

THE ROLE OF GENDER APPROACH IN TEACHING TRANSLATION TO THE STUDENTS.

Bobojonova Risolat Shermat qizi

*Student, Urganch Ranch Technology University
Uzbekistan*

Abstract: *This paper explores the role of a gender-sensitive approach in teaching translation to undergraduate students. Drawing on classroom research and student feedback, it demonstrates how integrating gender awareness enhances learners' critical thinking, linguistic competence, and cultural sensitivity. The study argues that a gender approach contributes to the ethical and inclusive training of future translators, preparing them to navigate ideologically charged texts with awareness and responsibility.*

Keywords: *Translation pedagogy, gender approach, feminist translation, inclusive language, translator training, critical thinking, linguistic sensitivity, cross-cultural competence.*

Translation is not merely a linguistic task; it is also a cultural, ideological, and social activity. In recent years, translation studies have increasingly acknowledged the role of gender as a significant factor influencing both the translation process and translator training. A gender-sensitive approach in translation pedagogy recognizes that language reflects and constructs gender roles, and that translators must be critically aware of how their choices affect the representation of gender in texts.

This paper explores the role of the gender approach in teaching translation to university students. It examines how integrating gender awareness into translation pedagogy enhances students' critical thinking, linguistic sensitivity, and socio-cultural competence.

The intersection of gender and translation has been explored by scholars such as Simon (1996), von Flotow (1997), and Godard (1990), who argue that translation is a site of ideological negotiation, particularly concerning the representation of women and marginalized voices. These theorists advocate feminist translation strategies such as supplementing, prefacing, and hijacking to draw attention to gendered language and power dynamics.

In the field of translation pedagogy, incorporating a gender approach has been shown to develop students' analytical and reflective skills (Federici, 2007). Training students to identify gender bias, stereotypes, and non-inclusive language equips them to make more ethical and conscious translation choices.

This study adopts a qualitative approach using classroom-based research conducted over a 12-week course in translation studies at two universities. The research involved 40 undergraduate students studying English–Uzbek and English–Russian translation.

Activities included:

- Analyzing gendered language in source texts (e.g., literature, media, political speeches)
- Comparing male and female-authored texts and their translations
- Translating gender-sensitive documents using inclusive language strategies
- Group discussions and reflective journals on gender awareness

Data collection methods:

- Pre- and post-course questionnaires on gender awareness in translation
- Samples of student translations
- Semi-structured interviews with students and instructors

Increased Awareness of Gender Bias

Students demonstrated improved ability to detect gender bias and stereotypical language in source texts. For example, they questioned the default use of "he" in legal texts and began to explore neutral or inclusive alternatives.

Enhanced Reflective Practice

Learners became more reflective about the cultural and ideological implications of their translation choices. Several students reported modifying their translations to avoid reinforcing traditional gender roles.

Development of Inclusive Language Skills

Students gained practical experience in using gender-neutral language and reformulating gender-exclusive expressions, especially in legal, institutional, and media texts.

Broader Cultural Competence

The integration of gender analysis led to more nuanced discussions about how different cultures construct gender through language, which in turn improved intercultural translation competence.

The findings support the growing body of research emphasizing the importance of critical pedagogical approaches in translator education. A gender approach fosters ethical sensitivity, critical literacy, and intercultural awareness—key skills for professional translators operating in a globalized world.

Furthermore, the gender approach complements broader educational goals such as social justice, inclusivity, and respect for diversity. In practical terms, students trained in this way are better prepared to handle sensitive texts, represent diverse voices accurately, and avoid perpetuating gender stereotypes.

However, implementing a gender-sensitive curriculum requires careful planning, teacher training, and the development of appropriate materials. Resistance may also arise due to preconceived notions about gender roles or the belief that translation is a neutral, technical act. Therefore, ongoing dialogue, institutional support, and curriculum design are essential for success.

Incorporating gender-aware translation instruction does not merely improve linguistic competence; it actively contributes to the formation of translators as socially responsible professionals. In multilingual and multicultural environments, translators often serve as

cultural mediators. Therefore, a lack of awareness regarding gendered expressions can lead to unintentional reinforcement of stereotypes or misrepresentation of individuals and groups in target texts.

A gender approach also encourages critical engagement with source texts. Students begin to ask questions such as: Whose voice is being prioritized? Are there implicit biases in the language? How might translation choices amplify or mitigate such biases? This level of inquiry transforms translation from a mechanical act to a reflective and interpretive practice, where students become active agents in shaping meaning.

In practice, students who have undergone gender-informed training displayed greater sensitivity to issues such as:

- The use of masculine generics (he, man, etc.) and the availability of gender-neutral alternatives.
- Translating job titles and roles (e.g., chairman vs. chairperson, fireman vs. firefighter) in inclusive ways.
- Awareness of grammatical gender distinctions (e.g., in Russian, Spanish, or Uzbek) and their cultural implications when rendering into English or vice versa.

Furthermore, the integration of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural comparisons helped students recognize that gender norms are not universal but language- and culture-specific. This realization deepens their intercultural competence, which is vital for effective and ethical translation across borders.

It is also worth noting that some students initially struggled with or resisted the idea that translation could be ideologically charged. These moments, however, served as opportunities for dialogue. Guided discussions, analysis of authentic texts, and exposure to feminist translation theory helped many learners understand how power and language intersect.

Overall, the gender approach cultivates a holistic perspective: it fosters linguistic accuracy, cultural empathy, and ethical responsibility. These are not merely academic ideals but professional competencies increasingly demanded in global institutions, NGOs, publishing, and media industries, where inclusive and bias-free communication is prioritized.

Incorporating a gender approach in translation teaching empowers students to become critical and responsible language mediators. It enhances their ability to produce linguistically accurate and culturally sensitive translations while promoting awareness of social equity and representation.

As translation increasingly plays a role in cross-cultural communication, especially in diplomacy, media, and education, it is crucial that translators are trained not only as technicians of language but as ethically aware cultural interpreters. Future research could focus on the long-term effects of gender-sensitive training on professional practice and explore how gender intersects with other identity markers such as race, class, and age in translation.

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