

Examining reading in translation pedagogy

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Translation process models have specified that the process of translation is partitioned into several phases depending on the nature of operations that are considered prominent. These include, two (cf. Hansen-Schirra & Gutermuth 2015), three (Gile 1995) and multiple phases (Kußmaul 1995:39). Whatever be the number of phases favoured by each scholar, there is a trend in the models that prioritises source text comprehension as the most crucial phase of the translation process. This paper therefore, reports on an experimental research conducted to examine the role which Sowa's (1984) conceptual graphs formalism plays in assessing language students' source text comprehension ability. The formalism is a visualised graph grammar derived from a phrase-structure grammar and formed the instructional object for one of two groups of homogeneous foreign language students performing translation task. A comparison of the two groups' performances on their ability to demonstrate adequate comprehension indicates that the group that was exposed to visualisation performed better than the group that was not. The rationale behind the examination of comprehension is that several studies (Washbourne 2012) have identified reading comprehension as the first and (perhaps) the most important phase of the translation process. Since a good translation is only possible after the source text is well-understood, it was necessary to examine how effective source text comprehension can be facilitated through the aid of source text visualisation technique.

References

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