Collaborative translation practices in the language classroom

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Background

Warwick Project co-lead 'Collaborative Translation: a Model for Inclusion', University of Warwick, UK, and Monash University, Australia.
- 'Italian language workshops', co-designed with Dr Georgia Wall

July 2016

July 2017

Language Learning Workshops (University of Warwick) – November 2016
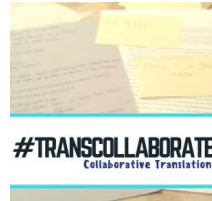
Final event in Prato (3-4 July 2016)

Today

'Italian language workshops' as a case study to explore the potential and the limitations of employing collaborative translation in language learning

Questions
- How does translation provide an opportunity to engage with linguistic and cultural diversity in the language classroom? What's the role of collaboration?
- What are the benefits of using collaborative practices in the language classroom?
- How (and why) shall we use translation at beginners level?
- How can we assess a "conversation translation"? Do we have to?

The project

#TRANSCOLLABORATE
Collaborative Translation

Translation Process

The **source and target collaborators** work simultaneously to produce the translation. The **source and target texts** must be consistently visible and accessible to both collaborators.

The **source collaborator** verbally translates syntactic units of the **source text** for the **target collaborator**, who transcribes their sense in the **target language**. This process will be used to produce a "reasonable draft" of the whole text.

The collaborators then work through the "reasonable draft" to negotiate improvements for sense and consistency
- The efforts of the **source collaborator** will be directed to ensure that the sense of the source is properly represented
- The efforts of the **target collaborator** will be directed to ensure that the final product will satisfy the expectations of target language readers

Source and target collaborators are both credited as the translators of the text.

COLLABORATIVE TRANSLATION
A Model for Inclusion

The following specifications delimit the approach to collaborative translation that is the subject of our research in this project

Source Collaborator

The **source** collaborator –
- *Will* be fluent (pref. native) in the **source** language of the text
- *Will* have conversational capacity in the **target** language of the translation
- *Will* have general expertise in the **source** culture
- *May* have disciplinary expertise relevant to text **subject**
- *May* have translation experience with other **languages**, or the other **direction** with the same languages

Target Collaborator

The **target** collaborator –
- *Will* be fluent (pref. native) in the **target** language of the translation
- *Will* have general expertise in the **target** culture
- *May* have disciplinary expertise relevant to text **subject**
- *May* have minimal knowledge of the **source** language of the text
- *May* have translation experience with other **languages**, or the other **direction** with the same languages

Jessica Trevitt, https://transcollaborate.wordpress.com/173-2/

Italian language workshops: design phase

- a text written in the facilitator's first language

- teacher (source collaborator) as a facilitator

- students (target collaborator) responsible for selecting the most effective translations

- **vehicular language of the session was the target language of the translation**

- we offered a total of seven workshops; three Intermediate-Advanced English and three Beginner Italian language. Each session lasted an hour and a half

More on: Gioia Panzarella and Georgia Wall, 'Focus sulla sensibilità linguistica: la traduzione collaborativa nella classe di lingua', *Italiano LinguaDue*, 8:2 (2016), 328-337

Italian language workshops: feedback

Written feedback:

1.   What is the most useful thing you have learned this session?
2.   What didn't you find productive?
3.   What did you find challenging?
4.   What surprised you about the session?
5.   Any other comments:

'similar reflexivity developed across both groups in spite of their distinctive needs and expectations'

More on: Georgia Wall and Gioia Panzarella, 'Language Explorers: Critical Reflexivity and Collaborative Translation', *mTm Minor Translating Major-Major Translating Minor - Minor Translating Minor*, 10 (2018), 22-42.

Feedback workshop 1

- 'literal translation isn't really possible'
- 'I gained more of an insight into how meaning differs depending on context'
- 'we felt like the teacher sometimes'
- 'having lots of opportunities to speak'
- 'I was expecting more of a lesson and to learn to say things like "Hello" and "My name is…"'
- 'this will indirectly help me think a lot more about language'

La guerra del sale - Daniele Silvestri feat. Caparezza (2006)

sale chi è eletto
chi viene eletto, sale
vorrei di sale un etto
e un'altra legge elettorale
vedo
sale da concerto
piene di persone sole
se ci sono le parole allora usale, usale, usale

chissà l'effetto che fa il sale sulla mia salute
il sale da cucina che sa levitare la pressione
sale la tensione se si sente male il commensale
se ci sono le persone allora usale, usale, usale

vota il sale
vote for sale
non è un venduto
not for sale
nella vita c'è chi sale
chi carbonato
siamo sale della terra
sempre sia iodato

Georgia's observer notes
(workshop 2)

Facilitator: Let's look at this word, *soggiorno*. So we know it is a room. What other word can you recognise here?

Several students: Day.

Facilitator: Yes, a room where you spend the day.

At this point different students contributed and all seemed confident in taking the lead by direct questions at Gioia.

Student L: Would you watch TV in there?

Facilitator: Yes.

Student H: Like, with sofas?

Facilitator: Yes.

Student L: Yeah, that's a 'living room' (*other students nodding agreement*).

Feedback workshop 2

'What surprised you about the session?

- 'the learning of a new tense (in a good way though)'
- 'learning about tenses in a more natural way = way it is used and examples, not simply told rules'
- 'the depth of analysis of the text and the fact it was **not just a simple speaking workshop**'.

Some final thoughts

- The multilingual nature of translation

- Uses of (collaborative) translation in the language classroom

    - The collaborative aspect: process-oriented vs output-oriented

- Translation as an opportunity for negotiation

- 'not just a simple speaking workshop': formalized VS non-formalized language teaching settings

Gioia Panzarella and Caterina Sinibaldi, 'Translation in the language classroom: Multilingualism, diversity, collaboration', *EuroAmerican Journal of Applied Linguistics and Languages*, 5:2 (2018), 62-75

Thanks!

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