

Exploring English Specialization Students' Theoretical Knowledge of Translation Methods

Aye Nyein San¹

Faculty of Natural Language (English), University of Computer Studies; Meiktila, Myanmar
ayenyeinsan09@gmail.com

Abstract:

The main concern of this study is to examine the theoretical knowledge of Third year and Fourth year English specialization students of Mandalay University of Foreign Languages by exploring the translation methods commonly employed in "The Choice", the translation of the Myanmar Short Story, "Yway-Chal-Paing-Khwint" of Soe Hlaing Tint translated by Zaw Tun. The research methods used in this study are both qualitative and quantitative. The data for this study were collected from 48 Third year English specialization students and 61 Fourth year English specialization students from Mandalay University of Foreign Languages. The translation methods were investigated based on the theory of Newmark (1988). The research found that both Third year and Fourth year English specialization students were weak in the knowledge of semantic translation method and idiomatic translation methods because their study and practice of translation methods do not go beyond the classroom. They need to make more practice in the out- of-the- classroom situations. The translator used 5 out of 8 translation methods in the translation of the short story. The most frequently used translation method is semantic translation. It was found that using semantic translation method has a positive effect on the translation text because it can give the readers the aesthetic pleasure with the atmosphere of the original taste of the story.

Keywords

word-for word translation method, literal translation method, semantic translation method, idiomatic translation method, communicative translation method

1. Introduction

Translation plays an important role in global communication. It involves at least two languages, source language and target language. The term translation usually means transferring meaning and conveying messages from one language to another (Cook, 2010). It is the process of converting a source

language to a target language and vice versa. Newmark (1981:7) indicates that translation is a craft that attempts to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message or statement in another language.

Newmark (1988) mentioned the difference between translation methods and translation procedures. He stated that translation methods are related to whole texts while translation procedures are used for sentences and the smaller units of language. He proposes eight types of translation methods. They are Word-for-word translation, Literal translation, Faithful translation, Semantic translation, Adaptation, Free translation, Idiomatic translation, Communicative translation. These eight methods help the translators to get a more clearly translated text to the target readers, who are able to read it without losing the original taste and appreciate the culture and society of the source language.

Foreign language learners need to be equipped not only with the language skills but also translation methods since, after their graduation, they are often assigned paid jobs for translation. For this purpose, the learner should be trained translation methods so that they will be able to cope with the tasks assigned. This research will also explore the students' knowledge of translation methods in third year and fourth year English specialization students of Mandalay University of Foreign Languages by testing their working knowledge of Newmark's (1988) translation methods. Proposed exercises will be provided for helping students to remedy their weaknesses in certain methods.

2. The significance of the study

The significance of the study is that the present research deals with the working knowledge of the English specialization students (Third Year and Fourth Year) of Mandalay University of Foreign Languages about the translation methods. The research findings will inform the teachers of translation about the strengths and weaknesses of their students and enable them to apply their knowledge to their teaching of translation methods.

In recent years, the new government of our country, Myanmar, has been increasing international relations with other countries in all sectors. As mentioned above, translation will play a crucial role in the process of bringing reforms to the country. The need for translators has been on the increase.

In this research, students' knowledge of translation methods among third year and fourth year English specialization students of Mandalay University of Foreign Languages is also explored. The purpose is that the students should be equipped with the working knowledge of translation methods to apply in real life situations.

3. Aim and Objective

The aim of this research is to explore the theoretical knowledge of English specialization students of Mandalay University of Foreign Languages about the translation methods. The target group is Third Year and Fourth Year English Specialization students of MUFL. Myanmar Short Story, "Yway-Chal-Paing-Khwint" was written by Soe Hlaing Tint. It was translated into English by Zaw Tun under the title "The Choice".

The objective of this research is to investigate how far third year and fourth English specialization students of Mandalay University of Foreign Languages have been equipped with the theoretical knowledge of translation methods with reference to the 'The Choice' by Zaw Tun.

4. Literature Review

Many linguists, theorists and translators have made different definitions of what translation is. Larson (1984), for example, states that translation consists of transferring the meaning of the source language into the target language and analyzing the source text by studying the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation, and cultural context in order to determine its meaning, and then reconstruct it in the same meaning using the lexicon and grammatical structure which are appropriate in the target language and its cultural context.

Newmark (1988) describes that translation means rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text. According to this definition, translation means to translate the meaning of the text from one language to another without spoiling the message of the author.

According to Newmark (1988), there are three main areas of translation. They are (a) science and technology, (b) social, economic and/or political topics and institutions, and (c) literary and philosophical works. A translator should be equipped not only with the knowledge and skill of the target language but also those on his or her mother tongue.

It is also important that a translator should be sensitive to the usage, as well as to the original author's intention and message. Translators usually decide what kind of procedures, strategies and methods should be employed in their translation based on the area of the translation.

4.1 Translation Methods

According to Brislin (1976: 3-4), there are four categories of translation method, namely: Pragmatic Translation, Aesthetic-poetic Translation, Ethnographic Translation and Linguistic Translation (cited in Stevanus Rendy JP, 2013).

According to Newmark (1988), while translation methods relate to the whole texts, translation procedures are used for sentences and smaller unit of the language. There are eight translation methods in translating text. Newmark (1988) explained these eight types of translation methods as follow:

(i) Word-for Word Translation

This is often demonstrated as interlinear translation, with the TL immediately below the SL words. The SL word-order is preserved and the translated singly by their most common meanings, out of context. Cultural words are translated literally. The main use of word-for-word translation is either to understand the mechanics of the source language or to construe a difficult text as a pre-translation process.

Word-for word translation is a kind of translation which is the translator translates the words of source language into target language without changing the formation of word in his translation.

(ii) Literal Translation

The source language grammatical constructions are converted to their nearest TL equivalents but the lexical words are again translated singly, out of context. As a pre-translation process, this indicates the problems to be solved.

(iii) Faithful Translation

A faithful translation attempts to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the original within the constraints of the target language grammatical structures. It 'transfers' cultural words and preserves the degree of grammatical and lexical 'abnormality' (deviation from source language norms) in the translation. It attempts to be completely faithful to the intentions and the text-realization of the SL writer.

(iv) Semantic Translation

Semantic translation differs from "faithful translation" only in as far as it must take more account of the aesthetic value (that is, the beautiful and natural sound) of the SL text, compromising on "meaning" where appropriate so that no assonance, word-play or repetition jars in the finished version. Further, it may be translated less important cultural

words by culturally neutral thirds of functional terms but not by cultural equivalents. The distinction between “faithful” and “semantic” translation is that the first is uncompromising and dogmatic, while the second is more flexible, admits the creative exception to 100% fidelity and allows for the translator’s intuitive empathy with the original.

(v) Adaptive Translation

This is the “freest” form of translation. It is used mainly for plays (comedies) and poetry; the themes, characters, plots are usually preserved, the SL culture converted to the SL culture and the text rewritten. The deplorable practice of having a play or poem literally translated and then rewritten by an established dramatist or poet has produced many poor adaptations, but other adaptations have “rescued” period plays. For example, Shwe Ou Daung’s translation of Sherlock Holmes’s work

(vi) Free Translation

Free translation reproduces the matter without the manner, or the content without the form of the original. Usually it is a paraphrase much longer than the original, a so-called “intralingual translation”, of then the prolix and pretentious, and not translation at all.

(vii) Idiomatic Translation

Idiomatic translation reproduces the “message” of the original but tends to distort nuances of meaning by preferring colloquialisms and idioms where these do not exist in the original.

(viii) Communicative Translation

Communicative translation attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership.

5. Related Research

The research papers which are both local and foreign, related to this research are described as follows.

Ohu Ohu Khin (2018) carried out M.A Thesis “Investigating the Translation Techniques in the short story ‘Yae-Mar-Yay-Te-Pa-Chi’ (The Pictures Drawn on the water’ by Win Win Myint (Nan Taw Shae) translated by Zaw Tun. The objectives of the study were to explore the frequencies of the translation techniques which were used in the translation of the Myanmar short story ‘The Pictures Drawn on the Water’ by Win Win Myint (Nan Taw Shae) and to find out which translation techniques are the most and the least preferred ones in the story. She used data analysis method and the story was analysed sentence by sentence. Data were analyzed based on the techniques of translation theory proposed by Molina and Albir (2002). In her findings, 15 translation techniques out of 18 were used in the translated work. The most frequently

used translation technique was ‘linguistic amplification’ and the least frequently used translation techniques were ‘borrowing, compensation and description’ in this story.

Another one is Stevanus Rendy JP’s (2013) research which focuses on the translation of figurative languages in words, phrases, clauses, and sentences employed in “The Old Man and the Sa” novel translated from English into Lelaki Tua dan Laut. The aim of the study was to provide description pertaining to the kind of data gathered and analyzed.

In 2018, the researchers Ying, B. T, Universiti Putra Malaysia, carried out a research Students’ Beliefs on Translation Strategy in Learning German Language. The aim of this research was to investigate students who use translation as their learning strategy in mastering reading, writing, listening and speaking of the German language. Data were collected by using questionnaire which was first designed by Liao (2006) originally in English and semi-structured interview. The number of participant are 60 Malaysian undergraduates studying German as a foreign language in a public university. According to the results in the research, it is observed that among the 60 participants, 46 participants used the English language as their source language to translate into German when speaking, and only 14 participants used Mandarin to achieve the same task. In addition, 46 participants preferred to use English while 12 participants used Mandarin and 2 participants used the Malay language as their translation language when writing in German. The result indicates that the majority of the participants used English language instead of their L1 to translate in the speaking and writing of the German language. Although 63.3% of the respondents were Chinese and Mandarin forms the majority of their L1, this language was not found to be the major language used in the translation strategy in this study. Most of the participants instead preferred to use English to translate during the process of learning German. It was the same for the Malay language; only two Malay respondents translated from the Malay language in learning the German language.

6. Research Methodology

This chapter consists of three parts. They are: Data Collection, Data Analysis and Data Interpretation. This research uses qualitative as well as quantitative method as the basic of this approach.

In this research, in investigating how far third year and fourth English specialization students of Mandalay University of Foreign Languages have been equipped with the theoretical knowledge of translation methods with reference to the ‘The Choice’ by Zaw Tun, the researcher selected some sentences from the source text and translated text. And (48) third year and (61) fourth year English

specialization students who are studying at Mandalay University of Foreign Languages were given these sentences and asked them to analyze these sentences. The third year and fourth year English specialization students have three years and four years experiences of learning English as a specialization subject. They have to learn translation as a module in both third year and fourth year. They were asked to tick the exercises which method that the translator used in the given sentences. Before the exercises were distributed to them, the researcher took two periods of lecture time and explained four translation methods: word-for word translation, literal translation, faithful translation and semantic translation methods in the first period and the left four translation methods: adaptation, free translation, idiomatic translation and communicative translation methods were explained in the next period to familiarize them with the translation theories. Then, they have to put a tick in the column of the method which they think is used.

6.1 Data Collection

The present research investigates English specialization students' theoretical knowledge of translation methods who are studying in Mandalay University of Foreign Languages. In order to accomplish this, the researcher did the following steps; firstly, the researcher gave an explanation of eight types of Newmark's (1988) translation method to the (48) third year and (61) fourth year English specialization students before doing the exercises. Then, students were distributed the exercises and asked to tick the translation methods which they think are used.

6.2 Data Analysis

The data to analyze Third year and Fourth year English specialization students' theoretical knowledge of translation methods were collected by asking the students to do some exercises which included five translation methods: word-for word translation, literal translation, semantic translation, idiomatic translation and communicative translation that the translator mostly used in the translation of Myanmar short story 'Ywae-Chal-Paing-Khwint'. Before they do the exercises they were given the explanation of the Newmark's (1988) translation methods by the researcher.

6.3 Data Interpretation

The following figure shows the comparison of the overall score of the third year and fourth year students' theoretical knowledge of translation methods.

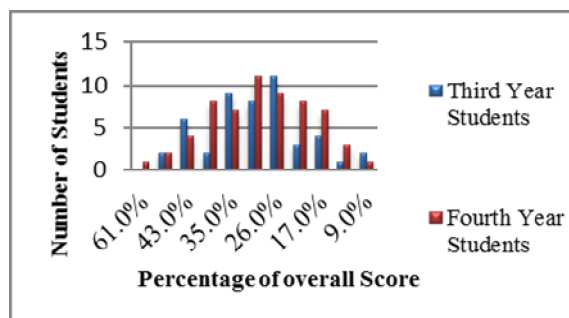


Figure 1: Comparison of the Overall Score of the Third Year and Fourth Year English Specialization Students' Theoretical Knowledge of Translation Methods

According to the overall score, it is found out that Fourth year students' theoretical knowledge is higher than Third year students. Among Third year English Specialization students, there is no student who had got 61% in the overall score of the theoretical knowledge of translation methods while there is 1 student who had got 61% of the overall score of theoretical knowledge of the translation methods in Fourth year. There are 2 Third year students and 6 Fourth year students who got 48% in the overall score of the theoretical knowledge of translation methods, 6 Third year students and 4 Fourth year students who got 43% in the overall score of the theoretical knowledge of translation methods, 2 Third year students and 8 Fourth year students who got 39% in the overall score of the theoretical knowledge of translation methods, 9 third year students and 7 fourth year students who got 35% in the theoretical knowledge of the translation methods, 8 third year students and 11 fourth year students who got 30% in the overall score of theoretical knowledge of translation methods, 11 third year students and 9 fourth year students who got 26% in the overall score of the theoretical knowledge of translation methods, 3 third year students and 8 fourth year students who got 22% in the overall score of theoretical knowledge of translation methods, 4 third year students and 7 fourth year students who got 17% in the overall score of the theoretical knowledge of translation methods, 1 third year student and 3 fourth year students who got 13% in the overall score of the knowledge of translation methods and 2 third year students and 1 fourth year students who got 9% in the overall score of the theoretical knowledge of the translation methods.

7. Findings and Discussion

In exploring the English specialization students' theoretical knowledge of translation methods based on Newmark (1988), Fourth year English specialization students' theoretical knowledge is higher than Third year English specialization students' theoretical knowledge. The maximum

overall score percentage of Fourth year English specialization students' theoretical knowledge of translation methods is 61% and the maximum overall score percentage of Third year English specialization students' theoretical knowledge of translation methods is 48%. However, 9% is the minimum percentage of overall score in both Fourth year and Third year English specialization students. Fourth year English specialization students have 31.2% in average percentage of overall score of the theoretical knowledge of translation methods but Third year English specialization students have 26% in average percentage of overall score of the theoretical knowledge of translation methods. This is probably because fourth year English specialization students have two-year experiences of learning translation, being exposed to the theoretical knowledge and practice while third year English specialization students have only one-year learning experience in translation.

According to the research findings, the English specialization students' knowledge of translation methods shows that their knowledge level of semantic translation method is low probably because their study and practice of translation method do not go beyond the classroom. It is not enough for students only having the theoretical knowledge but also need to have practical work. Therefore, they need to make more practice in the out-of-the-classroom situations so that they will become independent translators.

8. Conclusion

This research was an attempt to explore the English specialization students' theoretical knowledge of translation methods based on Newmark's (1988) theory. Fourth year English specialization students' theoretical knowledge of translation methods is found to be higher than Third year English specialization students. This may be because Fourth year English specialization students have more experience of learning translation than Third year English specialization students.

Both Third year and Fourth year English specialization students are weak in the knowledge of idiomatic translation method and semantic translation method. They all should be given some reinforcement exercises in these translation methods that they are found to be weak in because it will probably help the students who want to become future translators to understand gradually that choosing the appropriate translation methods plays an important role in completing a good translation.

Further studies can be done on the other translation works of the same author in order to investigate whether the same translation methods are employed or not in these works. An exploration of English specialization students' theoretical knowledge of translation techniques, strategies or

procedures can also be carried out in further researches.

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