

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF WORD-FOR-WORD VS. MEANING-BASED TRANSLATION IN VOCABULARY LEARNING

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15073732>

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Abstract

Second language acquisition relies heavily on translation because it enables students to receive vocabulary definitions and meanings despite different language barriers. The research evaluates how literal word-to-word translation functions alongside sense-for-sense meaning-based translation when teaching new words. This paper evaluates vocabulary retention alongside contextual comprehension and practical language use based on research findings related to two translation approaches. The research seeks to supply vital information which stands beneficial to educators along with language learners alongside translators when deciding how to obtain maximum results from their vocabulary acquisition method and general language skill development.

Key words

Second language acquisition, vocabulary learning, word-for-word translation, meaning-based translation, contextual comprehension, language retention, translation methods, linguistic skills, practical language use, semantic equivalence

Introduction

The educational process relies on translation to combine languages because it enables learners to bridge cultural differences while helping them build their word knowledge. According to Newmark's research in 1981 the verbal translation techniques of word-for-word alongside meaning-based methods require separate teaching approaches. Following word-for-word translation requires maintaining literal matches between both language structures and the Definitions. The method results in expressions that deviate from original context leading to confusing messages for readers. Translation based on meaning tries to deliver the original

message instead of direct word matches and uses cultural and linguistic elements to help readers grasp content deeper (Nida, 1964).³²⁰

Research into translation and language learning strongly focuses on the comparison between these methods for vocabulary development. A debate exists between scholars regarding the effectiveness of word-for-word translation because some views it provides structured learning paths for vocabulary but others promote meaning-based translation for practical language development (Benson et al., 1986; Baker, 2011).³²¹ Such an investigation evaluates word-for-word and meaning-based translation approaches by both presenting their strengths and discussing their weaknesses in vocabulary acquisition.

An in-depth evaluation of vocabulary learning effectiveness regarding these approaches emerges from this paper's assessment of essential research studies.

Methods

The research utilizes comparative studies from existing work to determine which approach between word-for-word and meaning-based translation produces better vocabulary acquisition results. The research approach incorporates qualitative assessments of academic literature which demonstrates methods that affect language acquisition results.

-In "Meaning-Based Translation: A Guide to Cross-Language Equivalence" the author explicates meaning-based translation practices alongside cultural and contextual adaptation in language education. This work demonstrates that semantic equivalence-focused translations enhance normal vocabulary usage by learners according to Nida (1964).³²²

-The research titled "A Comparative Study of Communicative and Semantic Translation Methods" examines the functional differences as well as disadvantages between word-for-word translation and meaning-based translation strategies. The analysis presents actual measurement results regarding vocabulary learning and understanding for students who experience both methods (Newmark, 1981).³²³

-This study analyzes lexical collocation acquisition through corpus-assisted contrastive analysis which involves translation methods as an acquisition pathway. The research analyzes how translation based on context helps learners develop better word relationship understanding which leads to improved language fluency (Benson et al., 1986).³²⁴

³²⁰Newmark, P. (1981). Approaches to translation. Pergamon Press. (21-43 pages).

³²¹Nida, E. A.(1964). Toward a science of translating. E.J. Brill.

³²²Baker, M. (2011). In other words: A coursebook on translation(2nd ed.). Routledge (45-67 pages).

³²³Newmark, P. (1981). Approaches to translation. Pergamon Press. (21-43 pages).

³²⁴Benson et al (1986). The BBI combinatory dictionary of English: A guide to word combinations. John Benjamins Publishing Company (12-39 pages).

These three studies contribute important data and theoretical frameworks that assist investigations about translation methods. This research combines recorded data to conduct a comprehensive analysis between word-for-word and meaning-based translation methods in vocabulary acquisition.

Results

Research collected through literature shows that translational approaches which focus on meaning lead to superior vocabulary learning results than direct word translation strategies. Several key insights emerge:

According to Nida's and Baker's research (2011) Through meaning-based translation students achieve better vocabulary memory because they learn words embedded inside contextualized material.³²⁵ The practice of real-life association enables learners to remember new words for better application in actual situations.

Engaging in meaning-based translation leads learners to develop better comprehension skills along with improved real-life application of language through vocabulary (Newmark, 1981; Munday, 2016). The choice of meaning over word equivalence helps learners develop an intuitive capability for word application.

Word-for-word translation maintains accurate correspondence between words and structures yet unfortunately lacks meaning clarity in translation. Their (Benson et al., 1986; Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995) restriction of word-for-word translation becomes most evident in the translation of idioms combined with metaphoric language as well as cultural expressions because it creates unnatural and stumbling language structure .

Studies on corpus-assisted analysis demonstrate that meaning-based translation improves the acquisition of lexical collocations according to Benson et al. (1986) and Chesterman (1997). Native usage of word combinations happens most successfully when learners experience phrases naturally instead of receiving them in static translated word lists.

Translation based on meaning helps students achieve fluency through their exposure to native speaker language forms (Nida, 1964; Pym, 2010) along with natural language patterns of Pym, 2010. Grammar and fluency problems emerge from word-for-word translation methods because they produce language constructions that fail to communicate effectively according to Newmark in 1981.³²⁶

Discussion/Conclusion

An examination shows that finding meaning in translation methods produces better results for vocabulary acquisition. The target language understanding of

³²⁵Chesterman, A. (1997). *Memes of translation: The spread of ideas in translation theory* (chapter 6). John Benjamins Publishing Company.

³²⁶Pym, A. (2010). *Exploring translation theories* (1st ed., Chapter 6, pages 125-158). Routledge

students grows deeper and more intuitive when they learn from intended meaning instead of seeking direct word comparison (Nida, 1964).

The Newmark's method (1981) helps students maintain vocabulary by placing words in contextual examples which minimizes mistakes that come from unmatched phrasing or misused words.

The word-by-word method provides useful translation solutions whenever technical documentation or structured content needs rendering into another language yet prohibits effective learning of general spoken language because of strict boundaries and insufficient contextual freedom. The process of meaning-based translation supports natural language learning processes which makes it the more suitable option for students who aim to improve their vocabulary and linguistic skills (Benson et al., 1986).

Educators in language learning should adopt meaning-based translation methods to help students build effective vocabulary skills through instruction. Additional research should analyze combination strategies of translation methods in order to determine best practices for improving vocabulary learning success (Nida, 1964).

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