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THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSLATION OF ENGINEERING TERMINOLOGY IN ESP CLASSES AND THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE LECTURERS

Abstract

As ESP lecturers to engineering students, we have often been in the dilemma of whether to provide students with source language definitions of the terms or to switch to target language equivalent. The first is most of the time provided by the textbooks in the form of glossaries by the end of the book while for the second one, additional work is required by the lecturers who have to consult bilingual terminology dictionaries and be well-versed in the respective fields even though not pertaining to it. The issue is if such dictionaries exist per each field of Engineering in Albania and if not, what solution should be given to it. Consultancy with the experts of the field is another way and the easiest used so far is making use of loan words which again puzzles the student in understanding the concept.

Keywords: translation, terminology, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), challenges.

Introduction

Based on the so far experience of teaching ESP, coming up with an Albanian equivalence to certain terms, apart from defining them in English, is very important to the better acquisition of language in

general and the lexical content of specific fields of study. Translation, defined by J.C. Catford¹ as the placement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL) is a complex process which has to stick to three main concepts; that of a translator who has to do with a proficient command of source and target language and a very good command of the subject matter. Precision is key to translation especially when it comes to engineering branches since mistakes might lead to costly errors, huge damages, life-threatening situations etc. However, such effects are present when dealing with engineering documents, whereas, in teaching, improper translation leads to misleading concepts and information for the student. People can also graduate in Engineering translation which is the ideal career path for those wanting to work with specific engineering documents such as manuals, labels, technical reports etc. Translation in ESP classes was considered for many years as a deterrent to communication Olivia Chirobocea-Tudor², a restrictive activity lacking creativity as strongly related to the teacher-centered approach. With the introduction of the Communicative approach and separation from the Grammar translation method, the focus switched to the definition of the words, thus encouraging real-life communication in the target language. Nowadays translation is considered as a teaching aid since it really helps students in a better comprehension and acquisition of specific terms as stated by Vanessa Leonardi³ maintains that translation is more and more frequently evaluated as a positive form of interference aimed

¹ Catford J.C. A linguistic theory of translation. Oxford University Press-1965.

² Chirobocea, O. A Case for the Use of Translation in ESP Classes. *Journal of Languages for Specific Purposes*. – Issue 5. 2018. – P. 68.

³ Leonardi, V. Teaching Business English Through Translation. *Journal of Language & Translation* – 10–1. 2009. – P. 143.

at enriching rather than harming learners' competence and performance skills. This is the reason why in certain situations, switching to translation in ESP classes is inevitable even though sometimes for engineering students the terms might be the same as in English since it is an international language and a language from which Albanian has borrowed many terms, especially in the field of technology or the recently developed fields of knowledge. Based on a study on translation and translation activities in a language classroom done by Cenaj, M.¹ most students found the use of native language in ESP classes practical and over 50% of the teachers included in the study used translation activities mostly for lexical units but rarely.

Method and material

The method used in this paper is the observational and descriptive one, based on the first-hand experience of over 10 years of working with ESP textbooks and facing the challenges of terminology translation. The corpora used is taken from the English engineering textbooks and the bilingual dictionaries.

How is the translation process dealt with in ESP classes?

With translating in ESP classes, we infer the switch into the Albanian equivalent terminology related in our case to the various engineering fields since the level of English in those classes is upper intermediate or advanced, thus translation is done in accordance with the students' needs. There is no need to translate grammar or sentence structures anymore because the students at this point are more than familiar with the grammatical structures in English and they might even be at a point in which they think in English. Viktorija Mažeikienė² refers to Kavaliauskienė and Kaminskiene

¹ Cenaj, M. Reconsidering translation as a learning tool in ESP classroom. *European Journal of Literature and Linguistics*, 2016. – P. 25.

² Viktorija Mažeikienė. Translation as a method in teaching ESP: an inductive thematic analysis of literature. *The journal of Teaching English for*

who maintain that translation activities are especially important at intermediate and advanced levels as translation is regarded as the fifth skill alongside reading, speaking, listening and writing. This is why translation in such cases is needed only when encountering specific terms in English. Some of the techniques used while translating engineering terms are the borrowing technique, adaptation technique and common equivalent technique.

There are many fields such as the one of Information technology, Telecommunication, Electronics etc., in which terminology has mostly been borrowed from English language because there is no Albanian equivalent for that, or the term has been internationalized.

Some examples of words borrowed from English and translated and used the same in Albanian with sometimes minor phonetic adaptation, the spelling of the words or morphological changes are: desktop, motherboard, pointer, router- adapted in Albanian as ruter, pixel or (piksel), shortcut, software or (softuer), videoconference or (videoconference), website, Bluetooth, hotspot, laser or (lazer), wi-fi, firewall, host computer-(kompjuter host) etc.

The above-listed terms are to a certain degree very familiar to many people because even though they belong to the IT field, those words with the advancement of technology are widely used in everyday life. However, when used in textbooks and by the future specialists their concept must be very clear, and since there is lack of Albanian equivalent terms, their English definition is crucial to their better acquisition and in this case, that is the only teaching technique used alongside the use of pictures, photos or schemes when possible.

Acronyms and abbreviations are used the same such as HTTP, hyperlink, HTML, POP3, URL, RAM, SIMM, VPN, PIN, ISP and this is obvious since it is technical language used worldwide

and some terms have been internationalized for the sake of ease of communication among specialists. Consequently, they are used the same even in Albanian but read and pronounced in accordance with the Albanian phonetic system and not the English one.

Some terms are used either in English or sometimes given the Albanian equivalent because there is lack of standardization. Such are these terms: attachment-bashkelidhje, database-bazë të dhënash, email-poste elektronike, laptop-kompjuter portative (rarely used like this), mouse-miu (almost never used despite the Albanian translation even in the informatics bilingual dictionary), wireless-pa kabël (rarely used), broadband-brezgjere, download-shkarkim, upload-ngarkim, ebook-liber elektronik, ejournal-reviste elektronike, voicemail-email zanor, integrated circuit-qark I integruar, clip art-figure, kompjuter desktop- kompjuter tavoline, etc.

For other terms belonging to 'consolidated' fields, if they may be considered so, switching to Albanian translation is very easy because their equivalents already exist in Albanian as the fields of study are older than that of IT or telecommunication. Examples of such terms easily translated into Albanian are: wedge-pykë, deforestation-shpyllëzim, inclined plane-rrafsh i pjerrët, irrigation-vaditje, welding machine- saldatriçe etc.

However, despite the translation challenges, in order to properly address and make full use of ESP classes as well as to help the student with the acquisition process, translation serves as a very helpful tool in the teaching process.

4. Translation challenges in ESP classes

Translation is challenging to us as lecturers since there are no translation exercises in the ESP course books and this activity should be introduced by the lecturer when needed. Viktorija Mažeikienė¹ refers

¹ Viktorija Mažeikienė. Translation as a method in teaching ESP: an inductive thematic analysis of literature. The journal of Teaching English for

to Simões, Guincho and Magalhães (2013: 54 who note that didactic materials for an ESP classroom have to be “home-made” because “It is unlikely to find instant made exercises from course books or the Internet”. Thus translation exercises should be carefully planned and oriented to help the student strengthen one’s lexical competence.

Considering that we deal with technical texts, there is no space for various interpretations of the reading passages but still translation in such cases does bring out the communicative element since sometimes students discuss and have to come up with the exact Albanian terms especially when encountering polysemic terms (terms having a specific meaning in various engineering fields). Leonardi supports the idea that translation is a communicative activity and writes¹ that translation involves interaction between the teacher and the students to discuss rights and wrongs as well as problems related to translation task. If this communication exchange takes place in the L2 before and after the translation this can help students enhance their oral skills.

In the case of technical words, the meaning of which most of the time is one, it is sometimes hard to guess from the context, thus addressing a bilingual dictionary is very crucial for a better comprehension of it. However, as above mentioned, it is sometimes impossible to have such dictionaries per each field of study. Consultancy with a specialist is another way of dealing with this issue but sometimes not that convenient due to the time required and the links needed to do so.

The remaining solution to finding an Albanian counterpart to certain terms is ‘sticking’ to the English term and trying to define it in both languages so as to help the student have a clear concept of the term and if possible illustrate it via any visual aid.

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¹ Leonardi, V. Teaching Business English Through Translation. *Journal of Language & Translation* – 10-1. 2009. – P. 143.

5. Conclusions

Based on the recent studies in translation as well as our personal experience of teaching ESP to engineering students, translation is and should be used as a teaching method, especially when the focus is the acquisition of lexical content of the language. The exposure to the target language counterpart of terms plays an essential role in accuracy which is crucial in technical fields. Translation activities should be used accurately and be developed to a certain degree in classes as the other language skills.

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