

Evaluation of Undergraduate Translation Program in Azad University

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The present study as its primary purpose sought to study the status of translation education and translator training at BA level in Azad University through administering a translation test in different branches of Azad University and assessing the performance of the students on the test and to recommend some ways to enhance the present curriculum through making some amendments. Finding out whether the translation majors' translation mastery was different in different departments, and whether there was any relationship between translation majors' general English mastery and their translation ability were the secondary purposes of this study. To this end, an essay-type translation test which consisted of 16 items was developed and along with a 2002 version of Michigan's ECPE Test was administered to 243 senior translation majors studying in English departments of Qom, Karaj, Sothern Tehran, Islam Shahr, Varamin, Northern Tehran, and Takestan branches of Azad University's Sothern Branch (district eight). Two questionnaires were also used to collect data on departments and students. The gathered data were subjected to statistical procedures. The results of the first analysis showed that although some groups had better performance and gained an average score which was over 50 percent of the total score, none of the groups was able to achieve the 75 percent of the total score on neither of the tests. To find whether the difference between translation majors' translation mastery was statistically significant, a one-way ANOVA was run on. Based on the results it was concluded that the difference between the groups regarding their translation mastery was significant. The correlation coefficient between the scores on ECPE test and the translation test revealed that there was a positive and acceptable degree of correlation between the two sets of scores. The above-mentioned findings along with the analysis of data gathered by questionnaires revealed that the students were dissatisfied with the content of the course, with the teaching methods used in the course, with the efficiency of the teachers, and with overall translation program offered to undergraduate students in the Departments of English Language in Azad university.

Introduction

Ever since the first social structures emerged and human beings—who knows, may be even our cave dwelling ancestors!—started to communicate socially or emotionally with members of their own species from other societies who had devised different codes of communication i.e. those who used different languages, they realized that there was a strong need for a mediator to facilitate this process, without which every such attempt would be like "talking to a brick wall." (Bassnett et al., 1990) . That was how translation as one of the earliest aids in international relations came into existence. As the scope of these relations broadened, people felt a need for experts with mastery of two or more languages who were actually the 'signifiers' of the former need in society. Translation is an activity comprising the interpretation of the meaning of a text in one language — the source text — and the production, in another language, of a new, equivalent text — the target text, or translation.

Traditionally, translation has been a human activity, although attempts have been made to automate and computerize the translation of natural-language texts — machine translation — or to use computers as an aid to translation — computer-assisted translation.

The goal of translation is generally to establish a relation of equivalence of intent between the source and target texts (that is to say, to ensure that both texts communicate the same message), while taking into account a number of constraints (Karimi, 2005). These constraints include context, the rules of grammar of both languages, their writing conventions, their idioms, and the like.

Translation is an art, not a science. Like most arts it is a lot more complicated than it looks.

Many newcomers to translation wrongly believe it is an exact science, and mistakenly assume a firmly defined one-to-one correlation exists between the words and phrases in different languages which make translations fixed, much like cryptography (Larsen, 1984). In that vein, many assume all one needs to translate a given passage is to decipher between the languages using a translation dictionary. On the contrary, such a fixed relationship would only exist were a new language synthesized and continually synchronized alongside an existing language in such a way that each word carried exactly the same scope and shades of meaning as the original, with careful attention to preserve the etymological roots, assuming they were even known with certainty. In addition, if the new language were ever to take on a life of its own apart from such a strict cryptographic use, each word would begin to take on new shades of meaning and cast off previous associations, making any such synthetic synchronization impossible. As such, translation from that point on would require the disciplines described in this article. Suffice it to say, while equivalence is sought by the translators, less rigid and more analytical methods are required to arrive at a true translation.

Some people argue that translation is a science. The most salient characteristics of a science are precision and predictability. We can call something a science only if it has scientific rules that work all the time. In fact, scientific rules are so fixed and precise that they are not called rules anymore, but laws. For example, compounding two units of hydrogen and one unit of oxygen will always give us water or steam, or ice, depending on the temperature. It is worth noting that some sciences, particularly those dealing with the humanities, do not achieve a 100-percent predictability level, and any theory in those fields must stand up to strict, recurring tests to be considered valid (Berkeley, 1991).

Translation uses scientific data, mainly taken from different branches of linguistics (like neuro-linguistics, semantics, sociolinguistics, etc). It has also been recently combined with computer science, giving birth to machine translation and computer-aided translation. But translation in itself is not a science.

Although translators use scientific data and theories, they do it in a way that gives free hand to individual taste, bias, imagination, and temperament. There are sometimes several solutions for dealing with a particular translation problem, and a creative translator may find a new solution on the spot. Translation problems may be similar, but it is impossible to devise a scientific equation that would work in the same way, every time, for each problem in all languages due to the inescapable differences among languages as well as their cultural contexts throughout the world.

Translation, according to Newmark (1988a, p.5) is "rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text." So, another major obstacle to having a comprehensive translation theory is that of getting a deep insight to what "meaning" is, something which is still a matter of debate in the humanities.

The translation process, whether it be for translation or interpreting, can be described simply as:

1. Decoding the meaning of the source text, and
2. Re-encoding this meaning in the target language.

To decode the meaning of a text the translator must first identify its component "translation units", that is to say the segments of the text to be treated as a cognitive unit. A translation unit may be a word, a phrase or even one or more sentences. Behind this seemingly simple procedure lies a complex cognitive operation. To decode the complete meaning of the source text, the translator must consciously and methodically interpret and analyze all its features. This process requires thorough knowledge of the grammar, semantics, syntax, idioms and the like of the source language, as well as the culture of its speakers. (Nida, 1993).

The translator needs the same in-depth knowledge to re-encode the meaning in the target language. In fact, often translators' knowledge of the target language is more important, and needs to be deeper, than their knowledge of the source language. For this reason, most translators translate into a language of which they are native speakers.

In addition, knowledge of the subject matter being discussed is essential. In recent years studies in cognitive linguistics have been able to provide valuable insights into the cognitive process of translation.

Translation, being a craft on the one hand, requires training, i.e. practice under supervision, and being a science on the other hand, has to be based on language theories. Training translators is an important task which should be given a high priority. The service that translators render to enhance cultures and nurture languages has been significant throughout history. Translators are the agents for transferring messages from one language to another, while preserving the underlying cultural and discorsal ideas and values (Azabdaftary, 1997).

Therefore, any sound approach to translation teaching has to draw on proper training methodologies. Training focuses on the improvement of the knowledge, skills and abilities of the individual, and it is functional and relevant only when it is evaluated (Zenger and Hargis, 1982). When we evaluate a training course, we actually evaluate its effectiveness, i.e. we measure the achievement of its objectives. A training course can be effective in meeting some objectives and be ineffective in meeting others. For example, a translation course may accomplish its objective of improving the the students' text analysis skills and fail in promoting their cross-cultural awareness.

It is expected that translation courses be carefully evaluated on a regular basis. But what happens in reality is that educational institutions hardly pay attention to translation course evaluation.

Translation course evaluation is not done frequently for several reasons. First, there is a tendency to assume that "(a translation) training (course), being a form of education, is a good thing and therefore its evaluation is not necessary" (Sheal, 1990). Moreover, those involved in translation course design and implementation may tend to be afraid of criticism or even of the assumption that they could be replaced in case it is established that the course is not effective. They may also assume that they fulfilled their evaluation responsibility in their pre-course phase. Their reasoning is that they would not prepare a course that they did not think was going to work, hence if they have made prudent decisions on the course content and delivery beforehand, then it is not necessary to conduct course evaluation. They tend to forget that many courses were designed under the assumption that they were almost perfect, and after application they proved to be a failure. Gabr, M. (2001a). Another reason is that the evaluation process itself is complex and requires time, effort, and expertise. These resources may not be available or those involved in course design and implementation may not be willing to take the trouble to expend them. Moreover, those involved in translation course design and implementation are either professionals or academics. They are not training specialists, and hence they do not look at the training system from the right perspective.

To familiarize undergraduate translation majors with the concepts of translation and to train them to become competent translators the following translation and interpreting courses are included in the undergraduate English Translator Training Curriculum in Azad University.

| <i>Course Title</i> | <i>Credits</i> | <i>Course Title</i> | <i>Credits</i> |
|--|----------------|--|----------------|
| Translating Simple Texts | 2 | Interpreting 1 | 2 |
| Translating Journalistic Texts 1 | 2 | Interpreting 2 | 2 |
| Translating Journalistic Texts 2 | 2 | Interpreting 3 | 2 |
| Translating Political Texts | 2 | Advanced Translation 1 | 2 |
| Translating Economic Texts | 2 | Advanced Translation 2 | 2 |
| Translating Documentation & Official Writing 1 | 2 | Individual Translation 1 | 2 |
| Translating Documentation & Official Writing 2 | 2 | Individual Translation 2 | 2 |
| Translating Audio & Video Tapes | 2 | A Survey of Islamic Translated Texts 1 | 2 |
| Persian Writing | 2 | A Survey of Islamic Translated Texts 2 | 2 |
| Persian Language Structure | 2 | Contrastive Linguistics | 2 |
| Modern Persian Literature | 2 | Theories & Principles of Translation | 2 |
| Translating Literary Texts | 2 | English Morphology | 2 |

Over the past few years, experts in the fields of ELT, linguistics, and translatology in Iran have offered new insights into these disciplines. As a result, the translator training curriculum in Iranian universities has undergone some changes. The existing B.A. curriculum for English translation in Azad university focuses on practicing translation in various fields, such as basic sciences, human sciences, religion, journalism, and literature. In the light of above facts regarding the nature of translation, the importance of translation training and translation programs evaluation and since there has been no systematic evaluation of the present translation curriculum, it can be assumed that the present courses listed in the table do not meet the needs of present-day Iran. A systematic approach to evaluation of translation majors and the translation program was needed in order to find out whether the assumption was correct or not and to suggest some ways to improve the present curriculum.

To achieve its purpose, the present study addressed the following questions:

1. Is translation curriculum effective in preparing the translation majors to become competent translators in accordance with B.A. level objectives?
2. Is there any difference between translation majors' translation mastery in the district eighth of Azad university?
3. Is there any relationship between translation majors' general English mastery and their translation ability?
4. What are the students' attitudes toward undergraduate translation program in Azad University?

Method

This study primarily used quantitative methods to gain perspectives on the students' translation mastery. However, two questionnaires were administered to gather qualitative data.

Participants

The subjects of the study were 243 senior translation majors. They were from English departments of Qom, Karaj, Sothern Tehran, Islam Shahr, Varamin, Northern Tehran, and Takestan branches of Azad University's Sothern Branch (district eight). The subjects were ranged between 22-26 years of age and were of mixed sex.

Instruments

Three instruments were used in this study. The first was 2002 version of Michigan's ECPE Test. This test which was intended to assess the subjects' general English mastery consisted of 130 multiple – choice items completed in 90 minutes. Due to practical limitations only the “grammar” (50 items), “vocabulary” (50 items), and “reading comprehension” (30 items) sections of the test were administered. The essay-type translation test which consisted of 16 items was used to measure the subjects' translation mastery. Questionnaires were the third instruments. The department questionnaire which was an open-ended questionnaire collected statistical data on translation teachers and the available resources for translation majors in each faculty. The student questionnaire was a structured questionnaire which sought to gather information on the translation majors' views towards the translation programs and to explore the students' understanding of the theoretical aspects of translation and their personal efforts to develop their translation skills. These objectives were achieved by exploring along six axes as follows:

1. Students' understanding of the concept of translation and the process of translating
2. Students' personal efforts to improve their translation skills
3. Students' satisfaction with the course material
4. Students' satisfaction with the teaching methods used in the course
5. Students' satisfaction with the roles played by the translation teacher
6. Students' overall attitude towards the four-year translation program offered in the undergraduate Department of English Language

The ECPE test and the translation test were administered concurrently to the subjects at the end of the second term of the academic year 2004/2005 to increase the probability that the students had already attended a considerable part of the course. The subjects were not informed they were going to take the tests. The tests were distributed to randomly selected translation seniors.

The questionnaire was distributed to all the students who took the tests. 150 completed questionnaires were returned.

The following table shows the groups and the number of subjects which took the tests in each group.

Table 1 Groups and the subjects

| BRANCHES | N |
|-----------------|-----|
| QOM | 35 |
| KARAJ | 35 |
| SOUTHERN TEHRAN | 35 |
| ISLAM SHAHR | 35 |
| VARAMIN | 35 |
| NORTHERN TEHRAN | 35 |
| TAKESTAN | 33 |
| Total | 243 |

Data Analysis

To find the answer to the third question The data were analyzed utilizing a number of statistical techniques in order to answer the research questions posed in this study. After calculating descriptive statistics, a one-way ANOVA was run on to answer the first and the second questions. To find the answer to the third question, Pearson product moment formula was applied. To answer the last question the students' responses collected through the questionnaire were analyzed.

Results and Discussions

In order to find the answer to the first question, the researchers based their acceptable level of mastery on gaining 75 percent of the total score on the translation test and general English test. Since, based on analysis number 3, it was found that there is a positive correlation between the translation scores and the general language score, the majors' performance on the general language test was also included in finding the answer to the third question.

Since the total scores for the translation test and the Michigan ECPE were 32 and 130, the adjusted means for each group on each test was used to make the judgment and comparison easier.

Table 2 The Adjusted Means of Each Group on the Translation Test

| GROUPS | KAR. | QOM | S. TH. | VARA. | ISLAM | N.TH. | TAK. |
|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| MEAN | 50.00 | 41.06 | 38.37 | 33.28 | 32.65 | 31.87 | 29.53 |

Table 3 The Adjusted Means of Each Group on the ECPE Test

| GROUPS | KAR. | QOM | S. TH. | VARA. | ISLAM | N.TH. | TAK. |
|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| MEAN | 68.43 | 56.74 | 55.01 | 48.15 | 51.23 | 60.13 | 58.29 |

The results indicate that although some groups had better performance and gained an average score which was over 50 percent of the total score, none of the groups was able to achieve the 75 percent of the total score on neither of the tests.

The purpose of the second analysis was to find whether there is any difference between translation majors' translation mastery in the district eighth of Azad university. To answer this question, a one-way ANOVA was run on.

The variances and means of the scores on the translation test as shown in table 4 suggested differences among the groups.

Table 4 Descriptives of Translation Test

| Branches | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Variance |
|----------------|-----|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| QOM | 35 | 4.00 | 24.00 | 13.1429 | 24.067 |
| KARAJ | 35 | 4.00 | 26.00 | 16.0000 | 23.294 |
| SOUTHERN THER. | 35 | 2.00 | 27.00 | 12.2857 | 42.504 |
| ISLAM SHAHR | 35 | 3.00 | 18.00 | 10.4571 | 14.608 |
| VARAMIN | 35 | 2.00 | 21.00 | 10.6571 | 27.820 |
| NORTHERN THER. | 35 | 2.00 | 23.00 | 10.2000 | 19.400 |
| TAKESTAN | 33 | 4.00 | 21.00 | 9.4545 | 16.506 |
| All Groups | 243 | 2.00 | 27.00 | 11.7613 | 27.910 |

Therefore a one-way analysis of variance was carried out to see whether these differences are significant or not. The results are shown in table 5.

Table 5 ANOVA on Translation Test

| | Sum of Sq. | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 1068.375 | 6 | 178.062 | 7.391 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 5685.782 | 236 | 24.092 | | |
| Total | 6754.156 | 242 | | | |

As the results show the F value was found to be 7.39 which is larger than F-critical value of 2.12 at .05 level. This means the difference between the groups regarding their translation mastery was significant. Hence the assumption that groups were equal in terms of translation mastery seems to be wrong. Therefore the hypothesis that “there is no difference between translation majors’ translation mastery in the district eighth of Azad university” is rejected at .05 level of probability.

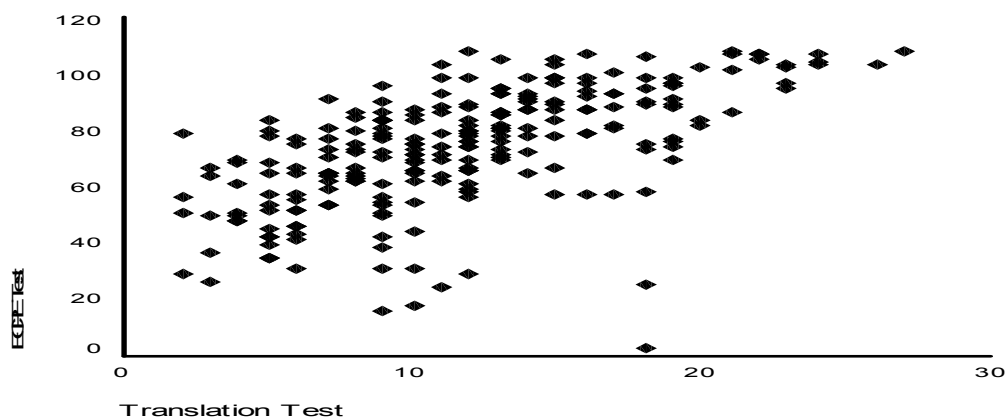
Comparing the means of the groups through a scheffe test revealed that groups were different regarding their translation mastery. The greatest difference was between Karaj and Takestan and the smallest difference was between Varamin Islam Shahr and North Tehran. The results indicate that groups performed differently on the translation test.

To find the answer to the second question, the correlation coefficient between the scores on ECPE test and the translation test was computed. Table 6 presents the results.

Table 6 Correlation Coefficient between Michigan ECPE and the Translation Test

| | |
|---------------|------------------|
| | TRANSLATION TEST |
| Michigan ECPE | 0.60 |

As Farhady et. al. (1994) state coefficient of correlation will always have a value between -1 and +1. A value of +1 means perfect positive correlation and a value of -1 means perfect negative correlation. Based on the value of correlation coefficient which is .60 and the following scatter diagram, it can be concluded that there is a positive and acceptable degree of correlation between the two sets of scores. Therefore, the hypothesis that “there is no relationship between translation majors’ general English mastery and their translation ability” is rejected.



To answer the last question, the responses of the sample students were first categorized under five headings: those who strongly disagree, those who disagree, those who expressed no attitude, those who agree, and those who strongly agree. The number of responses for each item along each axis under each of these five categories and the respective percentages were calculated. The total number of responses under each category and the total percentage were calculated as well.

Then, these response options were reduced under three main categories only: those who maintained negative attitude, those who expressed lack of attitude, and those who maintained positive attitude. The number of responses for each item in each axis under each of these three categories and its percentage were also calculated.

The total number of responses under each category and its total percentage were calculated as well. The differences between the total numbers under these categories were then calculated. The differences were notably high. This means that these differences were significant and required no further statistical processing.

The following presents the analysis of responses under six headings:

1. Students' understanding of the concept of translation and the process of translating
2. Students' personal efforts to improve their translation skills
3. Students' satisfaction with the course material
4. Students' satisfaction with the teaching methods used in the course
5. Students' satisfaction with the roles played by the translation teacher
6. Students' overall attitude towards the four-year translation program offered in the undergraduate Department of English Language

1. Students' understanding of the theoretical aspects of translation

This research point addressed the students' understanding of the definition of translation and the process of translating. Following is a summary of most significant findings in this connection:

The majority of the respondents do not have a clear understanding of the correct definition of translation. The majority of the respondents do not have a clear understanding of which aspects should be given first priority of transfer when translating.

The majority of the respondents do not have a clear understanding of the skills essential to the professional translator in order of priority.

2. Students' personal efforts to improve their skills in translation

This point of research covered the findings related to the efforts exerted by the respondents to improve their skills in translation. The findings along this axis lead to the conclusion that the majority of respondents exert serious efforts to improve their skills and broaden their knowledge about translation. Still, these efforts are wasted, which can be clearly seen from the findings of axis 1: the respondents have incorrect assumptions about translation in theory and practice. Therefore, any efforts associated with these incorrect assumptions will go in the wrong direction. This will definitely maximize the feeling of dissatisfaction on the part of the students, because, despite their earnest efforts, they cannot improve their performances.

3. Students' satisfaction with the course material

| Disagree | | Not sure | | Agree | |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| <i>Resp.</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Resp.</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Resp.</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
| 100 | 66.60% | 08 | 05.30% | 42 | 28.00% |

The alarming finding shown in the table is that the total number of responses, 100 (66.60%), expressing dissatisfaction with the content of the course is more than double the number, 42 (28%), of those who express satisfaction with it.

4. Students' satisfaction with the teaching methods adopted in the course

| Disagree | | Not sure | | Agree | |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| <i>Resp.</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Resp.</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Resp.</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
| 110 | 73.33% | 14 | 09.30% | 26 | 17.30% |

The alarming finding shown in the table is that the total number of responses, 110 (73.33%), expressing dissatisfaction with the teaching method used in the course is more than four times the number, 26 (17.3%), of those who express satisfaction with it.

5. Students' satisfaction with the roles played by the translation teacher

| Disagree | | Not sure | | Agree | |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| <i>Resp.</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Resp.</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Resp.</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
| 80 | 53.33% | 34 | 22.60% | 36 | 24.00% |

The significant finding shown in the table is that the total number of responses, 80 (53.33%), expressing dissatisfaction with the teacher's efficiency is more than double the number, 36 (24%), of those who express satisfaction with it.

6. Students' overall attitude towards the four-year translation program offered to undergraduate students in the Department of English Language

| Disagree | | Not sure | | Agree | |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| <i>Resp.</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Resp.</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Resp.</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
| 94 | 62.66% | 26 | 17.30% | 30 | 20.00% |

The alarming finding shown in the table is that the total number of responses, 94(62.66%), expressing dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of the translation program offered to undergraduate students in the Department is more than triple the number, 30 (20%), of those who express satisfaction with it.

Conclusions and Implications

The translation majors in Azad University each semester are divided into smaller groups so that they can be accommodated in the available classrooms and in order to facilitate the learning process. Thus, the translation teacher must see for each course, in a weekly two-hour session, an average of 35 students. Moreover, in majority of researched departments, teaching translation from English into Farsi is provided in one term and from Farsi into English in the other. Furthermore, at least an average of 4 sessions are used up by mid-term exams or are lost by vacations, the beginning and the end of the semester class cancellations due to variety of reasons. By simple calculation, the students in these departments, under ideal circumstances, attend 13 translation sessions for each course during one semester. There is traditionally a 30-minute break between sessions. Therefore, the students, if their teacher does not come late to the class or make him/herself absent for one reason or another, attend an approximate total of 20 hours of translation teaching and training for each course. These problems are compounded by the inadequacy of classroom facilities and other factors.

The current situation of translation teaching at the undergraduate level in Azad university is characterized by a number of alarming features:

- All departments of English offer translation courses at the undergraduate level as a compulsory subject, but what is actually offered is quite arbitrary and depends almost entirely on personal initiatives on the part of teachers.
- Arbitrary approaches cannot serve as reliable, sound bases for translation teaching, which should follow a systematic approach to achieve its goals. These arbitrary approaches adopted in the English departments frustrate all educational efforts and keep the university from achieving one of its main goals-preparing future translators to meet market needs.
- The relevance of what is being offered in these courses to market needs is virtually non-existent, even though course content should be oriented to commercial practice so that graduates will have better opportunities in the labor market.

- In addition, the translation class is looked at as a means for improving foreign language competence. Most students regard it as a kind of grammar drill. Still, the course, in reality, does not include any language teaching/training drills. Some of the sample students committed *shamefully* serious grammatical errors in their Farsi-English translations, although they were about to graduate with Bachelor of Arts degrees.

- Worst of all, many of them apply the rule of 'parroting.' In other words, they learn by heart whatever translations the instructor may propose. And before the end-of-term exam, they just urge the instructor to include in the exam 'as a favor, or rather a gesture of cooperation on the part of the teacher' one of the texts for which the teacher dictated a 'model translation'. A few attempts, however, are being made by some of the revolutionist teachers to correct this erroneous approach and to create translation modules on sound, systematic bases.

The overall attitude of the respondents towards the course content, the teaching methods, the efficiency of the translation teacher, and the overall translation program offered for undergraduate students in the Department of English Language and Literature can be summarized as follows:

1. The students are dissatisfied with the content of the course.
2. The students are dissatisfied with the teaching methods used in the course.
3. The students are dissatisfied with the efficiency of the teacher.

4. The students are dissatisfied with the overall translation program offered to undergraduate students in the Department of English Language.

- There is a shortage in resources and classroom facilities. This limits the choice of appropriate teaching methods and keeps teachers from distributing handouts and correcting assignments. It further undermines the roles played by the teachers. The spirit of teamwork among translation teachers is virtually non-existent. There is a lack of coordination in the translation program, and as a result the overall program is not very successful.

- The findings showed that the students are not satisfied with the adequacy of the content of the translation classes that they attended. It also showed that translation teachers do not follow a systematic approach in developing their instructional objectives and selecting class material. It is suggested that presented materials consider and include bilingual and bicultural competencies, subject competency, translation strategies, teamwork, communication and research skills, exposure to real-life situations, knowledge of the history of translation, and finally, familiarity with personal computers.

To improve the status quo of the B.A. translation program in Azad university the following are suggested:

- It is suggested that translation teachers through workshops and in-service training programs receive regular and constant training in teaching translation, and this training should include modules on theoretical aspects of translation, translating general and specialized texts, issues in bilingualism and biculturalism, professional environment and market trends, and research in translation studies. The importance of theoretical knowledge lies in the fact that it helps translators acquire an understanding of how linguistic choices in texts reflect other relationships between senders and receivers, such as power relationships, and how texts are sometimes used to maintain or create social inequalities (Fairclough, 1989). Translation teachers also need to receive training on pedagogical issues related to teaching translation, training of translators, and classroom management. They also need to attend modules on developing evaluation tools, either for assessing student performance or judging the quality of the program. Lastly, translation teachers should be acquainted with the latest developments in information technology and electronic tools for translators.

- Translation trainees need to be exposed to a variety of genres in L1 and L2, including Persian and English literature, so as to obtain a thorough and deep understanding of both languages. While there is a strong emphasis on developing source and target language competencies, the ways in which students can develop them should not be neglected. Group work and cooperation with peers can always lead the

translating process to better results. Students who practice translation with their peers will be able to solve problems more easily and will also more rapidly develop self-confidence and decision-making techniques (Razmjou, 2002). Although there is a possibility of making mistakes during group work, the experience of making, detecting, and correcting mistakes will make the students' minds open and alert.

- Reading courses on advertisements, announcements, instructions, etc. are essential for the trainees since they imply socio-cultural aspects of a language. Furthermore, specialized readings, including recently published articles and journals on theoretical and practical aspects of translation, not only have a positive role in improving the trainees' reading skills in general, but also in helping them become more cognizant of what they are doing. A good translator should be familiar with the culture, customs, and social settings of the source and target language speakers. She should also be familiar with different registers, styles of speaking, and social stratification of both languages. This socio-cultural awareness, can improve the quality of the students' translations to a great extent. According to Hatim and Mason (1990), the social context in translating a text is a very important variable. The act of translating takes place in the socio-cultural context.
- Critical reading and writing courses in Persian and English prose are also suggested since they familiarize the trainees with the differences between the two languages. The translator's task is to create conditions under which the source language author and the target language reader can interact with one another (Lotfipour, 1985). The translator uses the core meaning present in the source text to create a new whole, namely, the target text (Farahzad, 1998). To that end, writing courses practicing various styles of writing in both L1 and L2 are essential, in addition to courses presenting the techniques and principles of editing, punctuation, and note-taking in both languages, for they increase the students' sensitivity to the differences between discursal strategies in the two languages and improve the speed and organization of translation and interpreting process.
- Familiarizing students with different sources of information, such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, and the Internet, through a two-credit course presented at the beginning of the four-year program is also recommended.
- The present undergraduate curriculum for translator training in Azad university lacks some key courses such as discourse analysis and text analysis. Moreover, introducing pragmatics and communicative functions of utterances to students would expand their knowledge.
- Shifting from a teacher focus in the classroom to a more workshop-like approach would help students solve their problems with peers and teacher supervision. Giving group assignments to prepare journals and newsletters on translation, asking students to justify their translations and those of their peers and to participate in translation seminars and lectures and take notes for subsequent discussion in class can develop self-confidence and decision-making skills that can only be developed if there is a friendly, flexible, supporting, interactive environment in the classroom. Appreciating student achievements rather than looking for perfection and having a limited number of students per class are also recommended.
- Offering elective courses is strongly recommended. Electives are essential for students since they give them an opportunity to choose subjects in which they have a genuine interest.
- It would be motivating for the trainees who have just started their four-year program to be informed of the importance of translation, a major intellectual discipline and is the key to international understanding and the vast world of communication, in which competent translators and interpreters are needed.
- Adopting a student-centered methodology with a focus on discourse-oriented activities, establishing friendly competition with communication and cooperation among peers, providing an academic environment in which recently published articles and books are available to students, teaching students how to find and use sources of knowledge, providing opportunities for student translations to be

published in college journals or periodicals, assigning internships for students outside of the university e.g., in translation companies, radio and television stations, newspapers and other periodicals, etc. ,and administering a proficiency test after the first two years of the BA program—which is devoted to general English courses—in order to distinguish those with good knowledge of L2, would be vital incentives for translation students to work harder and become highly motivated.

- Building confidence in students toward the translation program in Azad university and creating a friendly atmosphere in the university to encourage positive attitudes

On the whole, it can be concluded that the BA translation program in Azad university needs substantive changes with regard to the skills, techniques, and contents it covers, the strategies used to teach these skills, and student motivation. Remedying these deficiencies should greatly enhance the effectiveness of the curriculum.

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دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی - واحد تهران جنوب

Dear Head of English Department:

Islamic Azad University's South Branch is conducting a review of the present translation program in BA level in an attempt to elevate the status of translation education in its affiliated colleges.

We would be more than grateful if you could give detailed answers to the following questions.

1. Are translation trainees exposed to a variety of genres in both English and Persian? If so, what genres and how much?

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2. Is "Classical and Modern Persian and English Literature" offered to students as reading courses?

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3. Are translation students offered a reading course in Persian periodicals?

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4. Are there any reading courses in "Advertisements, Announcements, Instructions, etc." in both L1 and L2?

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5. Is there a critical reading and writing course on Persian and English prose?

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6. Are there any courses on various writing styles in both L1 and L2?

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7. Do students take independent vocabulary courses in both L1 and L2?

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8. Are students offered some courses on "Discourse Analysis" and "Text Analysis.?"

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9. Are students offered courses in practical comparative translation (comparing original texts with their translations) besides present comparative translation for Islamic texts?

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10. Are students introduced to the latest articles and journals on translation and assigned to read them and present summaries?

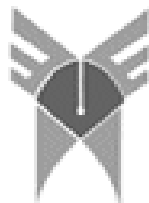
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11. Do students have courses on how to use dictionaries, encyclopedias, the Internet, and other sources of information?

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12. Do you employ workshop-like approaches in translation classes?

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دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی - واحد تهران جنوب

Dear translation major:

Islamic Azad University's South Branch is conducting a review of the present translation program in BA level in an attempt to elevate the status of translation education in its affiliated colleges.

We would be more than grateful if you could first provide us with information requested in the following questionnaire.

For each item select the extent to which you agree with the statement. (where 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = not sure, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree)

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I have a clear understanding of what the definition of translation is | | | | | |
| 2 | I have a deep understanding of the theories of translation. | | | | | |
| 3 | Translation theories are applicable in real translation. | | | | | |
| 4 | I have a clear understanding of the skills essential to the professional translator in order of priority. | | | | | |
| 5 | I have a clear understanding of what the process of translation involves. | | | | | |
| 6 | I do a lot to improve my translation skill. | | | | | |
| 7 | Teaching materials are effective in training students to become efficient translators. | | | | | |
| 8 | The methods and styles of training delivery used are effective in preparing students to become competent translators. | | | | | |
| 9 | Course objectives are appropriate for the students' needs after graduation. | | | | | |
| 10 | Instructors and university's educational policies motivate learners. | | | | | |
| 11 | Library books and audio-visual materials in our college met the needs of translation majors. | | | | | |
| 12 | Instructors play a vital role in our college in training the students to become efficient translators. | | | | | |
| 13 | Teachers put emphasis on out of the class activities. | | | | | |
| 14 | Teachers attempt to relate translation theories with translation practice in our classes. | | | | | |
| 15 | On the whole, four- year translation curriculum in our college is effective in turning students into efficient translators. | | | | | |

