned GTM, which was used and is still used to master certain grammatical forms, although we assume that at some stage of language learning, such a method also has the right to exist. What is meant here is the contrastive approach suggested by Deller and Rinvulcri²³. They emphasize that contrasting grammar tasks help learners differentiate between various grammatical structures in the two languages, showing similar aspects and pointing out the differences, often confused and leading to interference. The author considers them especially effective in demonstrating how English and Russian grammars work in terms of their sentence structure and word order. The rigid sentence word order in English is in contrast to the Russian one. The Russian language is known to be rather democratic as far as the sentence word order is concerned due to the availability of other means of signalling word function. The subject

²³ *Ibidem*, 29.

may take any position in a sentence and its agreement with the predicate is realised by other grammatical means than the word order, for example:

Вчера в центре города собрались люди.

(Literal translation in English: Yesterday in the centre of the city gathered people).

People gathered in the city centre yesterday.

The examples demonstrate the difference and show that the subject *ljudi* in the Russian sentence is in postposition to the predicate *sobralis'*, in comparison to the semantically similar sentence in English. Here, the subject "people" takes the initial position and precedes the predicate "gathered".

The examples also illustrate the difference in the ways the two languages position the semantic centre in a sentence, i.e. the actual division. The division of the sentence on the theme (old) and rheme (new) information is realised in the two languages, and each of them has its own set of devices for highlighting the semantic centre, the rheme. Among the common techniques for the two languages (intonation, restrictive adverbs, constructions, etc.) one can observe different ones. In a simple non-emphatic Russian sentence with the direct order, the rheme is placed at the end, while in English, the use of word order and articles, for example, allow shifting the rheme to the beginning of the sentence.

На стене висят портреты известных людей.

(Literal translation in English: On the wall hang the portraits of famous people).

There are portraits of famous people on the wall.

The example above shows that utterances describing the presence or absence of something somewhere are expressed through complex structures in the two languages. The contrastive study of certain speech patterns and their translation help to recognize and comprehend differences in the verbal expression of the same situation and eliminate interference when learning a foreign language.

Russian one-member sentences present a problem and may interfere in learning English. The structural types of Russian sentences include both two- and one-member sentences. The latter may be further subdivided into impersonal, definite-personal, indefinite-personal and generalized personal types. The four types possess distinctive features. Thus, the impersonal sentences are sentences in which the main member denotes an action or condition that exists independently of the person. In the definite-personal sentences, the main member points to a specific doer of the action and is

expressed through the finite verb form. The indefinite personal sentences are sentences in which the action is expressed by the predicate forms referring to an indefinite person. The generalized-personal sentences do not denote any specific actions but express general judgments, often didactic, that can be applied to each or any person. In the English language, however, there are no such impersonal constructions. The English sentence always contains a subject and a predicate. The former may be represented by the semantically empty “it” or “there”, the pronouns “one”, “you”, “everyone” with a generalized meaning and other means. The examples below illustrate the differences in the two languages.

Уже становится темно. (impersonal)
(Literary translation in English: Already is getting dark).
It is already getting dark.

Никогда не знаешь, когда она может появиться. (generalized-personal)
(Literary translation in English: Never know when she may turn up).
You never know when she turns up.

Comparing similar content expressed by two different language systems encourages learners to focus on the most difficult aspects of foreign language learning and increase their awareness of the existing differences in the two languages. The contrastive analysis may precede the process of translation to exclude the mistakes students typically make by copying their native language. This helps them avoid the question repeatedly asked by learners, no matter what level they are at: Why is this English sentence not constructed like in Russian?

In our understanding, mastery of the grammatical aspect of the target language also refers to the ability to choose the appropriate grammatical structure from several possible ones for a particular situation of communication.

Task A. Render the following statements into English using different grammatical structures. Explain the communicative differences of their use.

Я видела, **как** соседи выгуляли свою собаку во дворе.
Я видела, **что** соседи выгуляли свою собаку во дворе.

Doing the task, students should first understand that these two statements have different grammatical meanings: the first one talks about the process, while the other talks about action as a fact. The aspect of the verb in the subordinate clause in the first sentence is progressive, while in the second one it is a completed action. Accordingly, here the choice will be between the options “I saw that our neighbors were walking their dog” and “I saw

that our neighbors walked their dog”. In addition, the same meanings can also be expressed by more complicated grammatical structures: “I see our neighbors walk their dog”. Such tasks seem necessary when revising the material studied.

Task B. Comment on the situation of communication presented by the two utterances. Render them into English.

Отнесите эти чемоданы в дом.

Отнесите, пожалуйста, эти чемоданы в дом.

In this task, different speech situations are presented. The first is an order, the other is a request. In Russian, they are both expressed by the same grammatical form of the imperative mood the perfective aspect. When rendering these utterances into English, these situational differences should be taken into account, since different grammatical structures are used to express them. The imperative mood form of the verb is used for the order – “Take these suitcases into the house, please!” – and this is similar to the Russian language; the structure of the question is used for the request – “Can you take these suitcases into the house, please?” – and this is in contrast to the Russian language. Another difference is that the Russian word *požalujsta*, unlike the English “please”, functionally is an ineffective means of expressing politeness. Depending on the situation of communication one can use either of the two but to make a request the structure of the question with “can/will” is preferable.

The principle of translation has a great potential for teaching speaking, too. For example, when starting a new topic, learners may have some time to think about its main points and then be encouraged to speak in their mother tongue before they actually learn to speak about it in a foreign language. This may serve as a diagnostic tool for both teachers and learners to check speech competence and the ability to produce a meaningful outcome in the mother tongue. Focusing on the content makes learners think about the vocabulary and the key words, in particular, to formulate their thoughts, as well as the structures and logic while speaking on the topic, in their mother tongue. These are universal skills and abilities and apply to any language. The activity may be presented in the following form:

The topic is ‘Language Learning’.

Task 1. Think about the topic for a while. Choose three main points and speak about them in your mother tongue.

Task 2. Note down in your mother tongue the key words and phrases you have used speaking on the topic. Suggest their English equivalents or try to render them into English.

The more general the topic is, the bigger the chance that practically all the learners in class will be involved in the activity. Besides, in this case, there is more possibility for them to choose similar vocabulary units and key phrases on the topic. The activity can be extended by encouraging the learners to discuss their variants in groups and check them as a class. A more personal topic, for example, “How I Learn English”, will require more time to do the task.

In the example, the topic is rather abstract, which may cause certain difficulties to speak about it. Therefore, students need time to concentrate and elicit as many points as they can. The activity develops the learners’ awareness of what speaking is, particularly unprepared speaking, as well as their confidence and readiness to take risks in it. Apart from this, it helps the learners foresee their speech and language problems and focus on the essential vocabulary and grammar in the language they learn. Finally, the task activates the learners’ knowledge of the topic, expressed in their native language, so that later they could transfer it to a foreign one.

As a means of teaching a foreign language, one can also use such communication-oriented tasks as expanding syntagmas in a certain speech situation. The idea of the task with an expanding syntagma is that at the first stage a word or a simple phrase is offered to the students, often with a variant in the native language. As a rule, this word or phrase is a new lexical unit and is a basis for creating longer phrases. The task can be done either by one person or collectively when each student in turn creates a longer syntagma than the previous one. For example,

Painting (Картина)

This is a painting by Rembrandt.

Is this a famous painting by Rembrandt?

I have always dreamt of seeing this famous painting by Rembrandt. etc.

This task can be turned into a translation task, offering certain students the possibility to act as translators or interpreters. To illustrate where when, and for solving which communication tasks one can use the presented material, it is necessary to create a speech situation as a model of life situations. Thus, for example, the situations “You are in a museum”, “You are in an art gallery”, “You are at the exhibition”, etc.

Another task of this type can be a task of the “search for missing information” type – the knowledge gap. The idea is that one student has information that the other does not have, and the latter has to find it out. It can be transformed into a translation task by presenting the missing information in one language and using it in a specific speech situation in

another language, both orally and in writing. For example, in the form of pair work – find out the missing information from the interlocutor and render it to the others in the mother tongue or another language or fill in the gaps in the tables with the missing information in the mother tongue or another language.

Going beyond the communicative approach in methodology and considering it in a broader sense, translation as a means of cross-lingual and cross-cultural communication can enrich students' knowledge of the language and culture, teach them the rules of intercultural communication and correct their communicative behaviour in various speech communication situations. Translating even the simplest expressions from English to Russian and vice versa, students receive valuable background information about the lives of people, their history and politics, and so on. For example:

I live in a **two**-bedroom flat.

Я живу в **трех**комнатной квартире

(since in Russia the living room is traditionally included into the general number of the rooms in a flat or a house).

Language learning, as the author has already stated above, is far more than learning a system of linguistic structures. Language learning presupposes learning about the people, their system of views and values, and their cultural and national mentality, all reflected through a system of concepts specifically arranged and organized in the language. The acquisition of this complex system as the author sees it starts at the very beginning of language learning and continues further. Translation-based activities can be a good tool for both teaching and learning this linguistic representation of the people's culture and mentality. This can be illustrated by how adjectives and nouns combine in the Russian and English languages on the example of geographical adjectives. Even though in the two languages geographical adjectives can combine with a wide range of nouns, among which there are correlated nouns, the ideas these combinations express may be communicatively different:

British President

Британский Президент and Президент Британии

American radioactive waste

Американские радиоактивные отходы and радиоактивные отходы Америки.

The first Russian version in both examples signals a formal situation of communication, accepted in official political spheres, whereas the second variant is mostly restricted to informal and colloquial speech. However, the

English language does not differentiate between these two situations. As follows, translation, apart from the general combinability rules, can also show and teach the pragmatic aspects of language use.

The principle of translation can be also used as a test tool in any aspect of language learning and teaching. It can be in the form of translation-dictations when teaching vocabulary; in the form of 'listen and find in the text' tasks when teaching reading comprehension, or checking orally the understood information in teaching listening comprehension. Translation as a speech test tool reveals the learned structures, communicative patterns and background knowledge of the learners. However, assessment is an important component of language teaching which deserves its own in-depth analysis and is beyond the scope of the present paper.

4. CONCLUSION

Summarizing all the above, the communicative approach in teaching a foreign language involves students in performing a wide range of meaningful, realistic, and achievable communicative tasks and thus develops their communication skills in this language. Translation can be used in teaching various language aspects and skills, such as vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics and cross-cultural potential, on the one hand, and in speaking, listening and writing, on the other hand. It can also serve as an effective diagnostic and test tool of the learners' performance, revealing weak and strong points of their linguistic intelligence and competence. Translation elements are powerful tools for learning a language and developing speech skills. The translation process is complex and multidimensional and requires an excellent command of the languages involved: therefore, many teachers perceive it as an effective way of teaching a foreign language. One cannot but agree with Barchudarov, who states that translation is not a retelling, not a statement; nothing can be omitted here, you cannot simplify it; the principle of the adequacy of translation requires a full conveyance of the entire language richness of the original, all its stylistic resources, expressive means; it requires the deep knowledge of the phraseology, synonymy, expressive vocabulary, the whole arsenal of language means²⁴.

However, in our opinion, translation on its own cannot become a fully fledged communicative tool, since it would completely transform the pro-

²⁴ Barchudarov 1966, 84.

cess of teaching a language into a process of teaching how to translate. Nevertheless, translation possesses enormous potential and remains one of the methods within the communicative approach to learning. According to the linguist D. Nunan²⁵, the broad umbrella definition of the communicative approach allows any teaching practice that helps students develop their communicative competence to be acceptable and beneficial.

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²⁵ Nunan 1991, 279.

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