



A Study of Intercultural Pragmatic Strategies of ELF Learners in Translation*

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigated how English as a lingua franca (ELF) learners use their intercultural discourse and pragmatic strategies in the translation of children's stories. English as an international language has blurred the boundary between English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a native language (ENL), defining the concepts of intercultural communication skills and pragmatic strategies as being more vital. This study analyzed the translations of Korean university students in a translation workshop aimed at improving their English and translation skills. The findings indicate that the translation of ELF learners is a complex process of meaning negotiation that involves the use of intercultural pragmatic strategies. Intercultural pragmatic competence involves the integration of complex elements of pragmatics from two languages such as interlanguage. The study shows that intercultural pragmatic strategies were used for meaning-based translation rather than structure-based translation. The ELF learners' unique intercultural pragmatic strategies did not result in errors but reflected their developmental stage of intercultural pragmatic competence. This study discusses further implications for enhancing intercultural pragmatic strategies.

KEYWORDS

intercultural pragmatic strategy, meaning-based translation, speech acts, pragmatics, ELF pedagogy

1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which ELF learners use their intercultural pragmatic strategies in the translation of children's storybooks. As English has become the most prominent international language (Crystal 2006, 2018), it is imperative to reconsider assumptions about English proficiency, language communities, and norms that are used in teaching. The pedagogy of teaching English as an international language should not be based solely on the norms of inner circle English speakers (Kachru 1985), but rather on the norms negotiated by intercultural speakers on both sides of boundaries, considering their communication background and purpose (Canagarajah 2013). Kramsch (2014) emphasizes the significant role of intercultural pragmatic competence in negotiating meaning in a multicultural communication context, rather than knowledge of English pragmatics, as the boundaries of grammatical, lexical, and discourse between EFL and ENL are becoming blurred.

After reading and writing, which have been defined as dynamic meaning negotiation processes, translation has been defined as a complex meaning negotiation process enhanced by pragmatic strategies. In the realm of English teaching, the focus has shifted from developing mechanical translation skills based on grammatical equivalences to developing pragmatic strategies in multilingual communication. Translating into English as an international language requires intercultural pragmatic competence as much as language competence. It means that there should be research focusing on how translators co-construct their intercultural pragmatic strategies that combine elements of the translators' L1 and L2 cultures in a context of time and space of translation (Kecskes 2014). The purpose of this study is to examine the use of intercultural pragmatic strategies employed by ELF Korean learners in a translation workshop designed to enhance their writing and translating skills in English.

2. Literature Review

2.1. English as a Global Language

The increase in the use of ELF now requires intercultural communicative competence in ELF communication, which differs from EFL to communicate with native English speakers (Jenkins 2015). The research focusing on the process of intercultural communication and how speakers use their resources to negotiate meaning in a certain context challenges us to reconsider previously established assumptions about linguistic norms, community, and language competency (Seidlhofer 2011). For example, the notion of *pragmatic failure* (Kasper 2000) which means a failure to interpret or convey intended meaning in a native English-speaking social context has become a challenge. Process-oriented research argues that socially appropriate linguistic behaviors cannot be defined as fixed or predetermined prior to communication. In particular, in intercultural communication, speakers negotiate not only with English competence and their own expectations which come from their first language experience but also with interlocutors to establish a common ground. Correspondingly, since L2 learners have become exposed to two language systems, they develop a hybrid pragmatic competence that presupposes the notion of interlanguage (Kecskes 2014). These intercultural speakers co-construct norms of interaction based on their unique communication contexts rather than the norms derived from the native English-speaking community. For example, pronunciation features such as avoiding consonant deletion at the beginning of words happen frequently in ELF interactions. Therefore, the traditional definition of native versus nonnative speakers is no longer useful in ELF pragmatic analysis (DeCapua and Dunham 2007, Gimenez, Calvo, and El Kadri 2015, Taguchi 2021). However, this new concept of intercultural pragmatics has not yet been the focus of much research on translation as a practice

in using ELF. Taguchi (2021) suggested there should be an extension of ways of investigating pragmatics for learning and teaching beyond the traditional approaches.

2.2. Intercultural Pragmatics

Given the increased attention towards studies on ELF and intercultural communication, significant research focusing on revealing the change of norms in phonology, morphology, and syntax of ELF has been carried out (Jenkins 2000), yet pragmatics has received attention in research (Kaur 2011, 2017, Pietikäinen 2018) on ELF much later (Kasper 2011). Since the definition of language competence by Bachman (1990) and Thomas (1983) includes pragmatic competence, it needs to be focused on more than now. In early research, pragmatic competence was defined as the ability to communicate speakers' intended meaning in any socio-cultural context and to interpret the interlocutor's intended meaning. According to Bachman and Palmer (1996), pragmatic knowledge consists of two components which are functional (the knowledge of form-function mappings) and sociocultural (the form-function mappings to contexts of use) knowledge. The research of L2 pragmatics investigates learners' understanding of the relationship among linguistic forms, function, and context of use based on their pragmatic competence.

However, Young (2011) criticizes the concept of pragmatic knowledge in the previous research because it is viewed as stable and fixed. This concept cannot explain aspects of the dynamic and interactive nature of the meaning-making process. He argues that process-oriented interactional pragmatics takes the view that individual speakers co-construct new hybrid norms based on their *“third culture that combines elements of each of the speakers' L1 cultures in novel ways”* (Kecskes 2014, p.13). Thus the concept of pragmatic competence has shifted to the ability to negotiate meaning in a flexible and adaptive manner for co-constructing a communicative act. This new view of pragmatics also impacts ELF education which now looks at the process of translation in a new way. Thus, as Taguchi (2021) points out, *“L2 learners use their own understanding of form-function-context mappings from their L1, but their prior knowledge becomes shared knowledge and new norms of interactions emerge during intercultural communication”* (p. 616). Pinto and Raschio (2007) show empirical data in their study on heritage learners that L2 learners use distinct pragmatic strategies which are not completely in line with L1 and L2. These come from their experiences in the two speech communities. Along with these shifting identities between two different communities, they use their unique profiles as L2 learner pragmatics (Taguchi and Roever 2017). Although several studies on the intercultural impact on pragmatic performance have been carried out in applied linguistics, intercultural pragmatics has not received much focus in regard to using translation as a way of teaching.

2.3. Intercultural Pragmatics and Translation

2.3.1 Intercultural Pragmatics in Translation Practice

Since translation is highly interdisciplinary in nature, it interacts with other areas. The translation studies interacting with pragmatics date back to the 1990s. The early research mostly focused on the interplay of pragmatics and translation. In particular, researchers studied cross-cultural transfer (Hatim and Mason 1990) in discourse texture, the illocutionary force of utterances, speech acts, coherence or cohesion, and interpretation. They dealt with how pragmatic issues may shift across cultural contexts and how pragmatic equivalence may be achieved across cultural contexts in translation practice. The next period of translation research (Hickey 1998) elaborated more on pragmatic phenomena in translation practice such as politeness and translation (House 1998),

new and old information in translation (Knowles 1998), presupposition in translation (Fawcett 1998), and deixis in translation (Richardson 1998).

The focus of this research moved more to translational context than to fixed pragmatic norms and rules. Baker (2006) discussed the importance of translator-mediated events where translation was seen as recontextualization (House 1998). Since it adapts the intercultural view of pragmatic competence which is the ability to co-construct a communicative act, most of this research highlights the use of intercultural pragmatic strategies in translation practice.

Therefore, translating now can be defined as an act of meaning negotiation with analysis of the source text message and of the communicative situation of the target language to re-create the proper condition of reception for the target text message. Meaning negotiation in translation occurs recursively; for example, translators move backward to the information supplied by the source language text and forward to the target reader-supplied information.

2.3.2 Translation of the Children's Story and Intercultural Pragmatics

As the purpose and context of communication play a significant role in creating meaning in communication, the purpose and the context of writing a story are very important in translating. Skopos theory (Nord 1998), which holds an important position in the translation of a children's story, also emphasizes that translating a text is producing an appropriate product to be comprehended by the reader because all human beings create something with a purpose.

Since a children's storybook has educational content and a message within the story upon which young readers may build good characteristics, a translator needs to have a purpose in producing an appropriate translation product for children. This leads to the manipulation of the source text for the acceptability of the reader (Kim 2020). Since the translation of a children's story is relevant to a certain age group of readers, a translator also needs to consider the choice of words and sentence structure based on the level of understanding and culture.

For acceptability, how faithful the way translating source text to the target text has been considered as the main difficulty, particularly when a text involves culture-specific terms and ideas. To fulfill the faithfulness of the translation, a translator has to choose one of two translation strategies - domestication or foreignization. The foreignizing translation retains the foreignness and cultural otherness of a foreign text even if it alienates the target language and cultural norms by literal translating. On the other hand, the domesticating translation known as the free translation has no equivalent traces of the source language in words, structure, and pragmatics if it preserves naturalness for the target audience. In order to raise acceptability in the translation of children's stories, a translator needs intercultural pragmatic competence to negotiate meaning enhanced these strategies for the potential readers.

Specifically, in the early translation research for children's stories, literal translation was dominant to achieve equivalence between the source text and target text. Translation strategies mostly focus on only the level of the word, grammar, syntax, and structure of the source language. It expands later for acceptability (Baker 1992) with the concept of *theme* and *rheme* in functional linguistics. In this viewpoint, a sentence consists of *theme* and *rheme* and *theme* refers to the first element in the sentence. It represents "*the starting point for the message*" (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). On the other hand, *rheme* refers to the component that comes after the theme that represents the remainder of the message. Since *theme* controls the flow of information the author intends, it is highly related to the coherence of the whole text. The lack of coherence in translation is derived from the mistranslation of *theme* and *rheme* although there is no ungrammatical sentence (Kim, Choi, and An 2011). To extend the scope of acceptability into the pragmatics aspect, it needs not only a micro-level of analysis of the texts aiming at the identification of their functions in their corresponding culture but also a macro-level of analysis including the

global organization of the text.

3. Research Method

3.1 Data Collection

This study analyzes the translation of texts in a translation workshop whose aim was to improve the English proficiency and translation skills of Korean university students. To investigate the use of intercultural pragmatic strategies in the translation process, the translations of children's stories by Korean university students and a native English-speaking instructor were collected.

The workshop consisted of lectures by a native English-speaking instructor and a translation practice as a process of writing by the students. The nine hours of lectures covered the effective use of genre knowledge and pragmatic strategies in translating a children's story during one week. Then, students worked in pairs to choose a children's book, which they translated from English into Korean and then back into English over the four weeks. The back translation method has been suggested as a tool to reinforce vocabulary, grammar, and writing skills (Cheon and Hwang 2020). After the instructor reviewed the first draft, the students rewrote the final version every two weeks during the workshop. Finally, the instructor translated all of the stories to provide a different version of the translation for the students to compare their translations with the original author and that of the English-speaking instructor.

TABLE 1. Participants and Materials

Name & Year	Purpose of participating in the workshop	Language proficiency	Titles of picture books
Sebastian	To teach	TOEIC 120 (Level 3)	<i>All five books</i>
Yeajin (2) Hyacin (2)	To improve translation skills	TOEIC 820	<i>Piggybook</i> Browne (1986).
Kyungju(2) Yunjong(4)	To improve English proficiency	TOEIC 750	<i>Zoo</i> Browne (1992).
Subin(2) Juyun(2)	To improve translation skills and English proficiency	TOEIC 780	<i>Millions of Cats</i> Gág (1929)
Jungbin(1) Yealin(4)	To improve English proficiency	TOEIC 820	<i>Into the Forest</i> Browne (2004).
Yuana(4) Hyunju(3)	To improve translation skills and English proficiency	TOEIC 790	<i>The Tunnel</i> Browne (1989).

The L2 participants had an intermediate level of English proficiency, with a TOEIC score ranging from 750-800. The instructor was a native English speaker who has been teaching at Korean universities for over ten years and was proficient in Korean at a TOPIC level 3 (with a score of over 120). The names of the participants were kept anonymous to maintain the confidentiality of individual participants.

3.2 Data Analysis

The methodology used for this study was discourse analysis. This qualitative research method focused on exploring various intercultural pragmatic strategies to translate an equivalent meaning in two languages. The analysis mostly focused on how participants co-construct their intercultural pragmatic strategies that combine elements of the translators' L1 and L2 in a context of time and space of translation for a children's story.

This study uses the framework of pragmatic analysis as you see in Table 2 with a modification of Yule's (1996) framework. In particular, the data analysis focuses on providing a descriptive account to reveal the process of co-constructing intercultural strategies with their experiential outcome rather than simply evaluating whether the participants adhere to the prescriptive rules based on English pragmatics.

TABLE 2. A Framework of Pragmatic Analysis

Categories	Items
Deixis and distance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal/ social deixis and social distance • Exclusive vs. inclusive 'we' • Psychological distance
Reference and inference: New and old information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attributive use of reference • Referential use of reference
Speech act: The illocutionary force of utterances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct vs. indirect speech act
Implicature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedges (Marked expression) • Particularized conversational implicature
Politeness and interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social power distance • Face-threatening

The researcher carefully reviewed the translated text multiple times to categorize the data and generate the study's findings. In order to increase the validity of the study, a native English-speaking researcher reviewed the analysis.

4. Results

4.1 Translation Based on Intercultural Pragmatics

The results of this study show that translation is a complex meaning negotiation process utilizing different intercultural pragmatic strategies. It occurs in a recursive manner, whereby participants move both backward to the source text and forward to the target reader-supplied information. The participants use a unique hybrid pragmatic knowledge based on their mother tongue and the target language to translate a text similar to the way L2 learners use their interlanguage. They employ intercultural pragmatic strategies primarily to translate implicit meaning (Larson 1984) rather than focusing solely on linguistic meaning. The utilization of specific strategies, such as those aimed at enhancing acceptability and speakerability, can be influenced by the genre of a text as is the case with children's stories.

4.1.1 Translation as a Complex Meaning Negotiation

The comparison of the four texts in the following excerpt demonstrates that the different use of intercultural pragmatic strategies can lead to the different levels of rudeness exhibited by the boys. The observation that the native English-speaking instructor translated the story differently from the original version reveals the importance of intercultural pragmatic competence and the effective use of pragmatic strategies, in addition to linguistic proficiency, in the translation process.

In the original text, a directive speech act has been used with an imperative sentence structure which indicates a strong request with face threats. In the source text in Korean, even though it still keeps the same force a speech act with an imperative structure, the pragmatic meaning of strong command has been mitigated using the honorific suffix “-요” and “-습니다”.

Original Text by the Author:

“Hurry up with the meal, Mom,” the boys called every evening when they came home from their very important school.

Source Text in Korean:

“엄마, 빨리 밥 줘요.” 아이들은 아주 중요한 학교에서 돌아와 저녁마다 외쳤습니다.

Native English Speaking Instructor:

Every evening when Simon and Patrick got home from their very important school, *they would shout: “Mom, make us some dinner!”*

Korean Students:

“Mom, Give me some food quickly.” The children shouted every evening after coming back from their very important school.

From *Piggybook* (Browne 1986)

Both the Korean participants and the instructor understand the rudeness in the message of the boys which is delivered with a direct speech act and global coherence throughout the source text. However, the instructor creates a mitigated pragmatic expression based on his hybrid intercultural pragmatic knowledge rather than one based on Korean or English pragmatics. The instructor sets an adverbial clause in the first part before the imperative sentence which shows the rudeness of the boys. The selection of this strategy moderates the pragmatic meaning of rudeness.

Even though the Korean participants keep the imperative sentence structure in the first part but translate the text literally using the addresser, *Mom*, in the imperative sentence, it also moderates the rudeness of the boys because the existence of the addressee in the first part of the imperative sentence tends to reduce a certain degree of the social distance than if it started with a verb.

It shows that they use various hybrid intercultural pragmatic strategies to deliver the meaning that they negotiated with the source text. Furthermore, it reveals that the nature of intercultural pragmatic strategies is idiosyncratic since they are cultivated from a hybrid of L1 and L2 pragmatics.

4.1.2 Intercultural Pragmatic Strategies for Acceptability

The participants endeavor to translate the implied meaning in language taking into account the acceptability of a symbol when two different symbols cannot correspond one to one. This is because both pragmatics and translation aim to promote communication by analyzing the function of language based on semiotics. Therefore,

the use of pragmatic strategies is crucial in ensuring the acceptability of a translated text, particularly in cases where metaphors containing cultural presuppositions and implicatures shared by members of specific societies are being translated.

The following excerpt provides an example of the translation of a metaphoric expression. In the source text, *교통지옥* (traffic hell) is used to express *traffic jam*, as this phrase is not commonly used in Korean in the context of traffic. For the back translation, the Korean participants and the instructor first comprehend the meaning of *교통지옥* through words and pictures in the story, and then utilize their intercultural pragmatic strategies to align the expression with the implicit meaning of *traffic jam*, despite the different linguistic meanings of the two phrases. As argued, in cases where it is challenging to find an equivalent meaning for jokes in the target language, domestication strategies such as modification, addition, and deletion were employed to bridge the gap between the different cultural contexts of the two languages.

Original Text by the Author:

“*What kind of jam do you get stuck in?*” asked Dad.

Source Text in Korean:

“우리가 만난 지옥이 어떤 지옥인 줄 아니?”

Native English Speaking Instructor:

Suddenly Dad asked, “*Do you know what kind of jam we are in right now?*”

Korean Students:

“*Do you know what jam we meet?*” asked Dad.

From *Zoo* (Browne 1992)

4.1.3 Intercultural Pragmatic Strategies for Speakerbility

The participants in the translation of a children’s story consider not only acceptability but also speakerbility since children’s stories are meant to be read aloud. Onomatopoeia is one of the important figures of speech to increase speakerbility in children’s stories as it creates a rhythmical effect with repetition of the same sound or similar sounds. However, translating onomatopoeia from Korean to English can be problematic, as it is more complex and used more frequently in Korean than in English (Shin 2005). To overcome this, fruitful onomatopoeias are often translated into idioms or rhythmical expressions that fit the rhetorical system of the target language. This exemplifies how translation with intercultural pragmatic strategies takes into account implicit meaning to find equivalent expressions.

The following excerpt shows an example of an intercultural pragmatic strategy used to adapt a repetitive expression for speakerbility while considering the purpose of the text and conveying the implicit meaning of continuous fighting.

Original Text by the Author:

Whenever they were together they *fought and argues noisily*.

Source Text in Korean:

둘은 얼굴만 마주치면 *티격태격* 다투었어요.

Native English Speaking Instructor:

There was *never a minute of peace* between them.

Korean Students:

When they were together, they *fought and fought*.

From *The Tunnel* (Browne 1989).

The source text adds the expression, *타격태격* to vividly translate the idea of *fought and argues noisily* using onomatopoeia in the Korean language. The participants also employ intercultural pragmatic knowledge of how a delicate sense of meaning can be delivered in another language in back translation. The instructor substitutes the onomatopoeia with a descriptive sentence such as *never a minute of peace* while the Korean participants employ an alliteration strategy by repeating the words *fought and fought* to convey the rhythmic effect of the onomatopoeia.

4.1.4 Intercultural Pragmatic Strategies for Implicature

The participants in this study aim to translate the text to communicate with possible readers who are children in various countries of the world instead of only native English-speaking children. Thus, the purpose of translation is not identically the same as the original text. They try to translate implicated meaning using intercultural pragmatic strategies related to implicature. Since the reader can infer additional meaning from the linguistic form and structure as well as from the meaning the words themselves are intended to convey, the effective translation of implicature relies on the translator's level of communicative competence in both languages and their use of intercultural pragmatic strategies utilizing a global organization of the text.

The following excerpt illustrates how the Korean participants use their intercultural pragmatic strategies to paraphrase the implicated meaning rather than translating the sentence literally. The Korean participants place the result at the beginning of the sentence knowing that the result usually comes first in the cause and result structure in English. As a result, the translated text emphasizes the sense of loss and wonder in the situation.

Original Text by the Author:

*We hadn't got a map of the zoo so we just wandered round.
Me and my brother wanted to see the gorillas and monkeys,
but we had to see all these boring animals first.*

Source Text in Korean:

*우리는 동물원 안내 지도가 없어서 무턱대고 돌아다녔다.
나랑 해리는 고릴라와 원숭이를 구경하고 싶었지만, 재미없게도 다른 동물들부터 봐야 했다.*

Native English Speaking Instructor:

We didn't have a map of the zoo so we just wandered around.

Korean Students:

We just wandered around, not knowing where to go because we didn't have a map of the zoo.

From *Zoo* (Browne 1992)

On the other hand, the instructor and the author of the original text use the conjunction *so* to emphasize the cause of the event, showing the sequence of events in the timeline and placing the cause phrase at the beginning of the sentence. In the context of the entire text, it is natural that the cause of wondering be presented first to maintain coherence with the subsequent sentences, which describe how the boys were unable to watch what they

wanted to watch initially.

Additionally, the following excerpt provides an example of implicature. In both the original text and the source text in Korean, the fight between baboons reminds the mother of two squabbling boys. However, the sentence does not explicitly state this connection, instead referring to *someone*. In the source text in Korean, a domesticating strategy is used to comment on what surrounds the fighting rather than on the person.

Original Text by the Author:

Two of them had a fight.

“They remind me of someone,” said Mum.

“*I can't think who.*”

Source Text in Korean:

개코원숭이들이 싸우자, 엄마가 말했다. “어디서 많이 보던 모습이구나. *어디서 봤는지는 모르지만*”

Native English Speaking Instructor:

Whenever the baboons started fighting, Mom said, “I’ve seen something like this before, but *I’m not sure where...*”

Korean Students:

“I’m used to seeing them. They remind me of my boys *when they fight*”, said Mum.

From *Zoo* (Browne 1992)

In this case, the Korean participants clarify the implicature of the sentence by using explicit words, such as *my boys*, to convey the author’s intention clearly. This proves that they understand that the source text has applied a domesticating strategy. The Korean participants attempt to re-domesticate the sentence into the target language by clarifying its implicature rather than translating it literally. They explain a temporal situation when the boys fight using a temporal adverbial phrase. On the other hand, the instructor attempts to translate this sentence literally, focusing on the place mentioned in the source text, despite it breaking the coherence of the text.

4.2 Intercultural Pragmatic Strategies for Dialogue

The analysis of the translation of children’s stories reveals the use of strategies related to speech acts. This is because dialogues play a significant role in developing plots in children’s stories that are appropriate for young readers. In particular, when the participants translate speech acts that include information on formality, politeness, and a character relationship, they employ intercultural pragmatic strategies. They do not always translate speech acts one to one correspondently because there are different norms of speech acts between Korean and English. The use of intercultural pragmatic strategies is a complex process because interlocutors share “*knowledge of roles and status of participants, knowledge of formality level, knowledge of domain determining the register of a language*” (Levinson 1983, p. 23) when a speaker uses speech acts to force the interlocutor’s action.

4.2.1 Intercultural Pragmatic Strategy Related to Speech Act

In this section, the results of data analysis demonstrate how the participants utilize intercultural pragmatic strategies to translate the level of formality in requests, degree of expression of emotions, and interpersonal closeness. According to Yule (1996), speech acts refer to the fact that an utterance can state a certain fact but also force one’s interlocutor to perform a specific action. These speech acts can be performed directly or indirectly,

depending on how meaning is conveyed. Direct speech acts have a direct relationship between form and function while in indirect speech acts, the form does not directly relate to its functional use. Indirect speech acts are often problematic in translation because they have implied meaning beyond what is explicitly said, and they are also particularly culturally bound.

4.2.1.1 A Level of Formality

The following excerpt provides an example of how participants utilize intercultural pragmatic strategies to translate formality. They use different levels of directness when making requests based on their intercultural pragmatic competence. In the original text below, the expression *If only we had a cat!* is an indirect speech act. The old woman expresses her desire for the old man to get a cat for her using a hypothetical statement. The sentence describes her wish literally but the illocutionary act of the sentence is an informal request. In English, speech acts used for requests are often indirect speech acts with consideration of the politeness principle to avoid threatening the interlocutor's face. In Korean, direct speech acts can be used without face threatening due to a sophisticated honorific suffix system. However, in the source text in Korean, an indirect speech act is still used to preserve the style of the original text's speech act.

Original Text by the Author:

"*If only we had a cat!*" sighed the very old woman.

...

"I will get you a cat, my dear," said the very old man.

Source Text in Korean:

하루는 할머니가 한숨을 푹 내쉬었어요. "고양이라도 한 마리 있으면 좋으련만!"

Native English Speaking Instructor:

One day the old woman sighed and said, "*Wouldn't it be nice if we had a cat?*"

Korean student:

One day, the old lady sighed. "*I wish we had a cat!*" She said.

From *Millions of Cats* (Gág 1929)

The instructor's translation is slightly more formal than the original text. Even if it appears to be a direct speech act because it is translated from the exclamatory sentence into an interrogative sentence, it is actually an indirect speech act because it is not a straightforward request for information. The instructor's translation expresses a hypothetical situation of owning a cat and wondering whether it would be nice or not. It is not a direct request for a cat, but rather an expression of a desire to have one. The use of the hedge *wouldn't it be nice* makes the sentence more polite and less demanding. In order to translate the level of formality, the instructor uses intercultural pragmatic strategies related not only to indirect speech acts but also to hedges.

On the other hand, the Korean participants try to translate it with a slightly more direct expression compared to the original text. *I wish we had a cat* is a more direct expression because it clearly states the speaker's desire to have a cat, unlike the expression *if only we had a cat* which suggests that the speaker is merely imagining what life would be like if they had a cat. It does not clearly state the speaker's desire to have a cat. The Korean participants' request is the most direct, while the instructor's request is the most indirect. This shows that the participants use their unique intercultural pragmatic strategies to translate the levels of formality, which are derived from the hybrid pragmatics of the two languages.

4.2.1.2 Degree of Emotion

The findings of this study indicate that changing the level of (in)directness in translation can affect the conveyed nuance of meaning. In particular, the findings in the following excerpt show how the use of an exclamatory sentence with an implied subject and a verb, as opposed to a declarative sentence with a subject and a verb, as well as the addition of reporting words, can impact the translation of the pragmatic meaning of a sentence. These findings demonstrate the importance of employing intercultural pragmatic strategies based on the integration of different levels of literal and pragmatic meaning in order to accurately convey the intended message in a given context.

Original Text by the Author:

“*Daylight robbery!*” Dad *snarled*.

Source Text in Korean:

“*이런 날강도 같으니까!*” 아빠는 *벼락* 소리를 질렀다.

Native English Speaking Instructor:

“*This is daylight robbery!*” Dad *shouted*.

Korean Student

“*Highway Robbery!*” Dad *muttered*.

From *Zoo* (Browne 1992)

In the above excerpt, the original text uses the expression, *Daylight robbery!*, as a direct speech act to illustrate the exasperated feelings of anger by omitting the implied subject. However, in the instructor’s translated text, the pragmatic meaning of anger is diminished by using a declarative sentence, which is slightly less direct than the subject-omitted sentence. The addition of *this is* makes it more of a statement of fact rather than a direct expression of emotion. The use of the verb *is* also shifts it to be more of a descriptive sentence, with a focus on the object of the emotion rather than on the emotion itself. Moreover, the choice of reporting verb *shouted* in the translated text conveys a meaning different from the original text. While the reporting word *snarled* suggests a strong sense of anger and frustration with an aggressive tone of voice, the use of *shouted* implies an emphasis on the injustice of the situation with a loud and forceful manner of speaking.

On the other hand, the Korean participants attempt to maintain the same structure as the original text but employ a figurative sense of idiomatic expression to describe situations that are being taken advantage of. However, their use of the intercultural pragmatic strategy of *figurative idiomatic expression* makes the expression more indirect since it takes time to discern the figurative meaning. Moreover, the choice of reporting verbs *snarled* and *muttered* conveys different levels of anger and intensity. The reporting verb *muttered* softens the pragmatic meaning of the sentence by implying that Dad is speaking in a quieter and more subdued manner, in contrast to the verb *snarled*, which conveys a higher level of anger and intensity.

4.2.1.3 Interpersonal Relationship

The following excerpt demonstrates how the change in the level of directness can influence interpersonal relationships in translation. The original text used a subject-predicate inversion strategy to convey a direct command and emphasize the mother’s irritation. Since the use of a declarative sentence structure for giving a

command is interpreted as an indirect speech act requesting something according to the pragmatics of English, the author changed the sentence structure to a strong direct speech act with a subject-predicate inversion structure. In the source text in Korean, a direct speech act is used without the honorific suffix clearly demonstrating the rigid hierarchical relationship between the mother and the children.

When the participants attempt a back translation, the instructor uses a declarative sentence structure without a subject-predicate inversion. This demonstrates that while the concept of the horizontal relationship between children and parents remains the same as in the original text, the delicate sense of anger of the mother and the force of commending were reduced. This makes the expression *You two go outside and play nice!* less direct and authoritative than the expression *Out you go together.*

On the other hand, the Korean participants attempt to use a subject omission strategy to make a direct speech act to show the authority of the mother and the rigid interpersonal relationship between them. However, even though they follow the rules of the direct speech act mechanically, the pragmatic meaning of the sentence by the Korean participants is not as strong in terms of conveying the direct command and rigid interpersonal relationship as the original text. This is because the inversion of the phrasal verb *out you go* conveys a stronger sense of giving a command than just deleting a subject to make an imperative sentence. This demonstrates the importance of intercultural pragmatic competence in translation.

Original Text by the Author:

One morning their mother grew impatient with them. “*Out you go together,*” she said

Source Text in Korean:

어느 날 아침, 엄마가 보다 못해 화를 냈어요. “*둘이 같이 나가서 사이 좋게 놀다 와!*”

Native English Speaking Instructor:

One morning, Mom was angrier than usual. “*You two go outside and play nice!*”

Korean Student

One morning, Mother got angry and said
“*Go out and play with each other!*”

From *The Tunnel* (Browne 1989)

Another example of changing an interpersonal relationship by using different speech acts can be found in the following excerpt. The author of the original text uses a direct speech act by choosing an interrogative sentence to show the blunt and authoritative characteristics of the father. However, in the source text in Korean, the sense of authority of the father is mitigated by the use of the suffix *-아냐?* in the interrogative sentence. This suffix form is less strong than *-아냐?* which shows a stronger sense of authority by the speaker.

Original Text by the Author:

“*What kind of jam do you get stuck in?*” asked Dad.

Source Text in Korean:

“*우리가 만난 지옥이 어떤 지옥인 줄 아냐?*”

Native English Speaking Instructor:

Suddenly Dad asked, “*Do you know what kind of jam we are in right now?*”

Korean Students:

“*Do you know what jam we meet?*” asked Dad.

From *Zoo* (Browne 1992)

The Korean participants and the instructor use indirect embedded questions to convey a mitigated authoritative tone influenced by the source text in Korean, such as *Do you know what kind of jam we are in right now?* or *Do you know what jam we meet?* Although the strong authority of the father is consistent throughout the story in the original text, there is less coherence in the back translation because the participants did not utilize domesticating strategies to translate from Korean to English. This supports the importance of not only the level of linguistic competence but also intercultural pragmatic competence in translation.

4.2.1.4 Involvement of Action

The results of the study reveal the challenges of translating speech acts across different pragmatic systems in languages. The following excerpt demonstrates that one-to-one translation of speech acts is not always feasible because different languages have distinct pragmatic systems. As an example, the expression -*하자* in Korean is categorized as an apropositive speech act, but its correspondent expression *Let's-* in English is considered an indirect speech act. This difference is due to the absence of an apropositive speech act category in English.

Original Text by the Author:

“I’ll swap it for that sweet fruity-cake in your basket.”

Source Text in Korean:

“젓소랑 네 바구니에 있는 맛 좋고 달콤한 케이크랑 바꾸자.”

Native English Speaking Instructor:

“I’ll trade you the cow for that delicious cake you’ve got in your basket.”

Korean Students:

“Let’s exchange this cow for your sweet, delicious cake in your basket.”

From *Into the Forest* (Browne 2004)

This study illustrates that even when the Korean participants translate -*하자* directly to *Let's-* in English, the result of the translation is an indirect speech. The apropositive speech act by *Let's-* implies that both interlocutors will carry out an action together in the future. Conversely, the instructor translates the expression as an indirect speech act, *I’ll trade you the cow ...* suggesting that the subject will initiate an action in the future. Even if the participants use the same indirect speech act category, their intended levels of involvement an action could be different. The use of *Let's-* implies a collaborative decision making process, while *I’ll* implies a one-sided proposal. This finding highlights the importance of understanding the implied meaning of the text, as intercultural pragmatic strategies are not solely based on the category of speech act, but also on the ability to recognize the context and intended meaning of the message.

4.2.2 Intercultural Pragmatic Strategies Related to Deictics

In this section, the results of data analysis demonstrate how the participants use their intercultural pragmatic strategies related to deictics which is an important element to maintain the coherence of text. To achieve a faithful translation, it is important to deliver referential or attributive use of deixis because it has a role in interpreting

speech in a context. Furthermore, this study highlights the significant role deixis plays in controlling the authority of the speaker and in facilitating politeness in a speech act.

4.2.2.1 Coherence with Pronouns

The following excerpts provide an example of using intercultural pragmatic strategies to maintain coherence through the use of pronouns. Pronouns are used to keep coherence not only at the local sentence level but at the global structure of the text. While proper nouns and common nouns are used to represent new information, old information that has already been mentioned in the text is replaced with pronouns that agree in numbers and gender with the nouns they refer to.

In this following excerpt, in the original text, the pronoun *it* replaces the old information *chocolate* in the second sentence. However, in the source text in Korean, *chocolate* is used again instead of a pronoun due to the characteristic of the Korean pragmatic system. This reflects the use of a domesticating strategy in Korean.

In the back translation, it is important to consider whether the use of nouns instead of a pronoun is for emphasis or is a result of adopting a domesticating strategy. The use of *chocolate* by the Korean participants reflects their adaptation of Korean pragmatics to convey the explicit meaning of the object. This demonstrates their level of applying intercultural pragmatic strategies, rather than any insufficiency of their language proficiency.

Original Text by the Author:

Mum had brought *some chocolate* and Harry and I were starving.

“Can we have *it* now?” I asked.

Source Text in Korean:

나랑 해리는 몹시 배가 고팠다. 엄마가 초콜릿을 챙겨 온 게 생각나서 물었다. “초콜릿 먹어도 돼요?”

Native English Speaking Instructor:

Me and Harry were really hungry. Mom had bought *some chocolate* so we asked if we could have *some*.

Korean Students:

Mum had brought *some chocolate* and Me and Harry were starving.

“Can we have *some chocolate*?” I asked.

From *Zoo* (Browne 1992)

4.2.2.2 Coherence with Deictics for Referential or Attributive Use

The results of the study indicate that the participants consider reference not only as a means of referring to an object in the world of utterance but also as a way to classify the function of an indicator into a *reference use* and an *attribute use*.

Original Text by the Author:

“No,” I said. (Why would I want *a cow*?)

Source Text in Korean:

“아니.” 내가 대답했죠. (도대체 내가 왜 젓소를 사고 싶겠어요?)

Native English Speaking Instructor:

“No,” I said. (Why on earth would I want to buy *a cow*?)

Korean Students:

“No.” I said. (Why would I ever want to buy *a milk cow*?)

From *Into the Forest* (Browne 2004)

In the sentence *Why would I want a cow?* as shown in the above excerpt, the term, *a cow* does not indicate the aforementioned *a nice milky cow* but refers to cows in general that have the property of being able to be milked in general. It shows that the Korean participant and the instructor employ intercultural pragmatic strategies based on their knowledge of the attributive use of deictics. This demonstrates that the use of intercultural pragmatic strategies is not solely dependent on linguistic competence, but also on pragmatic competence, as shown in their ability to understand that the indicator, *a cow*, reflects that the speaker had no reason to want a milking cow.

4.2.2.3 Coherence of Relationship With Deixis

The results of the study demonstrate that the choice of deixis can imply the relationship between characters in a story. It is because a dialogue includes clues to indicate the hierarchical relationship among characters even if there is no explicit explanation. Deixis in a dialogue can convey the age, the social position, and the closeness of the speaker to other interlocutors. Since the meaning of deixis is contextual and subject to change, intercultural pragmatic strategies related to deixis play a crucial role in achieving equivalent translations that convey communicative meaning rather than the literal meaning of the words.

In the following excerpt, in the original text, the father asks a question using the second person pronoun *you*. This direct question creates an atmosphere in which the listeners are compelled to engage in the conversation.

Original Text by the Author:

“What animal can *you* eat at the zoo?” asked Dad.

Source Text in Korean:

아빠가 물었다. “동물원에 있는 동물 가운데 먹을 수 있는 것은?”

나는 투덜거리기 시작했다.

Native English Speaking Instructor:

Dad said, “*You* know what there is to eat at the zoo?”

Korean Students:

“What animal at the zoo can *we* eat?” Dad asked.

From *Zoo* (Browne 1992)

On the other hand, the Korean participants use the first-person plural pronoun *we* in the question. In English pragmatics, the usage of *we* can be divided into two categories: inclusive and exclusive. The Korean participants use the inclusive *we* to address not only to the interlocutor in the dialogue but also the readers of the text, emphasizing a sense of community. When determining the omitted subject for the back translation, the Korean participants choose the *inclusive we* to emphasize this sense of community with the interlocutors. In contrast, the instructor uses the second-person pronoun *you* to convey a sense of authority and strong involvement. The use of intercultural pragmatic strategies related to deictics creates a different relationship among characters in the story, as shown by the participants’ choice of pronoun.

4.2.3 Intercultural Pragmatic Strategies Related to Politeness

This study highlights the importance of intercultural pragmatic strategies related to politeness in translation. Leech (1983) points out that effective translation requires attention to politeness principles, which are ways of demonstrating consideration for one's face. The principles of politeness vary across different languages.

The following excerpt shows an example of the use of an intercultural pragmatic strategy related to politeness. Since politeness principles apply to all social relationships, whether close or distant, a distant relationship is represented as a form of respect, while a close relationship is represented as a level of intimacy that is highly related to a relationship among interlocutors.

In the original text, the author uses pragmatic strategies to depict the relationship between Mr. Piggott and Mrs. Piggott. In the story, Mr. Piggott refers to his wife as an *old girl*, which appears to break the politeness principle. However, the author intentionally uses the expression *old girl* to convey the psychological distance between Mr. Piggott and his wife; this implies that Mr. Piggott disrespects his wife. In the source text in Korean, the expression, *old girl* was translated as *아줌마* to convey this implied meaning.

Original Text by the Author:

“Hurry up with the meal, *old girl*,” Mr. Piggott called every evening when he came home from his very important job.

Source Text in Korean:

“어이, *아줌마*, 빨리 밥 줘.” 피곳 씨도 아주 중요한 회사에서 돌아와 저녁마다 외쳤습니다.

Native English Speaking Instructor::

Every evening when Mr. Piggott got home from his very important job, he would shout: “*Hey*, make me some dinner!”

Korean Students:

“*Hey*, give me some food quickly.” Mr. Piggott shouted every evening after coming back from his very important company.

From *Piggybook* (Browne 1986)

However, the Korean participants and the instructor face difficulty in translating the implied meaning when they translated it back into English. The face-threatening expression *old girl* is deleted as it violated the general politeness principle in English. They may have deleted it after considering its acceptance as it is a children's story. However, the deletion of face-threatening expressions without considering the intentional violation of the politeness principle leads to a reduction in translation of the implied meaning.

The following excerpt also highlights how the politeness principles reflect the social values related to relationships in a particular society. The level of politeness is expressed based on the characters' social position and the social relationship between the speaker and the listener. In Korean society, it is relatively natural for a mother to give orders to her children in a hierarchical social context instead of asking them. That is why the Korean participants and the instructor use the expression *told* instead of *asked* in the following excerpt, based on the norm of politeness influenced by Korean pragmatics.

Original Text by the Author:

The next day Mum asked me to take a cake to Grandma, who was poorly.

Source Text in Korean:

다음 날, 엄마가 말했어요. 할머니가 아프시니 케이크를 갖다 드리라고요.

Native English Speaking Instructor:

The next day, Mom told me that Grandma was sick, and that I needed to take some cake to her.

Korean Students:

The next day Mom told me, Grandma is sick so I should take her a cake.

From *Into the Forest* (Browne 2004)

However, the instructor uses the word *need* and the Korean participants use the word *should* to emphasize the concept of request or obligation using their intercultural pragmatics. In Western culture, a child has the option to accept the mother's request so the instructor translated it as *need*. Conversely, in a Korean context, the child is expected to accept the mother's request, so they translated it as *should*. Both groups of participants attempt to translate using their unique intercultural pragmatics to convey the pragmatic meaning that the linguistic structure alone could not convey.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

As English has become an international language, translation has become a common social act that bridges two cultures and languages in everyday life. This study demonstrates the use of intercultural pragmatics strategies to find equivalent intended meaning in translating. Intercultural pragmatics can be defined as an intrinsic pragmatic system that emerges when learners utilize all available data from both their L1 and L2, resulting in an idiosyncratic intercultural pragmatic system that is distinct from either language (Corder 1971, Gass and Selinker 1994). Since the intercultural pragmatic strategies of the participants come from a hybrid pragmatic knowledge system of their L1 and L2, translation can be defined as a more complex meaning negotiation process.

This study shows that the participants attempt to translate the implied meaning of the text using their unique intercultural pragmatics, rather than simply matching linguistic structures in the source text with the target text. In particular, the translation of the connotative meaning in a culture-specific context is reliant on the intercultural pragmatic competence of translators. Participants focus on translating metaphoric expressions based on the equivalence of implicit meaning, rather than solely on linguistic meaning, for acceptability. In translating a children's story, the participants use intercultural pragmatic strategies to consider both the acceptability and speakerability of the text. The consideration of acceptability and speakerability for young children demonstrates that the intercultural pragmatic strategies of the participants are influenced by the genre knowledge of a text.

Since the participants focused on the intended meaning of the text in translation they did not consider translating speech acts in the same way as the authors of the source text or the original text have done. Their use of intercultural pragmatic strategies related to speech acts impacts them as they create a certain degree of anger and politeness, the social power relationship, and the coherence of meaning throughout the whole text.

Translations do not need to have the same purpose as the original text. Rather, they could be defined as the co-construction of pragmatic meaning for the target audience of the translated text in a particular social and temporal context. It supports the expansion of the scope of pragmatics beyond cultural boundaries to also encompass specific time periods. Since translations involve adapting to a new target audience, the meaning of particular expressions should be understood not only in the cultural context of the original text but also in the current society. It also changes the concept of translation in the context of this study. Translations are not stable concepts anymore but they are visibly different depending on the relationship, the degree of shared knowledge, and the social power

between the speakers and listeners in a certain social context. Therefore, the translation act does not just involve finding equivalent language structures in a target language but it is a process of creating equivalent meaning based on the pragmatic context in the target language by analysis of the micro and macro levels of meaning.

The implications of this study are twofold. One is that this study provides a new perspective on translation practice in ELF. It is a false myth that L2 learners who translate in exactly the same way as the original author are better translators, as even the instructor who is a native-speaking English speaker may use different expressions from the original story. This false myth, which leads L2 learners unconsciously to feel inferior, should be debunked because the different expressions from the original story in back translation are not due to the lack of language competence, but due to different levels of using intercultural pragmatic strategies based on the specific context, including time and space.

The other implication is that it is necessary to increase meta-pragmatic strategies, as Taguchi (2021) proposed since both the Korean participants and the instructor use not only linguistic knowledge but also pragmatic features when engaging in translation activities (Park 2000). The study of intercultural pragmatic strategies should not solely focus on checking L2 learners' language errors, which may hinder their language competence. Instead, it should be viewed as a strategic and creative pragmatic effort for the use of ELF in a global context. Developing intercultural pragmatics can help L2 learners overcome mental blocks associated with failure and inferiority in learning English and enhance their ability to communicate effectively in diverse contexts.

To develop effective meta-intercultural pragmatic strategies, it is essential to understand L2 learners' intercultural pragmatics using a wide range of data, rather than solely emphasizing the norm-focused legitimacy of native-speaker English pragmatics. When teaching English through back translation, instructors should guide L2 learners to become aware of their meta-pragmatic knowledge. They can compare the reasons for using specific expressions in their translation as this study did, rather than solely focusing on correcting their mistakes related to English pragmatics.

Although this study has the limitation of subjectivity due to the use of discourse analysis as a research method, it is significant in that it presents a new perspective and norms of translation by highlighting intercultural pragmatic strategies as a newly hybridized field. For the practice of translation in ELF, the analysis of the data of this study provides a useful sample of how to analyze these intercultural pragmatic strategies in practice. Further studies should examine this issue using a combination of quality and quantity research methods and focus on further developing and refining this as a teaching method in detail.

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Examples in: English

Applicable Languages: English

Applicable Level: All