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GLOTTODIDACTICA

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## FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING MATERIALS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF A BILINGUAL APPROACH

STANISŁAW P. KACZMARSKI

*Technical University of Warsaw*

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**ABSTRACT.** The paper deals with the theoretical assumptions underlying the Bilingual Approach and postulates the design and development of foreign language teaching materials facilitating the learner's assimilatory strategy from L1 to L2 in accordance with the recommended syllabus. The problem involves the following aspects:

- a. Textbooks,
- b. Pedagogical grammars and reference books offering inter- and intra-language comparisons,
- c. Bilingual grammatical and phraseological dictionaries as well as dictionaries of topical utterances,
- d. Bilingual structural and communicative/functional exercises,
- e. Bilingual readers.

The paper provides a discussion on the concepts of: (1) grammatical transference, (2) semantic and pragmatic interpretation/translation — and their pedagogic implications. It also includes a general survey of recent developments concerning the matter in question with reference to the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Poland

### *Introduction*

In order to discover and formulate grammatical rules one needs semantic interpretation due to which learning a foreign language becomes not only a process of acquiring new knowledge and experience but also an alternative realization of what the learner is already well familiar with both as far as his knowledge of and practical experience in the native language are concerned. Therefore semantic interpretation of foreign language grammatical structures and a large number of lexical items (mainly phrases) should be based on the principle of bilingual comparison, thus making it easier for the learner, by means of appropriate didactic materials and procedures, to achieve a synthesis of many disparate linguistic items in the form of a coherent composition of his own.

The native language is part and parcel of our emotional life, our knowledge and cultural background, and very often turns out to be the ultimate criterion of the proper understanding of a foreign language text or the point of departure to its formulation. Hence, the learner's L1 must be treated as an ally, as a constructive element in the formation of bilingual semantico-grammatical associations, so that the process of formulating concepts of ideas and expressing intentions in the communicative interaction can be facilitated (cf. Marton, 1981:172).

The Communicative/Functional Approach seems to be particularly suited for establishing common ground between two languages, since we are not restricted by the problem of deciding about structural similarities without any reference to semantic concepts. "The meaning of most concepts — in fact numerous aspects of first language knowledge — the understanding of syntactical categories and functions, facility in using many structural patterns that are nearly identical in the two languages are directly transferable. It would therefore be not only impracticable but also impossible not to make use of this knowledge in acquiring the foreign language" (Sharwood-Smith, 1977:74).

It may be taken for granted that learners (both adults and teenagers) often cannot help comparing newly encountered forms of the foreign language with those of their L1. Research carried out in this respect has shown clearly enough that "the teacher who does his best to avoid using the learners' L1 in class is not able to make his students exclude their mother tongue from their own individual learning processes (i.e. thinking) while they listen to or produce utterances in L2" (Carroll, 1966:103). According to Shubin (1966:106) "with no regard to whether the teacher wants it or not, the pupil assimilates L2 through the medium of his own language, the latter being the only means of understanding new signals". The above opinion is strongly supported by Leontiev (1970:19) who claims that "the phenomenon of transferring skills and habits of the mother tongue onto a second language takes place independently of our efforts to limit it by a special method, e.g. by a direct method. This kind of transfer is deeply rooted in some general principles of the transfer of knowledge or, rather, the transfer of corrective measures, as it is more economical to be aware of and to automatize some corrections concerning the already existing knowledge than to start building a system of knowledge from scratch". The logical conclusion which follows is that the student's L1 should be used whenever there is high likelihood that it will accelerate the learning of foreign language components and thus increase the effectiveness of the didactic process. It is necessary, however, to maintain certain proportions in regard to the use of L1 as an auxiliary factor in the learning of the L2 system to avoid an undesired bias which might be brought about by overemphasising the L1 interference as well as by focusing attention only on the advantages of the L1 positive transfer.



In other words more attention ought to be paid to the learner's experience in L1 in general, and its main aspect, i.e. the grammatical system in particular, since "a learner of a foreign language is quite familiar with a large portion of the foreign language grammar even before his first lesson" (Krzeszowski, 1974:81). Besides, it can be assumed that it is normal for a person who knows one language and has developed language-like behaviour in a second language to be able to adjust this behaviour in accordance with the grammar of his first language (cf. Spolsky, 1966). What should not be underestimated then is the creative role of the L1 grammar in the process of learning a foreign language. The phenomenon of transfer, however, must be controlled and taken advantage of in the right way, i.e. in terms of appropriate teaching strategies, methods, procedures and materials.

Another problem which deserves particular attention, and which seems to have been in focus at least theoretically as regards recent developments in foreign language teaching, is that of individualizing the didactic process. Not much has been done in this field yet, though. What is needed here is an abundant store of materials and aids so that the learner can have an easy access to what: (a) suits his mental predispositions, (b) meets his gradually emerging needs, (c) conforms to his own strategies of thinking and learning, (d) helps him find alternative solutions which have a bearing on his verbal behaviour in various contexts of situation, (e) consolidates his practical knowledge of the already assimilated elements of the foreign language.

It is also necessary to bear in mind that "foreign language learning is a long-lasting and difficult process which involves individuals in spite of a social character of the language. Actually, it is a gradual transition from discursive to nondiscursive acquisition" (Szkutnik, 1981:103). During the process the role of the learner changes from that of an outside observer to a participant. Simultaneously the foreign language ceases to be an outside object and becomes part of the learner's personality in its intellectual, emotional, and volitional aspects. The foreign language teaching materials representing a set of open structures must therefore relate to the learner's entire biography.

### *Theoretical assumptions underlying the Bilingual Approach*

#### **The methodological aspect:**

The model used in the formulation of methodology should be the young developing bilingual and not the young developing monolingual. This requires further research into the types of communicative utterances and the nature of those speech acts necessary for successful second-language acquisition in both natural and classroom environments (cf. Dodson, 1985).

The linguistic aspect:

(1) The formation of receptive skills should be based on the syllabus resulting from the analysis of the target language (L2) in contrast with the native (preferred) language (L1).

(2) The formation of productive skills should be based on the syllabus resulting from the analysis of the native (preferred) language (L1) in contrast with the target language (L2).

The term "L1 analysis" here denotes: (a) the description of the L1 system with special reference to the semantic structure, (b) the research into the frequency of occurrence as well as into the typical character of grammatical patterns and lexical items (conventional syntagms in particular), (c) focusing attention on the phenomenon of stereotyped linguistic behaviour in its registeral aspect both in speech and writing (cf. Kaczmariski, 1979a). Such an analysis would: (1) provide basic material for bilingual comparative studies to be followed by error analysis as their practical verification, (2) make it possible to design a realistic L2 communication teaching syllabus. In a psychological sense it would refer to the concept of positive transfer; from a linguistic point of view it would mean constructing a fully bilingual foreign language course which takes into consideration natural tendencies resulting from the linguistic/cultural background of the national group concerned to *use* typical (or even stereotyped) syntactic patterns in formulating ideas or intentions and *transfer* them into the foreign language. Needless to say, all that would obviously have a strong impact on the selection, gradation and distribution of linguistic items in the course material as regards both the semantic and grammatical structures.

The Bilingual Approach as outlined here requires:

(1) designing textbooks, pedagogical grammars and other supplementary materials as devices facilitating inter- and intra-language comparisons;

(2) making consistent use of the Bilingual Method which involves interpretation and reverse-interpretation exercises treated as routine teaching procedures of precisely defined character and purpose (see: Dodson, 1967; Butzkamm and Dodson, 1980; Alexander, Butzkamm, Kaczmariski, in press);

(3) developing new teaching techniques based on the principle of grammatical transference as well as on the principle of semantic and pragmatic interpretation/translation to facilitate the learner's assimilatory strategy (Kaczmariski, 1979b).

The realization of the above mentioned postulates would undoubtedly be of great importance for self-taught persons and those who devote much of their spare time to the individual study of the foreign language and do not feel satisfied with conventional monolingual exercises the usefulness of which often

happens to be criticized and even negated by teachers as well as by learners.

Besides, it is worthwhile to remember that "learning a foreign language is an exercise in reinterpreting one's image of reality in terms of the new language. Understood as such the process cannot be deprived of its subjective dimension referring especially to one's individual study at home which requires calm (perhaps solitude) and concentration, and consists in one's own endeavours in tackling problems and overcoming unpredictable difficulties" (Szkutnik, *ibid.*):

#### *Directions in working out foreign language teaching materials*

- (1) Textbooks corresponding with the already mentioned criteria and containing texts and exercises subordinated to clearly defined purposes as regards: (a) language skills, (b) concepts and functions, (c) contexts in which the learner's verbal communication is anticipated.
- (2) Richly exemplified comparative pedagogical grammars and topical compendiums (e.g. dealing with modal auxiliaries, grammatical tenses, categories of communicative function, polite forms, the use of articles, etc.).
- (3) Bilingual grammatical and phraseological dictionaries with special reference to conventional syntagms, notional/functional dictionaries in relation to particular language registers, and dictionaries of topical utterances mainly in the native-foreign language version.
- (4) Bilingual anthologies of unadapted readers including carefully selected extracts from theatrical or television plays, novels, reviews, articles and even abstracts, etc. to illustrate various registers and styles.
- (5) Specially designed books of bilingual structural and functional/communicative exercises providing a kind of feedback relating to the basic texts as well as numerous suggestions for appropriate message-orientated activities.

It is just here that the concepts of *grammatical transference* and *semantic and pragmatic interpretation/translation* as well as their pedagogic implications need to be taken into consideration.

According to Catford (1965) "in normal translation the TL text has a target language meaning. That is to say, the 'values' of TL items are entirely those set up by formal and contextual relations in the TL itself. There is no carry-over into the TL of 'values' set up by formal or contextual relations in the source language. It is, however, possible to carry out an operation in which the TL text, or, rather, parts of the TL text do have 'values' set up in the SL, in other words, have SL meanings. We call this process transference" (p. 43).

Thus "in translation there is substitution of TL meanings for SL meanings — not transference of SL meanings into the TL, while, in transference, there is an implantation of SL meanings into the TL text" (p. 48).

In the case of grammatical transference restricted to the rank of group (cf. Halliday, 1961) the operation may concern the implantation of the meaning conveyed by the SL surface structure into the TL text at the same rank in the TL surface structure. Hence, it is feasible to carry out the operation within the nominal and adverbial group, and first of all within the verbal group which constitutes an extremely important linguistic and methodological problem in the teaching of English to foreigners in general and to Slav students in particular.

From the pedagogic point of view it can be assumed that systematic use of grammatical transference as one of the basic techniques in the teaching of the TL system both in remedial courses and throughout an organized didactic process, i.e. at all its stages, whether under the guidance of the teacher or in one's own individual study of English — in the form of specially designed and graded transference exercises — may play an important role in the formation and consolidation of bilingual semantico-grammatical associations, at the same time facilitating the learner's assimilation of TL items with full understanding of their meanings. Grammatical transference also makes it possible for the learners to practise formulating utterances in the TL in the form suitable for the intended meanings.

The concept of grammatical transference can be utilized for the purpose of teaching English as a foreign language in the following fields of application:

### (1) *Transference exercises*

*Semi-drills* (based on the principle of analogy in bilingual comparison), e.g.:

#### *Pattern*

Seit zwei Stunden *schreibt* Tom Briefe. Tom *has been writing* letters for two hours.

Seit drei Stunden *sieht* Betty fern. Betty *has been watching* television for three hours.

#### *Express in English:*

1. Seit zwei Stunden liest Jack ein Buch.
  2. Seit drei Stunden hört Frank Radio.
  3. Seit vier Stunden lernt Jane Englisch.
- etc.

Here we have to do with the problem of semantic equivalence of grammatical items in two languages, i.e. in the horizontal layout, and identity or likeness concerning the context of reference as well as formal correspondence within each of the languages, respectively.

*Contrastive exercises* (based on the principle of contrast in bilingual comparison),  
e.g.:

*Pattern I*

Jetzt hört John Radio.

Seit zwei Stunden hört er Radio.

Oft hört er Radio.

John *is listening* to the radio now.

He *has been listening* to the radio for two hours.

He often *listens* to the radio.

*Express in English:*

1. Oft sieht Betty fern.

2. Jetzt sieht sie fern.

3. Seit drei Stunden sieht sie fern.

etc.

*Pattern II*

Was macht Mary jetzt?

+ Vielleicht liest sie ein Buch.

+ Jetzt wird sie fernsehen.

+ Unmöglich, daß sie fernsieht.

+ Nicht ausgeschlossen, daß sie Radio hört.

What is Mary doing now?

+ She *may be reading* a book.

+ She *must be watching* television.

+ She *can't be watching* television.

+ She *might well be listening* to the radio.

*Express in English:*

Was macht Peter jetzt?

+ Er wird einen Aufsatz schreiben.

+ Unmöglich, daß er einen Aufsatz schreibt.

+ Vielleicht sieht er fern.

+ Nicht ausgeschlossen, daß er eine Zeitung liest.

In this case it can easily be noticed that while maintaining semantic etc.

equivalence in bilingual comparison, i.e. in the horizontal lay-out, it is the deep structures or both the deep structures and their surface exponents that are contrasted within the same language.

(2) *Diagnostic and achievement tests*

*Grammatical competence tests* — employing the technique of multiple-choice with the possibility to compare the L2 response items with the L1 verb form given in brackets in the context of a foreign language sentence. The stimulus in L1 defines accurately the meaning which is to be realized by an L2 surface structure. The distractors may include items that are grammatically correct but not equivalent from the semantic point of view or those which are not in conformity with the syntactic rules of the foreign language.





Example:

*Grammatical competence multiple-choice test*

Choose the English equivalents of the German verb forms given in brackets.

1. Betty (schreibt) a letter for twenty minutes now.

- |                      |             |
|----------------------|-------------|
| (a) is writing       | (a) _____   |
| (b) writes           | (b) _____   |
| (c) has written      | (c) _____   |
| (d) has been writing | (d) _____ + |

2. (Unmöglich, daß Tom ...

ist) in Paris last Thursday.

- |                           |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| (a) Tom can't have been   | (a) _____ + |
| (b) Tom couldn't be       | (b) _____   |
| (c) Tom may not have been | (c) _____   |
| (d) Tom might not be      | (d) _____   |

etc.

*Grammatical performance tests* aim at measuring the learners' proficiency in transferring verb forms from L1 into L2, i.e. their ability to express adequately the meanings suggested by the L1 verb group in the context of an English sentence. The formulation in L1 is always followed by an English lexical verb in the infinitive. Example:

*Grammatical performance transference test*

Transfer the German verb forms into English without re-writing whole sentences.

1. How long (ist Tom — BE) in London? 1. HAS TOM BEEN

2. Jack (muß ... gekauft haben — 2. MUST HAVE BOUGHT  
wird

BUY) a new car.

3. They (möchten ... gehen — GO) to 3. WOULD LIKE TO GO  
the theatre.

4. Why (wollte Kate ... nicht fernsehen — 4. DIDN'T KATE WANT TO  
WATCH) television last night? WATCH

What should be mentioned here is that the principle of grammatical transference seems to be particularly suited for practising and testing the modals by making it possible for the learners to express precisely what is to be said or written in L2.

(3) *Visual aids* in the form of tables providing a schematic comparative survey of verb forms in L1 and L2 in the Active and Passive Voice, both in the direct and indirect speech with reference to the perfective and imperfective aspects, etc. The tables may be used during the aural-oral exercises in class under the guidance of the teacher in order to review the already assimilated



L2 verb forms or to drill and consolidate selected patterns in a remedial course.

Example:

SCHREIBT

IS WRITING  
WRITES  
HAS BEEN WRITING

WAS WRITING  
WROTE  
HAD BEEN WRITING

Direct Speech and Reported Speech in the Present

Reported Speech in the Past

Translation, to put it briefly, can be defined as the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by an equivalent textual material in another language (TL).

In the case of *semantic translation* we are concerned with the problem of semantic equivalence relating different surface forms to a common deep structure which represents their basic ideational and interpersonal elements. *Pragmatic translation* requires pragmatic equivalence relating surface forms to their communicative functions as utterances. "Whereas semantic equivalence", as Widdowson puts it (1974), "refers to the propositional content of sentences, pragmatic equivalence cannot be established by considering isolated sentences but only by considering what utterances count as in context".

Both types of interpretation/translation exercises must be based on specially prepared or selected texts such as short descriptions, narratives, dialogues, mini-talks and last but not least texts of a reflective character, i.e. inner monologues (see: Szkutnik, 1982). The following example illustrates reverse-translation exercises the aim of which is to stimulate reflection about texts carrying multi-layer meanings while being relatively simple in form and well-suited to the particular phase of foreign teaching:

### Exercise

#### Vocabulary:

travel, where, am, where to, what for, way, I, a ... station, in, out, railway, thank, no, today, you, so, not, but, the way.

#### Express in English:

Wo bin Ich?

Eingang. Ausgang. Wo bin Ich? Ein Bahnhof? Reisen? Aber wohin? Wozu? Nein, danke. Nicht heute. Also der Ausgang. Aber wohin?

*Recent developments in the production of bilingual teaching materials for Polish students of English*

*(1) Language exercises*

(a) A number of testing exercises referring to bilingual associations between L1 and L2 are contained in the textbook "English? Yes." by Szkutnik and Marton (1975). The exercises involve grammatico-contextual transformations suggested in the instructions in the mother tongue, e.g.:

*Exercise*

1. Frage den Gesprächspartner ob .....
  2. Sage, daß der Gesprächspartner .....
  3. Sage dem Gesprächspartner, daß/damit .....
  4. Frage den Gesprächspartner was/wo/wann/warum/wie oft/wieviel mal .....
- (b) Another kind of grammatico-contextual testing exercises can be found in the book "Test yourself" by Szkutnik (1976). The learners are supposed to make up short dialogues according to the given pattern and follow the instructions providing the necessary information as regards various possible versions of the dialogue in question, and often suggesting certain grammatical forms, e.g.:

*Exercise*

A: We (1) leave at ten.

B: That's (2) me.

- |              |                       |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| (1) can      | (2) all right with    |
| may          | too late for          |
| should       | too early for         |
| ought to     | not the best time for |
| must         |                       |
| will         |                       |
| are to       |                       |
| are going to |                       |

- Anweisung:*
1. Fähigkeit — Einverständnis
  2. Möglichkeit/Übereinstimmung — Zu spät
  3. Notwendigkeit — Nicht die beste Zeit
  4. Absicht — Einverständnis
  5. Frühere Bestimmungen — Zu früh
  6. Zukunft — Zu spät
  7. Empfehlung/Rat — Nicht die beste Zeit

(c) A book of grammatical transference exercises on the basis of analogy and contrast in bilingual comparison dealing with the verbal group exclusively,

called "Verb Forms in Bilingual Exercises and Tests", was published by Kaczmariski in 1982.

## (2) Reference books

The following publications ought to be mentioned here:

(a) "The Articles in Polish-English Translation" by Douglas-Kozłowska (1983). The book deals mainly with the definite article and zero article. It raises only such problems of the indefinite article as make an exception to the rules about the definite article. Both proper nouns and common nouns are dealt with. The book falls into six chapters, each dealing with some sphere, i.e. Time, Geography, Infrastructure, Urban Topography, People and Miscellaneous, and contains a large number of examples — not single words but phrases or sentences — illustrating the rules determined empirically by the writer on the basis of a large amount of material.

(b) "What Can You Say about Him?" — A bilingual dictionary of topical utterances by Bajoński (1984). The author suggests the conversion of all spontaneous texts into a countable set of categorized text units. Each of the "topical segments" consists of a pragmatically selected set of answers conforming in both languages to the range of a particular heuristically chosen question. Each topical segment creates a contextual model of our knowledge of the world and may be rendered in any language within European culture. The selected sets of segments constitute glossaries of topical utterances.

(c) "A Glossary of Polish and English Verb Forms" by Kaczmariski (1976) — based on the principle of grammatical transference in bilingual comparison. The aim of the book is to compare verb forms in the two languages with reference to the contextual meanings conveyed by the many variants of the modal sentence.

## (3) Language tests

(a) About 1000 test items involving language communication in roles and situations as well as relating to notional/functional categories are contained in "Testing English" by Komorowska (1978). In concept the first two chapters of the book are similar to the already mentioned testing exercises designed by Szkutnik. The book includes a key to tests.

(b) Two types of bilingual tests employing the techniques of multiple-choice and grammatical transference can be found in "Verb Forms in Bilingual Exercises and Tests" by Kaczmariski (1982). The book also provides a key to tests.

## (4) Textbooks

A new fully bilingual course-book for intermediate and advanced learners of English in two parts, i.e. "English as Experience" by Szkutnik and "Experience through Practice" by Kaczmariski, is to be published in the near future.

Its most characteristic feature is the application of a large number of didactic techniques (including grammatical transference and semantic/pragmatic translation) related to the principle of L1 — L2 feedback.

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**ABSTRACT.** The role of the explicit teaching and learning of grammar in the process of foreign language teaching is a very controversial issue. Language teachers and language teaching methodologists differ in their opinions as to whether grammar should be taught at all and, if so, what is the best way of presenting it. In order to find out students' opinions on the usefulness of the explicit teaching and learning of grammar a questionnaire was given to fifty-one English majors studying in the Institute of English at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. The results of the questionnaire reveal a very positive attitude on the part of the students towards the explicit learning of grammar. The deductive way of learning seems to be favoured by the majority of the respondents, who also unanimously point to translation as a very effective form of grammar exercise.

## Introduction

There has been a sharp controversy over the role of grammar in the foreign language teaching/learning process. Two main trends can be distinguished in the recent history of language teaching. On one extreme we have language teaching specialists who see the deliberate teaching of grammar as an indispensable condition for the acquisition of a foreign language. Within this orientation, however, opinions are divided as to how grammar should be taught. Some of the proponents of the deliberate teaching of grammar put stress on implicit, whereas others are for explicit grammar teaching. The latter can be further subdivided into inductive and deductive teaching. On the other extreme we have language teaching specialists who are of the opinion that foreign language should be acquired in a more natural way, similar to the way in which a child acquires its first language. Within this particular approach it is thus believed that no deliberate, organized grammar teaching is necessary in the foreign language teaching/learning process. Let us now take a brief look at how this particular controversy has been reflected by various methods in the recent history of language teaching.

The grammar-translation method concentrated on the deliberate, explicit

