

Translation in the Foreign Language Teaching of the Twenty-First Century: A Game of ‘Hide-and-Seek’?

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Abstract

In the globalised era of the 21st century the constant mobility of citizens around the world has led to great linguistic and cultural diversity resulting in a growing demand for interlingual and intercultural mediation, affecting both disciplines of Translation Studies (TS) and Foreign Language Teaching (FLT). The fact that achieving interlingual/intercultural communication is an objective of both translation and language learning has been officially acknowledged in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (2001), the first document since the decline of the Grammar-Translation method to relate the concept of translation to language learning. However, neither the acknowledgment of the role of the L1 in the L2 classroom nor the development of mediation skills for every language student, as proposed in CEFR, have seemed to restore the place of translation within FLT. The paper examines the possible reasons for the negative reactions towards translation’s recent introduction in FLT, arguing for its use as both a bilingual communicative activity and a means for intercultural mediation.

Key Words: Translation Studies, Foreign Language Teaching, bilingualism, intercultural mediation

Introduction

During the last sixty years a series of documents and recommendations has been drafted by the Council of Europe promoting the idea of plurilingualism and the need for education policies, which develop learners’ linguistic competence through plurilingual teaching and pluricultural education (Council of Europe 2007: 57–58). Within the context of a plurilingual approach the aim of language learning has shifted – language learners are no longer expected to achieve “native-like” language mastery but to act as “social agents” (Council of Europe 2001: 1), who have the skills to link all of their linguistic repertoires (own language and second/foreign languages) with each other, switch between them (code-switching) and

mediate between parties who cannot understand each other through translation and interpretation (ibid 4–5).

The current article is particularly interested in translation, and how it is connected to this plurilingual approach within the context of Foreign Language Teaching (FLT). It specifically makes two observations: first, that although translation is explicitly connected with the concept of mediation as a communicative activity for language learners, no such explicit connections have been attempted with the concepts of plurilingualism, bilingualism and code switching. Secondly, that even the explicit connection between translation and mediation has sparked mostly negative reactions by language teachers and scholars, thus, making translation almost ‘invisible’ within FLT.

The paper attempts to challenge this type of ‘invisibility’, by arguing that translation is indeed related to all the aforementioned concepts currently being introduced in FLT. After taking a brief look at some historical attitudes towards translation in language teaching, it discusses the way the plurilingual approach is currently defined in the context of the European Union, and draws on research and theories from the field of bilingualism, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Translation Studies (TS) in order to (re)establish the relationship between them and uncover this game of ‘hide-and-seek’ between translation and the FLT.

Historical Attitudes Towards Translation in FLT

The relationship of translation with FLT has been a very long one. The first positive attitude towards this relationship was the Grammar-Translation Method, which dominated the European and foreign language teaching scene up until the 1940s. Based on the earlier classical model for teaching Latin and Greek, the method focused on reading and writing, while translation was utilised as the basic teaching technique for presenting new vocabulary, explaining grammar, and evaluating the students’ performance (Richards & Rodgers 1986). Since the 1940s, however, the reasons for language learning shifted from reading comprehension, mastery of grammar rules and literary appreciation to oral communication and focus on meaning – instead of form – which should be conveyed directly through demonstration and action and not through translation (Butzkamm & Caldwell 2009). This led to the rejection of the Grammar-Translation method, in the second half of the twentieth century, and the emergence of new methods, such as the Direct Method (or else Natural

Approach), the Audiolingual/Audiovisual Method, the Communicative Language Teaching Approach, and the Task-Based Language Teaching amongst others (ibid).

The majority of the methods developed throughout the second half of the twentieth century have held a predominately negative attitude towards the use of translation and the learner's own language (L1), ranging from total banning to cautious use, when absolutely necessary. More specifically, use of L1 has been blamed for reducing the time of exposure to valuable L2 input (Hall & Cook 2012), whereas translation has been considered an unsuitable teaching technique, allegedly accused of "producing interference, being independent and radically different from the four skills, misleading students into one-to-one correspondence, being time-consuming, being only appropriate for training translators, [and] being a bad test of language skills" (Malmkjaer 1998: 44). With translation also being criticised as "uncommunicative, 'boring', 'pointless', 'difficult', 'irrelevant', and the like" (Maley 1989: 3), it is no surprise that language teaching organisations (e.g. British Council, Goethe Institute), schools, and language departments in colleges and universities around the world, have adopted a monolingual approach, and have implemented policies banning any use of L1 and translation activities from their classrooms (Kerr 2014: 1).

Be that as it may, the prevalence of the monolingual approach has never managed to completely evict translation and L1 from the language teaching scene. Proponents of translation have continued to defend its use (Duff 1989; Atkinson 1987; Sheen 1993) as a teaching device, emphasising its benefits and pointing out ways in which it could successfully be incorporated in the L2 teaching plans. At the same time, studies have revealed that teachers have been employing their students' L1 in their classrooms for a variety of reasons and uses, albeit often with feelings of guilt (Kharma & Hajjaj 1989; Anton & DiCamilla 1999). In fact, as Prodromou believes, this guilt is responsible for restricting the potential of translation as a classroom resource (2002: 5).

Continuous research on the role of translation and L1 as a teaching tool (Vygotsky 1986; Holliday 1994; Widdowson 2003), and recent publications exclusively devoted to the same topic (Cook 2010; Butzkamm & Caldwell 2009; Leonardi 2010), although being very informative, seem to have remained isolated voices, "not widely heard" (Kerr 2014: 1) in order to officially shift current monolingual teaching policies. What could be considered, though, as a turning point in the relationship between translation and FLT, at least in theory,

is the idea of plurilingual education. A plurilingual teaching approach which would take into account and make use of all the learner's competences (national, regional, foreign) instead of keeping them in separate compartments, as developed in CEFR (2001), has been generally embraced within the teaching community (Martyniuk 2007). However, the idea of achieving this kind of mediation between languages and cultures through the medium of translation/interpretation, as proposed in the same document (CEFR 2001), has been subject to scepticism and severe criticism, as will be discussed further below.

The Plurilingual Approach and its Implicit Connection to Translation

As the phenomenon of immigration has been transforming countries into multicultural societies, where persons of different languages, historical and religious backgrounds, and cultures have to live peacefully side by side, the need to know and respect one another has become a fundamental aspect towards the realisation of a harmonious cohabitation and for better management of the immigration phenomenon (Bloommaert 2010). Proof of this paradigmatic societal shift towards the ethos of multiculturalism in Europe, is the fact that “imposed monolingualism is now held to be illegitimate and even illegal” (Council of Europe 2007: 33), whereas the notion of plurilingualism is the one “which has asserted itself as a form of language education appropriate to European realities” (ibid 55). According to the European Union, plurilingualism, is a flexible and ambiguous goal to achieve, “open to various interpretations involving other concepts, including linguistic diversity, multilingualism, bilingualism” (ibid 60). This paper focuses on how plurilingualism relates to and influences language teaching.

Plurilingual competence has been defined as “the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures” (CEFR 2001: 168). It should be noted that in the context of CEFR, plurilingualism is distinguished from the concept of multilingualism. Whereas the first is regarded as the presence of different languages at the same time in a given geographical area, plurilingualism is considered as a repertoire of languages at a speaker's disposition, and their potential and/or ability to use these languages to differing degrees of proficiency and for different purposes, a concept which is closer to the teaching of foreign languages. Even more relevant, however – for the purposes of this paper and with regards to the use of translation in FLT – is the way these languages are related to each other within the plurilingual approach.

More specifically, CEFR promotes a plurilingual learner, who “does not keep [their] languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact” (2001: 4). The importance of building connections between old and new experiences and competences, and relating all languages to each other in order to develop one whole linguistic repertoire is being further emphasised not only in CEFR (2001: 43), but in another European recommendation on the plurilingual approach (Council of Europe 2007), as well. The latter one, in particular, stresses that the distribution of language teaching in the curriculum should explicitly consider “linking (over time) languages with each other: mother tongue/national and foreign/regional languages” (2007: 177), whereas “the pedagogical nature that calls for the teaching of different languages to be linked to one another” is based on the fact that “these are likely to involve the same skills” (ibid 64). Moreover, it is specified that the linguistic varieties could be used simultaneously, e.g. when the mother variety is used “as auxiliary during a discussion in a foreign language” (ibid 110), acknowledging the fact that “this simultaneous use of several linguistic varieties, known as code switching, gives the speaker great flexibility in communication” (ibid 64).

From the above, it is clear that the plurilingual approach, which is not intended to impose any particular teaching method, but to leave “a very broad freedom of choice in drawing up curricula and progression” (CEFR 2001: 170), does not explicitly refer to (nor reject) any use of translation and L1 in L2 teaching. However, the way the plurilingual approach is related to language teaching, as briefly presented in the aforementioned quotes, seems to draw a lot on theories from the fields of bilingualism, and second language acquisition – theories, which have been further used by researchers and scholars as arguments to support the use of translation and L1 in the L2 classroom.

Translation, Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

As has been stressed, a key point in the plurilingual approach is the fact that learners should not keep their languages separate from each other, but rather connect them. The theoretical background supporting this argument can be found in the fields of bilingualism and SLA. Research on bilingualism supports the connection between a bilingual’s two languages, maintaining that in bilingual brains there is a common neural system which mediates semantic processes for both languages (Kim et al. 1997; Illes et al. 1999), or as Proverbio et

al. (2006: 11) put it, “it appears that the linguistic systems (L1, L2, L3, etc.) are not independent but rather based on a common conceptual system.” Even from a very young age, reports suggest that bilinguals are able to differentiate between their languages and associate the appropriate language with a particular person (Nicolaidis 1998; Nicolaidis and Secco 2000). Baker notes that bilingual children often act as “language brokers” (2001: 104) at home or at school, arguing that “rather than just transmit information, children act as information and communication brokers, [...], often ensuring the messages are ‘culturally translated’” (ibid). Butzkamm and Caldwell, researching if natural bilinguals tend to use their skills in one language to help themselves progress in the other, argue through a series of studies and reports (cited in 2009: 217) that the two (or more) languages young bilinguals acquire constantly support and compete with each other. The strategies bilinguals use to achieve their communicative goals include request of a translation for communicative needs, making comparisons, building their own bilingual lexicon, translating to themselves, and code-switching between languages. As Butzkamm and Caldwell conclude, the strategies young bilinguals develop in order to successfully extend their linguistic competence should definitely be included in the learning strategies language learners develop when acquiring L2 (2009: 218–224).

Code-switching, in particular, which according to the plurilingual approach can be used by the learner as a way to simultaneously link their linguistic varieties, is generally defined as a linguistic phenomenon where language alternations may occur in order to substitute a word or phrase in another language, express a concept that has no equivalent, or in the form of translation to clarify a point (Gafaranga 2009: 279). Providing pedagogical arguments for its use within an L2 classroom setting, research has shown that code-switching facilitates FL learning, by reducing the processing load for learners during cognitively challenging tasks, such as vocabulary learning (Macaro 2001). On the other hand, Beller supports its role as a learning strategy from a psychological perspective, asserting that code-switching “send[s] a positive sign to the child that his or her language is welcomed and even fruitful for communicating” (2008: 36).

Lastly, coming from a cognitive perspective and connecting bilingualism to the field of SLA, Cummins (2007), in his “Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis”, argues that there is a common underlying cognitive-academic proficiency across languages, which makes possible the transfer of cognitive-academic or literacy-related proficiency from one language to

another. Cummins' hypothesis on transfer of skills and knowledge between languages simply means that incoming information must be matched up against prior knowledge, and, if prior knowledge is encoded in the student's L1, then the engagement of prior knowledge is inevitably mediated through the L1 (Bransford, Brown and Cocking 2000, 2005). Cummins (2007) points out that the implications of this principle for language students' education underline that instruction should explicitly attempt to activate students' prior knowledge and build relevant background knowledge as necessary, and not deliberately limit its expression to what students can articulate through their L2, providing, in other words, sufficient support and theoretical evidence for the use of L1 in the L2 teaching.

Moving from theory to practice, researchers have also discussed the types of L1 activities that can be implemented in the L2 teaching plans, offering language teachers a plethora of practical examples. Some of them refer exclusively to the practical application of translation in the classroom (Witte et al. 2009; Cook 2010; Leonardi 2010), whereas others regard translation as an own-language activity (Butzkamm and Caldwell 2009; Kerr 2014). Translation is also included in a number of bi/multilingual activities, taking place in multilingual classroom settings, in terms of using bilingual phrase books and audiovisual resources, as well as reading, contrasting and even producing bilingual stories, poems, drama, e-mails and web-pages (Conteh 2003). Projects, such as The Dual Language Showcase (www.thornwood.peelschools.org) and The Multiliteracies Project (www.multiliteracies.ca) are further practical examples of how translation in particular is currently utilised as a bilingual/multilingual technique in a multilingual classroom setting. At the same time, projects such as the Translation Nation Project (translation workshops in UK primary and secondary schools), the Juvenes Translatores (a European annual translation contest for schools in EU member states) and the e-book *Once Upon a Time in Europe* (a selection of 35 fairy tales translated into English by 35 different schools in Europe) provide language practitioners with sufficient evidence of how translation could be part of a school's education system.

The Plurilingual Approach and its connection to Translation

Thus far, it has been suggested, that the first connection between translation and the plurilingual approach, although not explicit, could be detected in the current terminology of 'plurilingual education', 'bilingualism', 'code-switching' and SLA theories, since they all provide theoretical and practical support for the use of L1 and translation in L2 teaching. The

second connection of translation to plurilingualism, however, is a very explicit one. It takes place on the grounds of language learners developing intercultural competence and awareness, in order to understand and experience not only their own culture but other people's lives, languages and cultures as well, and most importantly, to be able to communicate these different thoughts, ideas and experiences to those who do not share the same linguistic and cultural background (Council of Europe 2007: 59). Henceforth, alongside intercultural awareness, the concept of interlingual and intercultural mediation is being introduced as a goal of language teaching and a skill for plurilingual learners. More specifically, CEFR suggests that:

[t]hose with some knowledge, even slight, may use it to help those with none to communicate by mediating between individuals with no common language. In the absence of a mediator, such individuals may nevertheless achieve some degree of communication by bringing the whole of their linguistic equipment into play [...] (2001: 4–5).

Language learners are, thus, expected to assume the role of an interlingual and intercultural mediator, who within a classroom setting can be asked “to mediate, whether as an educational activity or in order to assist another pupil” (ibid: 57). In other words, mediation is regarded in CEFR not only as a pedagogical tool but also as a communicative activity, which will help language learners develop communicative competence. According to CEFR, during these written and/or oral language mediating activities learners are expected to (re)produce a source text by either translating, interpreting, paraphrasing or summarising it for those who do not speak the same language (CEFR 2001: 14), explicitly connecting therefore, mediation to translation/interpreting.

A further detailed definition of mediation activities and strategies introduces specific examples of the ways translation/interpreting can be utilised in mediation tasks. More specifically, “[i]n mediating activities, the language user is not concerned to express his/her own meanings, but simply to act as an intermediary between interlocutors who are unable to understand each other directly – normally (but not exclusively) speakers of different languages” CEFR (2001: 87). Examples of mediating activities include “formal” (simultaneous, consecutive) and “informal interpretation”, “exact” and “literary translation”, as well as summarising the gist and paraphrasing texts between L1 and L2 (ibid). Last but not least, mediation strategies are considered as “ways of coping with the demands of using finite

resources to process information and establish equivalent meaning” (ibid 88), and involve the stages of planning, execution, evaluation and repair, which are quite similar to the different phases of planning, drafting and revising during the translation process, as described by several scholars (Gambier & van Doorslaer 2010: 409–410).

Reactions towards translation and mediation in FLT

CEFR appears to be a widely recognised document on language education, “treated as the standard point of reference” (Valax 2011: 83), and used by European countries (e.g. UK, Germany, France) to support curriculum and assessment design (Heyworth (2006: 182). Based on that fact, it could be assumed that both the inclusion of mediation as an essential skill for language learners, and the view of translation as a mediating activity, alongside theoretical and practical research on the issue would provide sufficient justification for (re)introducing translation in FLT.

Nonetheless, reactions to this issue indicate a different case. Studies have shown that some language practitioners appear to be rather sceptical towards mediation and give less attention to it compared with the activities of reception, production and interaction, which are also included in CEFR (www.mercator-research.eu). The reasons, according to Lenz & Berthele (2010: 17–18), refer to mediation being more relevant for schools that “favour plurilingual and intercultural scenarios supporting exchange activities and CLIL [Content and Language Integrated Learning], and do not implement distinct boundaries between different language classes”. Moreover, unlike the other three activities of reception, production and interaction, no illustrative scales with can-do statements are available for mediation in the Framework (Alderson 2007: 662), whereas the outlining of mediation strategies “is done in brief and with the language and resources focus only” (Atabekova R. et al 2012: 6).

At the same time, countries, such as Germany and Greece, welcome the concept of mediation, incorporating mediation tasks in their national curricula, but distinguishing it from translation. According to the recommendations (www.kmk-format.de) handed out to language teachers in 2006 in Berlin, with regards to the inclusion of, and preparation for the “new type of mediation task” (ibid, my translation) included in the German school exams, mediation is kept separate from translation, in the sense that mediation is considered as a “freier” (freer) concept than translation. This view is also supported by Hallet (2008: 4) who argues that in the concept of translation any deviations from the source text are unacceptable.

In the case of Greece, Dendrinos distinguishes between the professional activities of translation/interpreting and the ‘informal interpretation’ which takes place between family members and friends, and can be accomplished through paraphrasing and summarising. The latter encompasses her views on mediation as “a form of everyday social practice”, which is “altogether different from professional translation and mediation” (2006: 16).

The explicit connection of translation to mediation appears to be ‘problematic’ for other scholars as well. Mader and Urkun have argued that “in some places in the CEFR mediation is taken to mean translation/interpretation, in others the central meaning is that of mediation in intercultural contexts, which broadens and changes its significance and may lead to a different interpretation” (2010: 18). In other words, mediation appears to be interpreted as a broader concept, leaning towards two different directions; one is translation, which is more concerned with the accurate transfer of the linguistic features, and the other is intercultural communication, which apparently is not part of the translating process. Also disapproving the introduction of translation in CEFR are Atabekova et al., who believe that it “restrict[s] the activity [of mediation] under study to the language usage field, thus shadowing those challenges that emerge in the course of intercultural communication due to partner’s different values, beliefs, social practices, etc.” (2012: 6). Similarly, Byram (2008) believes that “there is a hint of the focus on form and on literal translation [...] [in] the CEFR” (www.vigdis.hi.is), and traces the reasons in the Frameworks’ definition of translation as “being a matter of finding a ‘corresponding’ or ‘parallel’ text” (ibid), as well as in other phrases throughout the CEFR, such as ‘translation of example sentences’ and ‘translation equivalence’ (ibid).

The aforementioned arguments seem to suggest that the reason why the relationship between mediation and translation is badly criticised relates to the various (mis)interpretations of the concept of translation by language teachers and scholars not only within the context of CEFR, but also in general. This assumption is reaffirmed by a recent European study entitled *The Role of Translation in the Teaching of Languages in the European Union* (2013), which reveals that the reasons why the majority of teachers are still not willing to introduce translation in their classrooms are because “they have never considered it seriously”, “they do not feel qualified”, and “they believe it to be detrimental for language learning” (2013: 123). Their responses seem to highlight the urge for a reestablishment of the lost connections

between the two disciplines, which could lead to more positive developments for the role of translation in FLT.

Translation and Mediation in TS

Views of translation as a strictly professional activity, or a merely reproductive activity, with no cultural connotations and communicative value, and therefore completely separate from the concept of interlingual mediation highlight what Pym calls “the discrepancy between the disciplines of FLT and TS” (2014: 192). As he points out, the problem seems to relate to the teachers and policy makers’ lack of awareness regarding the developments in the TS discipline for the past thirty years. Furthermore, Pym makes an interesting historical observation, criticising specifically the dichotomy between translation and mediation, and the language-learning experts’ preference of the term mediation instead of translation (ibid 193). As he notes, earlier in the 1940s, both the German terms Sprachmittler (language mediator) and Sprachmittlung (language mediation) were used to refer to cross lingual communication, and explicitly included the concepts of translation and interpreting. However, in the years that followed, the term ‘mediation’ has moved slightly from generally referring to communication between languages in TS, to describing “performances of untrained bilinguals in face-to-face communication” in the field of bilingualism (ibid). The latter is what TS has described as ‘natural translation’ (Harris 1976), and what Lörcher calls the “rudimentary ability to mediate” (2012: 6). Lörcher, who assumes that every bilingual with a command of two or more languages (even with various degrees of proficiency) is also endowed with a rudimentary ability to mediate information between these languages, calls the performance products translations, even though they are imperfect or restricted (ibid). In other words, it could be argued that this blurring of boundaries between translation and mediation is partly caused by the different interpretations each discipline (TS and FLT) attaches to the two concepts. In FLT the term translation has currently a very limited scope, whereas within TS the terms translation and mediation are deeply interwoven (Pym 2014: 103).

The idea that through the medium – and mediation – of the translator’s voice multiple linguistic and cultural framings are brought into relation, so that meanings are communicated across linguistic and cultural boundaries has been indeed discussed by a variety of scholars in TS, who have been focusing not only on the communicative aspect of translation as mediation, but on the cultural aspect as well. The term “cultural mediator”, first introduced in Stephen Bochner’s *The Mediating Person and Cultural Identity* (1981), although not

necessarily confined to translators, has been since embraced within the discipline. Hatim and Mason suggest that “the notion of mediation is a useful way of looking at translators’ decisions regarding the transfer of intertextual reference” (1990: 128), arguing for two specific ways in which a translator is a mediator: bi-cultural vision and critical reader, whereas Neubert and Shreve suggest that translations should serve as “knowledge breakers between the members of disjunct communities” (1992: 54). With regard to the role of the translator, Vermeer (1978) had already described the translator as “bi-cultural”, and Snell-Hornby (1992) has described them as a “cross-cultural specialist”. Hewson and Martin talk of The Translation Operator as a Cultural Operator and clarify that “our aim is simply to underline once again the [translator operator’s] socio-cultural identity as being one of the many factors which account for translation being what it is” (1991: 160-1). Katan argues that both translators and interpreters will have to be fluent in cross-cultural communication, focusing on both the linguistic and cultural resources translators must employ in order to serve as mediators of messages (2004: 22), and reflecting, at the same time, the socio-cultural role translators have to play within a cultural environment (Toury 1995: 53).

Toury’s remark on the social role of a translator highlights once again the “thorny” aspect of translation’s and the translator’s ‘invisibility’, not only within FLT, but in other fields, as well. The concept of ‘invisibility’ (Venuti 1995), initially referring to the issue of “unequal power relationships prevalent between cultural and linguistic systems” (Bassnett 2014: 14), is also hiding behind current attitudes towards mediation and translation, which appear to be different outside the circle of TS. More specifically, Phelan and Martín argue that “interpreters and cultural mediators [are] different but complementary roles” (2009: 1). The difference is based on their codes of ethics, where interpreters are expected to be linguistically accurate and impartial, and cultural mediators are expected to be more flexible, provide cultural explanations, and break the cultural barriers (2009: 17).

In a different context, that of information journalism, Bassnett reports that “the term ‘international journalist’ is deemed preferable to the term ‘translator’” (2014: 130). The reason is that although translation is understood as a process of synthesis and collection of information for a designated readership, this kind of (re)writing of stories by local language journalists for local audiences (2014: 131) is not defined as an activity of translation. On the contrary, what seems to prevail, is the dichotomy between a) the conception of translation as a simple and strictly word-for-word activity, with no creative character, and b) the concept of

adaptation and localisation, or “cultural homogenization and [...] hybridisation” of news and stories, an approach which journalists seem to prefer (Bielsa 2009: 12), despite the fact that “all interlingual textual transfer involves reading and rewriting within a dual context” (Bassnett 2014: 131).

Whereas these distinctions support the view of different professions and roles, Valero Garcés (2013) identifies mediation as one of the two different approaches within the same discipline of translation/interpreting in the modern changing societies. The first approach considers the translator/interpreter as a “professional in charge of taking a text from one language to another following the traditional principles of fidelity and adequacy”, and the second one considers them as an “intercultural mediator filling the breach between two cultures and languages and whose role is to favour the understanding of the different groups involved” (www.translationdirectory.com).

Drawing a conclusion to a seemingly endless debate, it should also be mentioned that, choosing the appropriate translation strategy – accuracy and fidelity or visibility – in each case is not simply a matter of the translator’s personal preference but a more complicated issue, subject to a synergy between economic, social, ideological and political reasons. This fact, however, cannot and should not diminish the translator’s ability and responsibility as a mediator, who takes decisions, completely involved, intellectually and emotionally, and is therefore a ‘visible’ part in the whole process.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to shed light on the game of ‘hide-and-seek’ between translation and FLT. By highlighting translation’s connections to the terms of bilingualism, code-switching and mediation, currently introduced in the plurilingual approach, and by challenging scepticism towards translation as mediation, prevalent in other fields outside TS, it has sought to provide sufficient evidence for an explicit current role of translation in FLT. At the same time, the article has suggested that the onus should be on both teachers and translators to re-establish the connections between FLT and TS.

Language teachers could do so by engaging with relevant developments in the discipline of translating (e.g. subtitling and dubbing, machine translation, intercultural translation as mediation), either at an academic level, as part of their undergraduate university courses,

and/or in the form of workshops/training days and courses organised in primary and secondary schools. At the same time, translators should be willing to provide teachers (and students) with the necessary skills and knowledge, ensuring that all plurilingual users, and not just translators, can develop a more fluent and accommodating attitude towards the concept of translation. Experiences and testimonies from both teachers and translators who have taken part in recently organised translation workshops in schools around the UK reveal precisely how important and beneficial this collaboration between the two disciplines can be (www.translatorsinschools.org).

Adapting and simulating highly motivating translating scenarios offer L2 students the opportunity to experience translation, and become aware of the nature, complexities and problem-solving strategies of the process. At the same time, in translation workshops, translators get the opportunity to work within a particular L2 classroom setting, and together with language teachers and teaching assistants to develop and follow specific lesson plans in order to present their own ideas on translation projects. Language teachers, on the other hand, get the opportunity to explore the concept of translation, enhance their students' creative thinking and writing through translation activities and games, and support foreign language learning by making it more interesting for their L2 students (www.translationgames.net), which proves, in other words, how applying translation techniques to foreign language learning is currently relevant to all language learners, language teachers and translators.

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