

Translation Skills and Language Acquisition

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Abstract : The field of Translation Studies includes both descriptive and applied aspects, one of which is developing curricula. Within this topic there are theories dealing with curricula aimed at translator training, and theories meant to explore teaching translation as means through which awareness to language is developed in order to enhance language knowledge. An example of the latter is a unique study program in Israeli high schools - Teaching Translation Skills Program (TTSP). This study program has been taught in Israel for more than two decades and is aimed at raising students' meta-linguistic awareness as well as their language proficiency in both source language and target language in order to enable them become better language learners. The objective of the current research was to examine whether the goals of this program are achieved - increase in students' metalinguistic awareness and language proficiency. A follow-up case study was aimed at examining the level of proficiency which would develop most by this way of teaching English. The study was conducted in two stages - before and after participating in the program. 400 subjects took part in the first stage, and 100 took part in the second. In both parts of the study, participants were given the same five tasks in both Hebrew and English in addition to a questionnaire, in which they were asked about their own knowledge of Hebrew and in comparison to that of their peers. Their teachers were asked about the success of the program and about the methodology they use in class. Findings show significant change in the level of meta-linguistic awareness of the students as well as their language proficiency. A comparison between their answers before and after the program shows that their meta-linguistic awareness increased, as did their ability to recognize linguistic mistakes. These findings serve as strong evidence for the positive effect such study program has on the development of meta-linguistic awareness and linguistic knowledge. The follow-up case study tests the change among weaker language learners.

Keywords : comparison, metalinguistic awareness, language learning, translation skills

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