

A Study on the Difficulties Encountered by Trainee Translators when Translating Psychology Related Terms from English to Sinhala with Special Reference to Mental Disorders

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Abstract

Translation, the process of transferring texts from one language to another, can be assumed as a pivotal tool of communication. Specialized translation, a major category under domain-based translation, plays a significant role in producing translations relevant to specific fields such as the economy, history, and psychology. In particular, when translating documents related to mental disorders under psychology, which is categorized under scientific translation, a number of difficulties are often encountered by trainee translators, and that very fact was identified as the research problem. Thereby, this study aimed at discovering the difficulties encountered by trainee translators when translating psychology related terms from English to Sinhala, with special reference to mental disorders, and providing feasible solutions for them respectively. In order to gather data, a qualitative methodology was utilized. Thirty common words related to mental disorders were given to fifteen undergraduates who follow Translation Studies at the University of Kelaniya. It could be observed that the main difficulty occurred in translating psychological terms was not having the exact Sinhala term for the English term and that the confusion was raised when translating terms due to a lack of knowledge in psychology. However, they had employed diverse methods to translate them. Apparently, a majority of English terms were translated by providing some lengthy descriptions in Sinhala. A few words among them were translated into Sinhala by borrowing them from English. In addition, a handful of words had their own equivalences in Sinhala. Thus, it was evident that exploring exact Sinhala terms for the terminology related to mental disorders is a challenging task except on a few occasions. As these terms are originally derived from English, either providing descriptions or loan words remain as the other alternatives. A background knowledge on this specific area is also required to make the process of translation a success.

Key words: loan words, mental disorders, psychology, translation

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