



## **Pedagogical Remedies to Improve Translation Teaching at Iranian Universities**

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### **Abstract**

The main priority for translation educators is to improve the quality and outcomes of translation courses at the university level. The process of planning and implementing the teaching process and the design of teaching materials are the translation teachers' two major concerns among many. This research presents Iranian translation educators' views on the possibilities for improving the conditions in the English language departments of Iranian universities. The goal was achieved through conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews with some of the experienced faculty members of the Iranian universities involved in translation teaching, whose suggested guidelines and perspectives were extracted and synthesized. The discussions centered around applying the constructivist approach to teaching translation, which the interviewees believed could provide opportunities for students to play an active role in their own learning by integrating and activating corresponding knowledge, skills, and attributes specifically in the form of group work or collaborative learning in translation classes. Furthermore, local policies, based on needs assessment, implemented by each department were considered to be highly efficient to face translation teaching and learning problems.

**Keywords:** Collaborative learning; Constructivist approach; Pedagogical remedies; Teaching translation

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Teaching translation as a sub-branch of applied translation studies is an exciting and pleasant challenge facing teachers specifically in the university settings. The excitement and pleasure derive from the trainer's efforts to satisfy the trainees' passion for understanding and observe the trainees' gradual translation competence development.

.....The process of planning and implementing the teaching process and the design of teaching materials are the translation teachers' two major concerns among many. Accordingly, creative approaches to teaching translation and training translators pave the way for trainers to train the students so effectively that they can act as capable translators meeting market demands.

The decision to work on this topic was based on observing the translation students' poor per-

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formance in translation classes at Shiraz Islamic Azad University and looking for some strategies to provide the students with a kind of systematic instruction so that they can first recognize their own *Achilles heel* and then take their steps in a proper way to develop specific skills required for the task. Thus, due to the fact that the traditional pattern of teaching in translation classes, where the teacher as the center of knowledge lectures on the platform while the students are just listening on their seats, leads to the students' passive state of learning process, the researcher tried to look at the present situation of translation teaching at the Iranian universities through the eyes of the highly-experienced specialists in the field of translation teaching and gather their practical and valuable recommendations on what can be done to have more effective translation classes at the Iranian universities to help the prospective translators develop their professional qualifications. As the similar key concerns are reflected in different studies throughout the world, what follows is the studies related to the targets of the present research.

### Translation Training Across the World

Translation teaching is "as complex, divided and sophisticated an activity as much translation itself" (Newmark, 1991, p. 139). The features necessary for translation teachers, as Newmark believes, are (a) sensitivity to written and spoken language; (b) a wide knowledge of one's own language and culture including an extensive vocabulary and the basic institutional and geographic facts as well as the metalanguage derived from grounding in linguistics to describe linguistic terms; (c) a good knowledge of the topic(s), and (d) knowledge of two or three foreign languages and cultures (p.130). Focusing on the role of the teachers as a crucial one, as a result, Newmark points out that "the success of any translation course must depend 65% on the personality of the teacher, 20% on the course design and 15% on the course materials" (p. 130).

In line with Newmark, Venuti (2017, p.4) explains about the undergraduate programs in trans-

lation in some of the American universities believing that "although the creation of translation courses and programs should be welcomed as a sign of progress, there has been a tendency to staff them with instructors, including senior faculty, who neither translate nor conduct research in translation." This tendency, according to Venuti, counters to the "most hallowed principle defining the identity of the scholar-teacher" who not only should be conversant with the trends and methods of a field but also conduct research and participate in its debates in order to be capable of teaching in that field.

Teaching translation is described by Pym (1992, p. 5) as "the transfer of translational competence from teacher to student." This competence, according to Pym, is formed by the union of two skills: (1) the ability to generate a target text series of more than one viable term for a source text and (2) the ability to select confidently only one TT from this series to replace ST for a specified purpose and reader.

Following a process-oriented translation pedagogy method, Kussmaul (1995) suggested some guidelines to translation teachers. He believes that the teachers should implement pragmatic analysis in their teaching to eradicate the misconception students have about the translation activity as a mere replacement of SL words by TL words.

Similarly, Kiraly (1995) criticizes translation courses stating that such courses "are usually not based on a coherent set of pedagogical principles derived from knowledge about the aims of translation instruction, the nature of translation competence, and an understanding of the effects of classroom instruction on students' translating proficiency" (p.5). To fill this gap, accordingly, he develops a model of translation processes based on a two-dimensional cognitive and social approach to translation activity focusing on the point that "translation students should be active participants in their training, especially at the university" (p.9). In his later work, Kiraly (2000, p.17) suggests that "translator education be seen as a dynamic, interactive process based on learn-

er empowerment," so that the teacher can act as a guide and consultant who provides the students with the opportunity to experience "real or at least simulated translation activities in all their complexity."

Likewise, (Davies, 2005), Schaffner (2001), and O'Haga and Ashworth (2002) believe in changes leading to a development from more traditional view of translation as reproduction of a text to more dynamic approaches which focus on the functions of texts in communicative settings.

Gerding Salas (2000) suggests the methodology "collaborative learning" (CL) to teach translation believing that it enhances students' motivation, productivity, and the quality of their work. The method involves small groups of students working together to maximize their own and each other's learning.

Based on the findings of an empirical study, Li (2002) suggested that the Chinese translation students be provided with more practical courses to be able to face the market challenges. Strengthening language training including both L1 and L2 before or during translation training also was among suggested solutions to improve the program.

### Translation Training in Iran

The current situation of translation teaching at the undergraduate level in Iranian universities has been discussed by many. The following are some representative views of those who are involved in teaching translation in the Iranian context.

According to Payande (2015), translation training in Iranian universities suffers from tangible drawbacks such as the lack of specialized university instructors of translation with sufficient experience in the field of teaching translation. Not having even translated a text, most of these instructors act, in the words of Payande, as "the ones who try to teach people how to cook without any culinary experience." Moreover, the current translation training programs have been purely theoretical, while the objective of academic training is to educate the students who, while possessing theoretical knowledge, can professionally meet the current market demands.

Similarly, Khazaeefar and Khoshsaligheh (2010) criticize the current translation programs believing that such programs do not reflect the market needs very well. Weak planning in the pre-university educational system can be considered as one of the most important reasons why translation training has failed in the Iranian universities.

Criticizing the synchronization of language teaching and translation at the Iranian universities, Mirza Abraham Tehrani (2003), also, argues that the universities should admit the students proficient in the second language to major in translation.

Based on the findings of a study conducted at Ferdowsi in Mashhad and Sheikh Bahaei University of Isfahan, Ghazizadeh and Jamalimanesh (2010) concluded that the most common technique to teach various translation courses is the *traditional product- and teacher-centered approach*. This traditional approach fails to make clear how students learn about translation and leaves the students' problems unsolved.

In a study conducted by Kafi, Khoshsaligheh, and Hashemi (2017), discussing the current challenges to establishing a professional status for translators in Iran, the researchers offered some solutions to improve the status quo based on the suggestions of experts in the field. To increase the practicality of the current translation syllabus at BA level in Iran, including some courses such as machine translation, time and project management, marketing and communication in the curriculum was suggested by the active Iranian agents in the translation market.

Based on the results of a study conducted in Tarbiat Modaress University in Tehran Tajbakhsh, Letafati, and Jalilimarand (2017 p. 171) suggested improving the current translation teaching methods by using authentic materials to introduce the requirements of the professional world of translation to students, focusing on team work to increase motivation and independence, and revising the curriculum and the admission system.

Reviewing the relevant literature indicates

that focusing on the weaknesses of the current translator training programs at Iranian universities; most of the researchers have discussed challenges facing translator trainers and criticized the traditional model of teaching in the Iranian context. However, there seems to be lack of professional practical guidelines created for instructors by experienced instructors to improve their practices so that they can drive positive academic outcomes in translation classes. Accordingly, the present research has attempted to explore the views of the faculty members of different Iranian universities involved and experienced in teaching translation to answer the following questions:

**Research Question One:** What are the sources of the Iranian English majors' problems hindering appropriate translation from English into Persian?

**Research Question Two:** How is it possible to help the students to overcome difficulties through teaching methods and materials?

## METHODS

### Design and Context of the Study

In attempt to investigate the views and the experiences of the educators engaged in teaching translation to the Iranian university students to offer a set of guidelines to improve learning and teaching activities in translation classes, the researcher conducted qualitative research carrying out open-ended semi-structured in-depth interviews in the form of face-to-face **interviews** with ten academic colleagues from different universities. The interviews were conducted at Shiraz University, Shiraz Islamic Azad University, and Allame Tabataba'i University.

### Participants

The participants of the study were ten faculty members of four Iranian universities, English departments, all with considerable practical experience of teaching translation. The respondents included one faculty member of Shiraz University, six of Shiraz Islamic Azad University, one faculty member of Khatam University and lecturer at Allame Tabataba'i University, one faculty

member from Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, and one faculty member from Jahrom state university.

Criterion-based purposive sampling was conducted to select the participants in the study. Having at least five years' experience in teaching translation and active participation in research such as publication of books or articles on translation or translating books were the criteria to be met for the participants in the interview.

Since the proposed number of interviewees, as stated by Dornyei (2007), is six to ten to make the initial plan about the sample size to schedule the investigation, ten participants proved enough due to data saturation and the fact that they provided a good enough representative insight into their experience or perspective as well as helpful hints to help English majors to improve their translation competence.

### Instrument

The research tool was informal open-ended semi-structured in-depth interviews, a seemingly appropriate method for data collection as it could provide flexibility for the research participants to elaborate on the points of each question, thereby driving the conversation even deeper (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010, p. 438).

The interview guide contained twelve questions primarily designed based on the questions and topics discussed at an on-line symposium on translator training organized by the Intercultural Studies Group at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili in Spain (Pym, 2000). All the questions covered three main topics: The reasons for the English majors' poor performance in translation, the quality of the present curriculum for undergraduate translation programs in the Iranian universities, and discussing and suggesting teaching methods in translation classes in the Iranian context

### Data Collection Procedure

The face-to-face interview with each of the participants lasted for almost one hour or more; the interviews were audio-recorded on-site and were later transcribed for further analysis.

An invitation mail, explaining who the researcher was, what the research was about, the type of information the researcher hoped to gather, and the reason why they were a good source for the research, was sent to the participants to get their approval prior to the interview.

### Data Analysis Procedure

In order to analyze the responses, the answers to each question were read carefully to find any commonalities across responses; in other words, the attention was focused on thematic units or the answers with similar topics scattered about the interviews. This is a method of analyzing the interviews as suggested by Meuser and Nagel (2009,p.35). The final step was condensing the commonly shared knowledge of experts and categorizing them under three topics covered by the interview questions. Studies in the literature supplemented these interviews to elaborate on themes emerging from the interviews.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The conversation started with a brief description of the research, informing the participants about the challenges in teaching translation at Shiraz Islamic Azad University, which were confirmed by all of the participants as they had similar experience in their own translation classes. The participants' responses to interview questions reflected their point of view regarding translation problems faced by the Iranian university students as well as the problems of teaching translation in Iranian universities; however, they all agreed on the following points:

### Factors for the Students' Poor Performance in Translation

In response to the first research question regarding the factors leading to the students' poor performance, despite multiple reasons offered for the students' failure, the most significant ones can be systematically classified under three general categories as those relevant to the students, the translator trainers, and the translator education system. These reasons can be outlined as follows:

#### I. Students

- A. Unacceptable level of proficiency in both SL and TL
- B. Students' poor topical knowledge
- C. Inability to bridge the theory-practice gap
- D. Lack of motivation

#### II. Translator trainers

- A. Not properly trained in teaching translation
- B. Not experienced and involved in translation and translation-related research
- C. Limited focus on needs analysis

#### III. Translator education system

- A. A limited number of experienced course designers
- B. Inadequate introductory and basic courses to prepare students to meet future needs
- C. A limited number of specialized courses
- D. Lack of any clear policy to meet the new market demands
- E. Lack of updated textbooks
- F. Poorly-equipped, populated translation classes

Most of the students admitted to the Bachelor of Arts in Translation have low or unacceptable level of proficiency in both English and Persian. Moreover, in spite of technological developments, the students are not persistent to acquire general knowledge of the world including the target language culture which covers a wide range of subjects from geographical features to social and religious culture to be gained through interactions with the world. In other words, they lack what Bachman and Palmer (1996) call *topical knowledge* or knowledge schema, which plays a fundamental role in decoding the source texts, resulting from the fact that "many students have turned from the feel of papyrus between their fingers to the smooth metal of the newest Apple product" (Dollisso and Cochran, 2017). In spite of having access to a variety of books,

newspapers, magazines, internet and in general *information and communications technology* (ICT), few students appreciate such means of communication to better understand the global village they are living in.

The students' inability to bridge the theory-practice gap, also, is a factor affecting the students' academic performance. Most of the students do not have enough practice to apply the strategies they have been introduced to in introductory courses. This might be due to weaknesses in the current translation curriculum or the teachers' teaching methods as well.

Furthermore, lack of motivation mostly resulting from lack of job opportunities after graduation might explain why the students lose their willingness and interest for optimal performance.

However, to put the burden on the students as the only ones who are responsible for faulty translation is wrong. The teaching staff, also, play a central role in developing the students' translation competence. In line with Khazaeifar (2016) and Payande (2015), the interviewees believed that most of the university translator trainers are holders of postgraduate degrees in English literature, teaching and linguistics and, unfortunately, lack a systematic training in teaching translation providing them with effective instructional strategies; they are "left literally to sink or to swim in the classroom" (Kelly, 2016, p.102), driven by the myth that knowing two languages qualifies them to work in the field of translation. Accordingly, they usually act, more or less, as editors or proof-readers rather than facilitators guiding learning through classroom interactions.

Besides, teaching translation needs expert practitioners tackling translation problems themselves and conducting research, to try out new ideas in their classrooms. However, some or most of the Iranian instructors neither translate nor conduct research in translation which is in contrast to what Venuti (2017) believes to be the identity of the scholar-teachers as he states that "only instructors who are professionally current in a field, who are not only conversant with its trends and methods but conduct research in it and

participate in its debates, should be assigned to teach courses in that field" (p.4).

Above all, it seems that conducting needs assessment used to guide strategic and operational decisions is, most of the time, ignored by the instructors despite the fact that using different instruments such as short quizzes and pre-planned challenging assignments helps the instructors to identify wants and needs and detect the students' progress (Watkins, Meiers & Visser, 2012).

In addition to mentioning the above factors, the participants criticized the current undergraduate translation programs at Iranian universities believing that such programs do not link teaching translation and training translators; they are not updated and designed by professional course developers, resulting in presenting a wide range of courses, few of which prepare students to face the translation challenges and teach them how to integrate theory and practice in a meaningful and proper way to solve the problems. For instance, improving the students' knowledge of Persian grammar and literature, which contributes positively to their perfect performance, is ignored in the syllabus.

Similarly, Molanazar (2004) states that "translation" as a major is meant to be "translator training", but, looking at the master's degree in translation, we find that the field is, in fact, the same as "Translation Studies".

Furthermore, the limited number of specialized courses such as translating economic and legal texts does not provide the students with sufficient skills to meet the needs of national and international labor markets at present. For instance, working as interpreters in different settings such as business and political meetings requires skills which cannot be acquired through the current translation programs.

The books used in the universities to teach translation was, also, the target for criticism. The participants stated that there is no systematic classification and organization of materials in the Iranian textbooks used to teach translation students. Conducting a study evaluating the books, Omaraee (2016), likewise, focusing on the poor

design of instructional materials, believes that it is not clear who the addressees and what their needs are; besides, most of them are designed based on almost old theories, ignoring the most recent perspectives in the translator training field.

.....Finally, the large number of students admitted to bachelor's level makes it difficult for teachers to teach in poorly-equipped over-populated classrooms.

### **Computer-Assisted Translation Tools (CAT)**

Introducing and integrating technology into translation curriculum is highly recommended as the students do not know how to work with CAT tools that are proved to have increased quality in translation. To arrange CAT workshops in the English departments as a complement to translation courses can provide translation students with practical training on using technology to increase translation productivity. In fact, a software program called TM, Translation Memory, is the core of CAT tools which stores a translator's output and the original source text, in order that these pairs can later be reused if the translator is tasked with translating similar texts. Thus, it is important to prepare our students on how to deal with such technologies, before they go through today's competitive professional working environments as the knowledge of using technology in translation positively affects employability of translation students. Similarly, Kiraly (2000, p.13) argues that it is necessary to help students both develop "translation competence" and acquire "translator competence", which involves different skills including proficiency in new technologies.

### **Innovative vs Traditional Translation Teaching Methods**

According to all interviewees, the traditional teacher-centered approach to teaching translation is neither advisable nor practical. The conventional or the transmissionist model of translation teaching, has been highly criticized by different experts as being uncreative and out of date (Colina, 2003; Kiraly, 2000; Molanazar, 2004; Stew-

art, 2008) due to the fact that the learners passively absorb the passed on knowledge rather than actively participating in the learning process.

In response to the transmissionist view of translation teaching, accordingly, the new pedagogical models such as the social constructivist approach and project-based approach focusing on experiential, collaborative learning were proposed to enhance learning through rigorous, relevant and hands-on practice (Kiraly, 2000). It is really crucial to notice the importance of cultivating the students' initiative in the learning process and to pay special attention to developing the students' cognitive abilities to help them become more effective in the construction of new knowledge.

### **Teaching Activities**

Despite explaining about a variety of activities in translation classes, all the interview participants held similar views emphasizing students' active, collaborative and authentic learning, which is essentially rooted in social-constructivism adapted to translator training by Kiraly (2000).

A method shared by all participants seemed to be splitting students into small groups and asking them to translate a short text together. The group work, as the interviewees believed, allows the students to work toward a common goal by sharing information and solving the same problems. Students can learn a great deal from each other, and discussions allow for a deeper, more profound understanding of the content. The next step taken in the participants' translation classes, is analyzing the translated output. Comparing the texts translated by different groups together and discussing the weaknesses and strengths of their translation, the instructors create an atmosphere for the students to reflect critically on not only their classmates' practice but also their own performance. As a result, through the participants' answers to the fifth question, it is clear that all of them prefer to have facilitating, guiding, and scaffolding role in their translation classes rather than play the role of a dogmatic parent.

In answer to this question some distinctive

points introducing the method of teaching, also, is worthy of mentioning. The "Project-based approach" was considered by the participant from Allame Tabatabai' University to have particular value when it is used in combination with guiding principles of the "social constructivist" approach. Believing in the benefits of incorporating the project-based approach into classroom practice, she explained about assigning the real projects in the market to her own students, encouraging them to perform the task and be paid. She believed that her students really enjoyed working on the projects individually or in a group and showed interest in solving the problems to complete the projects using different strategies while being guided by the instructor.

### **Students' Attitudes Towards Teaching Activities**

All the participants stated that their students usually fed back to them their opinions and feelings concerning the content, activities, and the teaching method; sometimes, even, they criticized the content and the methods applied to teach translation by other instructors in other classes in the department.

The students' evaluation or their voice as feedback is welcomed by the interviewees as they believe it to be necessary to improve their teaching skills and materials to help students learn more effectively. Those feedbacks are also a way to create a dialogue between teachers and students. Moreover, when the students feel and believe that their voice is heard in an atmosphere of acceptance and understanding, their learning, along with motivation, would be optimized.

### **The Role of Motivation in Developing Translation Skills**

The interview participants believed that the teachers' success to motivate the students to follow the path depends totally on their decisions made about the content and the way the tasks are used in the classroom, what Ellis (2006) states as "the what of teaching" in contrast to "the how of teaching" (p. 6).

Involving the students in the translation of au-

thentic and practical topics, specifically those connected to and inspired by the market demands, that are worthwhile and of potential interest to them is one of the helpful strategies to foster motivation. Moreover, teachers' proper feedback leads to the students' eagerness to demonstrate their strengths by applying their knowledge, skills, and dispositions in ways that are helpful to others.

### **The Effects of Mass Media on Students' Performance**

According to the respondents, it is crystal clear that exposure to mass media acts as pathway lights in enhancing language skills development. The students can gain prior knowledge of universal topics helping them face translation challenges more effectively. Supporting such a view, nearly all the faculty members who handled audio-video translation courses agreed that those students who participated in both audio-video translation and textual translation classes simultaneously performed news and films translation much better than the translation of the texts with unknown topics due to the information gained from TV networks.

### **Motivational Strategies to Increase Persian Language Proficiency**

Some of the respondents suggested introducing Persian classical literature to the students by using the excerpts from novels while focusing on the structure, vocabulary, rhetorical devices, and the points helpful to overcome problems regarding their poor L1 proficiency. Some others suggested arranging practical workshops managed by the Persian language and literature instructors active in the translation field.

### **Activities to Increase Students' Knowledge of English Grammar**

According to the respondents, clearly the introductory courses on grammar offered to the students have failed to be effective due to the fact that most of the instructors run these classes fully in English and do not link translation and gram-



mar as these courses are offered to English majors including students in literature, linguistics, teaching and translation as well. Consequently offering joint courses combining grammar and translation or arranging grammar workshops specific to translation students was suggested by the respondents.

Moreover, the translation teachers can focus on grammatical points while discussing the students' performance. For instance, dissecting the sentences first into their main and then subcomponents for the students to get acquainted with the natural word-order of the source language helps the students identify the sentence patterns and function of different elements to put them in their correct order in the target language.

Furthermore, a great help to those students who have difficulty finding the logical relationship between the sentences and decoding the messages is working on cohesive devices including conjunctions, punctuation marks, verbal bridges, and back referencing. Such devices bringing about coherence and cohesion are essential to be presented through assigned paragraphs to be worked on later in the classroom for the students to follow the clues to get the intended messages since, in fact, the first textual problem is the inability of the students to understand the messages sent specifically through long complex sentences, a problem experienced by some other instructor-researchers in the world (Abu-Ssaydeh & Jarad, 2016; Nyqvist, 2012; Zou, 2016).

### **Cooperative Learning**

The participants, in fact, had already talked about CL as their instructional strategy. They believed cooperative learning to be really a form of active pedagogy leading to positive responses from their students since they found translation easier and more enjoyable when performed in group work. According to the interviewees, this approach to teaching provides the opportunity for the weak students to work together with their stronger peers, leading to increasing their intrinsic motivation and active participation. Three of the participants admitted that their students usually were so

involved in working together and discussing their assigned task that they lost the track of time staying in the classroom more than the expected time; they never showed signs of being bored and confirmed that they enjoyed their classes.

In sum, the participants' views on cooperative learning and group work can be supported by a bulk of studies and most of the experts in the field such as Kiraly (2000), and Gonzalez Davies (2004, p.226) who believes a combination of learner autonomy and team effort leads to students' losing their fears when faced with decision-making situations.

### **Guidelines for Effective Translation Teaching**

In response to the second research and the last interview question, in line with all the other interviewees, the faculty member of Shiraz University got straight to the heart of the matter noting that suggesting impractical solutions would be useless. Criticizing the translator training or university admission system in Iran, proposing changes in plans and curriculum might have been or may be heard loud and clear, but taking steps to change the system is another matter. Accordingly, the following practical guidelines for tackling basic difficulties proposed by the interview participants may be inspiring to all translator trainers who have to face challenges of teaching translation in the Iranian context:

1. In introductory translation courses which introduce the translation theories to the students, design learning activities helping the students apply translation theories in practice so that when they get acquainted with different translation strategies, they can use them practically to translate SL texts. For instance, assigning the texts the translation of which needs applying one or more strategies to the students, discussing their completed task in the class, and giving directions for better performance provide students with enough practice to challenge the problems. It is not possible to practice translation without theory "if we consider that

- any decision taken by the translator during the translating process or any comment on a translation product implies a conception of what translation entails, i.e. a theory of translation" (Bartrina, p. 178).
2. In order to improve students' linguistic knowledge, combine language teaching and translation training whenever possible in translation classes, so that the students can activate their knowledge of both SL and TL structure and vocabulary or learn whatever they need to overcome linguistic problems. For instance, teaching students how to parse a sentence into its components, and describing their syntactic roles help them make a comprehensive and thorough understanding of the source text meaning when encountered with a long complicated sentence. To foster language learning in translation classrooms is valuable as the students would have "opportunities to understand how language is used and learn a powerful tool which can help them in their learning language process and later on in the professional careers as translators" (Singer, 2016, p. 165).
  3. Extracurricular activities such as lectures, roundtables, and workshops may be a good contribution to improving conditions; for instance, the language departments can arrange compulsory language workshops specific to translation students in the department since specific local or departmental programs may be the best way to guarantee learning of at least those students who are motivated enough to work in their field after graduation.
  4. Familiarizing the students with the culture of the target language by assigning texts with cultural information or culture-specific items to be discussed in the classroom will also be beneficial to tackle cultural translation problems.
  5. Increasing students' sensitivity to stylistic features of the source texts by focusing on these features such as the choice of some specific words in contrast to some others and participial constructions leads to the students' recognition of different types of texts and their styles.
  6. Use real-world or authentic translation tasks in compliance with market demands. For example, with the development of the Internet, many university students involved in different tasks relating to their academic assignments look for the translators to translate different articles and books, or a number of different companies are hiring web translators and editors to communicate with the rest of the world. Creating authentic situations makes learning meaningful rather than a mechanical and boring process; moreover, content design, "a varied selection of authentic and prototypical texts", ensures professional realism (Biel, 2012, p. 162).
  7. Regular staff meetings to share teaching experiences with fellow translation educators and discussing the ways to improve teaching activities would be an effective practice in strategic planning with regard to effective translator training programs.

In sum, all the participants in the interview agreed that developing opportunities for the students to improve their translation competence is possible through programs implemented by the departments based on the local needs. In fact, circumstances may vary from institution to institution and from student group to student group; in other words, the English departments in the Iranian universities differ in regard to their students' capabilities, methods of teaching, adopted textbooks, and in general needs and wants; accordingly, providing the students with a set of transferable skills necessary to achieve translation tasks successfully needs local decision making strategies as translation teaching is not an exact area to which a specific preconceived pattern of *prescribing* practices can be applied.

.....The findings of the face -to face dialogues with the Iranian experts in the field of translation, consequently, proved to be fruitful due to the guidelines suggested to solve the problems based on the belief that the role of the instructors is crucial as they plan the teaching and learning activities and direct them to the desired destination. Their discussion centered around constructivist approach to teaching translation , the core principles of which are collaborative learning, developing autonomy in the learners, creative, individual self-expression, and authentic tasks.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the discussions on the interview highlighted topics by the Iranian academics active both in translating and translation teaching:

- Translation teaching programs should focus on improving both linguistic competence and strategic competence as well. Working on a set of practical principles, guidelines and problem-solving strategies by combining theory and practice in the translation classes should be accompanied by language training in both the SL and TL. Such a compound training model as a therapeutic strategy sensitizes students on the importance of translation competence development by targeting their weaknesses in different areas.
- Promoting student discussion and group activities involves them in their own learning. Furthermore, engaging in group-work in a cooperative learning environment increases students' intrinsic motivation, leading to "higher achievement and greater productivity" (Gillies, 2016).
- "A fairly common discourse among professional translators is that the formal training programs are inefficient, misleading, too theoretical, irremediably out of touch with market developments, and in some instances saturating the labor market with graduates" (Pym, 2012). Accordingly, using authentic translation tasks prepares students to function efficiently as a professional. For example, assigning the students with the source business texts and discussing their performance in the class prepares them for performing appropriately within the context of the client relationship.
- Students can benefit from creative local programs such as problem-solving workshops to improve their self-esteem and critical thinking skills which follow translation competence development . In fact, such programs may act as the only and the best rescue lifeboat due to the fact that the management staff and the instructors are the only ones in each of the English departments who know their students' capabilities, wants and needs.

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### **Appendix: Interview Guide**

1. What do you think might be the reasons for the Iranian students' poor performance in translation?
2. Do you think some courses or workshops teaching CAT (Computer-Aided Tools) should be offered to the Iranian students?
3. What is your attitude towards the conventional way of teaching translation?
4. What is your own teaching method to your students?
5. Have you ever noticed the reaction of your students to your method of teaching? If so, do you think knowing their attitude towards their class is effective in their learning?
6. How is it possible to constantly motivate the students and arise their curiosity to do well in translation classes?
7. Can mass media play a role in increasing the Iranian students' communicative competence so as to affect their performance in translation?
8. How is it possible to motivate students to increase their knowledge of Persian grammar and vocabulary?
9. The analysis of the students' papers through the terms of teaching translation at Shiraz Islamic Azad University has revealed that the bulk of the errors in their output are grammatical, mainly grammatical cohesion. Considering the fact that these students had passed pre-grammar courses, what ways do you suggest to improve their knowledge of grammar in translation classes?
10. A popular working method used in class is splitting students into small groups and asking them to translate something together. What do you think about Cooperative Learning?
11. What method/s do you suggest to improve the university students' translation competence in translation classes?