



Allameh Tabataba'i University

Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages

Department of English Translation Studies

**The Effect of Consciousness Raising (C-R) on the
Reduction of Translational Errors:**

A Case Study

A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in
English Translation Studies

Advisor: Dr. Gholamreza Tajvidi

Reader: Dr. Farzaneh Farahzad

By: Azadeh Sadat Makkinejad

Tehran, Iran

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Examiner: Dr. Kambiz Mahmoodzadeh

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In the name of the Almighty

I would like to dedicate this thesis to

my mother

because of all her sacrifices throughout my life and
education.

فرم گردآوری اطلاعات پایان نامه ها
کتابخانه ی مرکزی دانشگاه علامه طباطبائی

عنوان: تاثیر افزایش آگاهی بر کاهش خطاهای ترجمانی	
نویسنده/محقق: آزاده سادات مکی نژاد	
مترجم: -	
استاد راهنما: دکتر تجویدی	استاد مشاور/استاد داور: دکتر فرحزاد/دکتر محمودزاده
کتابنامه: دارد	واژه نامه: ندارد
نوع پایان نامه: <input type="checkbox"/> بنیادی <input type="checkbox"/> توسعه ای <input type="checkbox"/> کاربردی	
مقطع تحصیلی: کارشناسی ارشد	سال تحصیلی: ۸۹ - ۸۸
محل تحصیل: تهران	نام دانشگاه: علامه طباطبائی
تعداد صفحات: 70	گروه آموزشی: مترجمی زبان انگلیسی
کلیدواژه ها به زبان فارسی: خطا/لغزش، تحلیل خطا، داده، افزایش آگاهی، خطاهای ترجمانی، زبان اول و دوم	
کلیدواژه ها به زبان انگلیسی:	
Input, Error Analysis, Error vs. Mistake, C-R= Consciousness Raising, Translational Errors, L2, L1	

چکیده

الف: موضوع و طرح مسئله (اهمیت موضوع و هدف):

عموماً در دوره های آموزش ترجمه استادان بیشتر سعی دارند دانشجویان را با انواع متون آشنا سازند، درحالی که کمتر به خطاهای مکرر آنان در متن ترجمه شده می پردازند. اهمیت تحقیق حاضر مبنی بر ارتکاب مکرر خطاهای ترجمانی حتی بعد از گذراندن دوره های تخصصی ترجمه از سوی دانشجویان است. هدف از آن تاکید بر خطاهای رایج میان دانشجویان مترجمی و کاهش این خطاها با افزایش آگاهی و هوشیاری دانشجویان از بروز آنها است.

ب: مبانی نظری شامل مرور مختصری از منابع، چارچوب نظری و پرسش ها و فرضیه ها:

در این تحقیق، تلاش شده است که تا حد ممکن از مدل های موجود استفاده شود. از آنجا که حوزه ی این تحقیق، بین رشته ای است، از مدل تحلیل خطاها در بررسی انواع خطاها و از مدل افزایش آگاهی برای بررسی تاثیر آن بر کاهش خطاها استفاده شده است. تقسیم بندی خطاهایی که مورد بررسی قرار گرفته اند بوسیله ی نظر خود محقق مبنی بر فهرست خطاهای ترجمانی ارائه شده از سوی انجمن مترجمان آمریکا و مشاوره با اساتید باسابقه رشته مترجمی انجام شده است. بر این اساس، این مطالعه در پی یافتن پاسخ سوالات زیر است: ۱. چه خطاهایی در میان دانشجویان مترجمی زمانی که از فارسی به انگلیسی ترجمه می کنند رایج است؟ ۲. آیا فرایند افزایش آگاهی و ارائه داده ها بر کاهش خطاهای ترجمانی موثر است؟

پ: روش تحقیق شامل تعریف مفاهیم، روش تحقیق، جامعه ی مورد تحقیق، نمونه گیری و روش های نمونه گیری، ابزار اندازه گیری، نحوه ی اجرای آن، شیوه ی گردآوری و تجزیه و تحلیل داده ها:

این مطالعه با رویکردی عملی تحلیلی و توصیفی، خطاهای ترجمانی را در ترجمه های جامعه ی نمونه بررسی می کند. در این تحقیق، پربسامدترین خطاهای ترجمانی به صورت قراردادی انتخاب شده و بر اساس آنها، نتایج عملکرد شرکت کنندگان مورد مطالعه قرار گرفته اند. جامعه ی مورد تحقیق ۱۸ نفر از دانشجویان ترم پنجم که واحد "ترجمه ی متون ساده" را می گذراندن انتخاب شدند. ابتدا پیش آزمون برگزار شد و طی شش جلسه ی متوالی آموزش و آگاهی لازم به آنها ارائه شد. در پایان ترم پس آزمون به عنوان بخشی از امتحان پایان ترم برگزار شد.

ت: یافته های تحقیق:

یافته های تحقیق در سه بخش خلاصه می شود که عبارتند از:

۱. نمرات پیش آزمون نمونه ها
۲. نمرات پس آزمون نمونه ها
۳. پربسامدترین خطاهای ترجمانی از فهرست خطاهای منتخب

ث: نتیجه گیری و پیشنهادات:

نتایج این تحقیق نشان می دهد که می توان روش افزایش آگاهی را به عنوان روشی موثر در هوشیارکردن دانشجویان و در نتیجه کاهش خطاهای ترجمانی آنها قلمداد کرد.

پیشنهاد می شود این تحقیق در مورد خطاهای دیگر که با معیاری غیر از فهرست منتخب انتخاب شده باشند تکرار شود. جامعه ی نمونه در این تحقیق صرفاً تعداد محدودی از دانشجویان تازه کار ترجمه بودند و می توان جامعه ی آماری متفاوتی را انتخاب کرد و نتیجه را در مورد آنها بررسی کرد.

صحت اطلاعات مندرج در این فرم بر اساس محتوای پایان نامه و ضوابط مندرج در فرم را گواهی می نمایم.

نام استاد راهنما: غلامرضا تجویدی

رئیس کتابخانه

سمت علمی:

نام دانشکده: ادبیات و زبان های خارجی

Acknowledgement

The following Thesis took almost a year from conception to completion and it would never have been accomplished without the precious support and encouragement of my professors and my caring family.

Words can not express my gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Tajvidi for all his insightful comments, countless hints, generous guidance and unfailing patience all through my work. Without his eagle-eyes, many slips might have gone unnoticed.

I also owe my reader, Dr. Farahzad a debt of gratitude for her invaluable help and advice from the very early steps of my work. I'm deeply grateful to her, since she sincerely provided me with the opportunity to perform this experiment by dedicating the precious time of her class, without which I could never test my hypothesis.

My special appreciation goes to Dr. Mahmoodzadeh, whose selfless contributions to my research were a decisive factor to gain practicality in the pedagogical and academic atmosphere of a university course.

I would also like to acknowledge the very considerable assistance of Dr. Mollanazar, the Chair of English Translation Studies Department of Allameh Tabataba'i University who paved the way for me to perform this research at the university.

My greatest debt is to my family; my beloved parents who have always encouraged me in my studies specially my mother without whose sacrifices I would not have achieved what I have now, also my dear husband for his wholehearted support, unfathomable love and passionate devotions in every step of this work and our life.

I am also grateful to the enthusiasm and collaboration of the participants.

Abstract

The present study was an attempt to investigate the effect of Consciousness -Raising (C-R) on the frequency of translational errors committed by translation students in translated texts from Persian into English. The sample population of this study was chosen from among junior students, attending "Translation of Simple Texts" Course at Allameh Tabataba'i University. A list of common potential errors was prepared based on the ATA's catalogue of errors and the consultation of translation professors. A pretest was administered to measure the participants' level of translational competence before the treatment. Then a 6-session class instructions were conducted for the subjects to make them conscious of the potential translational errors. After the treatment, a post-test was administered to check whether the subjects had made any improvements in their competence.

Each test was analyzed in terms of the seriousness , gravity and type of error. In the overall data analysis, the Mean and Standard Deviation of the pretest and post-test were calculated. Also the frequency of each error was counted to find out the most and the least frequent errors among the subjects in pretest and post-test.

The results of the overall analysis demonstrated that the participants had outperformed in the post-test based on the Mean and Standard Deviation. Also, the significance of the two tests measured zero indicating that there was a meaningful difference between pretest and post-test scores. This may substantiate that Consciousness-Raising Method is effective in reducing the translational errors of the translation students. Furthermore, the analysis of frequency of errors revealed that the most frequent error among translation students was Grammatical Mistakes.

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List of Abbreviations

ATA: American Translators association

C-R: Consciousness Raising

EA: Error Analysis

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

TQA: Translation Quality Assessment

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Overview and Background of the Problem

Translator training was not of great importance formerly; however, due to the ever increasing role of the translators at the dawn of a new era in communication and transfer of information, translator training has drawn greater attraction during the few past decades. Training professional translators have become highlighted in Translation Studies; therefore, attempts have been made to exploit the most efficient ways to train translation trainees. Yet, there are many deficiencies and shortcomings as a result of the sophisticated nature of translation and its inherent subjectiveness. Amongst the various issues in translator training, less has been done in the field of translational errors made by undergraduate trainees which is a considerable drawback in translation training.

The feasibility of teaching translation has always been frowned upon within Translation Studies. As the old saying has it “practice makes perfect”, translation was considered as a trivial practice which would dispense with any specific training. However, the growing need for skilled translators has given rise to the emergence of translation training courses, text books, tutorial sessions, workshops and most importantly Translation Studies as a an academic discipline. Translator training has nevertheless remained undertheorized and taken for granted, since little actual research has been carried out in the pedagogical methods, materials and assessment. Therefore the time is ripe to investigate more into the field of translator training. Each era of translation training was concerned with a particular issue, ranging from broader to more specific one. The one which is of great significance to translation trainers nowadays is the issue of translational errors which occur repeatedly in students’ translations. Since there are a considerable number of translational errors

remaining unattended and awaiting closer scrutiny as the Translation Study develops into a stand-alone discipline, it seems crucial to attend more to this area.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Translational errors can stem from linguistic or cultural peculiarities or a combination of both, intrinsic to source or target language. In the interim, some errors are target-language-specific or source-language-specific. In Iran, a considerable amount of translation tasks assigned to students pivot around translating from Persian (mother tongue) into English. Therefore, the researcher decided to focus on errors peculiar to the English language as the target language into which translation students have to translate. This study, therefore, investigated into translational errors commonly made by junior students at the first stage. Accordingly, it would probably help them improve the quality of translations by error treatments and make them more conscious about English language structures and norms.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Normally, during translation training courses, teachers attend more to acquainting students with a wide range of texts, while emphasis is rarely placed on eliminating errors made repeatedly by translation students. Students' over-reliance on bilingual dictionaries has led them to ignorance of authentic target language; consequently, it is a desideratum for all translation courses to compensate for this shortcoming. The main motif of the present research was the occurrence of repeated errors even after attending specialized translation courses at a university level. In other words, it is significant since it succinctly

focused on translational errors committed by translation students and the result will give fresh impetus for pedagogical purposes, it eventually points out the didactic contributions of findings to training programmes.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study firstly intended to lament the lack of sufficient attention to students' errors in translating texts from Persian into English. Secondly, it revolved around high frequency of errors committed by translation students translating into English. Thirdly, it attempted to decrease the number of such errors by giving input to students and raising their consciousness towards their own errors.

1.5 Research Questions

The study attempted to seek answer to the following questions:

1. What are the most frequent errors made by junior translation students when translating into English?
2. Are giving input and Consciousness Raising effective in reducing translational errors?

1.6 Research Hypothesis

The dominant hypothesis throughout the study was that training and Consciousness Raising can improve the quality of translations done by translation trainees taken into consideration the occurrence of translational errors in particular, and therefore hopefully enable the students to become aware of the potential errors in their translations from Persian into English language.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The present study was mainly carried out in the framework of Error Analysis, Input Theory and also it utilized help from Consciousness Raising (C-R). The yardstick for detecting errors in students' translations was extracted from a list provided by ATA (American Translators Association) and consultation with highly experienced translation professors. The errors itemized to this end are not source language-specific but only English bound.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

Error vs. Mistake: Error is a rule-governed and systematic defect whereas mistake is random and unrelated to any system (Keshavarz 1993, p 50)

Error Analysis: an approach towards learners' errors which is based on Contrastive Analysis (Keshavarz 1993, p 42)

Input: new structures that are one step beyond what the learners know at the present time which is called "comprehensible input" (Krashen 1984, p 262).

C-R= Consciousness Raising: an approach in language learning which assists the students to notice what they have already learned (Dodigovic 2005, p 37).

Translational Errors: If we consider translation as decoding the message from a text and re-encoding it into a new text (Nida and Taber 1969), then we can probably define translational errors as some encodings that distort the message induced by the original text.

L1: first language or mother-tongue

L2: Second language or foreign language

1.9 Scope and Limitations of the Study

Due to the limited number of participants, it was not possible to limit and control factors such as gender, exact level of English and Persian proficiency among students. Furthermore, this study is limited in its scope to a group of translation students at Allameh Tabataba'i University only and may not be applicable to other provinces in Iran. Besides, the researcher was supposed to substitute the usual method of the course with a new one including Consciousness Raising Method and giving extra input to the students, therefore to what extent the students would follow her instructions was not controlled. Another limitation that this study suffered from was in the qualitative part, where the genre and difficulty level of texts given for translation may affect the amount and frequency of translational errors. Also the group of errors selected to be covered during the treatment sessions are based on the researcher's decision and consultation of other translation professors and the adviser of this thesis.

As for the English Proficiency, since the participants were at their 5th semester at the time of this study, they had already taken general courses in English Language at their first and second year; it was supposed that they had almost the same level of English Proficiency. So, no proficiency test such as TOFEL or IELTS were administered. On the other hand, with regard to their Persian Language level, it was supposed that all the participants had gained the relative proficiency when passed in the Entrance Exam. So, this is a Case Study.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature