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Brno studies in English. 2018, vol. 44, iss. 2, pp. [5]-17

ISSN 0524-6881 (print); ISSN 1805-0867 (online)

Stable URL (DOI): <https://doi.org/10.5817/BSE2018-2-1>

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/140974>

Access Date: 28. 11. 2024

Version: 20220831

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TRANSLATION AND LANGUAGE LEARNING: UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF FUNCTIONALIST APPROACH TO TRANSLATION IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Abstract

Since the 1970s, the foreign language classroom has been more or less dominated by the principles of the Communicative Approach, which following the shift away from the teaching of language systems in isolation to teaching them in real communication views translation rather negatively. Nevertheless, Functionalist Approaches to translation – describe this in the foreign language classroom somewhat marginalized phenomenon as “a specific kind of communicative action” (Schäffner and Wiesemann 2001: 9), which clearly represents a sort of *promising* liaison between the principles of Communicative Language Teaching and a possible re-introduction of translation into the foreign language classroom. The present paper aims to explore the creative and so far unfulfilled potential of Functionalist Approach to translation in the foreign language classroom and discuss its obvious benefit and new possibilities.

Keywords

Translation; foreign language classroom; Functionalist Approach; Skopostheorie

1. Introduction

“Interlingual translation may be defined as a bilingual mediated process of communication [...]” (Reiss 2004: 168)

Communication is commonly understood as a process based on the transmission of a message between the addresser and the addressee. According to Jakobson “the message requires [...] a Code fully, or at least partially, common” to the addresser and addressee (or in other words, to the encoder and decoder of the message)” (1969: 3). Nevertheless, there are cases when there is not one single code, but two (or even more) distinct codes. One possibility is definitely to employ translation since translation, following Katharina Reiss, as a *bilingual* process of communication literally bridges the gap between the two codes, (the source and the target language), and *mediates* the message to the addressee. Another possible solution is to learn the other code to make it more *common* to the addressee/s. Apparently, both translation and language learning seem to have much in common pursuing in fact a similar goal, which is to facilitate or even establish communication. Despite that, their mutual relation has always been somewhat difficult.

Currently, the foreign language classroom more or less under the influence of the principles of the Communicative Approach views translation rather negatively (Butzkamm and Caldwell 2009; Cook 2010; Kerr 2014; Pym 2015) and students often believe “that translation has basically to do with languages and dictionaries” (González Davies 2004: 39), which is definitely a dramatic reduction of this complex activity that offers enormous space not only for language exploration and creativity, but also for language learning. The present paper explores the creative and so far *untapped* potential of one of the still dominant theories in the field of translator training programmes and Translation Studies (Schäffner and Wiesemann 2011; Mraček 2012), the Functionalist Approach to translation (Vermeer 1983; Reiss and Vermeer 1984; Nord 2007), in the foreign language classroom. The paper discusses its obvious benefits as well as new interesting possibilities of this concept of translation in the foreign language classroom. Since functionalists conceive translation as “a specific kind of communicative action” (Schäffner 2001: 9), we will try to explore this *promising* liaison emerging between the principles of Communicative Language Teaching and a possible re-introduction of translation in compliance with the functionalist perspective into the foreign language classroom.

2. Translation and language learning

The concept of education, including language learning, has definitely undergone several changes reflecting the development and individual shifts of focus in the field pedagogy, psychology as well as linguistics. The role and use of translation in the foreign language classroom has been changing as well, once per-

forming different tasks assuming growing importance, at other times forced to retreat or vanish completely from the foreign language syllabus (Richards and Rodgers 1986; Brown 1994; Butzkamm and Caldwell 2009; Cook 2010; Kerr 2014; Pym 2015). Apparently, there are various classifications of methods and approaches relating to language learning following different criteria. Generally speaking, the development of individual methods can be seen as a sort of oscillation between two in many respects opposing concepts, i.e. *synthetic* vs. *analytical method* (Hendrich 1988) or, using different terminology, *direct* vs. *indirect methods* (Choděra 2006). According to Hendrich, the difference between the synthetic method (cf. the Grammar Translation Method) and the analytical method (cf. Direct Method) results from the different definitions of the goals of foreign language learning, which is reflecting the different role and significance of L1 in the process of foreign language learning and a different concept and approach to grammar in the foreign language classroom (Hendrich 1988). Choděra classifies methods according to the way they pursue their goal. Direct methods as methods anticipating the result of the whole process, literally attaining their goal *directly*, and on the contrary indirect methods as methods that try to postpone the goal, and are *delaying* the use of L2 in communication in favour of devoting more time to practising and getting prepared for L2 communication (Choděra 2006).

The Grammar Translation Method, a prototypical example of a synthetic or indirect method, assigns translation a dominant role in the foreign language classroom. Nevertheless, it is rather a sort of *literal* translation forcing students to translate from L1 into L2 and vice versa. This concept of translation reflects, among others, the influence of rationalist philosophy of the 17th century and the principles of formal logic; individual words of foreign languages are seen as notions shared by all languages – accordingly, literal translation is perceived as one of the basic teaching techniques of foreign language teaching (Hendrich 1988: 257–258). The Grammar Translation Method (also known as the *classical*, *Ciceronian* or *Prussian* method) has its roots in the Middle Ages and developed on the basis of the teaching of classical languages, *dead* languages (and literatures) such as Latin and Greek. The goal was to learn a foreign language to be able to read in that language, i.e. to read its literature, and to benefit from the intellectual development resulting from the foreign language study (being able to read and know classical literature was considered a proof of indisputable erudition) (Richards and Rodgers 1986: 3–7). This rather structure-based method dominated foreign language teaching from 1840s till the end of the 19th century – though certain aspects and principles based on this approach are still present in the foreign language classroom (Cook 2010: 3–4).

The Direct Method (also called *new*, *natural* or *reform* method) evolved in the late 19th century as a response to the growing disappointment with the so far predominant approach to language teaching, the Grammar Translation Method, and inspired many other language teaching approaches, giving rise to various modifications of the concept of foreign language teaching in the course of the 20th century. The Direct Method tries to teach foreign languages more intuitively and less theoretically,

reflecting the accelerated development in the field of linguistics and psychology (stressing the importance of associations and perception in terms of language development and highlighting the role of listening and speaking). The proponents of this approach imitate in fact the process of L1 acquisition, which means that L1 is dramatically reduced in the foreign language classroom or completely omitted. Language is primarily spoken, not written. Accordingly, oral communication skills are in the foreground in the foreign language classroom and translation is somewhat ostracised or entirely excluded (Richards and Rodgers 1986: 8–16).

In the 1970s and 1980s, reflecting the development in the field of sociolinguistics, pragmatics and applied linguistics, the foreign language classroom started to adopt a new approach to language teaching. Foregrounding the communicative aspect of languages, it became to be known as the Communicative Approach (Brumfit and Johnson 1979). This method follows in many ways the concept of the Direct Method. It prefers the principles of natural language acquisition¹, trying to develop all language skills, involving different language functions, psychological factors in the classroom and principally communicative activities. This approach to language teaching has been more or less dominant in the foreign language classroom since 1970s and has become a sort of “generally accepted and relatively uncontroversial canon of teaching theory and practice” (Richards and Rodgers 1986: 107). In 1982, it was officially promoted by the Council of Europe to be used in the foreign language education. Consequently, the Communicative Approach gradually becomes the accepted *standard* in English language teaching (Choděra 2006: 91–120). Translation continues to be marginal if not completely abandoned (often associated with rather negative connotations) in the foreign language classroom:

In the brave new world of the Communicative Approach, translation (and the use of the mother tongue in general) came to be regarded as a relic of the past, a symbol of the bad old days of Grammar Translation, an echo of those long forgotten secondary school lessons when paragraphs of English prose were translated into Latin for no apparent purpose other than as an intellectual exercise. (Bowen 2015)

In the 21st century, the foreign language classroom seems to be still under a considerable influence of the Communicative Approach. Though enriched by various sociological, culture-oriented and humanistic aspects based on cognitivism, reflecting also learner’s individuality and his complex development (Choděra 2006: 96–98), the communicative principles remain to be rather dominant. Since the end of the 20th century, the foreign language classroom is also under the influence of humanistic theories and different alternative concepts – there are innovative and new conceptions of the foreign language classroom trying to overcome the *conflict* between the principles of direct and indirect method (also called *mixed* methods, referring back to Choděra’s taxonomy). Nevertheless, translation is at present still somewhat marginalized in the foreign language classroom. The conception of translation is rather formal, perceiving it as some sort of *trans-*

formation or *conversion* of individual units from one language into another (i.e. words, phrases or isolated sentences) (Cook 2010).

With respect to the present topic, a detailed content analysis of particular Czech curricular documents was conducted to prove whether this sort of very narrow and formal conception of translation is also embedded in the for Czech schools binding documents. With respect to the present topic, translation in the foreign language classroom, requiring particular level of language proficiency, we selected and analysed documents relating to the level of grammar schools. It was the Framework Education Programme for Basic Education (Stage 2 of basic education and the corresponding grades of six- or eight-year grammar schools) and the Framework Education Programme for Secondary General Education (Grammar Schools). In particular, we analysed the educational area called Language and Language Communication, which contains also the educational fields of Foreign Language and Second Foreign Language. Following the Framework Education Programme for Basic Education, translation seems to be present only in terms of the ability to use different types of dictionaries:

5.1.2 Foreign Language

Educational Content

Stage 1

RECEPTIVE, PRODUCTIVE AND INTERACTIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS

Expected Outcomes – Cycle 1

The pupil shall: (...) use *an alphabetical glossary in a textbook*

RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS

Expected Outcomes – Cycle 2

The pupil shall: (...) use *a bilingual dictionary*

Stage 2

RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS

Expected Outcomes

The pupil shall: (...) use *a bilingual dictionary, find information or the meaning of a word in a suitable explanatory monolingual dictionary*

(*Framework Education Programme for Basic Education* (2007) Available online at: http://www.vuppraha.cz/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/RVPZV_2007-07.pdf. Accessed on 26th January, 2015)

Following the Framework Education Programme for Secondary General Education, translation, again, seems to be *covered* by means of dictionary use:

5.1.2 Foreign Language

Educational Content

RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS

Expected Outcomes

The pupil shall: (...) *utilise various types of dictionaries, informative literature, encyclopaedias and media*

PRODUCTIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS

Expected Outcomes

The pupil shall: (...) employ *monolingual and specialised dictionaries* when writing on selected topics

Subject Matter

REALIA OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE LANGUAGE STUDIED

(...) *language peculiarities and differences*

(*Framework Education Programme for Secondary General Education (Grammar Schools)*).

(2007) Available online at: http://www.vuppraha.cz/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/RVP_G-anj.pdf. Accessed on 15th January, 2015)

Obviously, put in a broader perspective there are other subject matter aspects and expected outcomes that could be mentioned here since the complex issue of translation naturally requires the gradual acquisition of all language skills. The relation of these aspects to translation activities is, however, rather indirect. These outcomes concern rather reading comprehension in general, which is in terms of translation definitely also important, but not that directly related; “the pupil shall understand the main points and ideas when reading an authentic text or written expression with a rather complex content on a current topic, identify the structure of a text and distinguish between the main and complementary information, find and accumulate information on a less common, specific topic from various texts and work with the information acquired, infer the meaning of unknown words based on already acquired vocabulary, context, knowledge of word-formation and cognates” (FEPSGE (Grammar Schools, 2007, online at: http://www.vuppraha.cz/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/RVP_G-anj.pdf, accessed on 15th January, 2015). The data from the curricular documents clearly show that in terms of the subject matter as well as the expected outcomes concerning the individual language skills, translation or certain aspects of the process of translating are only marginal or reflected indirectly.

Consequently, these results were compared with the data generated by means of the content analyses of selected textbook series. It was EFL textbook series for secondary education that have been officially approved by the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports². For the purposes of our analysis, we selected the *New Headway* textbook series by Liz and John Soars – as a prototypical L2 EFL textbook series clearly foregrounding the principles of the Communicative Approach – and *Maturita Solutions* by Tim Falla and Paul A. Davies – a relatively new textbook series focusing on the preparation of learners for the new Czech *maturita* (school-leaving exam taken at 18–19). The textbook was prepared in cooperation with Czech *maturita* consultants and accordingly occasionally and for particular purpose presupposes the use of L1 as well³. In the following section, there are a few concrete examples and results of this analysis.

In compliance with the Communicative Method, the *New Headway* textbook series contains translation and related activities really only marginally. The Student’s Book is accompanied by an English-Czech wordlist (with phonetic transcription)

summarizing the vocabulary of each chapter (Soars et al. 2007); instructions in individual exercises in both the Student's Book and the Workbook do not include activities requiring learners to translate from one into another language and basically address translation only with respect to the use of dictionaries. The *New Headway Third Edition (Intermediate) Workbook* includes an exercise asking learners to use a monolingual dictionary and to connect individual sentences with the meaning of a piece of vocabulary (Soars et al. 2007:8), the *New Headway Third Edition (Advanced) Workbook* includes an exercise asking learners to use a monolingual dictionary – this time a more complex task, to select individual vocabulary in the dictionary themselves (Soars et al. 2007:55).

The second textbook series, *Maturita Solutions*, is also accompanied by an English-Czech wordlist (with phonetic transcription). Nevertheless, since this textbook series aims at the preparation for the Czech *maturita* exam, it includes more L1 instruction. The *Maturita Solutions, Second Edition (Upper-Intermediate) Workbook* contains a section called “Writing Bank”, where all instruction and comments are in L1 (Falla et al. 2013: 104-107). Surprisingly, one translation-oriented exercise appeared in one of the Student's Books (apparently to contrast L2 and L1). The *Maturita Solutions, Second Edition (Intermediate) Student's Book* includes an exercise asking learners to translate from L2 into L1 and to focus on the difference in meaning, verbs followed by a to-infinitive and/or gerund and change in meaning (Falla et al. 2013: 7).

To summarize the results of our analysis, translation and its role or even potential in the foreign language classroom seems to be dramatically reduced (at least in terms of the Czech curricular documents and the selected textbook series still used in the foreign language classroom and approved by the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports). What is more, it has been limited to the word-level, implying a sort of unit equivalence only, where the very concept of equivalence is seen as synonymous to *sameness* – almost as an *equation*, where a ST unit is being replaced with a TT unit to reach some sort of *correctness*. Such a view excludes, however, the text-level equivalence, omits many aspects of the process of translating and suggests that translation is in fact some sort of dictionary-based activity and not a complex and creative task that could be of considerable benefit to both teachers and learners of a foreign language. Nevertheless, such an approach to translation is afterwards being reflected also in the translation classroom and forces the foreign language learners to face numerous obstacles.

3. Foreign language learner in the translation classroom

As implied above, in the translation classroom foreign language learners suddenly have to cope with this rather narrow and almost negative view of translation gained during the years of foreign language education. In consequence of this marginalisation or even simplification, translation is often perceived either

as something very *easy*; it seems enough *to use dictionary for a while*, or on the contrary, translation is considered as something very *painful* and *traumatizing* – probably because students' only experience with translation was connected with testing, “where the emphasis is on what is wrong”. As a result of this approach to translation, students lack confidence to search for new interpretations of meaning and to explore possibilities of how to translate the ST and instead only strive for “correctness/equivalence”, believing that their only resource is the dictionary (González Davies 2004: 39).

Not only in the translation classroom, but in the course of their whole studies (or even afterwards) students in fact go through several developmental stages that represent the gradual process of skill acquisition. Especially the first stages, however, might be affected by this sort of foreign language classroom *legacy*. To illustrate this process, it is possible to refer to the five-stage model by Stuart E. Dreyfus and his brother Hubert L. Dreyfus describing the process of skill acquisition “by means of instruction and experience” (Dreyfus et al. 1980). Many psychologists, educators as well as theoreticians in the field of translation draw on this model to depict the gradual development of a student into a translator (González Davies 2004). The individual stages are: *novice*, *competence*, *proficiency*, *expertise* and *mastery*.

Students appear in the translation classroom as *novices* and get at first acquainted with the broad field of translation. During this stage, they often have to face the above-mentioned obstacles and get rid of the false concept of translation, which often slows down the whole process. Gradually, students discover the complexity of translation, involving much more than just the word-level, dictionary dependence or linguistic aspects:

“Beyond the notion stressed by the narrowly linguistic approach, that translation involves the transfer of ‘meaning’ contained in one set of language signs into another set of language signs through competent use of the dictionary and grammar, the process involves a whole set of extra-linguistic criteria also”. (Bassnett 2002: 21)

In the course of their studies, students then become more and more self-reliant (the stage of *competence*), start to understand the concept of translation in context and their TTs gradually reach the required standard or even surpass it (the stage of *proficiency*). Many students are able to reach also the further stages. Due to the acquired knowledge and experience, they are able to work more intuitively and create their own interpretations, search for new solutions and possibilities (they gain *expertise* and then also *mastery* in the field of translation).

Nevertheless, the question is whether it is possible to overcome this sort of foreign language classroom *legacy* and make the process of skill acquisition – particularly at its very beginning – somehow easier for the students of translation training programmes (and definitely not only for them). Before discussing individual suggestions and strategies to tackle the concept of translation in the foreign language classroom in a sort of broader way reflecting its creative potential,

it is important to select an alternate, but at the same time comprehensive approach to suit the foreign language classroom.

4. Functionalist Approach in the foreign language classroom – an alternative?

Despite the rather dismissive attitude towards translation in the foreign language classroom, it can be argued that “teachers can’t stop students translating – it is such a fundamental basis for language learning” (Cook 2011). Irrespective of the arguments against the use of translation (e.g. overdependence on L1 or translation as a barrier hampering the natural language acquisition principles, etc.), translation seems to be a natural (and perhaps also ineradicable) aid to teaching and learning a second language.

Following Widdowson (1979: 71), translation has unambiguously positive effects and allows learners to relate new knowledge (L2) to the existing knowledge (L1):

[T]he process of learning a foreign language should be presented not as the acquisition of new knowledge and experience but as an extension or alternative realisation of what the learner already knows.

Apart from that, translation definitely promotes language awareness, highlighting the differences and similarities between the new (L2) and the existing language (L1). It encourages the positive transfer and alerts learners to interference at the same time. What is more, the tackling of translation problems is definitely “intellectually stimulating and aesthetically satisfying”. It allows students “to maintain their own sense of first language identity, while also building a new bilingual identity” (Cook 2011) and it is definitely less time-consuming if compared to explanation or inference, etc. Last but not least, the mother tongue should not be seen as some sort of detriment, but “rather as the most important ally a foreign language can have”, which should be “employed regularly and systematically, and in its fullest form where that is appropriate” (Butzkamm and Caldwell 2009: 24–25). Accordingly, how should teachers incorporate translation into their foreign language lessons, avoiding the too narrow conception reflecting the dominant role of the Communicative Approach and at the same time respecting the educational goals in terms of language education embedded in the curricular documents?

In the broad field of translation theory, there seems to be an approach that apparently offers a sort of *liaison* between the complex and not simplified concept of translation and the principles of Communicative Language Teaching foregrounding the communicative principles and language functions. It is the Functionalist Approach to translation, which emphasizes the communicative aspect of translation, viewing translation as “a specific kind of communicative action”. As every communicative action needs to have a specific purpose or function (to be produced and

received with a specific function or purpose in mind), the Functionalist Approach to translation perceives the purpose⁴ as “the most decisive criterion” for any translation (Schäffner and Wiesemann 2001: 9). Moreover, the model of the translation process following functionalist theory represents the whole procedure as some sort of *loops* (Nord 2005: 36) or cycles (Hervey et al. 1995: 6) consisting of several steps or phases⁵, where due to the cyclic character of the process there is always the possibility to return to any of the previous steps and re-think any of the solutions, offering naturally enormous space for creativity:

The circular path of the translation process contains a number of smaller circular movements or *loops* that keep recurring between ST situation and ST, between TT situation and TT, between the individual steps of analysis, and between ST analysis and TT synthesis. This means that each step forward the translator *looks back* on the factors already analysed, and every piece of knowledge gained in the course of the process of analysis and comprehension may be confirmed or corrected by later findings. (Nord 2005: 38)

Therefore, the Functionalist Approach stresses the significance of the ST and the TT, foregrounding the text level, and not just SL and TL and the linguistic aspects. Functionalists highlight the importance of TT *skopos*, the function, purpose of the TT, and its identification and interpretation or the role of the translation brief analysis, followed by the ST analysis and identification of translation problems (e.g. intercultural problems resulting from the differences in conventions between the two cultures involved such as measuring conventions, genre conventions, etc., interlingual problems, implying structural differences in vocabulary, syntax or suprasegmental features, text-specific problems resulting from the translation of one specific text such as puns, alliteration, rhyme, etc., or pragmatic translation problems, including the contrast of the two communicative situations, the two texts relating to a particular time, place and addressees such as culture-bound terms, references to time and place, etc. (Schäffner and Wiesemann 2001: 17). They also try to draw attention to cases of “functional constancy” and/vs. “change of function”, which involves altering the TT function according to the translation brief, which is an interesting and often neglected aspect with respect to both the translation process and the communicative principles (Schäffner and Wiesemann 2001: 10).

Such an approach definitely offers an alternative view of the concept of translation compared to the current, dictionary-oriented foreign language classroom attitude to translating. Functionalism unequivocally opens enormous space for creativity as well as L2 learning possibilities in the foreign language classroom. Instead of word-for-word translation of individual vocabulary and fixed phrases, it offers more complex tasks based on functionalist principles, where translation is seen and practised as a purposeful, creative and *intellectually stimulating* activity. Such activities might include the identification of particular purpose and function of various L2 and L1 texts, followed by comparing, contrasting and analysing these texts focusing on “language peculiarities and differences” (FEPSG

2007). Translation activities might be easily integrated into the foreign language classroom, when learners practise textual changes and are asked to transform texts and sentences employing a new grammatical phenomenon or in a more advanced context with respect to the change of the TT function. Students might thus discuss which transformations are necessary to comply with the new function and which ST elements need to be adapted and how. A very useful and motivating technique is the use of *intralingual* translation with the change of TT function, where learners adapt L1 texts changing their function, TT audience, etc. (even reaching the extremes such as a text from the Bible into a fairy tale or a newspaper article or advertisement). In this way, learners practise in fact the individual stages of the translation process; identification of TT function, ST analysis or ST comprehension, practise the circular aspect of the process of translation, highlighting the role of L1 and L2 differences and peculiarities and, what is more, get used to the complex concept of translation and at the same time comply with the communicative principles that frame the foreign language classroom curriculum.

5. Conclusion

The Functionalist Approach to translation is definitely not some sort of *panacea* that could remedy all foreign language classroom deficiencies with respect to translation use and exploit all its possibilities in language teaching and learning, nevertheless, as far as the concept of translation is concerned, it may definitely help both the teachers and the students learn more about the complexity of translation and experience the captivating moment of *mediating* a message between two distinct codes, the moment of communication. “Language is an indispensable element in the realisation of the verbal act. It is a necessary precondition for communication. [...] Translation is a dual act of communication. It presupposes the existence, not of a single code, but of two distinct codes, the ‘source language’ and the ‘target language’” (Brisset 2004: 337).

Notes

- ¹ The phrase ‘(second) language acquisition’ is used here to refer basically to the definition of language acquisition introduced by Stephen Krashen, i.e. “the non-conscious and ‘natural’ process of internalizing the rules of a language, as in first language acquisition” versus the concept of learning, i.e. “conscious, usually classroom, study, including attending to rules of grammar” (Thornbury 2006: 113). The phrase ‘foreign language learning’ is also used in the paper to refer basically to the same context.
- ² See the official document, i.e. Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Available online at: <http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/skolstvi-v-cr/schvalovaci-dolozky-ucebnic-2013>. Accessed on 26th August, 2015.
- ³ The following textbook series were analysed: Soars, Liz and Soars, John (2007) *New Headway Third Edition (Elementary, Pre-intermediate, Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate)* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Soars, Liz and Soars, John (2009) *New Headway 4th Edition – Intermediate*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Falla, Tim and Davies, A. Paul (2012) *Maturita Solutions (Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Falla, Tim and Davies, A. Paul (2012) *Maturita Solutions, Second Edition (Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Falla, Tim and Davies, A. Paul (2013) *Maturita Solutions, Second Edition (Upper Intermediate, Advanced)*. Oxford University Press.

⁴ In terms of translation studies, the Functionalist Approach to translation is related to the *Skopostheorie*, claiming that the determining principle of any translation is the purpose (*skopos*), from a Greek word ‘purpose’. The key figures of this concept of action-oriented translation theory are Katharina Reiss and Hans J. Vermeer (Nord 2005: 28).

⁵ In accordance with the functional approach to translation, which seems to be very effective in the T classroom (Nord 2005, Schäffner and Wiesemann 2001), the translation process can be briefly described in the following way: the first step is the translation brief analysis or interpretation of TT *skopos*, the comprehension or decoding phase represented by the second step, i.e. the translation-oriented ST analysis, resulting in the identification of translation-relevant ST elements to be adapted and matched with the corresponding TL elements, and finally the encoding phase, i.e. the final structuring of the TT (Nord 2005: 36–37).

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