

Translation Exercises in the Algerian English School Textbooks: A Worth Or a Hurt?

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Abstract

The currently used English textbooks in the Algerian middle and high school cycles are overtly distinguished by a newly inserted kind of exercises which did not appear in earlier textbooks. The innovating initiative is shaped in plain instructions inciting pupils to translate a wide range of English words, sentences, sayings and proverbs toward their mother tongue. This paper attempts to analyse whether or not translation is a stimulating strategy to adopt in the process of learning English as a foreign language and to inquire about its usefulness to be officially set in school textbooks.

Keywords: *Translation, strategy, learning, school textbooks.*

Résumé

Les manuels scolaires algériens mis actuellement en vigueur pour l'apprentissage de la langue anglaise au sein du cycle moyen et secondaire se distinguent visiblement par l'insertion d'un nouveau genre d'exercices nullement trouvable dans les ouvrages scolaires précédents. L'initiative novatrice est modelée sous forme d'instructions précises incitant les élèves à traduire un ensemble de mots, de phrases, de maximes et de proverbes en langue anglaise vers leur langue maternelle.

L'objectif de notre contribution est d'analyser si la traduction est une stratégie stimulante à adopter dans l'apprentissage de la langue anglaise comme langue étrangère et d'examiner son utilité à apparaître officiellement dans les ouvrages scolaires.

Mots clés : *Traduction, stratégie, apprentissage, manuels scolaires.*

ملخص

تتميز كتب التدريس المستعملة حاليا في المدارس الإكمالية و الثانوية بإدماج سلسلة جديدة من التمرينات لم تعرف فيما سبق من الكتب. و تتجسد هذه المبادرة المبدعة في تعليمات تحث التلاميذ على ترجمة العديد من الكلمات والجمل والأقوال والأمثال الإنكليزية إلى لغتهم الأم.

نحاول في هذا المقال تحليل ما إذا كانت الترجمة استراتيجية سليمة في تعلم اللغة الإنكليزية بصفتها لغة أجنبية، و التساؤل عن نجاعة إدخالها الرسمي في الكتب المدرسية.

الكلمات المفاتيح : *الترجمة، التعلم، استراتيجية، الكتب المدرسية.*

Introduction

Introducing translation officially in distinct exercises within English textbooks over the Algerian middle and high school cycles in current use has definitely been done not only deliberately but purposefully as well. Its presence would undeniably foster pupils feel a certain kind of orientation while receiving a total acceptance or an entire disapproval from their teachers about their converted versions.

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the merits furnished by the co-existence of English as foreign language (FL) and the pupils' mother tongue (MT) via the adoption of translation exercises within a FL learning environment without averting to reflect on the tacit harms they may call forth. However, raising the talk about translation as an autonomous activity cannot be dissociated from peering at the principle of encouraging or discouraging the learners' first language (L1) use in a foreign language learning process. Translation, in a more promising way, is frequently realized in the learners' own language. Both referential languages are so interweaved for the learners that the debate about translation cannot be developed without the L1 involvement. In other words, translation – officially or officiously practised - always encroaches upon the talk of the admissibility of L1 use since its performance reckons on its virtues as a vertiginous help.

1- The Use of L1 in a FL Classroom.

The use of the learners' MT while learning a FL is one of the major interests which greatly inspired the area of FL acquisition over the last decades. Despite its ancientness, the debate remains vivid among researchers because of their controversial positions shouldered by plausible arguments for justifying their assumptions.

The research literature displays plenty of records and findings speculating on the allowance or the prohibition of the use of the learners' MT in a FL teaching environment. The former position, historically speaking, is traced back to Grammar Translation Method whose main tenet was using translation as a basic and an efficient technique enabling learners to convert a list of words, a gamut of sentences and a series of paragraphs from the target language (TL) towards their native language and vice versa. Unsuccessfully, this method did not last for so long due to the uncommunicativeness and inability of learners to use the TL fluently.

Later on, with the consecutive emergence of both Direct Method and Audio Lingual Method, the pedagogical trend has plainly undergone against the principle of admitting the inclusion of L1 in a FL class by directing its new flow towards its total exclusion. The belief underpinning these methods was that learners can learn a second language (L2) in the same way children do while acquiring their L1⁽¹⁾ in the sense of being solely exposed to the TL through which learning takes place without having a sound reliance on the learners' MT. The novel tendency, thus, maintained the notion that L2 is best learned monolingually i.e. learning a FL throughout itself with a definite rejection of learning it via L1. The proponents' belief concerning this assumption is strongly supported by the Monolingual Approach which firmly objects to using L1 in a FL learning setting on the ground that it hinders the learning process.

Admittedly, many researchers in Second Language Acquisition field, still reflect on the admittance or the exclusion of L1 use in a FL teaching environment seeking permanently for proven evidences. In this regard, authors who advocate the use of L1, in general, and translation, in particular, deem that their contribution is largely

observed in developing the learners' skills to achieve better understanding. They defend mainly translation practice not as an end in itself but as an efficient strategy to make learners better equipped when engaged in an FL learning.

Meaningful learning takes place when learners comprehend the material and can relate it to their present knowledge system ⁽²⁾. The misunderstanding of a new item can be, for instance, prevented if clear, simple and brief explanations are provided in the learners' MT ⁽³⁾⁽⁴⁾. The taboo against using L1 in an FL classroom breaks down and the attitude to L1 and translation in FL classes has witnessed, to a larger extent, a positive appreciable change following the recognition that some learners use L1 as a communicative strategy to learn using the FL ⁽⁵⁾ and helps to promote dynamicity in the classroom by providing a sense of security ⁽⁶⁾ especially in the area of vocabulary for learners with lower proficiency level.

A continual divergent persistence of L1 use in a FL teaching-learning process, however, pursues its stream running counter to the already existing opposing current in the field. What matters the opponents, indeed, is that restricting the role of L1 as a facilitator on which learners' reckoning might be focused is not the sole valid attributable justification for its valorisation. Their interpretation, paradoxically, was negatively assigned and their objection was sustained with a firm reservation. The regard they brought to the L1 use goes adversely, to perceiving it as a constructive tool aiding learners to have access to a better and a quick assimilation, but rather, as a destructive medium impeding learners to advance progressively in their learning path. The subversive role appears not only in the constant resort of appealing the ready made translated patterns but in the incessant prevention of training learners to think in the FL as well.

It is flatly observed that opponents' rationale used for maintaining exclusively a FL in the classroom is deeply focalised on the psycholinguistic dimension ⁽⁷⁾ to interpret the imperative repudiation of L1 since their claim speculates heavily on the cognitive process itself to generate the systematic laws of the TL by internalizing both its linguistic and non-linguistic rules and obliging learners their strict applications.

All in all, the two distinct stated trends either supporting or opposing the L1 use in a FL educational setting still perennially diverge in their persisting unequivocal assumptions as well as their laborious rational findings. The constant controversy, actually, enriches the spectrum of the FL teaching- learning field by furnishing valid precepts to the specialist community and leave room to make a worth profit.

2- Translation in a FL Class:

Throughout our dig in the literature review about the investigations reflecting on why L1 is favourably welcomed or not by some researchers, our purpose within this section is following up the discussion on how L1, when admitted, may significantly intervene for providing help to learners to overcome some difficulty they encounter.

It is undeniably agreed that the insertion of the learners' L1 in a FL class has never been randomly favoured in the sense of introducing it in a purposeless way. Its insertion has openly manifested a fan of multiple fold solutions for remedying frequent and recurrent comprehension dilemmas customarily met among teacher-pupil population as well as pupil-pupil population ⁽⁸⁾. The factual success of its presence might be highly coined with the perpetual assistance it brings for the two stated distinct audiences whenever there is a substantial need for clarifying either clumsy

data stemming from confusing structures delivered in the TL or ambiguous expressions laboriously digested by learners or painfully adjusted to their understanding. The rational recourse for L1 may solve the faced troubles but must not also rhyme with an anarchically abusive use or a randomly irregular custom. Its strength and value reinforce the intended inspirations wilfully aimed at for easing the learners' engagement in grasping firstly⁽⁹⁾, the FL input and, afterwards, having access to various tasks compulsorily bound to the newly discovered lore⁽¹⁰⁾.

Translation exercises are among the possible efficient activities to propose for introducing the learners' L1 in a more structured, organised and official way. Such kind of initiative allows learners to explore their L1 as a supportive tool to check to what extent their understanding is considerably appreciated for getting a further long breath of advancement in learning a FL.

The prominent role preserved for translation exercises eases the teaching – learning commitment by setting up not only assurance for pupils but concision for teachers too. All the possible intermingled proposals suggested by learners are surely eliminated on the spot of their occurrences when supplied erroneously and substituted by adequate corrections in L1 version. The dichotomy between the learners' delivery of what is right and what is wrong is confirmed and strengthened as long as there is a plausible convincing truthfulness to recoil upon for cutting off in favour of the supreme correctness. The reiterative need to the L1 use via translation exercises, generally, sheds among nearly all learners regardless to their level appurtenances whether belonging to beginners, intermediate or advanced level. The accessibility to the authentic understanding can be, hence, easily obtained in a span of time via the L1 through which bewilderment is seldom faced. Not only does access to comprehension preponderate the participants' interest but also the notion of saving time disquiets teachers. Spoiling time in interminable knotty ambiguities can drive down learners more and more in endless incomprehension. The presence of translation exercises promoting the employment of the learners' L1 would be regarded as an authentic revealer that witnesses either their flux of progress or their startling stumbling.

3- Evaluative Reflection on the Insertion of Translation Exercises in *Spotlight on English (I°AM)* and *At the Crossroads (I°AS)*:

It is a pragmatic insight that textbook makers held while introducing a series of translation exercises within the Algerian school textbooks starting the middle school cycle to the high school cycle. This peculiar innovating decision is grounded and proved by numerous researchers who advocate an overt use of the learners' L1 besides their FL learning, in general, and the conversion of FL output into their own language, in particular.

The vetting which is being conducted upon the insertion of translation exercises would be iniquitous if it were solely restricted to perceive their apparition in isolation. Their perception imposes a scrutiny upon a wide range of elements which are significantly interpretable to display neatly their impact upon the exercises' existence and the enrichment they may add to the pupils' learning process. The fan of elements which are considerably thought about can be categorized regarding their nature. Two broad major axes are recognizably implied and do necessitate a large spectrum of reflection. The representative constituents embodied in the former category include both pupils and teachers and are referred to as the human source whereas those which

constitute the latter category involve the target language as well as the target culture and are pointed out as the non-human source. Our investigation, in such case, spreads its scope on a series of questions directly tied with the above stated contingents whose influence must be initially regarded before peering at the exercises as a final production. The making out of translation exercises results after reflecting upon a collection of questions to foresee their usefulness and their success. The series of questions may be narrowed on the following dimensional perspectives as for instance: who is primarily concerned with these exercises? What are their linguistic backgrounds? What is the purpose of initiating such type of exercises in an EFL learning context? Do teachers share the same linguistic backgrounds with their learners? Are teachers bicultural? What kind of linguistic and cultural data to work on?etc. The amalgam of the raised issues and the like will shed light not only on the context in which the exercises develop but on the degree of participation the concerned population may reach for assuring, to a large extent, an attainment of a considerable efficiency. The ensuing discussion will comprise the above stated axes and analyse individually the contingents forming each axis as follows:

3. 1- The Human Source:

3.1.1 - Pupils:

The inclusion of translation exercises reveals, from the first glance, that a worthy profit is surely extricated for the pupils' favour. As their FL learning process undergoes a gradual cadence which necessitates a wide range of facilitators to ease their miscellaneous tasks, the use of the pupils' L1 seems taking the lead over a large number of other supports. Its appeal, most of the time at a high frequency especially during the initial learning stages, is not only fundamental but vital as well. Pupils are neither able to detach themselves abruptly nor radically from their L1 since it operates as an already existing linguistic device representing their inner language; i.e. the language of their thoughts. Thanks to it, pupils can progressively build up multifarious portions of the TL they successively discover by driving their attention towards the acquisition of the correct forms dictated by the newly approached linguistic system. Its presence intensifies the FL understanding with a certain reserve kept discriminately for each respective language. The L1's role becomes neatly a medium bridging the FL input to the pupils' inner thoughts. It assures them the obtainment of valid notions highly tied with the linguistic and the non-linguistic features constituting the TL.

The great assistance expected from the L1 reliance is usually performed by learners either silently or manifestly. The practice may even be done in a hidden way despite the harshness of the teacher's instructions. The teacher's authoritative forbiddance to ban their pupils thinking, using, and excessively relying on their L1 does not significantly impact the pupils' personal way of behaving. It usually remains the most efficiently adopted strategy by the individual learners due to its weighty reliability. Neither the teacher nor the pupils can have over command upon the eradication of the L1 from the learners' mind during the development of the FL learning process. It is better admitted, then, to believe strongly that the co-existence of the two languages does exceedingly exist in the pupils' mind. The L1 exploration can be thought of as a propitious tool by which pupils' success in understanding the FL input may be easily checked.

On the light of this perspective of being considered as a strategy explored rather than a study aimed at in itself, translation exercises would plentifully bring advantages to the Algerian pupils by strengthening their FL input throughout the existence of their L1 input. The first translation exercise appears in the first school textbook *Spotlight on English (1°AM)* on page 66 formulating explicitly its instruction as follows: “*Here are some words, translate them in your language.*” From the onset of the pupils’ engagement to solve the exercise, a crucial linguistic dilemma immediately surges confusing the learners to set an appropriate choice concerning their language. In fact, the expression “*your language*” when addressed to the pupil-population is both vague and misleading because it does not specify accurately the language variety to be selected: Is it either solely the “Algerian Dialect”? or purely “Standard Arabic”? or even unconditionally a mere mixture of both?

The unspecified selection cheers up the pupils’ will for embracing one of them or even swinging between them whenever their aptitude and/or decision fits. Their choice would not be at any time liable to a severe criticism or a firm refusal. The peremptory motive that shoulders their free choice is that both of these stated linguistic codes form their own languages: The Algerian Dialect is their own language. So is Standard Arabic. It becomes, therefore, their absolute right to behave linguistically via their preferred language.

3.1.2- Teachers:

Pupils are not the only actors concerned with the choice of their language varieties. The latter may affect negatively the teacher whose task will be entangled in a dainty position. The exigencies may impose on him/her to be both bilingual and bicultural besides the aptitudes s/he necessarily has to possess for his/her teaching. These abilities enable him/her to cope with every single translated attempt suggested by the participants. The teacher, as being the sole coach in the classroom, might be confronted to various kinds of Algerian dialects; each of which has its proper distinct morphology, syntax and semantics. The idea underlining the confrontation is whether the teacher is well-enough acquainted with all these distinctive features that may discern a dialect from another to approve or disapprove the attempts. Likewise, for Standard Arabic which can be another language variety s/he might encounter if any trial is provided with. The teacher is put in a perplexing situation if his/her acquaintances are very limited. Worse than this, it is unfair to let the furnished attempts with no correction and with no feedback. What would be, then, the essence of the insertion of translation exercises if they remain uncorrected? It is always pedagogically recommended that model types follow immediately the solutions attempted earlier. Hence, correction imposes its presence to guide pupils towards correctness.

An uninterrupted enchainment of wonders pursues the flux of our reflection by stepping forward to think about another salient factor bound to the mode of correction. If correction is compulsory, in which language variety should it be done? How should it be delivered, in an oral or a written form? In such situation, dialect will be definitely excluded if the choice prevails on the written form since dialect is purely restricted to the verbal delivery.

Because of the formal social setting where the teacher-pupil population is gathered and the formal language use which characterizes their linguistic behaviour, it is more

credible to think that translation versions would be better performed in Standard Arabic. Its privileged status in an academic environment accentuates more and more the formality of the learning context.

Furthermore, its considerable value stems from the powerful unification it possesses upon the audience. Standard Arabic is commonly shared by all the classmates and intensifies collectively their comprehension when compared to a dialect which is too individually restricted to the regional area pupils originate from. The unshared dialect may dislocate pupils and may become a major linguistic obstacle that impedes them to have mutual constructive exchanges. When clumsiness settles amidst pupils due to a dissimilar L1, it obviously obstructs clarifications. The settled ambiguity vacillates the role provided by the dialect as the pupils' L1 from a status of profitable gains to the status of noxious harms. The L1 obstructive aspect will no more reflect the initial traced expectations of being an aid, but rather, becoming a hindrance.

After attempting to establish a dichotomy between the pros and the cons and between the most favourably sought criteria attributable to each language variety to be explored as the pupils' L1 within translation exercises, our perception is unhesitatingly fixed on Standard Arabic. The fixation does not forcibly equate with a painless and a fastened conversion. The work requires mainly from the teacher to be linguistically and culturally well-equipped to pinpoint the similarities as well as the differences where the two languages under study converge or diverge. The teacher must accomplish the role of a perfect model whose presence stands as a credible source of knowledge in which correction of translated exercises is always readily available. The supplied correction must be an everlasting acquired richness to preserve.

From all what has been pointed out so far, let us assume that ideal teachers are hired for not only their mastery of Standard English but also for their over command of Standard Arabic. Besides this, their cultural knowledge of the stated languages is highly appreciable. The persistence of dilemmas continues to emerge and takes another aspect.

3.2. The Non-Human Source:

3.2.1. Translation: Two perspectives can be analysed focusing on the linguistic and the cultural level.

3.2.1.1. The Linguistic Level:

With the providence of the basic qualifying characteristics assigned to the teachers' potentialities, translation exercises still seem imposing a harsh pedagogical task for teachers to accomplish, on one side, and a difficult exercise for pupils to solve, on the other side. It may happen that the teachers' aptitudes would inactively interfere in such solving-problem activities. The inaptitude resides in the converted language itself that cannot be integrally submitted to Literal Translation⁽¹¹⁾, i.e. word for word translation. The mere recourse of reproducing word for word conversion entails erroneous attempts and ends with a thorough miscarriage because of the obscure and distorted meaning⁽¹²⁾. The possible alternative to save meaning is to model it through equivalents for overcoming the multiple faced difficulties.

Each language functions distinctly: what might be findable, operable and applicable in Standard English can be, at least, partially transformed or wholly omitted in Standard Arabic.

To deepen further our reflection about the raised issue, another pertinent perspective attracts our attention correlating between the proposed nature of the linguistic material worked on in the school textbooks and the possible appropriate equivalents that suit translation. The data allows us to have a clear picture about the degree of difficulties pupils may face while translating it from the source language (Standard English) to the TL. As it was previously discussed, for its numerous advantages, Standard Arabic would be preferably chosen as the TL. The data appearing in exercise “d” on page 66 designed for first year pupils in their textbook *Spotlight on English (1°AM)* includes the sentences below :

1. I am having a nice holiday.
2. How long does an elephant live?
3. How do you come to school?
4. At what time do you get up?
5. It is five p.m.
6. I have breakfast/ lunch/ dinner/ at home.

The convenient translation fitting these prescribed sentences may be as follows :

- 1- أقضي عطلة ممتعة .
- 2- كم يعيش الفيل ؟
- 3- كيف تأتي إلى المدرسة ؟
- 4- على كم الساعة تستيقظ ؟ / تستيقظين ؟
- 5- إنها الخامسة مساءً .
- 6- أتناول الفطور / الغداء / العشاء / في المنزل .

Our observation is highlighted with the total absence of word for word translation, despite the embryonic stage of discovery pupils still undergo; none of these samples require the application of literal translation. The sentence structures are neatly different from one language to another bringing the learners’ attention to emphasize on every syntagm, belonging to a given linguistic system, occupies a specific position; and the relatedness that ties syntagmatically one linguistic unit to another is set differently. The distribution of the linguistic units is submitted to dictated laws whose obedience is indisputable. When the samples are put in juxtaposition and divergences are pointed out, pupils may consciously retain the placement of the linguistic elements and the way they are discernibly distributed and used.

If the English sentences included in the exercise are syntactically approached, several changes appear on the surface structures when translated into Standard Arabic. The modifications are applied according to the grammatical elements involved in the structures. To give a clear picture of what might stem from these translations, an illustrative model of the sentence “I am having a nice holiday.” may be conveniently converted to:

“ عطلة ممتعة اقضي ”

and will be analysed grammatically as follows :

Nb	Standard English	Standard Arabic
1	“I” appears as an independent pronoun.	“I” appears with the inflectional verb " اقضي " through the letter ' ا ' "
2	“am having” appears as the main verb of the sentence.	It is substituted with another equivalent verb: " اقضي "
3	The main verb is conjugated in “Present Continuous”.	The main verb is conjugated in “Simple Present” which is the equivalent of “المضارع”.
4	The indefinite article “a” is used independently.	The indefinite article is shown through the absence of the use of “ ال ” in the word “ عطلة ” and not “ العطلة ”.
5	“nice holiday” is a collocation.	The equivalent is “ عطلة ممتعة ” and not “ عطلة جميلة ”.
6	The order is: “adjective (nice)+ noun (holiday)”.	The order is: “noun (عطلة) + adjective (ممتعة).”

The analysis of the data above conducts our reflection to put a major emphasis on the contrasts existing between the source and the target sentences that might stimulate the pupils’ inquisitiveness by developing their attention on the highlighted discernments between the syntactic units displayed in the correction to be well-memorized and implemented once needed.

The fan of chunks implied in transformations, unfortunately, consume a considerable time for allowing pupils to well-digest the divergences, to retain them and to be a part of their accessible knowledge. The explanations delivered for stressing the divergences and the accents put on for showing the contrasts are tasks which engage pupils to invest themselves in another cognitive process: notions must, first of all, be recognized and grasped in the FL and, then, transferred and associated to L1. These simultaneously conducted operations, however, can never be mastered from one single illustration debated in a demonstration. Each sentence is structurally built up in a specific way leading to distinct explanations which are supposed to be accurately assigned for justifying the occurring changes in translation forms. The time allocated to translation exercises, thus, must not take the lion’s part and be at the expense of other exercise performances. It is a matter of a permanent recall to insist on the role of translation as just a contributive tool in the pupils’ English learning advancement for dispelling the abusive use of their L1 that might degenerate on other tasks tackled and for not, essentially, swerving from the primary traced goal.

3.2.1.2. The Cultural Level:

The cultural dimension, in its turn, embodied in the data presented as a group of sentences explored in the textbooks is far away from being a common and an ordinary engagement to deal with. The endeavours expected from the pupils cannot be inspired; and successful proposals as might be with those examples that rely on a pure lexical and syntactic translation are rarely guessed because this particular kind of translation outrides their abilities to succeed on their own to make up the convenient equivalents. The meaning represented through the cultural aspect is a conventionally made version referred to as an unmodified and an incontestable matter. As culture is often shaped through sayings, proverbs and the like, the credible reference from where the source is drawn would inevitably be the dictionary (as standard languages are the unique language varieties referred to in our scrutiny). The exercise solvers are, hence, implicitly boosted to effect some researches to find out the sought versions bearing in mind that the discovered equivalents must be faithfully restated and/or re-written as they are denoted in the trustworthy reference.

The embodiment of culture as a crucial entity in the proposed translation exercises interposes smoothly in textbook succession. Its ignorance is unquestionable because of the sound concomitance that unifies both entities, namely culture and language. The native speakers' way of thinking, of living and of perceiving the world are mirrored in their language, and therefore, are disposable to non-native language users' discoveries.

A collection of English sayings and proverbs does constitute the spectrum of the target culture moulded into multiple series of exercises to consolidate the underlying assumption that a language is not only restricted to its linguistic aspect; but it conveys a whole perception of moral, social, psychological and philosophical dimensions disclosing the autochthones' beliefs in the bosom of a universe where they gladden a perpetual evolution.

The high school cycle does not linger to bring into vogue its textbook contents with the similar principle of focalising upon exercises whose aim targets to work on equivalents; however, their singularity lies in their narrowed circle centred on both proverbs and sayings as the best representations of culture. Here is a prototype of an exercise (on page 68) on the school textbook entitled *At the Crossroads (1°AS)* designed for first year pupils in the high school displaying the following instruction as well as the given sayings to be examined. The dictated instruction states the following: *Discuss these sayings in class and try to find their equivalents in your own culture.* The sayings are as follows:

- A- One good turn deserves another.
- B- Necessity is the mother of invention.
- C- It is easier to make a suggestion than to carry it out.
- D- It is better to bend than to break.

To cut the Gordian knot does not appear to come down the pupils' level. The hindrance amplifies and becomes tougher. The specificity of the difficulty manifests itself by the limited source of inquiry to consult suitable equivalents in the "Algerian Culture". As the source restriction binds tighter impeding pupils to get an autonomous performance to solve the exercises, their inquiries are certainly driven towards persons who detain the Algerian cultural inheritance. What complicates more their tasks - even

if assigning the exercises as homework for gaining more time in the classroom activities - is the way addressing the samples to aiders whose aptitudes frequently in English is naught. The Algerian population linguistic repertoire is meagrely endowed with English language. How comes to expect an assistance from persons who cannot decode the content of the samples in the TL and to encode it again through corresponding equivalents in their own culture?

Again, no alternative may be adopted apart from choosing equivalents to get rid tactfully from the predicaments. The teachers' explanations in English can provide pupils with some hints letting their smartness to be more fertile to guess relevant equivalents. In fact, this genre of statements may be regarded as riddles to which semantically-oriented interpretations are attributed with reference to the relevant contexts they represent. Here are the corresponding equivalents in Standard Arabic:

- أ - ما جزاء الإحسان إلا الإحسان
- ب - الاختراع أم الحاجة
- ج - ما أسهل الكلام و ما أصعب الأفعال
- د - الاتحناء أفضل من الانكسار

On the whole, translation exercises officially inserted in the Algerian English school textbooks do impressively attract when discovered forthwith through page flipping. The impressive attraction lies in the fact that translation, generally performed in the language users' MT, may ensure a certain confidence, security and orientation due to the comprehension enlightenment it sheds on the FL input. Its role is always coined with the merits it supplies to non-native learners so that more clarifications are conceded in their L1 furrowing their learning path in a more simplified and an easier way.

Their presence, nevertheless, decoys the pupils since they will be hastily caught in a whirlpool-like torment: no sooner do they start engaging themselves to seek for relevant conversions that their enthusiasm is dashed by shuffled obstacles emerging from the inapplication of literal translation. It is with great pains that the relinquishment of furnishing more efforts may assert from the first couple of trials which ends in a blind path.

Conclusion:

Prompting officially translation exercises is an encouraging strategic stimulator that may motivate the pupils' curiosity in grasping that no language system is alike. Nor is culture. Numerous swervings, shunless in the discovery phases, can be shuffled off for leaving room to those conversions congruously submitted to the prescribed conventions. A minute revision is desirable in regard to the involuntarily emerged harms that appear attenuating the intended gains. In other words, the exercises seem to cause more hurt than to bring worth. A deep reflection about the purpose and the manner of introducing translation exercises necessitates a well-structured framework comprising not only a well-selected data that fits the content file it appears in but also a series of correction model well-stated on the teacher's textbook that stands as a sole reference unifying all the national English classes to explore them as solved exercises.

The lack of model types may instigate a certain feeling of despondency among teachers who may scamp or skip them when being not well- trained maintaining their repudiation due to the absence of such kind of questions in official exams.

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Note:

Algerian English School Textbooks worked on:

- 1- *Spotlight on English (1°AM)* - ISBN – 2004.
- 2- *At the Crossroads (1° AS)* - ISBN – 2005.