

USING KNOW-HOW PRESENTATION IN TRANSLATION CLASSES FOR ENGLISH LINGUISTICS MAJORS

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Abstract: *This study suggests using know-how presentation in translation classes and examines its effectiveness in developing English linguistics majors' translation skills. An experimental research was done in which the control group was taught with common steps of a translation lesson while the experimental group was taught with integrated know-how presentation. A pretest and a posttest were administered to both groups before and after the experimental program to measure the efficacy of know-how presentation in translation classes. A questionnaire and interviews were conducted to the experimental group to investigate students' reaction to the program. The obtained results revealed that know-how presentation did help English linguistics majors develop their translation skills.*

Keywords: *Know-how presentation, translation steps, translation methods, translation strategies, translation evaluation.*

1. Introduction

With the global trade and cultural exchange in the modern world, translation has become an integral part in connecting different countries. In order to facilitate both linguistic and cultural transfer, translators require certain knowledge and skills. Lam Quang Dong (2007) argued that people working in translation field need a wide range of knowledge: language, culture, general knowledge or background knowledge and professional knowledge. They need to be proficient in language, grasp a rich variety of vocabulary, have a thorough understanding of linguistic issues of both languages, have an in-depth insight into the similarities and differences between the two languages not only in grammar but also in terms of semantics and pragmatics.

The knowledge and skills required for a translator poses a major challenge for teaching translation at foreign language departments in general and the Foreign Language Department at Hong Duc University in particular. In reality, our initial survey showed that many translation classes were quite tedious and monotonous with English texts being translated into Vietnamese and vice versa.

In order to create a positive change to translation classes, it is imperative that different teaching methods with various activities be exploited. This article reports an attempt to use know-how presentation as an integrated activity in translation lessons.

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2. The study

2.1. Subjects

The participants were sixty third-year English linguistics majors of Foreign Language Department at Hong Duc University. They were divided into two groups with one served as the control and the other as the experimental group. These students had completed the Translation Theory course in their second year and were taking the Translation 1 course.

2.2. Instruments

In order to find out whether this activity worked well in translation classes and how the students reacted to the experimental program, different instruments were exploited in the study.

Pretest and posttest: A pretest was administered at the beginning of the course before the experimental program to make sure that two groups had the same level of translation competence. At the end of the course, a posttest was conducted to find out whether know-how presentation made any difference to the translation competence of the experimental group compared to the control group. Both tests included texts to be translated from English into Vietnamese and vice versa.

Survey questionnaire and interviews: A small-scale survey questionnaire and interviews were conducted to the experimental group at the end of the semester to investigate into students' reaction to the experimental program.

2.3. Research methods

In order to measure the efficacy of the experimental program, both quantitative and qualitative methods were utilized.

Quantitative method: Results of the pretest and posttest as well as the survey questionnaire were synthesized and compared between the control and experimental groups to find out whether know-how presentation could improve English linguistic majors' translation competence.

Qualitative method: Interviews with the students in the experimental group provided the researchers with raw data for analyzing the students' reaction and attitude to the experimental program.

2.4. Procedure

At the beginning of the semester, the control group were divided into 10 small groups of 3 students. Each group chose one source text in English and one in Vietnamese. The source texts may be articles, short stories, reading passages or other documents with a length of about 300 words. They would be relevant to the topics of the lessons in the syllabus, and have vocabulary of levels from B2 to C1.

These texts were to be sent to teachers for review and approval. When the teacher accepted the group's chosen texts, the groups would work together to determine the know-how, i.e. translation steps, translation methods and strategies, translation evaluation. Then they translated the source texts into the target language.

During the semester, apart from other activities of a translation lesson, a presentation of one group was integrated either at the beginning or the end of the lesson. In the total 13

weeks of the semester, the first two weeks were reserved for the introduction of the intervention program and the pretest. The next 10 weeks, each of which consisted of two lessons, were for presentations with texts translated from English into Vietnamese in one lesson and texts translated from Vietnamese into English in the other. The remaining week was for the posttest and survey questionnaire delivery.

The primary purpose of each presentation was to help students apply theory into practice. Therefore, the contents of the presentation were comprised of translation steps the students followed, methods and techniques they exploited, and how they evaluated their final translation version.

The source text, target language translation, and PowerPoint presentation were to be sent to the teacher and the whole class 2 days before the presentation day. On the day of the presentation, the group members took turns to deliver the presentation. Other groups in the class would give comments on the translation version as well as the presentation itself. Teachers provided final feedback and graded each member in the group.

2.4.1. Translation steps

To ensure that students follow the steps in the translation process, the first part of the presentation required the group to describe the steps the group had applied to proceed with the translation work. Based on the theories about the steps in translation which students had learned in the Translation Theory course, students presented what they actually did in each step.

The following was the teacher’s suggested approach for students to use in their presentations.

Table 1. Translation steps (adapted from Nguyen Quoc Hung’s)

No.	Description	Presenter groups’ expected work
Step 1	Read through	Identify topic of the source text. Identify aim of the source text. Find out main ideas of the source text.
Step 2	Identify difficult vocabulary such as new words, technical terms, or idiomatic expressions.	List the new and difficult words in the source text. Look up the meaning of these words in the target language.
Step 3	Identify sentence structures	Choose 5 significant sentences with different grammar structures in the source text. Analyze the components in these sentences. Find the equivalent structures in the target language.
Step 4	Translate sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph.	Show the translation work to the whole class. Point out the difficulties they encountered when translating. Explain what they had done to overcome these difficulties.
Step 5	Edit the translation using appropriate language style	Point out what sentences were edited to suit the style of the target language.
Step 6	Comments on the translation work	Presenter group self-evaluated their work. Other groups gave comments. Teacher gave final feedbacks.

2.4.2. Translation methods and techniques

Based on translation methods and techniques students had learned in the Translation Theory course, students pointed out what methods and techniques they used in translating the chosen source text into the target language.

The following translation methods of Newmark's (1988b) and translation techniques of Mona Baker's (1992) were a suggestion for students.

Table 2. Translation methods and strategies

No.	Description	Presenter groups' expected work
I. Translation Methods (Newmark, 1988b)		
1	Word-for-word translation	Point out which sentences are translated in which word order is preserved and the words translated singly by their most common meanings, out of context.
2	Literal translation	Point out which grammatical constructions are converted to their nearest target language equivalents, but the lexical words are translated singly, out of context.
3	Faithful translation	Point out which sentences are translated with the attempts to produce the precise contextual meaning of the original within the constraints of the target language grammatical structures.
4	Semantic translation	Point out which sentences are translated with more account of the aesthetic value of the source text.
5	Adaptation	Point out whether the source text is translated into the target text with the freest form of translation, the source culture converted to the target culture and the text rewritten.
6	Free translation	Point out whether the source text is translated into the target text without the style, form, or content of the original.
7	Idiomatic translation	Point out which sentences are translated keeping the 'message' of the original but tending to distort nuances of meaning by preferring colloquialisms and idioms although these do not exist in the original.
8	Communicative translation	Point out which sentences are translated with the attempt 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.
II. Translation strategies (Mona Baker, 1992)		
1	Translation by a more general word	Point out which sentences are translated using this strategy to deal with nonequivalence.
2	Translation by a more neutral/ less expressive words	Point out which sentences are translated using a more neutral/less expressive words.
3	Translation by cultural substitution	Point out which sentences are translated using this strategy which involves replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a target language item considering its impact on the target reader.
4	Translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation	Point out which sentences are translated using this strategy which deals with culture-specific items, modern concepts, and buzz words.

5	Translation by paraphrase using a related word	Point out which sentences are translated using this strategy in which the source item is lexicalized in the target language but in a different form.
6	Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words	Point out which sentences are translated using this strategy when the concept in the source item is not lexicalized in the target language.
7	Translation by omission	Point out which sentences are translated using this strategy in which translators omit some information to avoid lengthy explanations if the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression is not necessary to mention in the understanding of the translation.
8	Translation by illustration	Point out which sentences are translated using this strategy in which the target equivalent item does not cover some aspects of the source item and the equivalent item refers to a physical entity which can be illustrated, particularly in order to avoid over-explanation and to be concise and to the point.

2.4.3. Translation evaluation

The presenter group themselves had to evaluate their own translation version based on the criteria provided by the teacher. Furthermore, after the oral presentation was completed, the rest of the class gave comments on the translation and the presentation itself. The evaluation criteria were based on those of Massoud [4, pp.19-24] and Nguyen Thi Minh Tam et al. [6, pp.90-104].

Table 3. Translation evaluation

No.	Description	Evaluators' work
I.	Criteria for a good translation	
1	The translation is easy to understand	Point out which sentences/parts are easy/not easy to understand.
2	The translation is fluent and neat	Point out which sentences/parts are neat and fluent/confusing and verbose.
3	The translation uses common phrases or idioms	Point out which common phrases or idioms are used.
4	The translation conveys, to some degree, the subtleties of the original text	Point out to what extent the translation can convey the subtleties of the original text.
5	The translation can reconstruct the cultural/historical context of the original text	Point out whether the translation can reconstruct the cultural/historical context of the original text. How?
II.	Translation mistakes and errors	
1	Spelling mistakes	List the spelling mistakes in the translation.
2	Word choice mistakes	List the word choice mistakes in the translation.
3	Grammar mistakes	List the grammar mistakes in the translation
4	Errors in style (commercial, formal, administrative, vocative ...)	Give comments on whether the language style is appropriate? Why?
5	Errors in redundant or missing content	Point out the words/sentences/parts that are redundant or missing.

2.5. Results and discussions

The results of the pretest and posttest administered at the beginning and at the end of the reading course to find out to what extent using group presentation in translation classes can help students improve their translation skills are presented in the following table.

Table 4. Results of the pretest and posttest

Points (/10)	Control group		Experimental group	
	Pretest (%)	Posttest (%)	Pretest (%)	Posttest (%)
8.0 - 10	10.00	13.33	13.33	20.00
6.5 - 7.5	43.33	43.33	26.67	53.33
5.0 - 6.0	30.00	33.33	40.00	20.00
0 - 4.5	16.67	10.00	20.00	6.66

It is clear from the table that both the control and experimental groups have more or less the same level of translation competence in the pretest. However, after the experimental program, the experimental group witnessed better results with more students achieving 8-10 points (20%). The number of the students who received 6.5 - 7.5 points also increased from 26.67% to 53.33%. Fewer students got 5 - 6 points (with the number halved from 40% in the pretest to 20% in the posttest). The number of students with 0 - 4.5 points also decreased significantly from 20% to 6.67%. In the meantime, the results of the control group experienced less change with only 13.33% of the students achieving excellent marks in the posttest as opposed to 10% in the pretest. The number of the students who got marks 6.5 - 7.5 remained the same at 43.33%. As regards marks 5.0 - 6.0, the control group also experienced negligible increase from 30% to 33.33%. The figures for weak marks (0 - 4.5) dropped from 16.67% to 10%. It can be said that the experimental program helped to improve translation skills for the students of the experimental group.

In addition to the tests, a survey questionnaire was also administered to the experimental group to find out how students reacted to the intervention program. The questionnaire was composed of five closed questions. The following table shows the results of the survey.

Table 5. Students' evaluation of the intervention program

No.	Questions	A (%)	B (%)	C (%)	D (%)
1.	<i>How much do you like group presentation in translation classes?</i> A. very much B. much C. not very much D. not at all	16.70	76.67	6.67	0
2.	<i>What do you think of the class atmosphere during lessons with group presentation?</i> A. very interesting B. interesting C. boring D. very boring	6.67	83.33	10.00	0
3.	<i>What can you learn from the presentations in translation classes? (more than one answer can be accepted)</i> A. Better command of your native language B. Better command of your second language C. Better translation methods and strategies D. Better translation evaluation	66.70	63.33	70.00	76.67

4.	<i>What other skills have you improved after the course (more than one answer can be accepted)</i> A. Extensive cultural knowledge in both languages B. Sound research skills (for words, structures, meanings, jargon, background information) C. Attention to details D. Self-motivation and organization	53.30	60.00	63.30	60.00
5.	<i>What difficulties have you encountered in translation classes with group presentations? (more than one answer can be accepted)</i> A. Too much pre-class preparation B. Lack of IT skills C. Not finding the suitable source texts D. Working with lazy partners	16.70	53.33	40.00	26.67

The figures in the table show that most of the students liked know-how presentation in translation classes. 16.7% liked it very much, and up to 76.67% like it much. Only 6.67% did not like it very much. No student stated that they did not like it at all. Similarly, many students remarked translation lessons with know-how presentations are ‘very interesting’ and ‘interesting’ (6.67% and 83.33% respectively). Only 10% found them boring and no student rated them very boring. Moreover, the students also assumed that they had better command of their native language (66.7%), better command of their second language (63.33%), better translation methods and strategies (70%), and better translation evaluation (76.67%). In terms of other skills involved in translation process, the students maintained that they improved their extensive cultural knowledge in both languages (53.3%), sound research skills (for words, structures, meanings, jargon, background information) (60%), attention to details (63.3%), and self-motivation and organization (60%).

However, there still existed some difficulties for students. 16.7% claimed there was too much pre-class preparation. 53.33% lacked IT skills and 40% found it hard to find suitable source texts. 26.67% complained that other members in their group were too lazy to fulfil their duty which delayed the group’s process to complete their presentation as required.

Interviews with the students of the experimental group also reinforced that although there were still some students who were not completely satisfied, most of them agreed that know-how presentation in translation classes helped students to improve their translation skills. They became more autonomous, active and interested in the translation lessons.

3. Conclusion

No one can deny that translation plays an indispensable role in the modern society as an essential means of exchanging information, contributing to the success of economic, political and cultural connection among countries. However, translation work requires intricate knowledge and skills. Training of translators at universities, therefore, needs continuous improvement to meet the rigorous requirements of the job.

Within the scope of this study, the author has proposed using know-how presentations in teaching translation modules for English linguistics majored students at Hong Duc University. This is a solution to help students master the major translation process which involves following the translation steps, applying suitable methods and techniques, as well as evaluating the translation.

An experimental research has been carried out to examine the effectiveness of the intervention program. A pretest and a posttest were delivered to both control and experimental groups before and after the experimental program. A survey questionnaire was also administered to the control group. The obtained results showed that using know-how presentations in translation classes helps students improve their translation competence. Moreover, it helps translation lessons to be more vivid, creating students' positive and proactive attitude to acquiring knowledge.

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