

Guy Cook

Biodata

Guy Cook is Professor of Language in Education at King's College, London. He was formerly head of TESOL at the London University Institute of Education (1991-1998), and Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Reading (1998-2004), and Professor of English Language at the Open University (2004-2012). He has published extensively on applied linguistics, English-language teaching, and discourse analysis. He was co-editor of the journal *Applied Linguistics* from 2004-2009, and Chair of the British Association for Applied Linguistics (2009-2012). His books include *Translation in Language Teaching* (2010) (Winner of the International House Ben Warren Prize), *Genetically Modified Language* (2004), *Applied Linguistics* (2003), *The Discourse of Advertising* (2001), and *Language Play, Language Learning* (2000) (Winner of the MLA Kenneth Mildenberger Prize).



Abstract

Coming back in from the cold: reassessing translation and first language use in language teaching and learning.

Translation and other uses of students' own languages come "naturally" as a resource for those who are able to use them in language teaching and learning. Translation is a useful skill in itself: personally, socially, and professionally. It provides insights into the nature of language and culture. It respects students' first-language identities, allowing them to build on existing knowledge, and relate a language they know to the one they are learning. It is intellectually stimulating and aesthetically pleasing. It is also a good way of assessing proficiency. Yet strangely translation has become a pedagogic outlaw, ignored or derided by almost every major language teaching theory of the last hundred years.

This talk considers the reasons for this marginalisation, and why there is still little serious consideration of translation or appeal to students' own languages as a means or end of language learning. It illustrates how the dismissal of translation has been largely based on ridicule and partial observations, and argues for a more rational and evidence-based reassessment.