

Painting a Picture of an Imagined Community: Mediation in the Second Language Learners' Translation Classroom

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the imagined community created when student translators envisage a target reader for whom they are translating and to highlight pedagogical implications for developing awareness of language and culture in the second language (L2) classroom context. As mediators between source and target culture, language learners dealing with translation, i.e., translation studies students who are also L2 learners of at least one of the languages in the language pair, may also have a role in an imagined community—they have an imagined or implied target reader for whom they are translating, and serve their roles as communicators between the imagined source and target communities. They make connections and fill in the gaps that may be found during the translation of a text from one language and culture to another.

This paper looks at the student contemplations during the process of translation in an imagined community they may imagine themselves to be in. Five Korean into English translation classes were offered to students at a university in Seoul, South Korea. Presenting qualitative excerpts from the data, this paper discusses the imagined community painted by the learners during their process of translation, and how they negotiate the identities of the target audience members with whom they are aiming to communicate.

Keywords

translation, Korean, English, undergraduate, imagined community,
cultural mediation

1. Introduction

A translation task may require the translator to envisage a potential target reader for whom they are translating. As translation involves communication from one language to another, and the languages involved contain both culture and language-specific differences, the translator often takes on the role of cultural mediator between the two languages and cultures. Through such mediation, the translator enters an imagined community, where they negotiate between ideas and meanings. An imagined community (Anderson 1991) implies the ability to employ imagination to reach out beyond one's immediate environment and experience (Ryan 2006) to communicate effectively to the imagined or implied target reader for whom they are translating the text (Assis Rosa 2006). While the notion of imagined community has been investigated by many in relation to L2 learning, there is still insufficient research on the application of the imagined community lens on translation pedagogy. As such, the current study aims to contribute to this area and open doors for further discussion in the field.

Five Korean-English translation classes were offered to two groups of students at a university in South Korea, which involved translation tasks of texts from news articles containing culture-specific lexis. The texts were to be translated from Korean (the source language) into English (the target language). Research was conducted at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in South Korea. Pre- and post-tasks and interviews were also carried out prior to and following the taught sessions.

This paper will look at the imagined community the translator paints for themselves while undertaking a translation task. The paper will begin by reviewing the current literature in relevant fields, and then outline the methodology used for the study. Following that, data excerpts will be presented alongside a discussion. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the key findings of the paper.

2. Background

When a translator works on a text, they have an imagined or implied target reader for whom the translation is intended. The notion of such a target reader, according to Assis Rosa (2006), is important for translation studies as it will “motivate or constrain the translation process and product” (104). Translation is “a production of negotiation with variables pertaining to the sociocultural context on which it is produced and received: the target culture” (100). Such variables are fluid and require contemplation for each given task—the translator can make decisions regarding the overall tone and style of the target text, as well as word and syntactical choices based on this negotiation with the variables. Assis Rosa draws on types of readers in literary communication:

- The actual or real reader: the receiver of the literary text, the flesh-and-bones individuals actually sitting in living rooms reading the book
- The ideal reader: capable of an informed and sensitive reading, able to understand the meaning and significance of any literary text but distant from any given context
- The implied reader: corresponding to the writer’s expectations of his/her addressed readership built by and in discourse (Assis Rosa 2006, 101)

Source texts originate from specific socio-cultural contexts, and when translating a source text into a target text in a different language, it is highly likely that the original will include culture-specific terms. The translation of such culture-specific lexis, which may be rich in connotations or require background contextual knowledge, requires communicative interaction between the translator and intended target reader for optimal message relaying.

The concept of “imagined communities” was initially introduced by Anderson in 1991. Norton (2001) builds upon Lave and Wenger’s (1991) perspective on learning and extends it to encompass the learner’s future associations alongside their ongoing educational journey. Lave and Wenger’s theory of situated learning primarily emphasizes learning occurring in conjunction with the learner’s active participation in a concrete and accessible community.

However, as Anderson (1991) initially posited and as Wenger (1998) has elaborated in his more recent work, humans possess the capacity to

establish connections with individuals beyond their immediate social circles through the power of imagination. Consequently, even when we lack personal familiarity with others, we can perceive them as fellow members of a broader community through our imaginative faculties.

The two theoretical perspectives—communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) and figured worlds (Holland et al. 1998) are related to the notion of “imagined belonging.” Wenger (1998) considers imagination as “a mode of belonging that always involves the social world to expand the scope of reality and identity” (178). Through imagination, we are “expanding our self by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves” (176). In this view, individuals, while participating in everyday social action, change to meet ways of doing in the community—whether it is imagined or real—and identify, define, and rectify their membership through a constant negotiation of their participation (Wenger 1998). In this vein, when undergoing translation tasks, translators are participating in a social action—in the form of rendering messages from source language to target language—and are changing their translation decisions and strategies to cater to the target reader community.

Holland and others also emphasize people’s figurative aspect of identity formed dialectically and dialogically in the imagined community called the “figured world”:

By “figured world,” we mean a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others. (Holland et al. 1998, 52)

This “socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation,” in which characters and actors are recognized, can be applied to the context of the current study. By carrying out the translation tasks, the students are utilizing the information in the translation briefs. The “characters” and “actors” could refer to the the writer and readers of the source text, the readers of the target text, and the translators themselves.

Holland and others (1998) also highlight individuals’ agency in forming and re-forming the imagined worlds based on their everyday activities and events. The conceptual realms they explore encompass both communal and personal aspects, intricately connected to the actual world

through everyday social interactions. Individuals' identities undergo continuous shaping and reshaping as they engage in these conceptual realms; conversely, their participation in these realms influences their identities in an ongoing manner. During the process of a translation task, translators are likely to undergo the "shaping and reshaping" as they engage in social interactions with the imagined worlds on which they are basing their translation acts.

Ryan (2006) discusses the notion of an imagined identity and community in language learning. While his exploration mainly focuses on the motivation of language learners, the concept of an envisioned identity holds relevance for the current study, as the students involved are engaged in the study of translation studies and acquire either English or Korean as their L2. Drawing inspiration from Norton's theory of imagined communities among language learners (Kanno and Norton 2003; Norton 2000, 2001; Norton and Kamal 2003; Norton and Toohey 2002), Ryan (2006) contends that these imagined communities utilize the power of imagination to extend beyond one's immediate surroundings and experience. Within this imagined community, the L2 self is seen as a social entity—a genuine member striving to align personal hopes and aspirations with perceived responsibilities and obligations associated with being part of that conceptual community (40). Instead of regarding both the individual and the community as fixed, clearly defined, and geographically bounded entities, an imagined community exhibits greater dynamism and specificity, tailored to the individual. The learner continually shapes and reshapes their identity in response to the evolving perceived expectations of their imagined community membership.

Ryan (2006) argues that imagined communities employ imagination to reach out beyond one's immediate environment and experience. As part of an imagined community, the L2 self is seen as a social being, as a "real member of an imagined community attempting to square hopes and aspirations with perceived responsibilities and obligations as members of that community" (40). However, direct engagement with other members of the community only occurs in the imagination. As mediators between source and target cultures, language users dealing with translation also have a role in an imagined community—they have an imagined or implied target reader for whom they are translating. In this imagined community, they serve their roles as communicators between the imagined source and target communities, drawing upon their linguistic repertoires and

background knowledge. As mediators, they draw connections and fill in the gaps that may be found during the translation of a text from one language and culture to another.

In relation to L2 learning, Norton (2001) argues that individual learners possess visions of the communities they aspire to join in the future. These “imagined communities” play a significant role in shaping their present learning experiences. Even though they may not belong to these communities yet, learners hold the aspiration of becoming part of them in the future. Norton suggests that the extent to which learners perceive their L2 learning as bringing them closer to this imagined community influences their current investment in their L2 learning.

Song (2012) also discusses the notion of imagined community in relation to transnational families. According to Song, the anticipation of belonging to a specific “imagined” community in the future plays a significant role in shaping how individuals perceive the societal importance of languages, influenced by their language ideologies. Consequently, the language ideologies embraced within each household have a direct impact on their commitment to present language learning endeavors (Norton 2001).

Norton (2001) suggests that learners’ imagined community influences their current participation in their language learning both through their resistance to, as well as active investment in, their learning. In their special issue on learners’ imagined communities, Kanno and Norton (2003) further conceptualize the notion through a broad range of imagined communities. In their view, learners’ imagined community:

[...] include future relationships that exist only in the learner’s imagination as well as affiliation—such as nationhood or even transnational communities—that extend beyond local sets of relationships. We suggest that these imagined communities are no less real than the ones in which learners have daily engagement and might even have a stronger impact on their current actions and investment. (Kanno and Norton 2003, 242)

As discussed by Kanno and Norton (2003), the concept of imagined communities pertains to groups of individuals with whom we establish a connection not through immediate, tangible means but rather through the power of our imagination. In our lives, we interact with numerous communities that have a concrete and direct presence, such as our local

neighborhoods, workplaces, educational institutions, and religious affiliations. However, it is important to recognize that our affiliations extend beyond these visible communities.

Kanno and Norton (2003) further emphasize two crucial aspects related to imagined communities. First and foremost, imagined communities expand the range of potential selves we can envision. Envisioning an identity within the context of an imagined community can profoundly influence a learner's engagement with educational practices. On the one hand, it may motivate learners to pursue actively certain educational opportunities they might not have considered otherwise. But these imagined identities can reshape a student's learning experience. Secondly, technological advancements over the past two decades have had a profound impact on what we can conceive.

Kim (2023) looks at how the identity construction of Korean heritage language learners in the United States is closely associated with the notion of their "possible selves" in a third space. The concept of imagined communities has also been examined in the context of academic writing. Romova and Andrew (2010) look at the utilization of portfolios in the academic writing classroom to rehearse membership in imagined communities. Further, Romova and Andrew (2012) contemplate the links between academic genres and students' desired, future imagined communities. The study finds that writing a range of genre-focused discourses enables students' involvement in future communities.

Translation tasks are often accompanied by a translation brief, which often contains a set of instructions for the given translation task. The designating of translation briefs that imply the target audience and purpose of the target text can enable exploration of the translator's negotiating and mediating of culture-specific lexis in the texts. Discussing the translation brief from a functionalist translation approach, Nord (1997) highlights the important role it plays, particularly for trainee translators. While professional translators' experience means they may not need detailed specifications for a translation task, trainee translators, who lack the experience, would need guidance (Nord 1997). As such, each translation task requires a brief that "defines the conditions under which the target text should carry out its particular function" (47).

Lee's study (2020) demonstrates the usefulness of the translation brief and designating of an online target reader to enable and encourage students to take on a role as translators and mediators in the online space

and make considerations of multimodal aspects. The study finds that students actively considered the target audience for whom they were translating, as well as the specific online platform they were using for communication.

It is evident that the notion of imagined communities can be applied across various contexts, as indicated by research conducted to date. The notion is also applicable to translation. During the process of translation, students can enter and then be part of an imagined community. They act as mediators between the writer of the source text and the reader of the target text. In the process of negotiating the messages to be communicated for the target audience, they assume a role within an imagined community.

3. Methodology

Five translation classes were provided for the project, which involved translation tasks of texts from news articles containing culture-specific lexis. The texts were to be translated from Korean (the source language) into English (the target language). Research was conducted at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul, South Korea. Pre- and post-tasks and interviews were also carried out prior to and following the taught sessions.

The participants were undergraduate students studying EIT (English Interpreting and Translation) at the university. Two groups of ten participants were recruited, with Group A being a control group and Group B the experimental group. For the experimental group, translation sessions placed an emphasis on context, communication, and relevance. The sessions involved in-session translation tasks and group discussions. While the pre- and post-tasks included the same translation brief and target reader, the translation tasks for the five classes specified different briefs with a different target audience/reader each time. The control group had the same translation sessions with the same translation texts, but the emphasis on relevance was not made. While translation tasks specified the target reader and purpose of the text, no emphasis was placed on the culture-specific lexis contained within. Participants were recruited on a first-come, first-served voluntary basis from students who had either previously taken, or who were taking at the time of the study, a translation class that involved Korean–English translation. All twenty participants participated in the research completed all assigned work successfully. Ethics consent forms were provided to the participant, who gave both

written and recorded verbal consent. Tables 1 and 2 below show the details of the study participants. The current study will examine the data from Group A, the control group. Pseudonyms have been given to the participants for anonymity.

Table 1. Background of Participants: Group A

	Name (pseudonym)	Degree	Year	Overseas experience	Previous translation classes taken	Current translation classes taken
1	Bo-young	EIT	2	4 years in the U.S. and 3 years in Ukraine	Introduction to K-E* Translation (2)	N/A
2	Min-jeong	EIT and French (Double major)	4	1 year in the U.S. and 5 months in France	Introduction to K-E Translation (1, 2)	Introduction to E-K** Translation (2)
3	Young-hee	EIT	1	4 years in the UK and 3 years in the U.S.	Introduction to Interpretation and Translation (1)	Introduction to Interpretation and Translation (2)
4	Yoo-na	EIT	2	3 years in the U.S.	Introduction to K-E Translation (1)	N/A
5	Ji-woo	EIT	1	N/A	Introduction to Interpretation and Translation (1)	Introduction to Interpretation and Translation (2)
6	Jin-ho	EIT and International Economics and Law (Double major)	4	3.5 years in Saudi Arabia and 3 months in the U.S.	Introduction to E-K Translation (1, 2), Translating Political and Economic Texts (1), Introduction to K-E Translation (2), Translation Theory and Practice (1, 2)	N/A
7	Soo-jin	EIT	1	9 years in the U.S.	Introduction to Interpretation and Translation (1)	Introduction to Interpretation and Translation (2)
8	Hyeon-joo	EIT	2	N/A	N/A	Introduction to E-K translation (2), English Translation Theory and Practice (2)
9	Hee-geun	EIT	2	2 years in Australia	Translating Political and Economic Texts (1), Introduction to K-E Translation (1), Introduction to E-K translation (1), Text Analysis and Introduction to Translation (1, 2)	Translating Political and Economic Texts (2), Introduction to K-E Translation (2)

	Name (pseudonym)	Degree	Year	Overseas experience	Previous translation classes taken	Current translation classes taken
10	Seon-hee	EIT	4	1 semester in Hawaii and 1 month in the Philippines	Text Analysis and Introduction to Translation (1, 2), Introduction to E-K Translation (1, 2), Introduction to K-E Translation (1, 2), Theory and Practice of Literary Translation, and Literary Translation (1)	N/A

* K-E: Korean into English

** E-K: English into Korean

Table 2. Background of Participants: Group B

	Name (pseudonym)	Degree	Year	Overseas experience	Previous translation classes taken	Current translation classes taken
1	Hyo-jin	EIT	4	1 month in the U.S.	Introduction to K-E Translation (1, 2)	N/A
2	Dong-gi	EIT	2	1 year in Australia	Introduction to K-E Translation (1)	Introduction to K-E Translation (2), Media and Culture translation (2)
3	Ye-hoon	EIT	3	15 years in the U.S.	Introduction to K-E Translation (1)	K-E translation (2), Media and Culture translation (2)
4	Eun-joo	EIT	1	N/A	Introduction to Interpretation and Translation (1)	Introduction to Interpretation and Translation (2)
5	Hye-young	EIT and China Area Studies (Double major)	2	6 months in the U.S.	Sight Translation and Introduction to Interpreting (1), Translation Theory and Practice	Sight Translation and Introduction to Interpreting (2), K-E Consecutive Interpretation (2), Introduction to K-E Translation (2)
6	Eun-seon	EIT	2	N/A	K-E Translation (1)	N/A
7	Ji-yoo	EIT and China Area Studies (Double major)	4	N/A	K-E translation (1)	Translating Political & Economic texts (2)

	Name (pseudonym)	Degree	Year	Overseas experience	Previous translation classes taken	Current translation classes taken
8	Jae-hee	EIT	4	N/A	Sight Translation and Introduction to Interpreting (1, 2), Text Analysis and Introduction to Translation (1, 2), English Translation Theory and Practice (1, 2), E-K Consecutive Interpretation (1, 2), Introduction to E-K Translation (1, 2), K-E Consecutive Interpretation (1, 2), Intensive E-K Consecutive Interpreting (1), Translating Political and Economic Texts (1, 2)	K-E Literary Translation (2), Practice in Korean into Japanese Business Translation
9	Kang-hee	EIT	4	3 years in New Zealand	Translating Political and Economic Texts (1, 2), Introduction to E-K Translation (1, 2), Introduction to K-E Translation (1, 2), Translation Theory and Practice (2), E-K Translation (1, 2)	K-E Literary Translation (2)
10	Bo-min	EIT	1	3 years in the U.S.	Introduction to Interpretation and Translation (1)	Introduction to Interpretation and Translation (2)

* K-E: Korean into English

** E-K: English into Korean

The current study focuses on the fourth translation class, which involved the translation of a news article about the changing household structure in modern day South Korea. This class is particularly relevant, as it provides insight into how participants considered an imagined community while translating the text for the imagined or implied target reader. Each translation task was accompanied by two different translation briefs, and the briefs for the fourth week class are outlined in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Translation Briefs for Week 4 Class

Brief 1	Brief 2
Please translate the following text for <u>a family welfare office, which is run by the government for foreign residents in Seoul</u> . The text will appear in their monthly newsletter.	Please translate the following text for <u>an academic magazine</u> which reports on social issues. It produces an online English version once a month.

The two different translation briefs were provided to enable varied perspectives by students. Rather than focusing on one target reader, the assignment of two different target reader groups can enable students to approach the translation task from different viewpoints while making additional considerations. Half of the class were assigned one translation brief each, so that they could exchange ideas based on their brief during the discussion activities. Students submitted a learning journal which reflected upon the class and translation task each week after the class was held. Students were able to choose whether to write in Korean or English, and there were no requirements for word length.

While all students showed meaningful insight, the current study will closely examine the data from five students due to space constraints.

4. Findings and Discussion

This section will look at excerpts from student's learning journals which were submitted after each class. For anonymity, students will be referred to by numbers, e.g., Student 1, Student 2, and so forth. Excerpts in English have been kept verbatim to preserve students' original, authentic voices, while excerpts which were written in Korean have been translated by the author and indicated with square brackets. Students were able to write in either English or Korean, according to their preference.

The excerpt below is from Student 1's learning journal and shows how Student 1 reflected on the assigned translation brief. Student 1 discussed the task together with peers and considered how to translate for the target reader. The excerpt also shows how, together with peers, the student considered the optimal way to translate to appeal to the audience. Due to the culture-specific nature of the source text, the students contemplated culture-specific content that might require extra explanation for the target reader who might not be familiar with Korean culture:

Today, we focused on one translation brief between the two of them. Our team was assigned to translate for a family welfare office run by the government for the foreign residents in Seoul. Compared to the other translation brief, which was for the academic magazine, we agreed that our target text should be lighter and should attract the readers by its title. And as the text is targeted to foreigners, we thought that we should add information to make it easier to understand. For example, the article is describing the unprecedented household trends in Korea and is surprised

by it. But foreigners who don't know the past situations of Korea (which usually formed a large family) might not understand why the trend is being such an issue. So, we might have to emphasize or add additional information about the change.

In another excerpt from Student 1's learning journal, we can see how the student actively mediates between source and target culture:

What I focused on in today's class was that, for the first time, I tried to intervene and change the tone of the source text. I found the article somewhat biased and tried to lessen the tone. For example, I thought calling the single households once "minorities" delivered an underlying idea that they were unprivileged. So I skipped the expression and paraphrased only with the objective information. But when I discussed this method with the other group members, they thought that it would have been okay to leave it as the source text as it shows the general view of Koreans, especially the elderly. Anyhow, I tried translating the text with an objective viewpoint.

The excerpt shows how Student 1 made decisions during the translation process, choosing a more objective and less biased tone by omitting information that they deemed biased and that portrayed single households discussed in the article in a negative light. Student 1 discussed this consideration with peers. Although their peers believed it would be acceptable to leave the content as is to reflect common views among Koreans, Student 1 emphasized that they still aimed for an objective stance.

Student 2 also reflects upon the task, and mentions how they focused on translating in a style fitting to the brief the student was assigned:

This week we took a different approach to translating texts. We had been translating for two target readers for each class, but today, we only translated one version of translation brief and discussed how people who got the other translation brief did the work. It was new so I think I can focus on one target reader, but at the same time I could understand how other people with different target did different from me.

I translated translation brief 2. This time we talked about what points we have to consider for designated texts. So we planned what to do before we translate the version. Since I got translation brief 2, which is an academic journal. I tried to focus more on academic part and elaborate

more on evidential parts like statistics than other parts like personal experience. Since this article is going to be in academic magazine, we even tried to enlarge the size of letter for important parts and minimize size of letters for less important parts. To look more academic, I put more word like “according to” rather than just writing the fact. I try to focus on explaining what is happening, and use what people at article say as example like we write Body part, for instance, TOEFL essay.

This class was challenging, because the text is getting longer. I was also able to learn how others did on different target. It was a short class, and good thing was I had more time to focus on one target reader rather than two. In addition, some sentences give hard time translating. For example, I didn’t know how to translate “누가 뭐라고 하지 않는 달콤함에 중독돼 있다”, but during the discussion, I learned one of the member translated like following: “He is stratifying delight of enjoying free time watching TV and listening [to] music.”

Student 2 mentions it was beneficial to see how peers translated for the other brief, for the target audience, as they were at first stuck on how to translate a particular sentence from the text.

In addition, Student 2 utilized a table (see Table 4) to organize their ideas from the class, brainstorming ideas for the two different translation briefs.

Table 4. Student 2’s Ideas from Class

Target Reader	Things to Consider
Brief 1	• It is an informative text. So conveying correct information is crucial. • The possible target readers could be multicultural families, foreign people who work with family welfare, or foreigners living in Seoul. • Targets can be people of nationalities and cultures. We must explain some details typical of Korean to foreigners so that they can understand more clearly. • [It] is possible to focus on some fun element or personal information that readers might get interested in. • Using simple but correct words is recommended since targets can be every group of people. • They may be interested in the reason why more people are willing to live alone. So focus on this fact. • Some words can look bad on people from different groups of people. For example, one of us translated “소수파” as minority, but this may word makes those “minority” people like outsiders.

Target Reader	Things to Consider
Brief 2	• It is informative text and academic text at the same time. It is recommended to use very educated words. • Focus more on information such as statistics [rather] than personal experiences. • Targets can usually educated people who study statistics or sociology. So it is okay to use professional words.
	• Used more academic tone and focus on facts rather than personal experiences or opinions.
Brief 1 and 2	• Some words typical of Korean culture distract readers from understanding the text. So it is a good idea to elaborate those words. Such as “goose daddy.” • When I translate words like drama or show, I always put Korean in front of those words to explain that those dramas or shows are typical of Korean culture. • Some words may not make sense in a foreign culture, use idioms or different expressions that make sense to the target text’s culture. For example, “네 가구 중 한 가구 풀이다” translated literally in English can be “Looks like one family of four households,” which does not make sense in this article. So it is better to translate like “one of four households are single households.”

Table 4 shows how the two different briefs enabled the student to look at the translation task from both viewpoints and consider differences in translation for each brief, such as purpose, target reader, challenging areas, and such. Table 4 also shows the student’s awareness of linguistic-related elements such as connotation. As an example, the student mentions how some words can have a negative connotation, such as the word “minority,” and how this word could possibly make this group of people be perceived as outsiders.

Student 3 also shows in their excerpts how the translation task enabled contemplation of translating for the imagined target reader in the imagined community:

Today’s class was very interesting. I translated for brief 2, which was for an academic magazine, so I thought that I have to sound very formal and informative in my writing. However, the sections chosen to translate were very descriptive and rather personal information that I could not really make it into a formal form. Also, it was hard to catch the message of the text since the Korean sentence structures were very run-on, in

terms of English grammar. Nevertheless, I tried to sound academic by omitting too descriptive and somewhat unnecessary sentences like “새벽 두시에 일어나 홀로...” because just saying “personal space and time” was enough to get the meaning across. Also in the beginning, I thought that it would sound better if I mentioned that living alone was uncommon in Korea until now, rather than saying the specific person mentioned. I think that the more I translate, the more difficult it gets. I used to think of translation as something that was different from writing. As of now, I think that it is something that is harder than just writing since I have to consider the audience and what kind of information and message they need, along with the author’s intention.

Student 3 envisaged a target reader group for whom they were translating in an imagined community and made active decisions to render the source text in a certain way. The student specifically states how they consciously aimed to make the text sound “academic” in line with the designated translation brief 2. In addition, the student ponders their development in translation and how it seems to be more and more challenging as consideration of the target audience and the author’s intention are needed.

The excerpt from Student 4’s journal has been translated into English from the original Korean by the author of this paper:

[My brief was an academic online magazine, and there was a lot of talk during the first group discussion. There were many opinions in the original text that it would be better to omit some of the interviews when they were included in a journal because there were so many interviews, and there were also opinions that all interview contents should be kept as they are “for a lighter feeling.” It probably depends on how academic the journal is. So, our conclusion is to mark a somewhat personal interview with italics, indentation, and reduced line spacing so that you can tell at a glance that this is an interview (I know it’s a common way of quoting). So, if you are short on time or are looking for more academic content, you can skip this part. I also thought of a way to hyperlink to important sociology vocabularies because they are online, so that they can link to pages with more information.]

Student 4 discusses in detail how the two briefs enabled ample consideration of two different target audience groups. The discussion with peers also provided the student with insights into how to approach translation differently. The student and peers came up with the idea to use stylistic

features in the text to enable the reader to understand some parts are from an interview. Student 4 also suggested leveraging the online platform where the target text would be posted by incorporating hyperlinks for key vocabulary related to the field of sociology. This excerpt from the student's data shows how the student can form an identity as part of a community with peers (i.e., fellow translators communicating the source text to an imagined audience on the online platform) and be able to consider optimal ways to enhance the communication for the imagined target community.

In another excerpt from Student 4's learning journal, the student shows how they made active decisions to alter some parts of the source text. The student mentions the use of translation strategies such as omission as well as conscious decisions to choose certain word choices:

[Returning to my translation, I omitted several parts of the original text. "Unmarried," "Like Mr. Lee," "I wake up at two in the morning and am addicted to myself," and "Sometimes, there are cases where I am just a goose daddy." I decided that other parts were more important, so I boldly deleted any excessively private or redundant content. Instead, I pondered for a long time when choosing a word, but when translating the expression "one-person households overtook two-person households and became the mainstream," I chose the rather objective and formal verb outnumber, "mainstream" or "trend," which was translated into major and mainstream. In addition, I tried to use the phrase "He feels uncomfortable when people around him are critical of him" rather objectively and translated it as "homosexual or unfaithful" in order not to use "I like men or flirt" too lightly. And finally, in "marriage is giving up the thing that I value the most, but I can't do that," I expressed the word "priorities" for "the thing I value the most." And I tried to change "existence value" by rewriting it like "he is living for them."]

In this excerpt from Student 4's journal, the student shows how they made certain choices during the process of translation. The student says they "boldly deleted" certain words, "chose the rather objective and formal" verb, and "translated it as 'homosexual or unfaithful' in order not to use 'I like men or flirt' too lightly." These examples of how the student rendered content in the source text for the target text highlight how the translation task enabled the student consciously to translate in certain ways for an imagined community.

Further, in another section of Student 4's journal, the student shows awareness of how the two different translation briefs called for different styles, tones, or translation strategies. Again, this data excerpt demonstrates how the translation tasks in the current study enabled student translators to contemplate the target audience groups of imagined communities and how to translate for such potential readers:

[On the other hand, the other person's brief was for the family welfare office, and it seemed to focus on using it quite comfortably and easily. So, I used a lot of verbal language, and even complicated sentences in the original text seemed to be translated as easily as possible. I thought that this method would be a very appropriate translation method for the target. Both briefs seemed interesting.]

The excerpts from Student 5's learning journal have also been translated from Korean into English by the author of this paper:

[In the fourth class, I translated the article about the studio. I received a brief to write about foreigners living in Korea, a medium published offline by the government-run family welfare center. When discussing before translating, our team has oriented it to a casual, easy-to-carry text that can be viewed while discussing the translation. There was an opinion to make it a strategy and to objectify the biased part. However, during the discussion after the translation, I sympathized a lot with the statement that the person who gave this article to my partner may have been trying to emphasize the point of view from one side as the reporter wrote. I can't see it well, but I translated the part that "I'm addicted to sweetness" to satisfy in order to be objective. But now that I think about it, I thought that this reporter's point of view may also be intentional. My partner, who translated another brief, said that she systematically divided the reasons in the article into two in order to differ academically. I thought that my partner's translation would convey the meaning better than the part I wrote about marriage. When I said "from child and wife," I thought that it was only child and wife because I kept talking about marriage before that. As I was translating this time, I thought about why I would have to translate for a family welfare-related institution. I thought that this might be showing the change in trend of Korea to foreigners living in Korea, and it may have been intended as a reference when looking for housing types in Korea.]

The data for Student 5, like the other four students, also demonstrates how the translation tasks in the current study enabled the student to think about how to translate while adhering to a translation brief. Here, the student contemplates who may be the intended target audience and envisions this imagined community to possibly be “foreigners living in Korea,” who may use the translated target text as a “reference when looking for housing types in Korea.” While the translation briefs did not state nor indicate the specific purpose for the translated target text, the student assumes on their own accord, showing how the student played a role in an imagined community during the process of translation.

The findings in the current study show a close relationship between target reader, imagined community, and identity. The data shows how the participants used the information available to them in the translation brief to decide on an imagined community for whom they then made efforts to translate, by consciously making translation decisions considering factors such as relevance, source text intention, target text cultures, target text purpose, target text features, source text-specific features, source text culture-specific background knowledge, and the difference between source and target cultures. These factors were all taken into consideration with the goal of communicating to the target reader in an imagined community or communities. With an imagined community of target reader groups in their minds, the participants were able to exercise actively their roles as translators and mediate between the source and target texts to cater their translation accordingly. In doing so, the participants were also able to develop their translation strategies and acquire new insight and perspective. The participants placed themselves in an imagined place by assuming the target reader through analysis of the translation brief.

According to Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), imagination plays a crucial role in the process of creating new identity options. Identities are viewed as social, discursive, and narrative options offered by a particular society at a specific time and place.

The data in the current study indicate a seemingly full-fledged flexibility and freedom in the learners’ identities and positions. Although they have objective “identities” and “positions,” the data reveals how the translation tasks and classes enabled them to flit between stances as language users, translators, and members of a particular group. Further, they were able to enter imagined communities and take on roles as mediators, at times putting themselves in others’ shoes and at times making decisions based on certain viewpoints or stances.

5. Conclusion

This study has looked into a translation studies classroom in South Korea, at L2 learners' data excerpts, which give insight into contemplations made during the process of translation. The translation tasks outlined in the study provided students with two different translation briefs, which helped foster and develop students' awareness and sensitivity to linguistic and cultural aspects in the source language of Korean and target language of English. By taking on mediator roles during translation, students could paint a picture of an imagined community for whom they were translating and consequently make justified translation decisions to communicate to the target audience group in the perceived community. This study has highlighted pedagogical implications for the translation classroom for L2 learners of English in the provision of different translation briefs for translation tasks. While the current study was set in the undergraduate translation studies classroom with native Korean speakers who are L2 learners of English, the pedagogical methods may be applied and altered to fit different language pairs and classroom contexts.

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