

TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION OF SPECIAL TEXTS THROUGH TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

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The past few decades are marked with global changes in international trade, migration, expansion of the mass media and technology. Specific knowledge of a certain area and the acquisition and command of languages, translation strategies and procedures are equally important for professional career.

Cognition sciences have provided us with simple but very useful ideas about meaningful learning, i.e. a positive approach to learning that comes from the relationship between previous knowledge and new knowledge. This cognitive approach perfectly applies to the transfer process of ideas from one language to another, which obviously implies a lot more than the simple reproduction model. In the preparatory phase of a translation, cognition, in the form of self-consciousness and self-confidence, plays a very important role, as much as this period implies conscious mental activities, where translating problems are detected and analyzed, and information and knowledge are accumulated.

To develop reading comprehension ability besides the knowledge of specialized subjects derived from specialized training and a wide cultural background, the global vision of cross-cultural and interlingual communication, it is a must to learn how to handle the strategic and tactical tools for a good translating performance.

In the course of academic reading students, first of all, face the problem of specific lexis, most of which constituting a terminological layer. That is why it is reasonable to provide students with the equivalents of the terms before they start reading a text. Then students skip through the text. The students should read the whole text at least twice. The first reading will be comprehensive and general, to become acquainted with the topic and to understand the original, bearing in mind the meaning of context-free terms (e.g. *legal tender*, *balance sheet*, *illiquid asset* etc.).

The second reading must be a "deep" reading, placing emphasis on items where translation problems may appear. In other words, this is the so-called "reading with translation intention," i.e. doing pre-editing and assessing the quality of the writing. When doing this "reading with translation intention," students should first underline unknown terms and then they should mentally confront potential translation difficulties in the text with suitable translation procedures.

Quite often students run into those painful "not found" terms, for which not even the best dictionary can provide a solution to convey an accurate meaning. It is necessary to develop "contextualized intuition," i.e. the ability to find the nearest common sense interpretation of the "not found" element within its context. In banking sphere, for example, there are such notions as *the trading desk*, *matching debt* etc. which can be translated only from wide context.

The teacher can check the comprehension by stop-translation, i.e. asking to translate only certain abstracts from the sentence. To enhance students' confidence in reading comprehension of special texts such types of activities as *stop-translation*, *Find in the Text the English/Russian equivalents for*, *Fill in the proper words*, *Render in English* are found to be very useful.

Students should be aware of the fact that incorrect translation of a text considerably decreases the quality of its comprehension. We must, therefore, use translation strategies for teaching reading comprehension (detecting translation difficulties, contextualizing lexical item – never isolating them, adapting, analyzing, and so on.)

Students should also be taught that meaning is not only conveyed by words. Hence adequate decoding and re-coding of nomenclatures, figures, tables and charts; standardized terms, acronyms, metonyms, toponyms, etc. is a matter that must be properly considered.

This methodology, consisting of a step-by-step procedure (stages may sometimes be sequential and successive, sometimes, alternated) has proven to be quite successful in terms of students' motivation, productivity and the quality of their work with professional texts.

Korzh, T. Teaching reading comprehension of special texts through translation strategies / T. Korzh // Актуальні проблеми перекладазнавства та методики навчання перекладу: тези доповідей VI Міжнародної наукової конференції (Харьків, 15-16 квітня 2011р.) – Вінниця : Нова книга, 2011. – С. 48-49.