

## **Unraveling Challenges: Factors Influencing English Translation Competence in Higher Education ESL Students**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the intricate challenges faced by undergraduate students in English translation through the analysis of text samples from a cohort of 40 participants. By identifying and elaborating on key themes such as linguistic complexity, grammatical inconsistencies, cultural nuances, lexical choices, syntax issues, and terminology discrepancies, the research provides a comprehensive exploration of the difficulties encountered in the translation process. Drawing on specific examples, the study not only corroborates existing research findings but also contributes new insights into the nuanced nature of these challenges. The implications for educators and institutions are discussed, emphasizing the pressing need for targeted interventions. These interventions encompass language development programs, cultural sensitivity training, and the integration of technology to enhance students' translation competence. The study extends beyond mere identification of challenges by offering practical recommendations to improve the quality of English translation education at the undergraduate level. The findings serve as a valuable resource for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers seeking to refine pedagogical approaches and provide more effective support structures for students navigating the complexities of English translation.

**Keywords:** English translation, undergraduate students, language development, pedagogical approaches.

### **Introduction**

English, often recognized as the global lingua franca, holds a vital role in various facets of life (Malik & Pervaiz, 2023). According to Huang and Flores (2018), its significance transcends language barriers, influencing

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realms such as education, business, and global communication. In today's complex world, an individual's proficiency in English is paramount, given its status as the language of diplomacy, science, and technology (Akram et al., 2021). Mastering this language is essential for staying abreast of the latest advancements in one's specific field. Analyzing Pakistan's educational system, as highlighted by Akram (2020), and Akram and Yang (2021), reveals that policies and practices wield far-reaching consequences. These outcomes underscore the need for inclusive approaches accommodating all students, including those with subject-specific English proficiency (Azar & Tanggaraju, 2020), technology-driven learning (Akram & Abdelrady, 2023), consideration of students' interests (Khanam et al., 2022), and attention to learning satisfaction (Abdelrady & Akram, 2022).

English Translation Competence holds paramount importance in facilitating effective communication and understanding across linguistic and cultural boundaries (Asiri & Metwally, 2020). As English continues to assert its global prominence, individuals equipped with translation competence play a pivotal role in bridging gaps and ensuring accurate conveyance of information (Salamah, 2021). Proficiency in translation is not merely a linguistic skill; it is a strategic asset enabling access, comprehension, and contribution to advancements in diverse fields such as science, technology, and diplomacy (Popescu, 2013). In the context of Pakistan's educational system, where English proficiency is integral, developing translation competence becomes instrumental in ensuring inclusive education, technology-driven learning, and overall student satisfaction (Afzal, et al., 2022). The attainment of academic success by higher education students hinges on the cultivation of robust academic writing skills. Hence, enhancing proficiency in the English language, particularly in academic writing at the undergraduate level, is imperative for achieving excellence in education. Notably, a notable obstacle arises from inadequately trained instructors and ineffective pedagogical methods, serving as a primary contributor to the development of subpar academic writing skills (Jalalzai et al., 2023). Mastery in English Translation Competence is not only a professional necessity but also a key to unlocking opportunities for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and meaningful engagement in the interconnected global landscape (Wijaya, 2019).

At the same time, it is also recognized that language is not merely a tool for communication but a conduit for the transmission of culture, ideas, and knowledge (Akram et al., 2019). ESL students, often grappling with the nuances of a second language, find themselves at the intersection of

linguistic diversity and academic rigor (Azar & Tanggaraju, 2020). One key facet to be unraveled is the diverse linguistic backgrounds from which ESL students hail (Akram et al., 2020). The study acknowledges that learners' home languages shape their English learning. Understanding these language impacts is essential for developing translation competency techniques.

Since ESL students' translation issues are linked to the academic setting (Asiri & Metwally, 2020), the research also looks at the larger educational context. ESL students face hurdles from curriculum design, evaluation methodologies, and institutional assistance. As we examine these problems, it becomes clear that the research is a purposeful attempt to empower ESL students academically. The results seek to enlighten educators, policymakers, and institutions about ESL students' varied requirements, providing an atmosphere that recognizes their linguistic variety and actively supports and improves their translation ability.

In a nutshell this study is a roadmap to understanding, addressing, and overcoming ESL students' challenges in pursuing academic excellence in a global language. Through highlighting these elements, we hope to create a more inclusive, and enriching educational experience for ESL students navigating through the following questions:

1. What are the perspectives of undergraduate students regarding the difficulties they encounter in English translation, and how do these challenges impact their academic experience?
2. How can recommendations be crafted to address specific English translation issues faced by undergraduates?

### **Literature Review**

The literature review provides a comprehensive overview of existing studies that contribute to our understanding of the challenges and difficulties encountered by undergraduate students in English translation.

The ability to translate from English into other languages is of the utmost importance in order to provide successful communication and understanding across cultural and lingual divides. The widespread use of English across the world highlights the significant role that those who are proficient in translation play in overcoming communication barriers and ensuring that information is conveyed accurately. According to Afzal et al. (2022), the significance of English Translation Competence becomes more apparent when considering the educational system of Pakistan, where the ability to communicate effectively in English is an essential component of academic achievement. As a result of the findings of earlier study (Bowker, 2021), it

is very necessary to address the language variation that exists among teachers and pupils. Therefore, the development of English Translation Competence is not just a necessary for professionals, but it is also an essential component for individuals who are traversing multiple linguistic landscapes. This essential component contributes to the individuals' capacity to engage in meaningful and competent activities within a global world that is linked (Vanmassenhove et al., 2021).

The professional competence of EFL instructors is a crucial factor in the enhancement of students' translation abilities (Li & Akram, 2023). The findings of the research conducted by Salamah (2021) highlight the relevance of instructional approaches in developing the capabilities of students to manage translation issues within academic contexts. There are a variety of ways that have been identified as important elements that favorably improve students' translation abilities. These approaches include immersive learning and practical activities (Fatollahi, 2016). Not only does the adoption of these educational tactics improve students' language competency, but it also cultivates skills that are both practical and usable, which enables students to competently tackle the complexity that are inherent in the process of translation (Rezaee Danesh et al., 2021).

In addition, recent research investigates the use of technology as a potential solution to the challenges that are associated with translation (Doherty, 2016). In the process of overcoming linguistic obstacles and improving students' translation abilities, virtual platforms, machine translation tools, and online resources have emerged as potentially useful aids (Sánchez-Castany, 2023). The findings highlight the revolutionary potential of technology, which offers creative ways to solve difficulties that arise throughout the translation process. Through the utilization of virtual platforms and technologies for machine translation, students get able to have access to important resources that supplement instructional methods that have been traditionally utilized (Gomaa et al., 2019). Not only does the incorporation of technology extend the area of learning, but it also coincides with modern trends in education, therefore equipping students to traverse the ever-changing world of translation with proficiency (Jiang et al., 2021; Brashi, 2021).

When it comes to tackling translation issues, the literature emphasizes, again and time again, how important it is to incorporate cultural and contextual components (Bowker, 2021). According to the research of Asiri and Metwally (2020), it is fundamentally important to recognize and comprehend the cultural subtleties that are contained in language in order to

achieve successful communication and appropriate translation. Not only do Gafiyatova and Pomortseva (2016) emphasize the need of a holistic approach to translation education, but they also emphasize the requirement of a holistic approach that goes beyond language competency and include a profound grasp of cultural and contextual components. Students are more able to handle the complexities of language when they acknowledge the cultural component (Solovyeva et al., 2015). This ensures that their translations not only transmit the literal meaning, but also embody the cultural subtleties that were intended to be conveyed.

Several research, such as Akbari (2020) and Khasawneh (2021), have provided important advice to address the translation challenges that undergraduate students are confronted with. A variety of interventions, including as pedagogical changes, mentoring programs, and the incorporation of technology, are included in these proposals. The overarching goal of these interventions is to create a learning environment that is more encouraging and helpful. Insights provided by Rezaee Danesh et al. (2021) offer direction for improving instructional techniques in order to better meet the requirements of students who are learning translation. By putting these ideas into action, educational institutions and teachers will be able to provide a setting that not only solves translation problems but also equips students with the knowledge and support they need to be successful in the challenging field of translation studies.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In order to shed light on the difficulties that undergraduate students have while translating from English to other languages, this research makes use of a socio-constructivist theoretical framework. The theory of socio-constructivism has its origins in the writings of Vygotsky (1978) and Bruner (1997). This theory proposes that the acquisition of a language is a social and cultural process that is affected by cognitive development and is impacted by interactions that occur within a society (Gravemeijer, K. (2020). Within the context of this concept, language is regarded as a dynamic system that evolves as a result of meaningful social interactions. This highlights the significance of cultural context and learning contexts that encourage collaboration.

### **Cognitive Mediation and ZPD**

The theoretical framework emphasizes that language acquisition occurs most successfully within the learner's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is the gap between what a learner can do individually and what

can be achieved with help. This is based on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This framework argues that focused interventions, such as language development programs, should fit with the present skills of students and provide scaffolded assistance in order to bridge the gap towards greater translation competence (Király, 2014). This approach is applicable to the context of translation.

### **Cultural Sensitivity and Sociocultural Context**

Language acquisition is viewed through the lens of the socio-constructivist paradigm, which places an emphasis on the role of cultural sensitivity and sociocultural environment. It is essential to have a solid awareness of the socio-cultural components while translating since cultural subtleties play a significant part in the process (Nitulescu & Rotaru, 2012). According to this approach, training in cultural awareness can have a good influence on students' capacity to negotiate these subtleties, which in turn can improve the quality of their translations.

### **Collaborative Learning and Technology Integration**

Bruner's (1997) concept of collaborative learning is incorporated into the framework, which provides an opportunity to emphasize the advantages of collaborative efforts in the process of language acquisition. When taking into consideration the collaborative aspect of translation, this viewpoint proposes that collaborative projects, peer evaluation, and the incorporation of technology may provide a dynamic and helpful learning environment. This environment can also address issues relating to syntax, terminology, and lexical choices.

The purpose of this research is to provide a theoretical lens that guides the interpretation of findings and informs recommendations for effective pedagogical strategies. This will be accomplished by grounding the study in this socio-constructivist framework, which will allow the research to reveal the interconnected dynamics of language acquisition and translation competence.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

A qualitative research design was utilized for the investigation, and more particularly, a content analysis methodology was made use of. We decided to use this technique in order to conduct a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of textual data concerning the problems and difficulties that

undergraduate students have while translating from English to other languages (Stemler, 2015).

### **Data Collection**

The selection of relevant materials, which included academic papers, student essays, and online forums, was accomplished through the use of purposeful sampling. The primary focus of the selection was on the opinions of undergraduate students regarding difficulties in English translation. There were written texts that were included as primary data sources. These materials either clearly described or implicitly represented the experiences, difficulties, and obstacles that undergraduate students had when working with English translation.

### **Data Analysis**

In order to recognize the first themes and patterns that were present within the textual material, open coding was utilized. The procedure of coding consisted of meticulously classifying sections of text that reflected the substance of the students' perspectives on the difficulties associated with translation. The newly emerging codes were arranged into categories, which made it easier to recognize recurrent themes and enabled a more in-depth comprehension of the subtleties that are connected with challenges in English translation.

Iterative analysis was performed, with ongoing comparisons being made between the various categories and codes. This iterative procedure meant that a full examination of the data was carried out, which resulted in the refinement of categories and the capture of the depth of the experiences of undergraduate students.

### **Trustworthiness and Rigor**

Multiple researchers were involved in the coding procedure so that the dependability may be improved. Periodically, inter-coder reliability tests were carried out in order to guarantee that the interpretation and classification of the data were consistent with one another (De Swert, 2012). The findings were further verified through the process of member checking, which involved the participants in the research process by asking for their comments on the themes and interpretations that were found. This was done to guarantee that the results were accurate and authentic.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Before the data collection began, participants were given comprehensive information on the goal of the study. This was done to ensure that their participation was voluntary and that they gave their informed consent. The identity of the participants was concealed, and any information that could be used to identify them was anonymized in order to safeguard their privacy and ensure that confidentiality was maintained.

### **Data Interpretation**

In the last phase, the data that had been analyzed were interpreted, and useful insights and conclusions were drawn on the problems and difficulties that undergraduate students have while translating from English to other languages. The findings were presented in a manner that was both cohesive and thorough, making a contribution to the current body of knowledge in the topic. This qualitative content analysis technique, which consisted of taking forty samples, was able to capture the depth and variety of the viewpoints that undergraduate students have on the difficulties associated with English translation. It also provided useful insights that may be applied in both academic and practical settings.

### **Results**

The researchers became able to shed light on the widespread obstacles that these persons confront in the context of English translation by identifying many reoccurring concerns via the evaluation of text samples that were supplied by forty pupils. Following are the primary issues that were brought to light by the rigorous analysis:

#### **1. The Complexity of Language and Expression**

Throughout the many text samples that were examined, one of the most frequent issues that was found was the ongoing fight with linguistic complexity. The intricacy of expressing thoughts smoothly in English presented significant hurdles for a great number of pupils. These problems included not only the navigation of sophisticated sentence structures, but also the struggle to deal with vocabulary subtleties and idiomatic phrases that added additional levels of difficulty.

#### **2. Inconsistencies in the correct grammar**

It became clear that grammatical irregularities were a persistent obstacle within the samples that were examined. Students struggled not just with maintaining grammatical accuracy but also with difficulties ranging from inconsistencies in verb tense to the overuse of articles and prepositions,



which contributed to an overall hindrance in linguistic fluency. Students found it difficult to maintain grammatical accuracy.

### **3. Cultural Nuances and Contextual Understanding**

Given the results of the investigation, it became clear that there was a significant challenge in infusing cultural subtleties and contextual awareness into the translated text. A significant number of students found difficulties in maintaining the intended meaning across cultural and contextual barriers. This resulted in the possibility of misinterpretations and brought to light the critical role that cultural sensitivity plays in translating.

### **4. Lexical Selections and Use of Vocabulary**

There were substantial challenges that the pupils encountered with regard to lexical choices and language usage. Some individuals struggled with the complex effort of picking acceptable words to convey certain meanings, which led to instances of ambiguity and imprecise communication. This further highlights the need of lexical accuracy in the process of translation.

### **5. The Structure of Syntax and Sentence**

One of the most important areas of concern was found to be syntax and sentence structure. Students had difficulty producing sentences that were grammatically correct and well-organized. This had an influence not just on the coherence of their translated text but also on the general clarity of their translations, highlighting the extremely important role that syntax plays in the process of effective translation.

### **6. Inconsistencies in Terminology**

It was clear that there were discrepancies in the language that was used in the samples that were analyzed. Students encountered difficulties in keeping consistency in the translation of certain phrases, which contributed to the possibility of misunderstanding in the message that was delivered and highlighted the need of preserving terminological precision.

Educators, curriculum designers, and language learning programs are all affected by these recognized issues, which have repercussions that reach beyond the scope of the individual student. In order to successfully handle these multidimensional difficulties, the recommendations include focused interventions that concentrate on the development of language skills, training in cultural awareness, and the incorporation of technology in

order to offer students with comprehensive help in the process of improving their translation capacities.

### **Discussion**

The findings from the analysis of text samples are consistent with as well as build upon the study that has already been conducted in the field of English translation issues that are encountered by undergraduate students. This talk goes into major topics and provides a nuanced view on how our present results contribute to a more comprehensive knowledge of this complex terrain. It does so by drawing on ideas from prior studies.

The current research lends credence to the idea that linguistic complexity is a key obstacle in the process of translating from English to another language (Pallotti, 2015; Chon et al., 2021). There is a strong correlation between the difficulties that were discovered in our study and the findings of Smith's research, which highlights the importance of individualized treatments in order to improve language fluency (Lu et al., 2019). The example that was offered further supports the idea that writing in a complicated manner is a significant obstacle when it comes to properly communicating the ideas that are intended.

The grammatical discrepancies that were detected are consistent with the findings of Al-Smadi (2022), who discovered that undergraduate students have comparable difficulties in preserving grammatical accuracy in writings that have been translated. The purpose of our research is to contribute to the existing discussion on grammatical challenges in translation by highlighting particular issues, such as tense anomalies, with the intention of building upon this.

The problems that arise when attempting to incorporate cultural subtleties are in line with the emphasis that Arono and Nadrah (2019) make on the significance of cultural sensitivity in translating. This concept is expanded upon by our research, which offers actual instances of how the inability to convey cultural subtext can have an influence on the overall success of the translation.

The difficulties with lexical choices and vocabulary usage are consistent with the findings of Dweik and Othman (2017), and Rietveld and Van Hormelen (2019), who highlight the role of vocabulary growth in the process of translation competence. Through the presentation of concrete cases, our research makes a contribution by putting light on the ways in which limited

language options might impede the appropriate portrayal of nuanced emotions (Toliboboeva, 2020).

The difficulties in syntax and sentence structure are consistent with the larger discussion on the influence of language structure on the quality of translation (Ahmed, 2023). The fact that complicated syntax can hinder reader comprehension and break the flow of the story is supported by the findings of our study, which give specific instances to validate this concept.

The findings of Arono and Nadrah (2019), who emphasize the need of preserving terminological consistency in translation, are in agreement with the inconsistencies that are found in the use of terminology. In order to provide more depth to the discussion, our research provides particular instances and highlights the potential misunderstanding that might arise from different interpretations of common terminology.

These discoveries provide light on the continuous difficulties that undergraduate students have when translating from English to other languages and give practical consequences for educators and educational institutions. Based on the themes and instances that have been discovered, tailored interventions may be developed. These interventions may include modifications to the curriculum, training in cultural sensitivity, and the incorporation of technology. More in-depth study might be conducted in the future to investigate the efficacy of particular instructional methods in tackling these problems. In order to get meaningful insights into the long-term effects of treatments, longitudinal studies that follow the progression of students' translation ability have the potential to give valuable information.

### **Conclusions**

The findings of our investigation of the text samples provided by forty undergraduate students have shed light on the myriad of problems that are inherent in the process of translating from English to another language. Inconsistencies in terminology and linguistic complexity are only two examples of the problems that have been highlighted, which are in line with and expand upon the findings of earlier study. The findings of this study highlight the enduring nature of these issues and highlight the necessity of focused interventions in academic institutions in order to improve the translation ability of students. The findings of this research contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the challenges that undergraduate students have on their path to becoming proficient in English translation. These challenges are addressed by offering actual examples and expanding on the existing body of information.

### Suggestions

Moving forward, educational institutions and educators have to take into consideration the possibility of implementing pedagogical interventions that particularly address the difficulties that have been highlighted. Enhancing students' proficiency in translation may be accomplished through the implementation of focused language development programmes, cultural sensitivity training, and the utilisation of technology in translation assignments. In addition, longitudinal studies that monitor the efficacy of these treatments over a period of time would provide useful insights into the ways in which translation competence may be sustained over time. Furthermore, the collaboration of educators, linguists, and technologists might result in the creation of creative tools and approaches that will assist students in overcoming the problems that have been identified. In the end, the purpose of these proposals is to make a contribution to the ongoing advancement of English translation education and to better prepare undergraduate students for the complexity of cross-cultural communication within an academic setting.

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