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APPLYING TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS
TO FACILITATE SELF-REGULATION OF TRAINEE
TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS

Abstract. This article rests on the assumption that self-regulation of trainee translators/interpreters can be significantly enhanced by moderating classroom communication practices. This concerns, in particular, the communication exchange relating to assessment. It is argued that assessment-related communication activates complex psychological mechanisms, which can either empower or disempower self-regulation. To illustrate such mechanisms, the author briefly discusses the theory of Transactional Analysis. It is a conceptual framework proposed originally by Eric Berne to explain the intricacies of how people communicate to attain their psychological goals. Berne's observations are adapted to the micro-cosmos of the translation/interpreting classroom in order to offer its participants tools of regulating their communicative interactions. The article ends with a handful of recommended activities intended to inspire the readers to research further and train the skills discussed in the article.

Key words: self-regulation; classroom assessment; interpersonal communication; Transactional Analysis; scripts.

INTRODUCTION

In her article, Moser-Mercer (2008) makes reference to a pivotal notion in performance psychology: self-regulation. As observed by Moser-Mercer (2008, 15), facing a learning task, a self-regulated learner is likely to act in the following stages:

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- a) task analysis
- b) setting task-specific goals, developing operational strategies and applying them
- c) monitoring the application of strategies
- d) taking any correction measures if recognized through monitoring

On the theoretical level, self-regulation corresponds closely to such educational and psychological concepts as learning autonomy (e.g. Grow 1991), self-directed learning (e.g. Knowles *et al.* [1973] 2005), heutagogy (e.g. Hase and Kenyon 2000 and 2007) or locus of control (Rotter 1966). One can also observe an obvious relationship obtaining between the four stages of self-regulated learning and Kolb's cycle of experiential learning (Kolb 1984). Self-regulation seems particularly of merit to those approaches to translator/interpreter education which rely on non-objectivist epistemology, e.g. variants of constructivism including anthropocentric epistemology, relational approach to education or emergent learning. The epistemologically opposite educational views that can generally be referred to as variants of instructionism (teaching-centred, method-centred, with models of idealized competences to be "transferred" to learners or "acquired" by them from experts) can hardly utilize the concept, as they are hardly interested in empowering learners with skills of self-regulation. Under instructionism, learners are by principle expected to be regulated by someone else: teachers, experts, "objective" evaluation grids etc. Self-regulation also implies that students relentlessly seek diverse ways of regulating their performance, while instructionism only rewards homogeneity of student behaviour—as predefined by the curriculum.¹

In this paper, I would like to develop two main arguments concerning self-regulation. Firstly, if self-regulation is acknowledged as desirable for translator/interpreter education, it needs to be supported by classroom assessment practices. In other words, classroom assessment is to facilitate self-diagnosis (task analysis or performance monitoring—as the main task for summative assessment), which then leads to self-regulated situational responses (choice of strategies or corrective measures—as the main task for formative assessment). Secondly, if classroom assessment is to facilitate self-regulation, it needs to improve the effectiveness of classroom communication practices. Facilitative assessment does not follow the pattern of the linear, predomi-

¹ All the educational conceptions and epistemological positions mentioned in this paragraph are subject to innumerable studies. For a short survey of these concepts, see e.g. Klimkowski (2015). Also see Kiraly (2015 and 2016) for a synthetic critical analysis of objectivist approaches to translator education and an outline of post-positivist views on translator education.

nantly mono-directional information flow, where an assessor sends assessment messages to the assessed, and the assessed receives them as ultimate judgments about his/her knowledge. Instead, it is proposed here to see assessment as part of the regular, reiterative classroom information exchange, as part of the experiential learning cycle postulated by Kolb (1984). Assessment as information exchange is also part of Kiraly's cyclical co-emergent learning. It can be defined as co-emergent, spiral negotiation of knowledge about a given performance detail, followed by efforts to determine what can be done next (e.g. how to solve a problem or inspire further learning).

In my view, as an educator and translator/interpreter, interpersonal communication skills influence the learning process to the greater extent than it is recognized by translation educators. On the one hand, communication *is* regarded as central to translation and interpreting—communicative acts *per se*. It is equally true that translator/interpreter training *does* concentrate immensely on the responsibility of the translator to facilitate communication. Yet, with the focus on communication in macroscale, the microscale communicative exchange needs more theoretical insight to enhance its classroom use.

With this latter idea in mind, we would like to have a look at one theory of interpersonal communication that can be of use to translation/interpreting teachers who wish to build a safe but demanding communication scaffolding for their classes. The theory we have in mind is Transactional Analysis, proposed by Eric Berne in the late 1950s, and developed further by a number of researchers in theoretical psychology, psychological therapy, education and organizational management studies. In what follows we present a brief outline of the main assumptions of Transactional Analysis. Then we discuss how these assumptions can be related to assessment and self-regulation in the translation/interpreting classroom. Finally, we provide a handful of activities suggested for use by the teachers and the students at an initial stage of training interpersonal skills.

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS: EGO STATES

Discussing Transactional Analysis in full detail lies far beyond the scope of this work.² Yet, we would like to present a summary of its underlying

² Apart from Berne's contributions discussed in the main text, other works in the field Transaction Analysis need at least a marginal mention here. They can be treated as the author's recommendation to the reader: Harris (1967), Rogol ([1979] 1989). A particularly insightful discussion

principles so as to prove that the theory can be helpful in facilitating self-regulation of trainee translators/interpreters. Transactional Analysis is a psychological theory and a therapeutic approach. As a theory, it aspires to describe and explain the intricacies of human relationships by investigating patterns of (verbal and non-verbal) interaction. Such interactional patterns can be broken down to interaction “units” called transactions. The latter involve language-based communication, but their teleology is extralinguistic. One of the founding principles of Berne’s Transactional Analysis is that there is an inseparable interconnection between the ways in which we communicate our functioning in life (setting and reaching goals, entering relations, satisfying needs, coping or structuring time). The way in which we communicate is strictly dependent on the particular, discreet states of our *ego* (personality). These discreet states postulated by Berne (1961, 31) are: the Child, the Parent and the Adult.³ They correspond to the classical Freudian division of *id*, *ego* and *superego*, but in Berne’s model they are used to explain the interactional—transactional—aspect of human functioning, rather than being a mere tool of psychoanalytic introspection.

The Child represents those beliefs, styles of thinking and behaving that are relics of one’s childhood activated at later life stages—adolescence, early adulthood etc. The Child can manifest itself in a natural or an adapted variant. A natural Child is the state of ego which Berne (1964, 26) describes as “a spontaneous expression: rebellion or creativity, for example” and adds that (p. 27) “[i]n the Child reside intuition, creativity and spontaneous drive and enjoyment.” The adapted Child, on the other hand, is the one whose transactions are modified by adults like parents or teachers—yet, ultimately, in Berne’s terms, by one’s own Parental ego state:

He behaves as father (or mother) wanted him to behave: compliantly or precociously, for example. Or he adapts himself by withdrawing or whining. Thus the Parental influence is a cause, and the adapted Child an effect. (Berne 1964, 27)

The Parent can also manifest itself in two forms: direct and indirect. When the Parental influence is direct, the person reacts in a fashion that is almost an ideal repetition of his/her parents’ words or acts. In the indirect mode, the person responds to a transaction in a way he/she was expected to

on how Transactional Analysis can be used in educational context is available in Pankowska (2010) and numerous positions discussed therein.

³ As ego states, the Child, Parent and Adult are always capitalized.

by his/her parents. According to Berne (1964, 27) “[i]n the first case he becomes one of them; in the second, he adapts himself to their requirements.” Berne (1961, 76) also distinguishes between the nurturing Parental ego state (sympathetic, providing security, permission and understanding) and the criticising or prejudicial Parent (relying on criticism as a tool of evoking the Child’s adaptive behaviour).

Berne admits that the Adult is the ego state is the most difficult to grasp, understand and explain. He describes the Adult as the ego state that is (Berne 1961, 76) “characterized by an autonomous set of feelings, attitudes, and behaviour patterns which are adapted to the current reality,” also being a “self-programming probability computer designed to control effectors in dealing with the external environment.” Under the former description, the Adult is depicted as a rational, calculating and the integrative personality state. Under the latter, it is presented as the ego’s “survival kit”. In his other work, Berne describes the Adult in the following manner:

The Adult is necessary for survival. It processes data and computes the probabilities which are essential for dealing effectively with the outside world. It also experiences its own kinds of setbacks and gratifications. (Berne 1964, 27)

However, central to my interests in this article is Berne’s argument that, apart ensuring survival, the Adult’s main task is (Berne 1964, 27) “to regulate the activities of the Parent and the Child.” Thanks to this explanatory note we can understand that Berne’s Adult is not an instrument of containing, correcting or eliminating the activities of the Parent and/or the Child. Its role is to integrate them into a (conditional and temporal) personality equilibrium:

Thus all three aspects of the personality have a high survival and living value, and it is only when one or the other of them disturbs the healthy balance that analysis and reorganization are indicated. Otherwise each of them, Parent, Adult, and Child, is entitled to equal respect and has its legitimate place in a full and productive life. (Berne 1964, 28)

EGO STATES IN INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

When people interact, they can rely on (intentionally or not) a variety of strategies for addressing the respondent in order to achieve their goals. According to Berne (1964, 30), some transaction exchanges are *complemen-*

tary while others are *crossed*. A complementary transaction is the one in which a transaction stimulus produced by the sender ego state and the transaction response are parallel. For instance, the sender's Adult message is responded to from the respondent Adult state. This kind of complementary message exchange can be illustrated by the following example:

- Do you know how to operate the machine?
- Yes, there is a list of instructions here.

The example above is intended to illustrate the Adult-Adult complementary communicative transaction, where the sender's question (transactional stimulus) is answered from the Adult position of the respondent (transactional response), even though one can potentially trace some nurturing Parent qualities in the question as well. The next example shows what a crossed transaction could look like:

- Do you know how to operate the machine?
- You were expected to have read the instructions, weren't you?

The original question is asked from the Adult position,⁴ but it meets with a Parent-level response directed to the Child—a case of Adult-Adult/Parent-Child crossed transaction. Berne argues that complementary transactions facilitate communication, irrespective of which ego states are activated:

The first rule of communication is that communication will proceed smoothly as long as transactions are complementary; and its corollary is that as long as transactions are complementary, communication can, in principle, proceed indefinitely. These rules are independent of the nature and content of the transactions; they are based entirely on the direction of the vectors involved. As long as the transactions are complementary, it is irrelevant to the rule whether two people are engaging in critical gossip (Parent-Parent), solving a

⁴ Examples like the ones presented above must be approached with caution. It is obvious that the way the reader can re-construct such transactional interchanges in his/her own personal context(s) can lead to a variety of valid interpretations of what is going on between the speakers. Hence, we would like to encourage the reader to check if the examples provided allow them to read the propounded interaction between the ego states—irrespective of all other available interpretations of the interchange. It must also be kept in mind that the examples above cannot be read as representing a list of “correct” messages that support “good” communication, while any others that are not on the list should be avoided. The argument is that effective communication requires skills of analysing the ego states behind various messages which we send and receive. In our view, these analytical attempts can never be reduced to using a ready-for-use list of “approved” messages.

problem (Adult-Adult), or playing together (Child-Child or Parent-Child). (Berne 1964, 30)

On the other hand, crossed transactions lead to broken communication cycles and evoke negative social and psychological consequences. According to Berne (1964, 30–31), their occurrence calls for a therapeutic (or auto-therapeutic) action based on the psychological analysis of the particular transactions.

TRANSACTIONAL SCRIPTS

A question that seems irresistible in this context is how come that some people are likely to react to a transactional stimulus in a complementary manner, while others would tend towards a crossed response—even if the communicative environment be similar for both cases. One answer suggested by Berne is that such distinct responses are conditioned by the lifetime history of communicative interactions. Our personal interactions leave traces—transactional patterns like procedures or rituals:

Transactions usually proceed in series. The series are not random, but are programmed. Programming may come from one of the three sources: Parent, Adult or Child. [...] The simplest forms of social activity are procedures and rituals. Some of these are universal and some local, but all of them have to be learned. A procedure is a series of simple complementary Adult transactions directed toward the manipulation of reality. [...] [a] ritual is a stereotyped series of simple complementary transactions programed by external social forces. [...] The difference between them lies in the origin of the predetermination: procedures are programed by the Adult and rituals are Parentally patterned. [...] (Berne 1964, 35–40)

Although the list of transactional patterns is longer and contains more complex forms, the main point remains that the way we react in various social contexts is to a large degree programmed by our ego states. Berne refers to the most complex programmes of this type as scripts:

Scripts belong in the realm of transference phenomena, that is they are derivatives, or more precisely, adaptations, of infantile reactions and experiences. But a script does not deal with a mere transference reaction or a transference situation: it is an attempt to repeat in derivative form a whole transference drama, often split up into acts, exactly like the theatrical scripts which are intuitive

artistic derivatives of these primal dramas of childhood. Operationally, a script is a complex set of transactions, by nature recurrent, but not necessarily recurring, since a complete performance may require a whole lifetime. (Berne 1961, 116)

Scripts, as defined by Berne, are our own “programmes” which we use to define and explain to ourselves who we are (who we are allowed/expected to be; individual and social identity etc.) and what we want (what we are allowed/expected to crave; values, objectives, methods etc.). The influence of scripts on human life can be positive, as long as (Berne 1961, 116) “the others in the cast are well chosen and play their parts satisfactorily.” More often than not, scripts are a problem to human functioning, since they make us interpret a given life situation and act from the position of the Child or Parent, where employing the resources of the Adult would be psychologically more beneficial to us and others (e.g. being effective at solving problems without hurting others). Taking that into account, Berne (1961, 117) poses a fundamental objective that Transactional Analysis is to attain: to help people shift the control over their life decisions from the Child to the Adult.

To conclude the above—most rudimentary—presentation of selected assumptions of Berne’s Transactional Analysis, we would like to pinpoint that its underlying idea is that even though complex and heavily programmed, human transactional behaviour can be trained. In what follows, we seek how Transactional Analysis can help translation/interpreting students and teachers build their self-regulation.

HOW CAN TRANSLATIONAL ANALYSIS BENEFIT THE TRANSLATION/INTERPRETING CLASSROOM

Transactional Analysis can help translation/interpreting teachers and students in two main ways. Firstly, it can help provide and sustain a safe communication environment where asking questions, negotiating views or constructive criticism are not thwarted or punished (in a more or less overt way). Secondly, Transactional Analysis can help develop communication skills for diagnosing and solving learning problems, even if the communicated messages concern problematic issues that can evoke strong negative emotions.

The need for a safe communication environment in the translation/interpreting classroom seem unquestionable for any contemporary teacher. Yet, understanding the need and meeting it can be worlds apart. Teachers’ or

students' declarative knowledge is not enough. Since every classroom participant brings their life history to the classroom, they all need to train how to make the transactional exchange demanding and developmental (Adult-Adult) without threats, aggressiveness or passiveness. Transactional Analysis can be particularly helpful to teachers who intend to optimize the Adult-Adult classroom interactions against the Child-Parent or crossed transactions.

Taking into account Berne's vision of the Adult as an analytical decision-maker, one can conclude that maximizing the Adult-Adult transactional interchange is necessary for fostering the self-regulatory sequences of diagnosing a situation and taking measures to improve. Inspiring students and teachers to talk about their learning in the Adult-Adult manner can help reduce the risk of frustration (Child) as a reaction to failure. Unless guided towards the Adult-level reconceptualization of a crisis, the frustrated Child is likely to resign from seeking solutions. Stewart and Joines (1987, 22–24) observed that in such circumstances adults are likely to behave like adapted children—some of them react with passiveness, acceptance of criticism or self-punishment, while others with aggressiveness or resistance.

In other words, Transactional Analysis can help classroom participants learn to talk about their good or bad decisions in such a way that it empowers them to transform crisis into success. This perspective is of utmost importance to our vision of classroom assessment signalled above. If self-regulation is defined as a key learning resource in the translation/interpreting classroom, assessment practices must provide classroom participants with quality feedback to enable the growth of self-observation, self-monitoring and self-regulation (Moser-Mercer 2008). Seen from this perspective, assessment is predominantly a communicative practice within the co-emergent learning process (see e.g. Kiraly 2015), rather than a formal educational procedure used to measure learning outcomes. Assessment is part of each and every statement relating to diagnosing performance, answering questions or finding solutions. It does not *follow* learning: it is part of the communicative (transactional) exchange that build the learning process.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

For reasons presented above, interpersonal communication skills need constant training and upgrading. What follows is a handful of activities worth considering for classroom and individual use. The activities concern assessment-

related classroom communication, as discussed above. Yet, one can easily extrapolate their main idea to other spheres of classroom communication.

♦ AVOIDING SCRIPT-BASED THINKING IN ASSESSMENT-RELATED COMMUNICATION

This activity is to raise the readers' awareness of how scripts can influence what happens in the classroom. Its objective is to help classroom participants minimize script-based transactions and substitute them with Adult-Adult interactions as much as possible. The activity consists in answering the questions below. It is recommended that the reader starts with analysing his/her intrapersonal communication (what you say to yourself) before focusing on the interpersonal aspect (what you say to others).

- ♦ Do you recall situations in which you reacted in the way illustrated below. Consider the reaction to your own (intrapersonal) or someone else's (interpersonal) actions (this may also concern the way in which you—as a teacher—talked to your teacher-colleagues about a student):

(explaining the past with a script)

- I failed as I expected
- No surprise you/he failed.
- This always happens to me (because...)/Why does it always happen to me?
- What (on earth) can you expect of her?

(explaining the future with a script)

- You cannot be good at X, if you make this kind of mistake
- This will happen to you anytime you...
- I know it is difficult for you to do better than this...
- And what good can that bring if you do X?

- ♦ Can you recall your own version(s) of statements like these? They can be far more delicate and subtle, and you may feel that you said these things with good intentions in mind! The problem starts when what you say activates the programmed idea of inevitable failure, mistake or other cases of flawed performance—whether it concerns you or others.
- ♦ It can be a good idea to utter these expressions aloud to feel (= to play out the drama of) the programming.

- ◆ Think of how to reconstruct such messages to transform them into constructive assessment-related transactions—irrespective of how critical (rationally and emotionally) you are about your own or someone else’s performance.

- ◆ REDUCING NEGATIVE EMOTIONAL PRESSURE IN ASSESSMENT-RELATED COMMUNICATION

If assessment is to help learners build self-regulation, teachers and students need to develop skills of discussing the learning status quo in all its positive and negative aspects. They also need to develop skills of transforming this diagnostic knowledge into learning objectives and activities. One condition on effective skill formation is reducing emotional pressure related to diagnosing one’s performance; in particular in the case of discussing problems and failures. Adopting the Adult-Adult style of communication can help focus on problems without disempowering people. As observed by Fisher and Ury ([1981] 1991), effective negotiating requires that the negotiators separate the problems from the people. These authors call for an approach under which a problem is analysed with diligence and scrutiny, but without harm to those whom we find related to the problem. Try practicing the following communication strategies relating to assessment, problem diagnosis and planning further learning:

FOR TEACHERS:

- ◆ Pointing out performance problems, ask students to present their way of seeing the problems (what, why, in what conditions).
- ◆ Maximize the Adult-Adult transactions. Minimize the impact of script-based communication.
- ◆ Try to determine if the way you see a problem coincides/matches with the student’s view (negotiating meanings, finding shared understanding).
- ◆ Do not persuade students to accept your judgment. Explain your assessment, but leave the students’ the choice to accept or reject your point of view.
- ◆ Avoid stopping assessment-based communication at the diagnostic stage. Proceed to negotiating/planning learning actions.

FOR STUDENTS:

- ◆ Concentrate on solving performance problems, avoid wide generalizations in self-assessment.

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- ◆ Train to reject (=refuse to be an addressee of) assessment-related generalizations made by teachers, colleagues or other people. The fact that the sender has a particular intention behind his/her transaction does not automatically implies you have to accept it as is. You can choose to respond the way you like.
 - ◆ Ask for quality feedback—tactfully but relentlessly.
 - ◆ Negotiate your point of view with the aim to see a problem and solve it. Avoid negotiating for defence or cloaking your sense of guilt.

 - ◆ ALLOWING STUDENTS TO HAVE A DIFFERENT VIEW.
ALLOWING ONESELF TO BE MISTAKEN

This activity is dedicated first and foremost to teachers. However, it is relatively easy to think of how to implement it as part of the translation/interpreting classroom communication training. One of the consequences of maximizing the Adult-Adult transactions in assessment-related classroom communication is allowing class participants (students and teachers) to have disparate views of performance problems. This definitely requires training and adopting a conceptualization of the classroom in which the Adult (in the) teacher addresses the Adult (in the) students. Taking into account that university students are young adults, the teacher will have to train to accept the students' unwillingness to adopt the Adult-Adult style and their potential tendencies to withdraw to the Child-level messages. The main objective of this activity is to maximize the Adult-Adult transactions and help the students experience the benefits and costs of negotiating views and opinions.

- ◆ Do you feel discomfort when students say they disagree with your opinion or assessment? What do you do? Do you think that adopting the Adult-Adult narrative can be an effective way out? If/When so, what do you have to do to achieve that?
- ◆ Do you try your best to make the students accept your point of view? How do you communicate when doing this?
- ◆ Do you allow students to prove their disparate point/views concerning a translation/interpreting/project-related solution? Do you ask them what they plan to do next?
- ◆ Do you ask other students for opinion on their colleague's questions and doubts? How do you handle these opinions?

- ◆ Do you talk about your mistakes or failures in the classroom (e.g. translation/interpreting decisions you changed, assessments you are ready to modify in the light of new circumstances, opinions that evolved in your mind)? Do you see any sense in doing so? Is a teacher who admits failure a ‘bad’ teacher?
- ◆ When you decide to talk about your mistakes in-class, do you mention correction measures you applied? Do you ask students for potential solutions?

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This article was an attempt to argue that effective interpersonal communication is necessary for facilitating the emergence of self-regulation in trainee translators/interpreters and their teachers. The case of classroom assessment-related communication was used to show that these communication practices need training. Transactional Analysis is a theory of human communication and interaction that helps explain how psychological background can manifest itself through communicative interaction—in particular when diagnosing learner’s performance. In the author’s opinion, Transactional Analysis can be a valuable source of ideas and practices for students and teachers who wish to optimize their interpersonal communication to authentically facilitate learning. The significance of training of interpersonal skills reaches beyond their pedagogical application. These skills are strategic for the professional, personal and social functioning of the graduates and the teachers. A number of activities provided in the latter part of the article are intended to illustrate what this training can look like—at least at a very early stage.

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ZASTOSOWANIE ANALIZY TRANSAKCYJNEJ
CELEM UMOŻLIWIENIA SAMOREGULACJI
W PROCESIE KSZTAŁCENIA TŁUMACZY

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł opiera się na założeniu, że sprawności samoregulacyjne kształcących się tłumaczy pisemnych i ustnych można znacząco poprawić poprzez zarządzanie procesami komunikacji interpersonalnej w procesie edukacyjnym. W sposób szczególny dotyczy to komunikatów w funkcji oceny. Autor stawia tezę, że ten typ komunikacji wyzwala złożone mechanizmy psychologiczne (postawy i zachowania) jej uczestników, które mogą prowadzić do wzmocnienia lub osłabienia sprawności samoregulacyjnych. Aby przyjrzeć się tym mechanizmom, autor omawia skrótowo teorię Analizy Transakcyjnej. Jest to koncepcja autorstwa Erica Berne'a, za której pomocą wyjaśnia on złożoność procesów komunikacji jako niezbędnej do osiągnięcia przez ludzi

ich celów życiowych. Poczynione przez Berne'a obserwacje znajdują w artykule zastosowanie w mikroskali programu kształcenia tłumaczy. Ich celem jest wyposażenie uczestników procesu dydaktycznego w narzędzia sterowania interakcjami komunikacyjnymi. Na końcu artykułu autor zamieszcza kilka ćwiczeń, których celem jest zachęcenie czytelnika do podjęcia dalszych studiów i samokształcenia się w zakresie omawianej tematyki.

Streścił Konrad Klimkowski

Słowa kluczowe: samoregulacja; ocena i ocenianie; komunikacja interpersonalna; analiza transakcyjna; skrypty.

