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Furthermore, they can make use of exercises to improve students' foreign language proficiency.

Another implication of this research corresponds to testing translation. Translation tests can be utilized for both prognostic and achievement purposes in educatonal and professional environments. The use of translation tests can help the teachers to locate the areas of difficulty. Therefore, test developers might emphasize more on learners' background knowledge (knowledge of the world) while improving translation tests. Also, the design of translation tests needs to incorporate production sections along with multiple-choice sections in order to provide a reasonable assessment of translation ability.

Furthermore, based on the findings of the present study, a fair amount of time, energy, and credit in the curriculum should be devoted to increasing students' background knowledge and also their foreign language proficiency.

Material developers, too, may incorporate teaching materials and exercises which may help students to enhance their background knowledge by including different texts from various articles, newspapers, magazines, and books in different fields of study. Also, they may prepare materials which include certain exercises for improving students' foreign language proficiency.

translation who had a better command of the English language, possessed a higher translation competence. However, this did not mean that they were able to produce better translations. It was concluded that foreign language proficiency is a necessary but not sufficient requirement for translating efficiently. Furthermore, the comparison of the two correlation coefficients proved that foreign language proficiency correlated higher with a TMT rather than with a TPT. This might be due to thd uniformity of format in the EPT and TMT.

Alongside the calculations carried out to answer the research questions, one more statistical analysis was performed. It was a correlational study for comparing the scores of different components of each translation of the TPT. The results of this analysis indicated that hte FLLS' knowledge of syntax had an effect on the naturalness of their tranlations. Also, it was concluded that the relationship between the FLLS' knowledge of syntax and the degree of their comprehension of the texts was not very strong and could be considered as a moderate relationship. Furthermore, the resutls indicated that the FLLS' lexical knowledge had a similar effect on both their comprehension of the texts and the naturalness of their translations.

Implications

Based on the results of this study, teachers can consider the improvement of students' background knowledge as a key-issue in developing their translation ability. They may adapt and adopt certain activities and exercises in order to enhance the students' background knowledge. One way to reach this goal is to persuade extensive reading.

correlational analysis to compare the scores of background knowledge questionnaire with those of the TMT. It was found that there was a high positive relationship between the FLLS' background knowledge and their translation ability. Therefore, it was concluded that taking precautions to improve the students' background knowledge might have positive effect upon improving their translation ability.

With regard to the second research question, the researcher correlaled the scores of background knowledge questionnaire with those of the TPT. The significant correlation coefficient obtained indicated a substantial and positive relationship between the students' background knowledge and their translation ability assessed by TPT. Also, it was found that the scores of background knowledge questionnaire correlated more highly with the TMT rather than the TPT.

Concerning the third research question, the researchers carried out a correlational analysis to compare the scores of the TMT with those of the TPT. It was concluded that in spite of the substantial and significant relationship between the TMT and the TPT in assessing translation ability, they can not substitute for one another, but have to be used together to provide a reasonable assessment of translation ability. This is due to the fact that both of these tests measure two related but different constructs. The TMT measures competence, whereas the TPT measures performance.

To answer the last research question, a correlational analysis was carried out to compare the scores of the foreign language proficiency test and the TMT. Also, the correlation between the scores of the EPT and the TPT was computed. The results indicated that those students of

comprehension, and naturalness. The whole score of translation production test assigned by the two raters was the total of the scores obtained on each of these four components.

The overall patterns of correlations among the scores of lexis, syntax, comprehension, and naturalness are presented in table 3.

Table 3. The overall patterns of correlations among the scores of lexis, syntax, comprehension, and naturalness.

Lexis	Systax	Comprehension	Naturalness
Lexis	.5259	.5778	.5785
Syntax		.4104	.7299
Comprehension		.5416	
Naturalness			

As it can be observed in table 6, syntax enjoyed the highest correlation with naturalness and it enjoyed the lowest amount of correlation with comprehension. Therefore, the relationship between the FLLS' knowledge of syntax and the naturalness of their translations was substantial: whereas, the relationship between the texts was not very strong and could be considered as a moderate one. Also, the correlation coefficient between lexis and coprehension (.5778) was nearly equal to the one between lexis and naturalness (.5785).

Conclusions

To address the first research question, the researcher conducted a

TPT. As it can be observed in table 1, the correlation coefficinet between the scores of these two tests (.75) is significant and substantial. Also, the overlapping variation between the two tests is 56 percent which is more than half; therefore, the relationship is fairly strong.

In order to answer the fourth research question, a correlational study was carried out to compare the scores of the foreign language proficiency test and the TMT. Also, the correlation between the scores of the EPT and the TPT was computed. The results are presented in table 2.

Table 2. The correlational matrix for the scores of EPT, TMT, and TPT

	BKQ	TMT	TPT
BKQ	1.00	.68	.51
TMT	.68	1.00	.75
TPT	.51	.75	1.00
N=56;	P<.01;	$d_f=54; r_{critical}=.35$	

Regarding table 2, based on a two- tailed test, at .01 level of significance and with 54 degees of freedom the $r_{observed}$ values of .68 and .51 exceed the $r_{critical}$ (.35). Therefore, both positive correlation coefficeints are statistically significant.

Alongside the calculations carried out to answer the research questions, one more statistical analysis was performend. It was a correlational study for comparing the scores of different components of each translation of the TPT. These components included lexis, syntax,

Table 1. The correlational matrix for the scores of BKQ, TMT, and TPT.

	BKQ	TMT	TPT
BKQ	1.00	.80	.70
TMT	.80	1.00	.75
TPT	.75	.75	1.00
N=56;	P<.01;	$d_F=54; r_{critical}=.35$	

The first correlational analysis was carried out in order to compare the scores of background knowledge questionnaire (BKQ) with those of the TMT. Regarding the statistics presented in table 1, at .01 level of significance and with 54 degrees of freedom the $r_{observed}$ exceeds the $r_{cirtical}$. Therefore, the high correlation coefficient (.80) is statistically significant. Also, the common variance (r^2) between the scores of BKQ and TMT is .64. The magnitude of r^2 shows that the variation in the two sets of scores overlapped about 64 percent and only 36 percent of the variation was due to some other factors.

The next corrlational analysis was carried out to determine the degree of relationship between the scores of BKQ and TPT. Regarding table 1, the correlation between these two tests (.70) is substantial and significant. Also, the magnitude of r^2 (.49) signifies that the variation in background knowledge accounts for about 49 percent of the variation among the TPT scores.

Concerning the third research quesion, another corrdlatioanl study was conducted to compare the scores of the TMT with those of the

multiple-choice tests. The questionnaires were also assessed objectively. However, scoring the TPTS proved to be rather complicated. They were scored by two experienced teachers of translation. The scoring of these tests was analytical. To score each paper, four components (syntax, semantics, coprehension, and naturalness) were taken into consideration. Then the inter-rater reliability was computed and because of the substantial and sigificant reliability

between the two sets of scores, the average scores were considered as the final TPT scores.

Data Analysis

In order to answer the research questions of the present study, several statistical analyses were carried out.

At first, the inter-rater reliability of translation production test scores given by two raters was computed using the Pearson's product moment formula. It was calculated to be. 72 which was substantial.

Then the researchers carried out several correlational studies. The correlational matrix for the scores of the background knowledge questionnaire (BKQ), the translation multiple-choice test (TMT), and the translation production test (TPT) is presented in table 1.

scientific, religious, social, and cultural books, magazines, and newspapers in their native language.

The second part included 6 sections (literature, poetry, history, religion, magazines, and newspapers). Each section included some important and famous titles in thd field, This part consisted of 78 titles. The subjects were supposed to highlight those titles that had been studied. At the end of each section there was a question addressed to the sujects in order to mention the name of any other magazines, newpapers, and books that they had studied in that field.

The third part consisted of the name of eight famous Iranian translators. Again, at the end of this part, there was a question for the subjects to mention the name of other translators that they were familiar with.

Procedure
Administration

To accomplish the purpose of the study, the EPT was administerd as a pre-test. One week after its administration, a questionnaire was given to the subjects in order to determine their level of background knowledge. Then the TMT and after two weeks the TPT were administered. Out of 120 students majoring in English translation who had taken the EPT, only 56 took the questionnaire, the TMT, and the TPT.

Scoring

The EPTS and TMTS were objectively scored since they were

3. Translation Multiple - Choice Test (TMT)

This test consisted of 23 items based on four brief informative texts in English. Each text was broken up into its component sentences. Each sentence was then used as a stem, and four different options, Farsi translations, were given for it. The subjects were required to choose the most accurate and natural translation equivalent for each sentence from among the given choices.

4. Translation Production Test (TPT)

This test consisted of the same four texts used in TMT. The subjects were required to translate the texts from English into Farsi.

Test Development

The translation tests used in this study were those used in a reasearch conducted by Birjandi and Farahzad (1996). However, the researchers did a pilot study and revised some of the items.

Questionnaire Development

In order to prepare the questionnaire, the researchers consulted some scholars in the fields of literature, history, science, translation, and sociology, They suggested a number of important books, articles, magazines, and newspapers to be used as the items of the questionnaire. The researchers selected some of these titles for this purpose. This questionnaire consisted of 100 items and it had three main parts.

The first part included 14 questions. This part intended to examine whether the subjects had studied different literalry, Poetic, historical,

University (Tehran-North branch) and had passed all the required basic English courses and at least five translation courses. These subjects were chosen from among 120 students who had taken the language proficency "TOEFL" test as a pre-test. The researchers selected the students whose languge proficiency scores were at most one standard deviation above or below the mean. The subjects were homogeneous regarding their sex, age (20 to 30), nationality, and level of language proficiency.

Instrumentation

Four kinds of instruaments were utilized in this study:

1. English Proficieny Test (EPT)

The TOEFL test was used as a pre-test in order to select subjects with similar level of language proficiengy. This test consisted of 40 granmmar items, 30 vocabulary items, and 30 reading comprehension items.

2. Questionnaire

A questionnaire was given to the subjects in order to determine their level of background knowledge, It consisted of 100 items. These items examined the number of different literary, poetic, historical, scientific, and religious books, magazines, and newspapers studied by the subjects in their native language. Also, it examined the degree of their familiarity with different translators in Iran.

This questionnaire was prepared in the subjects' native language, that is Farsi.

knowledge), knowledge of the source language (SL), the target language (TL), and the content. In this study it was attempted to explore the relationship between background knowledge and translation ability.

To achieve the purpose of the study the following research questions were proposed:

1. Is there any significant relationship between background knowledge of FLLS and their translation ability?

2. Do the scores of background knowledge questionnaire correlate higher with translation multiple-choice test scores than with translation production test scores?

3. Is there any significant relationship between a multiple-choice test of translation and a production test of translation in assessing the translation ability?

4. Is there any significant relationship between foreign language proficiency of FLLS and their translation ability?

In this reasearch, "background knowledge" refers to the general knowledge (knowledge of the world) of EFL learners which is gained through studying different literary, historical, religious, and scientific books, articles, magazines, and newspapers in their native language which is Farsi.

Method
subjects

The subjects in this study consisted of 56 female undergraduate students. They were majoring in English translation at Islamic Azad

Background knowledge consists of the general knowledge about the world, including psychological, and cultural knowledge gained through experience (Yule and Brown, 1983). It has been realized that the way we communicate via language is based on vast amounts of assumed background knowledge, not only of language, but of how the world is (Anderson, 1977).

The recognition of the existence of some sort of relationship between the individual's background knowledge and the amount of his memory and learning is not a newly found issue. In fact, it dates back to the time when Immanuel Kant (1781) argued that concepts only had meaning in so far as they could relate to knowledge the individual possessed.

According to Oakhill and Garnham (1988), it is easier to understand a text if one can bring appropriate background knowledge or schema. Yule (1985) believes that schemata are considered to be conventional knowledge structures which exist in memory and are activated under various circumstances, in the interpretation of what we experience. Widdowson and carrell (1983) emphasized on the cognitive characteristics of schemata which allows us to relate incoming information to already known information. This covers the whole range of knowledge of the world from everyday matters to very specialized knowledge.

The study

Translators and translation scholars unanimously agree that efficient translators must have a good knowledge of the world (background

the translator decodes messages in one language and re-encodes them in another.

Bassnett-McGuire (1980) believes that the translator is both a receiver and an emitter, the end the beginning of two separate but linked chains of communication:

Author - Text - Receiver = Translator - Text - Receiver

According to Bell (1991,p.35), "... the professional (technical) translator has access to five distinct kinds of knowledge: target language (TL) knowledge, text-type knowledge, source language (SL) knowledge, subject area (real-world) knowledge, and contrastive knowledge," What should be added to these are the decoding skills of reading and the encoding skills of writing.

Translation Theory

Translation theory is neither a theory nor a science, but the body of knowledge that we have still to have about the process of translation, (Newmark, 1988). The main concern of translation theory is to determine appropriate translation methods for the widest possible range of texts or text-categories. Further, it provides a framework of principles, restricted rules and hints for translation texts and criticizing translations, a background for problem solving. According to Newmark (1998)," translation theory is concerned with choices and decisions, not with the mechanics of either the source language (SL)" or the target language (TL)" (p.19).

(P. 238)

Many explanations have been proposed for this disappointing situation; one is that there has been unfruitful issues among translation theorists, such as whether translation should be literal or free, or whether translation is possible or not. Another suggestion is that understanding translation is possible or not. Another suggestion is that understanding translation has remained inadequate because it has never been studied in its own right, but merely as a subdomain of some other subjects, such as literature or foreign language teaching. Furthermore, translation has not been studied in a proper scientific manner.

Translation has been detbined in various ways. Nida (1975) states, "Translation consists of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in meaning, and second in style. "Catford (1965) believes that translation is the replacement of textual material in one language (source language) by equivalent textual material in another language (target language).

On the whole. the study of translation has been dominated by the debate about its status as an art or science. The linguists approach translation from a scientific point of view, seeking to create some kind of objective description of the phenomenon. While some scholars consider it as anart and others as a craft.

Translator

The translator is a bilingual mediating agent between monolingual communication participants in two different language communities,i.e. the translator decodes messages in one language and re-encodes them in

This study which was carried out at Islamic Azad university (Tehran - North branch) with female undergraduate students of English Translation, aimed at investigating the impact of foreign language learners´ background knowledge on their translation ability. In addition, the study examined the effect of foreign language proficiency on translation ability. For this project a questionnaire and three test batteries were utilized: an English Proficiency Test (EPT), a Translation Multiple - Choice Test (TMT), and a Translation production Test (TPT).

Correlational analyses indicated that there is a significant correlation between students background knowledge and their translation ability. This showed that those who had a wider background knowledge were better in translation. Also it was found that the degree of background knowledge correlated higher with TMT than with TPT. The results also indicated that there is a significant correlation between students´ Performance on TMT and TPT. Furthermore, it was observed that there is a significant correlation between the scores of EPT and those of translation ability.

Translation is a necessary intercultural activity, and at the same time, a source of controversial influence on the language into which a text is rendered. Although there is a vast body of literature on translation which offers a wealth of observation and proposes different views of the subject, the volume of literature does not necessarily indicate the degree of understanding achieved in this field. Steiner (1975) expressed this in the following words: ".... despite this rich history, and despite the calibre of those who have written about the art and theory of translation, the number of original, significant ideas in the subject remains very meagre".

Background Knowledge
and
Translation Ability

By: *Parviz Birjandi*

R. Aminzadeh

Abstract

In recent decades, in most cases information transfer depends on efficient translation. However, most of the rendered materials are incomprehensible and this is due to many factors such as deficiencies in the translator´s background knowledge of syntax, semantics, or pragmatics. Ignoring each if these factors may distort the meaning of the original text. Therefore, if translation studies focus on these elements, much more realistic results would be achieved.