

Some ways to improve Vietnamese - English Translation

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Abstract: Translation is one of the most indispensable skills in transferring messages across the languages. Translation creates opportunities for people over the worlds to share the viewpoints, scientific achievements and so on. Translation is also an important subject helping students improve professional communicative, international and cultural understanding. Through Vietnamese-English translation, students know thoroughly about English and Vietnamese. This article aims to provide some ways to get a better Vietnamese-English translation version for students. They are (1) reading English book, bilingual book, news, magazines; (2) studying in group; (3) watching film with English subtitles; and (4) practicing exercises.

Keywords: Translation, way, solution, students

1. Introduction

In today's globalization and internationalization, English becomes a common language which helps people understand each other in many fields. There are more requirements for Vietnamese to have expert English skills, especially translation skill is considered as a bridge, connecting Vietnam with partners, enhance the international economy, and exchange culture with other countries around the world. Therefore, the demand of professional translation is getting more necessary than ever.

According to Catford (1965), translation is the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language. Translation is a synthesis of knowledge about grammar, vocabulary, cultural knowledge, personal acumen, etc. So, a translator needs to have good knowledge of both the source and target languages to transmit the writer's intension, original thoughts and opinions in the translated version as precisely and faithfully as possible.

Translation is essential to learn, but it does not mean it is simple for learners. Many Vietnamese people have faced with challenges when translating mother tongue into English. This study mainly focuses on finding out some useful solutions to improve translation skills.

2. Some ways to improve Vietnamese-English translation

2.1. Translation difficulties

Translation is a complex process so students need good knowledge about the target language. The number of document, material and news which are translated is more numerous day by day. If students want to improve their translation skill, they have

to find their own problems in translating. Ghazala (1995) argues that, "a translation problem is any difficulty which makes us stop translating to think about it." Students tend to make common mistakes on vocabulary, grammar, and culture when doing translation from Vietnamese into English.

2.1.1. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is very important when studying a foreign language. Good knowledge about vocabulary helps students understand foreign language easier. According to Zimmerman (1997), "Vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to the typical language learners." Hence, when communicating with others by English, students need to have wide vocabulary to be able to understand what people intend to convey. Besides, according to Wilkins (1972), "without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed." English vocabulary is regarded as the greatest language problem of students. There are some problems as lack of vocabulary, word choice and word meaning.

2.1.2. Grammar

Each language has its own grammar. Grammar structure is necessary for students when translating. According to William (2005), "Grammar is a study of the structure of the language and describes the way of putting words together to make meaningful sentences." Knowing about grammar offers a window into the human mind to know how to build sentences. In fact, grammar has both form and meaning, it makes not only the rules how to form words but also concerns with the meaning of the language. Translating from Vietnamese into English has the grammatical difficulties such as word order,

noun phrase, relative clause and tense.

2.1.3. Culture

Translation is always influenced by two cultures. Culture involves typical things that belong to both the matter and the spirit. Culture is usually complex and can be understood as the total set of beliefs, attitude, customs, behavior, social habits, etc. of members in a particular society. Cultural untranslatability is mentioned as “situational text that are referred to in an original are absent in the culture of translating language.” (Mona and Gabriela, 2012). Each nation has its own culture so there must have suitable changes in translation with the culture of the target language. For this reason, students usually meet the cultural difficulties about lack of culture and cultural substitution.

2.2. Some ways to improve Vietnamese-English translation

Translation is a difficult subject and students also recognize that it is necessary to have some good ways to learn this subject well. 50 juniors majoring in English at a University in Cantho city are invited to suggest ways to get good translation version. Their ages range from 21 to 23. They all speak Vietnamese as their mother tongue and English as a foreign language. They have already studied Translation Theory and Translation Practice. Therefore, English-majoring juniors are the most suitable participants. They get many challenges in translation process, so their suggestions would be better than others.

2.2.1. Reading book

Most students think that learning more vocabulary is the good way to overcome lacking of vocabulary and choosing suitable words can avoid ambiguity and can help them translate better. Enlarging vocabulary is necessary. Students can learn more vocabulary by reading books. 30% of participants think that reading book is good for translation. While reading books students can easily pick up new words. Then students look up them in dictionary to know word meaning. There are many kinds of books in the bookstores, so students need to choose suitable books for themselves. It is also necessary for the students to try to create a habit of regular reading newspapers, magazines, articles or news on the Internet. They can be the best choice for students because they are understandable and close with general Vietnamese and particularly students. In addition, they can enlarge cultural knowledge via the stories. Students should find to read suitable books to improve their

translation skill.

Besides, culture is also a problem which most of students are hard to overcome, so students believe that reading bilingual book is good for translation. Bilingual book is a book to express in two languages and it has many advantages for students in learning English and especially translation. Students can read bilingual books to improve translation ability because it supplies much knowledge about vocabulary, grammar, culture and ways of translation. Reading bilingual books also helps students correct their mistakes about grammar. They can learn some new grammar structures. Thanks to reading, students not only enlarge their vocabulary but also have more background knowledge about aspects that are strange with them.

Moreover, to improve Vietnamese-English translation, reading bilingual book helps students to recognize the differences between English and Vietnamese. Students can avoid the common mistakes in translation process. Students should search and update the information about the second language to widen their culture knowledge. When having a good knowledge about culture, students can translate exactly and naturally.

2.2.2. Studying in group

Only 16% (the lowest percentage) of students agree that studying in a group can improve translation skill. In fact, studying in group bring many benefits. Studying in groups help students improve grammatical knowledge through discussing and exchanging knowledge together and then they can choose the most suitable structure for their versions. The grammatical structure in English is a lot of difficulties. So, with the assistance of the members in group, it is easy to choose the right structure that makes the translation script more and more perfectly. In addition, no one can master all fields, working in group gives students a chance to support each other about the ways to translate and it is a good place to exchange ideas freely that motivate students study better. In short, if students know how to listen to members in group, they have a good version in translation process.

2.2.3. Watching films with English subtitle

18% of students thought that watching films with English subtitle was good. It is so interesting when watching films with English subtitle, it is a good way for students to learn translation, especially cultural problem. There are many benefits from this way, it

is both relaxing and studying time. In fact, it helps students to expand both vocabulary and cultural knowledge to translate better. When students watch Vietnamese film with English subtitle, they can observe the ways to use grammatical structures such as tense, word order, relative clause and so on. In addition, students can learn many things about the culture of the other countries. From there, they may compare the cultural differences from the film.

2.2.4. Practicing

Grammatical structure in Vietnamese is different from English. Thus, this is a big obstacle for students in translation process. There were 36% (the highest percentage) of the students who agreed that practicing was a good way to improve translation. Since all strategies studied at school are only the theory, practice is really necessary. If students try to do exercises regularly, their grammatical knowledge in English is better. Students can enrich their vocabulary and they also become more flexible in using grammatical structure. Finally, students can easily solve the troubles about word order, noun phrase, and relative clause, tense and so on due to practice exercises a lots.

2.3. Steps to translate well

Translation is one of a difficult subject. If students want to improve their translation skill, they need to know the ways to translate exactly. The five below steps help students to translate well.

Step 1, reading clearly before translating. It means reading many times to understand deeply the sentence or the paragraph. From there, students can determine good tense to translate. In addition, the translation has the cultural factors, reading helps to translate clearly the meaning then having a better translation version.

Step 2, identifying objects who read the translation. This objects can be children or adults so, students need to know the ways to translate accordance with age, job and sex of each object.

Step 3, choosing specialized word. Each field has particular style, so students have to consider the fields which the translation version belongs to. It is needed to choose specialized word exactly depending on the fields such as culture, education, polity, finance and so on.

Step 4, looking for reference materials. When translating, students will meet some difficulties about vocabulary, grammar and specially culture; sometimes students cannot overcome it because it

is so difficult. Students should look for relevance materials to know how to translate. If possible, students can ask someone who have knowledge about the fields.

Step 5, rereading to find mistakes, then edit to have a perfect translation version.

3. Conclusion

Translation is one of the most important skills, but studying it is not easy; students have many problems about vocabulary, grammar and culture in translation process. Some basic ways as reading English book, bilingual book, news, magazines; studying in group; watching film with English subtitles and practicing exercises will be useful for students to overcome their difficulties.

Students should enlarge knowledge about vocabulary, grammar and culture by reading English book, news, magazines, bilingual books. Besides, students should practice more exercises and study in group. These help students enlarge social knowledge and imitate writing style to translate better. In addition, watching film with English subtitle helps students learn many new words and enrich cultural knowledge.

In short, translation is considered as a bridge between people who live in different nations. In other words, translation helps to remove the language barrier and make people closer to each other. Translation skills are becoming more and more popular in numerous universities as well as in practical areas. Students should focus on developing their translation skills as soon as possible so that they can set the path for the global success in the modern time.

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