

Translation as a practical activity to effectively generate equivalences in the process of learning a foreign language

D. Thilini Ferdinando¹

INTRODUCTION

Since Learning a Second/ Foreign Language and Translation are branches of Applied Linguistics, they are inter-connected. When learning a foreign language the student is confronted with new alphabetical symbols, phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic patterns which are totally different to such pattern of learner's first language (L1). Thus, automatically the action of "translation" starts to occur in the brain. The learner tends to think in L1e and transfer the known linguistic patterns or lexis to the new structures of the foreign language. Furthermore, when understanding a statement in the foreign language, the learner strives to find the equivalences in L1 to comprehend it. Accordingly, it is evident that both these components i.e. learning a second/foreign language and translation, are interconnected. On the other hand, proficiency of both source and target languages is required for a successful translation that reflects the main ideas/facts presented in the text derived from the source language. The common phenomenon of both the components is understanding the meaning of a given expression correctly and generating the exact meaning in the target language. This is mostly relevant to the semantics and pragmatics which is pivotal in translation. However, judging by the curricular and course content of many courses on Foreign Language Learning in Sri Lanka not much focus is given to aspects of translation and interpretation. Foreign Language Teaching mostly focus on language and cultural aspects including phonology, morphology, syntax and pragmatics of the particular language whereas the definition of the translation itself prioritizes on semantics "Translation is converting a text written in one language to another language without violating its complete meaning"; as

far as the quality and the success of a translation are concerned, the accuracy of the facts and semantic representation are unavoidable. Securing the semantic representation of a translation involves skills of creatively playing with the language while understanding the subtle turns-twists of the meaning and make them live in the dynamics of the target language. Thus, developing such skills which are particular to the field of translation can be used in teaching and learning a foreign language so as to enhance the language skills of the learner.

PURPOSE

As described above, a given text or an expression cannot always be considered as a static specimen of language, therefore, good language skills include understanding the overall meaning of a given text or an expression owing to the textual and pragmatic meaning. Furthermore, with the number of foreign investors and multi-national companies investing in Sri Lanka, the demand for highly skilled translators and interpreters with foreign language competency has rapidly risen in recent times. Thus, the attempt of this research is to develop translation as a major component of Foreign Language Learning with special focus on enhancing the skill of generation textual and pragmatic equivalences.

METHODOLOGY

The research tries to bring to light the relevance and the significance of generating accurate textual and pragmatic equivalences in the process of language learning and to develop activities based on translation so as to enhance the skill of generating accurate textual and pragmatic equivalences. Under this the research highlights significant strategies that can be utilized in producing a successful translation while overcoming the difficulties encountered with relevant to the recreation of textual and pragmatic equivalences. Also, the research attempts to illustrate the importance of above skills in developing comprehension and speaking skills of the learner.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

Pragmatics means what is beyond the surface meaning of the selected text. Pragmatic equivalence means the equivalence of the implication of pragmatics in the translated text compared to the source text. Textual meaning is what is explicit in the text, on the other hand, pragmatic stands for implicit meaning of the text. Skill of distinguishing between them is a necessary skill for a language learner and could be gained through practical involvement in translation. Accordingly, this study strives to incorporate translation as a major component in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning.

CONCLUSION

The anticipated results and outcomes of the research is to confirm the hypothesis of necessity of improving the skills of generating accurate equivalences in foreign language learning/ teaching and using “translation” as a practical activity in enhancing such skills.

REFERENCES

- [1] Baker Mona,(1992): In Other Words - A Coursebook on Translation. 1sted. Routledge: Oxon
- [2] Bassnet, Susan. (2002). Translation Studies. 3rd ed. Routledge, 2 Par Square Milton Park, Abingdon:Oxon.
- [3] Catford, J. C. (1965), A Linguistic Theory of Translation - An Essay in Applied Linguistics, Oxford University Press: London

KEYWORDS

translation, textual equivalence, pragmatic equivalences, Second/ Foreign Language Learning/Teaching, practical cctivity

¹International Student Affairs Unit, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.
dtm.ferdinando@yahoo.com