

Translation is the Most Accurate Measure of a Student's Language Ability in Secondary or Tertiary Education

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Abstract

Translation, once an integral activity in language learning, has fallen out of favour since the introduction of communicative methodologies to the classroom. However, using translation as a tool for language learning has the benefit of being able to pinpoint exactly where students' weaknesses are in order to address these. A further advantage of using translation in a language class is that students are motivated to leave their comfort zone and actively search for new synonyms and collocations. The beauty of translation lies in the holistic approach. Not only should the grammar be correct, but the essence of the text in the source language (SL) must be reproduced in the target language (TL). This necessitates walking a fine line between trying to stay as true to the original as possible while still showing flexibility to ensure that the translated text has the same effect on the reader as the original would have had. The intensive analysis of short translation texts provides a clear basis for students to work with and communicate with each other in a creative workshop atmosphere. For teachers it is an invaluable tool in ascertaining and assessing a student's progress in learning the TL by assessing the grammar, lexis, and cultural content.

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