

This article was downloaded by: [Universitat Jaume I]

On: 27 January 2012, At: 01:48

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Perspectives: Studies in Translatology

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rmps20>

Think-aloud teaching in translation class: implications from TAPs translation research

Dechao Li ^a

^a The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies, Hung Hom, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Available online: 03 Mar 2011

To cite this article: Dechao Li (2011): Think-aloud teaching in translation class: implications from TAPs translation research, *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, 19:2, 109-122

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2010.506955>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Think-aloud teaching in translation class: implications from TAPs translation research

Dechao Li*

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies, Hung Hom, Kowloon, Hong Kong

(Received 5 October 2009; final version received 8 April 2010)

TAPs translation research is the application of the think-aloud method to an empirical study of the translator's mental process, and over the past 20 years it has been using students primarily as its subjects. The present paper argues that the think-aloud method can not only be used to investigate students' translation processes, it can also be adopted in translator training by the teacher to give students more direct and concrete guidance in translation practice and thus to establish a new interactive mode of translation teaching in class.

Keywords: think-aloud method; translation teaching; translation studies

1. Introduction

Think-aloud, originally an experimental method used in psychology, is now widely used in translation studies to reveal the translator's thinking process. Subjects involved in think-aloud experiments are asked to verbalize in the translation process as many of their thoughts as possible, which are at the same time recorded or videotaped by researchers. Then the recordings are transcribed into think-aloud protocols (TAPs), which will be further analyzed to reveal features and rules that are inherent in the translation process (Jääskeläinen, 2009, pp. 290–293).

2. The validity of using think-aloud to gain access to the translator's mental process

One of the persisting questions of TAPs translation research is whether TAPs really reveal the translator's thinking process. To answer this question, we have to go back to how thinking-aloud was viewed and received in psychology, in which it was first used by German psychologists Karl Bühler and Edouard Claparede (1933, 1934) as one of the introspective methods or one type of verbal reporting procedure to collect data related to the thinking process (Lörscher, 1991, p. 68). Psychologists' views vary regarding the effectiveness of using verbal reports in the study of the thinking process, ranging from 'unconditional acceptance by structuralists to total rejection by behaviourists' (Jääskeläinen, 2009, p. 291). Viewed less radically today, verbal reports are believed to be useful and illuminating sources as long as the experiments leading to them are carried out with rigor and the research designs are trustworthy (Li, 2004).

*Email: ctdechao@polyu.edu.hk

The validity of verbal reporting to a great extent lies in what ‘mental process’ is defined. One definition sees it as a neural interaction of nerve cells which is unexplainable and inaccessible via any method of verbal reporting. This neural process is more like a chaotic, intuitive activity than a logical one that follows certain procedures. Any study of such a process will lead to ‘neurology, chemistry and physics, to a reductive explanation ultimately in terms of atoms, synaptic activity, etc.’ (Chesterman, 2005, p. 196). By contrast, the other definition regards a mental process as an information processing activity that occurs in working memory, which is liable to be reproduced verbally (Ericsson and Simon, 1984; Jääskeläinen, 2009). Translation scholars who support the first definition tend to believe that the translating process is a sudden interaction or activity of neural or cerebral cells, which takes place within such a short time that it defies any attempts to report it verbally. They tend to use some fuzzy or abstract language (such as inspiration), or borrow the explanation of ‘stimulus-response’ from behaviorist scientists to explain the translating process. Such thinking may be the psycholinguistic underpinnings of Harris’s concept of ‘natural translation’, which views translation as an endowed skill of bilinguals (Harris, 1977), and the popular belief that ‘translators are born, not made’ (Baer & Koby, 2003, p. vii).

Implicitly, the above view evinces a total denial of the role played by translator training in grooming competent translators, as it completely ascribes the acquisition or improvement of translation skills to some psychological factors that are either subjective or uncontrollable. But it certainly cannot explain why thousands of translators are produced by different translation schools or institutions worldwide every year if translation cannot be taught at all.

By contrast, experiment results from psychology in recent years tend to favor the second view: mental activities consist in information processing. As Ericsson and Simon (1984, pp. 78–107) have found out in their research, there exist three situations in which subjects’ TAPs and their mental processes show different degrees of matching. Their findings can be summed up as follows:

- (1) if subjects are performing oral tasks that can only be accomplished in a step-by-step manner or through a number of procedures, their TAPs have a high resemblance to their thinking processes;
- (2) if subjects are undergoing highly automatic thinking processes when performing tasks and the intermediate phases of such processes are not stored in their short-term memories, their thinking processes cannot yield any relevant TAPs;
- (3) if subjects are undergoing non-automatic thinking processes when performing tasks and they mainly rely on visually encoded information rather than verbal messages to implement such tasks, their TAPs are incomplete representations of the thinking processes. In other words, the TAPs only maintain a partial resemblance to their thinking processes.

In translation, it is indeed possible that some translating processes correspond to the second scenario, especially when the subjects are dealing with linguistic items below the sentence level (such as words and phrases) or sentences that only carry phatic function (such as ‘Good morning’, ‘How do you do?’, ‘How are you?’, etc.). The translating process in such cases is often so swift and automatic that it yields few relevant TAPs.

But for the translation of linguistic units equal to or larger than a sentence (such as sentence groups, paragraphs or texts), the translating process is more complex as it frequently invokes analytical steps in understanding the source text (ST) and reconstructing the target text (TT). For instance, when an experienced Chinese translator is asked to translate Eugene Nida's famous dictum 'Translation means translating meaning', he or she will not render it in a word-for-word manner as, say, '翻譯是翻譯意思' ('Translation is to translate meaning') even though it perfectly makes sense and almost conveys all the original message. He or she will first of all make a detailed analysis of the original sentence, calculating its semantic meaning and its syntactic and stylistic features that are used to enhance the semantic meaning. He or she will notice the special pattern in which the four words of the sentence are organized: 'translation' and 'translating' are all derivative forms of the verb 'translate', just as 'means' and 'meaning' are the derivative forms of the verb 'mean'. These four words are arranged into a sentence pattern of 'ABAB', which helps to create a special circular effect.

Besides the above wordplay feature, the translator will also notice the phonological features of the sentence. The sentence has a special rhythmic effect when it is read aloud. This is because all the syllables of the words are arranged according to a fixed pattern of strong syllables (accents) and weak syllables. If we use the '˘' symbol from English prosody to indicate weak syllables and the 'ˉ' for strong syllables, and use 'l' (vertical line) to identify the smallest rhythm unit (namely, the metrical foot) in the sentence, then the rhythm of the sentence can be transcribed into l' ˘l' ˘l' ˘l' ˘l' l, which can be regarded as one of the variants of iambic pentameter.

Having realized the above syntactic and phonological features of the sentence, the translator will no longer be satisfied with just rendering the semantic meaning of the sentence. He or she will also try to reproduce these stylistic and syntactic features in the translation. Given that 'translating' can be rendered as '翻譯' and 'meaning' as '意義', '意思' etc. in Chinese, he or she may center on these phrases to work out a number of translations that best reproduce the sound, form and meaning of the original. Some possible versions include:

- (1) 翻譯的意義在於翻譯意義。(The meaning of translation means translating meaning.)
- (2) 翻譯的意思就是翻譯意思。(The sense of translation is translating sense.)
- (3) 翻譯即翻譯。(Translation is translating meaning).¹⁾

This example clearly demonstrates that even the translation of a simple sentence consists of a number of analytical moves which are causally linked to each other. All these steps are conducive to the objective of reproducing the semantic, syntactic and phonological features of the original in the translation to the utmost extent that the target language would allow.

It may be safe for us to sum up here that translating is mostly not a simple, mechanical transcoding process, as some of the proponents of the first view of the translation process tend to believe. It is more appropriate to regard it as a sequence of purposeful, analytical steps than the result of a sudden flash of intuition on the part of the translator. Since all these are stored in the translator's retrievable short-term memory (as the above example shows), this indicates that the translator's thinking-aloud process can be analyzed and shown to others, given that the

translator is properly trained to verbalize his or her thoughts and not be distracted by the process *per se*.

3. Implications of think-aloud for translation teaching

Before the 1980s, the think-aloud method, which was predominantly used by psychologists, was marginally known in translation studies.² The processes involved in translation were still quite mysterious in some scholars' views. British linguist J.R. Firth once lamented that 'translators know they cross over but do not know by what sort of bridge' (1957, p. 27). His view was echoed by George Steiner about two decades later as he pointed out that up till then researchers still had to guess the 'principles, devices and routines' that drove translators to make translation decisions (1975, p. 273).

It was not until the early 1980s that we witnessed the first systematic application of TAPs to reveal the translating process (Krings, 1986; Sandrock, 1982). In the following two decades, more than 100 research papers and monographs have been published on this topic (Jääskeläinen, 2002, p. 135), the subjects of study ranging from examining the effects of external factors (including dictionaries and translation briefs) on translation, translation strategies and translation units, etc. (Li, 2005).

In addition to gaining insights into the nature of translating from both the internal and external perspectives, TAPs translation research also helps to shed light on translating teaching with a better understanding of the translation process. In fact, it was also one of the purposes of TAPs translation research when it was first envisaged (Færch, 1987; House & Blum-Kulka, 1986). The potential of TAPs translation research for translation teaching is vast. For instance, we may compare the differences between professional translators and student translators in the translating process and sum up rules or patterns of general applicability for translation teaching. We may also compare the learning and translating habits as exhibited by successful translation learners and less successful ones and apply the findings to the classroom to make translation teaching more purposeful. What is more, we can also resort to thinking-aloud to locate and analyze students' mistakes and to prevent similar blunders in similar situations in the future. We can also analyze the TAPs of students at different learning stages from multiple perspectives, such as the translation unit, translation strategy, the acceptability of translation in the target culture, etc., and compile a translation learning portfolio for each student (Wakabayashi, 2003). The list may go on and on.

Compared with other approaches to translation teaching, the merit of TAPs study lies in its distinctive research vantage point: it does not follow the theoretically deductive tradition in translator training, which frequently puts theory learning ahead of translation practice. In contrast, it applies an empirically inductive method, which summarizes the observable characteristics of students' translation performance via TAPs before they are theorized into principles with wider applicability (House, 2000, p. 152). Specifically, the former method adopts a prescriptive stance by presetting teaching objectives and skills that are needed by students, which are of course helpful for the systematic training for students, especially those at beginners' level. However, this method also runs the risk that the intended learning outcomes might be too idealized to be in line with the actual abilities and real needs of students. In contrast, the latter makes use of a descriptive perspective with intended learning objectives that are based on students' actual data. It thus helps translation teachers

to design teaching flexibly so as to cater to the exact needs of students at different learning stages.

So far a number of research studies on the significance of TAPs for translation teaching have been carried out (e.g. Colina, 2003; Wakabayashi, 2003), aiming to enrich the research paradigm on translation teaching. Interestingly, almost all these studies are concerned with the thinking-aloud processes of students (including translation or non-translation majors) or professionals, with the intention of enhancing their translating competence. Few are conducted on the implications of teachers' think-alouds (either in or outside the classroom) for translation teaching.

Such a dearth of studies may be due to the diagnostic nature of TAPs studies whose major aims are to locate problems encountered by translators and to find effective solutions to them. The thinking process data of students, as mentioned above, are valuable and helpful for teachers to set up explicit and achievable goals in teaching. From the students' perspective, however, the translating think-alouds of the teacher would be equally precious as such demonstrations reveal to them in a direct and vivid manner how translation problems are solved and goals are met. A personal attempt at using think-aloud teaching in a translation class is described below. It is found that this new teaching method greatly contributes to an interactive teaching and autonomous learning mode which increases the efficiency of translation teaching.

4. Think-aloud teaching in translation class: a personal attempt

Think-aloud teaching in a translation class here refers to the use of the thinking-aloud method by the teacher to reveal to students what is going on in the mind when translating certain texts. When using this approach, the teacher should verbalize as much of his or her thoughts as possible: some of these thoughts might be broad, such as the aim, the readership, the overall translation strategy and the general requirements of the client (translation brief); some might be specific, concerning the choice of words, the reproduction of the original phonological features, or the arrangement of word sequence, etc; still some might involve many self-corrections or repairs. All these thoughts, no matter how transient or trivial they may be, should be told to the students verbatim.

To make the teacher's think-aloud demonstrations take place in a situation that resembles the real one, it is suggested that the translation material should not be analyzed or translated by the teacher beforehand. Similarly, translation tasks that are derived from students' questions in the class are also good materials for the teacher to practice think-aloud translating just because the translation of them can best reflect the teacher's thinking process under normal situations.

Since the teacher is speaking while thinking at the same time in think-aloud teaching, his or her verbal reports may be less systematic and logical than his or her lecture notes that have been prepared beforehand. To some extent, think-aloud teaching data are somewhat similar to the paragraphs of 'stream of consciousness' in fiction which are used to express the continuous, random thoughts of a character during the course of the story. What is more, they also share the similarity of non-linear narration. But differences do exist. The former is a purposeful, planned activity with clear goals, while the latter is an aimless, discrete event, irregular at best or whimsy at worst, such as Harold Bloom's famous 'wild flights of fancy' in James Joyce's novel *Ulysses*.

During the teacher's think-aloud teaching, students are encouraged to raise questions, put forward different views or suggest their own versions, to which the teacher responds by relating his or her steps of thoughts. This student-teacher interaction mode is similar to the joint-translating mode in TAPs research, in which the verbal data of the subjects of think-aloud research are elicited through discussions with other partners (usually in the form of question and answer) instead of reporting alone. Compared with sole-translating, joint-translating enables subjects to utter more complete and 'more authentic' TAPs (House, 1988, p. 95).

In the following, I will illustrate how think-aloud teaching is carried out in my course 'The Application of Translation Theories'. But the rationale of this teaching method, as this personal account will show, is applicable to other translation subjects too.

The course aims to develop students' critical and constructive thinking based on their awareness of the relationship between theory and practice. It is usually given to senior translation major students to help them to relate what they have learned about translation theories to what they have observed in real life, so far as translation is concerned. For instance, students can use theories to explain certain translation phenomena or to guide their translation practice. The course is given once a week for a duration of two hours to different tutorial groups of around 25 students. Given that the focus of the course is the application of theories, students' presentation about what they have observed accounts for a relatively large proportion of class teaching time. The usual running format of the course is composed of two parts: the first part is students' presentation about a topic (ranging from literary to non-literary) they have prepared and discussed with the teacher beforehand; the second part is the teacher's comments on their presentation and a follow-up lecture on the theoretical points mentioned in the presentation so as to enhance students' understanding of the theories concerned.

The presentation is given by three to five students each time. The weekly order of all presentations for a whole semester and members of each presentation group are decided in the first lesson of the course so that all students know when to prepare and whom they should cooperate with in advance. In the presentation, each group reports to the rest of the class on how they apply translation theories in different case studies and how these theories have helped to shed light on the research questions they have set out to answer.

The presentation, which usually lasts about 30 minutes, is followed by a question-and-answer session of ten minutes from the floor. Then the teacher spends around five to ten minutes commenting on the presentation and responds to some of the questions asked by the floor before giving a more in-depth lecture on the translation theories covered in the presentation.

The think-aloud teaching to be illustrated below happened in the teacher's commenting session after a presentation on the application of pragmatic theories, namely, Grice's conversation maxims (Grice, 1985), to analyze the Chinese translations of some conversations from Jane Austen's novel *Pride and prejudice*.

One of the conversations takes place between two protagonists, Darcy and Elizabeth, when Darcy for the first time proposes to Elizabeth, who rejects Darcy's offer of marriage because she suspects Darcy has tried to undermine her sister Jane's relationship with Mr Bingley. In the dialogue, she emotionally questions whether Mr Darcy has done it. This is a rising action of the story, which paves the

way for the climax to come. The source text and the three Chinese translations (published either in the Chinese mainland or in Hong Kong) are quoted below:

ST:

'Can you deny that you have done it?' she repeated.
With assumed tranquility he then replied: 'I have no wish of denying that I did everything in my power to separate my friend from your sister, or that I rejoice in my success. Towards HIM I have been kinder than towards myself.' (Austen, 1975, p. 157)

TT:

(1) '你敢說你沒幹嗎?' 伊莉莎白又問了一遍。

達西故作鎮定的答道: '我不想否認, 我的確竭盡全力拆散了我的朋友和你姐
的姻緣, 並且還為自己的成功感到高興。我對賓利比對自己還要關心。' (南京譯林
版)

['Can you dare say that you haven't done it?' Elizabeth asked again.
Pretending to be self-composed, Darcy answered, 'I don't want to deny it. I indeed did my utmost to break off the love relationship between my friend and your sister and I felt quite happy for my success. I care more about Bingley than about myself.] (Nanjing Yilin's version)

(2) '你能否認你這樣做過嗎?' 她又問了一遍。

他故作鎮靜地回答道: '我不想否認。我的確用盡了一切辦法, 拆散了我朋友和
你姐姐和一段姻緣; 我也不否認, 我對自己那一次的成績覺得很滿意。我對他總算
比我自己多盡了一分力。' (上海譯文版)

['Can you say that you have not done it in this way?' She asked again.
Pretending to be calm, he answered, 'I don't want to deny it. I did use all means available to break off the love relationship between my friend and your sister. I don't want to deny either that I felt satisfactory for what I achieved at that time. I have at least done more to him than to myself.'](Shanghai Yiwens's version)

(3) '你能否認會做過這件事?' 她重複說著。

他平靜地答道: '我不願否認我曾竭力拆散我的朋友與令姐一事, 我深慶我的成功,
我之愛護他, 更甚於愛我自己。' (香港文海版)

['Can you say that you have not done it before?' She repeated saying.
He quietly answered, 'I am unwilling to deny that I have tried my best to break off the relation between my friend and your sister. I am deeply celebrating my success. My love and protection for him are more than those for myself.'](Hong Kong Wenhais's version)

My students had diverging opinions on the appropriateness of the Chinese translations of Elizabeth's question "'Can you deny that you have done it?' she repeated'. Though all three translations were faithful to the ST to a great extent, most of the students felt that the diction and the style of TT (2) and (3) were

awkward, as few people would use these sentences to question someone in real life. Whereas TT (1) was more idiomatic than the other two, it seemed lacking something, as the translation struck them as less powerful and effective than the original. The students spent some time wracking their brains to come up with better versions, but failed. So they turned to me for help, asking what my version would be if I was asked to translate it on the spot and how I would evaluate the three existing versions, including their strengths and weaknesses. Although I had discussed the outline of their presentation with the presenters (usually one week before the presentation), I was not familiar with all the details (including the STs and TTs quoted) in it. Therefore, when they suddenly gave me this assignment, I had not prepared for it at all. But this just gave me a good chance to reveal my translating process to the class in a real situation.

To let students realize the differences in the translating processes between an experienced translator (in this case, the teacher) and a novice translator (in this case, the undergraduates), I used think-aloud to translate the sentence. The following TAPs of the translating process have been post-edited and simplified to some extent. To save space, some interjections or phrases that express the tone and some speech fillers which do not have actual meaning, such as 'er', 'oh, yes', 'that's it', etc. have also been deleted.

So far as genre is concerned, *Pride and prejudice* is a literary work. According to the translation typology proposed by Reiss, literary works are especially known for the 'expressive function', which is achieved by the author's use of language to express his or her subjective feelings. And it is exactly this function that differentiates literature from non-literary works, such as promotional materials, manuals, hotel brochures, etc. To produce similar expressive effects in the target language, a translator has to pay special attention to the original form, or how an author expresses himself or herself, because the formal elements contribute a lot to the artistic or aesthetic effects in literary works. For this reason, the preferred method for translating literary works is literal translation, which aims to follow the original closely in both meaning and sentence structures. More specifically, semantic translation – a translation strategy put forward by Peter Newmark, with its emphasis on reproducing the form and meaning of the original in the TT as much as the target language system would allow, should be used as the general strategy for translating this sentence. Only by sticking to this strategy throughout the translation process can we maintain the aesthetic effects to the largest extent.

Now come to the detailed analysis of the source sentence. For the tag question 'She repeated', from the context we know that it actually refers to another question, but not the same question which Elizabeth asks before, though these two questions are more or less similar. So the translation '她重複說著' ('She repeated saying.') in TT (3) is ambiguous, because it may lead readers to believe that Elizabeth has asked the same question again. It would be more accurate to translate it into '她又問道' ('she asked again') or similar expressions.

The conversation exchanges of these two protagonists reveal that they are all in an emotional mood and deeply suspicious of each other. We may thus infer that their discussion was conducted in a loud and raspy manner rather than in a good-tempered and peaceful way. Although the paralinguistic features such as pitch, volume and intonation are best revealed in spoken language, part of these features can be shown in written language by using supersegmental means, such as the use of italics, bold type, or capital letters that make them stand out from the rest of words on the page. For example, in Darcy's reply in the ST, the word 'HIM' is capitalized, which indicates that the word should be given extra accent when it is read aloud. This phonological feature should also be preserved in the TT. And we can see that only TT (2) faithfully reproduces this supersegmental feature.

The dialogue can also be analyzed from the perspective of John L. Austin's speech acts theory, which distinguishes locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. On the surface, Elizabeth's question 'Can you deny that you have done it?' seems to request a positive or negative answer from the addressee, as it is expected in most general questions (or yes-no questions). This is the locutionary act, or the surface meaning of the utterance. But its underlying meaning is to press the listener, in this case Mr Darcy, not only to admit that he has done it, but also to confess his guilt in doing it. This is the illocutionary act,³ or the real intention of the utterance. The tone of Elizabeth's question is not for discussion or query, but for blame or condemnation. In Darcy's answer, we find that he accepts outright Elizabeth's accusations. In other words, he clearly gets the suggestive message carried by the question and the perlocutionary act (or the realization of illocutionary act) has been achieved. Seen from this perspective, TT (2) and (3) do not pay enough attention to the pragmatic effects of Elizabeth's question. TT (2) '你能否認你這樣做過嗎?' ('Can you say that you have not done it in this way?') and (3) '你能否認會做過這件事?' ('Can you say that you have not done it before?') strike Chinese readers as ordinary or prosaic questions posed by the character. What is more, they do not reflect in full the angry tone of Elizabeth with their long and convoluted sentence structures. Comparatively speaking, TT (1) '你敢說你沒幹嗎?' ('Can you dare say that you haven't done it?') achieves better the original aesthetic and pragmatic purposes and renders the underlying tone of the original more directly and forcefully with its simple structure.

Talking about sentence structure, we can see that TT (2) and (3) are typical written Chinese, lengthy and complicated. In real dialogue situations, especially when a speaker is fuming with indignation, it is hard to imagine that he or she will taunt others with verbose sentences. Instead, he or she will be more likely to use short sentences to have more punching effects.

In Chinese, when it comes to criticizing someone, it is usually more natural to state what the victim has done (causes of why he or she is scolded), followed by the comments on the action. But TT (2) and (3) follow closely the original structure with the words '你能否認...?' ('Can you say that you have not done...') to begin the questions, which makes them quite unidiomatic in Chinese. Though we have emphasized on using 'literal translation' as the general translating approach for this text, we should still achieve a subtle equilibrium between following ST closely and producing idiomatic language in TT. One of the better options, therefore, is to translate it as '你做過這件事，難道還想否認?' [You have done it. Don't you want to negate it?]. In this way, we can be closer to the reproaching tone of the original than TT (2) and (3). If we want a stronger tone of the revised translation so as to reflect more vividly the angry feeling of Elizabeth, we may add some adverbs of degree, such as '明明' (clearly), etc. Thus the modified version which recreates the original supersegmental features may be like '你明明做過這件事，難道還想否認?' [You **clearly** have done it. Don't you want to negate it?], etc. Some might argue that these translations make Elizabeth's intention more obvious and her underlying tone less subtle. But since it is exactly Elizabeth's intention to insult Darcy in her speech, the original conversational effects may be partially or totally lost if such an intention is misrepresented or underrepresented in the TT. And this will in turn fail to give target readers a vivid picture of an emotional Elizabeth.

After listening to my think-aloud explanation for the translating process, some students immediately suggested that the word '抵賴' [deny] could be used to replace '否認' [negate], for the former was more colloquial and more resonant in sound. In addition, the Chinese pronunciation of '抵賴' [di-lai] had additional phonological rhyming with 'deny' in the ST.

I happily accepted their suggestion and we together worked out the final Chinese version for Elizabeth's question as '你明明做過這件事，難道還想抵賴?' [You clearly have done it. Don't you want to deny it?]. Since the theme of the presentation was the application of conversational implicature in translation, I concluded the thinking-aloud process

by restating the importance of reproducing the original pragmatic effects, especially in handling conversations of literary works, because they help to achieve coherence of the text and contribute to a vivid description of the characters concerned. As a follow-up to the above discussion, I gave students an in-class exercise of translating Darcy's answer into Chinese, asking them to pay special attention to maintaining the pragmatic effects of the original. apparently helped by my previous verbal reports of the translating process, the students this time quickly came up with what they believed to be better versions:

Students' versions:

(1): '我根本就不想抵賴。我就是想方設法拆散我朋友和你姐的好事，大功告成後，我高興極了。對於我的朋友，我可算是仁至義盡了。'[I did not want to deny it at all. I have tried every means to undermine the relation between my friend and your sister. When it did succeed, I was extremely happy. As for my friend, I've already done my best.]

(2): '沒錯，我就是要盡可能地破壞我朋友和你姐的姻緣。他們沒成，我高興還來不及呢。對於這位朋友我花在他身上的心機比自己多多了！'[Quite right. I've tried every possible means to undermine the love relationship between my friend and your sister. They did not become a couple, and I was more than happy about it. For this friend, I care much more about him than about myself!]

Compared with the published TTs, the above versions express more effectively Darcy's injured and resentful feelings caused by Elizabeth's misunderstandings, though some phrases are a bit over the top. And the supersegmental feature is also duly reproduced in the TT, either by fronting the topic structure '對於我的朋友' [As for my friend] or using the typographic symbol – the dotted characters 對於這位朋友. As shown by the translations, the students had enhanced their awareness of reproducing the pragmatic effects in the translation by listening to the teacher's think-aloud demonstration.

5. Think-aloud teaching as a pedagogical tool in translation classes: merits and cautions

From the above description, we can see that think-aloud teaching can give students more direct guidance in the translating process than traditional translation teaching, in which teachers usually give students the so-called model translations for the translation task, but seldom reveal to them how these model texts are come by. Students are often left wondering why they cannot adopt versions that look similar, what factors drive the teacher to produce these model texts (if the texts are translated by the teacher), and whether there are any other alternatives. But frequently to students' disappointment, few teachers will touch on these issues in an explicit manner in class.

Absence of detailed explanations for what actually goes on in the translation process may give students the wrong impression that there is only one absolutely correct translation, which is often arrived at by the translator on the spur of the moment. They may be led to believe that good translations are mainly the results of the translator's inspiration rather than the fruit of careful analysis and deliberation. Since the process leading to the model translation remains unclear to students, the learning and translating experiences in the class are often limited to the translation task itself and cannot be applied to similar translation situations. In other words, the

in-class translation practice cannot generate generalizable learning experience for the students. These weaknesses, as exemplified above, can be overcome to a great extent by using think-aloud teaching in translation class. By demonstrating each step of his or her translating process via thinking aloud, the teacher reveals to the students that the translating process is actually constrained by a number of factors, ranging from the overall tone, style, and pragmatic effects to the conventions of the target culture and language. The final product is not achieved in one go, but only after a careful and usually prolonged decision-making process. In addition, when listening to the teacher's demonstration, the students can purposefully compare their own translating processes with the teacher's and have a deeper understanding about the methods used by the teacher in the translation.

In traditional translation teaching in China, the role of the teacher is somewhat like an active 'truth defender', in which model translations are equal to a 'truth' that he or she needs to give the utmost to defend in the face of the students' challenges; whereas the role of students is that of 'passive receiver', who listens passively to the teacher and dares not challenge the model translation, as such an act will be tantamount to questioning the authority of the teacher. This teaching and learning mode greatly distances the students from the teacher (Mu, 1999, pp. 55–56). In contrast, in think-aloud teaching, students are encouraged to contribute to the teaching process by freely expressing their opinions on the teacher's translating process or its end product. This 'joint-translating' mode will not only help to develop students' critical thinking and stimulate the bi-directional exchange, but also enhance the student–teacher relationship.

In think-aloud teaching, the role of the teacher has been expanded from simply being an instructor to incorporate other roles such as 'problem solver', 'learning guide', 'language counselor' and 'progress evaluator', etc. In line with the expanding roles of the teacher, the 'receptive' teaching has also been changed to the new 'interactive' mode of teaching and learning in translation. And establishing 'interactive' and 'constructive' translation teaching is one of the trends of translation education today (Kiraly, 2003).

To make the best use of think-aloud teaching, it is suggested that teachers should pay attention to the following points.

First, think-aloud teaching presupposes that teachers have rich translating experience and are good at applying theories to explain and analyze phenomena related to translation. Here theories include not only translation theories, but also theories of linguistics, communication, stylistics, and literature that are related to translation as a whole. Theories help teachers gain deeper insights into the translation phenomenon to be explained and prevent think-aloud reports from becoming personal impressionistic or subjective monologues.

In translation class, students may sometimes ask the teacher why he or she prefers strategy A to strategy B in translating certain texts. Frequently, some explanations offered by the teacher are ambiguous or puzzling justifications such as 'A sounds better than B' or 'B does not sound right'. Attributing translation decisions to such highly temperamental statements only betrays the teacher's appalling theoretical ignorance, and the students can hardly learn anything. Therefore, for theoretically inadequate teachers, even if they use think-aloud teaching to demonstrate their interpreting process, the teaching effect will still be doubtful.

Second, given the complex mental mechanism involved in thinking aloud, not all subjects are used to verbalizing their thinking process freely when they are asked to

do so for the first time (Jääskeläinen, 2002). Therefore, some training for verbalizing thoughts freely without interfering in the thinking process *per se* is necessary before any teacher embarks on think-aloud teaching. This is especially necessary for teachers who have long been accustomed to thinking in quiet environments, as think-aloud may be a hindrance for them to engage in active thinking. If this is the case, these teachers need to do some think-aloud practices before the class to help them verbalize their thoughts freely. Some knowledge of the basic rationales of TAPs may also help them to familiarize themselves with the method.

Third, in think-aloud teaching, examples used to demonstrate the translating process should be of appropriate length, usually not exceeding several sentences. If the examples are lengthy, the teacher has to spend quite a long time to finish them. And sometimes the teacher's long monologue may distract the students' attention. In addition, the examples should also be selected in such a way that the most suitable or representative ones will be included. It is hoped that after hearing the thinking-aloud explanation of the translation of typical texts, students may apply the translating experience to similar contexts.

Fourth, the teacher's think-aloud teaching should always be relevant to the theme of the lecture and should avoid going far astray. Though teachers doubtless have the freedom to think as they prefer in teaching, they are still advised not to digress too much from the topic or theme they have decided upon for the translation class. Otherwise, they may run the risk of wasting the valuable class-teaching time.

Fifth, think-aloud teaching should be used flexibly. It can be used as a supplementary session to a traditional lecture on translation, or it can be used throughout the class to demonstrate the ways of doing translation. For example, after students have done some in-class exercises, the teacher can use think-aloud teaching to translate the same exercises. In this way, the students can compare their own versions with the teacher's and achieve autonomous learning.

Notes

1. The Chinese version uses a pun which is untranslatable into English. “翻譯” (translation) and “翻義” (translating meaning) have the same pronunciation, and this phonological feature is completely lost in the back-translation.
2. It is generally believed that the first research to employ the thinking-aloud method to study the translation process was a PhD dissertation, *‘Thinking-aloud Protocols’ (TAPs) – Ein Instrument zur Dekomposition des komplexen Prozesses ‘Übersetzen’*, by Ursula Sandrock in 1982. Since the dissertation was not published, and was written in German, it is not well known outside German translation scholars. TAPs translation studies gained wider recognition only with the publication of a collection of research papers entitled *Interlingual and intercultural communication: Discourse and cognition in translation and second language acquisition studies* in 1986, in which four articles were devoted to the topic.
3. There is a wide variety of opinions related to the definition of ‘illocutionary act’, which even Austin fails to define clearly himself. The definition adopted here is mainly from John R. Searle (e.g. 1969, 197).

References

- Austen, J. (1975). *Pride and prejudice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Austin, J.L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baer, B.J., & Koby G.S. (Eds.) (2003). *Beyond the ivory tower: Rethinking translation pedagogy*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

- Bell, R. (1991). *Translation and translating*. London: Longman.
- Chesterman, A. (2005). Causality in translator training. In M. Tennyson (Ed.), *Training for the new millennium: Pedagogies for translation and interpreting* (pp. 191–208). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Colina, S. (2003). Towards an empirically-based translation pedagogy. In B.J. Baer & G.S. Koby (Eds.), *Beyond the ivory tower: Rethinking translation pedagogy* (pp. 33–59). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Ericsson, K.A., & Simon, H.A. (1980). Verbal reports as data. *Psychological Review*, 87, 215–251.
- Ericsson, K.A., & Simon, H.A. (1984). *Protocol analysis: Verbal reports as data*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Færch, C., & Kasper, G. (1987). *Introspection in second language research*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Firth, J.R. (1957). A synopsis of linguistic theory 1930–1955. *Studies in linguistic analysis* (pp. 1–32). Oxford: Philological Society.
- Fraser, J. (1996). Mapping the process of translation. *Meta*, 1, 84–96.
- Grice, H.P. (1985). Logic and conversation. In A.P. Martinich (Ed.), *The philosophy of language* (pp. 159–170). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harris, B. (1977). The importance of natural translation. *Working Papers on Bilingualism*, 12, 96–114.
- Harris, B., & Sherwood, B. (1978). Translating as an innate skill. In D. Gerver & H.W. Sinaiko (Eds.), *Language, interpretation, and communication* (pp. 155–170). New York: Plenum.
- House, J. (1988). Talking to oneself or thinking with others? On using different thinking aloud methods in translation. *Fremdsprachen lehren und lernen*, 17, 84–98.
- House, J. (2000). Consciousness and the strategic use of aids in translation. In S. Tirkkonen-Condit & R. Jääskeläinen (Eds.), *Tapping and mapping the processes of translation and interpreting: Outlooks on empirical research* (pp. 149–161). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- House, J., & Blum-Kulka, S. (1986). *Interlingual and intercultural communication: Discourse and cognition in translation and second language acquisition studies*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr.
- Jääskeläinen, R. (2002). Think-aloud protocol studies into translation: An annotated bibliography. *Target*, 1, 107–136.
- Jääskeläinen, R. (2009). Think-aloud protocols. In M. Baker et al. (Eds.), *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies* (2nd ed.) (pp. 290–293). London: Routledge.
- Kiraly, D.C. (2003). From instruction to collaborative construction: A passing fad or the promise of a paradigm shift in translator education? In B.J. Baer & G.S. Koby (Eds.), *Beyond the ivory tower: Rethinking translation pedagogy* (pp. 3–27). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Krings, H. (1986). *Was in den Köpfen von Übersetzern vorgeht: Eine empirische Untersuchung zur Struktur des Übersetzungsprozesses an fortgeschrittenen Französischlernern*. [Tübinger Beiträge zur Linguistik 291.] Tübingen: Gunter Narr.
- Li, D. (2004). Trustworthiness of think-aloud protocols in the study of translation process. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 3, 301–313.
- Li, D. (2005). Utilizing taps in the study of translation process since the 1980s: A retrospection. *Chinese Translators Journal*, 1, 29–34.
- Lörscher, W. (1991). *Translation performance, translation process, and translation strategies: A psycholinguistic investigation*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr.
- Mu, L. (1999). *Zhongguo Fanyi Jiaoxue Yanjiu* [Translation teaching in China]. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Newmark, P. (1981). *Approaches to translation*. Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall.
- Reiss, K. (2000). *Translation criticism: The potentials and limitations*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Rose, M.G. (1981). *Translation spectrum: Essays in theory and practice*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Sandrock, U. (1982). 'Thinking-aloud protocols' (TAPs) – Ein Instrument zur Dekomposition des komplexen Prozesses 'übersetzen'. Unpublished thesis, University of Kassel.
- Searle, J.R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Searle, J.R. (1979). *Expression and meaning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Steiner, G. (1975). *After Babel: Aspects of language and translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sun, Z. (1990). *Aoman Yu Pianjian* (Translation of *Pride and prejudice*). Nanjing: Yilin Publishing House.
- Wakabayashi, J. (2003). Think-alouds as a pedagogical tool. In B.J. Baer & G.S. Koby (Eds.), *Beyond the ivory tower: Rethinking translation pedagogy* (pp. 61–82). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Wang, K. (1980). *Aoman Yu Pianjian* (Translation of *Pride and prejudice*). Shanghai: Shanghai Yiwu.
- Zhang, Z. (1984). *Aoman Yu Pianjian* (Translation of *Pride and prejudice*). Hong Kong: Wenhui.