Semantic Prosody: Its Knowledge and Appropriate Selection of Equivalents

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Abstract

In translation, choosing appropriate equivalent is essential to convey the right message from source-text to target-text, and one of the issues that may have a determinative role in appropriate equivalent choice is the semantic prosody (SP) behavior of words and the relation existing between the SP of a word and semantic senses (i.e. negativity, positivity or neutrality) of its collocations in the context. This research explored the impact of Iranian translator trainees' semantic prosody knowledge on the appropriate selection of equivalents in translation. The probable influence of proficiency level or fields of study on the appropriate selection of equivalents with respect to SP was concentrated as well. To fulfill the aims of the study, a translation test including a number of near-synonym pairs with different SPs was administered among participants with different fields of study as well as different proficiency levels. Findings were analyzed based on Sinclair's (1996) hypothesis of SP as well as Stubbs' (1995) model of SP classification. The study showed where there is more than one equivalent of a word in another language, having the knowledge and being aware of the conditions of semantic prosody is necessary to select the appropriate, accurate equivalents and thus to convey the exact message from a source text to the target one. The results also revealed that proficiency level and field of study among language learners can have an influence on choosing appropriate equivalents with respect to SP. The findings of the present study can be beneficial for the instructors and learners in both fields of translation and Teaching English as a Foreign Language to improve equivalent choice appropriateness. Also, this study by highlighting the essential role of semantic prosody in selecting appropriate equivalents can be beneficial to dictionary compilers to include semantic prosody behaviors in the definition and information of words.

Keywords: collocation, equivalent, semantic prosody, translation trainees

Introduction

Semantic prosody (SP) of words has an essential role in choosing appropriate equivalents, especially in case of near-synonyms, i.e. identical or similar in denotational meaning but usually differ in their collocational behaviors and semantic prosodies (Zhang, C, 2010a). According to Carmen Campoy-Cubillo, Bellés-Fortuño, and Lluïsa Gea-Valor (2010), SP is the determiner of the meaning of the whole lexical item, expressing its function and showing how the rest of the item will be interpreted. Wei (2006) cited in Zhang, W. (2009) states that common inappropriate word choice is because of neglecting semantic prosodic features of the words.

Semantic prosody studies are deeply tied to the phenomenon of collocational sequence of lexical items that frequently appear together in a certain semantic environment where words collocate could be positive, negative or sometimes neutral. For example the words *cause* and *provide* have a negative and a positive SP correspondently. This is because the former collocates

with negative words such as *problem, pain, disease, etc.* and the latter collocates with positive words, for instance *assistance, funds, opportunities, etc.*

Several scholars (for example, Partington, 1998; Dam-Jensen & Zethsen, 2008; Stewart, 2009) have referred to the importance of semantic prosody concerning translation and translation studies, because cross-linguistic near-synonyms, and translation equivalents looked up in the dictionaries may or may not have different prosodies across languages. Partington (1998) declares that "the pitfalls for translators unaware of such prosodic differences are evident" (p. 78). If a translator wishes to translate the sentence "How we can bring about a change?", to select the appropriate equivalents of words or phrases in the target language for conveying the right concept, she/he should be aware that the expression *bring about* is associated with either a positive or negative prosody; otherwise, she/he may not transfer the same semantic prosody of a word from the source text into the target one. Hence, this research investigates the impact of the translator trainees' semantic prosody knowledge on the appropriate selection of equivalents.

Literature Review
The Concept of Semantic Prosody
Sinclair (1987) was the first one who noticed the phenomenon of SP in the collocational behaviour of words. Sinclair (1987) referred to "good/positive" or "bad/negative" semantic profiles when a node word collocates with another word that may be positive or negative. However, the term semantic prosody was first coined by Louw (1993) who borrowed "prosody" from Firth's (1957) study of prosody in phonological terms which was concerned with how sounds transcend segmental boundaries. The term has been defined variously by different scholars, such as Stubbs (1995), Bublitz (1996), Sardinha, (2000), Partington (2004), and Stewart (2010). Louw (1993) defined semantic prosody as "a consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates" (p. 157).

Stubbs (1995) expanded the studies in this field significantly, investigating the semantic prosody of a great number of words, amongst *accost*, *amid*, *amusement*, *backdrop*, *care*, *cause*, *commit*, *community*, *deadlock*, *distinctly*, *soar*, *heritage*, *lavish*, *lurk*, *provide*, *somewhat*, *standard*, *undergo*, *untold*. He also classified semantic prosody into three categorizations: negative, positive and neutral prosody (Zhang, C, 2010a).

Semantic Prosody and Translation
Translation seems to be the ideal field to cross-linguistic analysis of Semantic Prosody. While translating from a source language into a target one, ignoring semantic prosodies may lead to misunderstanding and consequently mistranslating the message in the target language. Partington (1998) who investigated cross-linguistic differences of the same semantic prosody between English and Italian, highlighted the importance of such findings for research in translation studies. He claimed that perfect equivalents across English and Italian are few and far between, "because even words and expressions which are 'lookalikes' or false friends (e.g., *correct* vs. the Italian *corretto*) may have very different lexical environments" (pp. 48–64). Stewart (2009) in a research on teaching semantic prosody to the translators, highlighted a number of problems with which the corpus users, teachers, learners, and translators deal with. Dam-Jensen and Zethsen (2008) tested awareness of prosodies in English on the part of non-native English students of translation.

However, cross-linguistic studies of semantic prosody demonstrate that this phenomenon, in general, is likely to be smoothed in the translation process, i.e. some verbs, nouns and near-

synonyms can be used interchangeably. Nevertheless, studies on SP in translation show that to translate these phenomena, it is still important to detect their presence or absence.

Collocation

Semantic prosody studies are deeply tied to the phenomenon of collocational sequence of lexical items that frequently appear together in a certain semantic environment which could be positive or negative or sometimes neutral. Partington (1998) believed that collocation is a semantic, textual, or statistical property and collocational relations are the semantic, textual, or statistical connections between their constituent words. According to Stubbs (2002), collocation involves "semantic relations between the node and collocates, and among the collocations themselves" (p. 225). Sinclair (2004) described semantic prosody from pragmatic approach and noted that "the word is associated not with a particular collocating word, but with an attitude which can be expressed in a variety of ways" (pp. 33-34). Zhang, C (2010a) stated that "in a semantic prosody, there is nothing explicitly positive or negative for the node word. It is its characteristic collocates that have a similar particular semantic association" (p. 192). Philip (2010) noted that SP is not visible from the individual word itself, but it must be observed by the word's set of participants.

It is clear that linguists believe there is a strong connection between collocations and semantic prosodies of lexical items. Collocational restrictions would determine what goes naturally with what, consequently collocates that are determined by these restrictions have mostly the same semantic prosody.

Denotation and Connotation

Louw (2000) noted that "a semantic prosody refers to a form of meaning which is established through the proximity of a consistent series of collocates, often characterized as positive or negative, and whose primary function is the expression of the attitude of its speaker or writer towards some pragmatic situation" (p. 56). Many scholars such as Partington (1998), Stubbs (2001) and Hunston (2002), Bednarek (2008) believe that SP is a type of connotative meaning.

Connotation and Denotation are two principal methods for describing the words' meanings. Connotation includes a wide array of positive and negative associations that most words naturally carry with them, whereas denotation is the precise, literal definition of a word that is mostly are in a dictionary. A word has not only a linguistic denotative meaning but also a connotative meaning that reflects the evocative or affective meaning associated with it. Synonyms may have the same denotative meaning but different connotations (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2003). According to Widdowson (1989) denotation is the meaning of a word which has added the component of meaning related to emotional overtones. The translators' knowledge of connotative meanings would enable them to choose an equivalent for the source word that is usually much more accurate in terms of the effect produced on the target reader.

Translation, Semantic Prosody and Bilingual Dictionaries

Bilingual or translation dictionaries are almost the most usable resources for translators; however, these dictionaries focus on isolated words rather than a text. This is while many words have different meanings related to the context in which they are used, and this faces translators, who expect to find the exact equivalent of the words in a bilingual dictionary, with a lack of total correspondence between the original word and its translation.

On the other hand, to render an acceptable, accurate translation the translator needs to consider phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, idiomatic, religious, and cultural systems of both SL and TL so that he/she can find the most appropriate equivalents, and thus conveys the author's intended meaning to the TL audience. However, bilingual dictionaries don't provide such information, including semantic prosody. According to Zhang, W (2009), awareness of semantic prosody plays a crucial role in interpreting a text producer's hidden attitudes and can help language learners to understand how to use lexical items appropriately. Therefore, as research on semantic prosody has shown (Wang, 2004; Zhang, C, 2010b), monolingual and especially bilingual dictionaries do not provide translators with information on the semantic profiles of words. Consequently, by relying on the meanings provided by dictionaries, the semantic prosody of a word in the original text may not be transferred to the target language correctly and translators need to develop the knowledge of semantic prosody so that they are able to choose appropriate equivalents of vocabularies in the target language.

Cross-linguistic Studies of Semantic Prosody

Semantic prosody has mostly been studied monolingually; however, there are a number of studies that have been conducted cross-linguistically. Partington (1998) demonstrated that the English word *impressive* and its Italian equivalent, which is *impressionante* don't have the same semantic prosody. Berber Sardinha (2000) studied English and Portuguese semantic prosodies, while Tognini-Bonelli (2001) did the same for English and Italian, demonstrating that semantic prosody of near synonyms was unpredictable across languages. Xiao and McEnery (2006) also compared the semantic prosody of near-synonyms between English and Chinese, concluding that collocational behavior and semantic prosodies of near-synonyms are fairly similar in the two languages.

There are also a number of studies conducting on the concept of semantic prosody that have been carried out in Iran. Hosseini-Maasoum (2012, 2016) compared semantic prosody between English and Persian and proposed the expression "*/tannin-e-manaiii/* طنین معنایی"as an appropriate equivalent for the "semantic prosody" to prevent confusion between this field and phonetics. Ahmadian, Yazdani, and Darabi (2011) introduced a corpus-driven measure as a method to assess EFL learners' knowledge of semantic prosody. Hashemnia, Hosseini-Maasoum, and Yousefi (2013) studied the semantic prosody of the equivalents of *cause, bring about, result, outcome, consequence and aftermath* from translation studies approach, comparing the semantic prosody of near-synonyms between English and Persian which were along with Xiao and McEnrey (2006), besides finding out that near-synonyms in English and their Persian equivalents are normally not interchangeable in both languages as they show different semantic prosodies. Mansoory, and Jafarpour (2014) examined the teaching of the English verbs' semantic prosody through the data-driven learning approach and its effect on learners' vocabulary choice appropriateness in a Persian EFL context. Biook, and Ahangaran (2015) investigated the influence of genre over the semantic prosody of the word '*Propose*'. However, none of the aforementioned studies have practically investigated how being aware of the semantic prosody of words would impact on selecting the appropriate equivalents by the translators in translation.

Therefore, the present study attempts to bridge the gap and supplement the existing studies of semantic prosody by investigating the impact of SP knowledge on selecting the appropriate equivalents in translation. In this regard the following research questions are proposed:

1.To what extent does the Iranian translator trainees' semantic prosody knowledge have an impact on the appropriate selection of equivalents in translation?
2.Does the participants' proficiency level influence choosing appropriate equivalents with respect to semantic prosody?
3.Does the participants' fields of study influence choosing appropriate equivalents with respect to semantic prosody?

Methodology

Participants

The subjects participating in this study include twenty senior undergraduate translator trainees as well as twenty MA students majoring Translation Studies and Teaching English as a Foreign Language. The participants in both BA and MA levels were all students of Islamic Azad University of Quchan. The participants averaged about 22-35 years of age, and they were both males and females, however, age and gender were not considered as moderator variables in this study.

The reason for choosing participants with different academic levels is to investigate whether their proficiency can have an influence on choosing appropriate equivalents by them. Besides, the reason for dividing MA students into two fields of study is to investigate whether their different fields of study can have an influence on choosing appropriate equivalents by them.

Instrument

A 56-item translation test having the multiple-choice format including a number of near-synonym pairs with different SPs designed to address the translation from Persian into English. The constructed test was given to the experts in the field, requesting them to analyze each test's item on the basis of its perceptual complexity and construct validity. After that, the test was piloted. To this end, the test was administered to a selected group of 25 MA students in Translation Studies at Islamic Azad University of Quchan. The pilot test included two item types; one for addressing Persian into English translation and the other vice versa. However, based on the results obtained from the pilot test, the items that addressed English into Persian translation were found inappropriate and thus removed from the test. The constructed test was given to the experts in the field, requesting them to analyze each test's item on the basis of its perceptual complexity and construct validity.

Corpus

The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) which is the largest freely-available corpus of English, and the only large and balanced corpus of American English was chosen as the corpus. COCA is probably the most widely-used corpus of English, and it is related to many other corpora of English. The corpus contains more than 520 million words of text (20 million words each year 1990-2015) and it is equally divided among spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic texts. Its size and accessibility make it suitable for convenient search for surrounding words (collocates) which often gives good insight into the meaning and use of a word as well as its semantic prosody.

Procedure
Item Selection

The target words used in this study for the intended test were acquired through two different ways. Some pairs of near-synonyms (for example, *Cause/Bring about,*

Consequence/Outcome) as well as a number of single words (*set in, rife, affect*) were borrowed. The SP behavior (positive, negative or neutral) of these words have been determined by different researchers such as Sinclair (1991); Louw (1993); Stubbs (1995); Tognini-Bonelli (2001); Partington (2004); McEnery and Xiao (2006).In addition to above mentioned words, there were some more pairs of near-synonyms as well as a number of single words among target words that their SPs were investigated and determined in the present study. To this end, the following four steps have been observed:

1.In the first step, some pairs of near-synonym words were looked up in The Oxford Thesaurus: An A-Z Dictionary of Synonyms. The looked up words must bear the same English and Persian denotations.

2.In the next step, to make sure that the words of each near-synonyms pair share the same denotational meaning, both their English and Persian meanings were looked up in Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, and English to Persian online Dictionaries.

3.After choosing the words (*government/regime; request/plead; leave/quit; begin; common; influence; determined; stimulate*), their SP behaviors were to determine. To this end, the positivity, negativity or neutrality of the words that mainly collocates with them were scrutinized in the COCA. Among one hundred collocates displayed in COCA for each target word, the twenty most frequent ones were picked up. However, the words which were repeated in the list with just different parts of speech (e.g. issue as a verb and issuer as a noun) or with different uses as singular or plural (e.g. agency/agencies) were considered the same. There were some abbreviations and their expanded forms (e.g. NPT/Nonproliferation) in the list, which assumed the same as well. Also, irrelevant cases such as dates (e.g. 1996) and Auxiliary verbs or Wh-questions (e.g. how) were omitted from the list. Table 1 shows top 20 collocates co-occurring with government and regime in COCA. The positive collocates are underlined, negative ones are made bold and neutral collocates are presented with no special font.

Table 1. *Top 20 collocates co-occurring with government and regime in COCA*

Government	occurring times	Regime	occurring times
FEDERAL	16902	NONPROLIFERATION	104
AGENCIES	2857	ANCIEN	102
SPENDING	2106	**CEAUSESCU**	42
BIG	1758	**STALINIST**	29
INDUSTRY	1038	**POL POT**	28
HEALTH	975	HASHEMITE	27
FUNDING	952	ISSUERS	27
SHUTDOWN	840	**CONTAINMENT**	25
EMPLOYEES	825	**DISTURBANCE**	25
TAXES	700	**SOMOZA**	22
BUILDINGS	563	SEABED	19
COUNTY	544	**DUVALIER**	18
COMMITTEE	501	POWER	18
BRANCHES	476	QUANTUM	18
OFFICES	454	CIVIL-MILITARY	17
DEBT	449	**CHUN**	16
BONDS	410	**DISCREDITED**	16
BOSNIAN	333	**KAGAME**	15

$ (dollar)	<u>321</u>	**BABANGIDA**	14	
LAWYERS	<u>313</u>	**SALIH**	14	

4.Following Stubbs' (1995) classification of SP and focusing on the collocation of the node word, their SP was classified into positive, negative or neutral.

Test Construction

After selecting the target words, a 56-item translation test having multiple-choice format was designed to address the translation from Persian into English. The test included those pairs of near-synonyms which have the same denotations but different SPs. For further clarification an example is provided.

Example

Words having SP: a) utter   b) sheer   c) both

This is a story about the ………….. destruction of a family because of their political beliefs.

ین دلتان نابو   <u>مطلق</u> یک خانواده به‌خاطر عقاید سیاسی‌شان است .

As it is seen in the above example, one of the alternatives provided in the items is "Both". This alternative was used to minimize the effect of guessing. Such an alternative will improve test discrimination and its reliability.

Finally, once all the items were constructed, they were checked by the experts in the field. They were requested to analyze each item on the basis of its perceptual complexity and construct validity. After that, the test was piloted.

Data Collection and Data Analysis Procedure

In the test, the items related to every pair of near-synonyms were organized in a separated item-group from A to N, thus the data gathered through administrating the constructed test were summarized in separate tables for every item group (from A to N) as shown in the following table.

Table 2. *Equivalents chosen by the participants in items group A*

1	a (false)	b (true)	c (false)	Total	
				True	False
BA	11	7	2	7	13
MA (TS)	3	6	1	6	4
MA (TEFL)	6	4	-	4	6
2	a (true)	b (false)	c (false)	True	False
BA	3	14	3	3	17
MA (TS)	4	4	2	4	6
MA (TEFL)	2	8	-	2	8
3	a (true)	b (false)	c (false)	True	False
BA	11	1	8	11	9
MA (TS)	5	3	2	5	5
MA (TEFL)	7	2	1	7	3
4	a (false)	b (true)	c (false)	True	False
BA	9	9	2	9	11
MA (TS)	2	6	2	6	4
MA (TEFL)	5	3	2	3	7

Table 2 shows to what extent the participants chose equivalents based on denotational meanings of target words without considering the semantic sense (i.e. negativity, positivity or neutrality) of their collocates. It also presents the data to find out to what extent the participants considered the target words' collocates while choosing equivalents. Besides, the results provide data to determine the different word choice relating to SP with respect to the participants' proficiency as well as their field of study.

Then, the general findings were tabulated to address the components of the models. Therefore, based on Sinclair's (1996) hypothesis of SP as well as Stubbs' (1995) model of SP classification, general findings was tabulated into three groups: Data on target words with positive SPs; Data on target words with negative SPs; Data on target words with neutral SPs. Also, such data were also tabulated considering participants' proficiency and fields of study to compare their performances. At last, the overall performance of the participants on the whole test was tabulated, once in general and once more by considering their proficiency as well as their fields of study to provide sufficient evidence to achieve the aims of the study.

After classifying the data, the gathered data were analyzed based on Sinclair's (1996) hypothesis of SP as well as Stubbs' (1995) model of SP classification. To choose appropriate equivalents for the target words in the test, the participants must consider each target word in relation to its collocates in the sentence, rather than considering just its denotational meaning.

Accordingly, in case of those test items where the target words (i.e. nodes) collocate with positive words, participants were expected to choose the equivalents with positive SPs in order to convey the positive sense of the whole sentence. In case of the test items in which the target words collocate with negative words, participants were expected to choose the equivalents with negative SPs. In case of the test items where the target words collocate with neutral words, the participants were expected to choose the equivalents that bear neutral SPs in order to convey the neutral sense of the whole sentence. In every item, if they chose another equivalent with different SP, this demonstrated that they chose the equivalent just based on denotational meaning of the target word without considering the semantic sense of its collocate. Hence, their choice could not convey the semantic sense of the ST; instead their choice imposed an opposite sense to the sentence.

Finally, in all cases, if the participants chose the third alternative that considers both presented equivalents as appropriate choices, they failed to convey the right message of the ST; because this alternative was the wrong answer in all items, and therefore such a choice could not convey the right sense of the ST.

Results

Target Words with Positive SPs

The performance of the whole participants, regardless of their proficiency level and their fields of study, in the items where the target words collocate with positive words is presented in Table 3. (As mentioned before, in the test, the items related to every pair of near-synonyms were organized in a separated item-group from A to N, and every group included four items; therefore, for example, A1 in the following tables refers to the first item of the item-group A).

Table 3. *Equivalents chosen by whole participants in the items where the target words collocate with positive words*

Items/ Responses	A1	A4	B3	B4	E2	E4	G2	G4	Total
True	17	18	20	19	17	22	24	18	49.1

	42%	45%	50%	47%	42%	55%	60%	45%	%
False	23	22	20	21	23	18	16	22	49.7
	57%	55%	50%	52%	57%	45%	40%	55%	%

Table 3 shows that the percent of choosing appropriate equivalents (49.1%) by the whole participants was very close to the percent of choosing inappropriate equivalents (49.7%) by them in such cases. In other words, half of the whole participants had appropriate choices and the other half made inappropriate choices. To compare the performance of BA and MA students with different proficiency levels along with their fields of study in these items, the appropriate equivalent choices by them is tabulated in the following table:

Table 4. *Appropriate equivalent choice in terms of participants' proficiency and their fields of study in the items where the target words collocate with positive words*

	Appropriate choice			
Items	20 BA	20 MA	10 TS	10TEFL
A1	7 (35%)	10 (50%)	6 (60%)	4 (40%)
A4	9 (45%)	9 (45%)	6 (60%)	3 (30%)
B3	9 (45%)	11 (55%)	8 (80%)	3 (30%)
B4	8 (40%)	11 (55%)	8 (80%)	3 (30%)
E2	7 (35%)	10 (50%)	4 (40%)	6 (60%)
E4	9 (45%)	13 (65%)	7 (70%)	6 (60%)
G2	11 (55%)	13 (65%)	7 (70%)	6 (60%)
G4	8 (40%)	14 (70%)	8 (80%)	6 (60%)
Total Percent	42.07%	56.27%	66.02%	43.97%

As shown in Table 4 the overall performance of BA students (42.07%) on choosing appropriate equivalents was weaker than MA students (56.27%). Considering participants' fields of study among MA students, the performance of TEFL students in choosing appropriate equivalents (43.97%) was weaker than TS students (66.02%).

Target Words with Negative SPs
In cases of near-synonyms with positive/negative SPs, the participants may choose equivalents in the items where the target words collocate with negative words. The chosen pairs by the whole participants, regardless of their proficiency level and their fields of study, are provided in Table 5. Meanwhile, appropriate equivalent choice in terms of participants' proficiency and their fields of study in the near-synonym pairs bearing negative and positive SPs is tabulated in Table 6.

Table 5. *Equivalents chosen by whole participants in the near-synonym pairs bearing negative and positive SPs*

Items/ Responses	A2	A3	B1	B2	E1	E3	G1	G3	Total
True	9 (22%)	23 (57%)	35 (87%)	17 (85%)	34 (85%)	25 (62%)	27 (67%)	22 (55%)	55.4%
False	31	17	5	23	6	15	13	18	33.

| (77%) | (42%) | (12%) | (57%) | (15%) | (37%) | (32%) | (45%) | 9% |

Table 5 displays that almost two-thirds of the whole participants had appropriate choices (55.4% vs. 33.9%) in the mentioned cases.

Table 6. *Appropriate equivalent choice in terms of participants' proficiency and their fields of study in the near-synonym pairs bearing negative and positive SPs*

| Items | Appropriate choice | | | |
	20 BA	20 MA	10 TS	10TEFL
A2	3 (15%)	6 (30%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)
A3	11(55%)	12 (60%)	5 (50%)	7 (70%)
B1	16 (80%)	19 (95%)	10 (100%)	9 (90%)
B2	8 (40%)	9 (45%)	5 (50%)	4 (40%)
E1	18 (90%)	16 (80%)	8 (80%)	8 (80%)
E3	11 (55%)	14 (70%)	9 (90%)	5 (50%)
G1	11 (55%)	16 (80%)	10 (100%)	6 (60%)
G3	8 (40%)	14 (70%)	8 (80%)	6 (60%)
Total Percent	48.1%	62.78%	69.9%	54.02%

Table 6 reveals that the overall performance of BA students (48.1%) was weaker than MA students (62.78%). Considering the participants' fields of study among MA students, Table 6 provides data on appropriate equivalent choice relating to SP with respect to the participants' fields of study. Based on Table 6, TS students (69.9%) had better performance than TEFL students (54.02%) in choosing appropriate equivalents.

In cases of near-synonyms with neutral/negative SPs, the participants may choose equivalents in terms of bearing negative and neutral SPs. The results of the whole participants' performance, regardless of their proficiency or fields of study, as well as their appropriate equivalent choice in terms of proficiency and fields of study in such cases are all shown in Table 7.

Table 7. *Equivalents chosen by the whole participants, as well as appropriate equivalent choice in terms of participants' proficiency and their fields of study in the items where the target words collocate with negative and neutral words*

| Total Participants | | | Appropriate Choice regarding Proficiency | | Appropriate Choice regarding Fields of Study | |
Items	True Answers	False Answers	20 BA	20 MA	TS	TEFL
C1	26 (65%)	14 (35%)	12 (60%)	14 (70%)	8 (80%)	6 (60%)
C2	22 (55%)	18 (45%)	9 (45%)	13 (65%)	8 (80%)	5 (50%)
D2	16 (40%)	24 (60%)	8 (40%)	8 (40%)	5 (50%)	3 (30%)
D3	28 (70%)	12 (30%)	13 (65%)	15 (75%)	9 (90%)	6 (60%)
F2	25 (62%)	12 (30%)	13 (65%)	15 (75%)	10 (100%)	5 (50%)
F4	15 (37%)	25 (62%)	2 (10%)	13 (65%)	10 (100%)	3 (30%)
H2	26 (65%)	14 (35%)	9 (45%)	17 (85%)	9 (90%)	8 (80%)

H3	21 (52%)	19 (47%)	9 (45%)	12 (60%)	7 (70%)	5 (50%)
I2	27 (67%)	13 (32%)	10 (50%)	17 (85%)	8 (80%)	9 (90%)
I3	25 (62%)	14 (35%)	11 (55%)	14 (70%)	7 (70%)	7 (70%)
J1	13 (32%)	27 (67%)	6 (30%)	7 (35%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)
J4	11 (27%)	29 (72%)	5 (25%)	6 (30%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)
K2	17 (42%)	23 (57%)	8 (40%)	9 (45%)	7 (70%)	2 (20%)
K4	18 (45%)	22 (52%)	6 (30%)	12 (60%)	7 (70%)	5 (50%)
L2	26 (65%)	14 (35%)	11 (55%)	15 (75%)	8 (80%)	7 (70%)
L4	20 (50%)	20 (50%)	8 (40%)	12 (60%)	5 (50%)	7 (70%)
M1	23 (57%)	17 (42%)	10 (50%)	13 (65%)	7 (70%)	6 (60%)
M4	26 (65%)	14 (35%)	12 (60%)	14 (70%)	9 (90%)	5 (50%)
N1	23 (57%)	17 (42%)	13 (65%)	10 (50%)	8 (80%)	2 (20%)
N3	25 (62%)	15 (37%)	9 (45%)	16 (80%)	9 (90%)	7 (70%)
Total percent	52.1%	43.3%	42.8%	60.75%	72.1%	46.7%

As shown in Table 7, data on target words with neutral/negative SPs reveal that more than the half of the whole participants (52.1% vs. 43.3%) had appropriate choices. Also, Table 7 shows, considering participants' proficiency, the overall performance of MA students (60.75%) were better than BA students (42.8%). Regarding participants' fields of study among MA students, Table 7 reveals that TS students (72.1%) obtained much better results than TEFL students (46.7%).

Target Words with Neutral SPs

In cases of near-synonyms with neutral SPs, the participants may choose equivalents in the items where the target words collocate with neutral words. The chosen pairs by the whole participants, regardless of their proficiency or field of study, as well as their appropriate equivalent choice in terms of proficiency and fields of study in such cases are all provided in Table 8.

Table 8. *Equivalents chosen by the whole participants, as well as appropriate equivalent choice in terms of participants' proficiency and their fields of study in the items where the target words collocate with neutral words*

	Total Participants		Appropriate Choice regarding Proficiency		Appropriate Choice regarding Fields of Study	
Items	True answers	False answers	20 BA	20 MA	TS	TEFL
C3	31 (77%)	9 (22%)	12 (60%)	19 (95%)	10 (100%)	9 (90%)
C4	28 (70%)	12 (30%)	13 (65%)	15 (75%)	9 (90%)	6 (60%)
D1	24 (60%)	16 (40%)	11 (55%)	13 (65%)	7 (70%)	6 (60%)
D4	20 (50%)	20 (50%)	7 (35%)	13 (65%)	7 (70%)	6 (60%)
F1	34 (85%)	6 (15%)	16 (80%)	18 (90%)	10 (100%)	8 (80%)
F3	21 (52%)	19 (47%)	8 (49%)	13 (65%)	9 (90%)	4 (40%)
H1	25 (62%)	15 (37%)	9 (45%)	16 (80%)	10 (100%)	6 (60%)
H4	19 (47%)	21 (52%)	8 (40%)	11 (55%)	9 (90%)	2 (20%)

I1	14 (35%)	26 (65%)	6 (30%)	8 (40%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)
I4	17 (42%)	23 (57%)	8 (40%)	9 (45%)	4 (40%)	5 (50%)
J2	16 (40%)	24 (60%)	7 (35%)	9 (45%)	6 (60%)	3 (30%)
J3	19 (47%)	21 (52%)	7 (35%)	12 (60%)	8 (80%)	4 (40%)
K1	35 (87%)	5 (12%)	18 (90%)	17 (85%)	10 (100%)	7 (70%)
K3	17 (42%)	23 (57%)	6 (30%)	11 (55%)	6 (60%)	5 (50%)
L1	21 (52%)	19 (47%)	13 (65%)	8 (40%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)
L3	15 (37%)	25 (62%)	8 (40%)	7 (35%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)
M2	26 (65%)	14 (35%)	13 (65%)	13 (65%)	8 (80%)	5 (50%)
M3	27 (67%)	13 (32%)	11 (55%)	16 (80%)	9 (90%)	7 (70%)
N2	31 (77%)	9 (22%)	14 (70%)	17 (85%)	10 (100%)	7 (70%)
N4	25 (62%)	15 (37%)	12 (60%)	13 (65%)	10 (100%)	3 (30%)
Total Percent	55.7%	37.9%	49.1%	62.01%	70.7%	49.2%

Table 8 reveals that almost two-thirds of the whole participants (55.7% vs. 37.9%) had appropriate choices in the mentioned cases. To compare the performance of BA and MA participants regarding their proficiency, the results show that in such cases BA students (49.1%) had weaker performance than MA students (62.01%). Considering participants' fields of study, TS students (70.7%) obtained much better results than TEFL students (49.2%).

Overall Performance of the Participants on the Whole Test

To summarize the final results, the overall performance of the participants on the whole test, considering their proficiency as well as their fields of study is presented in the following table.

Table 9. *Overall performance of the participants, regarding their proficiency as well as their fields of study on the whole test*

Total Answers in 56 Items		Appropriate Choices regarding Proficiency		Appropriate Choices regarding Fields of Study	
True	False	BA students	MA students	TEFL students	TS students
53%	40.7%	45.4%	60.3%	47.3%	69.6%

As shown in Table 9, data on overall performance of the participants, regardless of their proficiency as well as their fields of study revealed that a bit more than the half of the whole participants (53%) considered the semantic senses of the target words' collocates while choosing equivalents. Considering participants' proficiency level, 45.4% of BA students made appropriate choices while this figure was 60.3% for MA students. This indicated that the overall performance of BA students was weaker than MA students. Finally, appropriate equivalent choice by the participants in the whole test, regarding their fields of study, the results revealed that 47.3% of TEFL students made appropriate choices while this figure was 69.6% for TS students. This indicated that the overall performance of TEFL students was much weaker than TS students.

Discussion

The objectives of this study were to investigate the effect of Iranian translator trainees' semantic prosody knowledge on the appropriate selection of equivalents in translation. The

probable influence of proficiency level and fields of study on the appropriate selection of equivalents with respect to SP was concentrated as well. The results of data analysis for the target words with positive SPs revealed that the percent of choosing appropriate equivalents by the whole participants is very close to the percent of choosing inappropriate equivalents by them in such cases. Therefore, the overall performance of the participants on choosing appropriate equivalents with respect to SP in such cases was fairly desirable. Also, data on the participants' performance, considering their proficiency in this group showed that the overall performance of BA students was weaker than MA students, and therefore the higher proficiency level of MA students did influence selecting appropriate equivalent with respect to SP. Moreover, data on the participants' performance, regarding their fields of study in this group displayed the overall performance of TEFL students was weaker than TS students; as a result, different fields of study among MA students influenced on appropriate selection of equivalent with respect to SP.

Data on target words with positive/negative SPs displayed that almost two-thirds of the whole participants had appropriate choices in the mentioned cases, and as a result, the overall performance of the participants on choosing appropriate equivalents with respect to SP in this group was, to a great extent, desirable. Besides, regarding participants' proficiency, the results revealed that the overall performance of BA students was weaker than MA students. Also, TS students had better performance than TEFL students in choosing appropriate equivalents. Therefore, in such cases the influence of MA students' higher proficiency level as well as different fields of study among MA students on appropriate selection of equivalent with respect to SP is obvious.

Data on target words with neutral/negative SPs showed that more than the half of the whole participants had appropriate choices. Therefore, the overall performance of the participants on choosing appropriate equivalents with respect to SP in such cases was fairly desirable, as well. Considering participants' proficiency, the overall performance of MA students was better than BA students. Also, regarding participants' fields of study among MA students, TS students obtained much better results than TEFL students. Consequently, in these cases, the influence of MA students' higher proficiency level as well as different fields of study among MA students on the appropriate selection of equivalent with respect to SP is obvious, as well.

Data on target words with neutral SPs revealed that almost two-thirds of the whole participants had appropriate choices in the mentioned cases. Thus, the overall performance of the participants on choosing appropriate equivalents with respect to SP in this group was, to a great extent, desirable. Also, the results regarding participants' proficiency showed that in such cases BA students had weaker performance than MA students, and thus the higher proficiency level of MA students did influence selecting appropriate equivalent with respect to SP. Moreover, TS students obtained much better results than TEFL students, and therefore different fields of study among MA students influenced on appropriate selection of equivalent with respect to SP.

At last, the overall performance of the participants on the whole test, regardless of their proficiency as well as their fields of study revealed that a bit more than the half of the participants made appropriate choices, and this indicates that the overall performance of the participants on the whole test was fairly average. Besides, the results of appropriate equivalent choice by the whole participants, considering their proficiency level showed that the overall performance of MA students was better than that of BA students. Thus, the higher proficiency of MA students influenced choosing appropriate equivalents by them. Finally, appropriate equivalent choice by the participants, regarding their fields of study indicated that the performance of TS students is much better than that of TEFL students, and as a result, different fields of study among MA students had an influence on choosing appropriate equivalents relating to SP.

Conclusion

The findings of the present study showed that the translator trainees' knowledge of SP and their understanding of the relation between words' SP behaviors and the collocates semantic senses in the context was almost average. However, this extent may not be enough; because, as SP has a great impact on the appropriate selection of equivalents in translation and thus on conveying the right message from ST to TT, translator trainees need to be more sensitized to the SP behaviors of words, for this issue may not be accessible through introspection and also has not been a part of dictionary information. When a source word bearing no certain semantic sense has more than two equivalents with different SPs in the target language, if the translators don't have enough knowledge of SP, they may not realize the difference between two languages just by relying on denotations and thus, they may use some equivalents in the place of one another. So, it can be concluded that being aware of the conditions of semantic prosody is necessary to select the appropriate, accurate equivalents and thus to convey the exact message from a source text to the target one.

Furthermore, analyzing the performance of the participants with respect to their proficiency revealed that BA students' knowledge of SP and their understanding of the relation between words' SP behaviors and semantic senses of the collocates in the context seems to be less than MA students. Therefore, in comparison to MA students, BA students could not transfer the semantic prosody of the source language words by their translation equivalents desirably. Thus, one can conclude that the higher proficiency level of MA students may influence selecting appropriate equivalent with respect to SP.

Finally, the analysis of the performance of the participants with respect to their fields of study indicated that the overall performance of TEFL students was much weaker than TS students, and thus TEFL students' knowledge of SP seems to be, to a great extent, less than TS students. In other words, TEFL students got a fail in understanding semantic prosody of words and the relation between words' SP behaviors and the semantic senses of their collocates in the context; therefore, they could not transfer the semantic prosody of the source language words by their translation equivalents. Hence, it can be concluded that in spite of equal proficiency level among MA students, their different fields of study plays a role on selecting appropriate equivalent with respect to SP.

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