

Week 1 Assignment - Translation Paragraph

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UCLA Extension: EDUC 425.04

10/11/2020

Here's the paragraph to be translated:

In this class, I expect to learn about new technologies that would help me teach English to future students. I suspect that I would learn about traditional hardware such as computers, tablets, and phones. As for software, I imagine I would get to play with new apps, interact with various websites, and watch instructional videos. Emerging tech like virtual reality would be something to look forward to. Finally, I think this would all come together when we learn how to apply teaching methods using technology that is old, new, and yet to be built.

Here's the paragraph translated from English to Chinese:

在這堂課上，我希望學習新技術，這些技術將幫助我向未來的學生教授英語。我懷疑我會了解傳統硬件，例如計算機，平板電腦和電話。至於軟件，我想我將可以使用新的應用程序，與各種網站進行交互並觀看教學視頻。像虛擬現實這樣的新興技術將值得期待。最後，我認為當我們學習如何使用舊的，新的和尚未建立的技術來應用教學方法時，所有這些都將融合在一起。

Zài zhè táng kè shàng, wǒ xīwàng xuéxí xīn jìshù, zhèxiē jìshù jiāng bāngzhù wǒ xiàng wèilái de xuéshēng jiàoshòu yīngyǔ. Wǒ huáiyí wǒ huì liǎojiě chuántǒng yìngjiàn, lìrú jìsuànjī, píngbǎn diànnǎo hé diànhuà. Zhìyú ruǎnjiàn, wǒ xiǎng wǒ jiāng kěyǐ shǐyòng xīn de yìngyòng chéngxù, yǔ gèzhǒng wǎngzhàn jìnxíng jiāohù bìng guānkàn jiàoxué shìpín. Xiàng xūnǐ xiànsí zhèyàng de xīnxīng jìshù jiāng zhíde qídài. Zuìhòu, wǒ rènwéi dāng wǒmen xuéxí rúhé shǐyòng jiù de, xīn de hé shàngwèi jiànli de jìshù lái yìngyòng jiàoxué fāngfǎ shí, suǒyǒu zhèxiē dōu jiāng rónghé zài yīqǐ.

THE RESULTS

I used Google Translate to convert the English paragraph to traditional Chinese. The results looked wildly intimidating to look at. The Chinese characters appear first, and then the Pinyin, which helps with pronouncing the characters phonetically. I gave the results to a native Mandarin speaker, and she felt frustrated at first. Slowly, but surely, my personal human translator read word by word, sentence by sentence. Along the way, she grumbled at how difficult it was for her to grasp certain Chinese words she had never heard of. “I don’t know how to say ‘apps’ in Chinese, so I cannot tell you if the translation is right or wrong,” she exclaimed. “I honestly don’t know the term for ‘virtual reality.’”

Structure of the language does remain the same, but this becomes problematic when written formally versus casually. The native speaker noted, “When they translate, they don’t change the sentence structure. I would never say it like that.” How I wrote the paragraph was already problematic. I used a passive voice instead of an active voice. My human translator said I needed to fix my English. Whether it’s English or Chinese, I shouldn’t use passive voice. “Overall they did a good job. It’s very formal. There’s a formal way to say things and there’s a casual way to say things,” she remarked. Some words are mis-translated. There’s not really a way to translate some of my colloquialisms. An example is the English phrase, “I think this would all come together,” translated to this Chinese sentence, “I think when we learn how to use opposites.” That doesn’t translate well. There are two sentences that don’t make sense.

CONCLUSION

Would online translations be a useful tool? It’s better than nothing. I would be mindful to write things more directly and simply, not in a roundabout way so that the machine knows to

translate correctly. It would cause confusion with students if I wrote too casually, only for the machine to translate something that doesn't really exist in another language. Another thing to keep in mind is my own imperfect English. If I were to type a grammatically incorrect phrase into Google Translate's box, it wouldn't correct when it translates. I can use translation apps in the classroom sparingly or for very simple sentences. I can also use it to get a sense of the overall meaning of a phrase. The app wouldn't decipher the meaning precisely, but that's what makes learning worthwhile. As a teacher, I would learn how to discern what is correct and use that as a teachable moment.