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Zusammenfassung:

Der Artikel handelt von einer kommunikativ-pragmatischen Konzeption der translatorischen Äquivalenz. Den Ausgangspunkt bildet die Auffassung des Textes. Er wird als komplexe Handlung verstanden, mit der der Sprecher ein Ziel verfolgt und erreichen will. Diese Komplexität drückt sich in Teilschritten aus, die Teilintentionen realisieren. Die semantische Ebene, die Ebene der Proposition thematisiert mehr oder weniger die intendierten Teilziele und somit auch das Textziel. So entsteht die Struktur und Hierarchie des Textes, die durch die Dynamik des kommunikativ-pragmatischen Komplexes motiviert ist. Ein solches Verständnis des Textes und seiner Funktionen determiniert den Relationsbereich der translatorischen Äquivalenz. Weil der Hauptintention des Textes alles andere direkt oder indirekt untergeordnet ist, so gehört sie zu jenen Werten, die im Translationsprozeß obligatorisch erhalten bleiben müssen und die zugleich einen Maßstab bilden für alle die lexikalischen Einheiten, durch welche diese Intention ausgedrückt wird. Die äquivalenten Texte müssen daher in erster Linie im Hinblick auf ihre Intentionen und Handlungsstrukturen identisch sein; eine weitere Übereinstimmung der beiden Texte erfolgt in der semantischen Ebene, die sprachspezifisch adäquat diese Intention jeweils signalisiert. Somit soll die Gleichwertigkeit zwischen Original und dem zu entstehenden Translat erst in den kommunikativ-pragmatischen Funktionen und ferner in der Semantik gesucht und gefunden werden.

Foreign Language Teaching

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Making the Most of a Graded Reader

Although graded readers have been at the disposal of foreign language teachers for more than 60 years, only with the development of communicative language teaching, it seems, has a considerably broad range of activities been offered to exploit them both in the classroom and outside it by learners working autonomously. One can also notice that despite some voices of criticism as to their effectiveness in developing reading skills, their motivational value for the learner who can read a number of pages of connected discourse with interest and enjoyment has never been questioned.

Graded readers played a very important role in foreign language teaching in the 1930s and 1940s in the United States at the time of the implementation of the Reading Method. The primary goal put forward for this method was to be accomplished by extensive practice in reading comprehension, based on materials carefully controlled, first of all according to word and idiom, and later on to formal elements of grammar as well. Generally, however, the method was regarded as a failure since learners taught in this way never reached a level of proficiency which would enable them to read original texts. In other words, even the limited objective of developing the so-called 'reading command of the language' was never achieved. Graded readers were criticized for providing learners with quantity rather than quality in comprehension practice, so indispensable for the enhancement of reading skills (Rivers 1968:22-24). It was also observed that the simplification of grammar might lead to impoverishing the intellectual value of books intended for adults (Kelly 1969:141).

Many problems of simplification and gradation of reading materials, taken up by the American representatives of the Reading Method, were likewise investigated by British methodologists. Work on the refinement of criteria for the selection and gradation of reading materials made it clear that a set of criteria would have to

be established in order to account not only for the restriction of lexical and structural items, but also to serve as a valid basis for more general solutions concerning the reconciliation of semantic, linguistic and didactic requirements of a foreign language course (Thone 1968:103-107).

Changes in the status of graded readers cannot be fully understood without tracing changes in the overall trends in reading instruction. In the 1960s and 1970s, after the rejection of the principles of audiolingualism, psycholinguistic models of reading started to exert their influence upon language instruction, with the interactive models of reading of the 1980s gaining much support from foreign language teaching experts (Sliberstein 1987:32-33). It was strongly emphasized that meaning in a text is created through the interaction of text and reader.

The communicative value inherent in real-life reading tasks was recognized as pertaining to reading practice by the proponents of the Communicative Approach. It was claimed that language can be satisfactorily processed only at the level of discourse which ensures access to communicative units to be interpreted on the basis of the knowledge of the language as well as the knowledge of the world (Davies, Widdowson 1974, Munby 1978). It was also advocated that for reading skills to develop, the learner has to participate in a variety of real-life tasks, while instruction should be based on different types of texts, different situations and different purposes (Mackay, Barkman, Jordan 1979:VI). Graded readers can certainly meet these requirements put forward for the development of reading skills and can be a valid source of reading materials for foreign language learners in the 1990s.

It is worth commenting on the term 'graded reader' itself, as it is not the only one that has been used so far. The term 'simplified reader', which was common in the past is not the preferred one nowadays. The adjective 'graded', 'controlled' or even 'guided' are used much more frequently to describe a special kind of a reader, aimed at a foreign language learner. The term 'simplified reader' is avoided, because more and more readers published recently are not shortened, abridged or adapted versions of already existing books but are specially written for learners of English as a second or foreign language.

The fact that numerous graded readers available on the market today have been written for the purpose of foreign language teaching is of prime importance for satisfying learners' needs. Readers can cover a variety of settings and fictional genres, as adventure, thriller, mystery, science fiction, romance or western, to satisfy different interests. They can also be non-fiction in character. They can address a young learner more efficiently by dealing with particular problems of concern to today's young people, such as the environment, the inner cities or human rights (eg. Heinemann's *New Wave Readers*). In order to look more attractive, they can be designed as popular paperbacks. They have to be seen as attractive books which can offer a challenging experience to language learners and encourage them to do more reading in the future.

Yet, even with much more interesting and efficient reading materials currently available, developing reading skills can be a difficult task for a foreign language teacher when learners are not willing to get involved in the process. The reluctance to read among some learners nowadays may stem from social causes, but also from previously used ineffective techniques of teaching reading, such as insisting that a pupil gets prepared to answer questions at the next lesson. Less academic learners will surely find reading boring as compared to watching videos or following cartoon strips which provide powerful visual images, and discourage viewers from reflection and deep processing. It is the teacher's role to convince them that using graded readers can really be a pleasurable activity and when seen as a long-term investment, reading a variety of controlled and, later on, authentic materials will help them to keep in touch with the foreign language after completing a language course.

In order to develop positive attitudes towards reading, the teacher has to choose graded readers which are appropriate for particular types of classes and learners. Although the sheer attractiveness of some graded readers in terms of genre or theme can be considered an important criterion here, they have also to be evaluated in terms of their content and language difficulty. Hence, understanding the general principles of all the types of control applied by the writers of readers can provide vital insights informing teachers' future decisions on the selection and exploitation of graded readers.

Contemporary graded readers are claimed to be controlled at least at 4 levels: vocabulary, grammar, information load and cultural background knowledge. For years, graded readers published by various publishers have been classified according to their current lists of headwords delineating particular levels of difficulty (eg. Collins uses 6 levels of difficulty at 300, 600, 1000, 1500, 2000 and 2500 headwords, while Oxford University Press - 5 levels at 500, 750, 1000, 1500 and 2075 headwords). However, it is not simply the numbers of levels and headwords accepted by publishers that determines the main differences between the readers, due to the fact that the headwords chosen do not necessarily overlap. In addition to that, some other words apart from the core vocabulary can appear in a text, the meanings of which can be guessed at from the context. This brings about further discrepancies between the series of readers coming from different publishers.

Apart from vocabulary, it has also been taken for granted that formal aspects of language also have to be controlled, in order to ensure a satisfactory readability index. Thus, graded readers at particular levels are based only on a carefully selected repertoire of grammatical structures. The length of sentences as well as their syntactic complexity are also under control. This does not mean, however, that mechanical simplification of a sentence will result in understanding it better. As actual bits of language always occur in context and constitute an integral part of its meaning, sentence length and sentence complexity have to be considered at the level of discourse together with cohesion and reference. In the Heinemann

Guided readers, for example, the reference relationships between noun phrases and the pronouns substituting them are given due consideration in the process of simplification. The simple repetition of a noun can suffice to avoid confusion of pronouns in reference (Hedge 1985:14).

Interpreting the communicative value of a particular text by a learner is heavily dependent on the density of the information it contains. Contemporary writers are fully conscious of the fact that the 'information control', that is, the control of the amount and flow of information, is of fundamental importance for graded readers which are intended to be read fluently and successfully. The density of information presented in a reader can be restricted by limiting the number of characters and the complexity of situational background, avoiding flashbacks in telling a story and keeping a balance in the length of chapters (Hedge 1985:15).

Interactive models of reading have brought into focus the role which background knowledge plays in comprehending a text. It is the conceptual knowledges in some area one can have problems with, or, more importantly, cultural knowledge, the lack of which can be a real obstacle in reading comprehension in a foreign language. Some cultural background knowledge can be effectively conveyed by means of pictures, short summaries at the start of the book, maps, diagrams or character portraits. These are simple devices, which can, however, be decisive for success in the comprehension of a particular text.

Although current trends in ELT put much emphasis on the communicative aspects of developing reading skills with the help of graded readers, one cannot refrain from a longheld idea that graded readers also provide efficient practice in vocabulary and grammar. As observed many years ago, graded readers help to review vocabulary already known, while they reinforce and enrich its meaning (West 1950:188). What is more, they contribute to an increase of vocabulary, since new words can be introduced gradually, appropriately recycled and contextualized in a text. Reading a longer text creates grounds for making reasonable guesses about unknown words, and thus triggers incidental vocabulary acquisition. Grammatical features, although not brought to the forefront in graded readers, can also become clear through context and repetition. Moreover, graded readers can demonstrate in a natural way how sentences combine to form paragraphs and paragraphs to form whole texts. Only longer stretches of language can help the reader gain a better understanding of how linking words or pronoun reference function in a text.

As already mentioned, appropriately exploited graded readers can undoubtedly lead to the development of mature reading skills that can help the learner gain autonomy in the future. They can also ensure the transfer of successful native language reading skills for language learners at lower levels of proficiency in the target language. This takes place when readers are exposed to material they can cope with both in terms of language and content.

Yet, graded readers can never be fully successful in the classroom, if not used with a full range of tasks, so that different reading strategies can be activated and

the teacher's guidance for their development provided. Reading should no longer be associated with the need for merely providing answers to comprehension questions but with creating a variety of communicative situations in which readers can present their predictions and express their views. The primary role of the teacher is not to test comprehension but to assist and guide the learner into understanding, so as to develop his confidence rather than his fear of failure.

The activities devoted to the presentation of graded readers which will be discussed at this point can be clearly divided as with other reading comprehension tasks into pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading stages.

The main role of the pre-reading stage is to arouse curiosity in the learner, which is often done by withholding a text in order to build interest in characters, places, themes and actions.

Sometimes learners can just be given a glimpse of small sections of a text, chapter titles or a cover to form some hypotheses about the contents of the book. They may be, for instance, asked to put chapter headings in the right order, or say which of the chapter titles sounded the most exciting or the most important. It is necessary to convince learners that in this type of task there are no right and wrong answers since hypotheses can be confirmed only after the process of reading has been completed.

The function of the while-reading stage is to teach learners how to respond to the text read without paying undue attention to details. Their main task here is to concentrate on the search for meaning, in order to achieve some global comprehension of the text. A technique which can be found useful at this stage is putting events into order on the basis of randomly presented sentences summarizing the whole story. Learners may be also asked to make predictions of, for example, what would happen in some part of the story on the basis of key words taken from it, or what would happen in the story on the basis of pictures. They can rewrite strip-cartoon dialogues in the form of a narrative, or retell parts of the story from the point of view of different characters. They should be involved in such activities that will enable them to respond cognitively and affectively.

For the purpose of the post-reading stage, the teacher should not employ conventional comprehension questions, but some other activities generated by the text. A part of the story with the names of characters erased can be presented, in order to guess them. A guessing game, in which one student asks the other yes/no questions about a chosen character from the story, can play a similar role. Speculations can be made as to how the story could be continued. The story can be summarized in different forms eg. as a review, a diary entry for the main character or a letter to a friend. An interesting exercise is to quote utterances from the book to be matched with the characters who made them.

To sum up, it is worth reiterating that the teacher has a very important role to play in introducing graded readers into the classroom. If he is enthusiastic and convinced that this is how he can help his learners to develop reading skills to the

point of gaining independence, he will surely impart this attitude to his learners. Any practising teacher knows that if authentic materials are introduced prematurely, this usually results in frustration and the complete lack of motivation to proceed. On the other hand, graded readers can provide learners a valuable and motivating experience in which they can go through the text relatively painlessly and efficiently, assisted by a helpful teacher. Open activities, that is, the ones with a number of possible answers, encourage learners to express their opinions freely, which develops their confidence. If there are a variety of language activities identified with graded readers, teachers will be able to choose appropriate ones to achieve their objectives, whatever the level of the learners may be.

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Discours direct / indirect et la pragmatique

La manipulation de ces deux formes de discours est incluse assez tôt dans la compétence linguistique d'un individu puisqu'elle représente deux activités fondamentales de *Homo loquens*: dialoguer et raconter. Elle est aussi introduite dès le début dans l'enseignement d'une langue étrangère sous forme de la transformation des dialogues en discours indirect, ce qui permet de mettre en relief l'emploi des verbes, la concordance des temps, la manipulation des déictiques (p.ex. le passé composé - le plus-que parfait; maintenant - alors; *Il dit: Je... - Il dit qu'il...*, etc.). Une telle conception se laisse déduire des exercices proposés dans les manuels scolaires traditionnels et elle est même parfois explicitement articulée dans certaines définitions linguistiques. Ainsi "Dictionnaire de la linguistique" de G. Mounin en fait la formulation suivante:

Direct (Discours)

"Se dit d'un énoncé qui est la représentation exacte de paroles réelles ou hypothétiques, et qui est introduit dans un autre énoncé sans l'intermédiaire d'un subordonnant: *Il a dit: "Je ne peux pas venir"; il répondra sans doute: "Je ne désire pas m'absenter"*. Syn.: *oratio recta* (Vx)"

Indirect

"Le discours indirect tel qu'il existe en latin, en français et beaucoup d'autres langues est obtenu à partir du discours direct transposé, et subordonné à une autre proposition: *J'ai oublié mon porte-monnaie, dit-il en fouillant ses poches, devient au style indirect: Il dit, en fouillant ses poches, qu'il avait oublié son porte-monnaie*, Syn.: *oratio obliqua*"¹

Cette définition présente le deuxième discours comme simple transformation du premier qui consiste en subordination à la proposition: *Il dit que...* et le changement du temps verbal de la subordonnée et du pronom personnel *je*-il. Il s'avère ainsi que, aussi bien dans certaines définitions que dans la plupart des

¹Mounin Georges, *Dictionnaire de la linguistique*, PUF, Paris 1974