

Awareness Raising Through Texts

Assist. Prof., Dr. Nesrin Bakırcı

Istanbul Arel University, Turkey

Introduction

This paper aims to discuss in what ways the content of ‘subject matter’ and ‘language development’ courses can be integrated to raise consciousness of students with the aim of developing their translation competence at the Departments of Translation and Interpreting. To be able to show how this kind of integration can be made, specific topics from the ‘linguistics’, ‘comparative syntax’, ‘semantics’ and ‘anthropology’ course contents will be focused on in the presentation of in-class activities. Theoretical discussion behind the suggestions in terms of development of ‘translation competence’ will depend on ‘the type of syllabus specification’, and ‘the role of consciousness in language learning’. Examples of classroom activities will be presented at the levels of ‘sentence’, ‘utterance’ and ‘text’, which will provide insights into ways of raising students’ awareness through texts.

1. Theoretical assumptions underlying integrated language study

2.1. Syllabus specification through ‘texts’

One way of integrating the subject matter and language development courses is the application of a “text-based syllabus” which is “a type of integrated syllabus” combining elements of different types of syllabuses. “Text based syllabus is built around texts and samples of extended discourse”. The type of texts that can be used in a text based syllabus are: exchanges, forms, procedures, information texts, story texts and persuasive texts (Richards 2003, 163). Literary texts or extracts from these kind of texts also provide a rich example of extended discourse for the students of translation and interpreting.

As Feez (1998, v; in Richards 2003, 164) puts it, a text based syllabus involves building the context for the text; modeling and deconstructing the text, joint construction of the text, independent construction of the text and linking related texts.

2.2. The role of consciousness in language learning

Language awareness which is considered essential in successful language learning and for the development of translation competency has cognitive dimensions and many cognitive actions are associated with learning (van Lier 1996, 69).

Wright and Bolitho define "the process of awareness-raising" "as being a gradual one" (1993, 298) and state the advantages of using authentic texts in the type of language awareness activities as "providing a discursal perspective on language, enabling comparison with other data sources, and allowing exploration". The language study to be carried out depending on texts involves "analyzing the text and specific sentences within it, identifying specific features of the language input, and sharing perceptions and negotiating joint responses by participants" (294).

Four common senses of consciousness are distinguished by Schmidt (1994, in van Lier 1996, 69-70)

- Consciousness as *intention* which highlights a contrast between intentional and incidental learning.
- Consciousness as *attention* which includes such notions as noticing and focusing.
- Consciousness as *awareness* which refers to knowing rules and noticing.
- Consciousness as *control* which refers to the difference between performing tasks with and without conscious effort.

The main domains of language awareness that should be taken into consideration while designing classroom activities/tasks for students are given below with the description of each one (van Lier 1996,83)

Affective domain: Relation between knowledge and feeling; consciousness including intellect and affect; language awareness involving 'forming attitudes, awakening and developing attention, sensitivity, curiosity, and interest'.

Social domain: Linguistic tolerance; relations between ethnic groups; bilingualism, biculturalism.

Cognitive domain: Relations between language and thought; metalinguistic awareness; cognitive academic language proficiency; learning training.

Performance domain: Relations between declarative and procedural knowledge; automatization and control; communication strategies; language practice.

Although the role of each of these domains may play a different role in the classroom activities carried out depending on the teaching objectives, raising awareness of students in terms of getting them to have an understanding of the syntactic, semantic and discursal differences between the source and the target language will help them to develop their competency in translation.

(See Carter, Hughes, and McCarthy 2000 for examples of awareness raising language study with a specific focus on different language structures and Hughes and McCarthy 1998 for the theoretical discussions about this kind of language study reflecting the change in focus from sentence to discourse grammar.)

2. Integrating course content

As stated by Richards (2001, 164), “all syllabuses reflect some degree of integration”. Integration of the course contents depending on the rationale behind an integrated syllabus can be made by making decisions about a suitable syllabus framework reflecting different priorities, such as *grammar* linked to *skills* and *texts*, *tasks* linked to *topics* and *functions*, or *skills* linked to *topics* and *texts*.

The decisions to be made in terms of a suitable integrated-syllabus framework reflect implications of ‘postmethod pedagogy’ (Kumaravadivelu, 2001) which is an outcome of the discussions leading to go beyond approaches and methods as a result of the need for curriculum development processes in the ‘post-methods era’ (Richards and Rodgers 1986).

The table below shows in what ways course content integration can be made depending on the course contents and the competencies aimed to develop in each of the following courses at the Departments of Translation and Interpreting.

Table 1. The course content integration among the courses

Courses	Contents	Competencies
Linguistics	Branches of linguistics Description of language at the levels of sentence, utterance and text	Developing awareness about social, cultural and universal aspects of languages

	<p>Basic concepts of semantics, different views of language and basic principles of discourse analysis</p> <p>Relationship between linguistic analysis and translation</p>	<p>Recognizing the importance of the implications of the relationship between linguistics and translation studies for all translation processes</p>
Comparative Syntax	<p>Concepts of the study of syntax rules and types of transformations, parts of speech and morpho-semantic features in Turkish and English</p> <p>The distinction between time, tense, aspect and modality</p>	<p>Developing awareness about the implications of the differences between the source and target languages in terms of the structural, functional and interactional aspects of each language for translation processes.</p>
Semantics	<p>Basic concepts of the field: context and reference, sentence meaning, speaker meaning and utterance meaning, interpersonal meaning; speech act theory and pragmatics</p>	<p>Developing awareness about the reflections of basic assumptions behind the speech act theory and pragmatics for the evaluation of texts in Turkish and English</p>
Anthropology	<p>Concepts of culture and language, and interaction between them in cultural contexts</p> <p>Definition of translation as a cultural activity, linguistic relativity, cultural identity, the difficulties that culture-specific elements create in the process of translation</p>	<p>Developing awareness about the use of language in different speech and discourse communities and the role cultural factors play in the process of communication through translation</p> <p>Evaluating different ways of analysis to identify the effect of culture-specific elements in language use and in translation</p>

The main course books used in the courses the contents of which were integrated are as follows:

An Introduction to Language by Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2007) (Linguistics)

Semantics: A coursebook by Hurford and Hesley (1983) (Semantics)

Language and Culture by Kramersch (1998) (Anthropology)

Turkish English Contrastive Grammar Morphology and Syntax by Sezer (1995)
(Contrastive Syntax)

Çeviride Dil ve Metin by Bulut, (2012) (Contrastive Syntax)

In-class activities to be presented in the following section reflect a way of integrating course content by first of all giving priority to a focus on a specific grammatical / structural unit and then linking this focus with functional and discoursal units in texts.

3. Awareness raising in-class practice:

The awareness raising classroom activities presented below have been carried out in the courses ‘linguistics’, ‘comparative syntax’, ‘semantics’ and ‘anthropology’ depending on the following type of questions being related to the competencies aimed to be developed in each of the courses.

4.1. Discussion points focused on in each of the courses

The discussion points presented below are believed to make it possible to see in what ways specific contents of the courses can be integrated to develop students’ awareness of the linguistic, semantic and textual differences in source and target languages.

Linguistics: The discussions made in the course of Linguistic in the light of the following items aimed at developing students’ ‘awareness of the implications of the relationship between linguistics and translation studies for all translation processes’.

1. Explain the distinction between structural view and functional view of language by giving examples and discuss which view can help us to account for the nature of language better.
2. Explain what insights we can get from linguistic studies for translation studies.

Comparative Syntax: The discussions made in the course of Comparative Syntax in the light of the following items aimed at developing students’ ‘awareness of the differences between Turkish and English in terms of structural, functional and interactional aspects’.

1. Comment on the following translations (from English to Turkish and from Turkish to English) by explaining what kind of structural differences in

English and in Turkish are reflected in terms of the linguistic realizations of 'passive voice' in both languages.

a) '*Light waves are easily scattered by small particles such as dust....*'

İşık dalgaları toz gibi ufak parçacıklar tarafından kolaylıkla yayılırlar.

b) '*Terör örgütü liderinin yakalanmasından bu yana Britanya basınının aldığı alışılmadık ölçüde Türkiye karşıtı tavra yine Britanya'lı yazarlardan tepki geldi.*'

The unfamiliarly anti-Turkish attitude that the British media has taken since the capturing of the head of the terroristic organization has likewise been criticized by the British columnists.

c) *Başkan adayı, sağlık nedeniyle adaylıktan çekildi.*

The candidate for presidency has withdrawn due to health reasons.

(Bulut 2002: 32-33)

2. Explain how a specific form may convey different functions depending on different contexts with examples from English and Turkish.

3. Explain how a specific function can be conveyed with different forms depending on different contexts with examples from English and Turkish.

Semantics: The discussions made in the course of Semantics in the light of the following items aimed at developing students' 'awareness of the distinctions among sentence, utterance, speaker and interpersonal meanings and the reflections of basic assumptions behind the speech act theory and pragmatics for the evaluation of texts in Turkish and English'.

1. Explain how the meaning of a sentence may change in different contexts analysing the dialogues below and commenting on how the sentence, utterance and speaker meanings of the underlined sentences are revealed in each dialogue.

Dialogue 1

A: *Have you been away on holiday?*

B: *Yes. We went to Spain.*

A: *Did you? We're going to France next month.*

B: *Oh! Are you? That'll be nice for the family.*

.....
Dialogue 2

Husband: *When I go away next week, I'm taking the car here to take the car.*

Wife: *Oh! Are you? I need the car here to take the kids to school.*

Husband: *I'm sorry, but I must have it. You'll have to send them on the bus.*

Wife: ***That'll be nice for the family.*** *Up at the crack of dawn and not home till mid-evening.*

(Hurford and Hesley 1983: 4-5).

2. Analyse the following exchange on the basis of the assumptions behind the speech act theory and pragmatics.

(The exchange was recorded at the diner-table of an Israeli middle-class family. Three children participate: Danny, 11.5 years old; Yuval, 9; and Yael, 7)

Mother: *Danny, do you have any homework?*

Danny: *I've finished it already.*

Yael: *Danny didn't answer Mommy's question.*

Yuval: *He did, he did; and when he said that he's already done it, he saved her the next question.*

Anthropology: The discussions made in the course of Anthropology in the light of the following items aimed at developing students' 'awareness of the role cultural factors play in the process of communication' and their 'awareness of the effect of culture-specific element in language use and translation'.

1. Read the contextual information given about the participants below and analyse the following dialogue within the framework of interactional sociolinguistics.

An African-American student has been sent to interview a black housewife in a low income, inner-city neighbourhood: The contact has been made over the phone by someone in the office. The student arrives, rings the bell, and is met by the husband, who opens the door, smiles, and steps towards him.

Husband: *So y're gonna check out ma ol lady, hah?*

Student: *Ah, no. I only came to get some information.*

They called from the office.

(Husband, dropping his smile, disappears without a word and calls his wife.)

(Gumperz, 1982: 133)

2. Explain in what ways cultural differences may be reflected in language use in different societies.

3. Kramsch (1998, 69) states that "in different cultures different speakers of different languages conceive of time in different ways." Explain what is meant in this statement by giving examples from Hopi language, English and Turkish.

4.2. Sentence, utterance and text level language study

The suggested syllabus specification to integrate the above mentioned course contents gets the students to be involved in language practice at sentence and utterance levels at the first stage. For this reason, first of all, sentence and utterance level and then text level language practice activities will be presented. Depending on the rationale behind these activities, in the conclusion part of the paper, explanation will be made about the reason why integrating course content through awareness / consciousness raising language study may help students develop their translation competence.

4.2.1. Sentence level language study

The following language study aims to raise awareness of the students into the choices made by speakers among the functions of language named as 'ideational, interpersonal and textual functions' by Halliday and Hasan (1989: 15-21). It illustrates the integration of the contents of the courses 'linguistics', 'comparative syntax' and 'semantics'.

1. Students are provided with information about the type of text as 'news stories' and theoretical knowledge about the functions of language in that type of texts.

2. They are asked to identify the structural differences among the following sentences that might take place in news stories and to evaluate the role of the speaker / writer in selecting from the range of options available to them.

- *Rioters burned ten cars.*
- *Ten cars were burned in riots.*
- *It was the rioters who burned ten cars.*

3. Students are asked to bring to the class Turkish and English newspapers for analysis of similar type of sentences and to make evaluations of the choices made by the news writers in terms of the use of active and passive structures .

The speaker/writer might choose within the ideational function highlighting agency and may have the role of giving information within the interpersonal component of the grammar (*Rioters burned ten cars*) or he/she may hide the agency (*Ten cars were burned*). The speaker might also choose to highlight the agents of the action within the textual component (*It was the rioters who burned ten cars*) (Kress (2001: 34).

Discussions on the distinction among these sentences is not in fact a matter of choice in terms of structural differences between active and passive voice but a choice in terms of how the news event may be perceived and / or how the news writer may want the news reader to perceive the event. Therefore, although the focus of study is seen at the level of sentence, with this kind of study, students are made aware of the distinction among sentence, utterance and speaker meaning and the role of context in determining the kind of choices the users of the language make depending on the kind of effect they want to be realized on the readers / listeners.

4.2.2. Utterance level language study

The discussion about semantic features of nouns and verbs in the course linguistics (Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams, 2007: 193-196) is followed by in-class practice in the course Comparative Syntax with a focus on the differences of the semantic features of specific nouns and verbs in English and in Turkish. In the light of these studies, students are provided with a discussion on a number of differences between English and Polish in the area of speech acts and linguistic realizations of different cultural norms and assumptions by reading the article named ‘Different Cultures, Different Languages, Different Speech Acts’ by (Wierzbicka 1985) in the course Anthropology.

1. Students are asked to identify how specific functions like ‘giving advice’, ‘making requests’, ‘expressing opinion’ are realized in Polish and English.
2. They are asked to give examples from Turkish comparing the linguistic realizations of the above mentioned functions.
3. Students read about the lexical evidence of cultural differences as a reflection of the characteristics of different cultures and focus on the concepts of ‘privacy’ and ‘compromise’ in Polish, English and Turkish.

The discussion to be held about how speech acts can be realized in different linguistic forms reflecting different cultural norms may be followed by the question about the existence of ‘untranslatable culture associated with the linguistic structures of any given language’ (Kramersch 1998:12).

“The translatability argument” to be made following the language study presented here is hoped to develop students’ understanding of the reflection of cultural differences on language use and the fact that

If speakers of different languages do not understand one another, it is not because their languages cannot be mutually translated into one another-..... It is because they don't share the same way of viewing and interpreting events; they don't agree on the meaning and the value of the concepts underlying the words. In short, they don't cut up reality or categorize experience in the same manner. Understanding across languages does not depend on structural equivalences but on common conceptual systems , born from the larger context of our experience (Kramersch 1998:12).

4.2.3. Text level language study

In the Departments of Translation and Interpreting, a text based syllabus

may be built around a variety of texts depending on the contexts in which the learners will use the language.

The language study presented below following the literary text should be seen as a way of raising students’ awareness into ‘how differences in the verb structures can be associated with depiction of characters and description of the interaction between characters’ (Jago 2001:75-76). It also illustrates how the content of the courses mentioned above can be integrated through a text.

(The extract is from the final pages of *Hot Touch*, a romance by Deborah Smith.)

Caroline laughed softly. ‘Wonderful.’

‘Talking to some animal I don’t see?’ Paul teased. He put his arm around her and drew her to him. Caroline looked up into his face and didn’t speak for a moment, enjoying the rush of pleasure she felt when she lost herself in his eyes.

‘Thank you for indulging my need to walk,’ she whispered. They’d left the Corvette near the end of the driveway. Paul caressed her face tenderly. It’s has been a long day. The walk feels good.’ He cupped her chin in one hand and studied her face. ‘How are you, *chère*? The truth.’

‘Better,’ she said in a thoughtful tone. ‘Much better than I’ve ever been in my life. And peaceful.’

‘*Bien*.’ Stepping back, he took her hands in his and looked at her with a quiet intensity that sent tingles up her spine. ‘Mademoiselle Caroline, will you marry a Cajun veterinarian who doesn’t care about being rich or living fancy but who’ll love you like no other man on the face of the earth?’

Caroline squinted at the trees overhead as if thinking. ‘I believe I’m as smart as my mother.’ she said finally. ‘I know what’s important.’ She looked at Paul so raptly that he began to smile.

‘Say it’, he whispered.

She brought his hands to her lips. ‘I’ll marry you,’ she answered, kissing them. ‘You’re my lifemate and I’ll never want anyone else.’

They stood in the driveway a long time, just holding each other. Long golden shadows slanted through the oaks when she and Paul finally walked into the yard, savoring every moment of a glorious fall sunset.

Language study:

1. Students are asked to identify whether the verbs are associated with the male or female character, whether or not they are followed by a direct object.
2. They discuss in what ways the verbs associated with the two characters differ and how these differences reinforce the stereotypical portrayal of the characters.

(Students should have listed the following verbs and direct objects)

Caroline		Paul	
Verb	Direct Object	Verb	Direct Object
Laughed		Teased	
Looked		Put	his arm
didn’t speak		Drew	her
Enjoying	the rush of pleasure	Caressed	her face
Felt		Cupped	her chin
Lost	Herself	Studied	her face
Whispered		Took	her hands
Said		Looked	
Squinted		Sent	tingles
Thinking		began to smile	
Looked			
Brought	his hands		
Answered			
Kissing	Them		

The students are expected to find the following differences in the verbs associated with each character: (Jago 20001, 85)

Paul:

- most verbs indicate some action instigated by Paul that affects Caroline in some respect
- most of the verbs describe physical movement
- the direct objects complete the action of the verbs by stating explicitly 'what has been affected'.

Caroline:

- a higher proportion of verbs have Caroline as their subjects
- several verbs indicate not actions but states of mind

After identifying the differences in the type of verbs associated with Paul and Caroline, the students are expected to evaluate the effect of the contrastive use of verbs and direct objects as follows: (Jago 20001, 85)

The male is reinforced as the person in control, the person who takes action that directly affects the female. On the other hand, the female merely responds rather than takes the initiative. She is far more involved in her own mental processes and emotional states than in physical action. (Only two verbs are followed by an explicit direct object relating to something outside of her –'his hands' and 'them'.) She is portrayed as the more sensitive and reflective of the two, and this portrayal is achieved in no small part by the grammatical choices of verbs and direct objects.

Follow up language study:

1. Students translate the text into Turkish and think whether there are any differences between the two languages in terms of the cultural elements associated with the linguistic structures of each of the languages.
2. They discuss whether the same differences are revealed in terms of the type of verbs used and how the male and female characters are depicted.

As stated above in section 2.1, text based study entails introducing students to samples of extended discourse and after building the context for language study, linking related texts to provide intertextuality. In the light of this need, the text study presented here should be followed by other type of studies making it possible to draw students' attention to other discursal features of language use.

5. Conclusion

Conducting lessons by integrating course contents through consciousness raising language study as presented here may help us to find out ways of making our students of translation and interpreting more sensitive to the use of language and to develop their translation competence. This will be achieved by getting the students to

- become more aware of the syntactic, semantic and discorsal features of both languages;
- realize that language is not only “a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning”, but also a means ‘for the realization of interpersonal relations and for the performance of social transactions between individuals’ and “a tool for the creation and maintenance of social relations” (Richards and Rodgers 1986:21)
- focus on and see the significance of distinguishing sentence and utterance meaning;
- develop their competence as language users and language analysts.

In this paper discussion about integration of course content has been made depending on two language development and two subject matter course contents. It is believed that the scope of the study can be widened by considering cross-curricular links among other courses of the program in the light of the program objectives and the kind of competencies that are aimed to develop.

References

- Bulut, A. (2002). *Çeviride Dil ve Metin*. İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları.
- Carter, R., Hughes, R. and McCarthy. M. (2000). *Exploring Grammar in Context Grammar Reference and Practice Upper-Intermediate and Advanced*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fromkin, V., Rodman, R. and Hyams, N. (2007). *An Introduction to Language*. USA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Gumperz, J. J., (1982). *Discourse Strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Halliday, M.A.K., & Hasan, R. (1989). *Language, Context and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hughes R., and McCarthy, M. (1998) From Sentence to Discourse: Discourse Grammar and English Language Teaching. *Tesol Quarterly*, Vol.32/2, pp.263-287.

Hurford, R.J and Hesley B. (1983). *Semantics:A coursebook*. Great Britain: Cambridge University Press.

Jago, M. (2001). *Living Language Grammar*. Keith, G. & Shuttleworth, J. (eds.), London and Bristol: Hodder and Stoughton.

Kramersch, C. (1998). *Language and Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kress, G. (2001). From Saussure to Critical Sociolinguistics: The Turn Towards a Social View of Language. In Wetherell, M., Taylor, S. and Yates, S.J *Discourse Theory and Practice*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi. Sage Publications. pp. 66-70.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2001). Toward a Postmodern Pedagogy. *Tesol Quarterly*, Vol.35/4, Winter 2001, pp.537-560.

Richards, J.C and Rodgers T.S. (1986). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Second ed., 2001)

Richards, J.C. (2001). *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sezer, A. (1995). *Turkish English Contrastive Grammar Morphology and Syntax*. Ankara.

Van Lier, L. (1996). *Interaction in the Language Curriculum Awareness, Autonomy & Authenticity*. Candlin, C.N.(ed.), London and New York: Longman.

Wierzbicka, A. (1985). Different Cultures, Different Languages, Different Speech Acts. In *Journal of Pragmatics*. Elsevier Science Publishers B.V: North-Holland. pp. 145-178.

Wright, T. and Bolitho, B. (1993). Language Awareness: A missing link in language teacher education? In *ELT Journal Volume 47/4*. Oxford University Press. pp. 145-178.