

Exploring the Cognitive Processes of Students and Professors of Translation

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Abstract: Translation is a cognitive process where the translator decodes the meaning of the source text, and re-encodes this meaning in the target language (Zlateva, 2000). Since thought processes are not directly observable, researchers use Think Aloud Protocols (TAPs) - a method based on translators' verbalization of their thoughts- while translating a text. Many observational studies were conducted with the attempt of understanding what goes on in the mind of translators during translation process. They focused on individual TAPs on various aspects of the process including comprehension, revision (Mossop, 2001), creativity (Kussmaul, 1997) professional and student approaches (Séguinot, 1989; Tirkkonen-Condit, 1989; Jääskeläinen & Tirkkonen-Condit, 1991), time pressure (Jensen, 1999). However, to my knowledge, very few studies have investigated individual TAPs of teachers of translation as opposed to collective TAPs of students of translation. The aim of this research is to observe and compare the cognitive processes of students and teachers to find out better translation practices. Through a set of experiments, involving master students and professors of translation, the study revealed that students were less strategic than professors. Yet, their non-automatic way of solving problems provided rich data. Students' collaborative TAPs, as opposed to professors' individual TAPs, helped them provide higher numbers of tentative and selected solutions.

Keywords: Cognitive processes, collective TAPs, individual TAPs, Think Aloud Protocol, translation teaching

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