

Video in the translation class

María González Davies. *Estudis Universitaris de Vic*

Michael Maudsley. *SAL (Servei d'Assessorament Lingüístic). Universitat de Barcelona*

In an image-oriented society it seems natural to use video as a motivating and authentic source of material. It is extensively used in Foreign and Second Language classes, as students feel more confident when using material they are familiar with and teachers can use an audiovisual support which presents informations in a comprehensible way and can prompt a wide range of activities for practising many different aspects of language. Besides the well-known reasons for using video in a Foreign or Second Language class, such as identifying language in a context, boosting the students' interest and concentration, familiarizing them with a variety of accents, listening comprehension practice and so on, video can also be specifically useful for translation awareness and practice.

In this workshop we shall illustrate the advantages of using video techniques in Translation classes with practical examples of video excerpts and worksheets which have worked favourably and have often been the basis for further research among our students.

The advantages and disadvantages of using the help of video in Second and Foreign Language Acquisition have been discussed widely for some time (see Bibliography). Taking this research as our basis, we have adapted the principles, strategies and tasks to introduce, revise or reinforce not only the L2 but also awareness of aspects of the L1 and specific translation skills.

The main advantages of video for translation can be grouped into three main areas: linguistic, extralinguistic and technical or directly professional. The first includes, among other things, introducing, revising or reinforcing most aspects of both the source and the target language/s: grammar, vocabulary, functions and notions, practising the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), combining different linguistic skills, integrating all four

skills, and interlinguistic contrastive analysis and intralinguistic contrastive analysis; the second covers discussion and debate of style, tone and register, the awareness of cultural variants, familiarizing students with different subject areas, recognizing the function of a given text (informative,...) or the development of the essential skills in translating and interpreting, such as memory, mental agility, flexibility, or common sense; and the third refers to the practice of note-taking and summarizing, and dubbing or subtitling besides techniques to reinforce interpreting skills including simultaneous translation. It presents the additional advantage of enabling the student to acquire self-study techniques, for most of the tasks can be carried out at home or at a self-access centre.

The first task which will help to illustrate the practice of some of these points is based on an excerpt from Michael Jackson's "Thriller". This clip offers a wide scope for different activities with different objectives (appendix 1). The tape that we use is subtitled in Spanish, and the tasks are designed in such a way that they start off with linguistic practice, including work on extralinguistic aspects and, finally, offer the students the chance to compare their own translations with those of the professionals.

First students pair off and become Student A and Student B. They both have the same text but Student A has to fill in the gaps in the first part, while Student B has to do so in the second part of the text. They can use different strategies to help each other (define, describe, paraphrase, spell at lower levels) as long as they speak in English and do not give the word or its translation. Once both have completed their texts, they are asked to produce a rewritten version in a more standard register. Therefore, the first part of the task is L2 practice.

So far, the objectives are mainly linguistic: awareness and practice of specific vocabulary (in this case, the vocabulary of horror films), and practice of the four skills, mostly reading, speaking and listening, but also writing if a spelling task is incorporated; and awareness of register and discussion of intalingual translation.

There are extralinguistic objectives as well: style awareness, culture, the author's intention, textual function and subject matter can be covered in a group or class discussion.

The final tasks have directly to do with professional skills. Students write subtitles or dubbed versions for extracts from films and comedy programmes and compare their work with that of professional translators. The professional translations should be selected on the basis of their quality; they can serve as models —either good or bad— and provide examples of an area in which a communicative approach to translation is of paramount importance. In the *Belinski* extract, for instance, the translator should have thought "beyond" the immediate equivalent *underground/metro*; in the extract from *Black Adder*,

the play on words in *bill = beak/money to be paid* is dealt with communicatively and imaginatively.

Video material can be found relatively easily as it has become part of our culture. It is produced for educational purposes as well as for entertainment, although in general authentic material is more motivating than prepared graded material for Foreign Language students. Moreover, it presents realistic, stereotype-free settings which favour cultural awareness. Documentaries, the news, interviews, video clips and films can all be used in different ways. Ideally, the teacher should have access to the L2 as well as the L1 version of the tape since then tasks can include translation analysis as well. Material can be recorded from television using the Dual or Nicam systems, which are especially useful for dubbing tasks. Subtitled films are useful for translation analysis and comparison. Films with subtitles in English —sold with magazines such as “Speak Up”— can save time when producing worksheets. These films are also available from NCI captions and in teletext.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ALLAN, M. (1985): *Teaching English with video*. Longman.
- ARNHEIM, R. (1969): *Visual thinking*. University of California, Berkeley & Los Angeles.
- BUSQUETS, S. (1977): *Para leer la imagen*. ICCE
- BRUMFIT, J. C. (ed.) (1983): *Video applications in English language teaching*. Pergamon.
- COOPER; LAVER; RINVOLUCRI (1991): *Video*. OUP
- FERNÁNDEZ, F. (1989): *El vídeo, un medio para la enseñanza*. Ph. D Universitat de Barcelona.
- FERRÉS, J. (1987): *Vídeo y educación*. Laia. Barcelona.
- KRASHEIN, S. (1985): *The input hypothesis. Issues and implications*. Longman
- LAVERY, M. et al. (1984): *Active viewing plus*. M. E. P.
- LEANY, C. et al. (1987): *Video in action. The bell educational trust*.
- LONERGAN, J. (1984): *Video in language teaching*. CUP.
- TOMALIN, B. (1986): *Video, TV & radio in the English class*. MacMillan.

APPENDIX 1

THRILLER

Student A

Complete the text by asking student B to help you with the missing words.

..... falls across the land. The midnight hour is close at hand. Creatures in search of blood to the neighbourhood. Whosoever shall be found without the 's forgiving gown must stand and face the hounds of and rot inside a corpse shell.

Now you can help student B.

The foulest stench is in the air; the fung of 40.000 years. And grizzly goons from every tomb are closing in to seal your doom and though you fight to stay alive, your body starts to shiver for no mere mortal can resist the evil of the thriller.

THRILLER B

Student B

Complete the text by asking student A to help you with the missing words.

Darkness falls across the land. The midnight hour is close at hand. Creatures crawl in search of blood to terrorize the neighbourhood. Whosoever shall be found without the soul's forgiving gown must stand and face the hounds of Hell and rot inside a corpse shell.

Now you help student A.

The foulest is in the air; the fung of years. And grizzly goons from every are closing in to seal your doom and though you to stay alive, your body starts to for no mere mortal can resist the evil of the thriller.

APPENDIX 2

TRANSCRIPTIONS OF THE MATERIAL USED**Belinski (from Cluny Brown, by Ernest Lubitsch)**

Good heavens!

What's the matter?

It's Belinski!

Adam Belinski!

Is he a gangster?

Don't be an idiot, Betty. He's Czech. He's a great man!

He's famous!

Whatever for?

He's a writer, a professor at Prague. One of Hitler's worst enemies.

That's why the Nazis are after him. He's probably just one jump ahead of them now. I wonder how he got to London.

Via the underground, no doubt. What a man!

("Via the underground" traduït per "en metro").

Thumbtacks (from The Cobweb)

I don't think the money should be a problem.

Shouldn't it? Last year the clinic spent a hundred dollars just on thumbtacks.

Thumbtacks?

Yes, and paper clips. We can't afford them.

("Thumbtacks" traduït per "tampax").

Black Adder/ L'Escruçó Negre

Black Adder: Oh God! Bills, bills, bills! One is born, one runs up bills, one dies. And what have I got to show for it? Nothing. A butler's uniforms and a slightly effeminate hairdo. Honestly, Baldrick, sometimes I feel like a pelican — whichever way I look there's always an enormous bill in front of me. Pass the biscuit barrel. Let's see what's in the kitty, shall we? Ninepence! Oh God, what are we going to do?

L'Escruçó Negre: Factures, lletres i factures! Naixem, paguem lletres i morim. I quin profit en trec jo? No res. Un uniforme de majordom i un pentinat de marieta. Mira, Baldrick, sembla ben bé la i grega –m'hi posi com m'hi posi, sempre tinc un munt de lletres al meu davant. Passa'm el pot -a veure què hi ha dins. Nou penics. Mare de Déu! Què farem amb això?