

Issues Faced by the Third year Undergraduate Students in Practicing Interpretation for Translation Methods

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Interpretation is the process of converting an expression delivered in source language into a comparable meaning in a target language either simultaneously in real time or consecutively when the speaker pauses after completing one or two sentences. "Interpretation" is a compulsory subject unit for the third year undergraduates who are reading translation methods in university of Kelaniya Sri Lanka. The unit is being taught for two semesters and the skill of interpretation is tested by a practical session. It covers Sinhalese to English interpretation and vice versa, and the lecture hours cover the theory components and conduct practice sessions by interpreting the Hansard reports. By this study, it was expected to find out the most prominent issues encountered by the undergraduates practicing interpretation. Therefore, a questionnaire was provided to the third year undergraduates who are currently studying interpretation to make a list of issues according to the responses recorded on the questionnaire. Meanwhile, five undergraduate students studying interpretation were interviewed to record their individual issues and they were given few sentences to interpret to identify the issues they face when interpreting these particular sentences. The results indicated that for many undergraduate students, it is difficult to interpret a long and complex statement with speed, while, some have expressed certain difficulties in interpreting technical words, and several students have mentioned difficulty in memorising complex sentences. Significantly, the different sentence structure between Sinhalese and English has created several confusions when interpreting complex sentences. Moreover, homonyms seem to confuse them when a sentence with the same word with different contextual meanings is given to interpret. As a consequence, students tend to have a lesser interest in choosing interpretation as their career path. Thus, possible suggestions were made for the identified issues to assist the students to practice interpretation more effectively and increase the number of students who are interested in becoming interpreters in the future.

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