

## ***Case Study 7***

### **Using a translation website to support a Maltese Year 11 pupil.**

Pupil R arrived in the UK in the Autumn term of year 11. He has some experience of English although of course he had no experience of the text that the pupils had been reading for their GCSE course work. The school that R attends has very little experience of supporting newly arrived pupils and I have been working there in an advisory capacity to help them to set up systems to support the large numbers of newly arrived children, in particular Polish speaking children.

I used the website <http://www.survol.com/hierflier/e2mdemo/> which translates from English to Maltese at word level only and is not strictly speaking a searchable translator. I could not find any other searchable translators for Maltese. However Survol uses interesting technology which is motivational in itself. The user has to 'navigate' the dictionary using a 'joystick'.

I used the translation website during 1:1 withdrawal session in the school library. Access to computers, particularly during lessons is problematic at the school and has proved to be one of the main barriers to the use of web-based translation software in the classroom. R was working on poems from the AQA Anthology 'Different Cultures'. I prepared pictorial support for the poems and used the translator for specific vocabulary which was often very challenging for an EAL learner

Seeding grasses thrust  
Bearded seeds  
Into trouser cuffs

Nothing's changed, Tatamkhula Afrika

R found the translator easy to use. We were able to find most words although it was hard at times for me to be sure that we had found the right meaning for the context. For example the word offered by the dictionary in translation of the word 'weed' was 'haxixa hazina' pronounced hashi'sha hazina...

We went through the poems over several sessions, translating the words R was unsure of. Where we could not find a translation for a word we used Google image search to find a picture that would help to clarify the meaning, as we had no other dictionary to refer to. After we had finished each poem R reread it aloud and I questioned him about various aspects of the poem.

There is no doubt that the sessions were beneficial to R and it is reported by his teacher that he tackled his coursework with increased confidence. The use of the internet possibly only served to speed up the process of locating words, as compared to using a paper based dictionary. However the internet did provide instant access to media resources such as photographs and video. We even found a short video clip of limbo dancing from a video search on 'Yahoo' <http://uk.search.yahoo.com/video> that greatly added to R's understanding of the poem 'Limbo' by Edward Kamau Brathwaite.

R does not have access to the internet at home so he can't use it for homework. However there is a printable version of the dictionary which I printed out and gave to him. Unfortunately it is a rather weighty tome and not terribly cool for a sixteen year old to be carting around.

It has proved to be very difficult to organise for R to have access to the internet during lesson times. Not all classrooms have computers and even where they are in the classroom they are often tucked into a corner where the pupil would not be able to see the teacher/board and use the computer at the same time.