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Translation Its Role in Communication and Learning

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TRANSLATION

Its Role in Communication and Learning

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ABSTRACT

This paper is presented in two sections. The purpose of Part One is to explore the nature and role of translation in communication, and to dispell the narrow conception of it as a mechanical process of "synonym finding." Toward a deeper understanding of translation, the first part provides theoretical background on the hypothesis of "linguistic relativity"--the claim that each language uniquely shapes the thinking habits of its speakers to the extent that no culture can be faithfully mirrored by a different language. An example of poetic translation from Spanish into English is then presented to explore the truth of this hypothesis. In light of the contrastive analysis of these poems and the theories discussed, translation is redefined as a pivotal, interpretive process at work within every act of communication (interpersonal or intercultural)--a process which is necessarily creative since it hinges, at least partly, on individual imagination.

The purpose of Part Two is to reconsider the place and value of translation in language learning. This section starts out by proposing a language-teaching approach for use in a multicultural setting with adult learners, aimed at promoting intercultural communication. Within this approach, translation promises to be a useful tool for cultural exchange as well as for the development of critical thinking, sensitivity to language, and creativity. This discussion is followed by an overview of current uses (and misuses) of translation in language learning, and a list of eight crucial (often neglected) ways in which translation can be valuable to language learners. Finally, a series of controlled exercises in interlingual and intralingual translation are described in some detail for use in the classroom.

In the concluding remarks, an analogy is drawn between the process of translation and the dynamics of creative learning.

ERIC Descriptors: Translation, Anthropological Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, Second Language Learning, English (Second Language), Adult Education, Multicultural Education, Learning Processes.

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PREFACE

The motivating force behind this paper is personal. It grows out of my not-yet-forgotten experience as a foreign student in the United States some years ago, and my current experience teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to international students who are now in this country pursuing a college education.

This paper, in other words, started "cooking" way before I started writing it. It was fueled by the struggle I personally went through, when I first arrived, in learning to understand where others were "coming from" and in making myself genuinely understood in a second language. Even though I already knew how to speak English (having been raised in a bilingual household), I soon realized that I used words with different connotations and in a somewhat different style from my own generation in this culture. The discomfort I felt at least yielded this bonus: it led me to become keenly interested in the ways language use affects our perceptions and attitudes towards one another and the world we live in--hence, the emphasis on "linguistic relativity" and communication theory in the first part of this paper.

In Part Two, where translation is applied to language learning, I specifically refer to "English" as a second language largely because of my experience, of course, but especially for the sake of concreteness. It should be understood, then, that the ideas and exercises set forth in fact apply to the teaching and learning of any foreign language. I would also like to emphasize that, in my judgment, the practice of translation can be more immediately

productive at the adult level, since translation is particularly useful as a tool for developing critical awareness of language and the skill to mediate imaginatively between cultures.

On the whole, the nature of this paper is exploratory and eclectic. It synthesizes elements of anthropological linguistics, poetics, hermeneutical theory, educational philosophy, psychology of learning, and teaching methodology. My hope is that in doing so, it overturns some valuable soil and invites readers to reconsider, on fresh grounds, the potentials of translation in language learning.

N.B. In order to avoid the cumbersome repetition of his/her throughout the paper, I have arbitrarily chosen the male pronoun to refer to the individual student, and the female pronoun to refer to the teacher or tutor. (An exception to this rule appears in one quotation which remains true to its source.)

PART ONE

LINGUISTIC RELATIVITY AND TRANSLATION

...and if she told us
it would be like the map of another star.

"The Foreigner"--Gabriela Mistral

Overview of Theories on Linguistic Relativity

The lines quoted above from Gabriela Mistral's poem "La Extranjera" give voice to a problem that has been haunting linguists and anthropologists for decades. It is what Benjamin Lee Whorf coined as "the problem of linguistic relativity"--the notion that an insurmountable communication gap, an essentially non-transferable element of perception and understanding, separates members of cultures that use different languages, especially when they belong to different language families.

Edward Sapir, one of Whorf's precursors especially known for his anthropological research on American Indian languages, discovered that

No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached.¹

He argued that human beings impose "meaning" on experience rather than discover it, and that this projection of meaning is a result of the "tyrannical hold" that the symbolic forms of language have upon our perception of the world.²

Whorf, later investigating Sapir's hypothesis through research on such diverse languages as Chinese, Latin, Hebrew, Greek, Aztec,

Hopi and Shawnee, arrived at the conclusion that "the forms of a person's thoughts are controlled by inexorable laws of pattern of which he is unconscious."³ He claimed that these "laws of pattern" form a metaphysical framework which is reflected in the surface structure of every language⁴ and directs people's perceptions accordingly:

Users of markedly different grammars are pointed by their grammars towards different types of observations and different evaluations of externally similar acts of observation, and hence are not equivalent as observers but arrive at somewhat different views of the world.⁵

For example, languages that belong to the Indo-European family are structured in terms of the space-time matrix, as shown by their use of verbs in the past, present and future forms. By contrast, the Hopi Indian language does not contain any grammatical forms, words, or idiomatic constructions that refer directly to what we call "time" or to vectors of motion as we express them. Instead, the punctual and segmentative aspects of verbs in Hopi treat events as being "in a dynamic state, yet not a state of motion." This fact, among others, led Whorf to believe that "the metaphysical framework which informs Hopi syntax is better suited to the world-picture of modern science," with its emphasis on fields of vibration and four-dimensional relativity, than is modern English, which, according to him, better articulates the physics of Newton.⁶

Whorf's conception of linguistic relativity was so radical that he did not believe translation was truly possible from one language to another. The paradox is that Whorf, himself, used translation in his study of different languages, but he used it

essentially as a technique to illustrate the gulfs that exist between thought-worlds, rather than their meeting grounds.

Even though the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity was drawn from concrete cases where languages were found to represent widely divergent modes of perceiving and defining experience, most linguists still believe that no culture (whatever its language) is wholly isolated, self-contained and unique. Among others, Joseph Greenberg, Harry Hoijer and Paul Friedrich claim that separate cultures share universal meanings--that is, "resemblances that stem in part from diffusion (itself an evidence of successful intercultural communication) and in part from the fact that all cultures are built around biological, psychological, and social characteristics common to all mankind."⁷ According to Friedrich,

Universals of experience are in the human imagination molded, structured, and processed by given cultures... so that resemblances between their meanings may be minimal; but some minimal resemblance there remains, and this is partly attested by the fact that some poetic statements in some serious sense speak to listeners of all societies.⁸

Paul Friedrich, an anthropological linguist and poet who has done extensive studies on Russian, Greek and Tarascan, does support the claim that "any natural language...massively shapes, channels, filters and otherwise determines the individual imagination."⁹ But he reformulates the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity from a somewhat different perspective.

He bases his hypothesis, first of all, on a distinction between two general functions or dimensions of language. One is the denotative, logico-referential function, where language

signifies things, propositions and ideas in basic, practical and highly economical ways. At this level of meaning, for example, words like "red" or "green" refer exclusively to certain shades in the color spectrum; "head" and "hand" simply refer to parts of the body. Words such as "and," "first," "although" and all such symbols that denote, for instance, negation, conjunction, sequence, class inclusion, verb tense or aspect, are also included within this logico-referential function.¹⁰

The second function of language, often referred to as the "poetic dimension," is essentially connotative and associative. At this level of meaning, symbols--from specific sounds, to words, to syntactic formulas--have "multiple values that are to some degree integrated and synthesized into a multidimensional whole."¹¹ For example, the word "red," through its relation to blood, could be associated with such meanings as life, energy, violence, shame, anger, heroism, revolution, passion, etc., depending on the context and the intention of the individual using or reading it. A similar list of associations could be derived from any of the other words cited as examples of denotative language. The associative network of poetic use, then, includes and makes us of logico-referential meanings.

Although Friedrich does agree with Whorf that languages differ from one another in their logical and syntactical operations, he does not agree that "thought" can be equated with the grammar of a language, since even grammar is, potentially, subject to creative use by the individual. In his words,

When being poetic the speaker makes the forms and figures of language, including even its grammar, the object of his imaginative processes.¹²

The poet E.E. Cummings, for example, is well known for the way he often breaks the syntactic codes of the English language--as in "he sang his didn't he danced his did" (from "anyone lived in a pretty how town")¹³--to shock his readers into an awareness of how syntax shapes our thinking habits. Other, perhaps less extreme, examples can be found throughout what we now consider traditional literature--as in Gerard Manley Hopkins' last line from The Wreck of the Deutschland, "our heart's charity's hearth's fire, our thought's chivalry's throng's, Lord."¹⁴

Instead of believing, then, that language determines thought at the level of syntax or basic referential semantics, Friedrich argues that language influences and interacts with the imagination through its more analogical, associative, connotative patterns and conventions.¹⁵ He thus considers "poetic use" to be the deeper, more encompassing perspective from which to focus on the phenomenon of linguistic relativity. This aesthetic dimension of language, he claims, is what most profoundly differentiates "natural" languages from one another.¹⁶

In Friedrich's view, all "natural" language--including the language of everyday conversation, advertisement, political rhetoric and similar worlds of discourse--is partly or implicitly poetic.¹⁷ While he admits that most routine conversation is formulaic or "knocked together out of prefabs," he notes that poetic usage "tends to emerge in moments of play, humor, trauma, crisis and strong emotion generally."¹⁸ Unlike the technical

languages of some scientific disciplines which aim at objectivity and non-ambiguity, natural language is an open-ended system that lends itself to subtle twists and gradual mutations in meaning. Not only, for example, do great poets, visionaries, and foreign languages and cultures have powerful transforming influences on every language over time, but unintended error, misinterpretation and whim also play a subtle role in the shaping of our linguistic habits and forms.

The heart of the differences between Whorf's and Friedrich's hypotheses of linguistic relativity (already suggested through the above discussion) is, I believe, their different perspectives on the relation between language and the individual mind. Even though most native speakers of a language tend to be unconscious and therefore at the mercy of its laws of pattern, as Whorf argued, Friedrich still sees the individual as capable of becoming aware of the logical patterns and aesthetic qualities of his language, of seeing language as an art and, therefore, of using it creatively. In other words, his "individual" is modeled after the "poet," which etymologically means "maker"¹⁹ of language and thought. His perspective on the relation between language and mind is, in this sense, mostly concerned with potentials.

Friedrich would then agree with Sapir's statement that "language is...a collective art of expression, a summary of thousands upon thousands of individual intuitions...[which can] be made ready to define the artist's individuality."²⁰ But precisely because each language embodies a distinct cultural-aesthetic style of perceiving the world, as well as the imaginative processes of

the individual, he believes that any language is poorly transformable into another--even while he maintains that some "universals of experience" are shared by human beings in all cultures.

The fact that so much of natural language is at least potentially poetic is partly responsible for the fact that no message can be fully translated from one language to another; here, just as in poetry, the best we can do is "creative transposition."²¹

Still, by the same token, he believes that the natural resources (imagery, cultural symbolism, rhythms, etc.) of any one language can nourish the poetry of another through the process of translation.²²

Linguistic Relativity Reflected in the Translation of Poetry

To elucidate Friedrich's claim that "poetic use" is the locus of differences between languages, I will analyze what happens in the translation of Gabriela Mistral's poem "La Extranjera" into English (see p. 7a). According to Whorf, a contrastive analysis of English and Spanish renderings of a text would be far from ideal to illustrate the phenomena of linguistic relativity, since both languages belong to the Indo-European family of languages. In fact, English and Spanish can be roughly calibrated at several levels (syntactically, lexically, phonetically), making mutual understanding between both thought-worlds easier than between English and Hopi, for example.²³

The essential message of the poem indeed translates without major obstacles. In both English and Spanish, the poem is a dramatic monologue through which a native from an unidentified country expresses how she sees, and feels towards, a stranger

La Extranjera

The Foreigner

GABRIELA MISTRAL (1889-1957)

La extranjera

A Francis de Miomandre

- 1) Habla con dejo de sus mares bárbaros,
con no sé qué algas y no sé qué arenas;
reza oración a dios sin bulto y peso,
envejecida como si muriera.
- 2) En huerto nuestro que nos hizo extraño,
ha puesto cactus y zarpadas hierbas.
Alienta del resuello del desierto
y ha amado con pasión de que blanquea,
que nunca cuenta y que si nos contase
sería como el mapa de otra estrella.
Vivirá entre nosotros ochenta años,
pero siempre será como si llega,
hablando lengua que jadea y gime
y que le entienden sólo bestezuelas.
- 3) Y va a morir en medio de nosotros,
en una noche en la que más padezca,
con sólo su destino por almohada,
de una muerte callada y *extranjera*.
- 4) She speaks with the moisture of her barbarous seas
still on her tongue, with the taste
of sands and algae unknown to me.
She prays to a god without form or weight,
and is so old she is ready to die.
In our garden which has become strange to us
she grows cactus and clawing grass.
She was nourished by breath of the desert
and loved with a scorching passion
she never tells. If she told us,
it would be like the map of another star.
She will live with us eighty years,
always as if just arriving,
speaking a language that pants and moans
and that only little beasts understand.
And she will die among us
on a night when she suffers most,
only her fate for a pillow,
a death silent and *foreign*.

by Gabriela Mistral
(Spanish poem)

by Doris Dana
(English poetic translation)

HABLA con dejo de sus mares bárbaros,
con no sé qué algas y no sé qué arenas;
reza oración a dios sin bulto y peso,
envejecida como si muriera.

EN huerto nuestro que nos hizo extraño,
ha puesto cactus y zarpadas hierbas.
Alienta del resuello del desierto
y ha amado con pasión de que blanquea,
que nunca cuenta y que si nos contase
sería como el mapa de otra estrella.
Vivirá entre nosotros ochenta años,
pero siempre será como si llega,
hablando lengua que jadea y gime
y que le entienden sólo bestezuelas.
Y va a morir en medio de nosotros,
en una noche en la que más padezca,
con sólo su destino por almohada,
de una muerte callada y *extranjera*.

Foreigner

SHE speaks of her barbarous seas with a strange accent; her seas
with I don't know what kinds of seaweeds and sands. She raises a
prayer to God without form or weight, looking old, as though she
were dying. That orchard of ours that she made strange has grown
cactus and scratching grasses. She is nourished by the breath of the
desert, and has loved with a passion that made her grey, that she
never speaks of, and that would be like the map of another sea: it
seems to have just arrived; speaking a tongue that pants and
moans, understood only by small animals. And she will die among
us, on a night during which she suffers more, with only her destiny
as a pillow, stricken with a quiet and *foreign* death.

by Tom Raworth
(English prose translation)

THE FOREIGNER

- 1) She speaks with the accent of her barbarous seas,
with I don't know what algae, I don't know what sands;
she prays to a god without form or weight,
grown so old it seems she might die.
- 5) In our garden, which she made strange for us,
she has added cactus and clawing weeds.
She draws her breath from the desert's heavy breathing
and has loved with a passion which pales her yet,
which she never tells, and if she told us,
it would be like the map of another star.
- 10) She will live among us eighty years,
always as if just arriving,
speaking a tongue that pants and moans,
that only the lowly beasts understand.
- 15) And she will die among us,
on a night when she suffers most,
with her destiny alone for a pillow,
from a silent, foreign death.

trans. by Eileen Rizo-Patron

who has come to settle in her land. Both Spanish and English versions offer a third-person description of the "foreigner" as an old woman uprooted from her own culture and living in a state of alienation among people who do not understand her ways and regard her suspiciously. Whether in English or Spanish, it is a tragic poem--not only because the speaker tells us that the foreigner will live in painful isolation and gradually die "a silent, foreign death" (line 18), but especially because the speaker shows no capacity, or willingness, to "step out" of her ethnocentric world to communicate with the foreigner. Even as she portrays the peculiarities of the stranger, she shows no awareness of her own fierce attachment to her local point of view (or "map" of the world), as though she unconsciously feared that if she reached out to the "unknown," her hold on meaning and order would be drowned by chaos. In fact, throughout the poem (Spanish and English), the foreigner is associated with the primitive, the formless and the wild (line 1: her barbarous seas; line 3: [her] god without form or weight; line 7: desert; line 14: only...beasts understand [her tongue]). Thus, for the most part, the fatalistic attitude of the speaker in the Spanish poem carries well into the English translation.

Along the lines of Paul Friedrich's definition of linguistic relativity, however, I would like to focus on some of the poetic subtleties that make for the differences between the Spanish poem by Gabriela Mistral and Doris Dana's English translation. Occasionally, a contrast will be made between Dana's poetic rendition, Tom Raworth's prose version, and my own translation (see pp. 7a, 7b)

to illustrate the crucial and shaping role of the individual imagination in the interpretive process.

The three most important features of poetic language, according to Friedrich, are figuration, intensification of form, and association by analogy. The latter, association by analogy, is the process that underlies both figuration and intensification.²⁴ These two features of poetic language will therefore serve as focuses for the contrastive analysis that follows.

1. Figuration in Spanish and English:

First, we will consider the use of figurative language in the Spanish version with the associations it evokes, and compare these with the directions which the figures of speech take in the English version.

The first figure of speech in the poem is a metaphor likening the foreigner's way of speaking to the natural surroundings from which she comes:

Habla con de^jo de sus mares bárbaros,
con no sé qué algas y no sé qué arenas (Mistral: 1-2)

The figure of speech in Spanish happens to point to more than one potential meaning; and in having to interpret it, the translator has made a choice which somewhat changes the direction of the original metaphor:

She speaks with the moisture of her barbarous seas
still on her tongue, with the taste
of sands and algae unknown to me. (Dana: 1-3)

The noun dejo, in Spanish, is often used to refer to a particular local accent. But Cassell's Spanish-English Dictionary also gives aftertaste as a possible equivalent. Though it seems to me most

probably that Mistral was drawing an association between the woman's manner of speech and the melody (stress and intonation) of her seas, Dana opted for highlighting the moisture and taste (more sensuous qualities) of the sea. Tom Raworth, on the other hand, uses accent for dejo in his prose translation, but he switches the word order of the prepositional phrases, thus changing the meaning of the whole line:

She speaks of her barbarous seas with a strange accent;
her seas with I don't know what kinds of seaweeds and sands.
(Tom Raworth: 1-2, underlining added)

Even if this interpretation were not to be dismissed as "wrong," it seems more likely that Mistral had meant, "She speaks with the accent of her barbarous seas," since this follows the word order she chose in Spanish.

The poem soon introduces the archetypal image of the garden, or huerto--a symbol of the speaker's cultural world (a world of images, values, rituals, etc.) where her people had long cultivated their native plants until the foreigner came and changed things by adding her alien forms of vegetation.

En huerto nuestro que nos hizo extraño
ha puesto cactus y zarpadas hierbas. (Mistral: 5-6)

In our garden which has become strange to us
she grows cactus and clawing grass. (Dana: 6-7)

In Mistral's poem it appears more as if the foreigner had intentionally changed the garden--her presence taken almost as an affront by the natives--since the Spanish line (Mistral: 5) literally translates, "In our orchard, which she made strange for us." Dana's version, on the other hand, depicts the stranger's transforming influence as less intentional or direct (the garden "has become" strange), but no less threatening to the natives.

The plural noun hierbas in the next Spanish line (Mistral: 6) not only denotes grass, as Dana has translated it (Dana: 7), but is also related to weeds (an image of disorder and waste). And the adjective zarpadas which qualifies hierbas adds an element of aggression to an otherwise simple image. Zarpadas is here used as a participle adjective derived from zarpa (noun) which means "the clawed paws of a feline." So the phrase could translate as "clawed weeds." But Dana has changed the past participle form of the adjective to the more dynamic present participle "clawing grass," thus picking up on the suggestion that an inner invasion is taking place in the orchard through the gains of disorderly growths.

Line 7 in the Spanish poem, "Alienta del resuello del desierto," presents another figure of speech describing the foreigner's intimate bond with the spirit of her land (or the spirit of solitude, as suggested by desierto). Again, when we get down to the specific direction of the trope, many possibilities open up to the interpreter. Alentar (infinitive form of the verb alienta) as a transitive verb means to inspire or to encourage (someone); but as an intransitive verb it means simply to breathe--and in the poem it appears as an intransitive verb. Now, the noun resuello literally translates as hard breathing. So one possible meaning of the figure might be that "she breathes harshly like the desert wind," but a link stronger than a mere comparison between the woman and the desert seems to be implied. The use of the preposition del before resuello suggests that "she draws her breath from the desert's heavy breathing"--as though she depended on the

desert (which has been personified) for her waning life. Dana followed this line of interpretation when she chose the word nourished for alienta: "She was nourished by breath of the desert" (Dana: 8). Yet, by relegating that life-giving link to the past (note the change in tense) she further suggests a mother-child relationship between the desert and the woman. This choice of hers, therefore, subtly transforms the trope as it appeared in Spanish.

In line 8 of Mistral's poem, "y ha amado con pasión de que blanquea," the word blanquea is open to a series of associations, since it is the verb form for blanco (white), the color which contains all colors. Literally, the phrase translates, "...a passion which whitens her," but this doesn't seem to work in English. So, Tom Raworth, in his prose translation interprets blanquea as an aging symptom: "...has loved with a passion that made her grey" (Raworth: 6), even changing the color to use a more idiomatic English phrase. Another possible meaning is "...a passion which makes her pale," implying an intense sadness which lingers in her regarding that love. Dana, instead, chose an interpretation that somehow extends the desert imagery (Dana: 9). She transformed "pasión de que blanquea" into "scorching passion" (that is, burning, parching and discoloring like the desert sun). Through her translation, therefore, Dana has suggested an association that remained at best only implicit in Mistral's color symbol. But in making it more explicit or specific, Dana may have also limited its scope of possible meanings.

2. Intensification of Form in Spanish and English:

According to Friedrich, even though it is the code of the language that partly determines the structure of poetic lines and utterances, it is just as true that a poem achieves intensity through the way the poet works on, or plays with, the codes of his language. In poetic language we often find a merging of structural levels (sound-meaning, syntagm-paradigm) that contributes to the intensification of a message. This merging of form with content frequently entails the violation of certain features of the linguistic system or the use of forms that are relatively "marked"--that is, forms used in unexpected ways so that they call attention to themselves, usually to underscore or to clash with (as in irony) the content of a message. Marking may be at any level of language--lexical, morphological, phonetic, syntactic, and even rhetorical. In a larger sense, if we consider a poem as a "marked context" in itself, aesthetic marking could be achieved through the use of unmarked forms (such as familiar patterns of conversational speech) within that context.²⁵

In "La Extranjera," for example, even as the speaker starts making a comment about the foreigner's peculiar speech, she reveals her own colloquial speech style when she says repetitiously, "con no sé qué algas y no sé qué arenas" (Mistral: 2). One can almost imagine her shrugging her shoulders as she says so. The conversational style of her monologue again becomes evident if we notice the run-on-sentence pattern she uses (Mistral: 7-10) with strung-on conjunctions and relative clauses. One gets the feeling that the poet recorded a piece of live gossip she heard in town.

Dana, however, doesn't seem to have tried to replicate this colloquial speech style in her translation. She changes the repetitive, almost nervous, pattern of the first two lines in the Spanish poem into a fluent, slowly moving parallel structure (with a lot of /s/ sounds), which instead underscores the sea imagery (Dana: 1-3). Also, because she chooses to shorten some of the sentences in the poem to follow English punctuation patterns (Dana: 8-11), one gets the feeling that the piece was "written" rather than "spoken."

Not that the somewhat colloquial Spanish version is devoid of craft. On the contrary, a strong internal rhyme and rhythm in the poem seem designed to imitate the sing-song quality of the native speaker's accent. Throughout the poem, for example, we continually find words with the /ue/ and /ie/ diphthongs (huerto, nuestro, puesto, resuello, cuenta, bestezuelas, muerte; muriera, hierbas, alienta, desierto, siempre, entienden) and words with /e/-/a/ sounds (arenas, muriera, blanquea, estrella, llega, padezca, extranjera, to mention a few).

Furthermore, it is very possible that the assonant rhyme (huerto nuestro) in line 5 of the Spanish version, which is underscored by a syntactic marking (the adjective pronoun nuestro placed after the noun huerto) influenced the poet's word choice in line 6, "ha puesto cactus y zarpadas hierbas." While puesto reinforces the internal rhyme, "plantado cactus" would have been a more expected word choice in this garden context, since puesto implies "put on a surface" rather than "rooted in the ground." Yet, this semantically marked verb choice leads one to reflect on a deeper

analogy potentially present in the Spanish poem--i.e. the foreigner, like her desert plants, never really set root in this land where she was transplanted. Her soul never nourished nor was nourished by the foreign culture. This suggested analogy, however, is not as apparent in the English translation since Dana instead chose to write, "she grows cactus and clawing grass" (Dana: 7).

Further along in the poem (Mistral: 13), we once again find a comment on the foreigner's manner of speech, although this time it is described not through a visual metaphor but through words that are phonetically marked, in the sense that they almost "sound" what they mean:

pero siempre será como si llega,
hablando lengua que jadea y gime (Mistral: 12-13,
underlining added)

The onomatopoeic effect of jadea and gime (with the aspirated, throaty /h/ sound that reminds one of harsh breathing) reinforces the earlier image of the foreigner drawing her "breath" from the desert. The poetic translation, on the other hand, conveys the literal idea, but not the onomatopoeic effect:

always as if just arriving
speaking a language that pants and moans (Dana: 13-14,
underlining added)

The words Dana chooses create a different, perhaps more sorrowful, sound idea.

One could speculate, from the above example, that the very existence of the harsh aspirated /h/ sound in Spanish, and the availability of words like jadea and gime, offered a phonetic pattern that enabled the poet to focus and elaborate on the breathy quality of the old woman's speech. The same could be said for the

influence of the /s/- and /sh/-sounding words in English on the translator's choice to elaborate on the moistness of the woman's speech (Dana: 1-3). These examples would support Sapir's position that language controls our perceptual processes by making us unconsciously project its forms on our field of experience.

But it seems equally significant that the associations that poets often draw or suggest, stemming from such linguistically "conditioned" perceptions, are sometimes surprising and even eye-opening--as though their unique way of using a word, or the context they place it in, adds new depth and nuance to its meaning.

Understanding Across Language and Culture Barriers

Just as individuals from different cultures learn, from childhood, to use different vocalizing muscles to pronounce the specific sounds that constitute the "music" of their native tongue, so they learn to perceive, think and even feel along the aesthetic and logical patterns set by their language. Does this kind of linguistic conditioning, then, mean that people are unable to transcend the habits of thinking ingrained in them from an early age, just as most adults seem unable to shake off their native accent? Does this mean that a person is never truly able to understand the ways of seeing and thinking of cultural communities far removed from his own?

As long as the phenomena of language remain beyond the critical awareness and control of its speakers, I agree with Sapir and Whorf and believe we can expect to find significant barriers to cross-cultural communication and understanding. But this condition is

not necessary. The contrastive analysis of "La Extranjera" and its English translations helped illustrate, for one thing, that it is possible to stand back and observe the way in which the subtle aesthetic qualities and structure of language tend to channel and organize an individual's imaginative processes. This possibility is essentially afforded us through the symbolic medium of writing, which enables us to intellectually distance ourselves from our own thought processes and reflect back on the relative nature of their configurations. Yet, Wilhelm von Humboldt, one of the main precursors of the movement towards "relativism" in American linguistics, seemed to believe that direct (or at least vicarious) experience in a foreign language/culture is a necessary backdrop for this type of reflection to take place. In fact he said that

...each language draws a magic circle round the people to which it belongs, a circle from which there is no escape save by stepping out of it into another.²⁶

Stepping out of our "magic circle," however, is not as simple as, for example, stepping out of our native country. It entails letting go (even if momentarily) of the grip on our thought habits so that we can become receptive to a different way of seeing, thinking and being. It calls for a degree of personal involvement in this "other world," so that we can experience, feel and think about it on its own terms. It involves risking the security of the familiar and accepting the possibility of self-transformation. The more strongly we identify with our native perspective, then, the more difficult it is for us to take this step.

Another point the foregoing contrastive analysis served to illustrate is that the phenomenon of linguistic relativity (as formulated by Friedrich) is at play among different speakers of the same language--not only among different languages and cultures. As George Steiner noticed,

No two historical epochs, no two social classes, no two localities use words and syntax to signify exactly the same things, to send identical signals of valuation and inference. Neither do two human beings.²⁷

Although the three translations of "La Extranjera" share many similarities because of the use of a common linguistic system, each articulates a slightly different interpretation and feeling for the poem. Ultimately, no two human beings share an identical associative context, since, besides the standard or conventional meanings we attribute to our words, we often infuse them with subjective connotations that surface from our subconscious, dreams or private memories.

The fact that each human being is at the center of a universe of meanings spells out his uniqueness and, at times, his isolation. If we were unable, however, to transcend our ethnocentric or egocentric perspectives, we would be trapped within our own frames. But even listening to and understanding someone who belongs to a different generation (or subculture) involves bridging gaps between "thought worlds." Understanding of this kind requires an attitude of openness and trust, a suspension of judgments, and a degree of immersion or intuitive participation in the other person's experience. Every breakthrough at this simple level of communication, I believe, already attests to our potential of transcending the "magic circles" of our cultural, local and personal outlooks.

Translation as a Mediating, Interpretive Process

The attitude of trust and receptivity that enables an individual to leave his own "world" for a moment and cross into the "world" of another is, however, only one phase of a successful communication act. Understanding also entails the ability to extract salient or essential elements in the other person's utterance (decoding), and the ability to transfer this new insight, once again, into the framework of one's universe of meaning (re-encoding). Therefore, for communication to take place between any two human beings (whether they come from the same or different language backgrounds), translation is a necessary mediating, interpretive process. Steiner explains the pivotal role of translation in every act of communication as follows:

'Translation', properly understood, is a special case of the arc of communication which every successful speech-act closes within a given language. On the inter-lingual level, translation will pose concentrated, visibly intractable problems; but these same problems abound, at a more covert or conventionally neglected level, intra-lingually. The model 'sender to receiver' which represents any semiological and semantic process is ontologically equivalent to the model 'source-language to receptor-language' used in the theory of translation. In both schemes there is 'in the middle' an operation of interpretive decipherment, an encoding-decoding function or synapse. Where two or more languages are in articulate interconnection, the barriers in the middle will obviously be more salient, and the enterprise of intelligibility more conscious. But the 'motions of the spirit', to use Dante's phrase, are rigorously analogous....In short: inside or between languages, human communication equals translation.²⁸

Whether interlingual or intralingual, then, genuine translation is never simply a mechanical matter of synonym finding. Even as he translates individual expressions, the translator must be sensitive to the overall cognitive, affective and aesthetic contexts he is dealing with. After all, as Richard Palmer pointed out in

his book Hermeneutics, "the translator is mediating between two different worlds."²⁹ Furthermore, because meaning in natural languages is never completely fixed (no matter how specific the context), the process of interpretation and translation is necessarily creative, besides being analytical and reflective. This can be confirmed, once again, by noticing that each of the three translations of "La Extranjera" has subtly transformed the experience of the original Spanish poem in a unique way.

Octavio Paz, a Mexican poet and translator, clearly put into relief the fact that every translation text has an innovative, while reproductive, function when he wrote:

Thanks to translation we find that our neighbors speak and think in a manner different from our own....Each text is unique; simultaneously it is the translation of another text. No text is entirely original because language itself, in its essence, is already a translation: first, of the non-verbal world and then, because each sign and phrase is the translation of another sign and phrase. But that reasoning may be inverted without losing its validity: all texts are original because each translation is distinct.³⁰

PART TWO

LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TRANSLATION

In the last chapter of his book After Babel, George Steiner poses a provoking question to anyone teaching English as a second (or foreign) language. According to him,

In many societies imported English, with its necessarily synthetic, 'pre-packaged' semantic field, is eroding the autonomy of the native language-culture. Intentionally or not, American-English and English, by virtue of their global diffusion, are a principal agent in the destruction of natural linguistic diversity. This destruction is, perhaps, the least reparable of the ecological ravages which distinguish our age. More subtly, the modulation of English into an 'Esperanto' of world commerce, technology, and tourism, is having debilitating effects on English proper....If dissemination weakened the native genius of the language, the price would be a tragic one. English literature, the penetrating yet delicate imprint of a uniquely coherent, articulate historical experience on the vocabulary and syntax of English speech, the supple vitality of English in regard to its unbroken past--these are one of the excellences of our condition. It would be ironic if the answer to Babel were pidgin and not Pentecost.³¹

Steiner's warning is that the internationalization of English might eventually leave its speakers around the globe with a simplified American-English shorthand allowing as little cultural variation and semantic variety as possible so that world-wide understanding can be "insured." If such really is the trend, this once naturally rich, soon artificially exact language will be bought at the expense of the spirit that inspires individual creative expression and makes the plurality of world-views and tongues possible.

While Steiner, as a linguist, is mainly concerned with the preservation of the cultural integrity of English and the other hundreds of diverse linguistic species around the world, we,

as language teachers, should be aware of, and concerned with, the effects of teaching a language so reduced in depth of personal meaning on students--on their thinking, and on their attitude towards language. One ESL college-bound student, for example, recently wrote:

I believe that English is a very useful language, because anything can be defined exactly using the language because there are so many words in English....English words come from many different languages, but this makes English spelling very difficult. English is not a very smooth language: it is for doing business, not for speaking with friends.

This student's perception of English as a chiefly utilitarian, denotative language is a reflection of the purpose for which English has been taught, learned and used by many around the world, rather than an objective description of the language. But most importantly, it reflects his disillusionment with the language--his shallow experience of it has led him to feel isolated in this English-speaking culture. Besides weakening the language's vital link with its cultural roots, then, the dissemination of a "functional" English has also failed to meet the students' needs for depth, relevance, and a sense of primacy in a "world of meaningful action."³²

Two Adult-Education Approaches Applied to the Field of ESL

In his book Education for Critical Consciousness, Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, drew a helpful distinction between two general approaches to teaching which stem from sharply contrasting perceptions of the purpose of education. Even though he developed his pedagogy from working in the field of adult literacy training

in Brazil, his insights shed light on the question of teaching ESL to adult students around the world.

1. ESL as a Medium for Cultural Extension:

The first approach is based on viewing education as a means of cultural "extension."³³ By the term "extension" Freire means that teaching is regarded as an act of handing over, or transferring, knowledge of some kind to someone else. Students are perceived as passive objects into which teachers (active subjects) deposit the contents of their lessons. The idea that language is something for teachers to transmit and deposit in students assumes, moreover, that language is a static, closed, predictable system; in other words, it does not take into consideration the socio-historically conditioned, flexible nature of language.

Learning a foreign language with this approach requires the accumulation of information (vocabulary, grammar rules, idioms, rules of rhetoric, etc.) and the acquisition of technical skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing. The ultimate goal is for the student to learn to think and express himself as much like a "standard native" as possible.

Since this approach takes into consideration neither the frame of reference nor the attitudes and values of the students who are supposed to learn the language, Freire believes the "extension" concept involves a subtle kind of cultural invasion: the teacher's vision of the world, reflected in the linguistic/cultural content of her lessons, is superimposed one-sidedly on those who passively receive. The emphasis is solely on the student's adaptation to the cultural milieu.

2. ESL as a Medium for Intercultural Communication:

The second approach, on the other hand, views education as an instrument for liberation. Its goal is for students to see themselves as creators of culture, not simply as repositories or inheritors of an imported culture. Education is conceived not as the "transmission of knowledge," but as "communication"--the encounter of subjects in dialogue in search of the significance of the object of knowledge that mediates them.³⁴ This approach is based, in other words, on the assumption that each student is potentially a source of valuable insights that might teach something to other members of the class--an idea that applies conspicuously in multicultural classrooms, where every student carries within him a wealth of experience foreign to many others in the group. Education is thus understood as a reciprocal process between teacher and students.

Translated into the context of foreign-language learning, moreover, this approach acknowledges each student as being at the center of an already existing semantic/cultural universe which strongly influences the way he perceives and responds to experiences in the new language, rather than simply as an empty receptacle ready to be filled. Language, accordingly, is not perceived as a program to be inculcated in students' minds, but as an open-ended system, a moldable vehicle for the students to communicate their thoughts and feelings in response to the challenges they face in the foreign environment. From this view, learning a foreign language means more than accumulating information, more than acquiring skills--it requires the student's transforming action

on the language as he imprints on it his unique style nurtured by his own experiences and awareness. As Freire put it:

In the learning process the only person who really learns is s/he who appropriates what is learned, who apprehends and thereby re-invents that learning; s/he who is able to apply the appropriated learning to concrete existential situations. On the other hand, the person who is filled by another with "contents" whose meaning s/he is not aware of, which contradict his or her way of being in the world, cannot learn because s/he is not challenged.³⁵

A key method that Paulo Freire used to engage his students in this kind of learning was "problem posing"³⁶--basing the content of the lessons on concrete dilemmas, conflicts or questions that students themselves propose and select in conjunction with the teacher. The task of the teacher is to present the content of a lesson as a problem for the students to work on through reflection, discussion and action, rather than to lecture on it as though it were a matter already thought out and solved by someone else.

The problem situation is presented in "codified form"³⁷--a figurative device (story, poem, photograph, written dialogue, movie, etc.) through which students can deal with a conflict directly or indirectly related to their own lives. The problem thus projected may be theme-centered (dealing with personal, social, cultural, political or other value-laden issues) or language-centered (dealing with problems of word-usage, structure, composition, register, etc.). The teacher then proceeds to ask a series of inductive questions to initiate discussion and help students move from the concrete case at hand to a more abstract level where they can discover rules and exceptions. They may also draw generalizations (depending upon the case) which apply to analogous situations. The

the purpose of such exercises is to foster critical thinking-- to prompt students to take charge of their own learning.

A foreign language program can in this way draw upon each student's "world of meaningful action" and not only on some alien reality. If a principal value of language is that "it permits a person to distance himself from his own perceptions, feelings and thoughts,"³⁸ then working on "problem cases" in a language classroom can help students become more consciously aware of where they are "coming from" (i.e., what knowledge and skills they have at their disposal; what attitudes, values, and beliefs govern their perceptions and actions) and where they want "to go from here" (i.e., what they need to learn or change in their present condition to act more effectively and freely in the new culture, not merely be acted upon).

Although it may seem idealistic to attempt to teach ESL, or any other foreign language, primarily as an instrument for developing critical thinking, freedom and creativity (precisely the opposite direction in which Steiner feared many ESL programs were headed), I believe the goal is worth pursuing. Earl Stevick, in his book A Way and Ways, was clearly referring to such an approach when he wrote,

Some language courses...turn out to [be] integrating elements around which a previously ill-organized set of values becomes clearer.

This is most likely true when the student's experience of the language is relatively deep. For a world of meaningful action is not a flat, two-dimensional thing like a map. Its structure has many dimensions, and some of its parts are much further from the surface than others. If what a student says makes little or no difference to him, it has little "depth" in this sense. But some things he says, or hears, or reads

make a difference to him in many ways. This kind of experience is relatively "deep." It draws more energy from his "world of meaningful action" and in turn it helps shape that world.³⁹

If foreign students learn to use English in the manner described by Stevick, I believe the genius and supple vitality of the language is likely to be energized rather than debilitated, as Steiner feared. The enrichment of any language is, after all, in direct proportion to the deepening of its speakers' own "worlds of meaningful action."

In answer to the question why certain languages effected a lasting grip on reality and kept alive their creative, transformational powers, Steiner himself wrote, "I suspect that the receptivity of a given language to metaphor is a crucial factor."⁴⁰ In other words, whether or not the expressive potential of a language weakens or intensifies probably depends on how hospitable that language can be to novel--including "foreign"--ways of seeing and thinking. This returns us to the problem of translation.

Translation in the Multicultural ESL Classroom

Teaching English as a second language, as we saw above, can advance intercultural communication rather than simply disseminate a reductive version of American-English culture. The multicultural ESL classroom, as an intersection of semantic universes, makes an ideal setting for such cultural interaction, the opening of new perspectives, and for linguistic enrichment--both in terms of the students and of the English language itself.

Such an approach to language teaching is not new. For example, "Counseling Learning" (or Community Language Learning),⁴¹ an approach developed by Charles A. Curran, coincides in many ways with Freire's approach to education "as an instrument for liberation." Among the points they have in common are the emphasis on education through communication (a cooperative dialogue between students and teacher, where the teacher acts as a facilitator rather than as a lecturer), and the use of student-generated material as a basis for language lessons.

1. Uses of Translation in Existing Language-Teaching Methods:

One of the features of "Counseling Learning" is the use of translation as a technique to facilitate the students' crossing the bridge between language worlds--to allow students to transfer their interests, knowledge, talents into the new world, and not enter "empty handed" and feeling powerless. But, particularly in the beginning stages of language learning, it is the teacher, not the students, who does the translating. The teacher translates into correct English what the students initially express in their native tongue, so that they can then repeat after her and record their voices in the target language. Based on these oral (or in some cases written) records of the students' conversations, the teacher then prepares lessons that are personally meaningful to the students.

In a multicultural ESL classroom, however, putting this translation technique into practice is difficult since it requires a truly multilingual teacher to be able to translate what each

student says in his own language. If students are able to speak at least broken English, the teacher can interpret and paraphrase in better English what they are struggling to express. While the process is workable, it can become slow and tedious (depending on how much of their message the students can get across) and, in some cases, interfere with the flow of the conversation. Moreover, the one expending most energy in this interpretive process often turns out to be the teacher and not the student, who is encouraged rather to focus on the content of conversation without worrying about making mistakes, since the correct language pattern will be supplied upon request by the teacher. The virtue of this exercise is, of course, that students are able to communicate meaningfully at a very early stage in language learning, with the least frustration possible. But their dependence on the teacher is paramount; and such assistance, by itself, does not motivate learning.

The practice of interlingual translation had previously appeared as one of the main features in two other well known language-teaching approaches, namely, the "Grammar-Translation" and the "Reading Approach."⁴² In both cases, however, students translated mainly from the target language into the native tongue for the purpose of checking their comprehension of the target language. Unlike the "Counseling-Learning" use of translation, then, the purpose of the transfer in these approaches was to bring the target-language culture into the student's native world rather than the student's culture and experience into the new, foreign world.

Another more contemporary approach which uses interlingual translation is "Suggestopedia,"⁴³ developed by George Lozanov in Bulgaria. Here, the teacher translates phrases and texts in order to ease the student's understanding of the lengthy dialogues taught in the target language. The aim of this technique is to allow the student to experience transfer of meaning from one language to another with little or no frustration so that his subconscious mind will offer the least resistance to the new material and language acquisition thus occur more readily.

2. Values of translation in language learning:

The question I would like to pose, however, is whether encouraging students (particularly at high-intermediate and advanced levels) to practice translation from their native tongue into English, as well as intralingual translation in English, can bolster the process of learning by challenging students to reconceive ideas, sensations or feelings in the patterns of the target language.

Considered from the narrow perspective of finding word-for-word equivalences, interlingual translation has a poor reputation among language teachers. Besides deploring the absurd results that often come from such mechanical "dictionary" translations, many educators believe that such translation slows down second-language acquisition because it interferes with the flow of thought-speech in the target language, rather than facilitates it. One of the language-teaching methods based on this belief is "The Direct Method,"⁴⁴ which claims that a foreign language can

be acquired only through its active and meaningful use including, if possible, thinking in it--that is, the student's experiencing the world in the target language. In most other methods, such as the "Audio-Lingual" and "Cognitive"⁴⁵ methods, interlingual translation is simply tolerated or permitted whenever the need to clarify meaning arises, and all other techniques have failed or proven too cumbersome.

Experience indeed shows that some ESL students invariably try to find a literal translation for every new word or linguistic pattern they encounter in the language class. Most often, for security's sake, students tenaciously hold onto, and rely on, the "magic circle" of their native tongue for "meaning." Any utterances in the foreign language which they cannot exactly match with cognates in their native tongue thus remain within a cloud of vagueness or incomprehensibility. Sometimes, students even make a habit of this type of translation, so that they continue performing it unconsciously. As long as a student is not aware that he is superimposing, for instance, syntactic patterns or idioms from his own language onto English, he will not be speaking or writing English, but rather his native language with "English" labels. On the other hand, if the student reflects on his native thought patterns and realizes they don't necessarily apply to other language contexts, he will be free to suspend them temporarily in order to welcome the new language on its own terms, and perhaps learn to see through its eyes.

Therefore, I believe that translation--understood in its interpretive sense--should be regarded as serving a purpose

complementary to language acquisition, not as a substitute for it nor as a technique for "faster" learning. In this light, I would like to propose the following points in favor of the controlled practice of translation "into" and "within" the target language in the classroom:

- (1) From a pedagogical standpoint, a text or statement selected for translation can be an ideal "problem case"--linguistically and culturally--that challenges the student to bring to use not only his dictionary, but also his feeling for context, his linguistic skills, his imagination, his values.
- (2) More specifically, the exercise of translation can help a student develop independence, since it will require him to come to a personal understanding of the original text and make the effort of recasting this interpretation in a new form. It can help him develop autonomy, in that he will have to choose among many possible ways (sometimes mutually exclusive, sometimes equivalent) of expressing in the target language what he perceives in the original text. He will, in other words, be exercising his initiative in attacking the material and producing a new version of it. Also, this type of exercise can help a student develop responsibility in that, while he acts as a communicative bridge between two language worlds, the understanding of his readers or listeners will be shaped, to a great extent, by his choice of words.
- (3) The self-investment that translation requires will thus lead the student to a deeper experience of language. Through his

own creative involvement with the target language, the student will begin to discover a new medium for self-expression.

While he allows his expression to be informed by the shape (or framework) of that language, he will also be extending and refreshing its boundaries through the imprint of his insights and developing style.

- (4) Linguistically speaking, translation can help a student sharpen his sensitivity to the melodies, textures, rhythms, figurative expressions and other aesthetic qualities not only of the target language but of his native language as well. With feedback from the teacher on the material he writes, he can gradually learn to discriminate between what works in the target language and what doesn't.
- (5) As translation helps the student become aware of the similarities and differences between his native tongue and the target language, it will lead him to realize that using one language versus the other is not simply a matter of applying different labels to the same perceptions, but a matter of focusing the world through different aesthetic prisms. In other words, it will lead him to experience on his own the phenomenon of linguistic relativity.
- (6) If language, by its very nature, allows us to transcend the physical world by making it possible for us to imagine, speculate, plan, draw analogies between seemingly unrelated things, discover new possibilities--or to create what Steiner calls "alternities of being"--then the ability to transform a given event by expressing and re-experiencing it through

the voice and eyes of a different language will further heighten the student's awareness of the arbitrary and moldable nature of the language-bodies he inhabits. As Steiner puts it:

To move between languages, to translate, even within the restrictions of totality, is to experience the almost bewildering bias of the human spirit towards freedom. If we were lodged inside a single 'language-skin' or amid very few languages, the inevitability of our organic subjection to death might well prove more suffocating than it is.⁴⁶

- (7) One of the more subtle values of practicing translation has to do with the student's developing perception of himself, and his coming to use himself better as an integrated person, freer from the control of outside forces or his own past limitations. As we mentioned earlier, the aim of foreign-language learning goes beyond adjusting to the target language's culture. Learning to adapt to another people's manner of thinking, speaking and acting is no doubt valuable for survival purposes, but does not by itself make a person freer. Within any student in the process of becoming bilingual (or multilingual) distinct language-worlds and language-selves are, in a sense, competing for space. These worlds are sometimes experienced by the student as being in conflict, and he may consequently feel confused, alienated or "split." But reconciling the conflict, or bridging the distance, between these inner worlds will be a task that only the student can perform for himself. Translation is one essential way of doing it. If regarded as a task of recasting what "naturally" belongs to one medium into a "foreign" medium, translation actually is a way of becoming more keenly aware of those

thought and image patterns that had been unconsciously or passively acquired, and making them one's own by transforming, re-inventing them. Thus, through his own work, a student becomes freer.

- (8) Finally, from a practical standpoint, exercises in interlingual translation can help the student develop a skill that may turn out to be valuable in the future, particularly if he works in an international environment or returns to his native country. Either way, he will likely be called upon in the future to translate--whether technical, business, scientific, political, journalistic or literary texts, or oral statements--and thus act as a mediator between the cultures he is closely familiar with.

Even at the intermediate level of language learning, the practice of translation can be helpful. Such was the case of Taikyu, a Japanese student taking ESL in a college-preparatory program in the United States. Taikyu was the son of a Zen priest who administered and lived in a temple near Tokyo. By tradition, all males in the family were supposed to become Zen priests. But Taikyu also identified in some ways with Western culture, for his sister had married an American. He was a great photographer, loved jazz, and had a certain "Americanism" in his style.

When he came to the ESL program, Taikyu was placed in a low-intermediate level ESL class, according to his scores on a standardized test. But it soon became evident that he could (or would) not function in class. Any time a teacher called on him

he would begin to utter a word, then interrupt himself, then smite himself on the forehead. He wasn't relating to other members in the class, either. Teachers feared he was experiencing an emotional conflict of some kind that was blocking him, so he was assigned an individual tutor.

At first, the tutor just tried to get to know Taikyu as a person--his interests, his family background, his feelings about being in the U.S., his plans for the future. Taikyu was eager to communicate--so eager, in fact, that he became frustrated and punished himself with verbal recriminations in Japanese for not being able to get across everything he had inside. There were obviously personal conflicts he needed to resolve. But the tutor gave little attention to what Taikyu insisted were his shortcomings, while expressing real interest in what he had to say.

Soon, Taikyu was telling his tutor about the Zen temple his father ran and trying to convey to her what he could about Zen practices and principles. Of course, he had trouble (the theme itself wasn't easy), and his speech was extremely stilted. But one day he brought to the tutoring session a short, simple book about daily Zen practices. Since his tutor told him she was truly interested, Taikyu offered to translate.

He came to the tutoring session each day after that with about three pages translated from Japanese into English. There was no question he had used a bilingual dictionary to translate some of the vocabulary, and his work showed problems with sentence structure. But the basic message of Zen got across. When it didn't, he would try to explain a given point orally, graphically or

through gestures, and then the tutor would assist him in rewording the statement.

The task was arduous, but soon positive results began to show. Week by week, Taikyu's statements became more confident and clearer, and he was learning some vocabulary, idiomatic usage, sentence structure, and stylistic conventions such as punctuation and paragraphing along the way. But, most importantly, he was sharing something he valued with an interested other. Taikyu was teaching as much as he was learning. Education, here, was truly a two-way process.

Taikyu's satisfaction with himself also gradually led to a better attitude and performance in class. When his composition teacher read what he was writing and revising, she was impressed with his progress. Of course, Taikyu's was a special case because he was taken out of the regular classroom to have this educational experience. But the challenge to language teachers remains: Is it possible to work with students in a group in an analogous way?

3. Interlingual Translation in the ESL Classroom:

One exercise that can be used in a multicultural ESL classroom is to give students a project in which they teach others something about their culture. Towards this end, they each translate a short passage on a topic they believe embodies a specific cultural value and share their translations with the class. Upon completion of the project, copies of their translations can be put together in a booklet and distributed among members of the class.

Texts for translation can run from 100 to 500 words, depending on the language-competency level of the group. Students should be free to select a theme that is specially significant to them. Subjects can vary widely--ranging from poems, songs, prayers, and excerpts of speeches delivered by a famous native figure (politician, religious leader, writer, sports star, etc.) to more practical matters such as recipes for typical ethnic foods and descriptions of the country's historical or geographical attractions from travel pamphlets. Students can initially brainstorm possible themes they would like to include in their booklet. The teacher will then ask them to bring their source-language texts to class for approval. Only the students can judge the level of difficulty of the translation passage they choose, since the teacher can't be expected to have a reading knowledge of every language. But their being given a chance to exercise their own discrimination can be instructional in itself. Clearly, students will get as much out of the task as they put into it.

After the chosen texts have been approved by the teacher, students should attempt a first translation draft in English--preferably in class. They should be allowed to use bilingual as well as English dictionaries and a thesaurus. This exercise will give them an in-depth experience of words, their nuances, uses and cultural connotations. Meanwhile, the teacher can circulate around the class and give students individual assistance as they work.

The task will most likely require more than one revision, depending on the level of difficulty, but a limit should be set

since any text can be interpreted and translated in countless ways. Perfection, therefore, should not be the goal--for "perfect translation" is by definition impossible. The goal is for the target-language text to "work" as a unit--to communicate the essential message, both cognitive and affective, and to sound right.

Interlingual translation projects like the above could subsequently be repeated as long, or as often, as students express an interest or need. Otherwise, exercises in interpretation and translation within the target language (intralingual translation) can prove to be productive learning experiences in the multi-cultural ESL class.

4. Intralingual Translation:

Intralingual translation is more commonly used than we realize. Better known by the names of "interpretation" and "paraphrasing," this type of exercise proves to be especially useful to ESL students. Among other things, it facilitates dialogue and develops students' understanding of figurative language. In the form of "metaphorical thinking" (expressing one thing in terms of another), moreover, intralingual translation can stimulate students' creative expression in the target language.

(a) Dialogue: One case where intralingual translation becomes a real necessity arises whenever ESL students engage in dialogue. As Steiner pointed out, intralingual translation occurs naturally when a person listens to and understands what another person says,

for the interpretive process includes decoding the message and re-encoding it within the field of one's perceptions.⁴⁷

In the case of students conversing in a foreign language, however, the process is compounded. If they are discussing a controversial issue or working together to solve a problem, students need to interact with each other, share insights and ideas, argue or plan a course of action. While such communicative interaction can be especially fruitful in a multicultural classroom, because of the meeting of different perspectives on a single issue, it can also be frustrating. Precisely because the students usually come from different language backgrounds, their communication problems in English differ widely. Some have specific enunciation or pronunciation difficulties; some inadequately attempt to translate their native vocabulary or structural patterns into English. Also, their attitudes, values or beliefs are often "worlds" apart. The challenge, therefore, is more intense than in normal circumstances: not only are they faced with a thematic problem which they must approach logically and imaginatively; they are also faced with the problems of verbalizing their ideas to make themselves understood and of understanding one another.

Teaching students the skills of listening, understanding and translating what they hear other students say is thus essential if they are to engage in productive dialogue with other speakers of English as a second language--now or in the future.

At first, this type of exercise can be practiced in a controlled fashion. For instance, the teacher can bring to class a series of photographs depicting specific themes, conflicts or problems

that students may recognize or relate to in some way. Students will then break into groups of two--preferably from different culture and language backgrounds--and choose one photograph that they both find interesting or challenging. After they have identified the elements in the scene and the problem involved, one student can express what he thinks or feels about it, what it reminds him of, or what he would do if he were in such a situation. The other student, who will be playing the role of "understander," will then translate into his own words in English what he hears his classmate saying. The roles can then be reversed.

Later on, after the students have grown comfortable with the technique, they can practice this type of translation in a freer context. During the course of a class discussion or student presentation, for example, they can be encouraged to paraphrase one another's statements when they feel they may have misunderstood what the other person has said, when they simply need confirmation, or when they feel the need to recapitulate significant points that the speaker has made before he moves on. (While these short "interruptions" are particularly useful when students are taking notes on a presentation, they should be aware that it is a "rule of order" to wait until the presenter pauses, or calls for comments or questions, before speaking up.) The students will thus be learning to use the skill that the "teacher-counselor" herself practices with her "student-clients" in Charles Curran's "Counseling-Learning" method.⁴⁸ Practicing this form of response is, in fact, much needed in any multicultural classroom since, as

students learn to listen actively, they will begin to appreciate each other's views and develop tolerance for each other's difficulties. Also, this process helps students build confidence in expressing themselves when they realize that what they say may actually make sense to, or touch, their listener in some unforeseen way. Although primarily referring to the liberating effect that a "teacher-counselor's" feedback often creates in the "student-client," Curran's insight potentially applies also to situations where students understand and translate one another:

When the person hears back in a different language [or in different words] what he has said, it may sound like something new to him; he is given an entirely new perspective. It is this hearing from a new perspective that enables him to flow forward in the unfolding of himself.⁴⁹

(b) Interpreting Figurative Language: As we saw in Part One of this paper, figurative language is an essential aspect of "natural language," or everyday speech--its use is not limited to poetic or otherwise literary texts. It abounds in almost any type of reading material--scientific, business, political, and non-fictional articles of all types. Besides idiomatic expressions, such as "it's a dog eat dog world," "to tread upon eggs," "to put one's best foot forward," "in this neck of the woods," which ^{have} become clichés through repeated use over time, people often put together novel phrases and expressions that cannot be understood in a literal or ordinary sense. Such words or phrases are used in ways other than their strict or usual meaning to express a fresh effect or insight.

A foreign student should especially be aware that the separate words that make up a figurative expression take on a new meaning

as a whole,⁵⁰ so that he not try to understand it simply by translating it word for word into his own language. A foreign student, therefore, must develop skill at recognizing and interpreting such figures of speech, and not only try to memorize and use lists of clichés and idiomatic expressions that he may be given in class (though this type of learning helps the foreign student "adjust" to the new social milieu).

First of all, the student should learn to distinguish between literal and figurative expressions.⁵¹ While literal expressions tend to stick to basic, factual meanings, most figurative language involves a comparison, association, or transfer of meaning between two images that seem to have little or no relation (e.g. "The test was a bomb"), or between a concrete, culture-specific image and a broader, more "universal" idea or abstract quality (e.g. "Security is a thumb and a blanket"). Often, of course, the decision as to whether an expression is meant to be literal or figurative will depend on the context in which the words are used; but exercises using isolated sentences such as the following could be useful, at an initial stage, in assessing the student's understanding of the difference between "literal" and "figurative." The student would be asked to write L in the blank if the sentence is literal, or F if it uses any figurative language:

- (a) ___ Mr. Kramer claims that the glamour of Paris is faded and tattered like old silk upholstery on a worn-out chair.
- (b) ___ The French usually eat lunch in a leisurely fashion.
- (c) ___ From a high-flying plane the Hawaiian Islands look like so many bread crumbs in an enormous bowl of soup.
- (d) ___ Be polite and cautious with the police on the East German side of the Berlin wall.

- (e) Our campfire was a cathedral of flame, theirs little more than slender candles burning in a night devout under stars. 52

At more advanced stages, students can be asked to select a magazine article on a topic of their interest, and make a list of, say, five expressions they consider to be literal, and five expressions they believe to be figurative. They will then hand in these lists along with a copy of the article so that the teacher can read the expressions in context and give the students feedback on their choices.

The next step will be for students to practice translating figurative expressions into non-figurative language. Especially if the students' expressive abilities in the language are still limited, the exercises can first take the form of multiple choice questions. At this stage they will only be required to decode the figurative expression, transfer the meaning to each of the non-figurative choices provided below in order to find the one which matches best, and finally circle their selection. For example:

1. Uncle Nemerof's beard was an avalanche of white snow from his chin and cheeks.
(a) His beard was wet and messy.
(b) His beard was white and thick.
(c) His beard was tangled and dirty.
2. Dr. Shoreditch rumbled on with his sermon, his heavy barge of a voice plowing slowly and evenly through the ocean of silence in the church.
(a) His loud voice alarmed the listeners.
(b) His deep voice filled the quiet church.
(c) His sermon was about a ship at sea. 53

At more advanced stages, students can be given figurative expressions such as these and be asked to decode and re-encode them in their own words--that is, to interpret and "creatively transpose"

the message into another form. Or, they can take the five figurative expressions that they previously selected from a magazine article of their interest and translate them into non-figurative language.

Figures of speech are seldom limited to a single word or phrase. They often extend through a poem, a paragraph, or even a long selection. One such case is "The Gambler" (see p. 45a), a song by Kenny Rogers which is suffused throughout with culture-specific symbolism but carries a message that may be universally, or at least cross-culturally, meaningful. This and other popular songs are examples of potentially rich "codifications" (in Freire's sense of the word) of personal, social or political conflicts which a generation or more (often cross-culturally) can identify with, and can therefore be used productively in the language classroom.

Before dealing with figurative dimensions of meaning in an extended selection, however, students must understand the text literally. In the case of "The Gambler," the students can listen to the song while reading the words on a sheet of paper that the teacher has distributed beforehand. The task is more challenging if the teacher has deleted some of the words so that the students can translate what they "hear" onto the paper. Once students have gotten all the lyrics down, the teacher can ask them to paraphrase the story sentence by sentence--for there are many idiomatic and slang expressions (e.g. "to bum a cigarette," "to break even," "to fold up") that may need to be clarified at a literal level.

THE GAMBLER (by Kenny Rogers)

On a warm summer's evening,
On a train bound for nowhere,
Met up with a gambler
We were both too tired to sleep
So we took turns 'a staring
At the window, at the darkness,
The boredom overtook us,
And he began to speak.

He said, "Son, I've made a life
Out of reading people's faces,
Knowing what the cards were
By the way they held their eyes,
So, if you don't mind my saying,
I can see you're out of aces,
For a taste of your whiskey
I'll give you some advice."

So I handed him my bottle,
And he drank down my last swallow
Then he bummed a cigarette
And asked me for a light ...
And the night got deathly quiet,
And his face lost all expression;
Said, "If you're gonna play the game, boy,
You've gotta learn to play it right."

"You've got to know when to hold 'em,
Know when to fold 'em,
Know when to walk away,
Know when to run;
You never count your money
When you're sitting at the table,
There'll be time enough for counting
When the dealing's done."

"Every gambler knows that the secret to surviving
Is knowing what to throw away,
Knowing what to keep,
'Cause every hand's a winner,
And every hand's a loser,
And the best that you can hope for
Is to die in your sleep."

And when he finished speaking
He turned back toward the window,
Crushed out his cigarette, and faded off to sleep ...
And somewhere in the darkness
The gambler, he broke even
And in his final words
I found an "ace" that I could keep.

Now the teacher can begin asking inductive questions to help the students enter into the more figurative levels of the song.

Some of her questions may be:

- (1) What do you think "a train bound for nowhere" might mean? Are trains, in reality, ever bound for nowhere?
- (2) What do you think "the card game" symbolizes in this song?
- (3) What does the gambler mean when he tells his traveling companion that he can see he's "out of aces"?
- (4) What does the gambler figuratively mean when he says, "You never count your money when you're sitting at the table"?
- (5) What do you think the cards one "throws away" represent?
- (6) What might the cards one must "keep" stand for?
- (7) What does "a hand" symbolize?
- (8) What is the "ace" that the singer finds at the end?

Questions such as these can generate discussion among students, who might vary in their interpretations of the symbolism. But the aim should be for the students to move into more abstract or general levels of meaning, from where they might be able to apply the message of the song to other contexts besides "playing cards." Finally, the teacher can ask the students to write a short summary of what the song suggests to them, and whether or not they agree with its figurative message.

Learning to interpret figurative language will not only deepen the ESL student's sense of the meaningfulness of the language. It will also enhance his awareness as a co-creator of the meanings on the written page and, as Stevick would say, his feeling of primacy in "a world of meaningful action." When a student begins to draw associations between the literal message he finds in a passage and the apparently unrelated experiences he has had,

he will begin to discover surprising correspondences, and the task of "thinking" will not only become enjoyable but will develop by leaps. Being able to penetrate the more figurative and analogical dimensions of language can, moreover, be particularly valuable for students of a foreign language since it is one way of transcending cultural boundaries of meaning. As Friedrich observes,

Seeing the universal through different cultural and language filters--if one remains aware of their depth and complexity--is a very poetic act.⁵⁴

(c) Creative Writing: From the above, it follows that developing the skill of interpreting figurative language is an indispensable step towards learning to think creatively in any language.

Robert Frost put it simply in his essay, "Education by Poetry,"

We still ask boys in college to think, as in the nineties,
but we seldom tell them what thinking means;
we seldom tell them it is just putting this and that together;
it is just saying one thing in terms of another.⁵⁵

Expressing one thing in terms of another is actually how Owen Thomas defines "metaphorical thinking" in his book, Metaphor and Related Subjects.⁵⁶ Strictly speaking, metaphor is a form of translation, since it involves the transferring of meaningful features from one idea or image to another.

Very specifically, I have found that working on writing "definitions" can be an eye-opening experience in an ESL multi-cultural classroom. The need to define is a persistent characteristic of the human mind. Ernst Cassirer, a philosopher of language, noticed that for the mind only that can be visible which has some definite form.⁵⁷ Studies have shown that our

minds screen out far more than we accept, or else we would live in a world of chaos. Our definitional system, which is largely inherited through our native tongue and by which we project form onto what we sense, is the foundation of our logical world and may be essential to our need for order and security.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, it is arbitrary, as proven by the existence of various languages which define the world in often surprisingly different ways, yet each with a wonderfully knit logic of its own; and it is changeable, as shown by the continual transformation of word meanings in any one given language throughout history. Just as a shift in sensory perception can lead a person to a new way of thinking about things, so a change in our way of defining things can bring about a transformation in our way of seeing our world. As Joseph Pearce put it, "concepts direct percepts as much as percepts impinge on concepts."⁵⁹ Therefore, reflecting and working on "definitions" can be a valuable beginning for students to learn to think and express themselves creatively in a foreign language.

The ESL teacher can start by introducing the students to the most commonly used types of definitions in English:⁶⁰

- (1) First, there is the genus-species type frequently found in dictionaries. A word usually is classified into a general category, and then differentiated by specifying its particular qualities or features. For example, "A hammer is a tool used for driving nails."
- (2) Another valid manner of defining is by simply pointing. We could, for example, define the general concept "chair"

by pointing to one or more chairs. Or, a term can be defined by providing examples or illustrations: "Fear is what Judy felt when the neighbor's dog snarled at her."

- (3) A third common way of defining is by using a synonym or series of synonyms, as in "Mortification is shame."
- (4) Finally, we sometimes define negatively by saying what a thing is not. For example, as Freire wrote, "Education is not the extension of technical knowledge....It is not an attempt to adapt the student to the milieu..."

The teacher can also point out to students that the distinction between concrete and abstract is a fundamental feature of the English language. Thus, as Thomas points out, "countable physical things can generally occur with definite articles, whereas abstractions, which by their very nature cannot be on a scale from indefinite to unique, do not normally occur with such articles."⁶¹ We can say, for example, "We are studying the lives of Washington and Lincoln," but we cannot say "The life is a game." While physical things can be sharply categorized and their differentiating features clearly described by being placed on a scale of measurement, thoughts and perceptions, abstract qualities and feelings, on the other hand, do not permit such precise definitions. Nevertheless, especially when we are dealing with our most immediate human concerns (love, alienation, death, home, happiness, etc.), we constantly feel the need for definition--especially personal definition--and we attempt to satisfy this need through the use of metaphor.⁶² Therefore, a fifth way of defining would be to say that one thing is another which, in fact,

it is not. As Peter Elbow tells students in Writing Without Teachers,

When you make a metaphor, you call something by the wrong name. If you make a comparison, an analogy or an example, you are thinking of something in terms of something else. There is always a contradiction. You are not calling a house a house, but rather a playground, a jungle, a curse, a wound, a paradise.⁶³

We often must resort, in other words, to violating the rational logic of our own linguistic system by saying contradictory things, if we want to say what we really mean or feel about something.

After students have understood and practiced controlled writing of different common types of definition in English (by genus-species classification, illustration, the use of synonyms and negation), the teacher can ask them to define an abstract concept by translating it into concrete terms, a concrete thing by translating it into abstract terms, or a concrete thing by translating it into another concrete term. If needed, before the students start to write, the teacher can offer them some examples by way of clarification and reinforcement. Then the students can brainstorm a list of concrete and abstract words (e.g. friend, parking lot, rose, freedom), which the teacher writes on the blackboard, and each chooses a word he would like to define. The idea of such an exercise is not for the student to copy his definition from a dictionary, but to write what that particular word means to him by bringing his own experience of the word, his feeling and imagination into his definition. Even students who choose the same word sometimes come up with very different, sometimes contrasting statements. In such cases, stringing their definitions

together in the form of a poem can produce an interesting effect. One group of ESL students, for example wrote:

Freedom is like ice-water
in the desert.

Freedom is a house
in which we can live without anxiety.

Freedom is the bird
that is king of the sky.

Freedom is the price man must pay
to live quietly in his given time.

Freedom is an idea that tries to lead people
to their own jail--their loneliness.

Students often feel inspired by the results of their writing, especially when they combine and juxtapose differing perceptions and thoughts on a single concept in one poem and hear them read out loud in class. Besides helping them develop flexibility in their formation of concepts and percepts, this exercise helps students discover the arbitrary and relative nature of their own definitions while at the same time their beauty and uniqueness.

No one metaphor ever comprehends a concept completely. Each emphasizes some features while ignoring others. And each metaphor, by so limiting our perception, also shapes or affects our emotional response and attitude towards the concept it attempts to define. The interaction created in the meeting of metaphors, of different aesthetic and emotional perspectives on a theme, usually sets off new energy, ideas, feelings, perceptions--or, as Elbow says, "cooking."

Cooking consists of the process of one piece of material being transformed by interacting with another: one piece of material being seen through the lens of another, ... being reoriented or reorganized in terms of the other, being mapped onto the other.⁶⁴

If language, as suggested by proponents of "linguistic relativity," is itself a translation of the non-verbal realm of undifferentiated sensations and intuitions into the world of relative form, then each language presents, in a large sense, a different "metaphor" of reality--each highlighting certain features of experience while ignoring others. Just as the interaction of metaphors on one topic can help deepen our insight or trigger creative thinking, the meeting and interaction of students from different language backgrounds on themes or problems of common concern can provide an ideal opportunity for learning. If students are encouraged to translate their cultural or personal views on such topics into terms their classmates can understand, the ESL classroom can become a fertile environment where students will no doubt conflict with, but also nourish and challenge one another to tap inner sources of meaning while learning to make the English language their own.

CONCLUSIONS

Let us reconsider the question posed earlier in this paper: whether the practice of translation--interlingual or intralingual--can bolster the language-learning process by challenging the student to reconceive ideas, sensations and feelings in the patterns of the target language. Particularly in adult education, "learning" involves both the student's attaining critical awareness of the subject matter he is taking in, and his developing skill in using this subject matter to help him act more effectively and freely as a creative individual in his world.

First of all, translation can help bring the phenomena of language to the foreground of the student's critical awareness. Translation requires him to stand back and observe the effects of the structure and aesthetic qualities of both receptor and source languages on his perception and understanding of experience. As we learned through the contrastive analysis of a Spanish poem and its English counterparts in Part One of this paper, translation can make us more fully aware of how words in different languages actually shape our perceptions, our emotions, our attitudes in unlike ways. By thus developing our ability to contrast modes of thought, translation can also help us become aware that each language contains an overarching interpretation of the world, that each language is a unique, arbitrary and flexible metaphoric fabric spun by human communities throughout time, but that no single language can define human experience absolutely or "once and for all."

As long as students who have acquired two or more languages remain unconscious of the conditioning effects of each language on their views, attitudes and actions, they will tend to respond automatically to the socio-linguistic web they find themselves in. They will adjust by becoming a cooperating strand in that web. But when they step out of that circle to return to their native culture, for example, a sense of disorientation often follows as a result. Students who have acquired a second language through passive identification with its culture usually come to a point when they feel torn between world-views, confused by alternatives, robbed of power.

Acquiring a second language, then, may be a step towards transcending the "magic circle" of one's native upbringing. But, by itself, it does not make a person freer. If the aim of language learning and teaching is for students to become freer individuals, capable of mediating between cultures without being unconsciously attached to any one arbitrary view, then learning cannot be regarded solely as a receptive and acquisitive process. The aim of education is not for students to become replicas of their teachers, their predecessors, their society--thus denying their unique condition, needs, potentials and goals.

Learning is more like a creative weaving process whereby a student seeks to circumscribe the unknown by relating, contrasting, associating or connecting it in some way with what he already knows. This task of associating apparently disparate elements in our experience and seeing things in new ways is what Thomas and Pearce, among others, call "metaphorical thinking"--the

translation of features from one idea, image or experience to another. It follows that learning--the process by which we make something unintelligible, strange, or foreign our own--is in essence an ongoing act of translation.

This kind of learning requires work. The translation of language texts, in particular, continually confronts the student with challenges which will require him to break through old habit-patterns of seeing and thinking, to explore fresh verbal combinations ... perhaps to conceive the "inconceivable" in the target language. As suggested earlier in this paper, translation is not a mechanical act of synonym finding, but an interpretive process whereby the translator recreates the experience or intuition that motivated the original utterance, and re-conceives it in a new linguistic form.

Like learning, however, this kind of translation involves more than a conscious and deliberate act of the will. Interestingly, the historical definitions of "translation" point to both active- and passive-voice uses of the word. On the one hand, translation refers to the acts of transcribing, paraphrasing, explaining, transforming and transferring ideas or things to another context or setting. On the other hand, it points to experiences of rapture, entrancement, or of being seized, enthralled and transformed--e.g. "By faith, Enoch was translated" (Heb. xi. 5).⁶⁵

Similarly, in learning, when one has focused one's undivided attention and energy on a question or problem--whether it be a poem, an abstract concept, or the meaning of an experience that eludes our grasp--one is sometimes surprised, seized by a sudden

insight or intuition that has the power to transform or re-structure one's mind in favor of the needed answer.⁶⁶ This latter step in learning, according to Caleb Gattegno, is a result of the assimilating, consolidating, image shaping-reshaping function of the subconscious mind after a person has spent his energy to "buy" new perceptions and insights from himself.⁶⁷

There is no question that translation "into" and "within" the English language is a difficult, challenging task for ESL students. Yet, if practiced in limited and controlled contexts, like those suggested in Part Two (pp. 37-51) of this paper, it can provide them with fruitful learning opportunities.

Finally, we language teachers may find that foreign students' ways of expressing their thoughts and perceptions sometimes, if not often, jar with our expectations and our cultural background. But their expressions, while jarring or strange, can sometimes be eye-openers that teach us to see things from a new angle. Before crossing out a student's expression as "wrong," "inappropriate," or "awkward," therefore, I believe both we and the student would benefit from taking a good look at his words to see what may have been the student's intent, and asking him to rephrase what he meant until his words communicate his thought. If we encourage foreign students to use the English language in their unique ways (within standards of intelligibility and reasonable standards of convention)--to underscore their personal or cultural connotations, to draw their own associations, and to create figures of speech--we will allow them to explore and discover the expressive possibilities of the English language, to experience it more deeply, and to enrich themselves, one another, and the language as they do so.

ENDNOTES

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- ³ Benjamin Lee Whorf, Language, Thought and Reality, ed. and intro. by John B. Carroll (Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1956), p. 252.
- ⁴ George Steiner, After Babel (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 91. Also in Whorf, pp. 87-101.
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- ⁹ Paul Friedrich, "Linguistic Relativity," Other Realities, II: On Linguistic Anthropology (California: Undena Publications, 1980), pp. 89-90.
- ¹⁰ Friedrich, "Linguistic Relativity," p. 99.
- ¹¹ Friedrich, "Linguistic Relativity," p. 100.
- ¹² Friedrich, Language, Context, Imagination, p. 474.
- ¹³ E.E. Cummings, "anyone lived in a pretty how town," in The Voice that is Great Within Us, ed. by Hayden Carruth (New York: Bantam Books, 1970), p. 182.
- ¹⁴ Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Wreck of the Deutschland, quoted by Friedrich, Language, Context, Imagination, p. 462.
- ¹⁵ Friedrich, Language, Context, Imagination, pp. 492-493.
- ¹⁶ Friedrich, Language, Context, Imagination, p. 490.
- ¹⁷ Friedrich, Language, Context, Imagination, p. 442.
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- 24 Friedrich, Language, Context, Imagination, p. 469.
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- 39 Stevick, p. 9.

- ⁴⁰Steiner, p. 23.
- ⁴¹Marianne Celce-Murcia and Lois McIntosh, eds., Teaching English as a Second Language (Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers, 1979), pp. 34-35.
- ⁴²Celce-Murcia, pp. 3, 241.
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- ⁴⁵Celce-Murcia, p. 4.
- ⁴⁶Steiner, p. 473.
- ⁴⁷Steiner, p. 47.
- ⁴⁸Charles A. Curran, Counseling Learning (Illinois: Apple River Press, 1977), pp. 112-116.
- ⁴⁹Charles A. Curran, Understanding (Illinois: Apple River Press, 1978), p. 59.
- ⁵⁰Olive Niles and David Memory, Reading Tactics (Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1977), p. 157.
- ⁵¹It is not really important to have students learn the terms for the various types of figures of speech (simile, allegory, synecdoque, metonymy, oxymoron, etc.), unless students show an express interest in understanding the differences among them. For the purpose of an ESL class, therefore, figurative language could be defined in a general way, since the aim would be for the students to learn how to interpret figurative meaning rather than to analyze types of figures.
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- ⁵³Niles and Memory, pp. 158-159.
- ⁵⁴Paul Friedrich, Poetry and Anthropology (Illinois: Benjamin and Martha Waite Press, Ltd., 1978), p. 3.
- ⁵⁵Robert Frost, "Education by Poetry," quoted by Owen Thomas, Metaphor and Related Subjects (New York: Random House Publishers, 1969), p. 3.
- ⁵⁶Thomas, p. 8.
- ⁵⁷Cassirer, p. 8.
- ⁵⁸Joseph Chilton Pearce, The Crack in the Cosmic Egg (New York: Washington Square Press, 1971), p. 61.

⁵⁹Pearce, p. 6.

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