

Assessment of Student Translators' Texts from Nepali into English: Language Quality and Degree of Task Completion

BAL RAM ADHIKARI

Abstract

This study attempts to assess the quality of English translations by English-major M.Ed. students specializing in Translation Studies. The study adopted the combination of error analysis and holistic method to assess the quality of target texts (TTs) elicited through the production task carried out by 30 purposively selected students. Findings show that most of TTs were undermined by grammatical errors and syntactic inaccuracies revealing student translators' substandard English competence. The study thus sees the urgency of incorporating English teaching into the translation course to strengthen student translators' production skill in English.

Keywords: Source Text, Student Translators, Target Text, Translation Assessment, Translation Competence.

1. Introduction

The ultimate goal of translation pedagogy is to produce competent translators in the language(s) in question. In principle, a competent translator is expected to possess abilities to interpret the source text (ST) adequately and produce the target text (TT) which, according to Reiss and Vermeer (2013), must be coherent not only with the ST in terms of content and style but also with the target language (TL) system (as cited in Munday 2016). Thus, comprehension of the ST and its composition in the TL can be conceived as the two fundamental components of translation competence (Campbell 1998; Hatim 2014) that any translation course aims to develop in prospective translators. In this respect, Campbell (1998)

observes that composing a coherent TT in a second/foreign language is far more challenging than in one's first language. Studies have also shown that translators are confronted with more challenges in producing linguistically coherent TTs in the second language than in the first language owing to their limited second language proficiency to manipulate linguistic and textual resources productively (see Campbell 1998; Abbasi & Karimnia 2011; Hatim 2014; Wongranu 2017; Mraček 2018). Because of translators' limited access to the second language, the acceptability and feasibility of inverse translation (i.e. translating from one's mother tongue into a second/foreign language) has been the subject of debate and dispute among translation scholars (Mraček 2018: 203).

For the last two decades, translation as a subject has been taught, trained and researched in M.Ed., M.A., and M.Phil. programs under Faculties of Education and Humanities in the universities of Nepal. In terms of directionality, the existing Translation Studies courses are inverse in nature, for their primary aim is to engage students in translation activities from their mother tongue (i.e. Nepali) into the foreign language (i.e. English). The underlying assumption is that after the completion of the courses theoretically equipped students will be able to translate Nepali literary texts of moderate length into English. However, there has been no study so far investigating the performance of these prospective English translators. To address the existing gap, this study poses the following questions with respect to student translators' performance in English:

- a) What is the language quality of the translations produced by student translators?
- b) Are their translations adequate enough to be accepted as English texts?

In my attempt to answer these research questions, I briefly review the literature on different methods of assessing student translators' texts, translation competence in the second language, and present the criteria for the analysis and evaluation of TTs. Then, I outline the methodology adopted to conduct the study before presenting results under four headings and their discussion. Finally, the conclusion subsumes the summary of key findings and a suggestion for future study.

2. Assessment of TTs by Student Translators

The survey of literature on translation assessment suggests that translation teachers and researchers have adopted different methods to assess translated texts in general and student translations in particular (see Waddington 2001; Doyle 2003; Schiaffino & Zearo 2005; Abbasi & Karimnia 2011; Reiss 2014; Wongranu 2017). The choice of one method over another is likely to be affected by a myriad of factors such as the theoretical underpinning of the method, the focus of assessment (such as cultural, textual, and lexico-grammatical aspects of the text), the dimension of assessment (comprehension of the ST, production of the TT or both), and the notion of what is constituted in translation competence. Despite such variations in theoretical orientation and practice, all the methods are predicated on the unvarying assumption that translation as a product can be analyzed systematically and its quality can be assessed by means of certain parameters.

Surveying the methods that university teachers adopted to assess the TTs by Spanish students translating into English as a foreign language, Waddington (2001) identifies three broad methods of assessment: error analysis, a holistic appreciation, and a combination of error analysis and a holistic appreciation. Drawing on Waddington's (2001) survey, we can further identify two methods based on error analysis. The first

involves identification and description of errors in: a) the interpretation of ST such as addition, omission, and loss of meaning; b) the expression of the ST in the TL such as spelling, grammar, lexical items; and c) the transmission of function of the text. Some of the researchers who have used this method to analyse and assess the quality of TTs are Doyle (2003), Schiaffino and Zearo (2005), Abbasi and Karimnia (2011), Koby (2015), and Wongranu (2017). Doyle (2003), for instance, adopted the American Translation Association's (ATA) Framework (2002) for standard error marking. Descriptive in nature, the ATA framework recognizes 22 types of errors, including those committed at grammatical and lexical levels. Likewise, Schiaffino and Zearo (2005) have presented translation quality index to assess the quality of translation based on the number and type of errors detected in the text. This assessment framework categorizes errors as critical, major, or minor, considering their effect on the transfer of content and breaching of the target grammar system. Abbasi and Karimnia's (2011) study also adopted error analysis to study the quality of English translations by Iranian students. The study reported the majority of students committing the grammatical errors. Like Doyle, Koby (2015) adapted the ATA Flowchart for Error Point Decisions and Framework for Standardized Error Marking (2009) to assess the translations carried out by graduate students from German into English in terms of such criteria as misunderstanding, omission, literalness, ambiguity and grammar. The study rated misunderstanding as the most serious error, whereas transfer errors were more frequently marked and noted more severe than grammar or language errors.

The second assessment method is principally built on Pym's (1992) work which distinguishes between language errors and translation errors. The former impairs the transfer of ST content, whereas the latter do not affect the content transfer but

breach the TL system. Translation errors result from deficiency in the translator's ability to interpret the ST and choose the most appropriate TT for it. Language errors, on the other hand, reflect deficiency in the translator's TL competence. Language errors, which typify breaches of the TL morpho-syntactic system, are binary in that they are grammatically either right or wrong (Pym 1992). Such errors can be detected even without comparing them with their source counterparts. Conversely, translation errors are non-binary because there cannot be one right answer. This approach regards translation or transfer errors graver than language errors. Since the theoretical distinction between these two types of errors is not fool proof in practice, the present study treats translation errors and language errors equally grave depending upon their negative impact on the communication of ST content in the TL. Moreover, language errors are not less severe than translation errors with respect to student translators particularly when they are working into a foreign language.

The holistic method involves the overall appreciation of the quality of a TT accompanied by descriptors for the assessment of different aspects of the TT. Descriptive in nature, Waddington's (2001) holistic method counts three areas of translation product: accuracy of content transfer, quality of language of the TT and degree of task completion. This approach is subjective and rather open-ended. Finally, the third approach concerns the combination of error analysis and holistic method. The present study adopts the combination of error analysis and holistic appreciation with the underlying reason that the combination of these two methods leads to more accurate assessment of TTs.

It should, however, be noted that the translation assessment methods discussed so far are product-oriented that treat translation as an end-product. In this respect, Huertas-Barros

and Vine call for the need of integrating other innovative assessment methods such as ‘formative assessment, peer and self-assessment, translation commentaries, reflective diaries, and student portfolios’ (2019: 249) with the product-oriented methods to obtain more valid and reliable information on student translators' performance.

3. Translation Assessment and Translation Competence in the Second Language

The guiding insight of Waddington (2001) is that translation competence underlies as the unvarying component of all methods of translation assessment. The review of some of the representative models such as Bell (1991), Pym (1992), Kiraly (1995), Campbell (1998), PACTE group (2003, 2005), and Göpferich (2009) reveals that there is lack of consensus as to the number and nature of constitutive components of translation competence. Pym's (1992) model, for instance, conceives translation competence as the union of two skills of generating a series of options in the TL and selecting the most appropriate option that fits the ST. The PACTE group (2003), on the other hand, hypothesizes the existence of as many as six components underlying translation competence such as bilingual sub-competence, extralinguistic sub-competence, and instrumental sub-competence. Despite such differences, these models accounting for translation competence share two common features. First, they are almost exclusively concerned with the competence of translators working from a second/foreign language to their mother tongue rather than inverse translation. Second, TL competence is either mentioned peripherally as in the PACTE group (2005) or completely ignored as in Pym (1992) despite the fact that linguistic competence on the TL is a prerequisite component of translation competence. In the composite models of translation competence, TL competence is generally subsumed into

bilingual competence (PACTE group 2003, 2005) or into bilingual communicative competence (Göpferich 2009). Albir (2015) is another glaring example of relegating linguistic competence backstage. Like Pym, she does not include the translator's abilities to interpret the ST and produce the TT in the catalogue of distinguishing features of translation competence.

In this respect, Campbell's (1998) model, however, is an exception, as it is exclusively concerned with inverse translation and centres on the second language translator's ability to produce optimum quality output in the TL. On the linguistic level, Campbell (1998: 59) posits three levels of translation competence: a) substandard competence that reflects translators' poor TL repertoire; b) pretextual competence that concerns translators' inability to free the TT from ST structure; and c) textual competence that mirrors translators' ability to produce the TT conforming to the TL system. Campbell's framework foregrounds the linguistic aspect of translation competence and recognizes TL competence as the pivotal factor that determines the overall quality of TTs. Although proposed two decades ago, this framework still holds true for and is of high relevance to ESL/EFL translation pedagogy in which students struggle simultaneously to acquire translation skills and to get mastery over English as the TL.

4. Criteria for Assessment of TTs by Student Translators

Drawing on the reviewed literature specifically Waddington's (2001) work, the present study adopted the combination of error analysis and holistic method to assess the TTs produced by student translators. Additionally, the study drew insights from Doyle's (2003) modified ATA's framework, Reiss's (2014) categories and criteria for translation quality assessment, and Wonggranu's (2017) evaluation of errors

committed by English major students. Based on these works, the following criteria were developed to analyze and assess the two different aspects of the TTs: a) quality of TTs in English; and b) degree of task completion.

The quality of English texts was assessed in terms of: a) grammatical errors; b) lexical errors; c) syntactic inaccuracies; and d) serious syntactic inaccuracies. Grammatical errors represent the errors committed in the use of grammatical categories such as tense (T), voice (V), article (Art.), preposition (Prep.), possessive determiner (Poss. Det.) and subject-verb agreement (SV). Lexical errors mean the inappropriate word choice (WC). Syntactic inaccuracies refer to such chunks/expressions that on the surface look grammatically well formed but lack semantic clarity. Finally, serious syntactic inaccuracies are those expressions that are unintelligible both syntactically and semantically. Recovering their meanings is impossible without going back to their STs.

Concerning the second aspect of translation performance, Waddington's (2001) five levels of adequacy were adapted to assess students' ability to produce acceptable TTs: a) successful (the translation that reads as if originally written in English); b) almost completely successful (the acceptable translation that can be made publishable after minor revision and editing); c) adequate (the acceptable translation that can be improved and made publishable after major revision and thorough editing); d) inadequate (the TT not acceptable, as almost all sentences are erroneous); and e) totally inadequate (the TT not acceptable at all). However, we should acknowledge the fact that such categorization and descriptors both are to a large extent subjective and intuitive. There are many fuzzy lines between adequate and inadequate, and adequate and almost inadequate translations.

5. Methodology

To assess the quality of English translations by student translators, the study combined error analysis and holistic method under the product-oriented research methodology (Saldanha & O'Brien 2014). As a tool, the production task (Nunan 2010) was employed to elicit data from the thirty purposively selected English-major M.Ed. students specializing in Translation Studies, Tribhuvan University Nepal. I purposively selected ten Nepali short stories, each within the limit of 800 to 1000 words, and assigned one story to three students. I requested all the thirty participants to translate the story on their convenient time and return the English translation within a month from the date of receiving the story. From each translated story, I selected the first fifteen sentences which normally exceeded the range of a paragraph. There were about 450 English sentences altogether extracted for the purpose of analysis. I adopted content analysis to investigate frequency and nature of errors and inaccuracies in the selected TTs. The English texts were coded as TT1, TT2...and TT30 to ensure participants' anonymity.

6. Analysis and Assessment of TTs

Considering the analysis and assessment criteria outlined above, the overall findings are summarized first. Then, each level of adequacy is presented followed by a close analysis of a representative text to illustrate key findings. The translation cases discussed under different levels of adequacy are the excerpts from the English translations of four Nepali short stories, namely *Ekānta* (Solitude), *Dukhānta* (Tragedy), *Chil* (Eagle), and *Bisesagya* (Specialist) by Brajaki (2003), Sapkota (2003), Regmi (2003), and Gautam (2015) respectively. The erroneous expressions are underlined in each representative case. Since the study uniquely focused on the assessment of the quality of English texts translated from Nepali, the STs are

referred to only occasionally when English TTs need to be compared with their STs.

The analysis revealed the four levels of texts produced by student translators, ranging from the totally inadequate (Level 1) to the almost completely successful (Level 4). Each level of text was tainted with grammatical errors, lexical errors, and syntactic inaccuracies with varying degrees of adverse impact on quality of expressions in English and degree of task completion. Breaches of English grammar were more dominant than errors in the interpretation of STs. Accordingly, most (90%) of the TTs were impaired mainly by the former type of language deficiencies. Table 1 below illustrates the TTs containing different types of errors and inaccuracies and corresponding levels of adequacy or acceptability:

Level	Quality of Expressions in English	Degree of Task Completion	Number of TTs (%)
5	Reads as if originally written in English; acceptable with minor editing	Successful	0
4	A few grammatical and lexical errors with very few syntactic inaccuracies	Almost completely successful	10
3	A considerable number of grammatical errors, a few lexical errors and few or no syntactic or serious syntactic inaccuracies	Adequate	43.33
2	Continual grammatical and lexical errors as well as syntactic and serious syntactic inaccuracies	Inadequate	26.66
1	Continual grammatical and lexical errors, and a total lack of syntactic accuracies	Totally inadequate	20

Table 1. Quality of TL expressions and degree of task completion

Table 1 presents the language quality of thirty paragraph-length English texts produced by thirty students and the extent to which these TTs were linguistically successful in communicating the ST content. As can be seen from Table 1, none of the TTs qualified as successful translations that could be accepted with minor editing. That is to say, no translator was able to produce the text that would read as if originally written in English. Only a very small percentage of TTs were rated as comparatively high in terms of their quality and were categorized as the almost completely successful. Likewise, less than half of the TTs were adequate, whereas a similar number of TTs were either inadequate (26.66%) or totally inadequate (20%). It means the majority of TTs were structurally substandard requiring thorough revision and editing.

6.1 Almost Successful TTs

A small portion (10%) of TTs rated as almost successful in conveying ST content were characterized by the presence of a few lexical and grammatical errors reflecting the higher level of structural standard of English. The almost successful texts exhibited high coherence with both STs and English grammar owing to the presence of very few syntactic inaccuracies. These TTs were largely syntactically dense and conformed to English grammar. TT2 in Case 1 below serves to illustrate the quality of language of the TTs in this category:

TT2: Neither he cries nor laughs (Neg. Avbl.). There is nothing to laugh about. His son is in (Prep.) (Poss. det-) deathbed in the room. He has passed away, probably. He is sitting on a 'Pajan's' stool (WC), whereas his wife is lamenting. He once tried to cry, but couldn't. Then he tried to laugh but his skin on cheeks folded (SI). He even felt like reciting the verses from the 'Geeta'. He couldn't do that either. He tried to answer the nature's call thrice (WC) but failed.

Case 1. A representative of almost successful TTs (Brajaki 2003: 168).

Most of the sentences in this representative text (TT2) are coherent with English grammar. Nevertheless, the text does contain a few grammatical errors such as lack of inversion in the first sentence beginning with the negative adverbial (*neither*), the faulty use of the article *in* (instead of *on*), the absence of the possessive determiner (*his*), and the wrong choice of the word *stool* (instead of *log*). Furthermore, the expression *his skin on cheek folded* (instead of *his cheeks creased*) is an instance of syntactic inaccuracy which has marred the meaning of the whole sentence. Despite these errors, this TT can be fine-tuned to make it publishable. The same applies to other TTs in this category that carried significantly low syntactic inaccuracies with optimum content transfer. Moreover, the language errors detected in these TTs could be edited even without referring them to their source counterparts.

6.2 Adequate TTs

Nearly half of TTs falling into this category were characterized by the presence of a considerable number of grammatical errors, a few lexical errors and the virtual absence of syntactic inaccuracies. Adequate TTs exhibited weaker coherence with English grammar than with their source counterparts. Despite containing grammatical errors notably large in size, these TTs were rated as adequate mainly because they contained a small number of lexically and syntactically deficient expressions. The representative text (TT4) in Case 2 below serves to illustrate the quality of language and corresponding degree of task completion:

TT4: That's why, deceit characters (WC) of Daulat Bikram Bista (Poss.) are borning (V) in many places inside him. Always (Adv.) after hearing every interview (SI), life smells like armpit sweat, and he remembers Bhupi. Jeevan laughs. Let me tell why he laughs. He is one of them who likes the smell of armpit since his childhood. That habit still exists. That's why he has no any effect of interview

results (SSI). He gave many interviews. In some oral interviews, he was even asked the questions like, 'Why are you born?'(T)

Case 2. A representative of adequate TTs (Gautam 2015: 150).

The sampled TT4 contains a significant number of grammatical errors, including the faulty use of voice, tense, possessive determiner, and misplacement of the frequency adverb, which do not correspond to English grammar. Nevertheless, the number of syntactic inaccuracies is relatively low, not exceeding more than two. Given the low presence of lexical errors and syntactic inaccuracies, the representative TT was categorized as an adequate translation. The key feature shared by the TTs in this category is that the impairment of the ST content was found relatively low, thanks to the low presence of lexical errors and syntactic inaccuracies. In a similar vein, categorical errors lent themselves to revision and editing even without having recourse to the STs. That is to say, the adequate TTs had the potential to be converted into readable texts after substantial revision and editing.

6.3 Inadequate TTs

More than one fourth of TTs were considered very weakly adequate, as they were undermined by continual grammatical and lexical errors, and syntactic and serious syntactic inaccuracies. Only a few sentences in each of the inadequate TTs conformed to English grammar, and the rest were marred by repeated grammatical and syntactic inaccuracies. Consequently, the large sections of TTs read oddly and were contextually unintelligible as evidenced by the sampled TT7 in Case 3 below:

TT7: We were staying in a resort very far from... (Art.) city. We came (T) here for the program. We are (T) feeling bored. Staying in a garden we feel natural relaxed (WC).

-I said that we feel (T) more relaxed to climb down from the hill. (SSI)

-May be, but what to do, doctor advised me that never climb up but climb down as you like (SSI). 'How do you told that, without climbing up it's not possible to climb down.' (SSI)
He smiles. It's a philosophical question. It needs rational (WC) not scientific analysis. He doesn't like (sub-v-agreement) to play with that reason.

Case 3. A representative of inadequate TTs (Sapkota 2003: 1).

As Case 3 shows, TT7 is riddled with categorical and lexical errors as well as syntactic inaccuracies. The grammatically inaccurate sentences are hopelessly confusing and absolutely unclear. Almost all sentences suffer from wrong word choice, and the faulty use of grammar rules such as lack of articles, incorrect subject-verb agreement and incorrect tense shift. Moreover, syntactic and serious syntactic inaccuracies are positively misleading. The presence of repeated inaccuracies such as *doctor advised me that never climb up but climb down as you like* indicates the translator's failure to express the ST content in English. The same goes for other substandard TTs in this category, which evidenced the severe impairment of ST content as well as gross breaches of English grammar rules. Consequently, such substandard TTs were beyond revision and editing.

6.4 Totally Inadequate TTs

One fifth of the 30 TTs were completely inadequate in that they were severely undermined by continual grammatical and lexical errors, and a total lack of syntactic accuracies. Such inadequate texts exhibited the unacceptable influence of source structures on English texts. As a result, these texts suffered from inadequacy with respect to both content transfer and conformity to English grammar. TT 28 in Case 4 below represents totally inadequate TTs by student translators.

TT28: Eagle looks down bowing its head to the distance (Adj.) ground. In a time of famine (SSI), everywhere is lushy greenery

(Adj.) farm, river, village, cottage, but no-where it looks carriion (SSI), what it is flying for. (-Art.) Eagle's hungry eyes find famine everywhere (SSI). Due to extreme hunger, it gets angered and heated (SSI). Its eyes become (N) red and ferocious.

Case 4. A representative of totally inadequate TTs (Regmi 2003: 40).

Almost all sentences in TT28 are grammatically erroneous and syntactically inaccurate, which have rendered the whole text unintelligible. The text is replete with the faulty use of adjectives, the absence of articles, the lack of subject-verb agreement, and the presence of syntactically uninterpretable chunks. Categorical errors and syntactically inaccurate chunks evidence the translator's failure to compose grammatically acceptable sentences in English. Other TTs in this category were also gravely garbled and failed to demonstrate the minimum standard of English composition. Characterized by gross breaches of English grammar, the totally inadequate TTs were beyond recovery by means of any level of revision and editing.

7. Discussion

It was found that English-major M.Ed. students translating from Nepali into English produced different levels of TTs in English ranging from the almost successful to the completely inadequate. Such variations in quality of TTs reflect varying levels of translation competence of these students. All things considered, they demonstrated relative strength in the interpretation of STs in their first language (i.e. Nepali), but their ability to produce TTs in English was severely limited. The latter case exhibits student translators' poor 'global target language competence' (Campbell 1991: 335). This finding echoes Hatim's (2014) conclusion that the real difficulty relates to composition while translating into a foreign language, and is consistent with Mraček's finding that translators tend to perceive inverse translation more

challenging than direct translation on account of ‘inadequate language competence’ (2018: 217). Student translators’ inadequate performance in English as a second language also corroborates the commonly held belief that second language translators often fail to produce optimum quality output (Campbell1998; Mraček 2018). Most of the TTs undermined by a substantial number of grammatical errors and syntactic inaccuracies indicate the majority of student translators’ inability to interpret the STs accurately on the one hand and deploy grammar and lexis to produce readable English texts on the other.

The prevalence of grammatical errors can be attributed mainly to deficiency in student translators’ English language competence in general and grammatical competence in particular. This result supports the findings from previous observations (e.g. Abbasi & Karimnia 2011; Wongranu 2017). In this respect, Wongranu observed that grammatical errors were the most dominant of all types of errors committed by Thai students translating into English. Like Thai students, the majority of translators in this study lacked good control over English grammar to produce grammatically correct sentences, meaning that their English language competence is not mature enough to manipulate linguistic resources productively.

Graver than grammatical errors were syntactic inaccuracies that permeated through almost all levels of TTs. These inaccuracies disrupted the linguistic flow with their detrimental effect on the overall transfer of ST content. A possible explanation for syntactic inaccuracies may be the literal translation of STs that resulted in the inappropriate transposition of Nepali syntactic structures to English texts. These inaccuracies also mirror student translators’ substandard competence in the interpretation of grammatical structures of STs. The translators of these texts thus lacked what

Waddington calls 'the ability to express (themselves) adequately in English' (2001: 315).

Serious syntactic inaccuracies were the gravest of all. The presence of such inaccuracies is the indication of student translators' disregard to semantic and structural aspects of STs and failure to generate coherent texts in English. The TTs replete with semantically unintelligible and syntactically unacceptable chunks can be ascribed mainly to their grim English competence. These texts were unacceptable primarily because translators lacked the minimum level of English to express what they had understood from the reading of STs. A complex combination of misinterpretation of syntax of STs, imprudent use of literal translation and defective syntactic competence in English can be postulated as a major cause behind the production of totally inadequate TTs. The misinterpretation of source syntax resulted in the minimum transfer of source content, whereas the inappropriate use of literal translation of source structures imposed ST structures on English texts. Likewise, their defective syntactic competence caused the gross violation of English grammar.

Finally, lexical errors that manifested themselves in wrong word choice were the least observed language deficiencies in these TTs. The low presence of lexical errors is one of the indications that second language translators tend to face less difficulty in the comprehension of STs in their first language than production of TTs in English as a second language (Campbell 1998, Hatim 2014). Nevertheless, lexical errors do indicate their poor 'lexical transfer competence' (Campbell 1991: 336), resulting in misinterpretation of ST words and/or the use of inappropriate TL words. These errors can be attributed partly to misinterpretation of source words and partly to translators' inability to choose appropriate words in English.

Since the research participants constituted only English-major M.Ed. students specializing in Translation Studies, it is hard to claim that these findings can be generalized to the translation students from other faculties such as M.A. in English literature or other levels such as M.Phil. However, the findings may provide some clues to the quality of TTs by ESL/EFL translation students and their ability to manipulate linguistic and textual resources in English as the TL. One of the theoretical insights that emerges from these findings is that translating into the second language needs to be treated distinctly from translating into the first language. It is illogical for translation researchers and teachers to assume that student translators have already acquired the adequate level of TL competence on which translation competence can be built. Rather, they should acknowledge the fact that translation competence particularly in the case of translators working into the second language develops as part of their second language competence (Campbell 1998). To such translators, TL competence matters more than other components of translation competence. Furthermore, the efficacy of translation courses depends on students' ability to produce optimum quality output in the TL, which is not possible unless their TL competence is improved and developed 'systematically towards native-speaker authenticity' (Mracek 2018: 219). It is therefore imperative that ESL/EFL translation courses aim at equipping prospective translators with linguistic skills in English while training them in translation methods and techniques. To this end, ESL/EFL translation teaching and training should incorporate English language teaching with a special focus on text production skills.

8. Conclusion

The aim of the present paper was to assess the quality of translations produced by English-major M.Ed. students

specializing in Translation Studies. The study has shown that most of the English texts by these students working into English were undermined by a substantial number of categorical errors and syntactic inaccuracies, which leads to a valid conclusion that their English competence is not adequate enough to express the ST content in grammatically acceptable sentences. Additionally, the TTs riddled with syntactic inaccuracies seem to have their origin in student translators' failure to interpret the syntactic aspect of STs adequately. Finally, the low presence of lexical errors in almost all TTs suggests that student translators tend to face relatively less problems at the lexical level than at the syntactic level while translating into the second language.

This study was limited to the assessment of translations by ESL/EFL students from the perspective of product-oriented research. Further work needs to be done to explore the why-
aspect from the process perspective so as to get the comprehensive picture of student translators' performance in English as a second language.

References

- ABBASI, MEHDI, and AMIN KAIMNIA. 2011. An Analysis of Grammatical Errors among Iranian Translation Students: Insights from Interlanguage Theory. *European Journal of Social Sciences* 25(4). 525–536.
- ALBIR, AMPARO HURTADO. 2015. The Acquisition of Translation Competence. Competences, Tasks, and Assessment in Translator Training. *Meta: Translators' Journal* 60. 256–280. DOI: 10.7202/1032857.
- BELL, ROGER T. 1991. *Translation and Translating: Theory and Practice*. London: Longman.
- BRAJAKI, MANU. 2003. Ekānta (Solitude). In Shrestha, Dayaram (ed.), *Nepali Kathā Bhāg Cār* (Nepali Story Part 4), 168-170. Lalitpur: Sajha Prakashan.

- CAMPBELL, STUART J. 1991. Towards a Model of Translation Competence. *Meta: Translators' Journal* 36(2-3). 329–343. DOI: 10.7202/002190ar.
- CAMPBELL, STUART J. 1998. *Translation into the Second Language*. New York: Longman.
- DOYLE, MICHAEL S. 2003. Translation Pedagogy and Assessment: Adopting ATA's Framework for Standard Error Marking. *The ATA Chronicle*. 21–29.
- GAUTAM, DHRUBAC. 2015. *Bisesagya* (Specialist). In Thapa, Roshan (ed.), *Dhrubachandra Guatam Samagra Kathā* (All Stories of Dhruva Chandra Gautam), 149-151. Kathmandu: Upalabdhi Prakashan Sewa Pvt. Ltd.
- GÖPFERICH, SUSANNE. 2009. Towards a Model of Translation Competence and its Acquisition: The Longitudinal Study Trans Comp. *Behind the Mind: Methods, Models and Results in Translation Process Research* 4(4). 11–37.
- HATIM, BASIL. 2014. *Teaching and Researching Translation*. 2nd edn. London and New York: Routledge.
- HUERTAS-BARROS, ELSA, and JULIET VINE. 2019. Constructing Standards in Communities: Tutors' and Students' Perceptions of Assessment Practices on an MA Translation Course. In Huertas-Barros, Elsa, Sonia Vandepitte, and Emilia Iglesias-Fernández (eds.), *Quality Assurance and Assessment Practices in Translation and Interpreting*, 245–269. USA: IGI Global. DOI:10.4018/978-1-5225-5225-3.ch011.
- KIRALY, DON. 1995. *Pathways to Translation: Pedagogy and Process*. Ohio: The Kent State University Press.
- KOBY, GEOFFREY S. 2015. The ATA Flowchart and Framework as a Differentiated Error-marking Scale in Translation Teaching. In Huertas-Barros, Elsa, Sonia Vandepitte, and Emilia Iglesias-Fernández (eds.), *Quality Assurance and Assessment Practices in Translation and*

- Interpreting*, 220-253. USA: IGI Global. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-6615-3.ch013.
- MRAČEK, DAVID. 2018. Inverse Translation: The more Challenging Direction. *Linguistica Pragensia* 28. 202-221.
- MUNDAY, JEREMY. 2016. *Introducing Translation Studies*. 4th edn. London and New York: Routledge.
- NUNAN, DAVID. 2010. *Research Methods in Language Learning*. 1st South Asian edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- PACTE GROUP. 2003. Building a Translation Competence Model. In ALVES, FABIO (ed.), *Triangulating Translation: Perspectives in Process Oriented Research*, 43–66. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- PACTE GROUP. 2005. Investigating Translation Competence. *Meta: Translators' Journal* 50(2). 609–620. DOI:10.7202/011004ar.
- PYM, ANTHONY. 1992. Translation Error Analysis and Interface with Language Teaching. In Dollerup, Cay, and Anne Loddegaard (eds.), *The Teaching of Translation*. 279-288. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- REGMI, SANAT. 2003. Chil (Eagle). In Luitel, Khagendra (ed), *Sanat Regmika Pratinithi Katha* (Representative Stories of Sanat Regmi), 40-41. Kamaladi: Royal Nepal Academy.
- Reiss, Katharina. 2014. *Translation Criticism: The Potentials and Limitations*, trans. by E. F. Rhodes. London and New York: Routledge.
- SALDANHA, GABRIELA, and SHARON O'BRIEN. 2014. *Research Methodologies in Translation Studies*. London and New York: Routledge.
- SAPKOTA, DHRUBA. 2003. Dukhānta (Tragedy). In *Andhakar* (Darkness: A Collection of Short Stories), 1-3. Lalitpur: Sajha Prakashan.

- SCHIAFFINO, RICCARDO; and FRANCO ZEARO. 2005. Translation Quality Measurement in Practice. *Proceedings of the 46th Annual Conference of the American Translation Association* 1–7.
- WADDINGTON, CHRISTOPHER. 2001. *Different Methods of Evaluating Student Translations: The Question of Validity*. *Meta* 46(2). 311-325. DOI: 10.7202/004583ar.
- WONGRANU, PATTANAPONG. 2017. Errors in Translation Made by English Major Students: A Study on Types and Causes. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*. 38.2. 117–122.

Cite this work:

ADHIKARI, BAL RAM. 2020. Assessment of Student Translators' Texts from Nepali into English: Language Quality and Degree of Task Completion. *Translation Today*, Vol. 14(1). 1-22. DOI: 10.46623/tt/2020.14.1.ar1.