

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Motivation and Purpose

English is regarded as a foreign language in Taiwan. The tendency to encourage students to learn English as early as possible seems to pave a way for learning English as a second language. According to the Integrated Curriculum of Nine-Year Compulsory Education Guidelines by the Ministry of Education (1998), language education, including the education of native languages (e.g. Mandarin Chinese, Taiwanese, Halka, etc.), English and foreign languages primarily focus on the acquiring of the four skills, communicative competence, and understanding of cultures and customs. The educational policy shows that English courses will be included in the curriculum of primary schools starting 2001 and if the quantity and quality of faculty members suffice, the Ministry of Education won't exclude the possibility of moving elective English classes up to first or second grades (*The China Post*, 1998, July 8). Many universities have established the departments of applied linguistics or the graduate institutes of translation and oral interpretation. English newspapers or magazines, extending the edition of a bilingual text, are now popular with language learners. Many masterpieces of literature are published in the form of a bilingual text. More and more affairs related to translation happen in Taiwan and we have no choice

but to think in a bilingual way.

Philosophy of language teaching underlies the approach of teaching English. At present, language for communication is a generally recognized idea for applying communicative language teaching (CLT) in secondary schools in Taiwan. Communicative Approach seeks a good balance among the four language skills and communicative textbooks may emphasize listening and speaking more than a traditional textbook does (Grant, 1987). According to Junior High School Curriculum Standards announced in 1994, Standard English Textbooks for junior high schools are compiled and written from the perspective of the Communicative Approach. Textbooks are designed largely on the basis of communicative functions and topics, while the concept of grammar is secondary for introduction. In this sense, it does not neglect the importance of grammar instruction although CLT excludes the Grammar-Translation method traditionally used by teaching literature. In fact, Grammar-Translation Method may help students to understand the basic syntactic structures better, but some teachers are apt to apply it in a servile way rather than in a practical way. As a consequence, the students are fed with memorization of syntactic rules and do not know how to use them in real life situations. According to Junior High School English Curriculum Standards (Ministry of Education, 1994), grammar practice can be drilled by repetition, substitution, making sentences,

transformation and translation. Chinese-English translation also can serve as a writing activity. In CLT, “ translation may be used where students need or benefit from it” (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p.67). In order to incorporate Chinese-English translation into CLT, this study attempts to investigate translation as communicative skills in language teaching and to recommend using the contextualized activity to make Grammar-Translation method variable and virtual to life. In other words, by means of translation we can integrate mechanical, meaningful, and communicative drills to facilitate English learning in a holistic way.

1.2 Research Method and Limitation

This study adopts the method of literature review and content analysis to introduce the theory of translation and explore how to use it as a strategy to promote learning in the foreign language classroom. Basically, translation is a thinking process to translate the source language (SL) into the target language (TL). In the process, the deep structure is transformed into the surface structure through a componential analysis between L1 and L2. The inner speech is decoded into the outer speech through verbal thinking. Translation is now used as much to share knowledge and to bridge the gap between groups and nations, as to transmit culture. Through a review of literature about the concept of

translation, the study tries to construct a cognitive model and revive its importance in language teaching.

With the economic prosperity and the development of a global village, oral interpretation and translation acquire a greater importance in cultural intercourse. Practice of translation, in the form of writing, may extend from sentence level to discourse level. But the scope of this study is limited to the materials of Chinese-English translation. The examples are cited from *the China Post*. Besides, this study would analyze the content of the bilingual magazine called *Sinorama* (Kuang-hua magazine) to see Chinese writing and Chinese-English translation moving closer to writer-responsibility. *Sinorama*, a bilingual text with twenty-five-year history, making the transition from reader-responsible writing to the tendency of writer-responsible writing, reflects its striving for perfect translation in a way more communicative. This serves as a case study for us to trace an outline on Chinese-English translation. In fact, the Joint College Entrance Examination since 1980 has prescribed the questions of Chinese-English translation as test items, which occupy about 20 percent of the total scores. This study tries to offer a model of Chinese-English translation to avail English teachers of using translation as a bilingual, cognitive, or communicative approach to help students have a better command of English.