Usefulness of Barik's Error Analysis Theoretical Model in Simultaneous Translation Pedagogy

اهمية انموذج بارك النظري في تحليل الخطأ في تعليم الترجمة الفورية

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Abstract

Empirical data can be of benefit for translation instructors and students of translation. This paper tries to bridge the gap between theory and practice in translation pedagogy. It shows how an error analysis can be of benefit in teaching translation. The research draws on Barik's error analysis theoretical model in analyzing errors in Simultaneous Interpreting (SI). The paper analyses a corpus of Arabic SI by Al-Arabiya TV channel interpreter for one of President Obama's speeches. The study argues that adopting Barik's model in assessing students work and making them aware of SI errors, in advance, can make students aware of the challenges in the market. The paper finds that most of the errors committed in SI stem from "elaboration addition" made by the interpreter which could affect the production and flow of speech of interpreters. The study discovers also that the second most committed errors come from "gross phrasing change" type which raises a red flag about trying to ponder the speech and not trying to keep up with the speaker. **Keywords: Translation, pedagogy, teaching, interpreting, error analysis**

الخلاصة

يمكن ان تكون البيانات التجريبية ذات أهمية كبيرة لمدرسي الترجمة وطلابها ويحاول البحث ان يقلل من الفجوة ما بين النظرية والتطبيق في طرائق تدريس الترجمة حيث يبين كيف ان تحليل الخطأ يمكن ان يكون فعالاً في تدريس الترجمة ويعتمد البحث في تحليله على نموذج بارك النظري في تحليل الخطأ في الترجمة الفورية ويحلل البحث مجموعة بيانات في الترجمة الفورية لقناة العربية لأحد خطابات الرئيس الأمريكي أوباما. ويناقش البحث بان الاعتماد على نموذج بارك في تقييم جهود الطلبة واشعارهم المسبق بالأخطاء في الترجمة الفورية يمكن ان يجعلهم مدركين بالتحديات التي ستواجههم في سوق العمل بعد التخرج و لقد توصل البحث الى ان معظم الأخطاء تنشأ عن "الاسهاب الإضافي "الذي يقوم به المترجم مما قد يؤدي الى التأثير في استمرارية الكلام للمترجم ,اكتشف البحث أيضاً بان الخطأ الثاني الأكثر شيوعاً بين المترجمين هو ناتج عن "التغير الإجمالي لنوع العبارة "الذي يشكل خطراً للتفكير في الكلمة وعدم بذل الجهد للبقاء متصلاً مع المتحدث. **الكلمات المفتاحية :الترجمة، طرائق التدريس، التدريس، الترجمة الشفهية، تحليل الخطأ**

1. Introduction

Error analysis has been used for language pedagogical purposes since S. P. Corder's article entitled "The Significance of Learner's Errors" in 1967 by second language acquisition teachers and researchers (Taylor, 1975: 391). The importance of error analysis, in translation pedagogy, stems from the fact that it provides both the instructor and learner of translation an insight about the translation process and the strategies used to render the text in question (Lungu 2003, 323). Moreover, adopting an error analysis method in teaching translation and knowing the types of errors and the strategies of averting them, used by the practitioners in the field, strengthen the link between translation pedagogy and the translation industry and market. It helps to put translation pedagogy in perspective as Wolfram Wilss states:

"a closer cooperation between translation teaching on the one side and translational practitioners on the other is imperative in an attempt to combine the systematic features of formal translation teaching with the practical advantages of collecting translational experience by on-the-job training, on the basis of translator-trainee-tailored apprenticeships of one sort or another" (Wilss, 1982: 77).

Moreover, an error analysis method in teaching translation can provide an adequate tool for accommodating the needs of translation students whether they are terminological, syntactic or pragmatic. It would turn translation courses into an interactive environment where students have a say in the class and a sense of ownership (Elmgrab, 2013: 359). (Smith, 1991) argues that the translation students' needs are dealt with through traditional translation theory (Smith, 1991 cited in Elmgrab, 2013). However, an error analysis method will help meet those needs and relate them to the theoretical frameworks of translation studies. The drawbacks of teaching methods that are based on theories only are their dependence on predictions on the part of the theorist or anticipation of a specific group of students, which is something that are not applicable to all students or languages (ibid).

This gap between theory, on one hand, and translation classes and students, on the other, can be bridged by adopting an error analysis method through which translation instructors can receive feedback from the group of students they teach about students' strengths and weaknesses and about the feasibility of the methods they adopt that theory could not help with. Furthermore, those errors are inescapable in any learning process and would be committed, "they are inevitable in any learning situation which requires creativity or the ability to analogize and regularize" (Taylor, 1975: 395).

2. Barik's Theoretical Model

The error analysis model proposed by the French-born Canadian Henri Barik is part of his PhD thesis which he submitted to the University of North Carolina (NUC), Psychology Department in 1969. The title of his dissertation is "Study of Simultaneous Interpretation". This dissertation is not published articles outlining Barik's model were published by him in 1973 and 1975. Other shorter versions were published later too.

Using Barik's terms, mistakes committed by interpreters are termed "translation departures" (Barik, 1975: 275). Barik classifies them into three categories. The first category is "omissions", the second is "additions" and the third is "substitutions". "Omissions" means that an item or items are not produced by the interpreter. There are four types of omissions according to Barik, these types are termed "M1, M2, M3, M4" respectively by Barik as M stands for missing:

a) "Skipping omission": under this type a lexical item is left out and not produced. Leaving out this single item does not affect the text and is of low importance. Examples of such items are "a qualifier or a short phrase" so in a phrase like "a rather difficult instrument" omitting the word "rather" is a "skipping omission". Another example is leaving out the word "really" in "a really funny joke".

b) "Comprehension omission": under this type a large lexical unit is omitted due to a comprehension problem on the part of the interpreter. The inability of the interpreter to comprehend that lexical unit would result in meaning loss or awkward production of speech.

c) "Delay omission": which means the interpreter leaves out a large unit of a text due to his/her inability of catching up with the speed of the source text speaker. This type is similar to the "comprehension omission" but the reason of omission is different as under this type, delay is the reason while not comprehending the speech is the reason in type (b).

d) "Compounding omission": under this type, text units are compounded from different clauses and produced as a one clause or sentence which would have a slightly different meaning from the original segment, however the core meaning of the original speech is rendered.

Moreover, "addition" is the second category of Barik's classification which refers to inserting items in the text, that are not found in the original speech. This category is subdivided into four types too. These types are termed "A1, A2, A3, A4" as A stands for addition:

a) "Qualifier addition": this type of addition refers to adding a qualifier that is not mentioned in the original speech. The addition of short qualifying phrases falls under this type too.

b) "Elaboration addition": this type refers to the type explained above but it is "more elaborate and more extraneous to the text" (Barik, 1975: 277).

c) "Relationship addition": which means the addition of items that construct a relationship with the sentence units. An example of this type is the addition of a connective.

d) "Closure addition" which refers to cases where the interpreter adds items that are usually inserted for rephrasing purposes or those accompany omission or misinterpretation, "which servers to give closure to a sentence unit, but does not add anything substantial to the sentence" (ibid).

Furthermore, the third category of the model which is the last is substitution. There are five types of substitution. According to Barik, only those mistakes that are attributed to the substitution category are termed "errors". Two of those types are semantic while the remaining three are attributed to phrasing. The substitution types are as follows:

a) "Mild semantic error": which refers to "an error or inaccuracy of translation of some lexical item, which only slightly distorts the intended meaning" (ibid). This type of substitution is termed mild because it does not disturb the structure that is part of it but its effect is at the level of the lexical item only. This type is termed E1.

b) "Gross semantic error": this type affects the meaning of the original speech. However, it is constrained to affecting an item without touching upon the rest of the unit. According to Barik, three causes may be behind this type: "error due to confusion with homonym or near-homonym", "error of false reference, possibly stemming from confusion and having its basis in the text" (Barik, 2012: 204) or "straightforward error of translation, not due to confusion" (Barik, 1975: 278). This type is termed E2.

c) "Mild phrasing change": under this type, only the gist of the original speech, is rendered. The interpreter does not render the same speech but the gist is retained. This type is termed E3.

d) "Substantial phrasing change": "Here, the change in phrasing is more marked and leads to a difference in meaning, but the overall gist of what is said by the S is not too distorted" (Barik, 2012: 206–7). This type is termed E4.

e) "Gross phrasing change": this type is similar to (d) above but here the meaning is more distorted to the extent that even the gist is not retained. Four events are cited by Barik where such an error occurs: "error of mistranslation", "making up something on the basis of some part of the speech", this can be due to lagging behind the speaker or to a comprehension problem, "different meaning resulting from omission of some item" and "error due to misunderstanding of some item". This type is termed E5.

Moreover, as stated earlier, Barik uses the word "error" for the occurrences falling under the substitution category "if they are at considerable variance with the original version" (Barik, 1975: 272). It is quite obvious that the model does not tackle prosodic factors like intonation in voice or appropriateness of pauses. However, it involves a great deal of subjectivity on the part of the assessor which is something that cannot be avoided when the issue concerns meaning and equivalence.
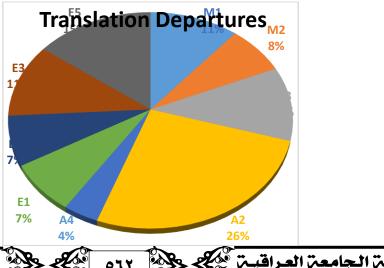
3. Analysis of Data

The data of this paper is a political speech of the President of the United States of America, Barak Obama. The speech, entitled "A New Beginning" was delivered on the 4th of June 2009 at Cairo University in Egypt. The visit of Mr. Obama honours a promise that he made during his election campaign to deliver a speech addressing Muslims around the world. The speech was broadcasted live by most of the Arabic TV channels with simultaneous interpreting to Arabic. The reason of choosing this speech is because of its importance and because of the availability of the simultaneous interpreting. The analysis of this paper is based on Al-Arabiya satellite TV channel simultaneous interpreting uploaded on youtube.com website. Segments of the speech are shown in the table below with the Arabic rendering.

4. Analysis of Speech

The table below shows the original text, which is President Obama's speech, under the 'source text' column, the Al-Arabiya TV Channel Arabic simultaneous interpreting text under the 'target text' column and the type of error, committed, under 'type of error' column. The speech is divided into segments according to the pauses of the speakers or the speech notion completion. Mistakes are underlined or put in red colour if underlines are not obvious. Not all the speech is analyzed as only 1000 words are studied due to space constraints.

5.Discussion

Although classifying which type of departures made is rather subjective but discerning the categories themselves is objective. As it is seen in the table, the mistakes committed come from Barik's three categories of "translation departures". Most of the departures are made under the substitution category with 41 per cent, while addition is % 30 and omission is % 29. No mistakes are seen under M4, A1, A3 and E4 types. Most of the departures fall under A2 which is "elaboration addition" which constitute % 26 of the departures committed. Although this type is not termed 'error' by Barik and it is one of the interpreting characteristics or universals (Gumul, 2017), but this study finds out that elaboration can delay the production of the interpreter and make him commit most serious mistakes as it is shown in the analysis, see also (Baker, 1995), (Mauranen & Kujamäki, 2004). Translation departures in E5 type are % 15 while M1, M3, E3 are % 11. M2 type is % 8 while E1 and E2 are % 7. A4 type is only % 4. An upward trend can be seen in E5, this paper argues that this could be attributed to lagging behind the speaker, trying to figure out some segment of his speech which in turn leads to more serious errors. The pie chart no. 1, below, shows the translation departures committed according to mistakes types while chart 2 shows translation departures according to the categories:

Chart no. 1 Translation Departures in Obama's Speech SI According to Mistakes Types
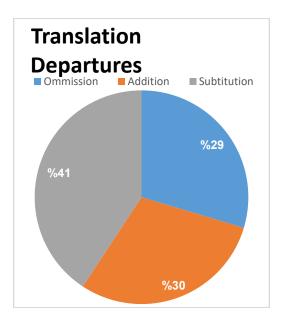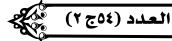

Chart no. 2 Translation Departures in Obama's Speech SI According to Barik's Categories.

Knowing what types of mistakes are made by professional interpreters would be useful for both the instructor of translation class and students. If instructors have representative samples of translation production or interpreting in the case of this study, then students would have a clear idea about the concepts they are taught. It would provide instructors with a conceptual framework according to which they can assess the interpreting of their students. Furthermore, it would equip the instructors with the type of problems that are required to deal with. Anthony Pym states: "the identification and analysis of translation errors requires a strong conceptual framework before it can ensure any heuristic validity. This in turn requires conceptually elaborate formalization of the problems to be dealt with, and perhaps some initial humility with respect to what empirical methods can hope to achieve" (Pym, 1992: 279). Having a theoretical model like Barik's would provide translation instructors with a useful tool by which they can assess the work of their students, show them what kind of errors they are faced with and design the course they intend to teach (Pöchhacker, 1992: 211).

Moreover, the role of translation instructors is of paramount importance. Newmark argues that "the success of any translation course must depend 65% on the personality of the teacher, 20% on the course design and 15% on the course materials" (Newmark, 1991: 130). But it is not just the instructors' personality that matters here it is their translational competence as Pym defines translation pedagogy as "the transfer of translational competence from teacher to student" (Pym, 1992: 283) see also (Nam 2018). However, this is not to suggest translation instructors should play the role of "the guardian of translatory truth keeper of the correct translation" (Kiraly, 1995: 99).

6. Conclusion

This paper studies the usefulness of using an error analysis model in simulations interpreting for translation pedagogical purposes. The study chooses Barik's error analysis theoretical model in simultaneous interpreting. 1000 words of Arabic simultaneous interpreting of President Obama's "A New Beginning" were analyzed. The research found that mistakes from all Barik's translation departures occurred. Errors in the "substitution" category scored high as they constituted % 41 while "addition" scored %30 and "omission" was % 29. The paper found that mistakes from "compounding omission", "qualifier addition", "relationship addition", and "substantial phrasing change" were not found. The research discerned that translation departures from "elaboration addition" types were higher than other type as they constituted % 26 of the departures made. This may be attributed to the explication characteristics of translation and interpreting in general where translators / interpreters strive to make their production conspicuous to the target text recipients. Departures from "gross phrasing change" type constituted % 15 of

the departures which occurred usually when the interpreter could not cope up with the speaker's speech either because of the speed of speech or the density of the structure. The percentage of translation departures from "skipping omission", "delay omission", and "mild phrasing change" types were %11. These three types of departures are inevitable in any interpreting due to differences in the structures between Arabic and English and speed of speech. "Comprehension omissions" were % 8, while mild and gross semantic errors were only % 7 which may be attributed to the experience of the interpreter and his preparedness. Finally, "closure addition" type was only % 4.

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