

Paraphrasing as a Technique for Improving the Translation of Undergraduate Students of Translation

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Abstract:

The present study is primarily concerned with the application of paraphrasing as a method to facilitate the understanding of the text by the readers . It tackles the process of translation and its relation to teaching translation . Since translation is a linguistic behaviour, then cognitive information processing and translation teaching and learning go hand in hand toward performing a translation task. The present study aims at facilitating the translation of difficult (at least to students) linguistic and textual elements existing in the text to be translated via cognitive translation processes conducted by a kind of brain storming on the part of the translator. The results of the study show that paraphrasing is a helpful technique in teaching translation.

1. Introduction:

Finding a suitable translation equivalence has been a key question. It has been perceived from different perspectives. Many theorists and researchers of translation argue that the translator should look for linguistic and textual closeness between the (ST) and the (TT). Catford (1965) maintains that translation must be achieved by formal equivalence. Thus, he (ibid.: 33) defines translation as "the replacement of textual material in (ST) by equivalent textual material in the (TT)" . Similarly, translation is defined by Bolinger (1966: 130) as: “ rendition of a text from one language into another”.

Recently, translation equivalence has been approached from text analysis view. In this regard, de Beaugrande (1980) highlights

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the importance of communicative context to perform translation equivalence. In this sense, it could be argued that appropriate translation may not be realized without taking into consideration textual elements and textual factors implied by the text producer. It is proposed in this study that paraphrasing can facilitate the understanding of textual material of (SL) by the (TL) readers.

2. The Concept of "Paraphrasing":

The term "paraphrasing" has been tackled by many scholars with various points of view; however, most of them share the idea that it is a kind of interpretation or illustration. It is believed that paraphrasing is rephrasing what you have read in order to make sure you conceptualize appropriately. The use of this technique saves you from wasting time spent in misunderstanding. It also clarifies your assumptions and anticipations that lie underneath your speech.

Paraphrasing means putting information from a source into one's own words. Researchers of translation maintain that paraphrasing is putting the ideas of the (ST) in different words. According to Carrove (1999: 47), paraphrasing is one of the strategies that professional translators use in order to serve linguistic naturalness and to achieve a high level of accuracy in specifying professional meaning. At classroom level (ibid.), though, students have been reported to use it when translating aloud in class but they stick to a literal and unidiomatic rendering of the (ST) in their written assignments.

For Bailey (2003: 21), paraphrasing involves changing a text so that it is quite dissimilar to the source, yet retain all the meaning. This skill is valuable in many areas of academic work. The focus here is on using paraphrasing in translation. Bailey (2003: 22) views that paraphrasing is important in two aspects. Firstly, paraphrasing techniques aim to restate the text. Secondly, a good paraphrase is considerably different from the wording of the original without changing the meaning. In other words, propositions of the text should be observed. Baker (1992: 37,38) argues that paraphrasing may either be by the use of the technique of related or unrelated words. This study, however, focuses on the related words ones. Baker (ibid:37) mentions that this technique, i.e., using related

words is applied when "the (SL) concept is lexicalized in (TL) but in different form and when the frequency with which a certain form is used in the (ST) is higher than it would be natural in the (TT)" , and she provides the following example:

Original Text:

Hot and cold food and drinks can be found in the Hornet's Nest overlooking the Alexick Hall.

Paraphrased Text:

In the Hornet's Nest, which overlooks the Alexick Hall, you can have hot and cold meals and drink.

Newmark (1998: 63) views that the term 'paraphrase' is a better word for Jakobson's "intralingual translation" (1959) . For him, paraphrase is expressing of a statement or stretch of text in different words; it is the translator's last resort, but "it has to be used " often enough. Newmark notes that one has to go for the "likely" meaning as nothing is perfect. He (ibid.:135) states that translation is always paraphrase since it is an approximation. Paraphrase , in the good sense, is the closest possible explanation.

3. What is a Pedagogical Translation?

Translation is a complex activity which involves linguistic, textual, cultural, communicative and cognitive factors. These factors are all closely intertwined with foreign language learning and teaching. This makes translation a must when learning and teaching languages. Schaffner (2002: 1) believes that there is a link between cognition and social activities while translating a certain textual material, and the fulfilment of translation cannot be done by reference to structural linguistics only without referring to cognition.

Translation is a linguistic process which involves the employment of cognitive processes to be fulfilled. Leonardi (2011) believes that it is a naturally-occurring cognitive activity which is ever-continuing. The translator should resort to the use of cognitive processes when facing different lexical items in the process of translation.

This study focuses on the importance of mental processes in teaching translation and learning it. To shed the light on mental processes which are often ignored in foreign language teaching and learning, especially in the case of translation, is simply a complex of

both linguistic activity and linguistic product. In this context, Leonardi (2011) views that translation is a complex cognitive activity aims at decoding the (SL) textual material transferring both linguistic and extralinguistic elements and meanings into target language textual material and encoding the text into the new language and context.

4. Pedagogy and Translation:

Langer et.al.(2003) emphasize the value of student-centred translation teaching in translation evaluation. They (ibid.17) maintain that "it is the responsibility of translation teachers to help students see alternatives", i.e., the range of possible translations for any given (SL). They believe that the instructor's task is to show the learner various paths and make the latter independent from them. To help the learner be able to adapt and act responsibly in any professional situation.

Newmark (1998) argues that one can no more teach another to be a good translator than to be a good linguist. You can give some practice and someone hints, and show more or less the job can be done. If you are a teacher you can arouse the students' keenness and enthusiasm which may make them capable of making progress under their own stem. In this sense, Newmark (ibid) stresses the necessity of active student participation in the translation class; the role-playing simulation exercises and real or imaginary situations.

Some researchers (Campbell,1991; and Colina,2003) focus on the role of realistic, practice-oriented classroom activities. For example, there is a strong tradition of role playing in language for special purposes. Other researchers and text linguists (Hatim and Mason,1990; McCathy,1991;and Hatim,1997) suggest that translation instruction also includes a focus on text analysis and the characteristic features of different types of texts. Some scholars propose text-type oriented theories of translation in which pragmatic text considerations play a vital role.

On the other hand, other scholars examine problems of student-teacher relations and learning atmosphere in translation training programmes. For instance, House (1997: 56) stresses "students' independence from the teacher; students' participation in the

selection and production of original texts for translation, and the integration of spoken and written language in the translation instruction process". In this domain, Campbell (1998) and (Cuellar,2002) discuss the importance of an appropriate evaluation technique for the translator in training, and criticize traditional testing practices as the easy way out for the translation teacher and as totally inappropriate method for testing acquisition of translating skills.

5."Paraphrasing" as a Tool for Facilitating Translation :

Newmark (1991) introduces the notion of "paraphrase" as an alternative choice to search for thought behind the words. He (ibid: 96) elaborates that the old-information, i.e., the original text, although it is context-dependent, may be paraphrased since its semantic content is already known to the readership; the new information (as he puts it), i.e., the paraphrased text, may be rendered precisely. What Newmark (1991) mentions can be a parallel to what Jacobson (1959) suggests that translators often need instructions and practice concerning the (SL) text. According to him, two forms of the (SL) text should be a regular part of a course in translation. What is called intralingual translation also has a supplementary advantage in learning how to edit a text so as to make the meaningful relations between words and phrases as clear as possible. This process which Nida (2001) called intralingual translation makes it easier and smoother for the translator, specially beginners, to translate confidently and more accurately.

It could be argued that paraphrasing lead to a communicatively acceptable translation . Consider the following part of the (SL) text taken from Al-Arabi Magazine (1997:114):

ذهب العلماء الى ما هو ابعد من ذلك

The scholars went to further of that. (literal translation)

The underlined words in the (SL) should not be rendered into its literal meaning (went to further of that); it does not mean so of course and here the metaphorical meaning is excluded since the translator is simply a beginner not a professional. Now paraphrasing is crucial in this context, the translator should pursue the sense of the (SL) rather than its physical meaning. However, this should be done by the translator here as cautiously as possible without distorting the image which resides in the mind of the (SL) text

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producer. Indeed, such cases require being acquainted with the whole co-text and context in which the text under question occurs. The translator may paraphrase the above (SL) underlined words into اولى العلماء إهتماما (The scientists paid due regard) instead of (The scientists went to further of that), capturing the whole sense of the text.

6. The Present Study:

The study draws on one literary text taken from Al-Arabi Magazine (1997: 103) .The population of this study is forty undergraduate students (3rd stage) and the text is translated by a sample of twenty students. This study aims at exploring the effect of the paraphrasing technique in the translation of undergraduate students of translation. The research question addressed is to what extent that paraphrasing is effective and helpful for the students to come up with a communicatively acceptable translation. This study hypothesizes that the technique of paraphrasing is an effective method to teach translation for undergraduate students, and that the students should learn this technique to promote and improve their translation performance.

In principle, the main task of the translator is to reproduce the most appropriate translation of the (TT). Appropriateness adopted in this study is a textual material to indicate the extent to which a text rendered in the (TL) reflects the semantic and pragmatic context of the source text. In other words, a target text rendering of a source text is considered appropriate in so far as it reflects the intended meaning that holds between propositions constituting a text. To this effect, Van Dijk (1977: 191), says that appropriateness is used to mark "pragmatic success".

To bring the discussion into focus, twenty students of translation were asked to translate one literary text from Arabic into English in one session . In order to avoid recency , three months later, the linguistic and textual elements of the text were paraphrased by the researchers and translated by the same sample of this study in one session. The two versions of each student translator were tested by three professors of translation at the

Department of Translation of Mosul University. The marks given were out of ten. The scoring of the marks were given as follows: 3.5 for coherence , 2.5 for cohesion ,2.5 for grammar and structure , and 1.5 for vocabulary and punctuation. The highest marks were given to coherence and cohesion because they are the cornerstone of text ; coherence refers to the conceptual connectivity of the text whereas cohesion refers to the textual connectivity of the text. In this sense ,if the students conveyed coherence and cohesion into target text , appropriate translation would be achieved.

7. Data Analysis and Results:

In literary text, as is the case in this study, the text producer employs the cohesive devices to indicate the progression of the content and signal how the parts of the text are linguistically connected (cohesion). He also organizes and connects the propositions of the text to indicate how they are semantically and cognitively connected (coherence). Consider the following Original Text taken from Al-Arabi (1997:103) :

الخروج عن المدار

ان انفجار النظرية النقدية و التسليم بالنتائج يعني الايقان بان مؤسسة النقد الادبي قد خرجت عن مدار فلکها الموروث و كفت عن كونها ملكا عينيا بيد النقاد ودخلت طورا جديدا. و لقد ولى العهد الذي كان فيه الحكم على النقد ظهيرا على الادب.

The above text according to Newmark (1991) is the old-information. The text below is the new-information, i.e., the Paraphrased Text, proposed by the researchers, is supposed to be made by the students of translation involved in this study may be as follows :

الخروج عن المؤلف

ان الانتباه الى انتشار النظرية النقدية و الاقرار بنتائج هذه النظرية يعني الاقتناع بان مؤسسة النقد قد خرجت عن نهجها التقليدي . ولم تعد مقتصرة بشكل خاص بيد النقاد لأن هذه النظرية دخلت مرحلة جديدة وهي اشراك النقاد للأشخاص المهتمين بالنقد و لقد انتهى الزمن الذي كان فيه الحكم على النقد يساعد الحكم على الادب.

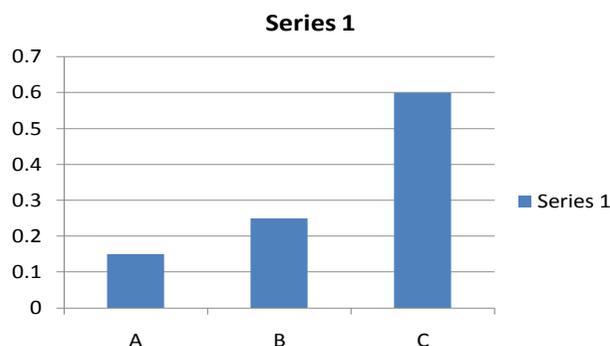
It could be argued that the proposed paraphrased text mentioned above may easify the original one at textual and lexical level . As a

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beginner in the translation field, the student of translation may, after decentering the text (Brislin: 1969) i.e., paraphrasing it (Newmark: 1991), before embarking on translating it would be more coherent and cohesive compared to the original.

A close examination to the marks of the text provided by the three professors of translation revealed that there were three kinds of translation levels; the first level amounted three student translators showed no significant difference as they provided appropriate translation of the original text. In this sense, those students had already paraphrased the source text and come up with a desirable translation. The second level amounted twelve student translators showed significant difference between the translation of the original text and the paraphrased one. In this sense, they had greatly taken advantage of paraphrasing; their renditions of the paraphrased text were appropriate compared to the renditions of the original. The third level amounted five student translators showed slight difference between the renditions of the source text and target text. In this sense, those students could not take advantage of the paraphrasing technique. Consider the chart in below:



Percentages of making use of paraphrasing from Arabic into English

The chart above shows that group A (15%) have already the ability to paraphrase the text ; they have not made use of paraphrasing due to their good linguistic and translational abilities . Group B (25%) , on the other hand, have not been able to take advantage of the process of paraphrasing due to their poor linguistic and translational abilities . Finally, Group C (60%) have taken advantages of paraphrasing in that they produced an appropriate renditions of the text.

8-Conclusions and Implications for Teaching Translation:

This study has concluded that paraphrasing is a useful and helpful technique to improve the translation skills and abilities of the students of translation ,especially the beginners. In order to make this technique applicable and workable, teachers of translation may give their students assignment and recommend them to render it to the (TL). At home ,the students apply the paraphrase method on the text so as to prepare it to be translated. The students, guided by the teacher, make a second (SL) version which is called (new-information) of the first (SL) version which is called (old-information) . They do so by firstly identifying the semantic relations of the textual elements of the text ; detecting the difficult lexical items and phrases within the text; and by paraphrasing them into less complicated , i.e., decoding and easifying the text . By doing so, the (SL) text would be understandable to the student , and ,consequently, appropriate translation would be accessible. Finally, this is a call for teachers and learners of translation to adopt paraphrasing technique as a first step to reproduce a desirable translation ; the researchers propose introducing a basic course in translation studies in the translator education curriculum. In such a course students would gain deeper understanding of professional practices.

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إعادة الصياغة آلياً لتحسين ترجمات طلبة البكالوريوس في الترجمة

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المستخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة تطبيق إعادة الصياغة بوصفها وسيلة لتسهيل فهم النص لدى القارئ، وتعالج عملية الترجمة وعلاقتها في تدريس الترجمة؛ لأنَّ الترجمة سلوك لغويّ، فالعملية الإدراكية للمعلومات من جهة وتدريس الترجمة وتعليمها من جهة أخرى متلازمان في أداء مهمة الترجمة، وعليه تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تسهيل ترجمة العناصر اللغوية والنصية الصعبة الموجودة في النص الأصل عن طريق العمليات الإدراكية التي يقوم بها العصف الذهني لدى المترجم، وتوصّلت الدراسة إلى نتائج تفيد أن إعادة الصياغة طريقة ناجحة في تدريس الترجمة وتعليمها .