

INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF INTERNET ASSISTED SIGHT TRANSLATION ON THE STUDENTS' SPEAKING FLUENCY AT UNIVERSITY OF MUHAMMADIYAH SUMATERA UTARA

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Abstract

This paper seeks to investigate the effect of internet assisted sight translation on the students' speaking fluency. Students at the third year of English Education Department were involved in this study. The data were collected using audio-recording and questionnaires. As a form of tasks, students were asked to translate orally Indonesia's tourism destinations texts which are derived from the internet for the course of eight meetings. Students' speaking fluency was assessed through the criteria of excellent, good, average and poor are used. The findings revealed that students at the experimental class gained a significant effect in terms of their speaking fluency. Upon the treatment, students at the experimental class showed an effect in terms of their speaking fluency. Approximately 90% of students are rated good, and the remaining 10% is rated average. Hence, it can be concluded that internet assisted sight translation gives effect the students' speaking fluency.

Keywords: Sight Translation, Speaking Skill, Translation Teaching Method



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1. INTRODUCTION

There are numerous methods applicable to teach speaking to EFL learners. Translation as one of the added skills that English students can acquire potentially serve as a technique in enhancing speaking. Despite that fact, translation used to be considered an ineffective method in English Language Teaching. It has also been considered inappropriate within the context of English language teaching (Brown, 2002) and was criticized due to the close association with Grammar Translation Method (GTM).

Even today translation is often regarded as some kind of mechanical linguistic transfer of meaning from one language to another. It is still ignored as a useful language learning tool because of being not a communicative activity that is not suited to the general needs of the language learner. As defined by Gonzales, Vasquez and Mikkelsen (2012), sight translation is the act of oral translation of a written text and is combination of translation and interpreting. In other words, sight translation is the oral reproduction in the target language of a document originally written in the source language for one or more receivers who may be listeners present in the same communicative situation where the translator or reader is who want to read written record of the oral translation provided by the translator. There seems to be a sort of connection between speaking fluency and sight translation.

However, there are studies that proved that Translation has positive and significant impact on student's speaking skill. One of such findings is Dagiliene (2012) who discovered that the participants in his study suggested that translation serves as a beneficial tool in learning speaking skill by 45% after vocabulary which is by 85%. Whereas from the perspective of improved skills, translation plays a significant role by 60%. Translation is an effective, valid tool in the foreign language learning and can be used in the university classroom to improve knowledge in English. (2012:128).

Most translation techniques used in professional translation, such as sight translation, are regarded to be effective learning techniques and fascinating for students because learners understand that they are fulfilling authentic activities. In this regard, translation tasks can effectively be used in language learning (Davies, 2005). O'Malley and Chamot (1990) also believe that translation (defined as applying L1 for comprehending and producing L2) encompasses more than one third of strategies applied in language learning so that beginners mainly use reiteration, translation and transliteration. On the other hand, higher level learners apply comprehension techniques besides repetition and translation (p.127).

As Popovic (2001) puts it, considering that fundamentality of learner-focused language teaching, any activity that assist language learning should be utilized; new techniques can be used in ELT. In this regard, translation as an instrument of language teaching is now being more emphasized by language instructors and learners (p.2).

The study presented here is one of the first investigations to test the effects of internet-assisted sight translation on the students' speaking skill. The research questions of this paper are Is there any significant effect of the use internet-assisted sight translation on the students' speaking fluency? and what are students' perspective on the use of internet-assisted sight translation in a speaking class?

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Translation

A very common definition of translation, which highlights its linguistic function, is a process of replacing a text in one language by a text in another (House 2009: 4). Yet translating is not only a linguistic act; it is also a cultural one, an act of communication across cultures (House 2009: 11).

A majority of scholars have touched on the role of translation in the process of teaching and learning a foreign-language (Duff 1989; Malmkjaer 1998; Stibbard 1998; Cunningham 2000; Gonzalez Davies 2004; Cook 2010; Vermes 2010; Pym et al. 2013; Kerr 2014).

Schaffner (1998) argues that the translation and related exercises could bring about benefits to foreign language learning in the forms of:

1. Improving verbal agility.
2. Expanding students' vocabulary in L2.
3. Developing their style.
4. Improving their understanding of how languages work.
5. Consolidating L2 structures for active use.
6. Monitoring and improving the comprehension of L2.

If related to EFL learning through translation, EFL learners' belief about translation can be defined as learners' feeling of being certain that translation can help them improve their English. In other words, they believe that translation is a tool for helping them learn EFL.

As for Indonesian EFL context, students tend to imitate the Indonesian culture when it comes to speaking. Therefore, their style of speaking tend to sound like Indonesian, their vocabulary tends to be repeated over and over again. Thus, it is important to give students knowledge of how to vary their vocabulary and subsequently can improve their speaking ability. Dagilienė, (2012:125) emphasizes that translation in foreign language classes is no longer taken as an ineffective tool in language learning. It is in the process of becoming a form of “pedagogical translation” and is regarded as a method to boost learners’ competences.

In line with that, Leonardi (2011) argues that translation as a pedagogical tool can be successfully employed at any level of proficiency, at school or University, as a valuable and creative teaching aid to support, integrate and further strengthen the four traditional language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. One of the possible ways to integrate translation in foreign language classes can be through the use of translation activities.

The same findings were also reported by other studies (Aktekin and Gliniecki 2015; Al-Musawi 2014; Dagilienė 2012; Guerra 2014; Karimian and Talebinejad 2013; Mutlu et al.2015). They state that translation as a learning strategy very frequently in their English learning. It is quite clear that translation does exist in EFL teaching and learning to improve learners learn, improve and develop more about English.

2.2 Sight translation

There are several types of translation. The most recognized ones are interpreting (oral translation) and translation (written translation). Very few recognize the types of sight translation. Sight translation converts a written message into a spoken message. It involves reading a text silently in the source language, and then speaking it in the target language.

(https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/courts/interpreters/bilingual_test/section_5.php). Hammad (2014) maintains that sight translation can be defined as the reading of a text by the interpreter from the source language into the target language, simultaneously, in a manner in which the content of the document can be easily understood by the audience. Sight translation is often considered to be the step that comes before simultaneous interpretation.

Sight translation is the oral rendition of text written in one language into another language and is usually done in the moment. Sight translation is often requested of an interpreter during an interpreting assignment. Weber (1984:33) maintains that sight translation is “one of the basic ingredients of interpretation”. According to Martin (1999, as cited in Shunnaq 2006: 20), sight translation “has all the characteristics of a translation whereas the final product has the demands of an interpretation, namely instant understanding and reformulation of cognitive content”, while Roseann Duenas et al, (1991) defines it as a hybrid of translation and interpretation.

In terms of teaching methodology of translation, Newmark (1991: 46–47) considers sight translation as part of translation practice. In addition, Lambert (2004: 298) argues that “sight translation can be rendered more or less challenging: an unstressful form of sight translation is where the candidate is allowed approximately ten minutes to read a 300-word passage and prepare the vocabulary.”

However, “[a] more stressful variation of sight translation would be where preparation time is eliminated altogether and the candidate is asked to begin

translating immediately, without even having the chance to read the document” (ibid.; see also Song 2010: 122).

There has been numerous studies pertaining to sight translation contribution on English skills, such as reading (Moslem Fatollahi¹ writing (Paula Gorszczyńska). Speaking, like the other skills, is more complicated than it seems at first and involves more than just pronouncing words (Karakuzu and Akdemir, 2011).

Krapivkina (2018) recommended that sight translation is taught to the students separately from other modes of interpreting because of different skills combination.

2. METHODOLOGY

The current research is conducted in experimental design, and the data were collected by using pre-test and post-test. There were two groups of students, namely the control class and the experimental class. The intervention to the experimental group was carried out for eight meetings after the pre-test. Finally, after the intervention, both groups were given pre and post-tests to investigate whether there was a significant effect on the students’ fluency in speaking.

2.1 Participants

The participants of this study are 40 third year students of English Education Department, University of Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara. The class is divided into two. One group consisting of 20 students at a controlled class and another group comprising another 20 at the experimental class.

2.2 Procedure

The procedures of implementing sight translating is as follows:

1. Pretest was conducted prior to implementing the sight translating. Upon the completion of eight meetings, post-test was conducted in order to assess the effect of internet-assisted sight translation brings on students’ speaking fluency.
2. Students at the experimental class are allocated five minutes to read the text on Indonesia’s tourism destinations to comprehend the general idea of the content of the text and text type. Then, they need to write equivalent words or ideas that come to their mind and try to segmentize the text into sentences.
3. The researcher starts the voice recorder at the end of five minutes and the student starts translating sentence segment 1 and read ahead to identify segment 2, and so on until she/he comes to the last segment. The researcher stops the voice recorder and checks the time to make sure whether the student has taken no more than four minutes to sight translate 250 words.
4. Eight meetings were constructed to test the applicability of using translation drills on students’ speaking skill. Upon completing the texts, students at the experimental class are instructed to perform speaking in public to talk about their own origin tourism destinations without looking at the machine translated text.

3.3 The Intervention

The experimental group was taught by the researchers for about two hours in every speaking meeting for eight meetings. The activities such as translate, translation drills, recording, speaking, discussion and problem-solving were used in the teaching-learning activities adapted from (Brown, 2000; Larsen-Freeman, 2000). However, the traditional way (teacher-centred) was applied by the English teacher in the control group.

3. RESULT

There are four parameters in assessing students' speaking ability. However, due to limited time, we only use fluency as the only indicator to measure students speaking skill. Below is the indicator for each of fluency parameter:

Assessing speaking fluency

In order to assess students' speaking fluency, we adopted the following rubric.

Table 1: Fluency Evaluation Metric

Parameter	Description
Excellent	Smooth of flow speech.
Good	Speaks flow with some hesitation.
Average	Speak slowly with many pauses and restart.
Poor	Speak is not flow with many pause and restart.

After conducting eight meetings, the following results were gained:

Table 2: Pre Test Results at the Experimental Group

Parameter	Number of Students	Percentage
Excellent	-	-
Good	-	-
Average	15	75%
Poor	5	25%
Total	20	100%

Table 3: Pre Test Results at the Controlled Group

Parameter	Number of Students	Percentage
Excellent	-	-
Good	-	-
Average	14	70%
Poor	6	30%
Total	20	100%

From the table above (in the pretest) it showed that the students' speaking fluency in English before having treatment by using internet-assisted sight translation was 75% categorized as 'average' and 25% categorized as 'poor' in experimental group, meanwhile the use of internet-assisted sight translation was 70% categorized as 'average' and 30% was categorized as 'poor' in controlled group.

After conducting the treatment by applying sight translation in a speaking class, we gained the following results.

Table 4: Post-Test Results at the Experimental Class

Parameter	Number of Students	Percentage
Excellent	-	-
Good	18	90%
Average	2	10%
Poor	-	-
Total	20	100%

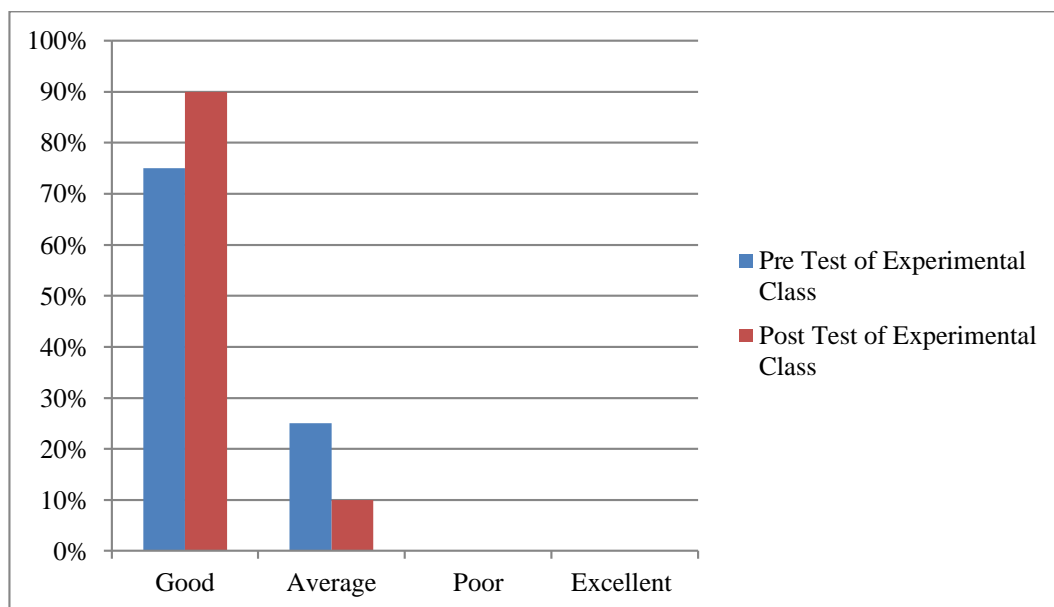
Table 5: Post-Test Results at the Controlled Class

Parameter	Number of Students	Percentage
Excellent	-	-
Good	5	25%
Average	15	75%
Poor	-	-
Total	20	100%

From the table above (in posttest) it showed that the students' speaking fluency in English after having treatment by using internet-assisted sight translation reached 90% categorized as 'good' and only 10% was categorized 'average' and no one was categorized as 'poor' anymore in experimental group, meanwhile the use of internet-assisted sight translation reached 25% categorized as 'good' and 75% was categorized as 'average' and no one was categorized as 'poor' anymore in controlled group.

The comparison results between pretest and post test at the experimental group could be seen in figure 1 below:

Figure 1. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results at the experimental group



As can be seen in the above chart, students who were treated with internet-assisted sight translation gained benefits in terms of their speaking skill. The pre test showed that at the pre-test, students speaking fluency is rated at an average level by 75%, and the remaining percentage is at poor level by 25%. Upon the treatment, students at the experimental class showed an improvement in terms of their speaking fluency. Approximately 90% of students are rated good, and the remaining 10% is rated average. Hence, it can be concluded that internet assisted sight translation give a significant effect on the students' speaking fluency. No students were rated poor and none of them were also rated excellent.

4. DISCUSSION

Based on the results above, viewed from belief about translation perspective, the third year students of English Education Department of University of Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara as EFL learners believe that assisted-internet sight translation helps them comprehend and acquire English speaking fluency. The findings are in line with Liao's (2006) that states that students believe translation helps them acquire English skills in term of writing, speaking, vocabulary, idioms and phrases. Other studies also revealed that students believe translation is importance in English learning as a tool for assisting them learn English (Aktekin and Gliniecki 2015; Dagiliene 2012; Karimian and Talebinejad 2013). In addition, this current study also found that EFL learners believe translation helps them interact with their classmates, understand English grammatical rules, recall the content of a lesson in the future. They also believe that to be able to think directly in English, someone should be immersed in an English speaking culture for some time.

However, this study also has some limitations. Although this study is able to find out that there is a significant effect of using internet-assisted sight translation on the students' speaking fluency, this study was carried out in small sample size (n=40). Therefore, adequate number of participants from different proficiency levels and background are required for future research to provide more precise conclusions. In addition, more advanced statistical analysis with more various variables are also required to provide more reliable findings. To support the

quantitative results, interviews with students and teachers may be effective to get a deeper understanding and insight on the use of internet-assisted sight translation in EFL teaching and learning.

5. CONCLUSION

Weber (1984: 33) believes that "it is important to have students perform at a speaker's rostrum, so that they face the class. This will help them cope with stage fright and nervousness." In interpreting setting, we can argue that 'two translators are half a translator, and three translators are no translator at all'. In other words, individuality should be encouraged and enhanced. The teacher should encourage students individually for public speaking. When students take to the podium, they may gain several qualities, e.g. self-assurance, self-belief, among other things.

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