The Use of Semantic Translation Strategy in English Learning from the EFL Learners' Perspective.

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Abstract:

The learners' attitudes have a great affect on their consciousness and ability to learn. The high positive attitudes toward a certain strategy would results in creating effective learning process (Büyükyazi, 2010:1). The current study aims at investigating the students' attitudes toward using the semantic translation strategy in English learning. The researcher chose a sample of thirty-five males and females' students from English Department of Misan University as participants. To fulfill the goals of the study, a questionnaire was used. The outcome of the study reveals that the participants in the study have a positive attitude toward using the semantic Translation strategy to learn language skills. Based on the results of the analysis, the participants used semantic translation as a learning strategy to produce, comprehend and remember English. Furthermore, it has also been found that students rely steadily upon semantics translation in the process of learning and acquiring English as a foreign language.

Keywords: translation, semantic translation, English language learning, students' attitudes

استخدام إستراتيجية الترجمة الدلالية في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية من منظور متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

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الملخص :

تؤثر مواقف المتعلمين بشكل كبير على وعيهم وقدرتهم على التعلم حيث تؤدي المواقف الإيجابية العالية تجاه استراتيجية معينة إلى خلق عملية تعلم فعّالة. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى استقصاء مواقف الطلاب تجاه استخدام استراتيجية الترجمة الدلالية في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. اختار الباحث عينة مكونة من خمسة وثلاثين طالبًا وطالبة من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة ميسان كمشاركين في الدراسة لتحقيق أهداف الدراسة وذلك بإستخدام استبيان. تكشف نتائج الدراسة أن المشاركين لديهم موقف إيجابي تجاه استخدام استراتيجية الترجمة الدلالية لتعلم المهارات اللغوية. بناءً على نتائج التحليل، استخدم المشاركون الترجمة الدلالية كاستراتيجية للتعلم من أجل إنتاج وفهم وتذكر اللغة الإنجليزية. وعلاوةً على ذلك، وُجد أن الطلاب يعتمدون بشكل مستمر على الترجمة الدلالية في عملية تعلم واكتساب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الترجمة، الترجمة الدلالية، تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، مواقف الطلاب.

1.1. Aims of the Study

The present study aims at:

1. Exploring the concept of Translation strategies and semantics Translation strategy.

2. Pointing out the semantics translation strategy influence on the students' achievements level in English learning.

1.2 Hypothesis

The use of semantic translation by EFL learners can improve and support their English language achievements.

1.3. The Limitations

The limits of the study are as following:

1. The students of the third year of the English department at College of Education in Missan University.

3. The students are at the Academic year 2020/2021.

1.4. The Procedures of the Study

In order for the aims of the study to be fulfilled, the following procedures are adopted:

1. Selecting a simple of thirty students from the third year students of English department at Miss University. The selected students are studying English as a foreign language.
2. Formulating a questionnaire to explore the students' attitudes toward using semantics Translation strategy method in English language learning.
3. The results of the questionnaire will be analysed and interpreted statistically.

2. Introduction

Many researches were interested in the translation filed. Most of these researchers focused on the errors of learners and their potentials in translating some structures. Interestingly, there were many studies about the how translation is important in the field of teaching English and less on the attitudes of the learners about using semantics Translation strategy. Naturally, individuals tend to behave and perform based on their attitudes and their understanding of the world. These attitudes and ideas have been constructed and built through years along with the different factors influence and have great affect on the behaviours and decisions of people in life. Similarly, in the education field language learners carry attitudes and ideas toward the learning process. Notably, exploring and discovering these unseen attitudes and ideas and making the implicit insights into explicit ones for learners to reflect on, is consider to be a suggested solution to the many problems that learners face during their English language education.

2.1 The Definitions and Importance of Translation

Defining translation can be a little bit tricky because there are so many variable definitions about translation from different perspectives and by various researchers who proposed the definitions about translation in many ways. Catford (1965:20) defines translation as "the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)".

According to (ALD) or Advanced Learner"s Dictionary (2004:1382), "Translation is the process of changing something that is written or spoken into another language". Based on Wiratn's opinion (2003) translation is "a process of transferring message from SL into TL". The term SL refers to the Source Language which the language that tended to be translated. On the other hand, the language that is translated into is called TL (Target language).

Chabban's (1984:5) states that translation is "a finicky job,"since it is not limited a certain scientific rules. Furthermore, it permits the varieties and differences that personalities have. According to Oxford (1990:46) translating is a process of turning the expressions or phrases from the source language into the native language (at different levels, from words and phrases all the way up to whole texts).

Additionally, Cook (2007: 399) stated his perspective as : "Many contemporary learners do not learn English to become monolingual English speakers, but rather to create a bilingual identity". That is to say, learners of foreign languages are more interested in learning a new language for the purpose of international communication instead of the environments of native speakers where there is face-to-face interaction. Such circumstances translation becomes benefiting and correct.

Depending on the above-mentioned definitions, we conclude that translation is a process that concerned with two distinct languages. Source language (SL) is the first language, which considers to be the original language where the data is taken from to be translated. The second one is the target language (TL) in which the data of the source language are translated into.

2.2 Semantic Translation Strategy

Semantic strategy is considered to be the second group in the classification of Chesterman's (1997), based on this classification, the semantic Translation strategy has the following subcategories:

1. **Synonymy**: The first subcategory in this group is the synonym where the translator chose the nearest synonym to the word.
2. **Antonymy**: The second strategy is the antonym where the translator employs the opposite meaning of the word. The selected word (the opposite word) is most likely to merge with negation.

3. **Hyponymy**: In this strategy, the translator uses the large category of a member such as using flower as a synonym for the word "rose". Furthermore, hyponyms are also linked to superordinate term. This term is used to refer a whole category using a more general category. (e.g. *flower* is a hypernym in relation to *rose*).
4. **Converses:** In this strategy, the translator uses a couple of opposites showing the same semantic relationships from the opposite perspectives such as "*send-receive take-give*".
5. **Trope change:** This strategy is also called metaphor or figure of speech. The term trope refers to the process of employing a word or phrase to make a comparison between two unrelated terms to show the similarities between them.
6. **Abstraction change:** Another type of semantic translation strategies is the abstraction change. In this strategy, the translator turns from using abstract expressions to more concrete one or the other way round.
7. **Distribution change:** In this strategy, the translator distributes more than one item that has the same semantic elements.
8. **Emphasis change:** In such strategy, the thematic concentration of the target text in comparison to the source text emphasis is gives either high or low.
9. **Paraphrase strategy:** Finally, in the last strategy and based on the whole source text meaning it makes a liberal approximate translation.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The participants for the study were selected in a random way. The researcher chose a sample of 30 students; twenty of them are females while ten are males. Their ages were between 20 and 25 years. The participants are studying English as a foreign language at Missan University. There was an equal proposition for both males and females. The participants had no experience before in Speaking English with native speakers or in a foreign country. The researcher presented a short instructions disturbing the questionnaires to the participants. The purpose of this instruction is to provide the participants with information about the aims and the nature of this study and about the way the questionnaire should be answered.

3.2.   Data Collection and Instruments

In order to fulfill the goals of the study, the researcher formulates questionnaire. The questionnaire is to measure the attitudes of the students toward the use and the affect of using semantic translation strategy on the students' English achievements. The questionnaire was conducted using simple and clear English words.

The responses to the questionnaire were on the form of Likert scale of 1 to 5. This scale shows the extent to which the participants agree or disagree with the statements in the questionnaire about their attitudes toward using semantics translation strategy. The answers will be represented in numbers, that so to say number one (1) stands for never, (2) stands for generally not true to me, (3) stands for somewhat true, (4) true for me, (5) stands for always true for me.

In order to collect data, the questionnaires are sent online using online platforms to the participants. The researcher made sure to inform the students about the study and what is it about and the way the questions of the questionnaire should

be answered. The students are told to fill the questionnaire with their choices by selecting a number from 1 to 5.

Table (1) Items of the questionnaire

No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Using semantics Translation strategy eases my understanding when I read the textbook.	15%	10.33%	20.00%	33.33%	21.34%
2	When I read the textbook and encounter a word that I do not understand. I translated it using its synonym in English.	11.33%	12.00%	35.11%	25.66%	15.90%
3	If I encounter a difficult and long text in English that I do not understand, I paraphrase it so I can understand it in better ways.	10.11%	15.55%	43.33%	12.35%	18.66%
4	When I forget I meaning of certain word during a conversation I remember the	16.55%	12.33%	45.00%	15.35%	10.77%
	opposite of word, which helps me, recall the meaning of the word.					

5	The use of semantics Translation strategy helps me to remember the words and the lessons even after it is finished.	12.33%	10.77%	45.35%	16.55%	15%
6	I face difficulties in learning English when I do not use semantic translation strategy.	12.00%	11.33%	35.66%	25.11%	15.90%
7	I believe that everyone should use semantic Translation strategy to improve his or her understanding during learning English.	10.33%	15.00%	33.33%	20.00%	21.34
8	Using abstraction change strategy helps me learn English idioms and expressions.	12.33%	10.77%	45.00%	16.55%	15.35%
9.	Using trope change helps me to get a better understanding of English texts and phrases.	15.33%	16.55%	40.11%	24.67%	3.34%
10	When the teacher uses semantic translation strategy	9.55%	14.45%	36.76%	23.11%	16.13%

	to explain the instructions, I understand the instructions much better.					
11	I learne and memorize more vocabulary when translate words into their semantic meanings.	17.55%	10.00%	32.67%	20.55%	19.23%
12	Using semantic translation strategy helps to improve my reading abilities.	14.45%	9.55%	36.11%	23.76%	16.13%
13	I get a better reading comprehension in English when I translate using semantic translation strategy.	10.77%	12.33%	45.55%	16.00%	15.35%
14	My writing skills improved when I started to use converses semantic translation strategy.	12.67%	14.33%	36.00%	30.00%	7%
15	I would recommend English learners to use semantic Translation strategy to improve their language's achievement.	12.77%	10.33%	35.55%	21.00%	15.35%

No.	Scale	Percentage

1	Never	12.85%
2	generally not true to me	12.37%
3	Somewhat true	37.70%
4	True for me	21.59%
5	Always true for me.	15.11%

The scale
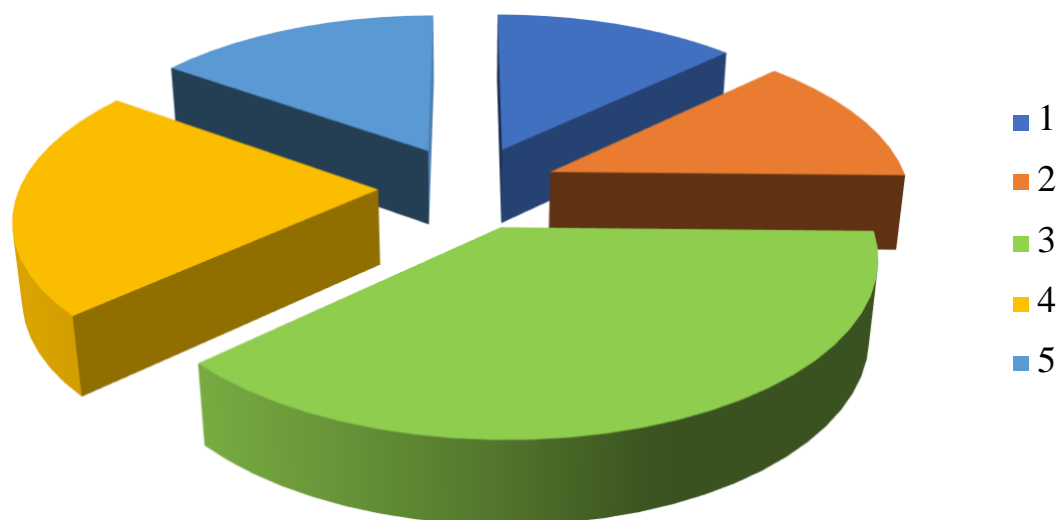
Results

The results of the study revealed that students of English as a foreign language employed semantics translation strategy during their English lessons.The students who participate in the study used semantic translation strategies as a

learning strategy. They employed this strategy while learning English to understand, produce, recall English. Mostly, they used semantic translation strategies when they encounter words that are vague or when they face difficulty in comprehending them. In addition, using synonyms is one of the frequently used semantic translation strategies. Another semantic translation strategy employed by the participants and frequently used by them is the paraphrasing strategy where the students use it to comprehend a certain text, idioms, phrases, and grammar.

Therefore, semantic translation strategies are employed to balance for their deficient knowledge in English, and to self-evaluate their English skills.

Conclusion

The present study is dedicated to examine the students' attitudes toward using semantic translation strategies in improving their English achievements. Based on the gathered results, it has been found that translation though it is considered to be one of the linguistics tools for learning and practicing language, the learners have a completely different point of view. The outcomes of the study reveal that most of the participants agreed that they employed semantic translation strategy to learn English language skills. Furthermore, the learners showed high positive attitudes toward using semantic translation strategies. This indicates that semantic translations broadly used by the foreign language learners during their learning process. Additionally, semantic translation strategies are apparently used frequently as technique for practicing language for many EFL students.

One of the noticeable findings of the study is that it revealed the need for the use various semantic translation strategies by learners to get a better comprehension and understanding of the target language. Students even without the awareness of the teacher or the instructor can employ semantic strategies. Therefore, it is important for the teachers to know about the students' attitudes to encourage them to use it more openly and consider it as an efficient tool and strategy for levelling up their English achievements. Furthermore, students and learners' attitudes should be taken into consideration.

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