
RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Utility of Sight Translation Cognitive Teaching Methods in Its Teaching to B.A. Students: A Case Study in Qassim University - Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

The present study is an attempt to determine the effect of teaching sight translation to the students of the undergraduate level at Qassim. The discussion and development of the phases and stages of teaching sight translation (ST) compared to other types of interpretation, such as simultaneous interpretation and consecutive interpretation, reveals its utility and effectiveness. The study claims the process of sight translation to be more effective than the other two types. The students call for the use of written material that they consider helpful and not distracting. This study used the descriptive method to fulfil its aims. There were about 14 male students in the 8th level of Qassim University in Saudi Arabia who participated in the study. The students were requested to answer questionnaire questions aimed at pointing out the difficulties and challenges they might face as students of the B.A. in English language and Translation while studying sight translation. After an examination, the students of Qassim University were asked to express their opinion on a sight translation text of 200 words. The results show that the Saudi dialect has an impact on the output. However, the majority conducted the test with high training skills. Some exercises proved that focusing on personal capabilities such as the tone, the speed of the speaker, and the emotions helps develop the teaching of sight translation. These exercises also emphasize that sight translation must be taught parallelly with the other modes and types of interpreting, as sight makes the obvious link between a written text and the oral aspect and feature of the other types.

KEYWORDS

Sight translation, Sight interpretation, Training methods, Trainee interpreter, Community interpreting, shared attention, public facilities

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1. Introduction

Sight translation is considered, in some countries, as an important process in interpreting courses due to its application in public service institutions such as courts, hospitals, and other public facilities. Nevertheless, articles on sight translation teaching and methods of application compared to the other two major types of interpreting to know consecutive and simultaneous interpretations need more research. Sight translation gained status and is considered as a type side by side with these two major ones.

It is taught in universities in the preparation of interpreters in prerequisite courses to interpretation ones or parallelly to them. As well, programs focus on it compared to sight interpretation (SI). Sight translation (ST) is *"the process of reading a text with eyes by an interpreter and interpreting it simultaneously into a target language. There is a slight difference between sight translation and sight interpretation: this 'type is also called 'at sight translation', or 'on sight translation'. Nevertheless, it is referred to as 'sight interpreting' when it is a mode of simultaneous interpreting done in a booth with a written document [and listens to a specific speaker who reads the same text used by the interpreter to help him/her in fulfilling the work of interpretation]. It is called 'sight translation' when an interpreter reads with his/her eyes a text and interprets it into a TL. Called 'translation' due to the existence of the written*

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document. Mainly it is practiced in courts and other PSI (Public Services Institutions)" (See author, (BHSS). No. 24 (1). July (2020). (pp. 28-41). 2048-1268)

The author also writes: *"The SL, the units of which are transferred in the sight translation process, should be always written; whereas the output is oral: the other language into which the process of translation or interpreting constitutes the TL. The latter is produced by an interpreter as if he/she is doing simultaneous interpreting, but after reading a text with his/her eyes and reproducing it into a TL in the form of speech in the language of the customer or the organizer of the event, either a courtroom, a hospital, a chamber of commerce, a university or any public Institution. So, a specific text is converted by an interpreter while reading it with his/her eyes and conveying it immediately into a TL."* (Ibid)

Teaching sight translation necessitates focusing on a written text where the interpreter cares about the meaning and the context of the subject to interpret, he/she as well transfers the context of the source message into the target language accurately. Memorizing source text read with the eyes and not being affected by it while converting it into a target language poses a big problem for trainee interpreters and even for old ones. It is challenging for the simple operation of distraction that might happen during the process while the interpreter sight translates the text. Moreover, some trainee interpreters, as the case of those of undergraduate students, face share attention problems: see and read a text in the language (A) and convert it into the language (B) some are confused and may read and produce language (A) instead of language B.

1.1. Importance of the Problem

The contacts between humans of different levels and languages, the conflicts that may rise among them and between them, peace relations, and commodity and goods exchanges and trade relations need the transfer via languages. The importance of sight translation, as with any other type of interpretation or translation, is important. Consequently, its training becomes a necessity. Yet, this training became institutionalized. It is conducted in Institutions of translation, colleges, and interpreting schools. Here comes the utility of training students on sight translation, e.g., at Qassim University. As the reader will see in this article, it is done in class, however, it has links with all types and modes of interpretations as well as those of translation: the oral aspects and the written ones. So, the preparation should forecast and expect the potential and future challenges that may face the interpreter who had been a trainee.

There are many types of research done in the field of sight interpreting and sight translation worldwide. Nevertheless, the present article will look at sight translation training tests as the major pillar that permits us to communicate by shortening the distances regarding translation and interpreting. Due to the simple fact that sight translation has joint characteristics: its base is written but the product is oral. In other words, its base or the source language is a written document, yet the output of this specific text is oral or a type of interpreting which is sight translation. This type will aim at unveiling the utility of its process and methods through sight translating and sight interpreting and their uprising in the face of consecutive interpretation. As the application of simultaneous interpreting skills does sight translation, the purpose of the training will be fruitful in joining the said skills through intensive training to students. Other important themes of the present study will be disclosed by showing the effectiveness and usefulness of sight translation to the students. Some respond actively and with high joint attention.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Sight Translation

In an earlier study carried out by this author, this type is defined as follows: *"It is also called 'on sight translation', or 'at sight translation'. However, when it is done from a booth by a simultaneous interpreter who reads, with his eyes, a document and interprets it immediately and instantaneously, it is called 'sight interpreting (sight simultaneous interpreting)'".* (See Author in the BJHSS, (Jul. 2020, Vol. 24(1)

Other forms of interpreting are modes or modalities such as: Lambert S. writes, *"The ability to have one's attention divided between different synchronous tasks has been explained by three hypotheses"* (2004).

In the present study, the author will focus on psychology studies or shared attention methods. Some joint attention ideas may be called as the written text represents a speaker whose role is played by the trainee interpreter while he is reading a text silently. Some others wrote about the different types of interpreting. VIEZZI, M. (1989) affirms: *"In interpreter training, sight translation may be encountered as early as the admission ..."*. Others such as WEBER, W.K. (1990) tackled the importance of sight translation in an interpreter training program.

As sight translation shares one characteristic with translation, methods of translation scholars will be referred to briefly in this study. Mainly those of Nida, are adopted by the author in refereeing to the equivalences and terminologies used in the samples of texts given to the students.

3. Method

The method used in this study is descriptive. It uses the analysis processes to discuss what the researcher means by 'sight translation' and what scope it offers after training students, as will be exposed in the present study, which describes some of the major principles discussed in training in sight translation. More precisely, the study proceeds to sight translation methods by investigating them in English/Arabic language examples. Some scholars of translation see it as a process of reading. The study overviews that have been made by students to fulfil the training tests. For so doing, the study investigates other related modes of interpreting to clarify and describe the product and process of sight translation. The attempts of this type, which sometimes become a modality, aim to determine the expected results of such a training on sight translation and how it will be useful for future interpreters.

Future research may focus on sight interpreting instead of sight translation, using statistical methods. However, the present descriptive approach developed hereinafter looks at finding answers to the question of 'the Utility of Sight Translation Cognitive Methods in Its Teaching to B.A. Students: A Case Study in Qassim University - Saudi Arabia'.

4. Assumption and Analysis

Many scholars wrote about sight translation or sight interpretation. It shares the writing aspects and features with translation. So, it is called 'sight translation'. And as the process of its production is oral, so it is called 'sight interpreting' as a science and sight interpretation referring to its production.

Some problems that encounter trainees at the beginning of the training on sight translation is due to its multiplicity of skills needed to perform it. The trainee must apply the skill of reading, but with eyes, then reproduce a translation synchronized with the step of reading, thus he uses the skills and competencies of an interpreter. A middle step is to memorize the terms and ideas of the sight translated text. This process approaches sight translation to consecutive interpreting. To train students, there are some requirements and qualifications that the trainee should have. This shift from level to level and the use of many skills, at the same time, is enhanced by its being a mode at a time or a type. It is worth mentioning that some researchers do not distinguish between modes and types of interpreting and speak about them as if they are the same. However, the author of the present article distinguishes between modes and types. Sight translation as (1) a type. (2) a Mode. Sight interpreting is considered as a mode: *"when practiced in a booth; here the author calls it 'sight simultaneous interpreting'. (...) It is done when a speaker gives his/her speech in written to the interpreters, via or through the Conference Director or the Secretariat of a certain conference before delivering it."* (Author, 2020). The interpreter from a booth converts the speech simultaneously with the aid of a written speech. He/she reads the text with the eyes and at the same time reproduces it for the audience. This makes sight translation a mode because it is done under the umbrella of simultaneous interpretation.

When it is practised at a public facility or institution such as courts without being in a booth or without using any other tool such as a cell phone or a tablet it is considered as one of the major types of interpreting, to know, consecutive interpreting, simultaneous interpreting and sight translation.

To practice sight translation as said above, the interpreter must have certain qualifications. The sight translation interpreter must have a good background in his/her working SL and the TL, to speak and use them fluently. The interpreter must also know the subject matter to sight translate and know the cultures of the languages of his/her work.

4.1. Sight Translation Exercise

The texts used by students in this training process and exercises vary from one another. Some students may have the same text or one like it. Timewise texts rarely surpass 3-4 minutes. These texts are on interpretation, so their terminologies are not so specialized. Students are familiarized with them since the beginning of the course.

The trainer or teacher, who is the author, sight translates a text of about 175-250 words or more before the students as an example. All students are asked to focus on him: and have joint attention. Then they are asked to focus on a sheet of paper or a page chosen randomly from the book they study. This book is collected from various articles on interpreting such as consecutive, simultaneous, and sight interpreting as well as chuchotage, retour, cheval, and anticipation on interpreting. The purpose is to draw their attention to focusing on a written text to prepare themselves for the training on sight translation, of these 14 students of Gassim University. The second phase: Students are given a text of 150-200 words. All students are asked to follow their colleagues' sight translation with their similar copies.

In part three of the training, the teacher, or author, makes comments on all the work done by the students, and gives them marks, if necessary, out of 5. These points or marks count on the final examination. All marks vary between 3-5.

Students are filmed by the teacher (recorded) using a cell phone. These short videotapes are to be used as an archive or notebook for them. They could be checked back and discussed, while playing on the projector of the classroom of the laboratory of interpreting. The videos show and prove the efficiency or not of the sight translation class.

It is worth mentioning that all 14 students are on levels 7-8, of fourth-year English and translation program, offered by Gassim University. Their course is entitled 'Interpreting ENG492'. Its section varies according to the term, which is of 14-15 weeks including,

before amended to be of 10 weeks, and three terms. The present study is carried out through the 2-semester program. The mother tongue of all the students is the Arabic language, the second language is English. The sight translation work is done from English into Arabic their mother tongue.

Some students were shy and asked for extra time or the changing of the text that was given to them randomly. As the teacher chooses a simple text with which all students may acquainted, no extra text is given. Sometimes, as in the training of consecutive interpretation, topics, and issues are drawn by a lot. The result of the present study is given theoretically herein and not calculated by statistics means. Maybe further research on the subject-matter will elucidate the issue by contrastive studies or new ones on the same issue.

A text of about 200 to 250 words is given to the trainee. The text is derived from the textbook specified in the course specification of the College language and Humanities (former Science and Arts), department of English and Literature (former English and translation). Sometimes, texts are diversified to train the students on multiple texts with different styles. The steps are as follows:

- The trainee is given the text to familiarize himself with it by scanning it or reading it silently for about 2 minutes maximum
- As in consecutive interpreting, the trainee or student should try to identify the difficult terms, if any. The trainee may face problems due to difficulties of expressions or vocabulary. So, he should depend on the context to resolve the issue. But, normally, the exercise or examination on sight translation should be according to the level of the trainees and students.
- It is preferable not to focus on notetaking, except in the case of difficult terminologies or expressions.
- Then the trainee or student is asked to sight translate the text. He will have about three minutes to do so. All students participate in this exercise. The choice of the fundamental text is made by the trainer (author), who will split the texts and give numbers according to the number of books from which these texts were derived. Then, each student or trainee will choose a number. The sight translation is recorded by the trainer (author) for grading and as a proof in case one context the marks given to him.
- The recording is made by video and stocked as if it is an examination paper. After the examination or exercise, these videos should be deleted.
- The trainer should count the total number of minutes accorded to the students plus the intervals and multiply that by the number of the students or trainees. This will permit the trainer or instructor to calculate the total time of the process. Some sessions extend for more than four hours. In the case the number of students is 20-30 students, examinations are passed in two days.
- The trainee students are advised to scan the text and apply some linguistic skills to try to memorize the general idea of the text. In the case the text is medical or technical or otherwise, students may check out some terms. This is rarely used in exercises. The purpose is to use this method of terms checking and dictionary consulting in their future life if necessary. But normally, the process passes without using dictionaries.
- It worth mentioning that the entire process of translation production is made from English into the mother tongue of the students, which is the Arabic language. In some cases, the trainer uses a translation method towards the foreign language: Arabic English.
- During this process, the instructor (author) will take notes and remarks for grading.
- The trainer should follow innovations and new technologies and allow the use of new devices in the sight translation process. *"The same also appears to apply to interpreter training: technological advances in training have usually been motivated by a desire for enhancement of pedagogical clarity, better or "easier" teaching and, as a consequence of the last two, superior interpreting performance by novices."* (Orlando, Marc, 2015)

5. Conclusion

This study tackled sight translation as conducted in (QU). Its purpose is to help future sight translators or interpreters to graduate with a high level of training and work at courts or other public service institutions. Yet, it would be better that the trainee follows higher education in the field of interpreting and translation to ameliorate and enhance his qualification and meet the international requirement for the work. The study also aimed at the development of the competencies of sight translators and interpreters and their techniques. The present study had other purposes including to suggest intensive training on sight translation to enable the undergraduate students to develop their potential as sight translators or interpreters. The trainer also can use new methods, techniques, and tools. The recorded session may be used to check out points of weaknesses and interpretation shortcomings and rectify any anomalies in the coming sessions. One of the results revealed the need for the study is to continue teaching students sight translation from English into Arabic. Some students had linguistic problems in reproducing the target text (TT), which is in Arabic. Others are influenced by the Arabic language which is manifest in their reformulation and production of the sight translated text. Trainees or students make sentences based on literal translations and or calques. Repetition of the exercises as proposed above may help in the enhancement of the training on sight translation.

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