

TRANSLATION AS MEANING CONSTRUCTOR FOR NEW WORDS IN THE MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

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Abstract. In the past twenty years, there has been growing interest in the role of translation in foreign language teaching. At the same time, throughout the world, language teaching is dominated by the communicative approach, which prefers to avoid translation during language classes. This means that when an unknown word appears, the teacher and students attempt to construct its meaning with the assistance of the foreign language only.

Interaction in language classes is more than merely verbal expression. There are many ways of constructing meaning – in addition to words, meaning can be constructed with the help of gestures, as well as by using space and objects. There are still few studies on the meaning construction for new words in the multimodal communication of foreign language classrooms.

The aim of this paper is to study the use of translation in the process of constructing word meaning in multimodal classroom interaction. The research is based on Estonian and French classes at a university in Estonia. The results draw on audiovisual material and the questionnaire responses of class participants. 110 communicative episodes have been chosen from video recordings and studied with the help of micro-level multimodal discourse analysis.

The research results show that translation was used during the French classes on thirty occasions, but only once during the Estonian classes. Besides translation, target language and gestures are used to construct meaning for the new words. Translation is applied in communicative episodes in two ways: it is either the only resource that constructs meaning for a word or it presents itself in combination with other resources.*

Keywords: discourse analysis, gestures, Estonian language, French language

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1. Introduction

The rationale of the communicative approach is to help the learner to start communicating in the foreign language quickly, but the use of translation in the learning process may obstruct it. However, some contemporary authors (e.g. Cook 2010, Fernández Guerra 2014, Laviosa 2014) find that translation is useful for language learning; it is inevitable and it activates the thinking process in its own way.

Learning new words and expressions is part of a foreign language class. This article is based on research material where meaning construction for vocabulary items takes place in the interaction between participants. The new/unknown word or expression is referred to as the **WORD**. For the purpose of the study, Estonian and French classes have been filmed and 110 communicative episodes where meaning construction for **WORDS** takes place have been transcribed.

The author of the present article hopes to contribute to the improvement of word learning in a new way – the use of translation is studied in the multimodal communication in classes on the basis of transcription which includes all audiovisually perceivable meaning-constructing resources used by teachers and learners. The present article partially continues the author's earlier research (Ingerpuu-Rümmel 2015) by accentuating the role of translation in multimodal communication. The present study relies on the theory (Kress, Leeuwen 2001) that supports the idea that human communication is multimodal – people use more than one means or resource to create signs for the purpose of meaning-making.

Chapters 2 and 3 present two kinds of studies: 1) works that focus on translation and expression in the target language at a time when the communicative approach is widespread in the world, 2) works that explore classroom communication as multimodal.

Chapter 4 introduces the research material and methods. Chapter 5 presents the results in three subchapters. The first subchapter presents the quantitative results by tables and analyzes the quantitative results together with the data collected by the observation of filmed material. The aim of this subchapter is to give an overview of the material and to show the origin of the three examples chosen for microlevel multimodal discourse analysis in the second subchapter. The third subchapter presents the summary of results by answering the following research questions:

- 1) How often is translation used to construct meaning for words?
- 2) What kind of resources are used together with translation to construct meaning for words?
- 3) Why may translation be chosen for meaning construction by participants in classes?

Chapter 6 discusses the results in relation to earlier studies.

2. Translation and expression in the target language in communicative language learning

Human beings use language to share their thoughts and feelings. Dell Hymes (1972) introduced the notion of *communicative competence*, which means that the language should be used in coherence with the discourse. The theory of communicative competence soon found other supporters (e.g. Canale 1983, Canale, Swain 1980,

Roberts 1986, Savignon 1983). These scholars claimed that people need communication skills in different social and cultural discourses and that first of all it is important to acquire the strategies of conveying thoughts and feelings in the target language even when the language level is still basic. This idea led to the need for teacher training as well as changes in classroom activities and teaching materials.

Sandra J. Savignon described methods that provide teachers with expressions which help to ask questions about word meaning, to ask to repeat, or to express difficulties in understanding. She found that vocabulary can be enriched by using definitions, synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms. Translation could have supplanted the opportunities to apply different strategies in expression in the foreign language. (Savignon 2002: 3, 11)

Several studies focused on communication in target language already in the 1980s and 1990s. Some scholars were interested in how people behave when their expression is limited by their language level (Bialystok 1990, Dörnyei, Scott 1997, Faerch, Kasper 1983). Zoltán Dörnyei and Mary Lee Scott (1997) found that people use different strategies when speaking in a foreign language – e.g. they ask for help and for confirmation from the conversation partner, they try to express themselves approximately, they reformulate their thoughts. Those authors also confirmed that an individual may use word for word translation from the mother tongue and code-switching, which alludes to the internal translation activity while speaking in the target language.

In 2014, Sara Laviosa published an extensive book “Translation and language education” which concerns the use of translation in language learning. She finds that at the end of the 20th century and in the beginning of the 21st century there is a growing interest in the role of translation in foreign language learning, especially in higher education. Several theoreticians support the use of translation in language learning classrooms. Alan Duff (1989: 8–11) considers that translation can be part of language learning activities like role play, reading texts, project work etc. The use of translation reveals the differences between the mother tongue and the foreign language. Guy Cook (2010: 156) supports the development of new courses and materials that help teachers to integrate translation into the language learning class.

Several authors (e.g. Cook 2010, Fernández Guerra 2014) think that translation should not be eliminated from language learning classes, because translation activates special mental processes that support the learning and use of language in everyday life. The author of the present paper emphasizes three reasons that support the use of translation in language learning based on the article by Ana Fernández Guerra (2014):

- 1) translation is a part of communicative competence (it is used in different fields in everyday life and it takes place in the language learner’s head, whether in a hidden or open way),
- 2) translation helps the learner to understand that one-to-one translation is not possible,
- 3) translation helps to develop different kinds of skills for analyzing and solving problems compared to the endeavor of expressing oneself in the target language.

Graham Hall and Guy Cook (2012) enumerate dozens of studies by researchers from different parts of the world which show that the mother tongue or some other

language beside the target language is used in the foreign language classroom. These studies were conducted at the time when the communicative approach flourished – from the 1990s to the present. Glenn Scott Levine (2011) finds that the language classroom is still a multilingual environment, despite the fact that the theoretical preferences support the use of the target language in classrooms. Laviosa (2014: 141–145) confirms that translation has always been a part of foreign language teaching, from the emergence of the method of grammar-translation until today, and that many contemporary scholars endeavor to emphasize the importance of translation.

3. Multimodal communication in classrooms

Already at the end of the the 20th century, some scholars started to pay attention to multimodality in the human communication. Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2001: 1–4) emphasize that a human being has other resources or means to create meaning beside verbal expression and that those resources are not less important or less used than verbal expression.

The studies on multimodal communication in classrooms reveal that participants in classes use several resources to construct meaning and that those resources are related in the meaning construction process (Kress et al. 2001, Kress et al. 2005, Lim Fei 2011, Norris 2013). A researcher who is interested in classroom interaction has to be aware of different resources that may construct meaning in the specific communicative situation; beside verbal expression, other vocal expressions (e.g. pitch, speed of speech, vocalizations, pauses), gestures (body movements and positions), and use of space and objects may be important.

Kress and Leeuwen (2001) find that every resource has its own possibilities and need for use. The choice of resources is limited by the conditions established in the communication. Meaning construction in the communication of foreign language learning is defined by the goal of language learning. The space and time of the class are important as well. In addition to those conditions, the same people attend each class; previously agreed interaction rules or practices shaped during the classes influence the use of resources.

The resources are also used in a frame. “Frames grow out of the recurrence of activities; they come to serve as a basis for the contextual ground for meaning making” (Bezemer 2008: 167). The language class includes several frames that follow each other or take place simultaneously – for instance, introduction to the class, written exercise, oral practice of the target language, etc. The present study is based on foreign language classes and the concrete frame is the situation where meaning is constructed for new words and expressions.

There are few studies on the meaning construction for words in the multimodal communication of foreign language classrooms. Anne Lazaraton (2004) has analyzed the communicative actions of one English teacher in the situations of explanation of words and expressions. She finds that beside verbal expression, gestures are important means to create meanings in those situations. The author of the present paper has studied teachers’ and learners’ collaborative activity in meaning construction for words. She finds that both verbal expression and gestures

may construct meaning for WORDS and both resources “fulfil specific roles and work towards creating a meaningful whole” (Ingerpuu-Rümmel 2015: 43).

The aim of the present article is to study translation as a meaning-constructing resource in multimodal communication. Translation is a part of verbal expression, but in this paper it is studied separately beside the target language and gestures. The author of the paper is interested in the reasons for the use of translation in multimodal communication because previous studies have not investigated translation in the same way.

4. Material and method

The study is based on four foreign language classes which lasted for 90 minutes each. The author videotaped two Estonian and two French classes at a university in Estonia in 2009–2010. The audiovisual material is part of the database of multimodal communication of the University of Tartu (DMC). Three teachers and 31 adult learners participated in the classes (see Table 1). The learners’ language skills were sufficient to participate in the class where the entire communication (e.g. task management, written exercises and texts, conversation) was in the target language. 110 communicative episodes where the meaning construction for WORDS takes place were chosen for analysis.

The researcher used two cameras to film the classes. She had no input regarding the structure or content of the classes. The researcher explained to the subjects before the classes began that the video material would be used to study participants’ communication and that the results would be presented anonymously. All the participants signed their informed consent. The study is also based on questionnaires (which include questions about e.g. mother tongue, other languages learned, gender, age, place of birth) filled by teachers and learners.

The study combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. Three methods have been used to study the multimodal communication in the classrooms:

- 1) repeated observation of the entire audiovisual material,
- 2) statistics presented in the questionnaires,
- 3) the transcription and microanalysis of 110 communicative episodes.

The data collected by the observation of the material and by the statistics based on the questionnaires explains the multimodal communication in the foreign language learning classes.

Gail Jefferson’s (2004) transcription system was used and has been adapted and partially modified in order to achieve a clear presentation of the episodes (see list of transcription symbols). Initially, 110 communicative episodes were transcribed following the same principle – all the audibly and visually perceivable communicative actions (verbal and other vocal expression, gestures) of all the participants were transcribed. The communicative actions of all the participants are presented in relation to one another in the transcriptions.

Three examples have been chosen from 110 communicative episodes to present the main results of the study in this paper. The transcriptions analyzed in the examples are shortened by the following two principles:

- 1) only a part of the communicative episode is presented to illustrate the results of the study,

- 2) only the communicative actions of the participants who ask the meaning of the word or who construct the meaning for the word are presented in the examples.

The three examples represent the main ways translation is used in the classes and show the important functions of gestures and the target language in the meaning construction process for WORDS. The chapter introducing the results also introduces the main reasons for using translation in the meaning construction for WORDS, relying on the analysis of questionnaires, audiovisual material and transcriptions.

5. Results

5.1. The conditions shaping the communication in the foreign language classroom

Meaning was constructed for WORDS in 110 communicative episodes in total: on 62 occasions in French and on 48 occasions in Estonian classes. Translation was used during the French classes on 30 occasions, but only once during the Estonian classes (Table 1).

Table 1. Analyzed classes and communicative episodes

Class	Target language	Teacher	Communicative episodes where meaning was constructed for WORDS	Translation as a meaning constructor for WORDS
C1	French	T1	12	2
C2	French	T1	50	28
C3	Estonian	T2	28	1
C4	Estonian	T3	20	0

All three teachers taught their mother tongues in the classes. In the questionnaires, they listed several foreign languages that they had learned. There was no common mother tongue for all learners in any class. (Table 2)

Table 2. Language expertise of teachers and learners

Class	Teacher	Teacher's mother tongue	Teacher's foreign languages	Number of learners	Learners' mother tongues
C1	T1	French	English, Spanish, Danish, Norwegian, Estonian	8	Estonian (7), Russian (1)
C2	"	"	"	8	Estonian (5), Russian (1), Italian (1), Turkish (1)
C3	T2	Estonian	German, English, Russian, Finnish	10	Russian (8), Hungarian (1), Ukrainian (1)
C4	T3	Estonian	English, Russian, French, Sanskrit, Swedish, German	5	Russian (4), Finnish (1)

Only the target language – French – is used in T1's classes. In the first class, the meaning is constructed for WORDS on 12 occasions. Only in two episodes is translation used – in both occasions T1 uses English and not the learners' mother tongues (the majority speak Estonian and one speaks Russian, T1 is learning Estonian) (see Table 2). In both episodes, translation is followed by meaning construction in the target language and with the help of gestures. In the first class, T1 sometimes uses a French-French dictionary. Three learners have computers at their table and there is wireless Internet in the room – the learners may use electronic dictionaries. Three other learners have small-sized French-Estonian dictionaries.

In the second French class, meaning is constructed on 50 occasions. This is the largest number of occasions compared to the other three filmed classes. The reason for this is the fact that T1 uses long lists of WORDS in this class. The lists are related to the texts and conversation subjects but there are many WORDS that are unknown for some or all learners. Translation occurs in 28 occasions but in addition to the translation, the target language is used in 16 occasions and gestures in 12 occasions. There are five Estonians, one Italian, one Russian and one Turkish native speaker in the room. The languages used for translation are English (18 occasions) and Estonian (13 occasions). This means that in three episodes both English and Estonian are used. T1 and some learners use dictionaries during the episodes. T1 uses a small-sized French-Estonian dictionary and two learners have dictionaries as well.

In the Estonian class of T2, there are 28 occasions where meaning is constructed for WORDS. In those communicative episodes the target language and often gestures are used to construct the meaning. Only in one episode (2) does T2 ask what the WORD means in Russian. Even in this episode the meaning construction continues in the target language and by using gestures. T2 uses translation only once, even if she has written in the questionnaire that she has learned four foreign languages (including the mother tongue of eight learners in the class – Russian –, and English – the language that is widely used throughout the world). Dictionaries are not used in this class.

In the Estonian class of T3, meaning construction takes place only in the target language. T3 has written in the questionnaire that she has learned six foreign languages (including the mother tongue of four learners – Russian –, and English). There are 20 occasions of meaning construction for WORDS in this class. In all the communicative episodes the target language is used to construct meaning and gestures are often used as helping means. Dictionaries are not used in this class.

The present article presents three examples to illustrate the results – two examples originate from the classes of T1 and one from the class of T2 (see Table 3). In (1), meaning is constructed mainly with the help of translation. In (2) and (3), beside translation the target language and gestures are used to construct meaning. For that reason – because of the use of target language and gestures – Examples (2) and (3) partially also represent the communicative episodes of the classes of T3.

Table 3. Examples of communicative episodes in the article

Example	Class	Target language	WORD	Meaning constructing resources
(1)	C2	French	<i>colère</i> 'anger'	translation (Estonian), gesture
(2)	C3	Estonian	<i>soo</i> 'swamp'	translation (Russian), target language, gesture
(3)	C1	French	<i>remue-méninges</i> 'brainstorming'	translation (English), target language, gesture

5.2. The examples of the microanalysis of three communicative episodes

5.2.1. French *colère* 'anger'

In French class C2, T1 has distributed copies of word lists. T1 has asked if the learners knew the words in the list. Learner G asks about the meaning of the word *colère*. Learners B, D and H translate the word into Estonian. The learners sit in rows. B and D sit in front of G and H sits behind G, alone in the last row. Learners G, B, D and H are all Estonian.

(1)

1. G: qu'est-ce que la colère
what is anger
((looks at the paper in front of her and supports her forehead with the fingers of the l hand))
B:
((glances at the paper in front of her and raises eyes to T))
D:
((leans her r cheek on her r fist, looks at the paper in front of her))
H:
((touches his forehead with the fingers of his r hand, holds the pen, looks at the paper in front of him))
2. T: ↑la colère↑ (.)
↑*anger*↑ (.)
((frowning a little, pushes her head forward))
3. T: c'est quand
it is when
H:
((takes his r hand off his forehead and raises his gaze towards T))
4. T: ee
aa
((gaze moves from one learner to the other))
B: viha
anger
((turns head over l shoulder))
D: viha
anger
((raises eyes and turns her head over her r shoulder))

- G:
 ((starts to write with her r hand))
- H: *viha*
anger
 ((shakes his r fist towards the T, leans his elbow on the table, smiles, holding pen with r hand))
5. T: *oue* (.) *voilà* (.) *c'est ça* *mhmm*
yes (.) *exactly* (.) *this is it* *mhmm*
 ((laughs, looks at G))
- B:
 ((looks at T)) ((looks at the paper in front of her on the table))
- D:
 ((nods and glances at the paper on the table))
6. T: (...) (...) ↑oui↑
yes
 ((looks at the paper in front of her))((glance moves from one learner to the other))
- B:
 ((smiles, looks at the paper)) ((smiles, raises eyes towards the T))
- G:
 ((raises the pen for a moment, starts to write again))
- H:
^o*raev* (.) *ka*^o
^o*rage* (.) *too*^o
 ((glances at the paper)) ((raises eyes smiling, r hand finger touches throat))

Learner G asks what the word *colère* means (line 1). Then (lines 2–3) the teacher repeats the word *colère* with a higher pitch, which may mean that she is giving a sign that she has noticed the learner's question. It may also mean that she is asking for help from the learners to construct the meaning for the word or that she is preparing herself to construct the meaning. She starts the construction with the words *c'est quand* 'it is when' (line 3). Learners H, B, and D say almost simultaneously that the word means *viha* 'anger' in Estonian without looking in the dictionary (line 4). H also uses the gestural equivalent to the word – he shakes his fist (line 4), which can be seen only by the teacher because all the learners are looking the other way. It is possible that this gesture is meant to confirm to the teacher that H knows the meaning of the word and not to explain the meaning to G. The gesture may also help G with lexical retrieval (Krauss et al. 2001). Learners B and D turn their heads to say the translation. This may be the reason why H says the translation first. Then G starts to write (line 4). The teacher confirms the translation by saying *oue* (.) *voilà* (.) *c'est ça* 'yes (.) exactly (.) this is it' and laughs (line 5). The laugh may express the happy surprise that the learners were quicker than she was in constructing the meaning. The laugh may also mean that the teacher is satisfied that she understood what the learners said. H says another translation into Estonian – *raev* 'rage' (line 6). The teacher shifts into high pitch while she says *oui* 'yes' (line 6); this is how she may express that she heard what H said and ask if the other learners agree with the translations.

In example (1), learners use translations to construct meaning for the WORD. Translation is the only meaning-constructing resource for the learner G, who asked the meaning of the WORD, because the target language is not used and the gesture used by the other learner is not visible to G.

5.2.2. Estonian *soo* 'swamp'

Learners read a text on copied paper in Estonian class C3. Teacher T2 has selected the word *soo* from the text and has written it on the blackboard. Presented below are lines 1–5 and 18–20 of the transcription.

- (2)
1. T: mis on soo (...)
what is a swamp (...)
 ((turns her face and body towards the learners))
 - E:
 ((touches her chin with the pen in her r hand, looks at T and the blackboard))
 2. T: vene keeles (.)
in Russian (.)
 ((looks at A, licks lips with the tongue))
 3. A: *boloto boloto*
bog bog
 4. T: nii (.) soo ↑ah↑
well (.) swamp ↑what↑
 ((nods)) ((looks at E))
 - E: raba (...) raba
bog (...) bog
 5. A: ei raba on raba on need
no a bog is a bog is these
 ((draws a hill with both hands))
 - T: raba on natuke teine asi (.) jah (.) raba on natuke teistmoodi
a bog is something else(.) yes (.) a bog is a bit different
 ((glances toward the ceiling))
 ((tilts her head from l to r)) ((turns gaze to A))
- [...]
18. T: just (.) aga soo on siis see märg maa
exactly (.) but a swamp is then this wet land
 ((draws a flat surface with her l palm, fingers repeatedly touch the thumb))
 19. A: soo on lihtsalt märg jah
swamp is simply wet yes
 ((draws a flat surface with her r hand))
 - T: see ei kasva ülesse kõrgemaks üks ole
it does not grow taller right
 ((draws a hill with her l hand))

20. A: kõrgsoo on nende kõrgendustega
 a raised bog is with these elevated areas
 ((the r hand draws a hill))
- T: soo on märg maa
 a swamp is a wet land
 ((turns towards the blackboard))

The teacher turns her face towards the learners and raises the question of what *soo* means (line 1). The teacher also asks if the learners know the translation of the WORD into Russian (line 2), because the mother tongue of eight learners is Russian (Table 1). It is possible that she decides to ask the translation because the duration of the class is limited (the class has already lasted for 60 minutes and only 30 minutes remain) and/or she thinks that learners are more able to construct the meaning of the WORD by translation than in the target language. Learner A proposes a Russian word *boloto* (line 3). Immediately after the words of A, learner E says the word *raba* ‘raised bog’ in Estonian twice (line 4). Learner A answers to E that the word *raba* is not suitable because it means something else and A uses gestures and not the target language – he draws an imaginary hill in the air (line 5). The teacher agrees that a swamp and a bog are not exactly the same thing (line 5). In lines 6–17 (which are not presented in this article), only learner A constructs meaning for the WORD. The teacher comments that *soo* ‘swamp’ is wetland as she draws a flat surface with the palm of her hand (line 18). By saying those words the teacher defines the WORD *soo*, which A has left out of the meaning construction process because he concentrates more on explaining what a bog is. Then A admits that a swamp is just a flat wet surface and that a bog has elevated areas (19–20) and he simultaneously uses gestures that describe the landscape. The teacher concludes by accentuating the difference between a swamp and a bog. She complements her words with the gestures that describe an elevated area and then turns her face towards the blackboard, signaling the end of meaning construction (lines 19–20).

In this communicative episode, there are three possibilities that may support the meaning construction for the WORD: translation, target language and gestures. In the beginning of the episode a learner proposes a translation into Russian, but it is not recalled later during the meaning construction. One learner and the teacher describe the phenomena marked by *soo* and *raba* in the target language and by using gestures.

5.2.3. French *remue-méninges* ‘brainstorming’

In French class C1, T1 and learners speak about events that unify people. The WORD *remue-méninges* ‘brainstorming’ emerges in this conversation. In the first part of the communicative episode (which is not present in the article), T1 tries to explain the second part of the WORD – *méninges* ‘meninges’ with the help of a French-French dictionary, but the learners express that they do not understand the medical meaning of the word.

(3)

1. T: en bref en tout cas en langage familier (.)
in brief in any case in colloquial language (.)
((lowers the hands and the dictionary and raises the hands again to the sides of the body, looks towards E, F, G, H, hands tap the air))
F:
((looks towards T))
2. T: méninge juste méninge (.) ee une méninge on dit familièrement oon (.)
meninx just meninx (.) ee a meninx we say commonly weee (.)
((looks at the book, shows lines in the book))
3. T: ça veut dire le cerveau l'esprit ou quoi
it means the brain the mind something like that
((turns the content of the book towards learners and looks towards E, F, points at the book, then waves the l hand around))
4. T: c'est pour ça qu'on utilise dans cette expression
that's why we use in this expression
((moves to the blackboard, points at the word *remue-méninges*, taps on it with her finger))
F: °remue-méninges°
↑*brainstorming*↑
5. T: qu'on a traduit brainstorming avec remue-méninges en fait
what we translated brainstorming as brainstorming actually
((draws vertical circles with the l hand))((points at the blackboard, shows the content of the book, looks towards E, F))
F: °remue-méninges°
°*brainstorming*°
((a nod raising the chin and eyebrows))
6. T: remuer remue on a déjà vu ça
to move move we have already seen it
((looks towards E, F, G, H; points with the r index finger towards the blackboard))
F:
((nods))
7. T: remuer (...) j'sais pas je vous parle quand vous avez une
tasse de café
to move (...) i don't know i tell you if you have a cup of coffee
((the r hand stirs)) ((waves the r hand around))
F:
((starts to write, stops, looks at T again))
8. T: vous mettez du sucre et vous (...) on dit touiller avec une petite cuil
ler remuer aussi
you put sugar and you (...) we can say to stir with a little spoon to move also
((the r hand indicates putting sugar in))
((the r hand stirs, then turns gaze towards A, B, C, D))
F:
((nods to T, then smiles))

The teacher lowers the dictionary in her hand and says that *méninges* means in spoken language the brain or the mind – *le cerveau l'esprit* (lines 1–3). Learner F very quietly says *remue-méninges* twice and gives a sort of backwards nod – first, raising her chin and then lowering it and raising her eyebrows (lines 4–5). F confirms listening, but also expresses incomprehension. Simultaneously, the teacher proposes the translation into English – *brainstorming* (line 5). The teacher uses the completed past tense *passé composé* – *qu'on a traduit brainstorming* – which may allude to the situation when the WORD was already translated by the help of *brainstorming* (line 5). English is not the mother tongue for any participant in the class – there are seven Estonians and one Russian learner (see Table 2). The class takes place in spring semester – it is possible that the teacher already knows which languages can be used for translation. The teacher is learning Estonian, but she may not know the translation into Estonian. Then the teacher starts to construct meaning for the first part of the WORD – *remue* (line 6). She alludes that she has discussed this WORD already with the learners (line 6). After that, the teacher describes the context where the word *remuer* can be used – sugar can be stirred in a cup of coffee (lines 7–8). She also names a French synonym *touiller* for the word *remuer*. The teacher demonstrates lifting and placing the sugar in the cup and stirring (lines 7–8). The iconic motion of stirring is also the equivalent to the word *remuer*. F starts writing, stops, nods at the teacher and smiles (line 8) – that is how the learner gives feedback about understanding.

In this communicative episode, the English translation may construct meaning for the whole WORD. The target language and gestures help to construct meaning for both parts of the compound word. The teacher also uses one gestural equivalent – the motion of stirring – which acts as a translation by movement.

5.3. Summary of results

Translation is used the most in the French class C2, where many WORDS occur that need meaning construction (in total 50 occasions). In this class, meaning is constructed with the help of translation on 28 occasions. However, beside translation, the target language is used on 16 and gestures on 12 occasions. The French class C1 contains 12 episodes where meaning is constructed for WORDS. Only on two occasions is translation used and these translations are followed by meaning construction in the target language and by gestures.

There are 48 communicative episodes where meaning is constructed for WORDS in Estonian classes. Only once does the teacher ask learners to translate the WORD. After the use of translation, the episode continues with meaning construction by use of the target language and gestures.

Translation may occur as the only meaning-constructing resource or it may be combined with other resources – the target language and/or gestures. Example (1) presents an episode where meaning is constructed mainly by translation. The translation is used by the learners. One learner even uses two different words for translation. He also makes a gesture but the learner who asked for the meaning does not see it. Examples (2) and (3) are cases where the translation is intended to represent the whole WORD. The WORDS themselves represent complicated phenomena

and their meaning is also constructed with the help of the target language and gestures.

The target language is used to present synonyms (e.g. (3), line 8), to describe the phenomenon indicated by the WORD (e.g. (2), line 17), and to introduce the context where the WORD can appear (e.g. (3), lines 7–8). Beside translation and the target language, gestures can construct meaning for WORDS. Both the teachers and the learners use gestures. Gestures are used to describe the phenomenon indicated by the WORD (e.g. (2), lines 5, 12, 14, 17–19) or as an equivalent to the WORD (e.g. (1), line 4; (3), line 7). Gestural equivalents are used like translation into a so-called international language. These ways of constructing meaning – gestures and target language usage – are also employed in the Estonian class of T3.

In all the classes, translation is used only in those languages that the teacher knows as a foreign language. That is how the teacher can check if the learners have found an appropriate translation for the WORD. It is probable that all learners do not understand every translation offered by their peers because learners with different mother tongues participated in the classes. The examples presented in the paper accentuate that:

- 1) translation is used between learners who speak the same mother tongue (e.g. Example 1);
- 2) the teacher asks to translate the word when most of the learners have the same mother tongue (e.g. 80 % Russians in Example 2);
- 3) the teacher herself uses a translation that can be comprehensible to most of the learners, but the language of the translation is not a mother tongue for any participant in the class (e.g. Example 3).

Sometimes the communicative actions of participants and/or the use of translation in the classes alludes to the time limits. In one French class, there are many episodes of meaning construction for WORDS – 50 occasions. Example (1) originates from this class – the communicative episode is preceded by the teacher's summarizing question asking if there were unknown words on the list. The meaning is not constructed for all WORDS one after the other; rather, unknown words are looked for on the long list. In the Estonian class C3, one reason why the teacher asks learners to use translation may be the wish to save time (2). The WORD *soo* indicates a phenomenon in the nature that has to be described by several sentences in the target language. This WORD occurs when the class has already lasted for almost 60 minutes.

Participants also choose resources on the basis of the other participants' communicative actions. Some of the participants' reactions to the meaning construction are seen in the Examples (participants who do not construct meaning for the WORD are not presented in Examples, but were analyzed on the basis of the entire transcription). The teacher and the learner may look for a common language if they perceive that the target language may be insufficient for meaning construction. Then the teacher may ask the learners to translate (e.g. in (2) the teacher's question about the meaning is followed by learners' silence) or may translate herself (e.g. in (3) a learner silently repeats the WORD). The situation can also be reversed – the target language and/or gestures may complement translation (2), (3). In (3), a learner makes a nod by raising the chin, raises the eyebrows and repeats the WORD to indicate lack of comprehension. Word for word translation may be insufficient if a WORD is complicated with respect to form or content.

6. Discussion

The communicative approach supports communication in the target language in the class. The present article shows that in the studied classrooms the participants speak in the target language but sometimes they also use translation to construct meaning for WORDS. The reasons for using translation may vary: common language for some participants, time limits, other participants' reactions about comprehension, etc.

The theoreticians of the communicative approach find that communication in the target language gives an opportunity to develop communicative skills immediately in the classroom and to look for learned words and grammatical knowledge in the memory. This study confirms that the target language was often used to construct meaning for WORDS. Translation was only used in 31 of 110 meaning-constructing episodes. These translations were often followed by meaning construction in the target language and with the help of gestures.

The communicative approach and translation seemingly conflict with one another. The present study reveals that they may not be opposite sides – translation and target language can complement each other. When the target language is used pervasively and habitually during the class, avoidance of translation may not be the goal. The observation of the entire video material revealed that teachers and learners also use the target language and gestures regardless of the number of translation occasions in the class. In the French classes even dictionaries are used, but regardless, all the communication takes place in the target language.

The meaning construction for the WORD may take place by translation alone or together with other resources: the target language and/or gestures. A learner who observes the meaning construction perceives several communicative actions which may be partially incomprehensible or not clear for him/her. The use of several resources – multimodal meaning construction for WORDS – is helpful when the form or the content of the WORD is complicated. Translation may create access to the meaning construction that takes place in the target language. Gestures may describe the phenomenon indicated by the WORD as the verbal expression does and they also may act as translations by presenting equivalents to the WORD. In the classes observed, the learners have different language skills and originate from different cultures and social conditions. Presumably, every learner creates some kind of meaning for the WORD for him/herself, if the meaning is constructed multimodally.

The present study focuses on foreign language classes where translation was used mainly in one class (28 occasions), in two classes translation occurred only on one or two occasions and in one class translation was not present. The functions of translation could be studied better if the material contained more examples of translation. The results could also be different if the study focused on children's or beginners' language learning.

The influence of the use of one or several resources in meaning construction for WORDS may be revealed by the use of experiments where the learners learn WORDS in controlled conditions and their knowledge is tested afterwards. A study of unplanned meaning construction for WORDS that includes learner feedback about the created meaning in their minds could support or contradict the results of the present study.

The results of the present study are based on audiovisual material and on the questionnaires filled out by participants in the classes. Future works on the use

of translation in the multimodal communication of language learning could use previous and following interviews with teachers and learners to better understand if they avoid translation and if they do it consciously.

The present article shows that communicative episodes containing translation do not lead to the avoidance of expression in the target language, that gestures may also act like translation and that different resources complement each other in meaning construction for WORDS. The author of the article hopes that the results of her study help teachers to use multiple resources more consciously for the purpose of constructing meaning for WORDS.

Transcription symbols and abbreviations

T	letter indicates the teacher
A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H	each letter indicates a different learner
(O)	doubled parentheses contain gestures and use of space and objects
<i>word</i>	italic indicates the translation of a verbal expression into English
l	letter indicates the left side (e.g. l hand, a nod to the l)
r	letter indicates the right side
(.)	a dot in parentheses indicates a brief pause within a verbal expression.
(...)	three dots in parentheses indicate a long pause within a verbal expression
↑	arrow indicates shift into especially high pitch
WORD	upper case indicates especially loud sounds relative to the surrounding talk
↑word↑	degree signs bracketing a verbal expression indicate that the sounds are softer than the surrounding talk
C1, C2, C3, C4	classes
T1, T2, T3	teachers

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TÖLKIMINE KUI TÄHENDUSE KONSTRUEERIJA UUELE SÕNALE VÕORKEELETUNNI MULTIMODAALSES SUHTLUSES

Eva Ingerpuu-Rümmel

Tartu Ülikool

Viimasel kahekümnel aastal on Läänes uuesti hakanud kasvama huvi tõlkimise rolli vastu võõrkeele õpetamisel. Samal ajal on üle maailma valdav kommunikatiivne lähenemine, mis eelistab tõlkimise vältimist keeletunnis. See tähendab, et kui esile kerkib õpilastele tundmatu sõna, siis püüavad õpetaja ja õpilased konstrueerida sõnale tähendust üksnes õpitava keele abiga. Keeletunnis suhtlemine on aga enam kui verbaalne väljendus. Inimestel on tähenduse loomiseks mitmeid vahendeid – lisaks sõnadele näiteks žestid, kujutised, ruumi ja objektide kasutamine. Uutele sõnadele tähenduse konstrueerimist võõrkeeletunni multimodaalses suhtluses on senini veel vähe uuritud.

Käesoleva artikli eesmärk on uurida tõlkimise kasutamist sõnadele tähenduse konstrueerimisel klassiruumi multimodaalses suhtluses. Uurimistöö aluseks on kaks eesti ja kaks prantsuse keele võõrkeelena tundi Eesti ülikoolis. Materjali kogumiseks on kasutatud audiovisuaalset salvestamist ning osalejate täidetud ankeete. Videomaterjalist valitud 110 suhtlusepisoodile on rakendatud multimodaalse diskursuse analüüsi mikrotasandil.

Uurimistulemused näitavad, et prantsuse keele tundides esines tõlkimist kolmekümnel ja eesti keele tundides ühel korral. Lisaks tõlkimisele kasutatakse sõnavarale tähenduse konstrueerimiseks ka õpitavat keelt ja žeste. Tõlkimine esineb suhtlusepisoodides kahel viisil: ainsa tähendust konstrueeriva vahendina või kombinatsioonis teiste vahenditega.

Võtmesõnad: diskursuse analüüs, žestid, eesti keel, prantsuse keel

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