TRANSLATION AND PERSPECTIVE TAKING IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

A thesis submitted
to Kent State University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts

by

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August, 2010.

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Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance and support of my advisor, Dr. Klaus Gommlich, to whom I express my deepest gratitude. I give sincere thanks to Dr. Karl Uhrig and Dr. Kristin Precht for being willing to serve on my committee a nd for their words of encouragement. I must also acknowledge Dr. Precht's inestimable assistance with the data analysis. I am very grateful to my teaching assistants, Meghan Cavanaugh and Tarrah Torrino, and colleague Jason Kane for their crucial help. My thanks are extended to Brianna de Santo for her help with the proofreading.

I would also like to express special thanks to my friends Lucia Scheffel, Monica Rodriguez, Maxwell Nogueira, and Jason Steinberg for their emotional support and suggestions. This thesis is dedicated to my friends and family who not only encouraged me to keep going but have helped me maintain a life that makes work meaningful.

Translation and Perspective Taking in the Second Language Classroom

Languages differ from one another largely because they encode different ways of seeing the world, that is, different perspectives. These perspective differences can be observed not only in terms of vocabulary but also of grammar and information selection a nd organization. Different cultures name things, structure thoughts, and select and organize information to be reported in different ways. This fact should be taken into account in the field of second language teaching, for one's ability to communicate effectively in a second language is highly dependent on their ability to conform to the perspective of the second language (L2).

One way of raising language learners' awareness of the perspective of the target language and helping them to adjust to it is usi ng comparison and contrast, for which translation can serve as a tool. The use of translation as a learning tool in second language classrooms, however, is a very controversial issue. Once one of the main tools employed in language teaching, it ended up fa lling from grace and being banished from L2 classrooms, mainly due to its close association with the grammar translation method, which caused translation to be separated from its cognitive value. Nowadays, it is possible to find a number of studies indicating the benefits of translation as a learning tool, but its cognitive value remains somewhat under-explored in second language teaching.

The present study, therefore, fills in two gaps in the field of second languag e teaching as it examines the use of translation as a learning tool in the L2 classroom and looks at ways of assisting learners to acquire the perspective of the second language. It does so by investigating if and how translation, in combination with curre nt teaching methods, changes

learners' ability to use the second language from the perspective that is encoded in it rather than from the perspective of their first language. In addition to investigating the validity of translation in this sense, this study also examines learner's opinions about the use of translation as a learning tool in the L2 classroom.

In order to measure any possible changes caused by translation to the learners' ability to use the L2 from the perspective that is encoded in it, this paper focuses on information organization in terms of delivery in one text type. Precisely, it looks at how native and non-native speakers of English distribute information in terms of themes and rhemes at the clause level in descriptive texts, with translation being used to raise text awareness as to how information should be distributed in the L2.

It should be emphasized, though, that the potential benefits of using translation as a learning tool in the L2 classroom are not restricted to raising text awareness and that perspective manifests in language not only in terms of information organization. Even though this study works on these two fronts, there are other ways of investigating the benefits of translation and of looking at the ways in which perspective is encoded in language.

One of the reasons for assessing the cognitive value of translation by looking into information organization in terms of delivery was that a rough comparison between native and non-native speakers' writings seemed to indicate that these two groups organized information differently. For instance, the non-native speakers seemed to choose more marked themes, and the native speakers seemed to convey more information in one single clause by means of phrases and clauses functioning as modifiers in theme or rheme position. In addition, it was noticed that an analysis of process types chosen by these two groups could also be relevant, since non-native speakers seemed to prefer existential processes.

This thesis starts by offering an overview of perspective in language and of the use of translation as a learning tool in second language teaching. Following that, it informs the reader of some concepts that are fundamental to an understanding of how langu age-encoded perspective was analyzed in this study. Then, it presents the methods and a discussion of the results, which include an analysis of the impact of translation on the learners' ability to adjust to the L2 perspective and an analysis of the learne rs' opinions about the use of translation in the L2 classroom. Finally, some limitations of the present investigation are presented.

Theoretical Background

Perspective and Second Language Learning

In every day communication, words such as 'perspective' and 'viewpoint' usually refer to the position from which a perceiver sees and expre sses something, while the word 'aspect' refers to the different ways in which something can be viewed, not only in terms of visual perception, but also of any cognition (Graumann & Kallmeyer, 2002). These words are also commonly used in scientific discourse and, when used separately, may imply the same meaning as 'perspectivity' (Graumann, 2002). The word perspectivity is a technical term that comes to encompass how those terms are interrelated and refers to the whole perspectival structure (Graumann, 2002). In Foppa's (2002) words:

> Perspectivity (…) is the necessary result of a subject's positioning . We cannot help to see things from a certain standpoint and in relation to a given horizon. And whenever two people are engaged in a dialogue they are displaying their respective perspectives on the issue in question. (p.17)

Since human beings coexist and communication is an important feature of our life, we learn, pretty early, that human knowledge and cognition may be position –related; that is, human knowledge is relative and highly dependent on perspective, which is reflected not only in how we view the world, but also in how we name and communicate things (Graumann & Kallmeyer, 2002).

In order for us to communicate, we need to learn to take the perspective of others and to help others to understand ours. There are two req uirements for communication to take place: 1) the interlocutors must speak and understand the language spoken and 2) they must

have some knowledge of the subject being discussed; however, perspectivity is going to be inevitable in the verbal exchange (Foppa, 2002). As Graumann argues (as cited in Foppa, 2002):

> Knowledge always exists in relation to a position (Mannheim, 1936) and 'every constitution of meaning refers back to an individual perspective' (Apel, 1973, 98), the capacity to take other persons' perspectives may be considered the elementary communicative competence. (p.16)

Studies on perspective and language tend to focus on perspectival differences in discourse between speakers of a same language and on how some aspects of perspectivity are manifested in the grammar of a language through deictic categories, for instance, or lexical choice. However, some studies have dealt with how languages differ from one another due to differences in perspective, which is one of the aspects with which this investigation is concerned.

As Zifonun (2002) informs us, perspectivity can be reflected in grammar through, for example, tense and deictic elements such as personal pronouns, local and temporal adverbs. It can also be reflected in the lexicon of a language in terms of concepts encoded in words; for instance, Inuktitut has a few words for snow which have no equivalents in English, such as *aput* (snow on the ground), *qana* (falling snow), *piqsirporq* (drifting snow), and *qimuqsuq* (snow drift) (O'Grady, Archibald, Aronoff, & Rees-Miller, 2001).

MacWhinney (1999) also shows how perspective is manifested in the lexical and grammatical system of languages. However, he looked at language comprehension and production as embodied processes that are dependent on perspective taking. In addition, in his studies on second language learning, MacWhinney offered some evidence as to how perspective changes from language to language and may influence language comprehension and production. For example, he observed that a German native speaker processed simple

English sentences using agreement and animacy cues from German w henever possible even after having lived in the United States for thirty years and published a considerable number of textbooks in experimental psychology in English (MacWhinney, 2002).

Considering that languages have different lexical options and systems of personal pronouns, local and temporal adverbs and tenses − giving its speakers inherent options from which they can make choices to express their perspectives −, one can surmise that different languages encode distinct perspectives or ways of viewing the world. According to Canisius, "perspectivity is deeply incorporated in language structure as a result of th e anthropomorphism of language" (as cited in Graumann & Kallmeyer, 2002, p. 4).

Perspective affects and reflects what is encoded in language and how. This point is supported and illustrated by Bavin (1995), who argues that "not all aspects of an event are encoded in language; speakers will select how they talk about an event on the basis of their perspective but also on the basis of the options provided by a particular language" (p. 391).

Supporting the notion that languages differ from one another in terms of what is encoded and how, Slobin offers the example of how languages express who does what to whom (as cited in Bavin, 1995). He explains that some languages, such as English, express that by means of word order, while others use case markings.

Bowerman corroborates the idea that languages encode different notions as she states that "all languages make categorical distinctions among spatial configurations, but not the same ones" (as cited in Bavin, 1995, p. 385). For instance, the ideas of 'support' and 'containment' are expressed in English by the prepositions 'on' and 'in'. However, both ideas are expressed in Spanish by 'en', while in Korean they are encoded by means of verbs.

An investigation by Stutterheim, Nüse and Murcia-Serra (2002) illustrates how different perspectives can be manifested across languages. The studies that they carried out with Spanish, English, and German native speakers confirm that different languages select

different components of an event for verbalization. In addition, the information selected is referentially anchored and related differently. “All these steps in the planning process are perspective driven” (Stutterheim et al, 2002, p.181).

More specifically, the researchers found that German native speakers tend to look for an endpoint of a given event so that they can construct a unit to be encoded in language, while Spanish and English speakers take any part of an ongoing activity as a unit to be reported. To cite an example, when describing individual events shown on a computer screen and whose endpoints were inferable, the majority of the German participants reported *the boat is sinking to the bottom*. However, the majority of Spanish and English speakers reported *the boat is sinking*.

The study demonstrates that from the options available, speakers of different languages put different elements in perspective, which is reflected in the information organization of their languages. It also showed that, besides affecting language pr oduction, distinct notions of what forms a reportable event affect language comprehension.

The investigation above suggests that information organization already follows some criteria according to the language one speaks. This notion is corroborated by Kirkwood (1966):

> Our native language presents to us the world of experience in a particular way as things, states, processes, actions. Some would go as far as to maintain that it superimposes upon us a particular view of the world and conditions our thinking. A more moderate view would be that it suggests to us a particular way of thinking. (p.176)

The fact that perspective is encoded in language and that it differs from language to language, as illustrated above, call for the consideration of perspective in second language teaching/learning.

When learning a second language, we tend to make use of the perspective of our first language. Even though we might acquire the general structure (lexicon and grammar) of the second language somewhat quickly and efficiently, we might still impose on this structure the perspective from which we are used to seeing the world, that which is encoded in our native language. This can be expected, for instance, in terms of how we organize information and what we select to communicate. After all, we cannot forget that "languages differ in the ways they encode objective experience" (Carroll, as cited in Kirkwood, 1966, p.176). As we learn a second language, we will constantly come across different ways of conceptualizing objective experience (Kirkwood, 1966).

Stutterheim et al. (2002) draw attention to a point in the process of translation that could be expanded to acquiring/using a second language, since L2 learners/speakers also need to be aware of the perspective of the L2 in order to communicate effectively. They mention that when translating from one language into another, professional translators reformulate and restructure the message of a text, which might involve a change in perspective. This means that professional translators do not only have to be aware of the different perspectives embodied in the languages that they are dealing with, but also know how to take those perspectives when passing from one language into another.

As Graumann (2002) asserts, "any translation, be it from language to language or from code to code, entails the risk of reperspectivation" (p. 35). In terms of different languages, this happens not only due to individual perspectival differences, but also due to the different ways of seeing the world which are embodied in the formal system of a language. When switching from one language to another, it might be necessary to suppress the viewpoint from which an utterance would be made in one language and replace it by one that conforms to the other. For instance, the sentence *It took me ten minutes to complete the form* would be expressed in Portuguese as *Levei dez minutos para preencher o formulário* (*I took ten minutes to complete*

the form). The sentence in Portuguese uses a verb as a point of departure but it also expresses that 'I' did something, while in English the point of departure is 'it', which seems to allow information to be conveyed in a more impersonal way.

I would argue that the same problem presented to professional translators is presented to second language learners; however, the former know how to deal with language -specific perspectivity, while the latter tend to be negatively influenced by it. In fact, as Stutterheim et al. (2002) points out, advanced L2 speakers "follow patterns of inform ation organization of their first language despite the fact that they have acquired the formal system of the tar get language to a large degree" (p.195).

It is hard to take the perspective of the second language when you are not aware of what it is or even that people think differently and view the world from a different perspective. For this reason, second language learners need to be made aware of the perspective encoded in the second language in order to avoid interference from their first language.

One way of helping learners to become aware of the perspective of the second language is by means of comparison or confrontation. Graumann (2002) corroborates this notion when he states that "the confrontation with a divergent perspective may be a necessary condition for perspective to rise to the level of awareness and thus become explicit" (p.34).

Since translation involves contrast and comparison, it can be a valuable tool in helping students become aware of the different perspectives reflected in language as well as acquire the perspective of the target language. This view is supported by Kirkwood (1966):

> … contrastive analysis through translation – translation as a means and not as an end in itself, and in small but intensive doses – is a way of bringing to the student's attention points of difference and contrast on a semantic and syntactic level, of coming to grips with these differences and conflicts and to some extent of solving them. (178)

In the same way, Ridd (2000) defends that translation helps learners of a second language realize the peculiarities of both the mother and target language. Duff (1989) does not only support the view that translation can be a valuable learning tool in the teaching of a second language, but also the notion that our native language suggests to us a perspective of the world:

> Our mother tongue shapes our way of thinking and to some extent our use of the foreign language (…). Translation helps us to understand better the influence of the one language on the other and to correct errors of habit that creep in unnoticed (such as misuse of particular words or structures). And, because translation involves contrast, it enables us to explore the potential of both languages − their strengths and weaknesses. (p.6)

Translation and Second Language Teaching

Translation was once one of the main tools employed in second language teaching (Ridd, 2000). In fact, there is indication of its use as a language-teaching method dating back to the fourteenth century, much before the Grammar-Translation Method was developed (Ridd, 2000).

Howatt (2004) informs us that the Grammar-Translation Method started in Germany, more precisely in Prussia, at the end of the eighteenth century and spread out at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It followed a reformist approach as there was demand for a method that would fit the needs of secondary-school pupils. The method preserved two traditional aspects of language teaching at the time: grammar and translation, with which students and teachers were already familiar, and substituted texts by example sentences. These sentences aimed to provide opportunities for practice and to allow presentation of grammar points in a more organized way. In other words, the main objective was to make learning easier.

The label "grammar-translation" can be considered somewhat misleading, for the intention was not to teach languages by grammar and translation, but to make language teaching simple enough to meet the needs of school pupils (Howatt, 1984). The method was, however, distorted from its original conception and caused translation to become closely associated with grammar (Ridd, 2000). Among the reasons why the method was distorted was the pressure for passing public examinations, which had an impact on determining the content of the syllabus for language teaching and on the techniques used (Howatt, 1984).

By being associated with tedious grammar exercises, translation lost its cognitive value, that is, it was dissociated from text, culture, literature, and everything else that pertains to real use of language (Ridd, 2000). In other words, the cognitive value of translation was lost as culturally-determined meanings at all levels were disregarded. Subsequent methods, starting with the Direct Method, basically banished translation or the use of the mother tongue from language teaching.

According to Duff (1989) and Ridd (2000), some common arguments for the banishment of translation from language classrooms have been the following: its association with grammar; the use of the mother tongue in the classroom, which is considered a hindrance to the oral practice of the target language; it is an individual activity, which is not considered appropriate for classroom work; it involves only two skills: reading and writing; it is time-consuming and boring; and it involves either technical or literary texts. However, all of these arguments constitute common fallacies.

To begin with, translation does not presuppose the teaching of grammar (Halliday, McIntosh & Strevens, 1965). It is a natural, inevitable activity that is going to take place on learners' minds willy-nilly. As Halliday et al. (1965) put it:

> If one is taught a second language (…) even by something approaching the 'direct method', one usually sets up patterns of translation equivalence (…) one abstracts

> translation equivalence for oneself from the observation of the two languages in operation. (p.125)

One should also remember that translation takes place in learners' minds whenever they encounter situations that challenge their current command of the target language; which is why it is especially common at the beginning levels.

It is important to point out that the nature of translation does not fall within the formal level (when grammatical categories and lexis from the source text are replaced by their closest equivalent in the target language), but within the textual level. In other words, translation occurs when two texts rendered in different languages play an 'identical' role in an 'identical' situation (Halliday et al., 1965).

Furthermore, translation, when used as a technique in the L2 classroom, does not have to be an individual activity; it can be done in groups or pairs and thus involve discussions. Likewise, it does not have to consist of long written passages or of technical or literary text types.

A benefit of using translation in the teaching of a second language is the fact that, in addition to enriching vocabulary, it forces students to become aware of the differences and similarities in terms of language structure and lexicon and to compare the two cultures involved in the translation process. Elorza (2008) supports this point:

> Translation activities seem most appropriate for dealing with cultural issues in the classroom because they are easily approached as problem-solving activities, where students must take decisions about the production of the translated text, thus raising questions related to cultural norms and requirements or merely to different ways of saying and doing things, as well as to the evaluative perceptions of the text from the target culture readers. These aspects do not refer to a certain way of carrying out this type of activities in the classroom, but rather correspond to a natural way of dealing

> with translation, in which, (…) considerations about the cultures involved in the translation are inevitable even if only intuitively. (p. 264, 265)

Another benefit of using translation in the L2 classroom is the intellectual challenge that it poses to students, who will have to speculate and discuss until they settle for a satisfactory and natural-sounding translation. Moreover, it equips students with a skill that is needed in the real world. As Duff (1989) says, those who speak two or more languages are constantly required to translate from one into another at work, airports, shops, during a small talk among friends, when watching a movie or listening to songs etc.

Translation, per se, has to do with bridging communication between people. Actually, that is its original purpose and role: to mediate communication between a sender and a receiver whose languages are different. Translation has little or nothing to do with the grammar-translation method, since its main focus is on meaning. It is an activity that involves negotiation of meaning, mediation, communication problem-solving, and culture and language awareness, which makes it suitable to the current popular methods of language teaching.

There are some other benefits to using translation in second-language teaching. One is that "the proper material of translation is authentic, not made-up language," and both oral and written language is appropriate for translating (Duff, 1989, p.6). Also, translation may help raise an understanding of how to use bilingual dictionaries. Some English language learners, especially Chinese and Japanese native speakers, tend to rely heavily on their dictionaries to communicate in the classroom, which often results in a breakdown because they do not know how to use their dictionaries properly.

Translation activities can also help instructors identify students' weaknesses and strengths, which may arise from transfer of the first language (L1) into the second language (L2). In this case, translation can function as a comparative method that allows the instructor

to identify possible sources of errors committed in the target language by its learners. It can also be the means through which the interference problem is going to be tackled, since it can be used to raise awareness of the similarities and differences between the L1 and the L2.

Even though the use of translation in second or foreign language teaching has been neglected, some studies have been dedicated to it. Scott and Fuente (2008), for instance, investigated how learners at the intermediate level use their first language when working collaboratively on consciousness-raising, form-focused tasks and the effects of prohibiting the use of the L1 during these tasks. Their findings show that the L 1 is used by learners even when they seem to be using the L2. They use the L1 in the form of translation to help them regulate themselves and to solve problems related to the L2. They also found that the exclusive use of the L2 during consciousness-raising, form-focused tasks may impose a cognitive overload on learners, thus affecting collaborative work and meta-talk negatively. Moreover, their study suggests that the exclusive use of the L2 inhibits learning styles. This last point is highly significant for the teaching of a foreign language, since the effectiveness of certain techniques should not be disregarded simply because they are misinterpreted by teachers and judged not suitable to the methodologies currently employed.

Similarly, Ramachandran and Rahim (2004) carried out a study to investigate the effectiveness of the translation method in the recall and retention of vocabulary by elementary ESL learners. The results of their study confirm the effectiveness of the translation method in comparison with a non-translation method in the teaching of vocabulary. First of all, it was shown that learners can recall the meaning of words more effectively when the translation method is employed. Moreover, their ability to recall word meaning is more lasting when translation is used. The investigation also points out that language learners can be motivated by explicit vocabulary teaching. It is interesting to notice that these researchers advocate the

use of translation in the teaching of foreign or second language vocabulary at the elementary level.

As a translator and an individual who grew up in a multi-cultural community, Wishaw (1994) knew how to take advantage of translation in language learning. Her study was based on the translation of poetry in the classroom. The task she created consisted of having ESL students write poems in their first language and attempt to translate them. Then, these students would sit down with native-speaker partners to work out the details of their translations. The study is a good example of how translation can be used for the negotiation of meaning, since the students had to try to convey their ideas and discuss with their partners until they could accomplish the task in a way that they considered satisfying. Moreover, the activity proved to be exciting and challenging as it involved students in a problem-solving situation and allowed them to create a bridge between the cultures involved. In fact, the author mentions that not all students joined the activity from the beginning, but as they noticed their classmates' enthusiasm, they decided to take part in it. The researcher concluded that the benefits of using translation are not confined to linguistic gains, once it also showed to be a tool for socialization.

Posen (2006) investigated learners' beliefs about using translation in the process of learning a foreign language and the types of translation learning techniques they employ. The author also looked at learners' beliefs concerning the use of translation in relation to their background and to learning strategies. The results of the study show that most of its participants believe that translation has a positive role in acquiring English. They also suggest that learners' beliefs regarding the use of translation in their learning of a foreign language as well as their academic background influence their choice of translation strategies. Additionally, there is some indication that level of proficiency will influence when and how

translation is going to be used. The investigation also points out that students use translation as a strategy from a medium to a high level compared to other strategies.

All of what has just been mentioned should be a good reason for teachers to use translation in class and help students become aware of when and how to use it effectively. It should also be a good reason for carrying out more investigations into the benefits of the use of translation in second language teaching.

Definition of concepts and relevance of the study

Perspective and information organization.

As discussed above, different cultures have different perspectives on the world, and these perspectives are encoded in language. Consequently, it can be surmised that in order to communicate effectively in a language one needs to acquire the perspective of that language. One way to do so might be to bring the perspective of the target language into a level of awareness by means of language comparison and contrast, for which translation can serve as a tool.

A possible way of looking at how perspective is encoded in language, that is, of operationalizing the concept of language-encoded perspective, is to look at how sentences are construed and what is selected as a "frame of reference" or "starting point" for the delivery of a message.

Starting points are the elements from which a sentence starts being organized. However, as MacWhinney (1977) poses, where do starting points come from? MacWhinney himself proposes the perspective hypothesis to answer this question. For him, the elements chosen to begin a sentence are those involved in the construction of a perspective. In other words, they are those that best reflect the perspective that we assume in our interactions with the world. For instance, in *John broke the window,* the perspective taken and which the

speaker wants the listener to take is that of John. The interlocutors identify themselves with John in this case and then construe a mental image from that point. They tend to see John performing an action (breaking the window). Now, if the sentence is *The window was broken by John*, the interlocutors take the perspective of the window. They identify themselves with the window, which is the element that they first see in their mental representation and which is pictured as being affected by the action of an external agent due to the *by* phrase in the sentence.

According to MacWhinney (1977), starting points have four functions: the perspective, the attentional focus, the agent, and the given. The starting point is always going to attend to the second function, since attention is always going to be focused on it; but it might not attend to the other ones. As an example, the starting point in *Up jumped the rabbit* only fulfills the function of attentional focus (p.155). It should be noted, though, that the listener tends to first look at the starting point as the perspective.

MacWhinney's construct expanded on the functionalist approach from a cognitive viewpoint. Both MacWhinney and functionalists look at the beginnings of a sentence, at what is selected as its point of departure. MacWhinney, however, uses the term perspective in an attempt to explain how speakers and hearers become actively involved with a sentence in order to build an understanding of it (MacWhinney, 1999). According to him, they take a starting point or initial perspective with which they identify themselves. They use that starting point "to get inside the sentence" (MacWhinney, 1977).

While MacWhinney focuses on utterance construction and the cognitive activity underlying sentences, functionalists are more concerned with sentence structure, which better suits the purposes of the current study, as it seeks to operationalize the concept of perspective by looking at what might be expected in terms of information distribution in different languages. In addition, this study calls for a construct that looks at the whole of an existing

sentence, for not only starting points can be culturally determined, but also the point to which the speaker wants to take their interlocutor.

This study, therefore, attempts to identify variations as to what speakers of different languages select as a point of departure and how they enact on it from a functionalist viewpoint, more specifically, that which deals with thematic structure. It looks at the types of themes selected by native and non-native speakers of English and the weight of information that is usually assigned to the rhemes in terms of process types.

To support our decision to use thematic patterns to look at how languages encode different perspectives and thus differ structurally from each other, we can cite a study by Ventola (1995). Ventola provides evidence that an analysis of theme and rheme patterns when translating from one language to another might be crucial to avoid rhetorical problems in translations as well as cumbersome translations due to "heavy marked thematic structures." This proves that an analysis of thematic progression might clarify how two languages differ and thus help bring those differences to students' level of awareness in an attempt to assist them to produce texts that will sound more natural in the target language.

It is assumed that all languages mark the point of departure of a cla use as message; however, the way they do it might differ from one language to another (Halliday, 1994 & Fries, 1995). In English, it is realized by attributing a special status to one part of the clause, which is why theme appears in initial position; in o ther languages, of which Japanese is an example, it might be realized by particles (Halliday, 1994 & Fries, 1995).

There are controversies as to what should be included in a theme. Some systemicists, for instance, think that everything preceding the verb o f a clause should be considered a theme (Fries, 1995). This paper looks at thematic structure as it was propose d by Halliday (1994) and in subsequent rev isions of his work such as in Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) .

A theme can be composed of elements serving three types of function: textual, interpersonal, and experiential; and everything that comes up to and including the first experiential element of a clause − that which has a function in transitivity − constitutes a theme (Halliday, 1994). An example of a theme containing the three elements mentioned above would be *Then* (textual element) *surely* (interpersonal element) *he* (experiential element) *got the job*. As a general definition, one can think of theme as what always comes at the beginning of a clause, setting the scene for the text to be unfolded in it (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). For the purposes of this study, it should be noted that there are simple and multiple themes and that they can be marked or unmarked.

Themes are most commonly realized by a nominal group, but they can also be realized by other types of groups such as adverbial groups or prepositional phrases (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). When the theme of a clause is formed by only one element, it is said to be simple. This single structural element, however, can be represented by only one unit (a prepositional phrase, an adverbial group, a nominal group) or by more than one unit, in which case it is called complex (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

The sentences presented below are examples of simple themes taken from Halliday and Matthiessen (2004). In the first example, the theme is formed by one nominal group; in the second, it is formed by two prepositional phrases. In either case, the theme consists of only one structural element.

(1) <u>The people that buy silver</u> love it.

(2) <u>From house to house</u> I wend my way.

We have seen that the theme contains only one experiential element, which can be a participant, a process or a circumstance. This constituent is called the topical theme. Sometimes, the topical theme is preceded by textual or interpersonal elements or themes. Textual themes are represented by continuatives, conjunctions, and conjunctive adjuncts,

while interpersonal themes are represented by vocative, modal and comment adjuncts, and finite verbal operators (see p. 79-87 in Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, for details).

Multiple themes are those which include textual and/or interpersonal themes in addition to the topical theme. This is so because textual and interpersonal themes do not exhaust the thematic potential of the clause, which means that the clause still lacks an element that has a function in transitivity (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The sentence *Then surely he got the job* has a multiple theme containing a textual, an interpersonal and an experiential element, as described above.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) point out that in order to decide whether a theme is marked or unmarked, it is necessary to consider the mood of a clause. In declarative clauses, the theme is unmarked when it conflates with the subject. A theme that is anything other than the subject in declarative clauses is a marked theme. The most common forms of a marked theme are adverbial groups and prepositional phrases, with complements being the least likely to appear in thematic position (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

In interrogatives, the typical pattern for the theme is unmarked, since questions embody the thematic principle in their structure as they present what the speaker wants to know in initial position. The unmarked theme in interrogatives, therefore, is going to be a group or phrase starting with a WH-word or with a finite operator plus the first experiential element of the clause as *do they* in *Do they live here*? In imperative clauses, the verb, that is, the predicator, is the unmarked theme (see Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, for details).

Themes are combined with the remainder of the sentence, the rheme, and these two parts together form the clause as a message (Halliday, 1994). The rheme is the part in which the theme is developed (Halliday, 1994).

A clause also has meaning as a representation of some process in the world of human experience. This experiential world is construed by the transitivity system in the grammar of a

clause through process types, namely material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Process types usually appear in rhematic position, but they may also appear in thematic position.

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), the main process types are those related to our outer and inner experiences, that is, experiences that occur outside ourselves and are related to what people do or what happens and those that occur inside ourselves and therefore are associated with processes of consciousness. These processes are material and mental respectively. A third process is that of identifying and classifying, which is called relational processes. These three constitute the main types of processes. All of the other ones are said to be in between the different pairs formed by them. It should be emphasized that the boundaries separating them are not very clear, which makes process-type classification rather subjective (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

Material processes are those of doing and happening. In a material clause, a participant, the actor, brings about the unfolding of the process through time, leading to an outcome that is different from the initial phase of the unfolding. The unfolding of the process may extend to another participant, the goal. Examples of material processes are *create*, *alternate*, *walk*, *use*, and *complement*. Differently, mental processes are processes of sensing, which may involve perception, affection, and cognition. These processes form clauses where the participants are a senser and a phenomenon. Examples of these processes are *see*, *like*, *think*, and *guess*. It is interesting to notice that the unmarked tense of the verb in material clauses is the present-in-present, while it is the simple present in mental clauses (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

Relational processes are processes of being and having. They set up a relationship between two separate entities in three different ways according to which they can be classified as intensive (X is A), circumstantial (X is at A), and possessive (X has A). Examples of these

processes are *be, seem, have,* and *depict*. Behavioral processes refer to typical human physiological and psychological behavior such as the verbs *cough, smile, dream,* and *stare*. Verbal processes are those of saying (tell, say, reply) and they involve a sayer and possibly an addressee. Existential processes, as the name suggests, are processes of existence. They represent something that exists or happens and typically, but not ex clusively, involve the verb *be.* Other verbs that might appear as existential processes are *remain, exist, occur, stand, sit* etc (see Halliday, 1994, and Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, for details).

The present study excludes behavioral processes from the an alysis of processes in the clauses, for they share characteristics of material and mental processes and could be argued to belong to one or the other depending on meaning proximity. These processes have no characteristics of their own (Halliday & Matthiess en, 2004).

The current investigation fulfills two gaps in the field of second language teaching as it focuses on the potential of the use of translation as a learning tool in L2 classrooms and on fostering the identification and acquisition of the perspec tive of the target language.

Methods

Research Questions

The main goal of this study is to analyze whether translation activities in combination with current methods help second language learners to become aware of the perspective of the target language and to adjust to it, thus improving their ability to communicate effectively in the language.

In order to investigate whether translation activities foster the acquisition of the L2 perspective, it was decided that we would focus on how information is organized in one text type; in this case, in descriptive essays. It should be stressed that information organization is one of the several ways in which perspective can manifest in language.

The questions guiding this part of the study were the following:

1) How do the descriptive essays of native and non-native speakers differ?

2) How does each of the non-native speakers' groups (control and experimental) differ significantly from the group of native speakers before intervention[1] on the instructor's part?

3) After the instructor's intervention, how do the learners' writings compare to those of native speakers?

4) How do the writings of the experimental group and control group differ from each other after the instructor's intervention?

5) Did the descriptive essays produced by the non-native speakers improve in relation to their production prior to intervention?

[1] Intervention here means the phase during which students practiced writing descriptions and during which techniques were used to make them aware of their linguistic problems. In the control group, the techniques used were those that comply with current teaching methods, while translation activities were used in the experimental group.

6) What kind of intervention (traditional techniques or translation activities) seemed to generate more benefits?

A secondary objective was to investigate learners' opinions about the use of translation in the second language classroom.

Participants

The study involved three groups: one group of 11 American undergraduate students pursuing their TEFL certificate in Germany; a control group of 16 English language learners, mostly Chinese, taking classes at the advanced level at Kent State University; and an experimental group composed of 16 Chinese native-speakers taking English classes at the advanced level at Kent State University. The three groups consisted of both male and female participants whose age varied from 18 to 25.

Data sources

At the beginning of the semester, the three groups of partic ipants were asked to analyze a painting and to write down a description of it. After the groups of non -native speakers received intervention from the instructor's part, they were asked to produce another descriptive essay of a different painting.

These two descriptive essays constituted the instruments addressing the main question of this study and were analyzed in terms of information organization. More specifically, the essays were analyzed in terms of themes and rhemes (see p. 19 to 22 for an explanation of the concepts) at the level of finite clauses.

In an attempt to find any differences in terms of information organization between the groups and to analyze if and how information organization changes after intervention, it was decided that we would look at types of themes and types of processes, which were mostly placed in rhematic position.

The themes in the clauses were classified as simple and multiple (see p. 19, 20), with their topical themes being broken down into:

1) Elliptical (It represents omitted noun phrases, mostly pronouns.)

Example: The ark is brightly colored and (elliptical theme) contrasts with the darkening sky while picking up the colors of the animals.

2) Existential there

Example: There is a lion in the lower left hand corner.

3) Simple noun phrase (A noun phrase which might include a specifier and one or more adjectives plus any antecedent.)

Example: While the bright yellow ark is very noticeable…

4) Complex noun phrase (A noun phrase which might include a specifier and any modifiers other than adjectives.)

Example: And the bright sky below creates a field of light color.

5) Clause (mostly represented by reduced clauses)

Example: Putting a lion by animals it would eat does not make sense.

It should be noted that we also looked at whether the themes were marked or unmarked (see p. 20 for marked and unmarked themes).

The rhemes, as mentioned above, were analyzed in terms of the processes composing them. These processes were classified as material, mental, relational, verbal , or existential (see p.20 to 22) as well as state − processes implying duration − or event − processes implying change. Examples of stative verbs are *seem*, *understand*, *see*, and *like*, while *make*, *begin*, *eat*, and *go* are examples of event verbs.

It should be noted that some themes and rhemes were not considered either because they belonged to a category not included in the analysis or because their analysis was impossible due to errors committed by the participants.

In order to address the second question of the study, the two groups of non-native speakers were asked to complete a survey on the use of translation activities in the L2 classroom.

Procedure

The first painting descriptions produced by the three groups of participants were classified according to their information organization, that is, according to the types of themes and processes described above. Then, the total number of each of those variables was calculated for the writings of each participant in the groups. This part of the study involved classifying each individual writing and counting up the number of times each structure was used. See Appendices A and B for samples of the classification of the non-native speakers' writings before intervention and Appendix C for a sample of the writings produced by native speakers. After that, the total numbers for each group were analyzed against each other by means of a one-way ANOVA. The objective was to find out whether there were statistically significant differences in information organization between the native and non-native speakers' descriptions as well as compare the mean values for each variable among the three groups.

After the first painting descriptions were collected, the experimental group and the control group went through a phase of treatment, which was called intervention. During this phase, students worked on four paintings in a way that should help them improve their ability to describe paintings in English. The control group discussed the paintings, wrote descriptions of them, received feedback from the instructor on their descriptions and analyzed descriptions produced of the same paintings by a native speaker. Simultaneously, the experimental group, which was composed of Chinese native-speakers, discussed the paintings, translated Chinese

descriptions of the paintings into English, received feedback from the instructor on their translations and analyzed descriptions of the same paintings produced by a native speaker.

For one of the activities used to give the control group some practice on how to write descriptions, the group was shown a painting, which was displayed on a TV screen, and given the following instructions, which were written down on the white board and read out loud by the instructor: *look at the painting and describe it as best as you can. Which item most calls your attention? Describe all of the other items in relation to this main one. Talk about location (make sure you use some prepositions of place), relationship, use of colors and make some interpretations about the picture. Also, what are some emotions/feelings that you experience when you look at this picture?*

The students were asked to discuss the painting in pairs following the instructions displayed on the white board. As the students discussed the painting, the instructor walked around offering help with vocabulary and language structure as needed. Next, the group was allowed some time to write their descriptions individually, which were collected and analyzed by the instructor. Students were then provided with a description of the same painting written by a native speaker. After the students read the text produced by a native speaker, the instructor checked comprehension in terms of vocabulary and language structure. Afterwards, the students received their descriptions back and were asked to share with the class ways in which their own text and the native speaker's text were similar or different in terms of information selection and organization. After this discussion, the instructor called students' attention to problems that had been detected in their descriptions, writing them on the board and having the students try to correct them.

Similarly, the experimental group was asked to analyze the same painting, which was shown on a TV screen, and given the instructions described above, which were also written on the white board and read out loud by the instructor. The students then discussed the

painting in pairs in accordance with the instructions given. As the students discussed the painting, the instructor and teaching assistants circulated providing help with vocabulary and language structure as needed. Next, the students were given a text in Chinese and asked to translate it in pairs. Again, as the students worked on the activity, the instructor and teaching assistants circulated providing help as needed and checking if the texts produced by the pairs conveyed similar meaning. It should be mentioned that the Chinese texts to be translated were produced by some Taiwanese colleagues in the TESL Master's program who also provided rough English translations of their Chinese texts so that the students' translations could be checked accordingly. As the pairs of students finished their translations, they verified with the instructor or teaching assistants if their translations were correct and sounded natural. At this point they had to negotiate meaning with their instructor/ teaching assistants until the text sounded natural.

Following this part of the activity, the students suggested ways of translating the Chinese description as a whole class. They had to help decide on the best options for translating the text. This version was written on the board as the students offered their suggestions. Next, the instructor called attention to any problems or interesting structures in the final text. Students were then provided with a description of the same painting produced by a native speaker and asked to analyze this text individually. After that, the instructor checked comprehension of the text in terms of vocabulary and structure and led a discussion about how the final version of the students' translation and the text produced by a native speaker were similar or different in terms of information organization and selection. At this point, there was explicit teaching of any structures consistently used by native speakers that were not used very often or correctly by non-native speakers, such as the use of clauses as post-modifiers.

It should be stressed that the instructors of the two groups worked cooperatively in an attempt to minimize differences in what was taught to the two groups. In other words, the instructors followed similar lesson plans, covering the same subjects and using similar activities in class whenever possible so that any significant differences in language improvement in the final descriptions could be attributed to the translation activities alone. See Appendix D for detailed lesson plans on the translation activities.

After intervention, the two groups of non-native speakers produced another painting description. Again, their descriptions were classified according to types of themes and processes and their numbers were calculated and analyzed for any significant differences in the same way as the first ones. See Appendices E and F for samples of the classifications of the writings after intervention. The one-way ANOVA was also used to compare these descriptions with the ones produced before intervention.

Finally, the two groups of non-native speakers were asked to complete a survey for which the results were calculated in percentage terms and then graphed. Each group completed a different survey consisting of 8 statements to be judged based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Appendices G and H show the surveys that were applied to the experimental group and control group respectively.

Inter-rater reliability

As it was stated above, the analysis of process types is somewhat subjective. In order to minimize errors in the analysis, two colleagues helped with the classification of those processes which seemed most problematic.

Results

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare how the descriptive essays of native and non-native speakers differed before intervention in terms of the following dependent variables: multiple themes (MultTheme), number of themes (NumbTheme), number of rhemes (NumbRheme), topical theme unmarked (TopU), topical theme marked (TopM), elliptical theme unmarked (EllipU), existential theme unmarked (ExistU), simple noun-phrase unmarked (SimpU), simple noun-phrase marked (SimpM), complex noun-phrase unmarked (CmplxU), complex-noun phrase marked (CmplxM), prepositional phrase marked (PPM), adverbial phrase marked (AdvPM), clause unmarked (ClsU), clause marked (ClsM), material state (MatS), material event (MatE), mental state (MentS), mental event (MentE), relational state (RelS), relational event (RelE), verbal state (VerbS), verbal event (VerbE), and existential state (ExistS). Statistically significant differences between the two groups were observed for seven of the variables: multiple theme, number of themes, numb er of rhemes, topical unmarked, simple unmarked, material event, and mental state, as Table 1 below shows.

The data was also analyzed to investigate how each of the groups of non-native speakers (NNS) differed significantly from the group of native speakers (NS) before intervention. Results indicated statistically significant differences between the experimental and the native speaker's groups for the following variables: multiple themes ($F = 7.94$, $p = .009$), number of themes ($F = 11.12$, $p = .003$), number of rhemes ($F = 10.43$, $p = .003$), topical unmarked ($F = 11.15$, $p = .003$) existential unmarked ($F = 4.34$, $p = .048$), simple unmarked ($F = 10.07$, $p=.004$), and mental state processes ($F = 9.86$, $p = .004$).

Table 1

Variables that showed statistically significant differences between NS and NNS and mean values for each of the groups.

Variables	*F*	*Significance*	Experimental NNS Mean	NS Mean	Control NNS Mean
MultTheme	10.04	0.003	7.81	4.55	8.00
NumbTheme	11.53	0.002	23.63	15.36	21.00
NumbRheme	10.77	0.002	23.44	15.36	20.81
TopU	12.24	0.001	21.56	13.27	19.44
SimpU	13.96	0.001	16.88	9.64	16.38
MatE	4.01	0.052	4.44	3.27	5.69
MentS	13.70	0.001	3.81	0.91	3.63

Note: Significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

As for an analysis of the control group against the native speaker's group, the results showed statistically significant differences for multiple themes ($F = 9.59$, $p = .005$), number of themes ($F = 10.34$, $p = .004$), number of rhemes ($F = 9.66$, $p = .005$), topical unmarked ($F = 10.50$, $p = .003$), simple unmarked ($F = 14.33$, $p < .001$), material event processes ($F= 4.58$, $p = .042$), and mental state processes ($F = 17.51$, $p < .001$).

The ANOVA test showed statistically significant differences for the same variable s when comparing each of the groups of non-native speakers with the native speaker group, with the exception of two variables: existential unmarked theme, which demonstrated to be statistically significant only in relation to the experimental group, and ma terial event processes, which showed to be statistically significant only in relation to the control group.

See Table 2 for a comparison of the means found for these two variables across the three groups.

Table 2

Mean values for existential unmarked themes and material event processes for the three groups before intervention.

Variables	Control NNS Mean	Experimental NNS Mean	NS Mean
ExistU	0.94	2.19	0.91
MatE	5.69	4.44	3.27

After intervention, the only statistically significant difference found between the experimental group and the native speaker group was for multiple themes ($F = 4.14$, $p = .052$). A comparison between the control and the native -speaker groups showed statistically significant differences for number of themes ($F = 6.51$, $p = .017$), number of rhemes ($F = 6.11$, $p = .021$), topical unmarked ($F = 8.41$, $p = .008$), simple unmarked ($F = 6.31$, $p = .019$), mental state processes ($F = 5.89$, $p = .023$), and mental event processes ($F = 4.24$, $p = .050$).

The analysis of variance indicated that the experimen tal group significantly improved their writings (comparison of writings prior and post intervention) for ten variables: multiple themes ($F = 24.65$, $p < .001$), number of themes ($F = 19.44$, $p < .001$), number of rhemes ($F = 18.04$, $p < .001$), topical unmarked ($F = 19.44$, $p < .001$), existential unmarked ($F = 7.98$, $p = .008$), simple unmarked ($F = 18.96$, $p < .001$), material state ($F = 9$, $p = .005$), mental state ($F = 9.75$, $p = .004$), verbal event ($F = 4.31$, $p = .047$), existential state ($F = 8.04$, $p = .008$). As for the control group, the results showed that there was statistically significant improvement for one variable: multiple theme ($F = 5.69$, $p = .024$), with learners deviating even more from the NS group in terms of elliptical unmarked ($F = 4.09$, $p = .052$) and relational event ($F = 4.60$, $p = .040$). An analysis of the mean values shown in Table 3 clarifies how much

improvement or deviation there was for each non-native speaker group in relation to all of the variables, as it allows for a comparison of the mean values across the three groups prior and after intervention.

Table 3

Mean values for all of the variables for the NS group and the NNS groups before and after intervention.

Variables	Ctrl1	Exp1	NS	Ctrl2	Exp2
MultTheme	8.00	7.81	4.55	5.25	2.94
NumbTheme	21.00	23.63	15.36	20.56	14.50
NumbRheme	20.81	23.44	15.36	20.38	14.56
TopU	19.44	21.56	13.27	18.75	12.56
TopM	1.44	2.00	2.09	1.81	1.94
EllipU	0.44	0.88	0.36	1.06	0.88
ExistU	0.94	2.19	0.91	0.56	0.81
SimpU	16.38	16.88	9.64	14.94	8.63
SimpM	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.13	0.00
CmplxU	1.50	1.44	2.27	1.94	2.06
CmplxM	0.00	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.00
PPM	1.31	1.50	1.73	1.50	1.81
AdvPM	0.00	0.13	0.18	0.13	0.13
ClsU	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.25	0.19
ClsM	0.06	0.06	0.00	0.06	0.00
MatS	0.19	0.38	0.09	0.00	0.00
MatE	5.69	4.44	3.27	5.56	4.44

MentS	3.63	3.81	0.91	3.44	1.38
MentE	0.38	0.50	0.36	0.06	0.13
RelS	8.44	9.38	8.00	8.44	6.06
RelE	0.56	1.31	0.82	1.31	0.88
VerbS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06
VerbE	0.13	0.31	0.09	0.06	0.00
ExistS	1.44	3.31	1.82	1.50	1.56

Ctrl1= control group before intervention/ Exp1 = experimental group before intervention/ Ctrl2= control group after intervention/ Exp2 experimental group after intervention.

The surveys applied to the two groups of NNS in order to assess their beliefs about the use of translation as a learning technique were completed by a total of 16 learners each. The results were calculated to show the percentage of students choosing each of the 5 possible responses to each statement. It should be noted that the fourth statement of the survey completed by the experimental group was ignored, since students misinterpreted it, as a comparison of their responses to the statements in the survey reveals.

Figures 1 and 2 present the results obtained from the experimental group. Figure 1 shows learners' responses to the following statements: 1) I enjoyed working on translation activities; 2) the translation activities motivated me to improve my English; 3) I would like to continue having translation activities in my English classes; 5) the translation activities helped me improve my English in general; whereas Figure 2 shows their responses to the remaining statements in the survey: 6) the translation activities helped me build vocabulary; 7) the translation activities helped me improve the way I build my sentences in English; 8) the translation activities helped me become aware of the similarities and differences between my native language and English.

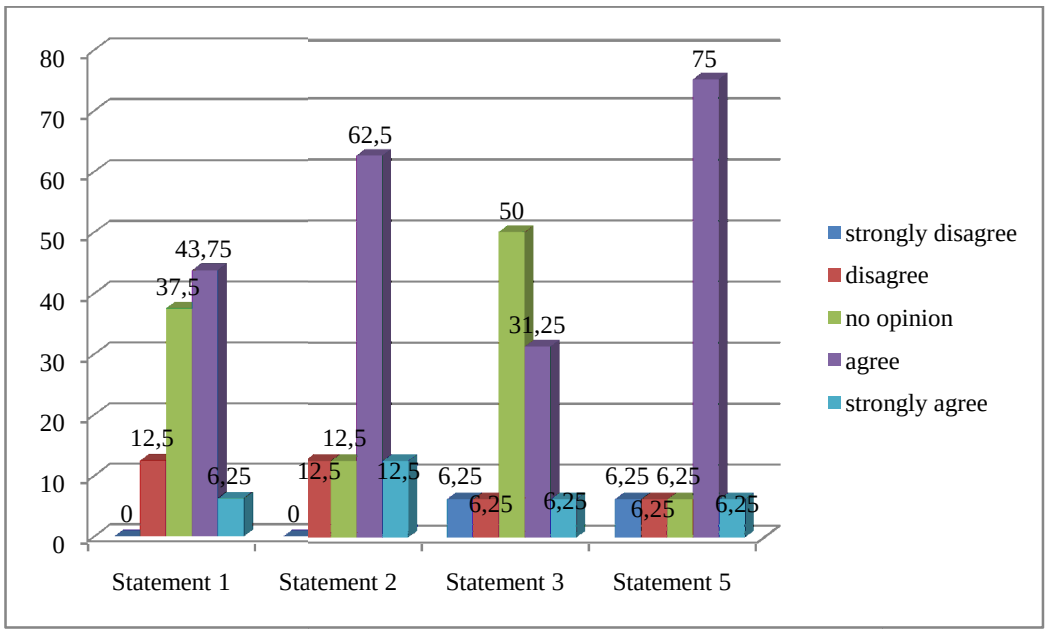

Figure 1: Percentage of learners' responses on a Likert scale to statements 1, 2, 3, and 5 of the experimental-group survey.

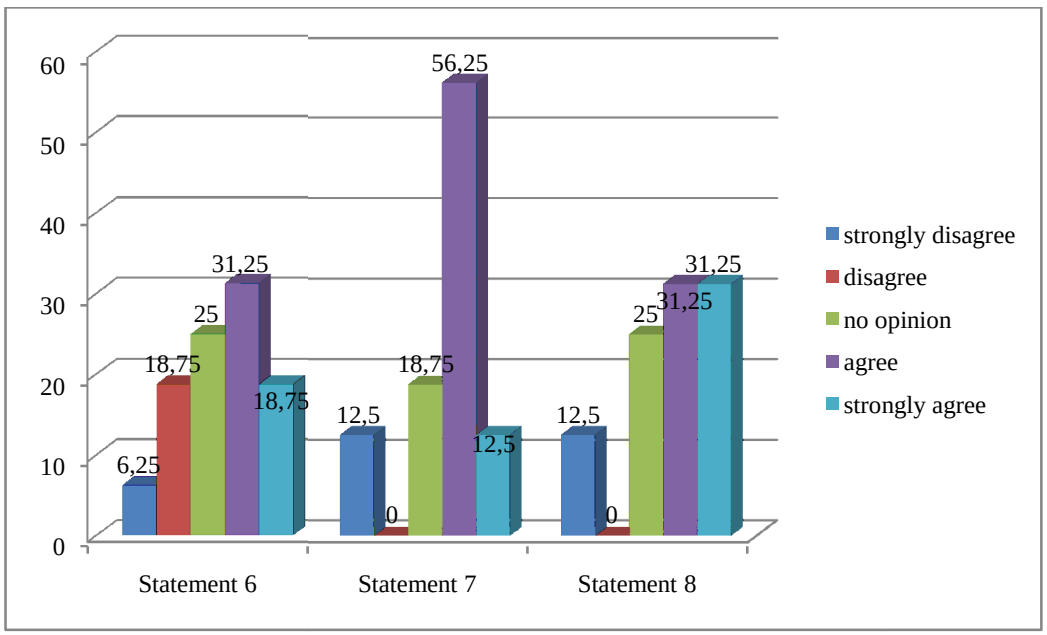

Figure 2: Percentage of learners' responses on a Likert scale to statements 6, 7, and 8 of the experimental-group survey.

Similarly, Figures 3 and 4 present the results obtained from the control group. Figure 3 shows the results for the following statements: 1) I enjoyed working on the activities used in

this course; 2) the activities used in this course motivated me to improve my English; 3) I would like to continue having similar activities in my English courses; and 4) the activities used in this course helped me improve my English in general.

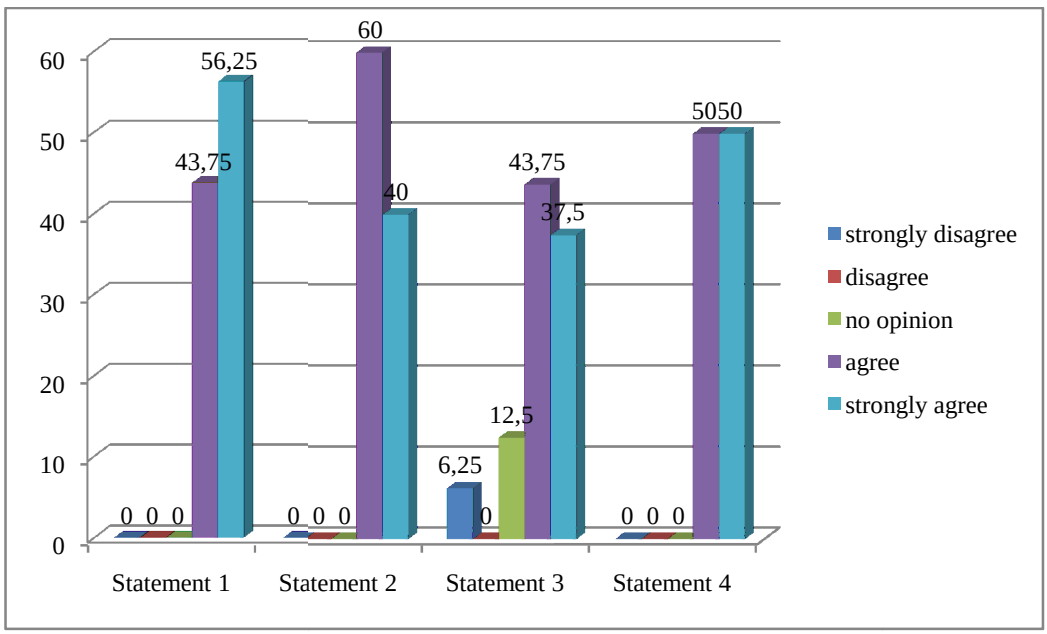

Figure 3: Percentage of learners' responses on a Likert scale to statements 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the control-group survey.

Figure 4, in turn, reveals the results to the remaining statements in the control-group survey: 5) the activities used in this course helped me build vocabulary; 6) the activities used in this course helped me improve the way I build my sentences in English; 7) the activities used in this course helped me become aware of the similarities and differences between my native language and English; 8) I would like to work on some translation activities during class.

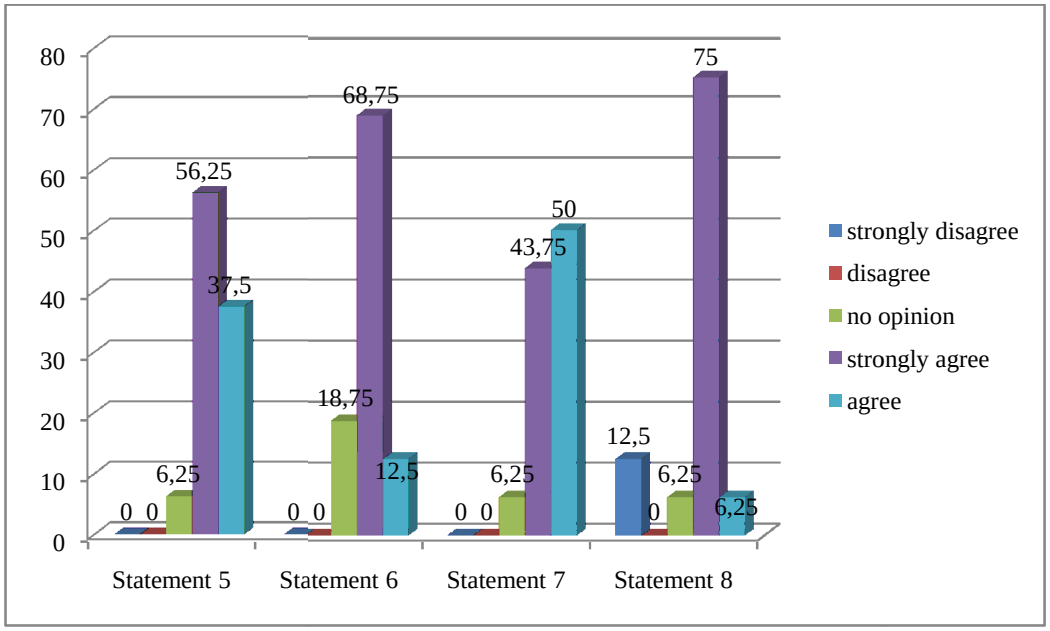

Figure 4: Percentage of learners' responses on a Likert scale to statements 5, 6, 7, and 8 of the control-group survey.

Discussion

As the results presented above show (Table 1), statistically significant differences were found between native speakers' descriptive texts and non-native speakers' descriptive texts for seven of the structures investigated (multiple theme, number of themes, number of rhemes, topical unmarked, simple unmarked, material event, and mental state). These findings imply the existence of perspective differences between the two groups regarding information organization in descriptive texts. What the results suggest most clearly is that non-native speakers tended to produce more finite clauses than native-speakers, which is demonstrated by the superior number of themes and rhemes produced by the non-native speakers. The presence of a larger number of topical unmarked and simple unmarked themes in the non-native speakers' writings may also be attributed to their higher number of clauses. This is so because every theme requires a topical theme and the most used kind of theme across the three groups was simple unmarked themes. This might also have influenced the number of multiple themes, causing the non-native speakers to produce more multiple themes than the native speakers, since this structure includes a textual and/or interpersonal theme plus a topical theme.

A comparison between the longest writing produced by a native speaker and some of the longest writings produced before intervention by non-native speakers, both in the control and in the experimental group, suggests that non-native speakers produced more finite clauses because they do not compact information as the native speakers do. Native speakers tend to compact information by using clauses and phrases that function as modifiers, both in thematic and rhematic position. This can be partially supported by the slightly higher number of

complex unmarked themes used by native speakers (see Table 3 for means). Below are some examples illustrating how native speakers compact information in a single finite clause and non-native speakers use more finite clauses to convey information.

NS:

Theme	Rheme
1) The animals	trudge their way to the ark, pacing through a dirt trail carved out by the prior animals.
2) The blotches on the green grass and the trail	*foreshadows* destruction.

NNS:

Theme	Rheme
1) On the top of the painting	a large *clouds* attracts people's attention.
It	is cloudy
which	indicates *a* bad weather.
2) Animals	are getting to the boat
There	are in lines to *going* to the boat.

This finding corroborates the expectations raised after a rough comparison of native and non-native speakers' writings, which seemed to indicate that native speakers convey more information in one single finite clause by means of post-modifiers such as clauses and phrases. This difference between the two groups indicates that the language acquired by the non-native speakers has not yet conformed to the perspective encoded in the target language, mainly because it does not yet allow them to organize and express complex thoughts as native speakers do. This is a matter of perspective at the structural level, for structural variations among languages are also a result of the different perspectives encoded in language. Were the

structures of the two languages similar, expressing complex thoughts would be a matter of transfer and the non-native speakers would not have to adjust to a different perspective.

In addition, the results helped to reveal that the non-native speakers used more personal language expressing their viewpoints than the native speakers, who tended to write in third person. The difference between the two groups in terms of personal-language use is mainly manifested in the non-native speakers' use of first-person pronouns and certain processes, which will be described below. Even though their use of more personal language implies a matter of perspective at the cultural level, another point to be discussed below, it also led them to produce more finite clauses and thus impacted on the structural aspect of the language acquired by them. Compare the examples below to see how the use of more personal language led non-native speakers to produce more finite clauses.

NS:

Theme	Rheme
1) The animals	are in pairs walking up to the ramp of the ark.
2) The white horse	seems to particularly stand out.

NNS:

Theme	Rheme
1) I	think
that they	are in line *as* some order
but I	don't know why.
2) I	feel
the ship	is too small.

An analysis of the mean values for processes (Table 3) points out that native speakers mostly used relational state processes (M = 8.00) in their descriptions, followed by material event (M = 3.27) and existential (M = 1.82) processes respectively. The non-native speakers

also used relational state processes most frequently. However, they used a higher number of material event processes and mental state processes when compared to the native speakers.

The higher number of mental state processes used by non-native speakers can be attributed to their use of more personal language, that is, to their expression of viewpoint in a more personal way, which indicates a difference in perspective at the cultural level . For instance, this population used processes such as 'think' and 'feel' very frequently in their writings, which were not used by the NS.

Examples:

1) I feel this picture is not colorful.

2) I think the sky wants to destroy the earth.

When using mental state processes, the verb 'see' as in *I see the green grass all around the lucky animals* was the predominant process in the native speaker's writings, with some other verbs being used less frequently. The non-native speakers also used 'see' very often.

The Chinese native speakers tended to express their impressions and feelings more often and in a more direct way when describing the paintings; on the other hand, the English-native speakers did not do that so often or did it in a more indirect way. For instance, while the Chinese speakers used verbs such as 'think', 'guess', and 'feel,' the NS expressed their impressions in a more indirect way such as through the use of 'seem'. It is worth noting that while 'think', 'guess,' and 'feel' are mental processes, the verb 'seem' constitut es a relational process. Compare the examples below:

NS

Themes	Rhemes
1) The animals	all seem docile and obedient.
2) The black clouds at the top of the picture	do not seem ominous
even though they	probably indicate an oncoming storm

NNS – Experimental group

Themes	Rhemes
1) I	think
that	indicates the hope for the lives on earth.
2) I	guess
these animals	get a storm or other bad things.

As for material event processes, this was the process category mostly used after relational processes across the three groups (NNS control, NNS experimental , and NS), and they were usually used to describe what happens in the painting. A likely reason as to why NNS use more material event processes than NS is that they do not compact information as the NS do. As explained above, this suggests a matter of perspective at the structural level. Below are examples of how NNS and NS organize information.

NS

Theme	Rheme
1) A steady stream of animals	file, two by two, into the ark, with birds flying into another opening higher up.

2) The water in which the ark floats	is pale blue and calm
though the bird filled sky overhead	is made up of dark clouds foretelling the coming rain.

NNS

Theme	Rheme
1) Because I	see
many animals	are going to the boat in the one line
and they	are going up to the boat.
2) And the birds	were flying through the window of the boat.
Although	they have to go to the shelter,
but they	still look back…

The second example given for native speakers above illustrate how material event processes are avoided as information is compacted by means of modifiers, thus allowing for the production of more relational clauses.

In addition, it seems that NNS tend to describe what is happening in the painting or to speculate more about events that will happen than the NS. This can be inferred by comparing the means for relational state and material event processes across the three groups before and after intervention, as shown in Table 4. Notice that even after intervention the groups of NNS continued to produce more material event processes than the native speakers . This suggests a difference in perspective at the cultural level, since it has to do with how speakers see the world around them and what they consider worth reporting. The fact that speakers of different languages put different elements in perspective had already been discussed and illustrated by Stutterheim et al (2002), as stated above.

Table 4:

Mean values for relational state and material event processes across the three groups before and after intervention.

Variables	Ctrl1	Exp1	NS	Ctrl2	Exp2
MatE	5.69	4.44	3.27	5.56	4.44
RelS	8.44	9.38	8.00	8.44	6.06

An analysis of each non-native-speaker group against the group of native speakers before intervention also revealed that the experimental group used more existential unmarked themes than the native speakers. Even though the control group did not show the same tendency, the experimental group diverged from the native-speaker's group, which suggests that this group had not yet conformed to the perspective of the target language, to what is normally chosen as a point of departure for clauses in English descriptive texts. Again, this is a matter of perspective at the structural level. While native speakers tended to start their sentences with a doer and to use 'there' only in the first sentence of their writings, this group tended to start their sentences with 'there' more often throughout their descriptions.

An after-intervention analysis revealed that the experimental group improved a significant number of the thematic and processual structures evaluated in this study, that is, they got closer to the way native speakers conveyed information in their descriptive texts. In addition to having improved those structures for which statistically significant differences had been initially found, they also got closer to the way native speakers were producing other structures, as a comparison of the results before and after intervention show (see Table 3). In total, this group improved their usage of 10 structures, which are described below.

Their number of themes, rhemes, topical unmarked, and simple unmarked dropped significantly, indicating proximity to the way NS organized information. The examples below show how they learned to compact information. In some cases, students' attempt to use

clauses or phrases as post-modifiers was not completely successful; however, it indicates that they became aware of how native speakers compact and organize information.

Examples:

Theme	Rheme
1) A boy wearing a blue shirt	is feeding his *sheeps*.
2) The farmer whose face turns orange in the sunshine	is addicted *himself* to farming.
3) The color *of clothes* that he wears	is the most outstanding color of this picture.
4) What's more, the tree and other plants *what* surround the land	bring *(unintelligible word)* life here.

As for multiple themes, the experimental group continued to differ from the NS as they produced a statistically significant lower number of multiple themes in comparison with the NS after intervention. Notice that before intervention, they had produced a s tatistically significant higher number of multiple themes. The decrease in the number of multiple themes can be partially attributed to their reduction in the total number of clauses on average, which was then lower than the average number of clauses produ ced by NS. The number of multiple themes was also affected as they learned how to compact and report information in a more native-like way; for instance, as they learned to express their viewpoints in a more indirect way. Below are examples of clauses that were less frequently used by the experimental group after intervention.

Example:

1) If you	know the story about the Noah's Ark
you	can imagine the picture clearly.
If not, I	will describe to you.

2) Maybe these animals have to leave this place.

Before intervention this group used a lot of interpersonal language in thematic position such as 'in my opinion' and 'maybe'. This was a characteristic of the non -native speakers' writings. They also seemed to use more textual elements such as 'first', 'se cond', 'actually', 'finally'. However, after intervention, the experimental group did not use much interpersonal language and used fewer textual elements. It should be noted that treatment often times leads participants to become over concerned about the u se of a particular structure, thus causing the results to go beyond expected limits.

As discussed above, the experimental group used more existential themes th an the NS in sentences such as *There are many animals, and all of them are couples* and *There is a boat in the lake, and there is a big enough house in the boat* . As their mean scores for existential themes dropped significantly after intervention and got closer to that found for NS, it can be surmised that the translation-based intervention helped them to adjust to more native-like ways to convey information.

An analysis of the writings produced prior and after intervention showed that the experimental group progressed in terms of how they used material state processes. It should be noted though that the numbers for the three groups before intervention were already low, and the fact that the NNS did not use any material state processes in their second descriptive text might be due to the painting being described. In other words, the results for this part icular structure in spite of being statistically significant may not mean much on practical terms, for the second painting might not have required the same kind of verbs that the first one did.

The experimental group also improved their use of mental stat e processes. This is so because they did not use as much personal language as they did in their first descriptive text, which suggests that they adjusted to the L2 perspective in terms of how NS report information and what they select as reportable.

The ANOVA test reveals that the experimental group improved their use of verbal event and existential processes as well. This indicates, at least partly, that as they became aware of how they diverged from the way native speakers select and organize information and adjusted to the perspective of the second language, especially regarding those structures for which statistically significant differences had been initially found, they also improved other structures as a consequence. For instance, as they avoided existential themes their use of existential processes was affected and became less frequent. It should be pointed out, however, that the numbers for verbal event processes had been low for the three groups before intervention and that again the picture might have influenced its use.

After intervention, the control group performed basically in the same way it did before intervention, considerably improving only their usage of multiple themes, which dropped significantly in spite of their number of themes and rhemes not having dropped to a native-like level. This implies that other factors other than number of clauses might have affected its use, such as the painting itself or the treatment with samples of native speakers' writings, which was applied to both groups of non-native speakers. In addition, a statistically significant difference was found for mental event processes, which was used less often this time by this group. This could also be due to the picture, since both groups used mental event processes less often for the second picture. Even though no statistically significant difference was found for material event processes after intervention, there was still a tendency for this group to diverge from the NS ($F = 3.95$, $p = .058$), which implies that improvement was slight.

A comparison of the writings produced by the control group before and after intervention shows that this group improved multiple themes, but got worse in their use of elliptical themes and relational event processes. In terms of elliptical themes, this group did not only deviate from the native speakers for overusing them but also for misusing them.

Elliptical themes are those in which the theme of a clause is omitted because it refers back to the theme of a previous clause such as in *The artist alternates white among the animals and uses a white sheep in the foreground*. In the group of non-native speakers, however, ellipsis was used when a non-finite clause, a pronoun, or a wh-word functioning as an element of co-reference was needed. For instance, they produced sentences such as *When I see the goatherd pastures sheep* or *The tree seems that stick the sky*. This might be due to influence of the Chinese language, since ellipsis is a referential device in Chinese (Halliday, 2009).

As for relational event processes, the control group used them more often than they did the first time, deviating more, although not significantly in statistical terms, from the NS group. This could be partially due to the painting being described, which elicited more of this process type from the learners. Notice, however, that the experimental group used fewer relational event processes in the second painting description. It is possible to notice that reduction of personal language led the experimental group to use fewer relational event processes, while unchanging use of personal language by the control group might have led them to use more of this process in this specific assignment. See examples of use of personal language affecting use of relational event processes.

Ex.: 1) The color of the picture make me feel comfortable.

Ex.: 2) They also let you feel comfortable.

Ex.: 3) So it makes me feel strange and depressing.

Ex.: 4) All color together let me feel very comfortable.

The use of personal language by Chinese-native speakers seems to indicate that this population sees themselves as part of their surroundings and consequently as integrated with what they are describing. Native speakers, on the other hand, seem to take the position of an observer who is apart from what is being described. Contrast the examples above which were produced by Chinese speakers with the ones below, which were produced by native speakers:

Ex.: 1) … and he draws attention because he is looking directly at the viewer.

Ex.: 2) Everything is in relatively warm earth tones.

Ex.: 3) The overall feeling is influenced by the dark sky and the obedient nature of all of the animals.

In general, the ANOVA test shows that the experimental group improved how they organize information in descriptive texts more than the control group, since the former got closer to the way native speakers organize information in this text type. This means that intervention with translation assignments led to better results in terms of adjusting to the perspective of the L2 than intervention with traditional techniques.

The figures presented above show learners' opinions about the activities used in the L2 classroom. Figure 1 reveals that most learners in the experimental group (43.75%) indicated to agree with the statement about enjoying working on translation activities, with 6.25% strongly agreeing with it and 37.5% not expressing an opinion about it. In contrast, Figure 3 shows that 56.25% of the students in the control group indicated to strongly agree with the statement about enjoying working on the activities used in the course, with 43.75% agreeing with it. Notice that while the students in the control group enjoyed working on the activities used in the course, some learners in the experimental group (12.5%) did not enjoy working on the translation assignments. This might be due to the lack of variety of translation activities. Since students' ability to organize information in descriptive texts was the focus of this study, all of the translation assignments were very similar and based on descriptions in order to investigate the actual role of translation in assisting students to conform to the L2 perspective in terms of descriptive texts. In other words, the fact that the students were participating in an investigation did not allow the translation assignments to be varied, thus disguising the cognitive load of translation.

Figure 1 also shows that most students in the experimental group (62.5%) reported to agree with the statement about translation activities motivating them to improve their English, with 12.5% strongly agreeing with it and 12.5% reporting to disagree with it. With regard to continuing having translation activities in the course, 31.25% indicated to agree with it, with 6.25% strongly agreeing with it and 50% not expressing an opinion about it. It is interesting to notice that while 50% (43.75% + 6.25%) of the students indicated to enjoy working on the translation assignments, 75% (62.5% + 12.5%) of them reported that the assignments motivated them to learn. As for the control group, 60% of the students indicated to agree and 40% to strongly agree that the activities used in the course motivated them to improve their English (Figure 3). However, 43.75% of these students said to agree and 37.5% to strongly agree with continuing having similar activities in their English course (Figure 3). Notice that while the whole group reports that the activities motivated them to improve their English, some (6.25%) report that they would not like to continue having these activities in the course.

The results presented in Figure 1 reveal that 75% of the learners in the experimental group agree that translation activities helped them improve their English, with the rest of the students being equally divided among the other four options on the Likert scale. These results indicate that most students were aware that the translation assignments were beneficial to their learning. In the control group, 50% of the students reported to strongly agree and 50% to agree that the activities used in the course helped them improve their English. It should be noted, however, that in the case of the experimental group they were asked about a more specific technique, even though they also worked on the activities used with the control group.

In terms of building vocabulary, 31.25% of the population in the experimental group said to agree that the translation activities helped them, and 18.75% said to strongly agree with it; 25% of the students did not express an opinion about it (Figure 2). As for the control

group, 56.25% indicated to agree that the activities used in the course helped them build vocabulary and 37.5% strongly agreed with it, with 6 .25% of the learners not expressing an opinion about it (Figure 4). Again, the more positive results obtained from the control group might be due to the fact that all of the activities used in the course were considered, while only translation was considered in the case of the experimental group.

As for building sentences in English, the majority of the students (56.25%) in the experimental group indicated to agree that the translation activities assisted them in improving the way they build their sentences in the L2, with 12.5% strongly agreeing with the statement (Figure 2). As one can see, the students judged translation activities more helpful in terms of sentence building than in terms of vocabulary building with regard to the assignments on which they worked. In the control group, the results were even more positive, with 68.75% of the learners indicating to agree and 12.5% to strongly agree that the activities used in the course helped them to improve the way they build their sentences (Figure 4). One should not forget that while the experimental group is asked about one specific activity, the control group considers all of the activities employed in the course.

Finally, 31.25% of the participants in the experimental group said to agree and 31.25% to strongly agree that the translation assignments helped them become aware of the similarities and differences between the first and second languages (Figure 2), while 43.75% of those in the control group indicated to agree and 50% to strongly agree that the activities used in the course helped them in that sense (Figure 4). In this specific case, one can wonder whether the control group is really empowered to answer that question for mainly two reasons: 1) the results of the experimental study show that they did not adjust to the L2 perspective as the experimental group did; and 2) becoming aware of the similarities and differences between languages usually involve comparison and contrast or explicit teaching.

When asked to respond to the statement about whether they would like to work on some translation activities, 75% of the students in the control group indicated to agree with it, with 6.25% indicating to strongly agree with it (Figure 4). The results show that these learners believe that they could profit from translation as a technique in the L2 classroom. This corroborates Posen's (2006) study, which also found that most of its participants believed that translation has a role in acquiring a second language (English). The results obtained from the experimental group also corroborate Posen's study, since they were mostly in favor of having translation as a learning tool in the L2 classroom.

Conclusion

This research project aimed primarily at evaluating the validity of using translation as a learning tool in the L2 classroom by looking at whether translation activities help learners adjust to the perspective encoded in the L2. The study, therefore, allowed for an investigation of the cognitive value of translation as a learning technique. In order to operationalize the concept of perspective and allow for a more concrete grasp on the cognitive value of translation, it was decided that language perspective would be analyzed in terms of information organization at the clause level in descriptive texts; more specifically, the study looked at how information was distributed with regard to thematic structure as it was proposed by Halliday and subsequent revisions of his work.

The results of the empirical investigation validate the use of translation as a technique in the L2 classroom as it offers confirmation to the cognitive value of translation with regard to helping students adjust to the L2 perspective and thus improve their ability to communicate more effectively.

The investigation consisted of collecting descriptive texts from native and non-native speakers and then submitting the non-native speakers to an intervention phase before collecting another set of descriptive texts from them. There were two groups of non-native speakers: a control group, which was submitted to intervention that involved techniques in accordance with current teaching methods; and the experimental group, whose intervention involved translation exercises. All of the writings were classified according to their thematic structure and a one-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate whether there were any

differences between the native and non-native speakers' writings. The ANOVA test was also conducted to look for any improvements on the non-native speaker's part after intervention.

The results of this part of the study showed that there were statistically significant differences between native and non-native speakers in terms of information organization. These differences, which affected both themes and rhemes at the clause level, showed to be mostly due to two main perspectival problems. The first one concerned the non-native speakers' inability to compact information as the native speakers did. The nature of this problem was grammatical, but suggested that the learners had not yet adjusted to ways of expressing more complex thoughts in the L2. The second main perspectival problem, on the other hand, had its roots in cultural differences, since the non-native speakers tended to use more personal language than the native speakers. The learners demonstrated to see themselves as integrated with the world around them and reflected that in their writings, while the native speakers conveyed their thoughts in a more impersonal way, as if they distanced themselves from what was being described.

As the experimental group learned to arrange information in a more native-like way, they proved that the translation-based intervention helped them to adjust to the L2 perspective in terms of information organization in one text type. Consequently, the value of using translation as a learning tool in the L2 classroom was confirmed. This study, therefore, corroborates other investigations previously carried out and which had pointed out the validity of using translation in the second language classroom, as discussed in the literature review above. In addition to having proven that translation exercises are valuable for helping students to become aware of and adjust to the L2 perspective, this investigation allowed the instructors to realize that translation activities assist teachers in identifying students' weaknesses and sources of linguistic errors, thus allowing them to address the problems more effectively.

Furthermore, the surveys carried out for the purpose of this study revealed that a significant percentage of the learners in the experimental group have positive beliefs about the use of translation as a learning tool in second language learning. The surveys also revealed that most students in the control group would like to work on translation activities in the L2 classroom. This is by itself a strong reason for implementing a component of translation in the teaching of a second language, for students have different learning styles and the exclusive use of the L2 might inhibit them, as Scott and Fuente (2008) suggested in their work. Using a wide variety of learning techniques allows teachers to attend to the needs of a larger number of students in the L2 classroom.

A major limitation of this investigation was the lack of formal inter-rater reliability for the classification of the writings in terms of types of themes and process types in rhematic position. Formal inter-rater reliability would minimize the chances of mistakes in the overall classification of themes and rhemes as well as minimize the level of subjectivity of the classification of the processes. The study prioritized consistency in the analysis of the structures; however, agreement on the classifications among at least three inter-raters would increase its reliability. Another limitation of the investigation was the fact that the native speakers only produced descriptive essays for the first painting. The number of native speakers that produced a description for the second painting was not high enough for the descriptions to be taken into account. A comparison of the native-speakers' descriptions for the first and second painting would have clarified which structures, if any, were used differently due to the painting being described. In other words, it would have allowed a better understanding of the use of certain structures, for the paintings might have required the use of different structures or affected their frequency, as it may have happened to the use of material states processes and relational event processes.

The research was also constrained by time, since learners could have profited more from the translation exercises had time allowed for the first set of descriptions to be classified and analyzed before intervention started. Instructors could have targeted specific problems after having a clearer idea of how learners deviated from the L2 perspective.

Finally, the results of this research project present important implications for second language teaching as they demonstrate that the use of translation as a learning tool in ESL teaching can facilitate the work of instructors on identifying students' weaknesses and source of linguistic errors, assist students in becoming aware of the similarities and differences between the first and second languages at various linguistic levels (grammatical, textual, cultural etc), offer the means through which linguistic problems can be tackled, and attend to some students' learning styles.

ESL instructors are constantly looking for ways of facilitating students' learning, which might entail seeking and accepting techniques other than the ones currently in fashion. A wide variety of teaching techniques, which would include the use of translation as a learning tool, will help attend to students' different learning styles and thus improve second language teaching.

This study emphasizes the need for future investigation concerning the use of translation as a learning tool in the L2 classroom as it demonstrates that translation can help students in their learning endeavor. Moreover, it sets out the stage for the investigation of perspective in second language acquisition with translation serving as a tool not only to bring the L2 perspective to the level of awareness but also to help learners adjust to it. It also offers useful implications for the design of future research. First of all, the investigation could be replicated with different groups of learners taking into account and capitalizing on the limitations presented above. In addition, similar procedures could be followed but using

different text types to investigate how translation would help students in acquiring the perspective encoded in a second language.

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Appendices

Appendix A

NNS before-intervention sample writing – experimental group

Writing 6

Clause 1	At first we(t1)	can see (r1) mt s
Clause 2	there (t2)	is a boat in the lake (r2) e s
Clause 3	and there (t2)	is a big enough house in the boat (r3) e s
Clause 4	(Elliptical) (t3 = part of r3)	can take many animals (r4) r s
Clause 5	And *than* we (t1)	will find (r5) mt s
Clause 6	there (t2)	is a long line from the boat to the far place (r6) e s
Clause 7	Many kinds of animals (t4 = refers to r4)	made of this line (r7) r ev
Clause 8	it (t5)	seems (r8) r s
Clause 9	that all of animals (t4)	will get into the boat (r9) m ev
Clause 10	(Elliptical) (t4)	go to the other place (r10) m ev
Clause 11	And we (t6)	can see (r11) mt s
Clause 12	there (t2)	are two horses and tow cows near the tree (r12) e s
Clause 13	their ears (t7)	reveal some sad emotion (r13) r s
Clause14	Also we (t6)	can see a lion, its face towards us (r14) mt s
Clause15	It (t8)	is hard to say its face (r15) r s
Clause 16	It (t9 = r14)	reveal many emotion, maybe sad, reluctant or something else (r16) r s
Clause 17	Actually, we (t6)	will find a fact (r17) mt s
Clause 18	that all of animals (t4)	have expressed a sad or gloomy emotion (r18) r ev
Clause 19	And *than* look (t10) m ev	at the top of the picture (r19) m ev
Clause 20	We (t6)	will find (r20) mt s
Clause 21	the sky (t11)	is dark, gray, and gloomy (r21) r s
Clause22	It (t11)	made you have a feeling (r22) r ev
Clause 23	that there (t2)	is some bad things or sad things happened (r23) e s
Clause 24	So when I (t12)	look at this picture (r24) m ev
Clause 25	I (t12)	feel a heavy pressure, sadness or some emotion (r25) mt s

Appendix A

NNS before-intervention sample writing – experimental group (continued)

Clause 26	which (t13 = r25)	is hard expressed by words (r26) r s
Clause 27	I (t12)	am sure (r27) r s
Clause 28	it (t13)	must have some bad things happened (r28) r s
Clause 29	Maybe these animals (t4)	have to leave this place m ev
Clause 30	even though they (t4)	love this place (r30) mt s
Clause 31	So this (t14)	is (r31) r s
Clause 32	why (t15)	we can feel (r32) mt s
Clause 33	there (t2)	is a gloomy atmosphere in the picture (r33) e s
Clause 34	And these animals face (t16 = refers to t4)	all express some sad emotion (r34) r ev

Note: (t) = theme / (r) = rheme / m = material / mt = mental / r = relational / v = verbal / e = existential / s = state / ev = event.

Themes

Note: There's one verb phrase functioning as theme. It is an unmarked case because the mood is imperative.	Topical themes	Unmarked	Marked
	Elliptical	2	
	Existential there	6	
	Simple NP	25	
	Complex NP		
	PP		
	Adv P		
	Clause		
Multiple themes	15		

Rhemes

Process type	State	Event
Material		5
Mental	9	
Relational	10	4
Verbal		
Existential	6	

Appendix B

NNS before-intervention sample writing – control group

Writing 11

Clause 1	As I (t1)	first see this picture (r1) mt s
Clause 2	the color of the picture (t2)	make me comfortable (r2) r ev
Clause 3	There (t3)	have a lot of animals in this picture (r3) e s
Clause 4	and every kind of animals (t4)	have two, like two sheep, two horses, two tigers (r4) r s
Clause 5	and the animals (t4)	are on line two to board a big boat (r5) r s
Clause 6	The boat (t5)	Is so huge (r6) r s
Clause 7	that (elliptical) (t6)	can make all the animals get in (r7) r ev
Clause 8	and there (t7)	is a very big house on the boat (r8) e s
Clause 9	and the animals (t4)	will going in to this house (r9) m ev
Clause 10	there (t7)	are so many animals (r10) e s
Clause 11	but they (t8)	walk slowly (r11) m ev
Clause 12	they (t8)	likes very quite (r12) r s
Clause 13	some sheep and horses (t9)	eat the grass on the ground (r13) m ev
Clause 14	some animals (t4)	look around (r14) m ev
Clause 15	There (t7)	are two trees near the animals (r15) e s
Clause 16	and they (t10 = r15)	are crisscross just like the animals (r16) r s
Clause 17	one female and one male (t10)	*to be* in love (r17) r s
Clause 18	And we (t11)	can find a little tree behind this two big trees just like their baby (r18) mt s
Clause 19	All this pictures, no matter the animals or the scenery (t12)	are so peaceful (r19) r s
Clause 20	When I (t1)	see this picture (r20) mt s
Clause 21	I (t1)	feel (r21) mt s
Clause 22	My heart (t13)	is quite (r22) r s
Clause 23	I (t1)	feel hope (r23) mt s
Clause 24	I (t1)	feel peaceful (r24) mt s
Clause 25	and I (t1)	think (r25) mt s
Clause 26	it (t14)	’s tell us about life (r26) v ev

Note: (t) = theme / (r) = rheme / m = material / mt = mental / r = relational / v = verbal / e = existential / s = state / ev = event.

Appendix B

NNS before-intervention sample writing – control group (continued)

Themes

	Topical themes	Unmarked	Marked
	Elliptical	1	
	Existential there	4	
	Simple NP	19	
	Complex NP	2	
	PP		
	Adv P		
	Clause		
Multiple themes	10		

Rhemes

Process type	State	Event
Material		4
Mental	7	
Relational	8	2
Verbal		1
Existential	4	

Appendix C

NS sample writing

Writing 11

Clause 1	The silver pond to the left of the yellow barn with the orange roof (t1)	is below the gray storm brewing sky (r1) r s
Clause 2	The barn (t2 = refers to part of t1)	is suspended between the gray sky (r2) r s
Clause 3	and the rocky ridge (t3)	is holding it firm (r3) m ev
Clause 4	The picture (t4)	is of Noah's ark boarding the animals (r4) r s
Clause 5	before the storm (t5)	hits (r5) m ev
Clause 6	The animals (t6)	are in pairs walking up to the rank of the ark (r6) r s
Clause 7	The gray sky (t7 = picks up r1/r2)	symbolizes time (r7) r s
Clause 8	The animals (t6)	only have a short time (r8) r s
Clause 9	until the storm (t7)	comes (r9) m ev
Clause 10	and the ark (t8 = refers to r4)	floats away (r10) m ev
Clause 11	I (t9)	see the ark as a big timely structure symbolizing the theoretic understanding of the conception of time (r11) mt s
Clause 12	There (t10)	are no watches or clocks in the picture (r12) e s
Clause 13	The ark (t8)	acts as a clock (r13) r ev
Clause 14	and it (t8)	symbolizes a deadline (r14) r s
Clause 15	The animals (t6)	trudge their way to the ark, pacing through a dirt trail carved out by the prior animals (r 15) m ev
Clause 16	that (t8 = part of r15)	have already loaded the ark (r14) m ev
Clause 17	The yellow of the Ark's body and the orange of its roof (t11 = picks up r14)	symbolizes a hope of sunshine for the future (r15) r s
Clause 18	The Ark (t8)	is a vessel of hope (r16) r s
Clause 19	The blotches on the green grass and the trail (t9)	foreshadows destruction (r17) r s
Clause 20	Something (t10)	has destroyed the grassy plain (r18) m ev
Clause 21	people and life (t11)	have destroyed it (r19) m ev
Clause 22	so as a result they (t12)	will be destroyed (r20) m ev
Clause 23	as tells (t12) v ev	the story (r21)

Note: (t) = theme / (r) = rheme / m = material / mt = mental / r = relational / v = verbal / e = existential / s = state / ev = event.

Appendix C

NS sample writing (continued)

Themes

Note: There's a verb phrase functioning as theme, which is a marked case.	Topical themes	Unmarked	Marked
	Elliptical		
	Existential there	1	
	Simple NP	18	
	Complex NP	3	
	PP		
	Adv P		
	Clause		
Multiple themes	7		

Rhemes

	State	Event
Material		9
Mental	1	
Relational	10	1
Verbal		1
Existential	1	

Appendix D

Lesson plans for the translation assignments

Assignments 1 and 2

Aims of the tasks:

By the end of the class, students will have produced a natural-sounding English translation for a descriptive text presented to them in their native language. Students will also have practiced their English as they negotiate meaning to translate the text and work on activities associated with the translation task.

Objectives:

- In pairs, students practice their English and learn new vocabulary as they analyze a painting.
- In pairs, students practice their English and use some learned vocabulary and English structures as they negotiate meaning to produce an English translation of a descriptive text presented to them in their native language.
- In pairs, students practice their English and become aware of some problematic structures and word usage in their translations as they discuss their translations with the instructors.
- As a whole class, students use the learned vocabulary and structures as they offer possible ways to translate the text.
- Individually, students practice reading as they analyze a native speaker's description of the painting.
- As a whole class, students practice their oral skills and become aware of lexical, cultural, and structural differences and/or similarities between the two

languages as they compare their English translation with the text produc ed by a native speaker.

Procedure:

- Give students the instructions below and allow them some time to analyze and discuss the painting. Help them with vocabulary to describe the painting.

Instructions:

Look at the painting and describe it as best as you can . Which item most calls your attention? Describe all of the other items in relation to this main one. Talk about location (make sure you use some prepositions of place), relationship, use of colors and make some interpretations about the picture. Also, what are some emotions/feelings that you experience when you look at this picture?

- Distribute the text in Chinese and have students translate the text in pairs. Walk around providing help as needed.
- Check the translation work with each pair of students. Point out what does not sound right or natural and have them offer other ways as to how to translate problematic parts.
- As a whole class, have students offer possible ways as to how to translate the text. Write this version on the board and call attention to an y problems or interesting structures.
- Distribute a description of the picture written by a native speaker. Have students read and analyze this text individually.

- Check comprehension of the English text and have students discuss ways in which the two texts (translation and the one produced by a native speaker) differ or are similar in terms of information selection and organization. Also, have them discuss how the perspective of the two writers is similar or different in terms of how they look at the painting.

Assessment:

- Students are assessed on their oral production as the instructors walk around the classroom monitoring students' performance and offering help as needed.
- Students are assessed as a whole class on their ability to negotiate and produce a final translation that is grammatically correct and natural -sounding.
- Students are assessed on their ability to reflect on the task and express their thoughts during the last part of the translation tasks, when the class compares the translation and the native speaker's description.

Assignment 3

Aims of the tasks:

By the end of the class, students will have produced a natural -sounding English translation for a descriptive text presented to them in their native language. Students will also have practiced their English as they negotiate meaning to translate the text and work on activities associated with the translation task.

Objectives:

- In pairs, students practice their English as they discuss possible ways to translate a descriptive text presented to them in their native language.

- In pairs, students practice their English and become aware of some problematic structures and word usage in their translations as they discuss their translations with the instructors.
- As a whole class, students use vocabulary and structures learned during the translation task as they offer possible ways to translate the description.
- In pairs, students practice their oral skills as they discuss the painting.
- Individually, students practice reading as they analyze a native speak er's description of the painting.
- As a whole class, students practice their oral skills and become aware of lexical, cultural, and structural differences and/or similarities between the two languages as they compare their English translation with the text produced by a native speaker.

Procedure:

- Distribute the text in Chinese and have students translate the text in pairs. Walk around providing help as needed.
- Check the translation work with each pair of students. Point out what does not sound right or natural and have them offer other ways as to how to translate problematic parts.
- As a whole class, have students offer possible ways as to how to translate the text. Write this version on the board and call attention to any problems or interesting structures.
- Show the painting to the students and have them discuss it in pairs. Ask the students to follow the instructions below:

Instructions:

Look at the painting and describe it as best as you can. Which item most calls your attention? Describe all of the other items in relation to this main one. Talk about location (make sure you use some prepositions of place), relationship, use of colors and make some interpretations about the picture. Also, what are some emotions/feelings that you experience when you look at this picture?

- Distribute a description of the picture written by a native speaker. Have students read and analyze this text individually.
- Check comprehension of the English text and have students discuss ways in which the two texts (translation and the one produced by a native speaker) differ or are similar in terms of information selection and organization. Also, have them discuss how the perspective of the two writers is similar or different in terms of how they look at the painting.

Assessment:

- Students are assessed on their oral production as the instructors walk around the classroom monitoring students' performance and offering help as needed.
- Students are assessed as a whole class on their ability to negotiate and produce a final translation that is grammatically correct and natural-sounding.
- Students are assessed on their ability to reflect on the task and express their thoughts during the last part of the translation tasks, when the class compares the translation and the native speaker's description.

Assignment 4

By the end of the class, students will have produced a natural -sounding English translation of a descriptive text presented to them in their native language. Students will also have practiced their English as they discuss their translation of the text and work on activities associated with the translation task.

Objectives:

- In pairs, students practice their English as they discuss possible ways to improve their translation of a Chinese descriptive text into English.
- In pairs, students practice their English and become aware of some problematic structures and word usage in their translations as they discuss their translations with the instructors.
- As a whole class, students use vocabulary and structures learned during the translation task as they offer possible ways to translate the description.
- In pairs, students practice their oral skills as they discuss the painting.
- Individually, students practice reading as they analyze a native speaker's description of the painting.
- As a whole class, students practice their oral skills and become aware of lexical, cultural, and structural differences and/or similarities between the two languages as they compare their English translation with the text produced by a native speaker.

Procedure:

- In pairs, have students discuss their translations of a Chinese descriptive text that was assigned as homework. Walk around providing help as needed.

- Check the translation work with each pair of students. Point out what does not sound right or natural and have them offer other ways as to how to translate problematic parts.
- As a whole class, have students offer possible ways as to how to translate the text. Write this version on the board and call attention to any problems or interesting structures.
- Show the painting to the students and have them discuss it in pairs. Ask the students to follow the instructions below:

Instructions:

Look at the painting and describe it as best as you can. Which item most calls your attention? Describe all of the other items in relation to this main one. Talk about location (make sure you use some prepositions of place), relationship, use of colors and make some interpretations about the picture. Also, what are some emotions/feelings that you experience when you look at this picture?

- Distribute a description of the picture written by a native speaker. Have students read and analyze this text individually.
- Check comprehension of the English text and have students discuss ways in which the two texts (translation and the one produced by a native speaker) differ or are similar in terms of information selection and organization. Also, have them discuss how the perspective of the two writers is similar or different in terms of how they look at the painting.

Assessment:

- Students are assessed on their oral production as the instructors walk around the classroom monitoring students' performance and offering help as needed.
- Students are assessed as a whole class on their ability to negotiate and produce a final translation that is grammatically correct and natural-sounding.
- Students are assessed on their ability to reflect on the task and express their thoughts during the last part of the translation tasks, when the class compares the translation and the native speaker's description.

Appendix E

NNS after-intervention sample writing – experimental group

Writing 7

Clause 1	When I (t1)	see the picture at the first sight (r1) mt s
Clause 2	the item that most calls my attention (t2)	is the beautiful sunset (r2) r s
Clause 3	Everything (t3)	seems to be in harmony with the sunset (r3) r s
Clause 4	The sea (t4)	looks pretty fantastic in the sunshine (r4) r s
Clause 5	From the background to the foreground (t5)	it seems (r5) r s
Clause 6	that some fishermen (t6)	are preparing to come back with their ships after fishing the whole day (r6) m ev
Clause 7	Along the seaside (t7)	many green trees and beautiful yellow flowers add to the energy and quiet atmosphere in the picture (r7) m ev
Clause 8	The farmer whose face turns orange in the sunshine (t8)	is addicted himself to farming (r8) r s
Clause 9	He (t8)	is operating a plough (r9) m ev
Clause 10	which (t9 = r9)	is pulled by a horse (r10) m ev
Clause 11	The colour of clothes that he wears (t10)	is the most outstanding color of this picture (r11) r s
Clause 12	I (t1)	like this picture (r12) mt s
Clause 13	because it (t11 = r12)	is not only colourful but also peaceful (r13) r s

Note: (t) = theme / (r) = rheme / m = material / mt = mental / r = relational / v = verbal / e = existential / s = state / ev = event.

Themes

	Topical themes	Unmarked	Marked
	Elliptical		
	Existential there		
	Simple NP	8	
	Complex NP	3	
	PP		2
	Adv P		
	Clause		
Multiple themes	3		

Rhemes

	State	Event
Material		4
Mental	2	
Relational	7	
Verbal		
Existential		

Appendix F

NNS after-intervention sample writing – control group

Writing 1

Clause 1	What first draw my attention to this painting (t1)	is the woman (r1) r s
Clause 2	who (t2 = r1)	wear a red shirt and a green dress (r2) r ev
Clause 3	Elliptical (t2)	use a cow to plough the bench *terrace* (r3) m ev
Clause 4	I (t3)	also see the sea and a big ship and some small islands in the sea (r4) mt s
Clause 5	Then I (t3)	think (r5) mt s
Clause 6	this (t4)	is a coastal city (r6) r s
Clause 7	When I (t3)	see the goatherd (r7) mt s
Clause 8	Elliptical (t5 = should refer to r7)	pastures sheep (r8) m ev
Clause 9	I (t3)	feel (r9) mt s
Clause 10	this (t6)	is a developed farming country (r10) r s
Clause 11	I (t3)	also think (r11) mt s
Clause 12	this (t4)	is a very harmonious city (r12) r s
Clause 13	And the citizens in this city (t7)	have a high level happiness (r13) r s
Clause 14	I (t3)	feel (r14) mt s
Clause 15	this city (t8)	is the best for people live (r15) r s
Clause 16	Everyone (t9)	has their own things to do (r16) r s
Clause 17	Nobody (t10)	does the bad things (r17) m ev
Clause 18	In this painting (t11)	has a lot of colors (r18) e s
Clause 19	but they (t12 = r18)	are not very *chao* (r19) r s
Clause 20	They (t12 = r18)	also let you feel comfortable (r20) r ev
Clause 21	The sun (t13)	rise in a moment (r21) m ev
Clause 22	the city (t8)	begin a new day (r22) m ev

Note: (t) = theme / (r) = rheme / m = material / mt = mental / r = relational / v = verbal / e = existential / s = state / ev = event.

Themes

	Topical themes	Unmarked	Marked
	Elliptical	2	
	Existential there		
	Simple NP	17	
	Complex NP	1	
	PP		1
	Adv P		
	Clause	1	
Multiple themes	4		

Appendix F

NNS after-intervention sample writing – control group (continued)

Rhemes

	State	Event
Material		5
Mental	6	
Relational	8	2
Verbal		
Existential	1	

Appendix G

Experimental-group survey

Survey

Express how you feel in relation to the statements below by using the following rating scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = no opinion, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree.

1. I enjoyed working on translation activities.

1 2 3 4 5

2. The translation activities motivated me to improve my English.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I would like to continue having translation activities in my Engli sh classes.

1 2 3 4 5

4. We spent too much time on the translation activities in the classroom.

1 2 3 4 5

5. The translation activities helped me improve my English in general.

1 2 3 4 5

6. The translation activities helped me build vocabulary.

1 2 3 4 5

7. The translation activities helped me improve the way I build my sentences in English.

1 2 3 4 5

8. The translation activities helped me become more aware of the similarities and differences between my native language and En glish.

1 2 3 4 5

Appendix H

Control-group survey

Survey

Express how you feel in relation to the statements below by using the following rating scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = no opinion, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree.

1. I enjoyed working on the activities used in this course.

1 2 3 4 5

2. The activities used in this course motivated me to improve my English.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I would like to continue having similar activit ies in my English courses.

1 2 3 4 5

4. The activities used in this course helped me improve my English in general.

1 2 3 4 5

5. The activities used in this course helped me build vocabulary.

1 2 3 4 5

6. The activities used in this course helped me improve the way I build my sentences in English.

1 2 3 4 5

7. The activities used in this course helped me become more aware of the similarities and differences between my native language and English.

1 2 3 4 5

8. I would like to work on some translation activities during class.

1 2 3 4 5