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New Approaches to Teaching English and Translation in the Era of Internet

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Abstract

The article is the summary of a year-long work with 3d year students of philological specialties during Business English Translation Classes in the era of the rapid development of Internet technologies. It points out the necessity to accord time conditions with the development of new methods of teaching English and Translation which have to include authentic text and audio-visual material from the Internet. Particularly, it describes in detail the methods of working with excerpts from the electronic Guardian article and the Youtube documentary, both dealing with such a topical issue as 'consumerism'. There is also a table of students' assessments of classical methods of teaching translation, and modern ones based on the work with digital technologies. It is important that students gave a high assessment both to the work with authentic English articles and audio-visual materials, and traditional language and translation exercises, such as the work with text-books. This makes us conclude that modern students still need systematic basic knowledge, just like the previous generations of young people; that it is necessary to create a fundamental theoretical basis for combining classical methods of teaching languages and translation with the use of a great deal of practical authentic material offered by the Internet.

Keywords: Internet technologies, authentic text and audio-visual material, challenging classes, classical methods of teaching, systematic knowledge, professional use of English.

Introduction

The advent of the Internet has exerted a significant influence on teaching languages, particularly English. The access to different kinds of written and audio foreign texts opens up broad opportunities for culture studies and intercultural understanding which earlier were completely impossible without a physical visit of a language learner to a foreign country. Nowadays language

students may take advantage of much more authentic foreign material than their peers of past decades. This is due to the deep penetration of Internet resources into teaching process, particularly the sphere of humanities, languages, and culture studies. Moreover, working with original texts from British and American famous magazines and video material facilitates a better learning of their

culture and historical issues by students. Therefore modern teachers can't ignore this very fact and always try to introduce challenging authentic language material into their classes. Such material includes non-adapted Internet articles containing not only printed texts but illustrations, charts, inscriptions, graphical division of the information, as well as various documentaries, lectures, talk-shows, which create the atmosphere of authenticity and involvement into the topic of a particular site. Besides, there is a plethora of research papers and text-books on the integration of Internet and digital technologies into the educational process, their advantages and new problems entailed by them, which once again proves the importance of the issue [1 - 8].

In the article we decided to describe our work with original articles and documentaries with third-year Philology students at our Business English-Ukrainian Translation classes, and give a methodological assessment of such work. At the end of the article we also give the table of students' assessments of various traditional and creative methodological tasks that they were supposed to do during the semester, and draw relevant conclusions.

Description of methods and results

The authentic texts we worked with during this year predominantly involved longreads articles from the electronic version of The Guardian newspaper devoted to various current issues of British life. Usually this work was done in the following way:

Students first were offered to read and translate either the whole article or an excerpt from it. (If this was a home task text then during the class students just read their translations). Then they were asked either to summarize an article or write down an abstract from it. After discussing the plot we went into translation analysis to single out the main challenges a translator might come across when translating this particular text. In such translation analysis students were supposed to mention the main lexical, that is terms, idioms, culture-bound words, as well as grammar and style specificities of a source text.

The follow-up discussion of the suggested topic may take different forms:

- Each student expresses his or her opinion on the topic;
- One student expresses the opinion in English, the next student interprets his/her thought into Ukrainian, then the latter gives his or her viewpoint in English and another fellow student interprets him or her, and so forth till the last student.
- Working in groups students take part in conversation/dialogues in which one of them may act as a two-way interpreter, and the other two - as specialists on the topic speaking English and Ukrainian, respectively.

Let's see how this method works on the article dealing with the issue of consumerism and overflow of things which fill every space of our life. The topic is quite relevant in today's world and, therefore, provoked a lot of discussion among students during our classes. Besides, it contains a great deal of modern specialized economic vocabulary which can be of use to future linguists and translators.

Too Much Stuff: Can We Solve Our Addiction to Consumerism?

Alarmed by the rising tide of waste we are all creating, my family and I decided to try to make do with much less. But while

individual behaviour is important, real change will require action on a far bigger

By Chip Colwell

One freezing cold morning, I drove past the outer edge of Denver, Colorado, past Buckley air force base, past the suburban neighbourhoods huddled at the edge of the Great Plains. I saw rising from the prairie several low bumps, lifting from the horizon like icebergs. As I got close to them, I saw they were encircled by barbed wire and knew I had reached my destination.

I pulled into the Denver Arapahoe Disposal Site, cutely known as Dads. I was part of a tour, arranged by a local reporter. Ten people gathered around our guide, Doc Nyiro, a Dads manager, middle-aged, with a studious, geeky demeanour. Nyiro began by telling us that Dads is open 24 hours a day, six days a week. Every day, 800 trucks arrive, culminating in about 2m tonnes of refuse a year. We watched the trucks pulling into the weigh station. "It just doesn't slow down," Nyiro said. "Truck after truck."

Climbing into a van, Nyiro took us to an area where a new cell was being constructed: the foundation for a new mountain of trash. It was 10 hectares in size and lined with clay and crushed glass to prevent the liquid that would gather as the rubbish breaks down from leaking into the groundwater. Once completed, the cell will be filled with waste, and would reach 90 metres high within two years.

Next, Nyiro took us to an active landfill area. We joined the line of traffic, driving a steep, rough dirt road to the top of a hill. We watched as a line of trucks stopped around us to empty out everything imaginable. "It looks like they just took all the contents of my apartment and dumped it here," a man on the tour said, not joking. The wind whipped trash into the air like snow as 100-tonne tractors compressed couches and cookie boxes and everything in between into thick strata that contain the full record of modern life. The result: a dry tomb of waste that will endure for millennia.

Nyiro then led us to a tragically small area of Dads dedicated to gathering recyclable and compostable materials. At the final stop, we visited an electricity plant, with old train motors powered by methane released from decomposing trash. The plant produces enough electricity to power 2,500 homes a year.

By the tour's end, I couldn't help but admire the landfill's efficiency, the engineering that goes into managing so much waste. Dads enables the endless cycle of consumption of my city to go on uninterrupted while reducing the chances of immediate environmental harm. But not every place has the resources to manage such monumental waste. Ghana, for instance, imports around 15m items of secondhand clothing from countries including the UK, US and China every week. Many of these garments end up in informal dumps, which, after seasonal rains, wash out millions of rotting, tangled pieces of clothing on to local beaches.

While grateful for the work of Nyiro and his colleagues, I also felt nauseated. It is hard to stomach seeing what actually comes of our collective consumption – the waste that makes literal mountains, not to mention the waste of resources that are spent on dealing

with it. Just this one **dump** was a **perpetual-motion machine** to manage a ceaseless flow of abandoned things, like trying to manage the ocean's tide.

Mass consumption has brought numerous benefits: **jobs and financial wealth**, physical safety and security. New ways of connecting, talking and thinking. Easy travel to nearly anywhere in the world. Lights that **keep the dark nights at bay**. Music constantly available.

But the **costs** have also been **staggering**. Economic inequality and wars over **non-renewable resources** have killed **untold numbers**. **The steep increase** in products in recent decades has accelerated **pollutant emissions, deforestation and climate breakdown**. It has **depleted water supplies** and contributed to the rapid extinction of animals. There are vast **"garbage patches"** floating across the world's oceans, with infinite bits of **microplastics** working their way into **food webs**. Even if we accept the positives of mass consumption to date, we must acknowledge that the situation is unsustainable. And yet, we can't seem to stop ourselves [9].

From stylistic and linguistic point of view this is a journalistic analytical socio-economic article which abounds in ecological and industrial terms and lacks in figures of speech and culture-bound words. Students' attention should be drawn to the meaning and translation of such English terms as **weigh station, groundwater, landfill area, dirt road, to power smth., to dump, perpetual-motion machine, jobs, non-renewable resources, pollutant emissions, deforestation, climate breakdown, deplete water supplies, garbage patches, microplastics, food webs** which can be often come across in other scientific and socio-economic discourses. Predominantly these terms have direct Ukrainian equivalents, however there are some nuances of translation which are due to grammar and cultural discrepancies between the languages. For example, *dirt road* is translated as *грунтова дорога*, and not as *грязна дорога*, as a literal translation of the phrase would sound. Deforestation can be translated either by a phraseological term *вырубка лісів* or by a one-word term *обезліснення* formed with the help of Ukrainian prefixes, the former equivalent being more preferable. *Perpetual-motion machine* is a three-component term in English, when in Ukrainian it is a two-component term; one-word economic term *jobs* has only one possible Ukrainian equivalent, a two-component phraseological unit *робочі місяця*; the English terminological phrase *climate breakdown* contains a more emotive last element *breakdown* as compared to its more neutral Ukrainian equivalent *руйнування клімату*.

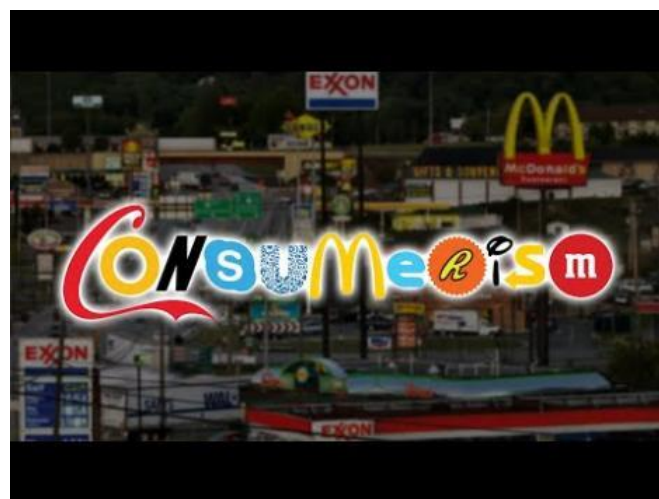
The excerpt also contains a few realia or culture-bound words which include geographical names and names of organizations which usually originate from some historical facts or cultural traditions of this or that region. These are such lexical units as Denver, Colorado, the Great Plains, Arapahoe Disposal Site, Dads where *Denver* is the capital of Colorado state and is transcribed into Ukrainian as *Денвер*, *the Great Plains* is a world-famous geographical region in the United States and which has already a well-established Ukrainian calque equivalent *Великі рівнини*. The realia *Arapahoe Disposal Site* is connected with the name of the County in Colorado, which is usually unknown to the Ukrainian audience. That is why to render it properly students should make a research into its meaning. The Internet research should be done

into the word *Dads*, which is the abbreviation of the full name of Denver Arapahoe Disposal Site.

Being of mass media informal style, the article contains some epithets, metaphors, set-expressions referring to the ecological situation. Students should pay a particular attention to their meaning and translation as they do not always have direct equivalents in the Ukrainian language. Besides, some of them may be a part of frequent English lexicon. Let's analyse the translation of the following idioms: **tide of waste, to make do, to whip trash, to keep smth. at bay, staggering costs, untold numbers, steep increase**. In other contexts *tide of waste* may be perceived as a term meaning *garbage, trash brought by the ocean tide* but in the context of the article it is a more free emotive expression meaning *influx of trash* (*наплив відходів/сміття*). *To make do* is a grammar set phrase which corresponds to the general structure of the English grammar. The other mentioned expressions predominantly have contextual meanings and that is why require some students' ingenuity and creativity to translate them adequately into the target language.

Such detailed lexical and translation analysis helps students become more sensitive to the nuances of a language and shades of meanings, be more scrupulous in choosing correct equivalents, and generally enriches their vocabulary. We noticed that with every such post-translation analysis students' answers were getting fuller and more professional. Moreover, good students are always willing to discuss challenges they might have faced during the reading and translation of a text, and penetrate deeper into the meaning of an interesting lexical unit.

It is a real methodological finding for teachers if they can accompany an article with a audio/video material, and modern educators shouldn't miss this opportunity to make their lessons more vivid and interactive. Today we may find also lots of documentaries and lectures on Consumerism in the Internet. For our class we chose to supplement the above mentioned article with an excerpt from Youtube documentary *Our Consumer Society*, 1:24:36 [10]:



In the video students come across specific American accents of the speakers, special terminological and general English vocabulary, and, what is not less important, get acquainted with particulars of formation of consumer society both in American and Western cultures.

At first students watched the video for 15 minutes trying to grasp the general information from it, and then they were asked to retell

the gist of it and discuss the episodes they understood and remembered the best. After that we gave them some vocabulary units from the video that could be either useful for enriching their English vocabulary or impede their understanding and interpreting of some essential phrases. During the second watching round students were offered to interpret the excerpt piece by piece into Ukrainian each in turn (if the task seems yet too difficult students may repeat small phrases after speakers). The third watching round is also preferable, (which can be also offered as a home assignment), as it should be aimed to consolidate the material and learn the new terms and idioms.

Usually third-year students of English Philology Departments successfully cope with such tasks, which is due to the fact that, fortunately enough, today's young people can easily train their comprehension skills by having a great amount of access to different audio and video foreign resources. However, they still may have difficulty in decyphering and grasping fast speech, specific individual and regional accents, technical terms, slang, dialectic, and culture bound vocabulary. But these are the usual challenges for all foreign language learners.

The excerpt (min. from 0:00 to 14:46), offered to students, is very emotive, and contains many epithets, quotations of western and American public figures, a great deal of names of material objects which were in use in different historical epochs of Europe, Asia, and the United States, and terms referring to modern consumer economy. To understand such a text in detail and, all the more, to interpret it this is not enough for students to possess a good command of the source and target languages. They should definitely have a broad outlook and background knowledge of history, economy, culture, be interested in burning issues of modern social life of the world. Right after interpreting exercise students were asked to dwell upon their personal hardships in working with the video, and to point out lexical units that were especially challenging for them. Students usually voluntarily accept this task and share their impressions and opinions.

Having done the linguistic and translation analysis of the article and the documentary students participated in follow-up discussions in the form of role-plays. To discuss the topic of consumerism students were offered the following questions:

1. Does the problem of consumerism really exist or is it an issue developed by the media as it is natural for people to satisfy their needs by consuming things?
2. Who is responsible for creating modern consumer society and what should be done to make people spend and consume less?
3. How can we cope with the problems created already by consumer economy, and is there any way to get rid out of things produced by human civilization?

The topic seemed to be quite appealing to students, as they, being among the most active participants of today's consumer society, are very much vulnerable to its impacts. In the majority cases students perceived 'consumerism' as a negative phenomenon which needs to be dealt with, though they admitted positive sides of the achievements of today's technological and digital civilization, such as new job and payment opportunities, ease in communication and access to information resources, abundance of useful devices aimed at simplifying human life. It is interesting enough that young ladies of the group I worked with expressed a negative attitude towards online shopping describing it as

'tiresome' and to the shopping in general, which allows us to be more optimistic about the negative aspects of the mentioned subject-matter.

It is important that the topic to discuss should be of great concern to young people. In this case they are quite willing to prepare interesting dialogues, monologues, presentations, to participate in role-play negotiations and interpreting sessions which are aimed at developing their creative thinking in the English language. And in this case the Internet comes to great help to them as they may use various reference specialized sites to develop topics of their dialogues and monologues and to make them deep, vivid, and sophisticated right during a class.

At the end of the semester we asked our group of students of seven people to give their own anonymous assessment of methodological benefits and efficiency of the main linguistic and translation exercises they did during the semester according to the scale from 1 min. to 5 max. They assessed 10 tasks which are the following:

Name of the Task	Assessment Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Work with a text-book		1*	1		11111
2. Translation of authentic texts from English				1	111111
3. Translation of authentic texts from Ukrainian			1	111	111
4. Post-translational analysis of texts		11	1	1111	
5. Summarizing of translated texts and writing abstracts				11111	11
6. Discussion of up-to-date issues prompted by translated texts			11	111	11
7. Group works (mini-presentations and interpreting; dialogues)		1	1	1	1111
8. Work with authentic audio and video material (discussion and interpreting)			1		111111
9. Interpreting of printed texts; translation-dictation			1	111	111
10. Compiling and learning terminological glossaries			1		111111

* 1 stands for the number of students

As far as we can see from the table the highest scores received the work with authentic English texts, audio and visual material, as well as such traditional tasks at English and Translation classes as the work with text-books and compiling individual glossaries. The latter two facts evidence that modern students still value classical, long-established methods of teaching as a basis from which they can develop their linguistic and translation knowledge and skills further. Therefore it is preferable that today's teachers and educators combine both methods, that is the work with original

digital materials and various kinds of methodologically elaborated exercise-books if they want to see their students progress and acquire new language and translation skills.

It is interesting enough that, despite having digital dictionaries, Internet translation programs and all sorts of electronic reference materials, modern students still find it useful to compile and learn glossaries based on the texts they worked with during the semester. Good and dedicated students always understand that only the learnt active vocabulary may be the key to successful work as a language specialist and translator. Besides, in compiling their own lists of active vocabulary today's students usually use relevant tools built into online dictionaries, which facilitates and organizes learning process. Another advantage of these electronic dictionaries is that they give the opportunity to hear a word sound. However, sometimes students don't remember all the correct pronunciations, that is why they are still recommended to note or write down transcriptions of hard words.

Students had also a positive reaction to translation of Ukrainian authentic articles into English, predominantly dealing with topics similar to those described in English texts. Mostly they coped with the task, which once again proves that today's students have a better feeling of a foreign language they learn than previous generations. However, their major challenges in translating from their native Ukrainian tongue into English remain preservation of word order, translation of terms, Ukrainian culture-bound words, and set phrases.

Conclusion

Today's students have an unprecedented opportunity of having diversified language and translation classes due to the active use of authentic text and audio/video material offered by the Internet. Having free access to various movies, specialized lectures, documentaries, electronic articles they can easily work independently on their language skills, which is manifested in their better feeling of the English language as compared to their peers of previous generations. However, they still value traditional, methodologically organized classes, working with text-books, doing other language and translation exercises as they still need systematic foundational knowledge and skills which would help them use the language on a professional level. The latter may include work with specialized English texts, participation in business negotiations, interpreting conferences and movies, translation of fiction, writing essays, reports, scientific articles, preparing documents in English, editing of translated texts. That is why for further research it is highly important to develop a comprehensive pedagogical theory on the ways to combine a plethora of authentic Internet visual material with classical long-established methods of teaching English and other humanities during University classes.

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