

## *Developing Writing Skills of English in Translation*

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### **Introduction**

The main concern of this paper is to discuss some issues concerning writing skills such as the major problems that the students of translation encounter when using the language among which, spelling mistakes, sentence combination, ambiguous sentences, etc. Therefore, we attempt to represent specific techniques and strategies that must be taken into consideration especially, at the writing level to avoid such important errors and obstacles that the students face.

Current developments in the teaching of writing have emphasized a focus on writing as a *öprocessö* and *öproductö*. However, for the same reason, we have noticed that

t students weaknesses in writing are quite serious. Thus, it is necessary to mention that only the major points ie, grammatical skills, technical skills and evaluation are discussed in this paper.

### **1. The writing skills**

Learning to write expressively is the most difficult skills for all language users, whether the language is mother tongue (native,11), second (L2) or foreign language (FL). The meaning of the term writing according to rivers (1976) means:

<<Writing refers to the expression of ideas in a consecutive way according to the graphic conventions of the language>>. (p.43)

Writing skills are said to be productive. To write means a sun of activities that aim at the students assimilation of the writing skills. Therefore, the activities should mostly be productive of what has been previously learnt.

In recent years, two different views on the nature of writing have emerged. The first is referred to as "the product approach". The second is called "the process approach" (Numan, 1989:36).

The product approach to writing focuses on the end result of the act of composition such as letters, essays, stories, etc. the writing teacher who subscribes to the product approach will have to see if the end product is readable, grammatically correct and obeys discourse conventions.

On the other hand, those who advocate a process approach to writing see the act of composition from a very different perspective focusing on the means where by the completed text is created as on the end product itself.

We strongly believe that two elements are essential in the success of teaching writing. The first is to negotiate a writing programme that is important in language teaching. A full discussion between the teacher and the students of a potential programme is required in order to demonstrate its interest, its relevance and its time arrangement.

The only way we find it effective to negotiate a writing programme is to negotiate it through a writing exercise in the first or second contact between the teacher and the

students, if, for example, each student in the group is asked to list his/her writing needs and the problems faced in writing, then this naturally leads to work on classifying, ordering and summarizing problems that may end by finding the new tools and procedures to fulfill the students needs. If this could be done in a language class, the written outcome might serve the students of translation for the first few sessions of the course.

The second element is about establishing the best learning environment in the class-room. Hence, teachers try to provide a good atmosphere in the classroom such as, the way the teacher introduces the topic the way of sending, receiving the message, quietness and calm). Students themselves may have a particular expectation of how serious a work should be conducted and brought to a final piece if successful writing.

Consequently, the following steps attempt to describe various practical activities and techniques that the student of translation must take into account to improve their writing.

## **2. Grammatical structure**

By and large, most of the students write vaguely, they, often, tend to forget their audience in the sense that they are mostly interested in addressing and having a wide range of information. Yet, many students fail because they can not communicate clearly, As a matter of fact, one of the frequent mistakes students make in writing is to use brief, undeveloped paragraphs as far as paragraph division is concerned.

It is evident that each paragraph contains a group of ideas expressed and formed in different types of sentences,

simple, compound and complex ones, what is, then, noticeable for the students of translation is that a production of ambiguous passages makes their composition incomprehensible (translated works). Therefore, the following appointed points are of prime importance if they are taken into consideration.

### **2.1 Simple, compound and complex sentence**

Sometimes, students fail to express themselves in writing. They even, lose the basic unit i.e. a simple sentence for example. Thus, their sentences are too long, they try to convey too much information at a time. Then, the result is a total confusion and their line of thought is lost or opaque. Consequently, confusion in expression leads to confusion in content. So, practising on certain types of sentences may help the student to obtain an acceptable degree of writing competence.

### **2.2 Sentence combination**

The majority of the students make efforts on how to combine sentences correctly. The students must be taught to combine sentences by using and selecting the suitable conjunctions and adverbs of frequency (time, place, and manner). As, it is preferable to increase practice and training the students on how to make, reduce, paraphrase sentences to phrases and phrases to simple words. This facilitates the task of compensation as a strategy in translation when facing very complex and ambiguous passages.

### 3. Technical Skills

Technical Skills are specific, useful and helpful techniques and steps that student must follow when writing any composition in a logical manure. Starting from its preparation; when they begin till they use punctuation as follows:

#### 3.1 Preparing

Most types of writing require some preparation. The writing process depends on who we are writing to (reader), why we are writing (purpose ) and what we are writing (content). At this stage, the students must storm or search their mind for ideas (brainstorming) then getting the ideas and thoughts into order. However, this could be applied in the translation task as the first step which leads to pre-translation.

#### 3.2 Drafting

The drafting stage is when we begin writing. Rewriting a draft is a significant part of the whole writing process, what is important here is to get words into paper. At this stage the students do not usually give much importance to spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. In other words, the students concentrate deeply on their ideas to avoid distraction and loss of their thoughts.

#### 3.3 Organizing

It is important at this stage to be able to see clearly what has been written and the changes that probably are brought (structure of sentences for instance). In order not to be confused or interrupted, the student have to concentrate on their ideas and get them on paper then

they move to organization as a necessary step to be followed. Obviously, when revising the draft some changes must be made such as, verify repetition, tense agreement, structure, etc.

### 3.4 Spelling

The spelling of English has traditionally been discussed and often taught in terms of rules to be followed. Henceforth, it is obligatory for the students to distinguish between American English spelling and British English spelling and its pronunciation for instance. Since spelling errors are of a wide range in translation. May be, this is due to confusion or the interference of languages.

### 3.5 Punctuation

Punctuation helps the reader to understand what the writer wants to say. Concerning teaching punctuation, Arthur Brookes and Peter Grandy (1990) point out that:

“Although punctuation is not the be-all and end-all of good writing, most students agree that it does contribute to the value of their writing.”

The teaching of punctuation mechanically or in isolation may or may not work, depending on the type of students you are teaching, but if you can give students the feeling that punctuation adds a star quality to good writing, then they are more likely to take it seriously.>>(p153)

On the other hand, Hodges (1967) states that punctuation:

“helps to clarify the meaning of the written sentence, the writer must supply as much as he can with marks of

punctuation what the speaker does naturally with his stops and pauses and with his voice variation or pithö (p.110).

Indeed, the student of translation does not know and confuse between the use of certain punctuation markers. The majority encounter may serious problems in punctuation. This not surprising to find a piece of writing by a third or fourth year student without a capital letter at the beginning of a sentence or a full stop at the end. Therefore, it is necessary to teach students the appropriate use of certain features of punctuation such as the full stop, if it is used when the sentence or the idea ends (as often asked by the students), the use Dashes (-) colon(),semicolon(,) and apostrophe of the possessive case. Hence, the students should be aware of some transformations of certain sentences within the use of different features or punctuation markers. This is mainly true when translating texts from the target language into the source language in order to keep and transfer the accurate meaning of the original text and help the reader guess the meaning (content).

#### **4. Evaluation**

It is of prime importance. It aims at enabling students to write in an appropriate manner for a particular audience or particular purposes. Never the less, the actual writing conventions which are necessary for the students to master the writing of language relate mainly to elementary stages such as, spelling and punctuation to any composition.

### 5. Writing composition: Paragraph/Essay

A composition is usually a series of paragraph developing one or several topics which are closely related. Any composition should have an effective beginning and an effective end. The purpose and the audience to whom the writing is conveyed should be clear to convey the message. This is not the case for the students who use a wide range of vocabulary and sentences blindly, inconsiderably. And, this is the case of their production (translated texts) mainly, when they face long sentences. They try to keep the same lengths of sentences which lead to produce meaningless passages (translation).

The sentences in most well written paragraph may be analysed into three general functions; the paragraph introducer (introduction) which establishes the topic, the paragraph developer which comprises the examples and details of various kinds of ideas and sometimes we find view-points which one often called context modulators, these are smooth transitions from one idea to another, or one subject to another. Where as, the third function is called, the paragraph terminator (conclusion) that concludes the ideas discussed in the paragraph. Therefore, the students must be familiar with this sort of composition and functions if, for instance, the students can easily guess these different functions of sentences they will succeed in translating a text; sentence by sentence semantically and structurally.

Consequently, to reach the last stage of writing, evaluation is not an easy task, for one to go step by step following the learning process. In other words, to start from the simplest to the more complex; from learning to

write a simple sentence to developing a paragraph then a essay. This requires and includes judgment and opinions whether personal (self-monitoring, self evaluation) or from the audience (the reader).

### **Conclusion**

Our discussion in this paper focuses on developing writing skills. The discussed points play an essential role if practised and followed seriously by the students to help them to improve their abilities in writing by taking each strategy and step into consideration.

The acquisition of the writing skills depends on the student's cognitive ability. If, for instance, the students increase practice on the grammatical skills (sentence patterns and sentence combination) the technical skills that start from the preparation of a topic then lead to making a proper use of punctuation makers and finally, end up in evaluation which requires self-correction and self evaluation before the translated piece is given to the reader. Students tend to forget the audience to whom they are writing. They seem to ignore and/or neglect the fact that any piece of writing is communicative in nature. Writing a composition must be conducted in a coherent and satisfying manner. Otherwise, it will be impossible for the reader to reach the writer's intention and purpose. Furthermore, translation is not only an activity to change words and expressions from one language into another but it is the cleverness, ability and competence of changing the language accurately.

However, the task is not easy because the form (structure) and the content (meaning) are necessary to grasp in the translation process. Failing to do so makes it

impossible to achieve one's aim as a future professional translator.

### **References**

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