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Using Translation in EFL Classes to Enhance Learners' Interpretation Skills

A Case Study of EFL Learners of Arts at the Sudanese Universities (2022)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims: to enhance EFL learners' interpretation skills by using translation and identify the role of translation in facilitating EFL teaching and learning. The study adopted the descriptive analytical method. The data for the study was collected by means of a questionnaire that was distributed to fifty (50) EFL University students. Then the collected data were analyzed by the SPSS program. The study came out with the following results: using translation in EFL classes develops learners' interpretation of L2 concepts, translation enhances EFL teaching and learning processes, translation helps EFL learners to perform the language confidently, translation improves learners' communicative skills, and develops their linguistic competence. The study recommended the following: translation should be used in EFL classes to facilitate the teaching and learning processes, EFL learners should practice translation for enhancing their interpretation of L2 concepts, and learners should be able to perform the language confidently. EFL learners should be able to develop linguistic competence through translation and learners should develop interpretation skills through translation.

Key Words: translation, enhancing learners' interpretation, facilitating teaching and learning.

مستخلص الدراسة

تهدف الدراسة إلى تطوير فهم الطلاب لمفاهيم اللغة الانجليزية و تسهيل عملية التدريس والتعلم خلال استخدام الترجمة. اتبعت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي كما استخدمت نظام الاستبانة لجمع البيانات من خمسين (50) طالبا وطالبة من طلاب اللغة الانجليزية بكليات الآداب بالجامعات السودانية. بعد جمع

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البيانات تم تحليلها ببرنامج الحزم الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية لتحليل البيانات (SPSS). توصلت الدراسة إلى عدة نتائج أهمها: أن استخدام الترجمة يحسن فهم الطلاب للمفاهيم اللغوية ويسهل عملية تدريس وتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، استخدام الترجمة يمكن الطلاب من تطوير مهارات التواصل باللغة الانجليزية والتمكن من استخدام المهارات اللغوية. توصي الدراسة باستخدام الترجمة في صفوف تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية لتسهيل عملية التدريس والتعلم، تمكين الطلاب من ممارسة الترجمة لفهم المفاهيم اللغوية في اللغتين، تحفيز الطلاب على استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية تمكن الطلاب من تفسير المحتويات اللغوية خلال الترجمة.

1.0 Introduction

Using translation in foreign language classes is becoming a form of pedagogical translation, which is viewed as an effective tool in language learning and is evaluated as a way to enhance learners' competencies. Students taught by using pedagogical translation are encouraged to practice reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, and speaking. It is also argued that Translation heightens language awareness (Dagilienè,2012). While students are translating, they focus on identifying differences in vocabulary and structure.

According to (Butzkamm and Caldwell,2009) using the native language in the classroom is "the greatest pedagogical resource" and can enhance learners' confidence and focus on meaning. Translation always makes learners view the FL through their native language, of course. FL learners always have a natural tendency to use translation (Ali, 2012) and will automatically compare both languages involved, either consciously or unconsciously, so it is pointless to try to avoid their internal thinking in L1 and code-switching between L1 and L2, since it is regarded as naturally developmental.

1.1 Problem of the Study

Many of EFL learners do not able to communicate successfully English language. Their comprehension of L2 concepts is weak. This study aims at using translation for more interpretation to English language beside their mother tongue and to solve the problems of understanding the difficult concepts.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study aims at:



1.enhancing EFL learners' interpretation skills through using L1 to ease L2 interpretation.

2. identifying the role of translation facilitating EFL teaching and learning.

1.3 Questions of the Study

The study will answer the following questions:

1.What is the role of translation in enhancing EFL learners interpretation ?

2. To what extent does translation facilitate EFL teaching and learning ?

1.4 Hypotheses of the Study

The study has the following hypotheses:

1. Using translation in EFL classes enhances EFL learners interpretation skills.

2. Using translation in EFL classes facilitates EFL teaching and learning.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study explains the benefits of using translation to enhance EFL learners interpretation skills and enhancing EFL teaching and learning process. For the teachers, it shows them a good teaching technique. For the learners it improve vocabulary knowledge

1.6 The Methodology of the Study

The study will follow the descriptive analytical method. The data for this study will be obtained through a questionnaire from (50) EFL university students at Sudanese Universities. The collected data were analyzed statistically with SPSS Program.

2.0 Literature Review

Interaction between people of different tongues and different cultures would be difficult without translation. So, translation has a pivotal role of bridging the gap between these different tongues and cultures. Ghazala (2008) asserts that

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translation includes both the processes as well as the methods used by translators to convey the meaning. (Shiyab and Abdullateef, 2001) consider translation extremely important for foreign language teaching simply because it allows conscious learning and control of the foreign language, and as a result, it reduces native language interference. Using translation can make learning meaningful because the learner is an active participant in the process. Translation has also been used to teach grammar. In this respect, teachers can show students equivalent and non-equivalent structures between L1 and L2.

The purpose of translation is communication. Basically human beings use language as the most important means of communication, and language is influenced by people's culture and beliefs whether consciously or unconsciously. Therefore translation involves both language and culture; yet most translation definitions do not directly imply cultural expressions. (Catford, 1965) argue that translation is the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language. Moreover, translation is made possible by an equivalence of thought that lies behind its different verbal expressions. (Newmark, 1981) gave a great importance to cultural elements in his suggestions of methods and procedures still did not indicate culture in his definition. He stated that "translation is a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language.

In his attempt to define translation and the role of a translator, (Nida, 1964) took into consideration the cultural elements by stating that "the role of a translator is to facilitate the transfer of the message, meaning, and cultural elements from one language into another and create an equivalent response to the receivers" (p. 13). He also suggested that the message from the source language is embedded by a cultural context. According to (Newmark, 1988) foreign cultural expressions include ecological, material, and social cultures. They also include expressions related to social organizations, political, religious, artistic, gestures and habits. Cultural expressions can also be found in proverbs, collocations, phrasal verbs and figures of speech including metaphors.



(Alousque,2009) focused on cultural words which require a cultural background to be properly understood and therefore pose translation problems. The challenges in the translation of cultural items and the range of translation procedures used to explain their meaning through the analysis of the lexis from the French cultural domain of cooking was examined. Those problems result from a number of linguistic phenomena, including the different semantic range of the cultural words in the source and the target languages, the absence of the cultural concept in the target language, the loss of meaning and the metaphorical meaning conveyed by many cultural words. The study has revealed the constraints of the translation strategies used to transfer the meaning of cultural units into the target language (loan, functional equivalence, descriptive equivalence, approximate equivalence) and the differences in the conceptualization of reality as reflected by the translation of metaphorical words and expressions from the French domain of cooking. These differences point to a cultural gap which makes the translation of cultural lexis a hard task.

Idioms and fixed expressions have got a vast territory in a way that they can include many cultural aspects such as religious beliefs, culture-specific items, superstitions, and different ideologies of the people from diverse societies and nations. Idioms are treated as figures of speech, which are defined in the (Collins English Dictionary, 2006) as an expression such as a simile, in which words do not have their literal meaning, but are categorized as multi-word expressions that act in the text as units”. (Longman Idioms Dictionary, 1998) defines them as “a sequence of words which has a different meaning as a group from the meaning it would have if you understand each word separately”. Accordingly, idioms should not be broken up into their elements because they are sometimes referred to as a fixed expression

According to (Straksiene,2009), one of the problems a translator faces in translating idioms is the lack of equivalence on the idiom level. All languages have idioms. But it is not easy to find an equivalent in the TL that corresponds to the idiom in the source text in both form and meaning. Idioms may contain a culture bound item and this poses a problem for the translator. (Nida,1964) affirmed that in order to achieve an equivalent response, the translation should make sense; convey



the spirit and the manner of the original; have natural and easy form of expressions. He suggested two main types of equivalence: 1. Formal equivalence: in which the translator focuses attention on the similarity of form between the source language and the target language texts, as well as on the content in order to enable the target language reader to grasp and understand as much as possible of the original text. 2. Dynamic equivalence: In which the translator has to reproduce an equivalent effect on the receiver as that experienced by the source language receiver (cited in Ahmed 2016).

(Newmark, 1988) has mentioned that in rendering idioms into idiomatic language, it is especially hard to match the meaning with its equivalent occurrence. He also stated that the principle issues a translator encounters are not syntactic, but rather lexical, i.e. words, collocations, and settled phrases or idioms. Moreover, (Baker, 2011) claimed that the major challenges that idiomatic and settled expressions discompose in translation are related to two main fields: the capacity to identify and to translate an idiom appropriately, as well as the complications in translating several aspects of meaning that an idiom or a fixed expression carries into the target language. Additionally, (Mollanazar, 2004) pointed out clearly that the initial step in rendering idioms is to identify them. Thus, the pitfall for translators is to decipher the idioms accurately. Besides, word-for-word translation for idioms is often nonsense or even, sometimes, interesting. Furthermore, according to (López Rodríguez, 2009) one glaring problem a translator faces in translating idioms is the

lack of equivalence on the idiom level. All languages have idioms. However, it is not easy to find an equivalent in the target language that corresponds to the idiom in the source language in both form and meaning. This is because; idioms may contain a culture-bound aspect that poses a problem for a translator. Thus, (Catford, 1965, p. 49) contended that the meaning of idiomatic is not indistinguishable with the aggregate meaning of their constituents, hence making it difficult to translate idioms word-for-word in most cases. The idiom or the phrase is considered as the unit of translation. He further stated that idioms ought not to be considered as the main conceivable translation components on the level of combination of words. Simply put, such a unit can be “a free blend of words whose



source language meaning is developed out of the meaning of its different components."

3. 0 Material and Method

The study adopted the descriptive analytical methods. The population of the study were EFL University students of Arts. The sample of the study fifty (50) of EFL students who were chosen randomly from the population. The data were collected by means of a questionnaire which was distributed to them. Then the collected data were analyzed with Statistical Packages for Social Science program (SPSS). The study came out with many results:

3.1 Data Analysis

Statement (1) Using translation in EFL classes enhances EFL teaching process

Table (1) enhancing EFL teaching and learning processes

Options	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	4	8.0
Neutral	9	18.0
Agree	37	74.0
Total	50	100.0

Table(1) shows that, (74%) of the respondents agree that, translation enhances EFL teaching and learning processes, (18 %) of the sample neutral and (8%) disagree with the statement. Therefore the statement is accepted.



Statement (2) Using translation develops EFL learners' interpretation skills.

Table (2) translation develops EFL learners' interpretation of L2 concepts

Options	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	5	10.0
Neutral	6	12.0
Agree	39	78.0
Total	50	100.0

Table (2) shows that, (78 %) of the respondents agree with the statement, (12 %) of the sample neutral and (10%) sample disagree with the statement, therefore the statement is accepted

Statement (3) Translation improves EFL learners performance.

Table (3) translation helps EFL learners perform the language confidently

Options	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	7	14.0
Neutral	10	20.0
Agree	33	66.0
Total	50	100.0

Table (3) shows that,(66 %) of the respondents agree with the statement, (20 %) of the sample choose the answer neutral and (14%) of the sample disagree with the statement.

Statement (4) Translation improves learners' vocabulary knowledge

Table (4) translation improves learners' vocabulary knowledge

Options	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	7	14.0
Neutral	9	18.0
Agree	34	68.0
Total	50	100.0

Table (4) shows that,(68 %) of the respondents agree that translation improves learners' vocabulary knowledge (18 %) of the sample choose the answer neutral and (14%) disagree with the statement. The statement is accepted.

Statement (5) Translation develops EFL learners' linguistic competence

Table (5) translation develops EFL learners' linguistic competence

Options	Frequency	Percent
Neutral	10	20.0
Agree	40	80.0
Total	50	100.0

Table (5) shows that, (80 %) of the respondents agree that through translation EFL learners develop linguistic competence and (20%) of the sample are neutral ,therefore the statement is accepted .

Statement (6) Translation enhances EFL learners' comprehension skills

Table (6) translation enhances EFL learners' comprehension skills

Options	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	5	10.0
Neutral	6	12.0
Agree	39	78.0
Total	50	100.0

Table (6) shows that, (78 %) of the respondents agree that using translation enhances EFL learners' comprehension skills , (12%) of the sample are neutral and (10 %) disagree with the statement. Thus the statement is accepted

Statement (8) Translation helps in building other language skills

Table (8) building other language skills

Options	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	6	12.0
Neutral	6	12.0
Agree	38	76.0
Total	50	100.0

Table (8) shows that, (76 %) of the respondents agree with the statement, (12 %) of the sample disagree and (12%) agree to some extent. This statement is accepted .

Statement (9) Translation is used by many EFL teachers as a useful technique to be used in EFL learning

Table (9) the usefulness of translation in EFL learning

Options	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	4	8.0
Neutral	7	14.0
Agree	39	78.0
Total	50	100.0

Table (9) shows that, (78 %) of the respondents agree with the statement, (16 %) of the sample neutral and(6%)of the sample disagree with the statement. This statement is accepted .

Statement (10) Translation hinders students performance in class contacts

Table (10) translation and students performance

Options	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	4	8.0
Neutral	4	8.0
Agree	42	84.0
Total	50	100.0



Table (10) shows that, (84 %) of the respondents disagree with the statement , (8 %) of the sample answers neutral and (8%)agree with the statement .Thus the statement is not accepted

4.0 Conclusion- Findings- Recommendations

The aim of the study is to improve EFL learners' interpretation of L2 concepts and facilitate EFL teaching and learning through using translation in EFL teaching. For the purpose of the study, the researcher distributed a questionnaire to fifty (50) EFL students of Arts at Sudanese Universities. Then the data were analyzed with the SPSS program. The following are the results.

4.1 Findings

After the data analysis, the study came out with the following findings

1. Translation develops EFL learners' interpretation of L2 concepts.
2. Translation facilitates EFL teaching and learning processes.
- 3 Translation helps EFL learners perform the language confidently.
4. Through translation EFL learners develop linguistic competence.
5. Using translation enhances EFL learners' comprehension skills.

4.2 Recommendations

The study recommended the following:

1. Translation should be used in EFL classes to facilitate the teaching and learning processes.
2. EFL learners should practice translation for enhancing their interpretation of L2 concepts.
3. Learners should be able to perform the language confidently.
4. EFL learners should be able to develop linguistic competence through translation.
5. Learners should develop comprehension skills through translation.

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