# IDIOMATICITY TOWARD PRAGMATIC - FUNCTIONAL TRANSLATION: NAVIGATING SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS TO TEACHING FILIPINO TERTIARY LEARNERS

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**ABSTRACT:** *The paper examined pragmatic-functional translation method used to navigate toward second language acquisition focused on how ESL students translated ideas to see how teachers could help in learning classroom translation procedures and identify pedagogical implications in teaching a second language. Focused on Pragmatic-Functional Translation (PFT), the researcher investigated translational actions in the pragmatic social contexts, in the study, the classroom setting. Aimed at finding out how students translate from L1 to L2. Using contrastive analysis (CA), specifically contrastive socio-linguistics, the researcher of this paper attempted to bring into compromise order of two languages toward the closest meaning of the texts for general audience. With the hope to identify the translation techniques used by the respondents, the study researcher did Contrastive Analysis (CA) to find out the equivalence effect in the rewording process and to analyze interview texts applied aimed at identifying social functional meaning of the translation.*

**KEYWORDS**: Idiomaticity, Pragmatic-Functional Translation, Sla, Pedagogical Implications

## INTRODUCTION

Asking students to do translation in the class is an old idea. But, the following questions should be considered in comparing: Have any important ideas been lost in the translation process? Does this loss affect the meaning of the text? Have any of the sentence structure alterations affected the meaning and interpretation of the text? Are any changes to the cohesion and coherence important to the meaning? What are the skills to set forth correct translation?

"Translation does not have to be a lone, pointless struggle between student and text" (Tan, 2008). Many other approaches are possible. The skill could be introduced purposefully and imaginatively into the language learning process. If one could shift the emphasis from learning translation as a set of discrete skills (although it may have its own merits) to using translation as a resource for the promotion of language learning, such might be used to one's advantage for interpretation and functional use.

The researcher herself, being a paper adviser had seen the dilemma of the broadcasting and journalism students in translating interview texts from Filipino (Tagalog) to English. As a language editor, she found difficulty in correcting reworded theses texts due to so many notable reasons. One of these was the role the English teachers play in the translation class. Does translation in the classroom accelerate or retard the learning process? Does it prevent the students from developing sound second language skills? Does it, in fact, place the classroom in an atmosphere strongly reminiscent of grammar-based learning, anathema to communicatively based methodology?

The researcher's checking these texts gave her the idea of doing this paper since she believes of the varied approaches matching the ever changing translation situation needs. While there may indeed be some negative effects from using translation, this paper had seen the importance of translation and its pedagogical implications to tertiary learners.


## LITERATURE

This paper aimed at examining the self-techniques students used in navigating to second language. The researcher emphasized in this study that translation seemed not an end in itself. Because the language used was a second language, it would take a higher linguistic ability to do the task. How ESL students translate ideas in the class was one very interesting note to set forth necessary teaching implications. Were Filipino tertiary students interested in informal technique (right there and then correcting their translation)? Or, were they actively concern in the use of formal translation?

Translating is the process of transforming signs or representations into other signs or representations. A translator expects that what is required of his translated work is exactly of the same significance if not nearly the same with the original text. Translation to Nord (2014) was regarded as "an art or a craft, now a science or recognized as a branch of applied linguistics". "It is the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent material in another language (TL). A translated text is the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message" (Nord, 2014).

"Translation is basically a code-switching operation where the source-language text is translated to a target-language text as close as the equivalent as possible and is presupposed as understanding of the content and style of the original" (Newson, 1998). Equivalence-based linguistic approaches focused on the source text, the features of which had to be preserved in the target text in the certain condition as content, style and function. To meet the necessary requirements for the paraphrased text, the author must consider the form; the quality for preservation of meaning and adaptation for appropriateness and consistency to meet the comprehensibility to the target audience.

The function assigns to the language is a product of the translator's molded cognitive image. The function to which he has in mind extrapolates his nature of translation. Thus, those who translate objectively (word-for-word) were found to have different translation from those who do functional translation where the source text has a life of its own getting away with equivalence text.

In translation of a text or part of a text, there is an approach to translation considered 'functional' when the target text is intended to replicate the function of the source text rather than to explain or analyze it in close detail. "Functional translation is the process of making another culture comprehensible especially when the culture being translated is constituted as that of the 'other'" (Anderman, 1998). At one angle, a translator emerges as a 'force for good', one who ensures the survival of the translated text. The writer interprets and mediates the text for continuity and diffusion of culture. One translates function as reflected in his mechanics and textual interpretation. In the 'force for much better' translation, there is the translation goal to understand the cultural and social implications of the translator's verbal choices.

Formal classroom translation takes place when the teacher shares the same L1 as the students. Although word-for-word translation promotes self-acquired guessing strategies amongst students, transferring meaning and doing assumptions and correlations between languages may substitute the 'common instinctive' technique. Formalizing language to become transactional uses 'creative spontaneity', not sticking to colloquial language.

"Traditional norm to translation relies only on limited syntax and immediate vocabulary of passive learners while the proposed method of this study regards functional-translation as an anchor of tertiary learners holding schema on language and accumulating of previously learned skills" (Bassnett, 2014). Advanced learners tend to fossilize in their acquisition of vocabulary because they had learned circumlocution skills.

To specifically describe the proponent of this paper, is not mere functional-translation which springs from the notion L1 students learn translation rules in the first language and apply them to any other language they learn. In the process of doing functional translation, aspects of plurality, nouns, tenses and other such linguistic components are built or may be dropped from a limitless construct in the language transfer applying purposive writing skills not just self-intake techniques. "Functional or contextual translation brings forth the shortest distance to language transfer and the 'close get away' to basic translation" (Cao, 2009). But there is no such thing as 'perfect translation' due to interference arising from native language word-for-word linguistic shift causing sure-fire noticeable source of error. "The concept of additive versus subtractive theory on bilingualism conforms well to the functional translation" (Cui, 2014). And, using additive, LI eases L2 reconstruction. On the other hand, subtractive translation takes place when constructs hinder exact shift to language transfer.

Pragmatic-Functional Translation (PFT) investigates the translational action as an action with a certain aim, as well as in the pragmatic social contexts in which linguistic action takes place. Such kind of translation poses a special focus on the receiver of the translational action and regards translation as a special form of intercultural communication in order to functionally bridge two different cultural backgrounds. PFT is considered a "culture-sensitive approach in translation needing 'equivalence' to succeed" (Leavitt et.al. 2017). Such is classified as to dynamic and formal, dissimilar translation techniques but are both use to achieve differing levels of literalness between the original and target languages of a text. The two terms have often been understood fundamentally as sense-for-sense translation (translating the meanings of phrases or whole sentences) and word-for-word translation (translating the meanings of words and phrases in a more literal method).

Formal equivalence tends to emphasize fidelity to the lexical details and grammatical structure of the original language, whereas dynamic equivalence tends to employ a more natural rendering but with less literal accuracy.

To Leonardi (2000), "dynamic equivalence is the quality of translation in which the message of the original text has been so transported into the receptor language needing response similar to the original receptors" which aim is for both the participants to understand the language in the same frame. From dynamic or functional equivalence, she suggested the use of PFT not just to have functional equivalence between the source text and the 'cultural translation' but to make the function become a property of text known as "pragmatic-functional translation". Using this technique, people could interact 'in cultures'. While functional equivalence adheres to grammatical structure of the original texts in favor of a more natural rendering in the target

language, PFT holds the idea of translation readability more than grammatical structure preservation.

Getting away with formal equivalence (goal-oriented than realistic translation) in PFT is near impossibility since one language (like English, in this study) may contain a word with no direct equivalent in another language (e.g. Tagalog). Neologism or a more dynamic translation through 'borrowing' may be created in the target language to present the concept. This may be done since the more the source language differs from the target language, the more difficult it may be to understand a literal translation without modifying or rearranging the words in the target language. "Formal equivalence can allow readers familiar with the source language to analyze how meaning was expressed in the original text, preserving un-translated idioms, rhetorical devices and diction in order to preserve original information and highlight finer shades of meaning" (GE Li[a] (2013).

The researcher herself being an English teacher when translating L2 to L1 as in the case of the responses from the interview of the students in completion of their theses, she found students' translation strategy very convenient as they did word-for-word translation believing that such approach would exactly capture what the interviewees were trying to tell without considering the knowledge of the respondents' field language. A psychologist for example would be using jargons which when translated would mean differently. Interference got in and shifting of word/s or structures to another was the best way native speakers of the language would do with the absence of equivalent term in L1giving the translator a more difficult task.


## METHODOLOGY

Using contrastive analysis (CA), specifically contrastive socio-linguistics, the researcher of this paper attempted to bring into compromise order of two languages toward the closest meaning of the texts for general audience. Believing that cultural as well as linguistic influences from the first language may be carried over into the second language, resulting to more comprehensible meaning of the texts particularly in writing, she hoped that inappropriate or unacceptable linguistically incorrect word, phrase, clause, or sentence would find their way toward better translation and more accepted meaning in attempt to show how the absence of a counterfactual in L1 coupled with a cultural discouragement of the use of hypothetical speculation, cause difficulties in translating L2.

Aimed at identifying the translation techniques used by the respondents, the study researcher did CA to find out the equivalence effect in the rewording process.  Equivalent effect is virtually the same as maximal equivalence. The term 'equivalent effect' refers to the target text or having the same effect on the target text (the source text has on the source text reader). Although it would be impossible to achieve optimal equivalence, 'maximal equivalence' in this study was aimed for the high level of naturalness on the language the expert respondent used.

In this study, contrastive analysis of the interview texts was applied aimed at social functional meaning of the translation. Translation methods and translation procedures were distinguished between global translation strategies and local translation strategies: (1) global translation strategy (aka. translation method); the overall strategy one applied to a text as a whole – the primary choice one had to get too close from the source text to the target text; and (2) local translation strategy (aka. translation procedure); strategies the researcher applied in the

translation of individual expressions in the source text, such as words, grammatical constructions, idioms, among other considerations. Global translation strategies/translation methods were choices between imitative translation and functional translation – the first striving to retain as much of the purely formal aspects of the source text, and the latter aimed at getting the message of the source text across, even if it took drastic changes in the formal aspects of the text.

The respondents, the graduating Mass Communication students between 2016 and 2017 and their thesis were the subject for the researcher's analysis. The translation methods as well as the equivalent effect of the reworded texts were identified. Students recorded the interview then put into writing the texts; first, the actual response of the interviewees, then the translated texts. Translation was a must to the students since responses were in two languages; English but for whatever reasons interviewees have, code switching (from L2 to L1) occurred.

The researcher, being a thesis adviser herself had a first-hand opportunity to have seen and analyzed the texts since one also of her tasks was to language edit her respondents' papers.

Aimed at identifying pragmatic-functional translation of the texts, Functional-Translation Method (FTM) was applied using the interview texts translated from L1 to L2 taken from the Mass Communication Broadcasting and Journalism students between 2016 and 2017 theses. For the proposed FTM, students were expected to recast texts: to use fewer frequent and useful chucked phrases for idea-level meaning; to use simple and direct language to use conversational patterns and dialogues; to use jargons (depending on the field); to use current, correct, natural colloquial, and idiomatic language focused on fewer frequent and useful phrases and focused on lexis of conversational management; and to use inductive discovery-driven techniques to do the translation task.

**Procedure**

Here are examples of texts taken from the interviewees' responses and the translation made by the student-interviewer.

**Question 1. As a media expert, how do you choose and create programs?**

| | Interviewees' Responses | Students' Translation |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Choosing a program kasi is largely up to the upper management to decide. | Choosing is largely up to the upper management to decide. |
| 2 | Ibig sabihin ng upper management, they're the bosses of ABS (ABS-CBN). | Upper management comprises the bosses of ABS (ABS-CBN). |
| 3 | For instance, they're the ones who could finally decide which program to place, which staff, which time slot. | For instance, they're the ones who could finally decide which program to place, which staff, and which time slot to air. |
| 4 | So, maglagay tayo ng isang kid-friendly show na sila ang nag-dedecide. | So, let us put up a kid-friendly show which they decide on. |
| 5 | Okay, Drama Team I create a children show na may values, so magkakaroon ng 'May Bukas Pa' and 'Pagdating Ng Panahon'. | Okay. Drama Team I (a group of producers) creates children show with values foe general viewers so there is 'May Bukas Pa' and 'Pagdating ng Panahon'. |
| 6 | Halimbawa ang hapon natin ay medyo nakakaantok in case gusto natin mag-liven up a bit, okay gumawa kayo ng medyo sexy | Example, our afternoon seems dull and we want to liven-up a bit, there is sexy drama show 'Moon of Desire'. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | drama show, so meron tayong 'Moon of Desire'. | |
| 7 | So choosing is largely based upon the decision of the management because they're also aware of the kita na pumapasok, so pag medyo bumaba ang ratings. | So choosing is largely based upon management's decision because the bosses are aware of the in-coming income to have a highly maintained rating. |
| 8 | We have to develop another show na may values para sa lahat para pumasok and mga sponsors. | We have to develop another show with values for all for sponsors to get in. |
| 9 | Sila dapat ang masunod because they know better. | They have to be followed because they know better. |
| 10 | They decide for everything especially in terms of revenue even 'yong oras, halimbawa kung kalian dapat lagyan ng kiddie show. | They decide for everything especially in terms of revenue; the time slot for example, when a kiddie show will be aired for teenage viewership. |

**Question 2: As an expert, what effects do informative shows have on teenagers?**

| | Interviewees' Responses | Students' Translation |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ngayon kasi ang adolescents of today, sila yung tinatawag na generation Z. | Adolescents of today are called the generation Z. |
| 2 | Yung generation Z sila yung ipinanganak between 1996, 1997, 1995 up to yung susunod pa hanggang 2010 | They are the teenagers born between 1996, 1997, 1995 until 2010. |
| 3 | Ito rin yung tinatawag na digital natives, ipinanganak silang nandun na yung technology, hawak na nila. | It is also called the digital natives who were born when technology was already there. |
| 4 | Nasa loob pa lang ng sinapupunan, nag swipe, nagpipinch na ng anong mga screen kumbaga. | They are visual generation who from the womb are already swiping and pinching screen. |
| 5 | Ganoon din sa television, ang gusto nila ngayon ay yung visual, everything is visual. | Even in television, they are into visual. Everything is visual to them. |
| 6 | Everything should be interactive at nakakakuha ng atensyon nila. | Everything is interactive. |
| 7 | Dahil kung hindi ganoon, they immediately loose interest. | Or else, you will never get their attention or immediately they will lose interest. |
| 8 | Kaya sa ibang medium, katulad ng internet nga, they focus their attention and their time. | That is why, for example in the internet, as a medium, they focus their attention and their time. |
| 9 | Ganoong mga bagay kasi dun nasasatisfy yung kanilang thirst for visual things, images, mga ganoon. | These are the things they do to satisfy their thirst for visual images. |
| 10 | Sometimes, we do not know na kung paano sila i-handle. | Sometimes we do not know how to handle these kids. |
| 11 | They are too focused sa technology. | They are too focused on technology. |

## RESULTS/FINDINGS

The following were observed in the respondents' translation procedures. The presence of *Indirect Procedure* (considered to have the 'closest get away' not to sacrifice the meaning of the source text); *Cultural Equivalence* (translated a culturally rooted word in the source text/language with a roughly equivalent culturally rooted word of the target language/text); *Functional Equivalence* (translated a word in the source language/text with a functionally equivalent target language word - i.e. a word which had the same meaning); *Descriptive Equivalence* (translated a source language/text word using a description of the concept it referred to in the target language; *(Near) Synonymy* (translated a source language/text word or expression with a target language expression that was nearly, but not completely, functionally equivalent); *Reduction/expansion* (added or removed elements in translation essentially a type of shift); *Paraphrasing* (amplified or explained meaning in target text); *Compensation* (made up for the loss of something in the source text, by adding something else in the target text; and *Shifts or Transposition* (translated a source language/text expression into a target language expression which involves change in grammatical structure or in word class).

## DISCUSSION

There was the use of terms familiar to both the interviewee and the translator as; 'upper management', 'program staff', 'time slot', 'to air', 'station', 'show ratings', 'revenues', 'viewers' needs', 'network teams', 'kid-friendly show', 'aired', 'teenage viewership', 'sexy-drama program', 'general viewing', and 'highly maintained ratings' were used.

There was omission of repeated structures made to shorten student's translation. There were cases of addition.

There was the case of 'Tagalization' in respondent's answer, 'in terms of revenue' and 'aware of the kita (the income generated from the show)' and 'show na may values' and 'show na medyo may values'. Student-translator, due to lack of word equivalence, retained some expressions from the interviewee's response.

There were too many cases of modifier misplacements that cause too many use of unneeded noun markers (articles and prepositions) that prolonged texts and redundant ideas which most of the time alter meanings as in the case of; 'for revenue purposes' instead of 'in terms of revenue'; 'management's decision' rather than 'decision of the management'. In the expression 'aware of the 'kita', (which also means revenue), such could be combined to revenue in another context to avoid repeating similar idea.

There were also too many observable cases of code/tag-ing: code-switching and code-mixing 'intersentential' or 'extrasentential' switching which occurred outside the sentence or the clause level; 'intra-sentential' switching which occurred within a sentence or a clause; 'tag-switching' which occurred either as a tag phrase or a word, or both, from one language to another; and intra-word switching which occurred within a word itself such as at a morpheme boundary.

Intra-sentential switching dominated the translation of the respondents to include alternational or insertional. In alternational code-switching, a new grammar emerged that was a combination of the grammars of the two languages involved. Insertional code-switching involves "the

insertion of elements from one language into the morphosyntactic frame of the other. In studying the syntactic and morphological patterns of language alternation, linguists have postulated specific grammatical rules and specific syntactic boundaries for where code-switching might occur.

Code-switching was of two constraints. First was the free-morpheme constraint where code-switching did not occur between lexical stem and bound morpheme since many Filipino words were borrowed and were used at either the syntactic level or the utterance-construction level. Second was the equivalence constraint predicted that switches occurred only at points where the surface structures of the languages coincide, or between sentence elements that were normally ordered in the same way by each individual grammar.

## CONCLUSION

Code switching and code mixing was viral in translation. Code-switching is distinct from other language contact phenomena, such as borrowing, pidgins and creoles, loan translation, and language transfer (language interference). Borrowing affected the lexicon, words that make up a language, while code-switching takes place in individual utterances. Speakers form and establish a pidgin language when two or more speakers who do not speak a common language form an intermediate, third language. On the other hand, speakers practice code-switching when they are each fluent in both languages. Code mixing is a thematically related term, but the usage of the terms code-switching and code-ixing varies.

Filipino language users were found to be rational who would choose to speak a language that clearly marked their rights and obligations, relative to other speakers, in the conversation and its setting. When there was no clear, unmarked language choice, speakers practiced code-switching to explore possible language choices.

Translation shares with language use a communicative purpose: it is a special form of communicative language use and therefore 'a unique form of second language education.' There is no reason why we should not regard translation as a 'fifth skill' alongside the other basic skills in modern language teaching.

Translation in the language classroom can be used as a practical activity, which may indeed be rewarding for the teacher and stimulating for the students. Carefully designed translation activities should involve learners in a metalinguistic task, which would require attention to the structural features of language thus having their awareness raised as to the specific way an idea. What makes the idea of translation worst is the fact that this activity is not used to learn a language but to test learners. With that reason, translation in the class is fossilized and makes the activity become less and less associated with the excitement of discovery learning, and more and more with the boredom of rigid lesson learning. What should have been a challenging activity had turned into a pointless routine exercise, a chore. Traditional teachers using conventional translation activities bore adult cognitively oriented learners.

### Implication to Research and Practice

In the classroom, the researcher of this study in learning a second language found translation in itself overused. Uninteresting texts were streamlined, exercises were not conceptualized and activities were not varied. To make translation effective was to teach the students the

functionality of such activity. Teachers should always know why they were using a translation activity and what they should expect students to get out of it. It should not be used excessively to get away with teacher's other works. Previous learning habits predisposed them towards conscious learning. For tertiary learners, they had to understand the need for formal correctness for active interest in the formal aspects of the second language and to humanize the language together with their teacher who was also a non-native speaker, who had experienced themselves the difficulties their students had, putting them in a very good position to understand those difficulties.

Translation in the language classroom could be used as a practical activity rewarding for the teacher and stimulating for the students (Holland & Shortall, (1997). Carefully designed translation activities involved learners in a metalinguistic task requiring attention to the structural features of language thus raising their awareness to the specific way toward an idea. What made the idea of translation worst was using the process not to learn a language but to test learners. With that reason, such fossilized and made the activity less and less associated with the excitement of discovery learning, and more and more with the boredom of rigid lesson learning. The challenging activity turned into a pointless routine exercise, a chore. Traditional teachers using conventional translation activities bored adult cognitively oriented learners.

For tertiary learners, they had to understand the need for formal correctness and for active interest in the formal aspects of the second language, and to humanize the language together with their teacher who was also a non-native speaker. To a non-native speaker-teacher, who had experienced themselves the difficulties their students had, this put her in a very good position to understand those difficulties.

While there was a resurgence of interest in traditional use of translation in the classroom, such practice could be renovated and be made communicative. It would be much better if translation teachers could shift the emphasis from learning translation as a set of discrete skills (although it had its own merits) toward using translation as a resource for the promotion, for reinterpretation and for humanization of language learning. Using such technique would be to the mentors' advantage as a powerful tool for developing language awareness.

**Future Research**

From the general perspective, translation should not be a dull exercise. The text to be translated must be interesting and relevant to the needs of the students. Interest could be created by applying the standard procedures of communicative teaching. An information gap may be created if only students have the text, and invite comments after they translated the text. Alternatively, if the texts were bit long, selected student may sum it up to the class and then the text is handed out to all of the students with their questions and comments to jointly work out the translation process.

Text should not contain unfamiliar vocabulary but this does not mean using familiar terms makes a good translation. Excellent translation aims at introducing new consolidated words to clarify relations between items in meaningful contexts and to draw attention to cross-linguistic problems and studying all the possible variations in grammar, lexis, and style.

A specific translation exercise has to be well-prepared. Preparation begins by selecting an appropriate text from different sources (e.g. newspaper). The text should be short to remember the text easily. Preparation should be particularly careful on the lexical side. In doing this, the

teacher should check the meanings of synonyms, record the collocational properties of individual items, and study the relevant semantic fields. Such meticulous preparations may appear to be too exacting although this may mean devoting extra time on the part of the teacher.

Considering the above findings and recommendations, researchers are suggested to work on the solutions to the problems students have and see further pedagogical implications to the teaching and learning process.

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