The Difference between Translation and Literature Students in Literary Translation Quality

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Abstract - The present study is conducted on two English groups of translation and literature students. The purpose of the research is to compare the literary translation (LT) quality between literature and translation groups. Translation students have passed translation courses including literary translation; correspondingly, literature students have passed literary courses and literary translation. The former is much experienced in translation and familiar with its theories and rules; the latter is familiar with the literature world as literary elements, genre, rules, the proper writers and poets and their styles. For this purpose 45 out of 50 students turned out in the survey to translate a literary text from English into Persian. The translations were graded by a university translation instructor according to Waddington Translation Assessment Model C and were compared between the groups. After performing Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for the normality of the data, t-test was run on it and the result proved no significant difference between translation and literature students in LT quality. It confirmed that literature knowledge is as important as translation knowledge in LT.

Keywords: literature students, translation students, literary translation (LT)

I. INTRODUCTION

Translation is an abstract work that nobody knows who may be successful in it before beginning it. It is possible sometimes that the achieved translators are not necessarily those whose major was translation and spent its courses at and graduated in translation studies from universities. In other words, we need to discover the factors influential to be achieved translators beside theories and its rules.

One of these factors is a new known intelligence called Literary Intelligence introduced by Saboormaleki (2011) and Rostami (2012) who designed respectively a ten and 25-item questionnaires asking questions about students' interest towards literature and how they deal with it. Both demonstrated a positive relationship between LI and LT among translation students. Like other intelligences, translation is an ability the achievement of which may differ among students.

Some students of English are not successful in LT despite skillful in other kinds of translation. One reason may be referred to literary knowledge or a sense of literature. A few English students could translate a poem to a poem, a particular style and a specific genre to the same style and genre while others reject such delicate tasks or change a poem to a prose, a particular style and specific genre to another style and genre. Do translation and literature students differ in handling LT regarding their major?

This study is to show literature students may be able to render a literary text as well as translation ones who have been mostly expected to render more successful LTs. If no significant difference was found between translation and literature students by this study, the result would make literature students and graduates hopeful to be able in handling and having a hand in LT even as a job in future.

Which group of literature and translation juniors outperforms in LT seems interesting; those who have studied more literature or those having translation experiences? Even though both have passed translation and literature courses, which group could defeat the other?

A. Research Question & Hypothesis

Thus, to meet the aforementioned purposes, the following research question is proposed: *Which students are more successful in LT? Literature or translation students?*

Based on the proposed research question, the following research hypothesis is formulated: *There isn't any significant difference between literature and translation students in terms of LT.*

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Literary Translation

LT may be affected by some factors like translator's literary sense or his flair, but according to Lefebvre (1992; as cited in Landers, 2001), two factors basically determine the image of an LT. These two factors, in order of importance are the translator's ideology and the poetics dominant in the receiving literature at the time the translation is made. The prime helps the translator to find solutions to problems concerned with both the "universe of discourse" in the original text such as concepts and customs belonging to the world that was familiar to the writer of the original, and the language of the original text itself. Another factor is the literature rules, concepts and acceptability of cultural elements such as words that constrain a translator.

B. Literary Translation by non-Translation Students

To the best knowledge of the researchers, few translation studies have been made on non-translation students. After Saboormaleki (2011) and Rostami (2012) who proved the more intelligent the translation students in literature, the more successful in LT quality, Javandoust, Ghapanchi and Askarzadeh (2015) pursued this relationship on a number of non-translation students. They were seeking if LI is so powerful to show its relation with LT in other English students whose fields were English teaching and English literature having not passed enough translation courses. They were provided by a literary text to translate from English into Persian and a correlation test was run on their LT and LI data. Such relationship was not demonstrated on them. It clarified that LI cannot be accounted as the only effective factor in LT and translation knowledge and experience play each a crucial role.

III. METHOD

A. Participants

50 university students of two English fields of translation and literature are randomly chosen from one university. To compare literature and translation students together in their LT quality, both groups should be selected from one university under the same educational system and at the same level, so Khayyam University including both fields in their sixth semester is the place of the research. The age of participants is 19 to 24 and both males and females turn out, but females are more.

A. Instruments

One literary prose text called *The Dwarf* is prepared for the participants by that the translation and literature students are asked to translate from English into Persian. They are provided by the texts' difficult words' full meanings under the text in order not to refer to dictionary.

B. Data Collection

The text was distributed among the participants in class and 30 minutes were devoted to do the task. He suggested whom enthusiastic to get informed about the project's final result adding their email address at the top of the paper to be sent to them.

The translations are rated by a university instructor according to Waddington Translation Assessment Model C, which is an objective holistic model.

The texts for translation were distributed among 50 students whose 45 papers including 22 for translation and 23 for literature groups were acceptable to rate.

C. Data Analysis

This survey is descriptive and comparative. To examine the normality of the variables at first, Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test is performed. To compare literature and translation students' LT, an independent t-test shows the possible superiority of one group.

IV. RESULT

The collected data including the mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum and plot parameters are statistically described and analyzed as well as inferential statistics for measuring the hypothesis by Kolmogorov-Smirnov and t-tests.

A. Descriptive Statistics

In the table below, the descriptive statistics of each variable (minimum, maximum, the mean, and standard deviation) is presented. As observed, the mean score of translation quality of translation and literature students are 13.55 and 14.96 respectively.

Table 1: *descriptive statistics*

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
LT of translation students	22	6.00	20.00	13.55	3.70
LT of literature students	23	8.00	20.00	14.96	3.07

B. The Variables' Normality Test

To perform statistical methods and to account logical inference about the study hypothesis, knowing how the data are distributed takes priority. In this study Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test is used to examine the normality of the data. The statistical hypotheses of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of normality are as follows:

H_0: The data are normally distributed.

H_1: The data are not normally distributed.

The rejection of H_0 means that the data is not normal. The table here shows the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test's result.

Table 2: *One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test*

	LT of translation students	LT of literature students
N	22	23
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	0.730	0.768
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.661	0.597

With reference to the meaningful significance level, the variables are more than 0.05 and hence, the normality of the data is accepted and all has normal distribution. So the parametrical methods are applicable for data analyses.

C. The Hypothesis

The hypothesis of the research is:

H_0: There is not any significant difference between literature and translation students in terms of LT.

If H_0 rejected, there is a significant difference between the two groups and if accepted, there is not. The hypothesis results are put in the table below:

Table 3: *Group Statistics and t-Test for Equality of Means*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t	Sig.
Equal variances assumed	1.019	0.318	Translation	22	13.54	3.6	-1.41107	-1.395	.17
Equal variances not assumed			Literature	23	14.95	3.06			

In the table 3, the Equality of Variances is firstly evaluated by Levene's Test. Regarding the significance level of the test, it is .318 and the variances are equal. The average scores of translation group is 13.54 and literature group 14.95. The significant level of t-test is .17. Hence, there is not a significant difference between translation and literature students in LT quality.

Graph 1: *The LT's Average between Translation and Literature Groups*
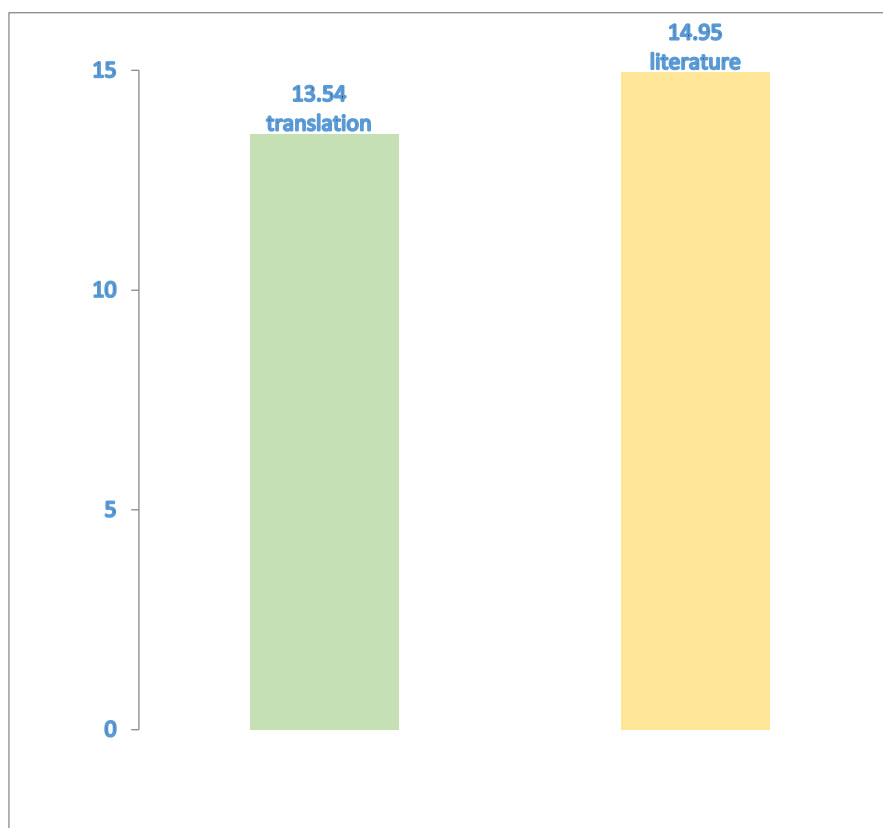
No meaningful difference between translation and literature groups indicates that literature students can translate a literary text as well, if not said that they are better literary translators regarding their higher mean score here.

V. DISCUSSION

The LT among literature and translation students is not significantly distinguishable. But the LT higher average of literatures shows translation knowledge is not the key factor in LT, but a sense of literature and its knowledge cause strong effect. Translation is a mental activity which beside its prerequisite knowledge, it is reinforced by other supportive elements as the knowledge and the information of the subject and its content, intelligence and experience, whereby some professional translators who have not studied translation academically have accomplished in their job. Studies on the role of experience on translation have rarely conducted, but a translator who utilizes the crucial factors of knowledge, intelligence and experience is known the best mostly are not among students, but among professional translators.

This study affirms that to make students more skilled in LT, more literature courses are required in translation curricula. The knowledge required for the subjects and the text types which the students are to translate can show superiority in importance over translation knowledge of theories and rules and perhaps over its practice. The students should get familiar enough to the subject and the text type they are supposed to render.

If the intimate familiarity of the subjects takes priority over translation knowledge itself, they deserve much more time, concentration, budget and energy to be devoted to rather than to translation by universities.

In contrary to the translation studies curricula of the present time where a text type of some sciences is given to the students during courses, which is not of course enough to make them skilled, this study brings the fact to light that translation does not need science, but science needs translation to be developed and global. That is, translation studies should be put as an aid in the curriculum of every science, not vice versa.

In conclusion, translation major as an art could be changed at universities into three possible programs which any can help both translation studies and the fields whose texts are translated:

1. A separate field for every science. By that translation stays a major itself, but it would be specialized for every science. For example, economics, engineering, biology, law, literature, etc. can be categorized as translation studies fields each would have its own department.

Table 4: *Example of Translation studies and it' fields*

			Translation studies			
Economics	Engineering	Biology		Law	Literature	Etc.

2. A new field of every science. For example, as engineering compasses architecture, geology, electricity, food industries and the like, translation can be added to engineering subcategories as a new field and include rendering all kinds of its related texts.

Table 5: *Example of Translation studies as a field*

			Engineering			
Architecture	Geology	Electricity		Food industries	Etc.	Translation studies

3. Keeping either of the above programs, but teaching the translator more than one foreign language. The proper international languages which are spoken in most countries could be taught in compact periods of time to make a multilingual international specialist of a particular field.

Regarding any of the three programs, after graduation there would be professional translators of a particular field who could be relied on as a mediator and connecter between two or more cultures and countries to improve that field internationally.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

Please translate the literary text below into Persian. For the convenience of you, the Persian equivalent of probable difficult words are brought on an attached paper. I warmly appreciate your effort and devoting your time. If you would like to get informed about the study's final result, please write your email address below.

First name: Last name:

Major and field: University:

Sex: Age:

Email address:

Text: The Dwarfs

As I look over my bare shoulder in this room or another in this sphere or another sphere a river is suddenly placed on the horizon by the dwarfs (this is all I know of their burden). Then a woman appears musingly at the river's edge carrying with her the shadow of a red scarf on her white dress. I have seen her before somewhere in a doorway opening her little umbrella under a Bo tree looking into the window of her fingers. She had a camera and pictured the city windows all squared and sealed. The dwarfs say she was weaned early, they say she had been in front of a café where she should not be, they say she is good only in blue, they say she is terrible with short hair, they say she is better in high heels. She has gone the river, has gone, by lady your shoes your scarf lady. They say she is forgetful.

dwarf : کوتوله

bare: برهنه

sphere: نیمکره

place: بیدا کردن

horizon: افق

burden: بار

musingly: اندیشه کنان

Bo tree: درخت بودا

Squared: چهارگوش

Sealed: ممهور

Wean: از شیر گرفتن

High heels: کفش باشنه بلند

Thanks a lot