



Contemporary Pedagogical Practices of Translation Skills in ESL Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

The present study explores the contemporary pedagogical practices of translation skills in undergraduate classrooms in Pakistan. Translation skills are essential components of the prescribed syllabuses and examinations. Classroom observations reveal that the students face problems in translation skills. Consequently, teaching and learning of translation skills need redesigning. The study aims to enhance awareness among students about the real implication of translation skills and suggest changes. The paradigm selected is the pragmatic analysis of contemporary unsuccessful pedagogical practices of translation skills. The data was collected from 321 undergraduate students of public and private institutions through a questionnaire. The data was analyzed descriptively. The findings reveal that the contemporary pedagogical practices of translation skills are less effective in enhancing translation skills as current translation practices focus on cramming translation rules and passages instead of developing students' autonomy. The research contributes to teaching and learning translation skills, especially for ESL teachers and learners. The outcomes of this research will lead future researchers to suggest further improvements in pedagogical practices of translation skills.

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1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, discussions about the function of translation in a foreign language (FL) or second language (SL) classroom have occurred excessively. Since the beginning of the new millennium, a considerable rise has been noted in translation publications which points to resurgence as new methods and ideas are investigated for teaching translation in the classroom. Based on the assumption that translation is a foreign language teaching strategy, translation is now seen as a communicative action is pointed out by Carreres, Noriega-Sánchez, and Calduch (2018); Colina (2002) and Pintado Gutiérrez (2021). Despite this growing interest, there are still several disagreements among academics, researchers and teachers about the exact nature and place of translation. Though the translation is frequently disregarded in the official foreign language curricula, it is utilized in classrooms. To resolve a major issue of the definition and function of translation in foreign language pedagogy, it is necessary to recognize occasionally overlooked reality of various forms and types of translation in language classrooms. Cook (2010), points out that although using one's L1 also referred to as first language is necessary for translation in the foreign language classroom, it is not always the case. The researcher has observed that despite regular pedagogical practices of translation activities in ESL classrooms and the language learning process, the students fail to become good translators. The students' translation problems are never fully solved. So, necessary changes in the pedagogical practices are needed to solve the students' translation problems. The suggested steps may enable the students to handle translation problems as well as turn them into good

translators. Pintado Gutiérrez (2021) argues that there are differences in the relationship between translation and language learning in the professional translation area and in the practice of foreign language education, but their relationship is valuable. Because of this, we should maximize our partnership rather than downplay the significance of our collaboration. It is important to note that the most closely related disciplines of the pedagogical translation of an interdisciplinary nature may reject it. Unfortunately, research shows that teachers lack the necessary understanding of the translation paradigm to do the translation. Noor et al. (2019) opine that they used unintentional code-switching strategies throughout their English language classes. According to Massey (2019), translation educators also do not possess adequate competencies in training language teachers to translate due to a mismatch between the chosen module and teachers' motivation. As a result, teachers failed to understand the purpose of such training and lacked the motivation to learn.

The study explores current pedagogical practices of translation skills. The focus is to find the answer to the research question of why despite having a concept and knowledge of translation skills, the learners rely on cramming translation paragraphs. The aim was to remove translation fears of students to become proficient as independent learners.

The research is significant as it aims to enhance translation skills. Generally, the students spend ample time dealing with translation skills in classrooms but depend on cramming. This study suggests that cramming is not the solution to becoming an expert in translation skills. They should aim for proficiency in translation skills.

The key research questions of the present study are:

1. Do the students know the concept and rules of translation skills?
2. What are the routine practices of learners for dealing with translation questions?
3. Why do learners cram translation paragraphs even if they have the concept and skills of translation?

2. Literature Review

Translation is a significant skill to be taught and learned in ESL English pedagogy. Several researches have been conducted on translation skills. It is pertinent to state that researchers explore all possible dimensions of a topic. The study traces contemporary pedagogical trends the students adopt for acquiring translation skills.

2.1. Pedagogical Practices and Translation

Previous researchers found that pedagogical translation supports and improves language proficiency in ESL and EFL classrooms (Cook, 2010; Leonardi, 2010). Leonardi (2010) sees pedagogical translation as the fifth ability in fostering and completing language competency among bilingual students and holds that translation exercises could accommodate students in developing analytical and problem-solving skills that apply to their everyday lives. These two viewpoints demonstrate the beneficial role that educational translation plays in the acquisition of second or foreign languages. On the other hand, translation pedagogy concerns the understanding of accurate source text (ST) decoding and target text encoding. It serves as a tool or collection of instructions for teachers who want to use translation with bilingual students. Today, it is clear how important this topic is to learning and teaching languages. For instance, Baer and Koby (2003) offer a critical analysis of translation pedagogy with a theoretical framework for teachers. They claim that in the last 25 years, the evolution of foreign language pedagogy has switched from behaviourist models of language acquisition (Skinner) to cognitive models (Bloom, Piaget, Vygotsky) to bring the actual world into the classrooms. They recommended that teachers use learner-centered, process-oriented translation pedagogy models while teaching translation. The study's findings, in brief, showed that it is significant to concentrate on the learners' competence levels, scaffolding, the substance of the materials, relevance to the context, and spiral learning while utilizing translation in ESL classes. Indeed, another study conducted earlier by Kiraly (2006) shows the significance of this information among teachers and education practitioners. The study stresses the importance of collaboration in educating translators in their craft to avoid the 'hand me down' principle. He offers the strategies of objectivity and constructive. He believes that teachers need to redefine their competency in translation by fusing the gap between their acquired knowledge of translation and what is actually taking place in the classroom. Thus, the aspects of pedagogical translation

and translation pedagogy work hand-in-hand in studying the use of translation in the ESL context.

2.2. Current Pedagogical Practices

Discussing Pakistani academic settings, Butt, Ali, and Asghar (2020) argue that conventional translation techniques are practiced in teaching the ELT syllabus. Most instructors depend on translations from Urdu to English employing teaching grammatical rules. Generally, ELT course materials are translated and retranslated. Such pedagogical translation practices take place all over in Pakistani colleges. Several things that are now academic, behavioral, pragmatic, and procedural spoil translation pedagogy in Pakistan. In the past, many Pakistani ELT researchers have attempted to find a number of the common problems with translation pedagogy in Pakistan. They suggested modifications that may be used in college classes to teach translation as an actual inter lingual conversation and a proper communication act. English language instruction in conventional Pakistani lecture halls heavily relies on translation. The ways in which the act of translation is understood and taught are particularly detrimental, not just from the perspective of translation itself but also from the standpoint of language teaching as a whole. Rarely do the students actually have linguistic gaps to close or communicative tasks to complete. Once more, translation is typically performed in an impersonal, decontextualized, and robotic manner. Translational proficiency thus fails to directly convert into a greater sociolinguistic proficiency.

2.3. Weaknesses of current pedagogical practices regarding translation skills

Current pedagogical practices are undoubtedly improving undergraduate students' translation skills. However, this phenomenon needs more improvements. Many researches have been conducted on pedagogical translation skills. These studies attempted to prove that translation is one of the most effective pedagogies applicable to the L2 teachers. Awan and Shafi (2016) found that many students show interest and prefer to learn from the Grammar Translation Method. As a result of this method, usually College students are involved in taking instructions in Urdu language instead of English. They prefer to be examines in traditional essays writing rather than doing innovative writing. They no longer ask questions as a substitute to opt for the lecture approach. Shejbalová (2006) used GTM and CLT methods to look at the interest of College students in mastering a 2nd language of Pre-Intermediate degree. They recommended Changes. According to the findings of the experimental groups, CLT points to generally superior performance in language learning and mastery.

Which strategy is most advantageous for teaching English language proficiency, according to Jin Fang and Qing-2007 Xue's analysis. The analysis suggested that each strategy has unique advantages. The practitioners must apply it in accordance with the learner's needs and the historical context. Studies on the application of language learning strategies at a better secondary level in Pakistan were conducted by Kazi and Iqbal in 2011. They evaluate the outcomes of the same strategies on students with comparable educational backgrounds using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The findings indicate that teachers frequently use metacognitive strategies and that students also have limited English proficiency. They speak English considerably less fluently than we do. The data were collected using a questionnaire method. According to a study done by Chang, Liu, and Lee (2007), the grammar-translation method is more advantageous than CLT for teaching foreign languages in Taiwan. It was a test-and-see study. According to Mondal (2012), who conducted a survey to gather information from academics, the Grammar Translation Method is the best available for Bangladeshi scholars. Using a set of records from college students, Dagilienė (2012) used a survey approach extensively to examine whether or not the translation approach is still useful.

It is advised that a translation strategy is a potent method for learning a foreign language. A study conducted on evaluations of the CLT and GTM. The survey method is used. The college students that will fill out the questionnaire are undergraduates. The results show that using a multilingual strategy is more advantageous than using a single approach for both CLT and GTM. Rahman (2012) examined a rough teaching strategy used in Bangladesh. He completes an internship with a faculty member and adopts the GTM techniques. According to his research, GTM is the best method for Bangladeshi academics.

According to Awan and Khalida (2015), memorising is the first step teachers employ to help their children learn words and sentences so they can use those same techniques to promote

creativity. According to Awan and Shafi (2016), reading a book repeatedly to memorise it is a useful exercise; but, when translating, students must use creativity to advance their translation abilities. The best method for memorization is frequent text revision. To improve the pupils' ability to translate, unique translation techniques should be taught. Newspaper editorials were the subject of study on textual analysis by Awan and Shafi (2016). They discovered that practising your translation skills and reading the newspaper are both vital components of learning how to translate.

3. Research Methodology

The study used descriptive approach to find answers to the questions raised for research on contemporary translation skills. A questionnaire was developed to collect data from the participants of the study.

3.1. Population of the Study

All public and private colleges and universities of Multan City are the population of the study. The data was collected from 321 undergraduate students of Emerson University, ISP, BZU, and the University of Education, Multan.

4. Data Collection and Analysis

The data was collected through a purposefully designed questionnaire and analyzed descriptively. The said method was applied for the readers to understand the responses clearly.

I know definition and concept of translation very well

321 responses

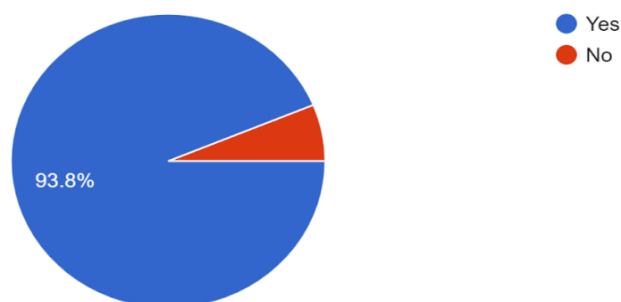


Figure:1

Fig.1, shows the response to question no.1 that the learner knows and understands definition and concept of translation very well, 93.8% of respondents responded with a 'yes' response, and 6.2% responded with a 'no'. There is a notable difference in received responses. It is important to note that many learners know the definition and concept of translation very well, while a few learners do not know definition and concept of translation very well. The analysis confirms that this response is positive and encouraging.

I always cram/memorize translation paragraphs

321 responses

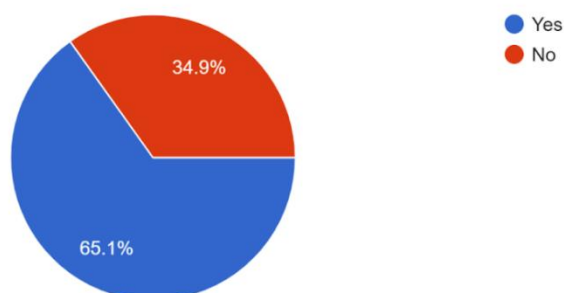


Figure:2

In response to the statement of Question No.2 that a learner always crams or memorizes translation paragraphs, 65.1% respondents responded with 'yes' response, and 34.9% respondents responded with 'no'. There is almost 50% difference of responses. It seems odd to know that 65.1% learners only cram or memorize translation paragraphs instead of solving them by learning translation skills. It is a big percentage that needs remedial work.

I regularly practice translation
321 responses

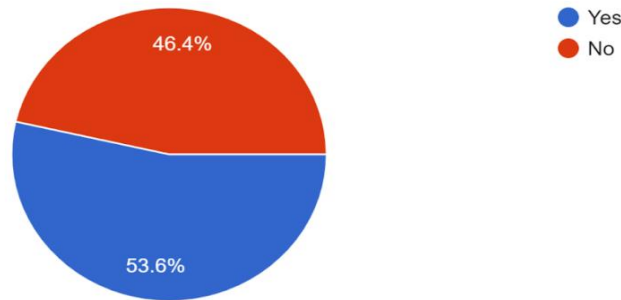


Figure:3

In response to the statement of Question No.3 that a learner regularly practices translation, 53.6% respondents responded with 'yes' response, and 46.4% respondents responded with 'no'. It seems that the result is almost equal of both responses. There is 7% difference among learners who do practice and those who do not practice translation skills. In view of the received responses it can be stated that attention should be paid to increase the percentage of 'no' into 'yes'. This may be possible by the personal care by the teachers.

I am satisfied with my translation skills
321 responses

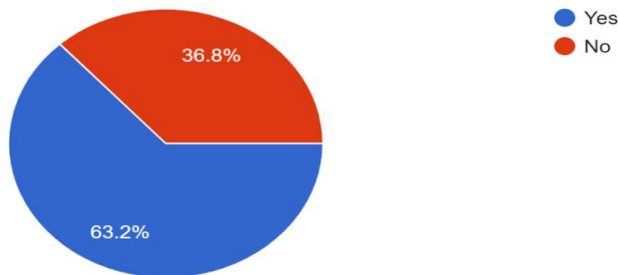


Figure:4

In response to the statement of Question No.4 that a learner feels satisfied his/her translation skills, 63.2% respondents responded with 'yes' response, and 36.8% respondents responded with 'no'. It seems that the result is 26.4% difference among learners who are satisfied and those who are not satisfied with their translation skills. In view of the received responses it can be stated that attention should be paid to increase the percentage of 'no' into 'yes'. This may be possible by cooperation of the learners with the teachers.

I am weak in translation skills
321 responses

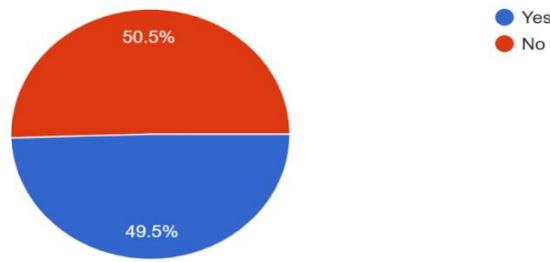


Figure: 5

In response to the statement of Question No.5 that a learner is weak in translation skills, 49.5% respondents responded with 'yes' response, and 50.5% respondents responded with 'no'. It seems that the result is almost 50% difference among learners who are weak in translation skills. In view of the received responses it can be stated that half of the respondents need to improve their translation skills. The learners should pay special attention to their translation skills. This may be possible by cooperation of the learners with their English language teachers.

I need to improve my translation skills
321 responses

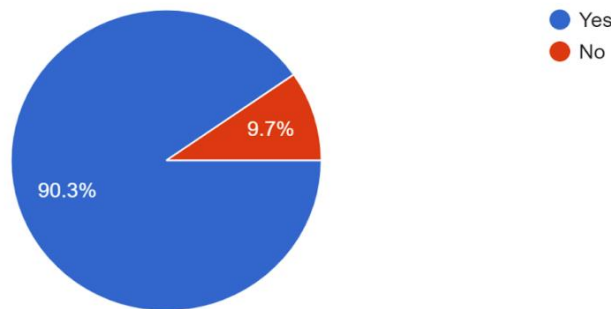


Figure:6

In response to the statement of Question No.6 that the learners need to improve translation skills, 90.3% respondents responded with 'yes' response, and only 9.7% respondents responded with 'no'. It seems that the result difference is almost 90% among learners who need to improve their translation skills. In view of the received responses it can be stated that a large number of the respondents need to improve their translation skills. The learners should pay special attention to their translation skills. They should get guidelines and instructions from their English language teachers to solve the problem of translation skills.

I make errors in translation
321 responses

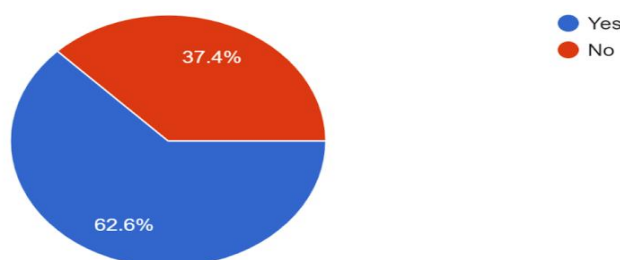


Figure:7

In response to the statement of Question No.7 that the learners make errors in translation, 62.6% respondents responded with 'yes' response, and only 37.4% respondents responded with 'no'. It seems that the result difference is 25.2% among learners who make errors in translation. In view of the received responses it can be stated that a large number of the respondents need to improve their translation skills. The learners should get guidelines from their English language teachers to avoid errors in translation.

I face no problems in translation

321 responses

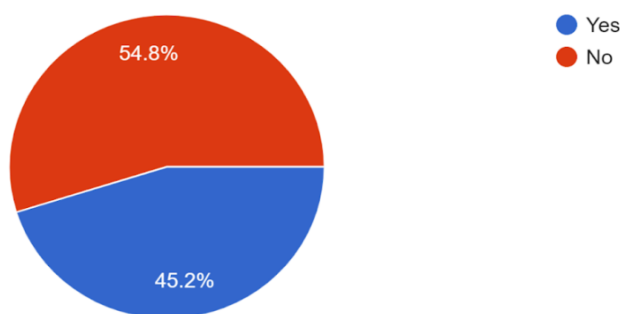


Figure: 8

In response to the statement of Question No.8 that the learners face no problems in translation, 45.2% respondents responded with 'yes' response, and only 54.8% respondents responded with 'no'. It seems that a large number of learners face problems in translation. In view of the received responses it can be stated that the respondents need to improve their translation skills. The teachers should guide learners to improve translation.

I feel confused when doing translation

321 responses

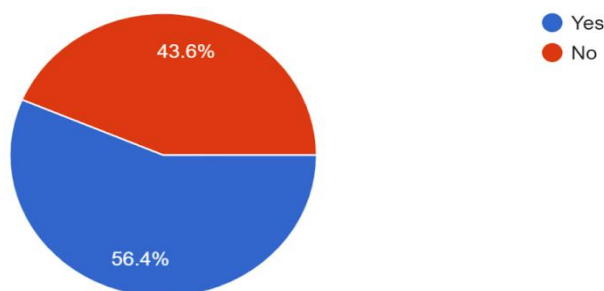


Figure:9

In response to the statement of Question No.9 that the learners feel confused when doing translation, 56.4% respondents responded with 'yes' response, and only 43.6% respondents responded with 'no'. There are result differences among learners who feel confused in doing translation. In view of the received responses it can be stated that the respondents need to remove confusion when doing translation. English language teachers should guide the learners to avoid confusion to improve translation skills.

In response to the statement of Question No.10 that the learners easily learn and apply translation rules, 70.1% respondents responded with 'yes' response, and only 29.9% respondents responded with 'no'. It seems that the result almost 30% among learners cannot learn and apply translation rules easily. In view of the received responses it can be stated that the respondents who need to improve their translation skills should get guidelines from their English language teachers to improve their translation skills.

I easily learn and apply translation rules

321 responses

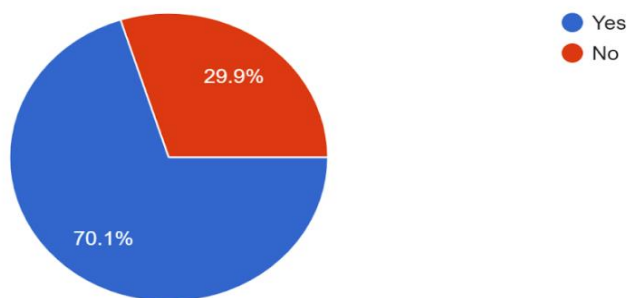


Figure: 10

5. Discussions and Conclusion

In the light of the analyzed data we find that students are facing problems in carrying out the translation skills. Expertise in Translation skills is considered directly proportionate to the command over the language. Pedagogical practices as practiced in contemporary undergraduate classrooms in Pakistan are creating the impression of being static and stereotypical. It is a common observation that the present translation teaching learning practices in ESL classrooms are more cramming based neglecting the real spirit of translation skills. Effective translation skills are concepts and creative writing skills based. The demands of vocabulary, sentence skills, and punctuation skills must be fulfilled by translation class teachers. The demands of learners coupled with effective teaching techniques can improve lags in contemporary translation skills. It is concluded that step by step improvements of vocabulary, punctuation and sentence skills activities exercises must be designed and used in Pakistani ESL classrooms for target-based teaching and learning of translation skills. The student autonomy should be focused. Effective changes in translation pedagogical practices will surely help the teachers and the students achieve desired and set goals regarding translation skill pedagogy.

5.1. Recommendations

In the light of analyzed data the researchers suggests following recommendations to improve pedagogical translation skills of undergraduate students at colleges. The students generally cram translation rule without understanding the rules. Cramming of Translation rules should be replaced with sentence practice. The students adopt of the approaches cramming translation paragraph for practice and examination purposes. Cramming of translation paragraphs should be replaced with extensive practice exercises. This approach will enhance translation skills of the students. The contemporary translation pedagogical practice is not effective in enhancing translation skills. It is therefore, recommended that changes in teaching learning should be implemented by bringing new techniques and activities in practice. The results of the study reveal that current practices are old and outdated and need to be modernized by making classroom learning-centered rather that continuing with cramming-based and learning-free pedagogical practices of translation skills. Contemporary translation skills should be redesigned to ensure quality education.

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