

## TRANSLATION TEACHING PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES

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**Товч агуулга:** МУИС-ийн гадаад хэлний сургалтын салиггүй нэг хэсэг нь орчуулгын хичээл юм. Орчуулгын хичээлээр оюутан орчуулах ур чадвар төдийгүй хэл-соёлын мэдлэгийг хослуулан эзэмшдэг давуу талтай бөгөөд орчин цагийн гадаад хэлний сургалтад “*translation for specific purpose*” буюу зорилтот орчуулгын хэлбэрээр түлхүү хөгжиж байна. Эдийн засаг хурдацтай хөгжиж, олон улсын бизнесийн үйл ажиллагаа нэмэгдэхийн хэрээр их дээд сургууль орчуулгын хөтөлбөрөө зах зээлийн эрэлтэд нийцүүлэн зорилтот орчуулгын сургалт уруу түлхүү чиглүүлж байна. Жишээ нь, МУИС-ийн 2014 онд баталсан орчуулгын хөтөлбөрт бизнес-эдийн засгийн орчуулга, техникийн орчуулга, хууль эрх зүйн орчуулга, анагаахын орчуулга зэрэг зорилтот орчуулгын олон шинэ хичээл нэмэгдсэн юм. Иймд орчуулгын шинэ тутам хөгжиж буй сургалтын өнөөгийн байдлыг судлах, тулгамдаж буй асуудлыг тодорхойлох нь орчуулгын хөтөлбөрийн цаашдын хөгжилд ач холбогдолтой юм.

**Түлхүүр үг:** *translation for specific purpose, translation teaching approaches, challenges, field knowledge*

### 1. Introduction

Translation course has always been an integral part of foreign language teaching at the National University of Mongolia. The course enables students to improve their translation skills, language commands, as well as their cultural awareness which is an essential aspect of foreign language learning today. Due to changing market demand with rapid economic development and increasing international business activities, significant reforms in our translation program and curriculum have been made; creating new translation courses including business–economic translation, technical translation, legal translation and medical translation among other subjects. With the new courses come new challenges for our teaching staff as the courses are more of inter-disciplinary – entailing special field knowledge both for teaching staff and students. In addition, faculties with various teaching backgrounds and experience have different views of the courses resulting different curriculum settings. With respect to this general consideration, it is the objective of this paper to analyze current setting and challenges for the translation courses at our department for the development of the program in the future.

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## **2. Translation teaching practice in the past and today**

Ever since the establishment of language department at the National University of Mongolia, translation has played an important role in foreign language teaching as it is considered a teaching methodology for advanced learners to enrich their vocabulary, stylistics, and most importantly their knowledge of culture of the language they study. The importance of translation teaching has been set by theorists including Schaffner (1998) who claims that the translation and related exercises could be beneficial to foreign language learning to improve verbal agility, expand the students' vocabulary, develop their style, improve their understanding of how languages work and monitor and improve the comprehension. In addition, with the practice of translation, students develop both creative and critical thinking that provide a fuller understanding of texts. Teaching translation takes creativity and it is important to encourage students about the process and prospects of translating texts.

Translation courses at our department in the past played more of supplementary role for the purpose of Teaching English as Foreign Language; these courses in nature and content were more general – bearing nonspecific titles such as English – Mongolian translation or vice versa. The purpose of the translation in this context is more of developing reading and writing skills where the translation practices focus more on the target language.

With the new economic and social demand requiring specialized translators, universities had to reform their translation curriculum, programs as well as the traditional mode of teaching. Our school, for instance, has introduced a new translation program with courses for specific purposes including business–Economic Translation, Technical Translation, Legal Translation and Medical Translation in 2014. The new translation program is designed to provide students with translation practices in specific areas – to work on with specialized language, resources, and corpus and terminology analysis. Compared to the traditional translation courses, where the word to word or literal translation prevalent, the new translation courses for specific purpose focus on constructive as well as functional knowledge of the specific field in addition to good command for both source and target languages to provide the best possible interpretation of concepts and terminologies.

In the past, translation teaching centered in teachers with students passively accepting the knowledge and training which, in most cases, ignored communicative purpose of learning language. Students considered translation course as uncommunicative and difficult. However, with the introduction of new translation courses for specific purposes, communicative approach is given more priority with task based teaching – integrated with demonstration method, case method among other methods today. According to this perspective, meaning must be translated, not language. Language is nothing more than a vehicle for the message and can even be an obstacle to understanding. In fact, translation for specific purpose is closely connected with communicative role of languages and their functional style due to the emphasis on using mother tongue as resource for the promotion of foreign language learning.

Translation for specific purpose is complex and multifaceted task as it requires the translator not only to comprehend the contents, including linguistic features pertaining to the source and target languages but also principles and systems of the specific field. For instance, due to the specific purpose of any contract in legal translation, the legal language within, needs no ambiguity or figures of speech. In legal translation, written legal documents are characterized by their conciseness and neatness. This neatness and clarity is intended to prevent fraud, additions, omissions or alterations in the text.

Translation for specific purpose is to adapt to the language requirements in the workplace, with its content involving field knowledge – thus, the characteristic of the translation lies in the professional field knowledge along with strong language command. In a word, practicability and business nature is the primary characteristics of translation for specific purpose.

### **3. The Challenges**

Compared to other programs, translation is one of our successful programs with average enrollment of approximately 50 students every year. However, with the new program come new challenges for our teaching staff as it requires not only a good command of English but also up-to-date field knowledge. For the non-specialized teachers, usually with English major or linguistic background, the new translation courses for specific purpose add more pressure to provide students with basic field concepts, principles, and major terminologies along with proper application of the knowledge, not to mention the linguistic proficiency of source and target languages. In addition, course content and teaching focus vary as teachers have different experience and background. Some focus on syntactic features, some put an emphasis on terminology use, some on the grammar or system of the language, and so on.

Here are some of the challenges observed over the years of teaching translation courses for specific purposes. First of all, the faculties, responsible for teaching translation courses, are not specialized in the specific fields such as economics, law and medicine; however, they may have limited field knowledge based on their translation experience. In addition, teachers with experience of teaching translation as part of EFL have different views and approaches to these newly introduced courses. As a result, the course content vary depending on teacher's experience and focus – creating less productive outcome for the students whose knowledge lack theoretical framework and inadequate to provide interpretation of technical terms; and are merely reflections of their personal or limited experiences. In a word, a little attention is paid to the teacher training while designing and introducing new programs. Programs which are more academic rather than professional produce graduates who are inefficient to pursue professional career to meet the needs of the workplace and the rapid development in global communication. Therefore, the most pressing issue for the faculty today is thorough training in translation for specific purposes.

Secondly, although translation courses for specific purpose are open to students from other disciplines, majority of the students enrolled are from linguistics and translation related fields – creating an additional task to provide them with basic field concepts, principles, systems and major terminologies along with proper application of the knowledge which is more pressure for non-specialized teachers. Students with low language capacity are a further complication as "ordinary" words, for example, acquire specific meanings, and these meanings tend to be quite different from what they are in other general context. Moreover, in translating economic and business texts, the difficulties encountered by students are of semantic, lexical and syntactical aspects. Considering linguistic factors, course content, to a certain extent, needs to be adapted to the level of the group, which is also to reflect the students' field knowledge. Otherwise, students are not only able to convey the original text message but also fail to construct the acceptable expressions in translation.

Taking everything into consideration, it is highly recommended to provide students with the required theoretical foundational knowledge of translation for specific purpose, basic notions and terminology of the specific fields and other related issues, problems and up-to-date techniques of translation. Adopting interpretive approach in teaching translation after investigating translation theories and covering as much domain as possible is of a practical and systematic importance for translation teaching to establish link between theory and practice.

### **Conclusion**

Translation for specific purpose is often more challenging than general translation because of the system-bound nature, special terminologies, abbreviations, formal and rigid words and expressions which are essential in conveying the concepts both in source and target languages. Students need to have access to observe more and more parallel corpus which enables them with the opportunity to conduct comparative and contrastive analysis of linguistic features. Technically, the most difficult part in teaching specific purpose translation is the field knowledge or the system knowledge while struggling with the linguistic elements. Thus, supplementary materials, such as brief introduction to the field or system, theoretical articles on the principles and translation, as well as basic explanatory glossary would greatly enhance the students' competence in translation.

Furthermore, teaching staff for specific purpose translation must always endeavor to have the up-to-date information of the field at their disposal through regular training, reading of newspapers, journals and articles, which is essential for the development of the program to provide students with deep understanding of concepts, technical terms and their relationship in the source and target languages employed in a particular field.

Finally, for the translation teachers it is noteworthy to adopt the very methodologies that best serve the process of teaching the translation for specific purpose and to motivate students of translation to have foundational knowledge of the

discipline along with learning foreign language. It is said that good teaching is not about giving correct answers, but it is about encouraging and inspiring the learners. Therefore, teachers involved in specific purpose translation are essentially advised to explore and to seek methodologies to accelerate translation learning process for their learners. After all, students as well as employers are interested in skills that are to be applied to work areas upon completion.

### Номзүй

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