

TRANSLATION AND THE ESP CLASSROOM

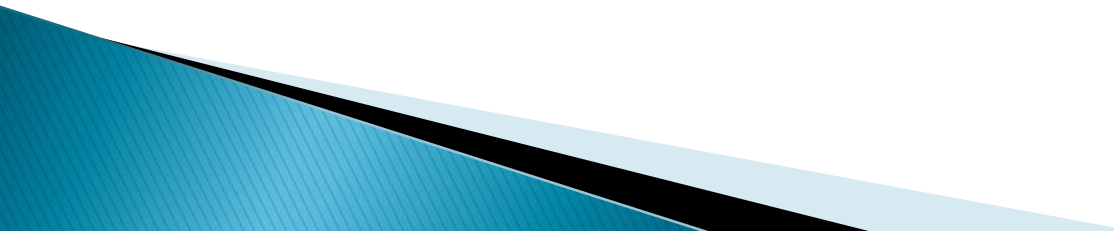
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**Future of English Language
Teaching Conference** **ONLINE**



SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

- ▶ Similarities and differences between the language teacher and the translator.
 - ▶ Arguments in favour and against the use of translation in the language classroom.
 - ▶ Using translation in the ESP language classroom.
 - Conditions
 - Suggested activities
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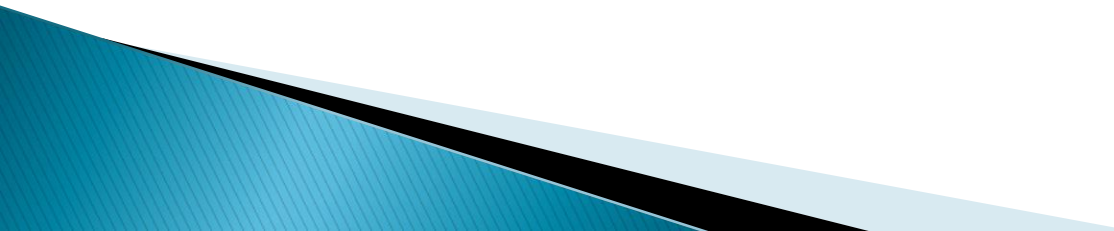
Translator: the human right to communicate



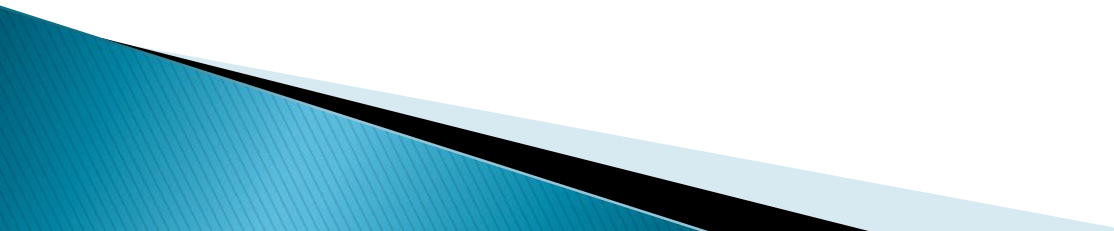
Teacher: the human right to learn



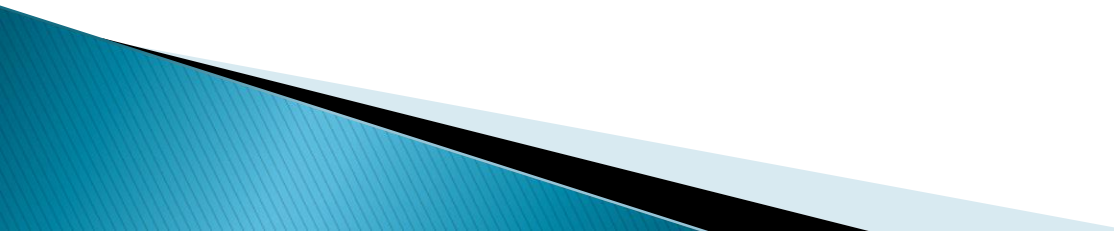
Translators and teachers should have:

- ▶ knowledge about the target and the source languages in terms of their linguistic organisation.
 - ▶ knowledge about the subject area (real world knowledge)
 - ▶ knowledge about the ways the source and target cultures function.
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In other words

- ▶ Grammatical competence
 - ▶ Sociolinguistic competence
 - ▶ Discourse competence
 - ▶ Strategic competence
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However, a teacher should also
have

- ▶ Strong interpersonal skills
 - ▶ Ability to transmit knowledge
 - ▶ Ability to motivate and engage learners
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The bottom line



Some skills in
common

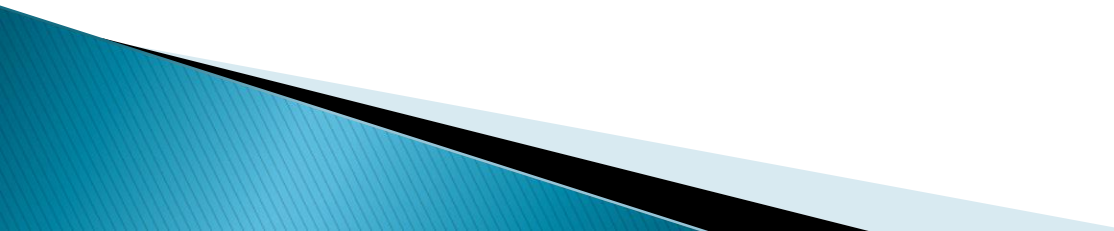
Different
approaches and
techniques

The polemical role of translation in language teaching

- Translation has been excluded from the language classroom, particularly after the arrival of communicative methods in the 1970s.



Arguments against
translation in the
language classroom

- ▶ Being independent of the four skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing);
 - ▶ Being radically different from the four skills;
 - ▶ Taking up valuable time which could be used to teach the four skills;
 - ▶ Being unnatural;
 - ▶ Misleading students into thinking that expressions in two languages correspond one-to-one;
 - ▶ Preventing students from thinking in the foreign language;
 - ▶ Producing interference;
 - ▶ Being a bad test of language skills;
 - ▶ Being only appropriate for training translators.
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However,

These arguments are based on:

Very limited and negative view of translation

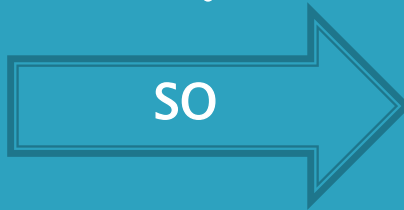


Associated with Grammar translation method

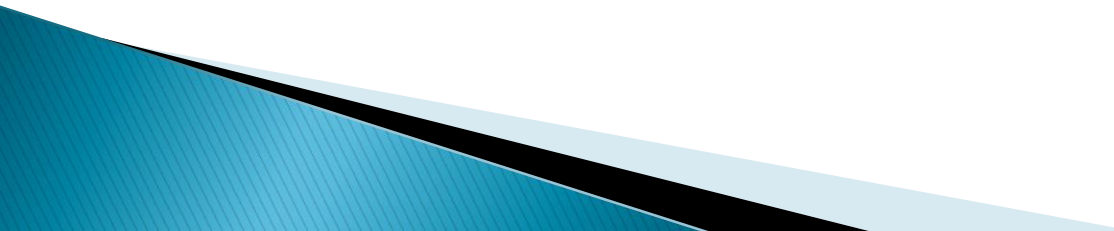
Students asked to 'translate' (i.e. word-by-word) decontextualized, isolated sentences or randomly selected portions of text



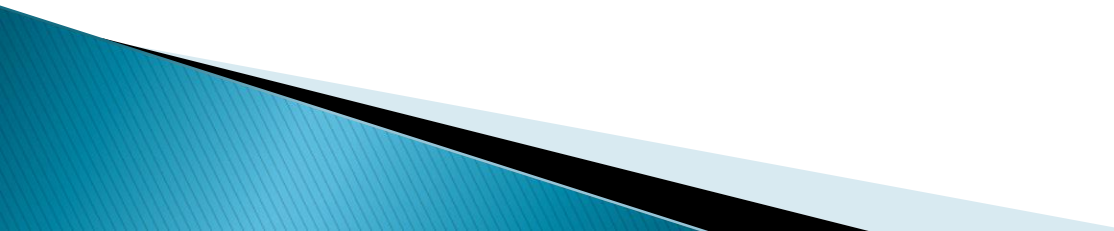
SO



Re-defining translation: Addressing the criticisms

- The communicative value of translation: crucial element at the heart of translation activities.
 - Competence in at least the mother tongue and one foreign language.
 - Ability to relate the two systems to one another appropriately
 - ‘Intralingual translation’ or ‘rewording’
 - Mediation
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Using translation effectively in the language classroom involves:

- A view of translation as a communicative activity and in context.
 - A careful examination of its role within a particular classroom, syllabus or programme.
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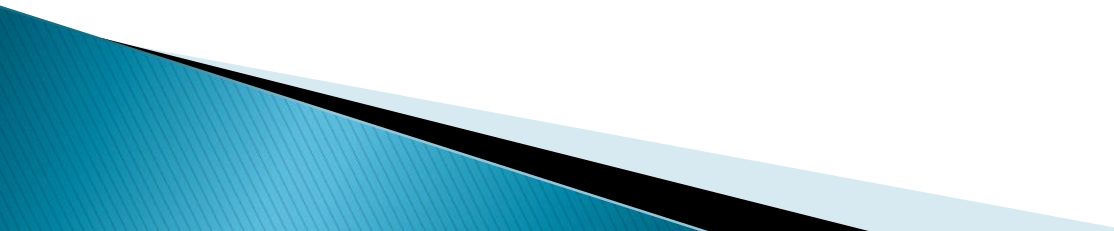
Using translation in the ESP classroom

The conditions

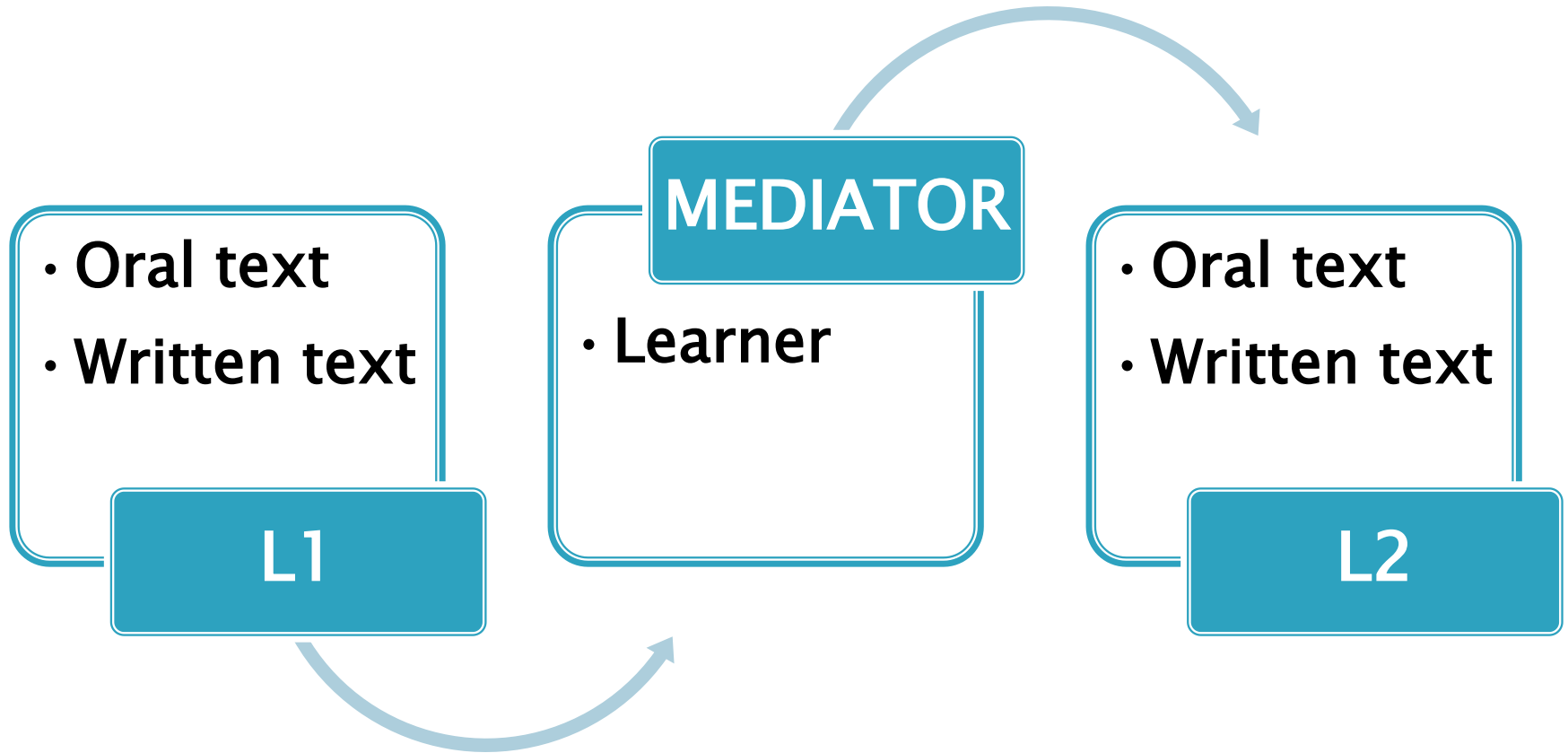
'A language class entails interaction about language and interaction through languages in continual juxtaposition.' (Breen, 2000)

- ▶ Take advantage of the similarities between L1 and L2.
- ▶ Raise awareness of differences between L1 and L2.
- ▶ Translation can be used for sentences or even whole texts so as to make learners aware of transfer errors.



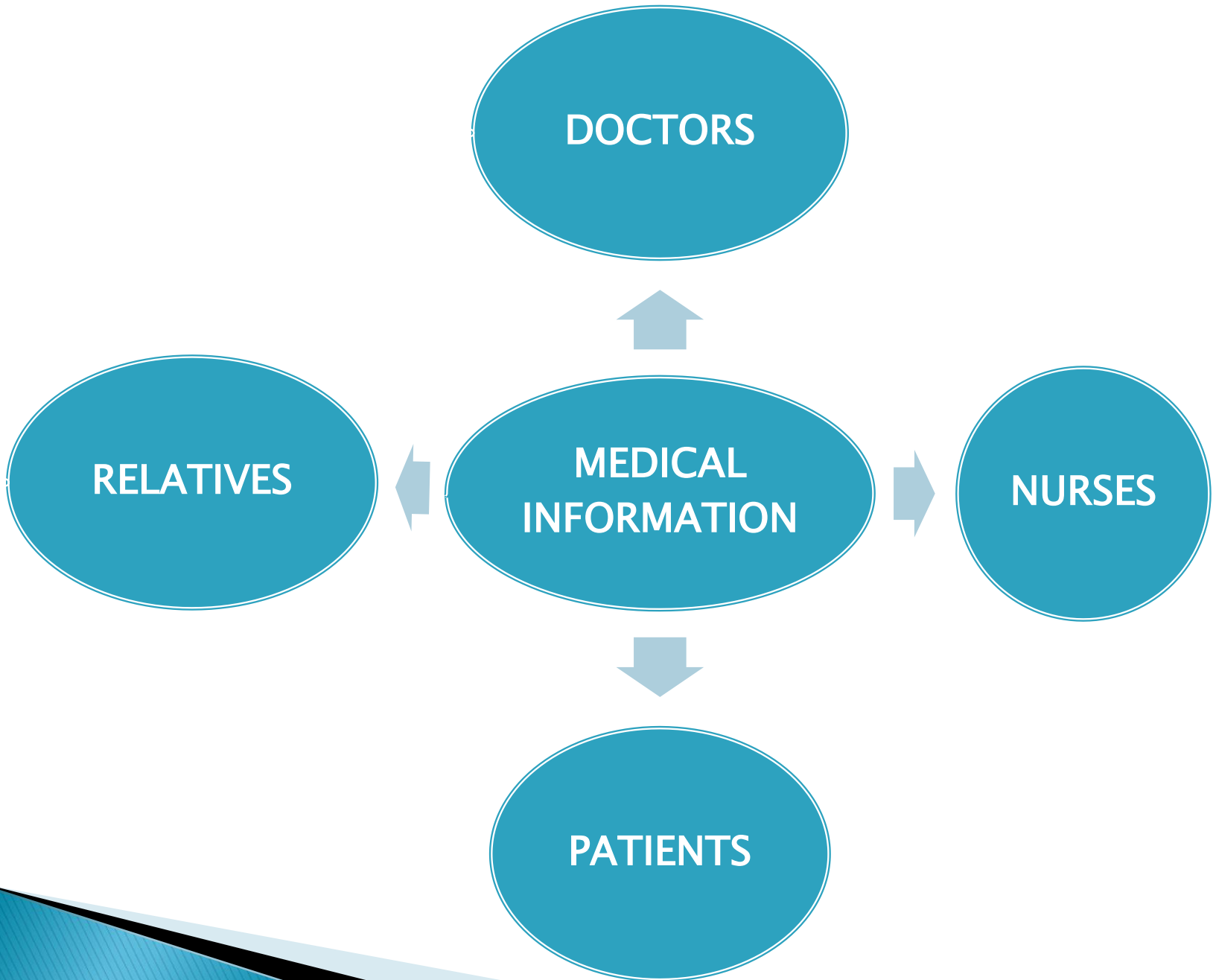
- ▶ Help students stay focused on the task at hand.
 - ▶ Negotiation purposes.
 - ▶ Help students voice inner thoughts on a more challenging cognitive level so as to organize their work.
 - ▶ Boost students' self-confidence.
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MEDIATION



MEDIATION IN THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD

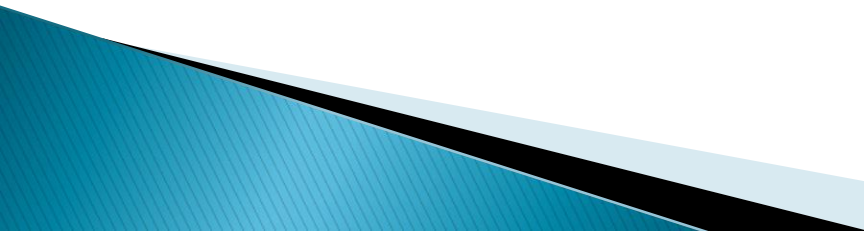






Using translation/mediation in the ESP classroom

Suggested activities

- ❖ **Gist translation**
 - ❖ **Grammar? Yes, but...**
 - ❖ **Comparison of original and translation**
 - ❖ **Comparing various translations of the same ST**
 - ❖ **Activities for group work:**
 - analyse L1 and L2 texts
 - identify and discuss the main linguistic and cultural differences/difficulties
 - focus on particular problem areas
 - produce a draft of the L1 text (mediation)
 - ❑ Comparison → discussions about cultural aspects, or at an advanced level, to questions related to the textual qualities of both texts, type of register, etc.
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Examples of activities

- ▶ For beginners:
 - ✓ *You work for a travel agency and a customer who is travelling to the UK wants to book a hotel but needs more information about it. All the information on the hotel's website is in English and your customer cannot understand it. Read the information and tell your customer about the facilities that this hotel offers.*
- ▶ For intermediate/advanced levels:
 - ✓ *A Greek chain of hotels wants to advertise abroad. You work for the advertising agency and your supervisor has put you in charge of this client's account. Write an ad for the hotel to appear in a tourist brochure in the UK.*
- ▶ For advanced levels:
 - ✓ *You are a reporter for a local paper. You have seen this interesting/polemical article in a Greek newspaper. Produce an English version of the article to appear in your paper.*



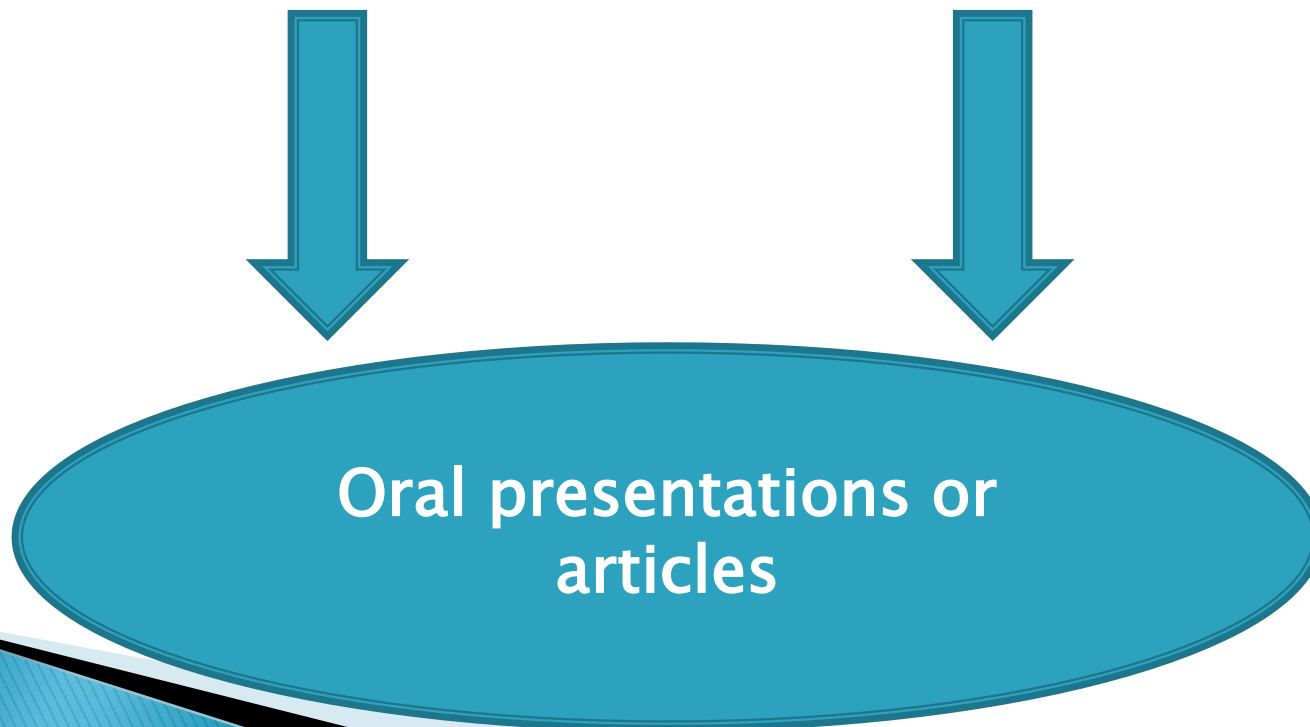
Research the formulation of marketing strategies by some competitive companies

Research the laws applying to illegal immigration

Compare the architectural styles of Greek islands with those of mainland Greece

INTERVIEWS WITH PROFESSIONALS

- ▶ Personal histories of successful professionals.
- ▶ Rewards and challenges of a profession.



TRANSLATION/MEDIATION ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE TESTING

SOME SUGGESTIONS

ASSESSING WRITING THROUGH L1 READING

You work in the Marketing Department of the Greek subsidiary of a multinational company. You have received the following series of 5 e-mails in Greek with the sales representatives' views on the factors that shaped sales last year.

1. Write an e-mail to the company's headquarters in the UK briefly summarizing these views in English.
2. Write a report for the British Marketing Director including the sales representatives' views as well as your own view on which factors were the most important and how you think they will affect next year's sales.

ASSESSING SPEAKING THROUGH L1 READING

You are an engineer at a British consulting firm. The organization has been set up to advise governments around the world on alternative solutions for transporting freight and people. You have recently received some information on an innovative type of freight transportation from a Greek manufacturer. You have been asked to brief the company's senior managers on it. Read the information which is in Greek and then prepare a short presentation of it in English.

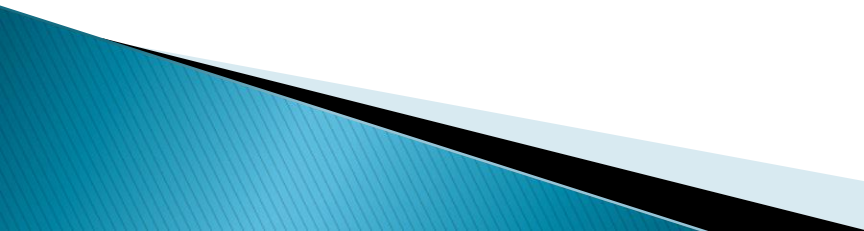
ASSESSING WRITING THROUGH L1 LISTENING

You work for an English newspaper published in Greece. Listen to 3 reports on the latest general strike from a Greek radio station and write an article about it for your newspaper.

ASSESSING SPEAKING THROUGH L1 LISTENING

Your Greek-speaking boss sent you a voice mail with instructions about cutting down on office expenses. Listen to it and then convey these instructions to the English-speaking office personnel.

Conclusion

- ▶ We have considered translation as a communicative activity and as a means to enhance language learning.
 - ▶ Therefore the activity of translating should happen after the presentation of language material, once students are familiar with the vocabulary and the structures.
 - ▶ The activity of translation will add variety in the process of consolidating those structures, as well as adding other skills.
 - ▶ HOWEVER,...PROCEED WITH CAUTION!
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