Construction and Validation of a Translation Self-Efficacy Questionnaire and its Relation to Translation Problem-Solving Strategies

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Received: 18.10.2015 Accepted: 20.01.2016

Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Given the role of affective variables in relatively every facet of human life, the research into the function of self-efficacy systems on individuals’ behavior and performance has recently carried much weight for psychologists and educators. Translation as a higher-order cognitive task is also viewed both as a process of problem-solving strategies and decision making. More specifically, translation competence in PACTE’s TC model encompasses five sub-competences, among which strategic competence is of utmost importance, playing a pivotal role in solving problems and making interrelations between the other sub-competences. All these sub-competences are also connected to the psycho-physiological component, reflecting cognitive and behavioral, and psychomotor mechanisms. Consequently, self-efficacy and problem-solving strategies can make contributions to each other according to this model.

Although translation strategies are of essence to translation process, whereby relevant decisions are made, the available literature shows somehow the neglected field of problem-solving strategies in the field of translation. Therefore, this study tries to investigate this relationship and to determine the way and to what extent translators’ self-efficacy influences the complex process of problem-solving and decision making throughout the translation practice.

Self-efficacy, the principal notion of Bandura’s social cognitive theory (1997), is defined as the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to manage prospective situations. In fact, self-efficacy plays a significant role in achieving goals, performing tasks, and approaching challenges. What is more, people’s level of motivation, affective states, and actions are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively true. On the other hand, translation

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strategies are at the core of translation process; every translation entails a certain strategy and each translator possesses a specific one. Actually, translators face multiple constraints at various levels and stages, which require tapping into more effective decision making and problem-solving strategies; and translators’ self-efficacy perceptions may serve a function on the strategies they choose in their performance.

2. Methodology
A total of 76 translation students of Imam Reza International University and Ferdowsi University of Mashhad participated voluntarily in this study. Their selection was based on convenience sampling. The sample was made up of 19 males (25%), 54 females (71%), and 3 non-mentioned (3.9%) whose first language was Persian. Their background education encompassed BA translation studies and literature in English. The primary purpose of the present inquiry was to develop an inventory scale to examine the probable impact of self-efficacy sense of student translators on their translation strategies. In so doing, two inventory scales of Translation Self-efficacy (TSE) and Translation Problem-solving Strategy (TPSS) in English were designed. The selection of scale items for the self-efficacy questionnaire was based on Bandura’s self-efficacy theory. The earlier version of the questionnaire was also consulted with two translation specialists for the better improvement and clarity of the scale. The construction of translation problem-solving strategy questionnaire was basically a case of the researchers’ personal experience based on their classroom observation of translation students. However, the main focus was on shared translation strategies which are commonly employed and verbally stated by translation students. Moreover, the earlier version of the scale was consulted with two translation teachers who commented on the items.

3. Discussion
Statistical analysis indicated that both scales enjoyed validity and reliability. Upon running an exploratory factor analysis to identify interrelationships among items in the scales, a couple of factors were extracted from both questionnaires. As for TSE, 7 factors were loaded and labeled. They were willingness to translate, motivation enhancement for translating, the ineffectiveness of colleagues’ remedial points on reducing motivation, demotivation in facing problems, positive feeling and translation, and having no fear against translating problems. Along with that, 5 factors were extracted from TPSS and labeled as metacognitive strategy (evaluating and designing strategy), reviewing the text in order to simplify next translating, translating then evaluating, reviewing the text prior to translating, and utilizing dictionaries.

In order to examine the relationship between students’ self-efficacy and translation strategy scores, the Pearson-Product Moment formula was used between the loaded factors of both questionnaires. Statistical calculations accounted for a significant relation between the first factor of the TPSS questionnaire (i.e. metacognitive
strategy) and the first and second factors of the TSE questionnaire (i.e. willingness to translate and also self-assuredness in ability to translate). What is more, using a dictionary made a modest contribution to the enhancement of motivation. An important implication of these findings is that the translation students who showed no concern or stress in facing translation problems were more qualified in designing and evaluating the relevant strategy in translating practice. It was also derived that the enthusiasm and confidence of students in translating were perceived to be inclining toward the application of metacognitive strategies. It can also be inferred that high-efficacious people compared to low-efficacious ones are cognitively and metacognitively aware of their behavior, trust themselves, and are able to control their demeanor and envisage success or failure.

4. Conclusion
Summing up the results, self-efficacy’s potentiality in the translation domain is evident in this study, which helped to broaden the insight of such tenet in connection with the application of translation problem-solving strategies. More importantly, the extant literature substantiates the findings of the present study as regards the impact of self-efficacy beliefs on stress, self-confidence, willingness, and motivation; therefore, meticulous recognition of the source, nature, significance, and process of efficacy perceptions serves the merit of proposing and developing practical guidelines on improving training and performance of translation students as well as stimulating translation expertise.

Key words: Self-efficacy, Translation strategies, Problem-solving and decision making activities, Cognition, Metacognition.

References


