

Translation as a Tool in Teaching English as a Second Language

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Abstract: The present paper focuses on Translation Method as a tool which enhances English language skills of ESL students in various contexts. It evaluates that the ESL students are supposed to allow a certain degree of translation in acquiring English Language skills. As result, it is strongly hoped through this research that the translation as a tool can help them in enhancing their English language skills. The study had surveyed the English Language Teachers at Vignan's Foundation for Science, Technology and Research, Deemed to be University, Andhra Pradesh and to find attitudes of the teachers and effectiveness of the translation exercises in the propelled English learning programs for Telugu speaking students. In the study, survey of literature covers the theoretical part and questionnaire is used for practical part of the study. It is carefully noticed the attitudes of the teachers towards using translation method and student's motivational level. Wang (2005) argues that "the integration of internet technology is inevitable in classrooms as it demonstrates the shift in educational paradigms from a behavioural to a constructivist learning approach." The area selected for the investigation is purely rural and the learners are under the influence of L1 on L2 skills. When the study focused on Translation, there is a positive response from the learners because the expressions and emotions are very nearer to their individual expressions. Finally, the study found that translation is a useful tool in the English language learning course for the improvement of second language skills.

Key words: Translation, pedagogical tool, second language skills

I. INTRODUCTION

According to direct language teaching method usage of mother tongue was restricted as rightly stated by H.H. Stern (1983: 456) "The Direct Method is characterized above all by the use of the target language as a means of instruction and communication in the language classroom, and by the avoidance of the use of the first language and of translation as a technique". The reformers in 1850 and 1900 strongly believed that usage of mother in foreign language learning context should be avoided. As result, in many English Medium schools English teachers neglect or refuse to incorporate translation into language classrooms. However, a multilingual country like India, the direct method has been proved as a failure and the Secondary Education Commission of 1952-53 also insisted that L1 should be given first preference along with Hindi, a National language and English as global language. An empirical study by Whyatt (2009) has proven that translation tasks are very helpful in improving the proficiency of reading skills of ESL learner. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) stated that translation as a teaching method has dual role on pedagogical context, the first one it is an accepted version of teaching and learning method and it can be used as a cognitive strategy in reading as well. Accepting the opinion, Vinay and Darbelnet (1995:124) added that the translation is a suitable method to validate conceptions of the SL.

Nevertheless, in the second language classroom, there seems to be an exponential increase in the practice of translation for the last few decades. The use of translation for multiple learning purposes has recently been restored by second-language teachers. In addition to other traditional language teaching activities, translation could be used for teaching and learning purposes in multi-language speaking Indian context.

II. OBJECT OF THE STUDY

The present worktries to focus on:

- ❖ To find attitudes of the teachers towards translation exercises in the ESL classroom
- ❖ Specifictranslation activities which are effective to raise students' language andusage.
- ❖ Influence of Translation in teaching and learning process in the light of ESL context.
- ❖ To know which language skills are more suits to translation method.

III.STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is an accepted version from the most of the teachers and researchers that the translation makes the role of language teaching and learning convenience and easy to understand the basic concepts of TL and SL. But there is another version contradicting the opinion and upholding that it is a tedious procedure. In this manner, the present examination is an endeavour to distinguish the degree to which teachers at Vignan's Foundation for Science, Technology and Research,Deemed to be University use translation sometimes as a tool in ESL classroom and how regularly do they use it for the benefit of the learners. It also analyses the circumstances that lead the teacher to adopt translation as a tool in their teaching in whichit may, result in, be productive in language teaching and learning.

IV.SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Apart from the influences of L1 on L2 and the others reasons thatteachers of English in ESL context are segregated into support and oppose the utilization of translation in the ESL classroom.But it remains autile instrument for the situation that it is utilized appropriate and purposeful. In this regard the present study probes the following questions.

V. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the objective of the university teachers to adopt translation as a tool in teaching English?
2. Which language skills can be effectively enhanced through translation method?
3. How the translations effect the activities implemented to learn English?

VI. LITERATURE REVIEW

“Translation plays a very important role in an increasingly globalised world and in increasingly multilingual Europe where it is used on daily basis” states Leonardi (2010, 17).Malmkjær (1998, 8) points out that “it is clearly true that translation produces interference [...]. However, bilinguals at whatever level experience interference of one kind or another, and practice in translation encourages awareness and control of interference”. According toNolasco and Arthur (1995) “Translation activities should meet the following criteria:

1. Language is used for a purpose.
2. Translation activities create a desire for communication.
3. Translation

activities encourage students to be creative and contribute their ideas. 4. Students are focused on what they are saying, rather than how they are saying it. 5. Students work independently of the teacher. 6. Students determine what to say or write. Moreover, translation activities need not be used in isolation, but should be included in an inherent part of the language learning course”.

Lan (2008) says that “translation from L1 to L2 offers an opportunity for learners to apply what they have learned before - such as, vocabulary and sentence structure - into practical use. However, words, phrases, collocations and grammar are communicative tools for learners to convey the writer's original meanings”. The researcher emphasizes that translation is limited to two skills- reading and writing. It is not a communicative interaction because oral interaction is not directly involved. It is then necessary to use the mother tongue, which is not desirable.

VII. METHODOLOGY

This investigation is carried out in two parts i.e. theoretical and practical. As a part of it, the theoretical part is studied in the light of survey of literature and in the second part researchers had administered an online questionnaire to the teachers. Further, the questionnaire has four sections dealing with personal information, attitudes of the teachers towards translation method, frequency of using translation in teaching and learning, the effects of the method and student’s motivation level. The teachers’ responses were collected by using the Google form and analysed in pie diagrams.

VIII. DATA ANALYSIS

The data was collected through a survey questionnaire. For this purpose, it used Google form, a free online tool which is cost effective and convenient to reach out the sample subjects. It is also a reliable tool to receive responses immediately with quantitative analysis. The questionnaire was employed to the English teachers working in VFSTR deemed to be University and its’ sister concern institutions in Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh. Total twenty-three questionnaires were sent to the subjects through mails but only eighteen were responded with complete data.

The questions were intended to deal with three factors which are correlating with the research questions which were discussed under the methodology part. The following are the teachers’ responses with quantitative and qualitative analysis:

a. Demographic Data:

Table 1 Qualifications and teaching experience of the sample

Sl. No.	Qualification	Years of experience	Numbers of teachers
A	Ph.D in English	10-15	3
B	MA in English	6 – 10	11
C	MA in English	1 – 5	4

Table-1 the responses elucidate three different categories according to teaching experience and qualifications, a) Those who have 10 to 15 and above years of experience b) Those with 6 to 10 years of experience and c) teachers with less than 5 years of experience. The data reveals that majority of the respondents are between 6-10 years of experience whereas only 18 percent of the teachers fall between 1-5 years of experience.

8.2. Attitudes of the teachers towards translation method

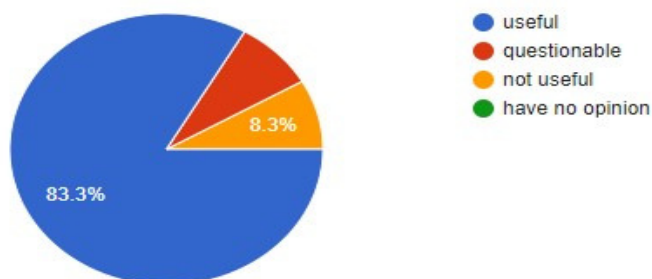


Figure1: Teachers' attitude toward the translation method

Figure-1 demonstrates that more than 83% of the respondents agreed a certain degree of translation at tertiary level required. It is due to their previous learning conditions at 10th and intermediate level. The experienced teachers see translation as an effective tool for language learning. They believe that translation activities are being considered as an important learning approach to understand, memorize, and acquire English language competence to perform effectively. In personal communication with the teachers (2019) they also expressed that to get better results through translation activities one should anticipate possible problems ahead of the class and the students should get motivated towards the activities. However, a meagre i.e. 17% of the teachers strongly expressed that translation activities are not useful and should be avoided at the tertiary level. This may be lack of awareness or not trained on the translation method or else they prefer to use direct method instead of translation method.

8.3. Frequency and effects of using translation in the ESL classroom

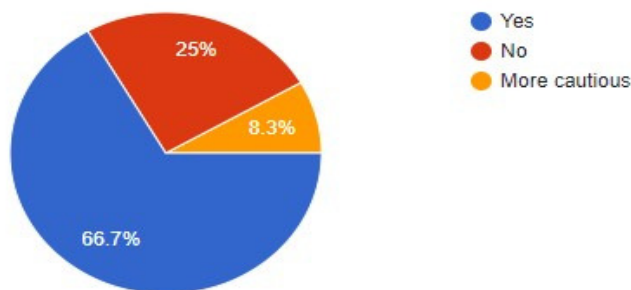


Figure2: The effects of using translation in the ESL classroom

Figure 2 elucidates more than 60% of the teachers are frequently using translation in their ESL activities. As majority of the students are Telugu speaking and exposure to the English language after the class is least as well as grammar translation method was great effect on these students in their previous academic backgrounds. As a result, majority of the teachers at the tertiary level strongly believe that using direct method for these students at entry level will result negative than positive effect. And the teachers would like to inject the language by allowing the students a certain extent of mother tongue interference is necessary to understand the language tasks and instructions for better results and motivations. However, 25% and 8.3% of the teachers expressed that they don't prefer or encourage translation in their ESL class. It is due to some teachers are from other linguistic

states they do not know the Telugu language and remaining teachers strongly believe that translation method could not help the students to enhance English language skills and linguistic competence.

8.4. Language skills which enhanced through translation method

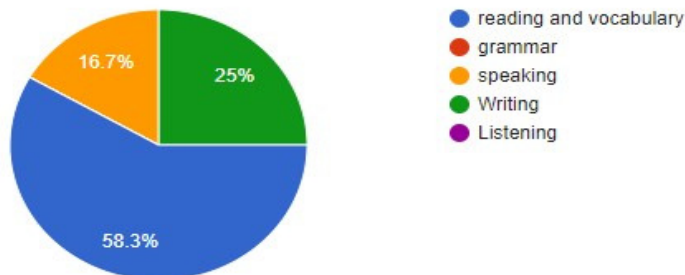


Figure3:The effectiveness of translation on teaching LSRW skills

Figure 3 responses clearly indicate that 58.3% of the teachers believe translation is more beneficial in reading and vocabulary activities followed by writing 25% and 16.7% speaking. The teachers see that translation could not be useful for listening skill and teaching grammar. Though translation is considered for speaking however they believe the students should be encouraged to speak in the targeted language than their mother tongue. As the language skills are inter connected and dependent between reading and writing and listening and speaking. So, the translation is more effective to enhance reading and writing. “Translation is by definition text-bound and confined to the two skills of reading and writing. This makes it hard to justify for many classes with time restrictions” (Kaye, 2019).

8.5. Student motivation level in Translation Activities

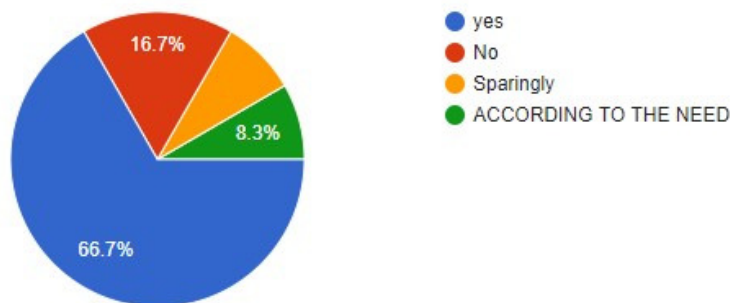


Figure 4:students' motivationlevel

According the figure 4, majority of teachers66%, believe that the students are motivated through translation based teaching. They also accepted that it is an effective tool. 16% of the teachers expressed it could not help in motivating the learner. Undoubtedly, translation consumes time and encompassed with difficultiesbut in order to manage the activity well, the teacher must be as good as and better than the students. Most of the students acquired English language skills, developed, reading, vocabulary, grammar and writing skills, and in addition, translation tasks taught students to work in groups and contributed to the preparation of their language skills.

IX. CONCLUSION

As these students' previous academic backgrounds influence of complete translation method and greater influence of mother tongue in peers' communication, social gatherings, at home as well as other subject teachers also prefer to teach in translation method. In these circumstances, the ESL teachers at tertiary level believe the translation is a more useful than direct language teaching method and the mother tongue interference cannot be avoided. It also has positive impact and encourages them to build their language skills. However, the translation should nevertheless not be overused and fully integrated into language teaching. Allowing the translation or mother tongue interference in the class at the right moment would be a useful and effective tool for second language teaching. In a caution, the translation method should be restricted to some skills like reading, writing and vocabulary and the degree of mother tongue usage should be decreased slowly in ESL classroom to make the learners more autonomous and confident in the target language.

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