

Students' Reflections on Pedagogical Translation in Spanish as a Foreign Language

Reflexiones sobre la traducción pedagógica de estudiantes de español como lengua extranjera

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Abstract

The use of the L1 and translation in foreign language teaching (FLT) has been widely analysed in recent decades. However, little attention has been paid to student's beliefs on the use of translation in FLT. Thus, the present study aims at showing secondary school Spanish FL learners' reflections on the use of translation activities in the teaching and learning of Spanish as a second language in a secondary school in the United Kingdom. Our findings reveal that students not only consider translation a natural activity in their learning process, but also a beneficial tool in the acquisition of a foreign language.

Key words: spanish as a foreign language; secondary education; pedagogical translation; self-reflection.

Resumen

El uso de la L1 y la traducción en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras (LLEE) ha sido analizado en profundidad en las últimas décadas. Sin embargo, se ha prestado poca atención a las opiniones de los estudiantes acerca del uso de la traducción en la enseñanza de LLEE. Por ello, el presente estudio tiene como propósito mostrar las reflexiones de estudiantes de secundaria que estudian Español como Lengua Extranjera (ELE) sobre el uso de la traducción en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje en una escuela de secundaria en el Reino Unido. Los resultados que revelan que los estudiantes consideran la traducción no sólo como una actividad natural en su proceso de aprendizaje, sino también como una herramienta ventajosa para el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera.

Palabras clave: español lengua extranjera (ELE); educación secundaria; traducción pedagógica; autorreflexión.

1 . Introduction

Translation plays a very important role in an increasingly globalised world and in an increasingly multilingual Europe where it is used on a daily basis. As a result of globalisation, translations have gained importance in our society in order to enable communication. It is well known that without translation the spread of culture would be impossible and the information currently available would be greatly reduced. Accordingly, if there exists such a high volume of translations within our culture, and we are daily exposed to translation, it seems appropriate to promote translation as a teaching tool in the foreign language classroom. When translation begins to be part of language teaching and learning, the term ‘pedagogical translation’ emerges. Pedagogical translation refers to an additional resource in the process of learning a language. In pedagogical translation it is not the message that matters, but the acquisition and improvement of the language itself. Gierden (2003) uses translation as a mere philological need and understands that pedagogical translation does not dwell on the creative and aesthetic pleasure that requires a literary transfer (competence of qualified translators), but seeks for text fidelity by focusing all the attention on linguistic equivalence.

Despite the aforementioned purported benefits of pedagogical translation in FLT, the use of translation in second language learning lessons has been a subject of much controversy and criticism (Duff, 1989; Widdowson, 1990; Cook, 2010; Leonardi, 2010). In more recent times, pedagogical translation has emerged as a useful teaching tool for L2 learners (Atkinson 1987; Malmkjaer, 1998; Leonardi, 2010). However, little attention has been paid to the importance foreign language learners give to translation in their learning progress. Hence, the present study aims at analysing the role of pedagogical

translation as a resource in second language acquisition (SLA), particularly in the teaching and learning of Spanish as a foreign language. For the purpose of this paper, the role of translation in foreign language teaching (FLT) and the importance of pedagogical translation and self-reflection in students' learning process will be first studied so that the object of study is clearly described. Then, a study will be conducted in a secondary school in the United Kingdom in order to test if students consider pedagogical translation relevant for their learning progress. Report of the study conducted with its methodology, main results found and interpretation of the same follows. We conclude pointing out some lines for further research trying to overcome the main limitations of the present study.

2. The role of pedagogical translation in foreign language learning

The role that translation played in the teaching and learning of a foreign language has overcome three different stages: predominance, rejection/absence and stage of progressive reinstatement (Zabalbeascoa, 1990; Alcarazo López and López Fernandez, 2014). In the predominance stage, translation was used as a very valid method to teach and learn classical languages as Greek or Latin. The Grammar-Translation Method was used to teach grammar and vocabulary, and speaking and listening skills were sidelined and neglected, resulting in a general inability to use the language for communicative purposes. Thereby, the belief that the use of the mother tongue and translation was not a successful tool for teaching and learning a second language derives from the use of this method, which has not enjoyed the same popularity when it comes to the learning of modern languages (Atkinson, 1987; Duff, 1989; Cuellar Lázaro, 2004). Translation as a method of language learning and teaching has been neglected and purported “as a pariah in almost all the fashionable high-profile language teaching theories of the 20th century” (Cook, 2010: 15).

Language-teaching strategies have focussed on the mastery of four different skills, which define language competence: reading, writing, speaking and listening (Vermer, 2010). Likewise, FLT assumes that people learn a language to operate in a monolingual environment; therefore, translation and learners' own language were considered harmful and counterproductive for the successful learning of a foreign language. For this reason many language teachers are locked in those traditional methods where the only possibility is a monolingual teaching methodology.

Despite the endless attempts of some authors to eliminate translation as a teaching tool, all their arguments against translation in SLA can be counteracted, since none of them were substantiated in experimental research (Malmkjaer, 1998). Besides, it has been proved that learners' first language cannot be entirely banished from language learning since "the mother tongue is the womb from which the second language is born" (Deller and Rinvolucrí, 2002: 4). In this vein, it is natural for people encountering a foreign language to relate it to the language they already know and to naturally translate mentally into their mother tongue (Duff, 1989; Widdowson, 1990; House, 2009; Cook, 2010; Leonardi, 2010; Marqués Aguado and Solís Becerra, 2013). Hence, if learners have a natural tendency to use their mother tongue and to translate into their L1, it seems reasonable to promote translation in the FL classroom. For this reason, teachers have retaken the use of L1 and translation strategies within the classroom, so that in a few years translation could be considered the fifth skill in FLT for the benefits it purports for FL learners since it improves verbal agility and expands students' L2 vocabulary. Pedagogical translation also favours learners' understanding of how languages work, helping students' consolidation and comprehension of structures in the foreign language (Schäffner, 1998).

Once we have discussed the importance of pedagogical translation in FLT, the next section of the present paper is devoted to

explaining the implications of pedagogical translation in learner autonomy by promoting students' self-reflection in the classroom.

2.1. Implications of pedagogical translation: Learner autonomy and students' self-reflection

Pedagogical translation is a quite recent field of study, and due to its novelty very little research has been conducted on the role given to pedagogical translation into the L1. This lack of research is even wider regarding the perceptions students, teachers and teacher educators have on the importance of the use of L1 in the classroom (Ferrer, 2005) According to Little (2007) and Benson (2007), learners' opinions are a reliable source when it comes to enhancing foreign language teaching-learning process, since nobody could have a more objective awareness of what one learns -or how they learn it- than the learners themselves. Cotterall (2000) and McClure (2001) asserted that the more students think about how they learn, the more they will be able to take charge of their own learning, and they will become autonomous learners.

Autonomy is a typical quality of learners, or in Benson's words "autonomy is an attribute of learners" (2007: 22). Learner autonomy has always been connected with 'responsibility' (Bocanegra and Haidl, 1999), which means that learners become autonomous when they recognize that they are responsible of all aspects of their learning process (Little, 1991). However, most teachers know that students do not take any responsibility in their learning unless instructors provide them with instruments to make them reflect on how they learn and how this learning can be made more effective (Harmer, 2007). Consequently, learner autonomy grows when students are aware of why, how, and for what reason they are learning a new language (Dam, 1995). Therefore, the teachers' role is to encourage learners to take responsibility of what they are doing in order to help their students become autonomous. Learners must be able to evaluate learning outcomes, identifying weaknesses as well as

strengths in order to give the next phase of learning an appropriate focus (Little, 1995 and 2004). Learner reflection also helps to improve learning strategies as well as overcoming weaknesses in the learning process. By means of students' reflection, teachers may change the strategies used or the activities proposed in the classroom since they may realise that students do not consider some types of activity useful and successful for their learning. Henceforth, negotiation between teachers and learners becomes vital for the development of learner autonomy (Little, 2007; Roca de Larios and López Serrano, 2011; Martínez Lirola, 2012a and 2012b).

Despite the importance of learner reflection for the successful learning of a language, little attention has been paid to students' opinions about the use of translation in their own learning process (Bagheri and Fazel, 2011; Fernández Polo and Cal Varela, 2011; Fernández and Zabalbeascoa, 2012; Canga Alonso, 2013a, 2013b). What is more, these studies have been developed with undergraduates in different countries, but, to our knowledge there is a lack of studies which analyse secondary school students' perceptions on pedagogical translation. In order to provide some light to this lack of research, the present study presents the results obtained in a questionnaire responded by secondary school students learning Spanish as a FL to reflect their opinions on translation as part of their learning process, making them active participants and responsible for their own learning.

For this purpose, we set out to find answers to the following research questions:

RQ1: Do students consider important to translate into their L1 when they are learning a language?

RQ2: Do students think that a contrastive analysis between their L1 and L2 can be a useful tool to learn the L2?

RQ3: Is self-reflection and translation important in their process of learning a foreign language?

3. Methodology

3.1. Setting and participants

The study was conducted at a *College* in Manchester, United Kingdom in 2014, at the department of Foreign Languages. The *College* is a sixth form college where students typically study for advance school-level qualifications. It has approximately 1,800 students around the age of sixteen, which are in their sixth form education. Roughly 32 of all the students in the school chose Spanish as one of their main subjects and six of these students, who were in their second year of the A Level qualification, completed the study. The study was accomplished by a total of three girls and three boys, who were all studying Spanish as a L2. Despite all of them were proficient in English, it was not all the students' mother tongue. A girl and a boy had Portuguese as their L1 and English was their L2. For the purpose of the present study, we will considered that Spanish was the L2 for all the students, since those students who had Portuguese as their mother tongue were bilingual from birth. As aforementioned, the students in this *College* were all around the age of 16, however in this group ages range from 16 to 19. Students were all in the same proficiency level, which was equivalent to B1⁺-B2 according to the *Common European Framework of Reference* (2001). This level of proficiency has been tested by the teacher of the Spanish subject throughout different activities and tests that he has proposed to their students along the academic year.

3.2. Instruments and procedure

As abovementioned, the study was conducted in one of the Spanish lessons taught in a *College* in Manchester to A level students. Only a session was necessary for the development of our research, which comprises: 1) a questionnaire which help us to understand students' background (see Appendix 1); 2) the translation of a journalistic text from Spanish into English (see Appendix 2); 3) the

fulfilment of a second questionnaire about the usefulness of translation itself as a teaching tool and the activity proposed (Appendix 3). Before carrying out the study, students were duly informed about the purpose of the activity. Moreover, the teacher in charge of the Spanish subject allowed us to conduct the study during school hours and let us manage the study according to our needs and goals.

The first questionnaire (see appendix 1) included some questions about students' personal information, such as gender, age, the number of languages they knew and the time they have devoted to the study of Spanish. This questionnaire was handed in to the students before they started with the translation activity. Informants were asked about the time they have devoted to the study of Spanish throughout their lives. The answers showed that half of the students had been studying Spanish for only 4 years, whereas the other half had been studying Spanish for 6 years. Moreover, they received 6 hours of Spanish lessons per week during the nine months of the course. Despite the differences in the time they have dedicated to the study of the language, they all accredited B1⁺-B2, according to the marks they had obtained in the tests they had sat during the course.

With regard to text translation, students were already familiarised with translation activities, since throughout their Spanish learning experience they translated different texts. In their first year in the *College* (AS level) they were used to translating from Spanish into English. As they were already trained with Spanish-English translation, we chose a translation from the L2 to the L1 to favour their reflection on the accomplished translation by means of the questionnaire implemented at the end of the session (see Appendix 1).

As for text selection, we tried to look for a challenging and motivating piece of writing, since we agree with Nord's (2005) assertion that the complexity of a text is not only an intrinsic quality of the text itself, but it also depends on students' motivation, prior

knowledge and level of competence. In this vein, the source text was adapted according to students' proficiency level so as to favour students' understanding and latter translation. The text selected for the research was an adaptation of a piece of news published on the BBC online the 10th May 2014 "La Universidad Virtual donde los títulos son gratis" [http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/noticias/2014/05/140507_universidad_del_pueblo_gratis_dv_finde.shtml] (see Appendix 2). Journalistic texts are believed to be easier to translate since they do not contain the complex structures and stilted vocabulary a literary text usually includes. Conversely, journalistic pieces of information should be comprehensible to readers since their main aim is to inform somebody about something (Hernández Guerrero, 2006). Furthermore, the topic in the article could be interesting for high school learners since it deals with current issues students are familiar with.

The translation of a text was just a compliment in our study, and there will not be an analysis of the text itself and the way learners' translate a text. Our main concern here is to show students' perspectives on the use of translation as a tool for foreign language leaning, so that students' experience is the focus of our research. The translation was a mere instrument to favour students' reflection on the importance they gave to translation in their learning process. This reflection would have been more difficult if our informants had not previously translated a text adapted to their proficiency level. In addition, the translation of this text provided students with an additional practice for their final exam, since they had to face translation activities to get their A Level certificate.

After the completion of the translation, a questionnaire in students' L1 was provided. There are many different ways in which teachers can analyse students' reflections in classroom settings, however, for the purpose of our research a questionnaire is the tool chosen for embracing reflective intervention (Brown, 2001). The usage of questionnaires is not new within second language research

insomuch as it is the most common method of data collection. This is due to its ease to be constructed, its flexibility and the fact that it is capable of collecting a large amount of information in a short while and the information provided can be readily processed (Dörnyei, 2010). However, to our knowledge, there are few studies that have used questionnaires as a method of self-reflection on the use of translation as a teaching tool in second language learning. The questionnaire (see Appendix 3) was in students' mother tongue in order to help them fulfil the questionnaire without hesitation, since it is not our main concern here to improve learners' Spanish knowledge, but support translation as a useful tool for this learning and help them reflect upon this fact. Accordingly, this questionnaire was employed in order to obtain some empirical data related to the use of L1 and translation in foreign language lessons. By means of the questionnaire, learners will reflect on their learning outcomes as Spanish language learners. There is the possibility that many learners have never considered how the use of L1 and translation can help them learn an L2, so that responding this questionnaire may help them think about how they learn and how translation may be beneficial for the successful learning of the foreign language. In this sense, we are trying to foster learner autonomy and to promote students' responsibilities within the learning process.

As illustrated in Appendix 3, the questionnaire provided to students (adapted from Rodríguez and Oxbrow, 2007; Martínez Lirola and Rubio, 2009; Canga Alonso, 2013a) consisted of fifteen items and they were asked to complete it based on a 4-type-likert-scale. There were four scales for each item from 'totally agrees', which indicates participants' highest agreement with the statement to 'totally disagrees', which represents the lowest acceptance of the assertion proposed. Students' responses will be organised into three major blocks:

- a) Use of L1 and translation in language learning (items 1-6)

- b) Use of contrastive analysis Spanish-English / English-Spanish (items 7-10)
- c) Self-reflection on the activity proposed (items 11-15)

4. Results

In order to answer our first research question (RQ1: Do students consider important to translate into their L1 when they are learning a language?), we will focus on the items related to the use of L1 and translation in second language learning settings (Items 1-7 in the questionnaire). The first three items referred to the different conditions used by our learners in order to face their translation task. The results of the first item (I usually translate from Spanish into English when I am studying) showed that more than a half of the students used translation when studying an L2 (see figure 1). Four out of the six students surveyed agreed with this item, whereas the other two remaining denied having used translation when studying a FL. The responses to item 2 (I usually translate from Spanish into English when I am reading a text) indicated that translation techniques are very frequent among the students in the sample. Moreover, the results for the third item (I usually translate from Spanish into English when I am learning vocabulary) were very similar since only one of them did not admit having used their L1 when learning new vocabulary. Item 4 (Spanish-English translation helps me to learn new vocabulary) revealed the positive attitude towards the use of translation when coming to learn new vocabulary since all the informants were for the use of translation to learn new vocabulary (see figure 1). Additionally, item number 5 (I try not to use English in my Spanish lessons) showed that four students do not make efforts to prevent the use of their L1 in second language learning, but they used their mother tongue on several occasions. This can be related to the natural tendency of learners to translate things (Duff, 1989; Widdowson, 1990; Cook, 2010; Leonardi, 2010), which was already mentioned throughout this paper. In this sense, while translation is seen as a natural process, it is

unnatural for learners not to use translation in FL learning. Furthermore, it can be appreciated in the responses to item 6 (Translation activities are very helpful to learn Spanish) that learners consider the use of translation and the L1 as a successful instrument to foster L2 learning. As shown in figure 1, all the students seemed to believe that L1 and translation activities might help them learn Spanish more effectively.

Items 7-10 were grouped into a different block since they pay attention to Spanish-English / English-Spanish, therefore they are useful to find students' responses to RQ 2 (Do students think that a contrastive analysis between their L1 and L2 can be a useful tool to learn the foreign language?). Our findings evince that all the students agreed with every item presented, which means that learners did not see a contrastive analysis between the mother tongue and the L2 as a counterproductive activity. These results also show learners' disagreement with some teachers' beliefs on translation as a negative activity to foster L2 learning. All the informants felt that it is basic for their learning process to be aware of the differences and similarities between their L1 and the language to be studied (item 7: It is necessary to be aware of the similarities and differences between Spanish and English). As shown in figure 1, all the students agreed with the need to be aware of similarities and differences between as well as establishing comparisons of grammatical structures their mother tongue and the L2 (items 7 and 8). The same tendency was found in items number 9 (Translation gives me the opportunity to see how words or structures can be used in Spanish and thus I learnt from my mistakes), and 10 (Seeing different structures translated into English helps me to assimilate sentence word order in Spanish. Thus, students' answers to this block of items concur with House's assertion that "translation promotes explicit knowledge about the foreign language and helps develop awareness of differences and similarities between the native and the foreign language systems" (2009: 64). Surprisingly, all the students shared the same opinion when responding to this part of the questionnaire, making it clear that the

views of students are very different to the opinions of those who claimed that a contrastive analysis between the L1 and the L2 caused interference and confusion, so that it ought to be avoided.

As for the last group of items in which the questionnaire was subdivided, we planned some statements for self-reflection on the activity done by our students. These answers help us find data for our third research question (RQ3: Is self-reflection and translation important in their process of learning a foreign language?). As illustrated in figure 1, four students assumed that they have improved their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills whilst two informants disagreed with item 11 (By means of this activity I have improved my reading, writing, speaking and listening skills). The scores obtained in item number 12 (By means of translation I have improved my abilities to analyse and synthesize information) showed five informants considered translation as an acceptable tool for the improvement of their abilities to analyse and synthesize a text. However, two participants consider translation useless to attain this goal. Moreover, item 13 (By means of translation I have improved my abilities to organise information) revealed that all our informants agreed with this statement, which seems to imply that they consider translation as a positive tool to improve such skills. The last two items display students' attitude and behaviour towards the activity suggested in our study, which will help us have a better understanding of the results our informants obtained. Regarding item 14 (I have felt motivated by this translation activity) five students agreed with the statement, whereas only one participant confirmed that s/he was not fully motivated. The outcome of the last item presented (item 15: I have put a lot of effort in this activity) showed that all the survey respondents admitted that they had put interest and effort in the completion of the translation task.

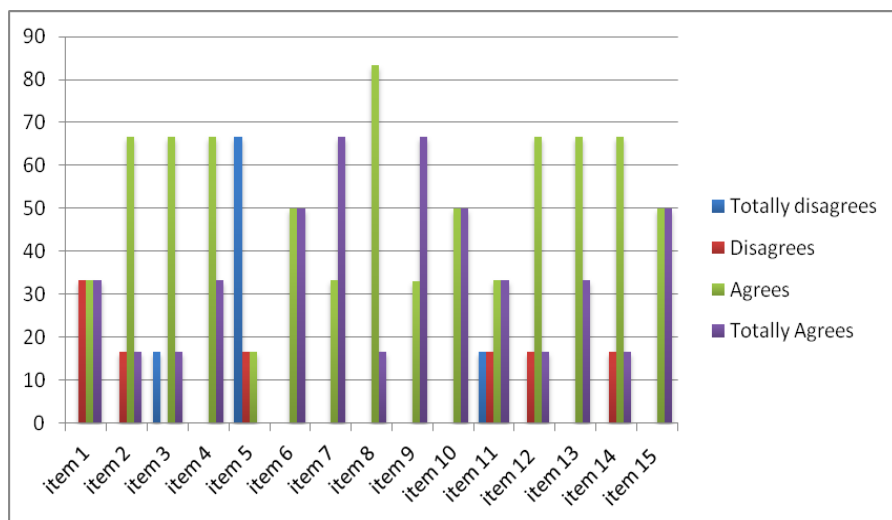


Figure 1. Percentages per item.

5. Discussion

The results of our study indicate that according to our learners' opinions, the use of L1 and translation activities can be a legitimate pedagogical tool in second language learning, which might contribute to the strengthening of foreign language learning. As well as O' Malley (1985) found that translation was a frequently used learning strategy among beginners and intermediate learners, our informants admit that they do not avoid using their L1 while translating a text and feel that they are useful strategies in their learning process. These findings also concur with previous research on L1 usage in the FLT (Rodríguez and Oxbrow, 2008) since they find that the use of L1 and translation seem to enhance second language acquisition processes. Our data also shows that most of the students acknowledge that they translate naturally into their mother tongue whilst learning a foreign language. This outcome indicates that the use of the L1 is unavoidable in second language learning at least from our learners' point of view. The results obtained for items 1-6 seem to prove Leonardi's (2010) assertion that all foreign language

learners instinctively translate from the foreign language into their mother tongue and that it is not natural to ask them to think in the language they are learning without using their mother tongue. What is more, students themselves value translation as very helpful activity to learn a language. Therefore, taking into account learners' opinion, it would be convenient and advisable to reconsider the role of translation and L1 in second language learning acquisition. Conversely, banning the use of translation and the use of the L1 in the classroom might be harmful for the acquisition of the FL. Thus, our belief here is that if the use of translation is inevitable in the classroom.

Our students' assertions on the use of translation and the L1 in FL classes are in agreement with Rodríguez and Oxbrow's (2008) claim that it is an indisputable truth that students translate naturally all the time. For this reason, it seems logical that a responsible use of the mother tongue and translation as a teaching tool might be suitable to assist learners to boost their knowledge of language systems as well as to make useful comparisons between languages and to benefit their comprehension of second language features in order to improve foreign language learning. Besides, learners consider that a contrastive analysis between the language to learn and their L1 is beneficial, since it may influence on their language acquisition to help them understand the similarities and differences between both languages in terms of grammar and sentence construction. In this sense, students' answers support our beliefs and those of all who have considered that translation skills help noticing and controlling interference through a contrastive analysis of both languages (Leonardi, 2010; Vermer, 2010). Furthermore, Caballero Rodríguez (2010) mentioned that students' reflections about the differences and similarities between the languages they translate, will help them better understand the interaction between languages, and therefore, to avoid some common mistakes. Hence, students' reflection on their own learning and how successful the methods used by teachers will not only help us in the development of our study, but also improve the comprehensive capabilities and later performance of learners themselves.

On the other hand, as aforesaid, the last part of the questionnaire was devoted to students' self-reflection on the activity accomplished. In this section, the results show that most learners consider that they have improved their abilities to organise and analyse information, while by contrast a smaller percentage believe to have improved their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Subsequently, some of our learners do not seem to perceive that translation helps to improve all the traditional skills required in learning a second language (reading, writing, listening and speaking skills), which is in opposition to other studies carried out in other learning settings, in which students improve their oral and written competences (Leonardi 2010; Canga Alonso, 2013b). Although this may be regarded as a rather unsatisfactory result for the purposes of our study, we feel that this finding is the result of some of its shortcomings. If this activity had taken place on several occasions and in different time periods, the results may have varied. The ideal for a study of this nature would have been that students have completed at least two different translations and a questionnaire (one at the beginning of the course and another one a few months later) to see how they respond to the questionnaire once they have more practice on translation activities. Moreover, it would be also wise to take more time to do the translation activity and comment out loud the difficulties that students have encountered on the translation process to see if they change their attitudes towards translation when applied to the improvement of listening and speaking skills.

Our intention when carrying out this study was to provide support to the use of L1 and translation activities in second language acquisition thanks to students' opinions about the matter. We consider that this paper is adequate and useful to make readers aware of students' beliefs on the use of L1 and translation when learning a foreign language, and that this can serve as the beginning of a new concept on translation in SLA, as can be noticed, we are also aware of the limitations of the study we propose here. The sample of six

students is not large enough to make generalizations about what students think about the use of translation as a second language-teaching tool. Nevertheless, we consider that despite being a small sample, it is adequate for an exploratory study. Furthermore, the type of students in the course might not be fully representative of the average Spanish students in the UK. Due to these failures on our study we have been cautious and we have avoided generalisations from this sample. Hereinafter, the purpose of the study is to offer a number of points for reflection which may serve as a basis for further research on the use of L1 and translation in the foreign language classroom and to open new avenues of research, which take into account students' mother tongue, the direction of translation and the educational level of learners. Additionally, it is worth mentioning here what Carreres purports in one of her articles, which is entirely consistent with our beliefs: "There is enough evidence to suggest that translation has an important role to play in language teaching, but more empirical research is needed. In particular, we need to gain further insight into its effectiveness relative to other language learning activities" (2006: 18).

6. Conclusion

In the present paper we have attempted to support the use of translation and the L1 in second language acquisition, where it has long been exiled from the classroom for the successful learning of a language in favour of a monolingual methodology. For this purpose we carried out a study which shows that pedagogical translation is another resource within students' learning process. Thereby, translation has not to be used as the only method for learning a language, but as a valuable activity, along with many other complementary tasks. This understood, pedagogical translation is fruitful and our research indicates that students' willingness to learn is enhanced because they feel more comfortable using their native

language and therefore, self-confidence increases when using the target language.

Finally, by translating students become aware of the grammatical divergences existing between the source and the target language, and therefore they will be able to correct some of the most common mistakes. Nonetheless, as abovementioned, further research is called for to overcome the limitations of the present study and, thus, test these assertions with a bigger sample of Spanish FL learners. Likewise, a similar study accomplished by students whose L1 is Spanish and who are studying English as a L2 could be conducted in order to see the differences or similarities when dealing with a different L2 (English).

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Appendix 1. Background Questionnaire

1. NOMBRE:
2. SEXO:
3. EDAD:
4. ¿CUÁNTO TIEMPO LLEVAS ESTUDIANDO ESPAÑOL?
5. AÑOS:
6. HORAS APROXIMADAS:
7. ADEMÁS DE ESPAÑOL, ¿QUÉ OTROS IDIOMAS CONOCES? NÓMBRALOS SEGÚN SEAN TU L1, L2, L3, ETC.

Appendix 2. La universidad virtual donde los títulos son gratis

Ali Patrik Eid es un hombre feliz. Hace unas semanas se graduó. No tuvo que asistir a clases para hacerlo ni tampoco debió pagar por ello. Además, cuando su esposa tuvo mellizos, poco después de que él empezara su curso en gestión empresarial, no tuvo ningún problema en tomarse seis meses libres para ayudar a cuidarlos. Estaba inscrito en la Universidad del Pueblo (UoPeople), una de un número creciente de universidades en línea que están abriéndole nuevas puertas a la gente, particularmente en el mundo en desarrollo. "Yo siempre soñé con tener un título pero nunca pensé que lo lograría", le dice a la BBC este jordano de 34 años.

Los cursos en línea no son nuevos -la Universidad de Phoenix, en Estados Unidos, por ejemplo, ofrece cursos 100% en línea desde 1987-, pero la UoPeople es la primera en otorgar títulos sin cobrar nada. A los estudiantes se les pide que paguen US\$100 por cada examen, pero si no tienen dinero con el que pagarlo, pueden aprovechar una gama de becas a su disposición.

La UoPeople fue inaugurada en 2009 por el empresario israelí Shai Reshef, quien cree que el acceso a la educación superior es un derecho básico que debe estar disponible para todos. En este momento, cuenta con 700 estudiantes de 142 países, y Reshef tiene la esperanza de que para 2016 la cantidad llegue a 5.000. Los costos se mantienen bajos puesto que no hay que pagar por aulas ni por libros. "Hasta los profesores, que son lo más caro tradicionalmente, acuden libremente y trabajan sin cobrar", señala Reshef.

Pero la pregunta del millón es: ¿Es válido un título de esta institución? Eid aún no ha conseguido empleo y admite que en una entrevista que tuvo en los Emiratos Árabes, el entrevistador no sabía de la existencia de esa universidad. A pesar de ello, dice, el potencial empleador quedó "feliz" con el título que Eid le presentó. Ahora está considerando empezar su propio negocio, inspirado por su tiempo en la Universidad. "Toda la vida soñé con ser mi propio jefe y en este curso aprendí cómo gestionar un negocio empezando de cero. Así que si consigo ayuda financiera, lo haré".

Adapted from:

La Universidad virtual donde los títulos son gratis, Jane Wakefield,
BBC

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/noticias/2014/05/140507_universidad_d
el_pueblo_gratis_dv_finde.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/noticias/2014/05/140507_universidad_d_el_pueblo_gratis_dv_finde.shtml)
[online] Accessed: 10th May 2014

Appendix 3. Questionnaire. Think about the use of the translation you have done in this class and answer the following questions by ticking the appropriate box (adapted from Rodríguez Juárez and Oxbrow, 2007; Martínez Lirola and Rubio, 2009; Canga Alonso, 2013a)

	1	2	3	4
1. I usually translate from Spanish into English when I am studying				
2. I usually translate from Spanish into English when I am reading a text				
3. I usually translate from Spanish into English when I am learning vocabulary				
4. Spanish-English translation helps me to learn new vocabulary				
5. I try not to use English in my Spanish lessons				
6. Translation activities are very helpful to learn Spanish				
7. It is necessary to be aware of the similarities and differences between Spanish and English				
8. Comparisons of grammatical structures in English and Spanish increases my understanding of grammar				
9. Translation gives me the opportunity to see how words or structures can be used in Spanish and thus I learn from my mistakes				
10. Seeing different structures translated into English helps me to assimilate sentence word order in Spanish				
11. By means of this activity I have improved my reading, writing, speaking and listening skills				
12. By means of translation I have improved my abilities to analyse and synthesize information				
13. By means of translation I have improved my abilities to organise information				
14. I have felt motivated by this translation activity				
15. I have put a lot of effort in this activity				

4= Totally agrees; 3=Agrees; 2=Disagrees; 1= Totally disagrees

