

Scaffoldings, Translation Errors, and Language Awareness by Thai University Students

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Abstract—Translation is considered one of the most complicated tasks for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners to undertake, as achieving faultless translation requires multiple skills. To render perfect meanings between two languages, syntactic and semantic skills are necessary. However, some tasks require even more, namely pragmatic skill, to translate the profound meanings of the words or phrases and the meanings between a paragraph's lines. This study was conducted to help Thai university students overcome these obstacles. The teacher's scaffolding procedures were introduced during the translation process in a translation course to increase the students' awareness of errors so they could consequently produce sound translations. Our findings show the significant effectiveness of scaffoldings for the improvement of translation tasks with appropriate lexical selection and good semantic form. However, the translation of some language aspects, such as figurative language, still needs further support and investigation.

Index Terms—scaffoldings, translation errors, language awareness

I. INTRODUCTION

Translation plays a large role in our globalized world, and its role is emphasized by the overwhelming development in communication technology. It is a means to transfer information from one language to another in this rapidly globalizing age. Translation is also considered an important language skill. Naimushin (2002) pointed out that it should be included as the fifth skill, along with listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Although translation has been taught in Thailand for a long time, various types of problems found among Thai students translating between Thai and English still occur. Moreover, even translation students possessing a sound knowledge of English and Thai, they produce poor translation work.

Translation is the process of transferring a message in the source text into another language, the target language. It is commonly believed that having knowledge of the source text's and target text's language would suffice for delivering a good translation. However, translation of a text successfully requires something more than processing linguistic knowledge of both languages. A successful translator should have extensive knowledge in linguistics, sociolinguistics, and other fields in the source and target languages. Besides sound knowledge of both languages, the successful translator should possess language awareness (LA). This qualification is believed to be helpful for the translator because it will help them produce better work. Language awareness has been defined as "a person's sensitivity to a conscious awareness of the nature of language and its role in human's life" (Donmall, 1985, p. 7). Such awareness is a major asset for any foreign-language learner, but for translation students, it is necessary in the translation process. Arguably, consciousness of underlying patterns of meaning in language (in the generic sense) is directly related to the ease with which students acquire translation skills. Even students who possess a sound knowledge of a language likely lack LA. That is, they are not aware of the mistakes arising from the differences in the character of the languages they made while translating. They also are not sensitive to the nature of the language they use. As a result, they produce translation errors. Therefore, LA practice should be provided for translation students so they can improve their translation quality.

Translation errors are seen as inevitable in translation. Moreover, there are no fixed models to categorize translation errors. These errors stem from many causes, such as a lack of comprehension, misuse of a word, or differences in structure. However, translation errors are significant for a translation teacher because they reveal where students are weak and need help so they can pinpoint and clarify such points. The study of errors has been many scholars' focus for a decade. Most of those studies have focused on the types of errors students make. However, researchers have conducted a few studies in the relationship between LA and translation errors. Therefore, this study speculated that LA can reduce the number of translation errors and improve the quality of translation.

The translation course was provided for third-year English-major students at Naresuan University. Even if these students had sound knowledge in Thai and have acquired knowledge of English in other courses, including basic grammar, morphology, and syntax for many years, they still made various translation errors. We regard LA as the main cause of an incorrectly determined meaning and poor translation. One assumption is that the students are not sensitive to

the nature of the languages and are not aware of the underlying meaning patterns and lexicon and therefore have a low level of LA and therefore did not realize they made a mistake in translation and produced a poor-quality translation.

To understand this problem more clearly, there is a need to determine whether the students are aware of their translation errors. Also, this study will help translation students identify their most common error types. This study is beneficial because it not only pinpoints students' problems in translation but also serves as a guideline for the teacher. As a result, the right pedagogies can address those problems and the course can be improved. This study, then, aims to answer the following questions:

- Are the students aware of translation errors they made in translation with the instructor's scaffoldings?
- Which types of translation errors were the students most aware of?
- Which types of translation errors were the students least aware of?

This study was conducted with some limitations because translation awareness in this study implicitly referred to the students' ability to produce and transfer an acceptable and equivalent meaning in the target language (Thai) with accuracy in selecting appropriate lexicon items, words, and phrases with good semantic form. This study presents that awareness as correctness of translation in the findings.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Translation and LA*

Translation is a complicated activity comprising the interpretation of meaning in a source text in one language and production in the target language. One of the most difficult skills translators have to learn is extracting concept meanings from the source text so that they base their translations on reformulations of those meanings rather than on the words or structures that codify them. LA plays an important role in producing an effective translation. It is believed that LA can help translators produce better work. It is a vital ingredient in translation because it can encourage the sensitivity of meaning when translated. Translation can be seen as a cognitive process involving a considerable amount of problem solving and decision making (Wilss, 1994). LA, then, makes use of cognitive strategies, such as noticing, hypothesis testing, problem solving, and recon structuring, to enhance the students' language learning. Ningsih (2013) studied LA's relevance in literature teaching for EFL students and found that teaching literature required the students to be aware of the use of language to determine meaning in the text. The teacher should provide students with opportunities in using language to express their opinions, share ideas, investigate a variety of interpretations, and think critically.

Zabalbeascoa (1994) studied awareness and translation and found that awareness plays an important role in translation, particularly in the area of translator competence. He also proposed his P-R model in translation to encourage awareness in students. Faber (1998) studied translation competence and LA. She found that LA is necessary for translation students and that consciousness-raising activities, such as mapping out semantic space, should be provided in translation class. B iy ükkantarcio and Do (2021) studied the importance of native LA in translation. They found that poor-quality translation is closely related to a low level of LA in mother tongue classroom revision and correction sessions and that conscious-raising activities were quite beneficial for the students.

B. *Translation Errors*

Translation requires a wide range of knowledge to understand several elements of the language; therefore, students who have just started learning translation, in particular, make errors. Error production occurs not only because of language transfer but also due to a variety of factors such as lack of text comprehension, inappropriateness for the reader, and misuse of time (Presada & Badea, 2014).

The American Translation Association's error categories help identify many types of errors found in translation. Corder (1973) found that errors in second- or foreign-language production can be categorized into four types: omission, selection, addition, and ordering of some language element. Moreover, Pym (1992) categorized errors as binary and nonbinary. Binary errors are any errors of incorrect translation whereas nonbinary errors are translations that are not totally wrong and can be improved.

However, for English as a foreign language (EFL) students, researchers of translation-error analysis mostly investigated syntactic errors (language errors) and semantic errors (renditions) (Amin, 2019; Chien, 2015; Wongranu, 2017). According to Wongranu (2017), semantic errors are mistranslations at the word level, whether a single word, collocation, or idiom. Furthermore, Liu (2012) analyzed the translation errors English-major college students made and discovered that they made more semantic errors than syntactic errors, possibly because they faced difficulties in comprehending the text.

Translation errors are not only beneficial for teaching pedagogy; they are also significant for the quality of translation. The fewer errors the students made, the better-quality translation they produced. In translation, students should try to reduce or eliminate errors as much as they can. To do so, they should be equipped with sound linguistic knowledge and a high level of LA. The instructor can help students achieve that goal through scaffolding. Scaffolding in this study refers to a special type of help the instructor temporarily provides to help students complete a task. Scaffolding may be a comment, assignment check, or guidance the teacher provides so the student can achieve the established goal. It is believed that the instructor's scaffolding can help students recognize their errors and rectify them with ease. Moreover,

scaffolding can indirectly raise the students' level of LA and enhance their linguistic knowledge. As a result, the number of errors will decrease and the quality of translation will improve.

C. Translation and Scaffoldings

The term scaffolding was first introduced and used in education by psychologist Bruner (1966). It has roots in theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) by Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky's theory is the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can do with help. Scaffolding in this study means that the teacher, another adult, or classmate provides temporary support for the students completing a task. Scaffolding may be comments or an instructor's check, in which the instructor provides more guidance or advice for completing a task. Scaffolding can assist learners in moving towards new concepts, skills, or understanding more easily. For translation, the instructor often scaffolds their students by means of comment or assignment check. This form of scaffolding can help students easily recognize the errors they have made. It can also indirectly help the students raise their LA and effectively reduce or eliminate their translation errors.

Nugraha (2013) studied helping students understand the text through scaffolding and found that the students attained three main bonuses: they become accustomed to building questions that affect their grammatical awareness, they become accustomed to communicating orally, and they are successful at comprehending the text thoroughly by acquiring new knowledge and vocabulary as well as context. Moreover, Aila and Mohmoud (2015) studied the effectiveness of scaffolding in developing seventh graders' reading comprehension skills. Their study showed that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control group in favor of the experimental group. They attributed differences to the use of scaffolding. Safa and Rozati (2017) also studied the impact of scaffolding on the development of the EFL learner's listening comprehension. The findings of this study underscored the positive potentiality of scaffolding in its different forms for the development of the EFL learner's listening comprehension. Furthermore, Elandeef and Handam (2021) investigated the use of scaffolding in teaching English in Saudi Arabia, and they found that scaffolding maximized the quality of teaching, learners' awareness and interactivity.

Due to the effectiveness of scaffolding on language comprehension and classroom interaction, the use of scaffolding to arouse the LA in translation might also be effective. However, there is still lack of investigation of the scaffolding, LA and translation error, especially in an EFL context. The development of scaffolding in translation classrooms might be beneficial as this could arouse the LA of translation error, then eliminate the translation errors and improve the quality of translation.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

Our aim in this study was to investigate the effectiveness of scaffolding on the LA of translation error. The participants included 25 third-year English major students enrolled in the Basic Translation course. The course lasted 15 weeks. During the semester, the awareness-raising tasks were implemented.

B. Texts

An excerpt from an English novel with 10 sentences was used. The translation was from English to Thai.

C. Procedures

1. Students were given one translation task.
2. Students handed in their tasks to the instructor three times.
 - For the first time, when the task was handed in, the instructor checked and marked the errors (if any). However, the instructors performed this marking implicitly. The students only knew that there were some errors but they did not know exactly where they were. They then returned the task to the students for correction.
 - For the second time, the lecturer checked the task, and the errors (if any) were marked explicitly but without any explanation, then returned to the students for correction.
 - For the third time, the task was returned to the students with the types of errors they had made.
3. This 3-step correction was designed to investigate the awareness among students of their errors. The lecturer observed the awareness of the students through the steps of correction.
4. The errors (a) were investigated for the differences of their correctness through the 3-step correction and (b) the types of error were classified according to whether they were appropriate lexical selection or semantic well-formedness.

IV. FINDINGS

The researchers analyzed the data for both descriptive and inferential statistics, using the SPSS program, whereas we investigated the qualitative data through error analysis.

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION OF THE STUDENTS' TRANSLATION SCORE WITH THE AMOUNTS OF SCAFFOLDINGS

Amount. of scaffolding	N	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max	F	Sig
None	25	2.04	1.30	0.00	5.00	75.36	0.000*
1	25	3.92	1.57	2.00	8.00		
2	25	8.12	2.33	3.00	13.00		

p<0.05

When the researchers calculated all scores for the student's translation assignments, it was found that the average score of the third-time assignment was the highest with 8.12 out of 19 (S.D = 2.33), following by the second-time 3.92 (S.D = 1.57) and the first-time assignment 2.04 (S.D = 1.30).

Before the researchers applied the scaffolding, the minimum score on the students' assignments was 0.00, and the maximum score was 5.00 from the total score of 19. The scores then increased as the first scaffolding was implemented, for which the minimum score was 2.00 and the maximum score was 8.00. For the third-time assignments with two scaffoldings, the minimum score was 3.00; however, the maximum score rose to 13.00.

TABLE 2
THE STUDENTS' TRANSLATION MEAN SCORE WITH DIFFERENT AMOUNTS OF SCAFFOLDINGS

Amount. of scaffolding	Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
	Between Groups	484.507	2	242.253	75.364	.000*
Within Groups	231.440	72	3.214			
Total	715.947	74				

p<0.05

The results from Table 2 show that there was a statistically significant difference among the mean scores of the students' translation assignments with different amounts of scaffolding at .05. Therefore, the Scheffé test was conducted to investigate the differences in mean score for each time we applied scaffolding.

TABLE 3
THE DIFFERENCES AMONG STUDENTS' TRANSLATION SCORE WITH DIFFERENT AMOUNTS OF SCAFFOLDINGS

Amount of scaffolding	\bar{x}	None	1	2
None	2.04	-	1.880*	6.080*
1	3.92	1.880*	-	4.200*
2	8.12	6.080*	4.200*	-

p<0.05

Table 3 shows that there were significant differences among the students' translation assignment scores with different amounts of scaffolding. The mean scores of assignments with one incidence of scaffolding are statistically higher than the mean score with no scaffolding (2.04 and 3.92). Moreover, the mean score of the assignment with two instances of scaffolding rises significantly from 3.92 to 8.12 ($p < .05$).

Furthermore, the researchers analyzed 19 words selected as the most frequent errors the students made. They could be classified into two types of translation correctness: (a) appropriate lexical selection and (b) semantic well-formedness. Table 4 below shows the distribution of translation correctness for these two types with the amount of scaffolding.

TABLE 4
DISTRIBUTION OF TRANSLATION CORRECTNESS WITH DIFFERENT AMOUNTS OF SCAFFOLDINGS

Translation correctness	No of scaffoldings	N	\bar{x}	S.D	F
Appropriate Lexical Selection (9 words)	None	25	1.040	1.098	40.003*
	1	25	2.120	1.363	
	2	25	4.160	1.280	
Semantic Well-formedness (10 words)	None	25	1.000	0.763	46.396*
	1	25	1.800	0.816	
	2	25	3.960	1.593	

Table 4 also shows that there were significant differences among mean scores on the students' translation assignments with different amounts of scaffolding applied in both types of translation correctness (appropriate lexical selection and semantic well-formedness). This reflected that scaffolding can improve the correctness of translation for both word selection and the judgment of appropriate meanings.

TABLE 5
DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' TRANSLATION IMPROVEMENT ACCORDING TO TYPE

Words or phrase with apparent improvement	Words or phrase with slight improvement	Words or phrase with bare/ no improvement
defense mind smashing her lip be different locking be melting his lip parted frantically adjust perfectly	kiss dude climbing peck was pressed gasped when it dawned on her	AC rib-cage defined jaw hit her like a brick*

The researchers thoroughly considered the 19 words that were the most frequent errors. It was found that some errors could be translated appropriately with the process of scaffolding while some errors showed slight improvements in correctness; however, some errors still showed barely or no improvement.

Table 5 was congruent with the results from Table 4 in that both types of translation correctness (appropriate lexical selection and semantic well-formedness) could improve through the scaffolding process.

Nevertheless, the other interesting findings in this study were that there were some errors indicating bare correctness, especially "hit her like a brick," which showed no improvement in translation. The researchers considered this phrase to be the most difficult task for all students in this study because none of the students could translate it appropriately even though they received scaffolding from the instructor. This may be because they could not identify the phrase as figurative language, so they failed to understand the underlying meaning of it and then rendered it literally.

Therefore, this study found that the translation of the figurative language did not improve even after the instructor's scaffoldings. Translating figurative language appropriately is a complex process. The students have to identify its underlying meaning, transfer the meaning into the target language, and find equivalents in the translated text. If they fail in any of these steps, they will fail to produce an appropriate translation of the text. Students need to possess a high level of cognitive linguistic knowledge in both the source language (English) and target language (Thai) to produce an acceptable translation. Moreover, they still cannot correct their mistakes even after scaffolding. Hence, this study may conclude that scaffolding cannot raise the awareness of figurative language and that awareness-raising exercises on figurative language should be developed.

V. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Overall, the performance of students in translation improved significantly after scaffolding. This answered the research question, "Are the students aware of the translation errors they made after scaffolding?" This study found that students recognized and self-corrected most translation errors. This reflected that the instructor's scaffolding can raise the awareness of the students when performing translation. They recognized and rectified the errors after the first or second scaffolding. The ability to self-correct demonstrated that the students possessed English linguistic knowledge, but they somehow have difficulty finding the lexicon during translation into the target language. The results from this study were congruent with Ningsih (2014) in that the LA helps students to gain meanings in the text. And they also agreed with Zabalbeascoa (1997), Chien (2015) and Büyükkantarçio and Do (2021) that awareness has an essential role in translation and with the LA of translation error, the quality of translation significantly improved. The scaffolding techniques that raised the awareness, then might take an important part in assisting the correctness of translation.

The scaffolding provided by the instructor might just assist the students in recognizing the errors. However, there is still not enough information regarding the causes of the problems—that is, why some students cannot correct their errors effectively. As for a student who has difficulty correcting his mistakes, the problems might result from various causes, namely the lack of comprehension of the text, the inadequacy of word choice, and the difficulty in finding the appropriate lexicon in the target language. However, this study cannot certainly identify the actual cause of these errors because we conducted the study online during the COVID-19 pandemic with the scaffolding provided online asynchronized, not face-to-face. Thus, the instructor cannot provide the scaffolding explicitly and cannot pinpoint the problems the students faced during the translation.

In sum, the instructors' scaffolding proved to be beneficial for students of translation as it will help the students raise their awareness while they perform translation and will also help them recognize their errors more easily. This results in an improvement in the quality of translation. Moreover, it also can reduce the negative feelings that occur frequently in translation as it is a complex and tedious task. Furthermore, with assistance from the instructor, the students are encouraged and willing to complete the tasks.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

To investigate the awareness of translation errors, the researchers suggest personal interviews with the students to understand their awareness. In addition, the task for this study was only translation at a sentence level as it was a part of the basic translation course. The translation of a long paragraph or a short story might reveal more about the

effectiveness of scaffolding and the awareness of translation error. Moreover, there is still room for the study of profound problems in the inability to correct the errors.

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