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ABSTRACT

This study helped develop guidelines for modifying the current curriculum of the existing B.A. in English Translation within Iranian universities. Participants were 30 experts in the fields of English language translation, linguistics, and translatology from four Iranian universities. Using the Delphi research methodology, researchers administered two rounds of questionnaires that focused on skills needed to help trainees adapt themselves to new changes in the field, strategies for applying these skills, and methods of promoting motivation among translator trainees. Results suggested that the Iranian B.A. translation program needed substantive changes in the skills, techniques, and contents it covered, strategies used to teach the skills, and learners' motivation. Suggestions included designing courses so that trainees could achieve mastery of first- and second-language proficiency; shifting from a teacher-centered to a workshop-like orientation; offering elective courses; helping students understand the importance of translation; and adopting a student-centered methodology. The questionnaires are appended. (Contains 16 references.) (SM)

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Leila Razmjou

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Developing Guidelines for a New Curriculum for the BA program in English Translation in Iranian Universities

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***Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to develop some guidelines to modify the present curriculum of BA in English Translation in Iranian universities. The participants were 30 experts in the fields of ELT, Linguistics, and Translatology from different universities in Iran. The research method applied, was *Delphi* in which two rounds of questionnaires were used. On the whole, based on the results of the study, some guidelines are suggested for skill development and content improvement with regard to the skills and contents needed in a translation curriculum. In addition, some strategies are introduced for applying the skills and contents. Moreover, a few suggestions are made for promoting motivation among translation trainees.*

The existing BA curriculum of English Translation in Iran, focuses on practicing translation in various fields such as basic sciences, human sciences, religion, journalistic, and literary texts. In addition to translation, interpreting is also practiced (see Table 1). Although there has been no systematic evaluation of the present curriculum of translation, we may intuitively say that this curriculum does not cope with the needs and requirements of the present day Iran. Of course during the past few years, experts in the fields of ELT, Linguistics, and Translatology in Iran have offered new insights into

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these disciplines and accordingly, the Translator Training Curriculum in Iranian universities has undergone many changes and modifications. However, it seems that we need a more systematic survey of the experts' views in the related fields as to what they can suggest to improve the present curriculum.

This study was designed to identify the skills and content materials needed in a translation curriculum and their method of application. It tries to suggest ways for promoting translation trainees' motivation. The findings can help curriculum developers to prepare more systematic programs and thus train more competent translators.

**Table 1. Translation and Interpreting courses in the undergraduate
English Translator Training Curriculum in Iranian universities
(Total= 48 credit hours)**

<i>Course Name</i>	<i>No. of credits</i>	<i>Course Name</i>	<i>No. of credits</i>
Techniques of Translation	2	Interpreting 1	2
Translating Simple Texts	2	Interpreting 2	2
Translating Journalistic Texts 1	2	Interpreting 3	2
Translating Journalistic Texts 2	2	Advanced Translation 1	2
Translating Political Texts	2	Advanced Translation 2	2
Translating Economic Texts	2	Individual Translation 1	2
Translating Documentation & Official Writing 1	2	Individual Translation 2	2
Translating Documentation & Official Writing 2	2	A Survey of Islamic Translated Texts 1	2
Translating Audio & Video Tapes	2	A Survey of Islamic Translated Texts 2	2
Persian Writing	2	Contrastive Linguistics	2
Persian Language Structure	2	Theories & Principles of Translation	2
Modern Persian Literature	2	English Morphology	2
Translating Literary Texts	2		

Method

In this study, the **Delphi** research method was applied. Riazi (1999) introduces Delphi as a method of data collection which can use both questionnaires and interviews while ensuring the anonymity of the experts. He states that Delphi method employs a multi-stage ethnographic approach and is employed predominantly by qualitative investigators. The Delphi method has been in use since early 1950s. The implication of the Delphi method is that it increases the degree of agreement among experts in the field. The Delphi process requires more time span than a typical one-shot survey and it draws on a broad base of people already knowledgeable in one particular field. The choice of the participants in this method is based on their relative expertise, not on a need to represent the larger population. The participants might have an increased sense of involvement after finding their own responses listed in the second questionnaire (see Doyle, 1993).

Murry & Hammons (1995: 425) state: "In higher education, the Delphi method has been used primarily for four purposes: (1) to develop goals and objectives, (2) to improve curriculum, (3) to assist in strategic planning, and (4) to develop criteria". The present study falls under the scope of the second category, i.e. it is an attempt to improve curriculum. The study was designed to find answers to the following questions:

1. What skills and contents do we need in a Translator training curriculum to promote students' learning?
2. Which strategies should we follow to apply these skills?
3. What should we do to promote motivation among translator trainees?

Participants

The participants were 30 experts from four universities in Iran including Shiraz university, Allameh Tabataba'i university, Tabriz university, and Shiraz Azad university. The lecturers and professors whose major was ELT, Linguistics, Translation studies, or English Literature and had experience in teaching translation courses or were theorists in the field, were chosen from these universities. The number of such experts is limited, so the majority of them were included. Among 50 experts throughout the country, 30 agreed to participate in the study.

Instruments

Two questionnaires were used. The first, which was an open-ended questionnaire, was designed on the basis of the research questions. The second, which was structured, was constructed on the basis of the answers the experts gave to the open-ended questionnaire. This questionnaire consisted of three categories. The first category included 25 items, the second included 12 items, and the third

included 18 items. On the whole, the questionnaire was made up of 55 items. The second round questionnaire was sent to the same experts who had completed the first round one. The rating followed the Likert scale. (See Appendixes A & B for the two questionnaires).

Two experts at Shiraz university were consulted. They reviewed and modified the format and content of the questionnaire. Their final approval was used as an index of the validity of the questionnaire.

The frequency of the items was calculated and through Chi-square test, significance of the high-frequency items was verified, which demonstrated a consensus among the experts on the second questionnaire.

Results

The significance of the high-frequency items was verified at the 0.01 level of significance. Out of 55 items in the second questionnaire, the panel agreed on 47 items and rejected 8. Part I which contained 25 items, focused on the first research question. Suggestions are directed towards learning and functionality of the trainees. The frequency counts show us that the respondents have agreed on 17 items and rejected 8. Table 2 presents the results:

Table 2. Descriptive statistics on the items of the questionnaire
(Part I, Total= 25)

Item	Frequency					Item	Frequency				
	Yes	M.	Un.	To.	No		Yes	M.	Un.	To.	No
1	21	7	0	2	0	14	15	5	4	4	2
2	10	1	2	14	3	15	7	3	6	6	8
3	16	7	0	5	2	16	14	6	3	3	4
4	9	5	0	11	5	17	19	9	1	1	0
5	9	8	2	8	3	18	17	4	2	5	2
6	12	5	3	7	3	19	5	5	3	7	10
7	15	8	0	6	1	20	8	4	2	12	4
8	7	4	1	12	6	21	16	7	0	5	2
9	6	2	3	11	8	22	15	7	2	5	1
10	19	1	2	5	3	23	16	2	2	7	3
11	18	1	1	5	5	24	12	2	2	9	5
12	8	1	3	12	6	25	14	5	2	6	3
13	16	1	0	11	2						

“M” in the table, stands for “Mostly”, “Un.” stands for “Undecided”, and “To.” stands for “To some degree”.

Part II contained 12 items and focused on research question two. The frequency counts of this section show that the respondents have agreed on all the 12 items. Table 3 presents the results:

Table 3. Descriptive statistics on the items of the questionnaire
(Part II, Total= 12)

Item	Frequency					Item	Frequency				
	Yes	M.	Un.	To.	No		Yes	M.	Un.	To.	No
26	18	8	1	1	2	32	19	7	1	3	0
27	16	9	1	4	0	33	27	3	0	0	0
28	20	3	3	1	3	34	17	4	3	6	0
29	21	2	1	4	2	35	26	2	0	2	0
30	14	4	5	7	0	36	18	10	1	1	0
31	25	4	0	1	0	37	23	6	0	1	0

Part III contained 18 items and concerned research question three. The frequency counts indicate that the respondents have agreed on all the items of this section, too. Table 4 presents the results:

Table 4. Descriptive statistics on the items of the questionnaire
(Part III, Total= 18)

Item	Frequency					Item	Frequency				
	Yes	M.	Un.	To	No		Yes	M.	Un.	To	No
38	13	9	2	6	0	47	16	4	3	5	2
39	22	5	0	3	0	48	22	4	1	3	0
40	25	5	0	0	0	49	21	6	0	3	0
41	18	6	1	4	1	50	16	8	2	3	1
42	11	8	5	4	2	51	17	7	1	3	2
43	18	12	0	0	0	52	22	5	0	3	0
44	18	10	0	2	0	53	18	5	2	4	1
45	19	8	0	3	0	54	22	5	1	2	0
46	7	11	1	7	4	55	21	5	3	0	1

Tables 2, 3, & 4 indicate that items 2,4,8,9,12,15,19, & 20 do not have a high frequency for “Yes” answer. In other words, the majority of the respondents rejected these items. Further, the tables demonstrate the high frequency items as well. However there is a need to validate them using inferential statistics (see Hatch & Farhady, 1996). To do so, the Chi-square test was applied to high frequency items of the questionnaire. Table 5 presents the results:

Table 5. The Chi-square test results for the high frequency items

(*df*=2)

Item	Frequency			Chi.	Sig.	Item	Frequency			Chi.	Sig.
	Yes	Un.	No				Yes	Un.	No		
Part I of the questionnaire (17 Items)						32	26	1	3	38.6	.0000
1	28	0	2	48.8	.0000	33	30	0	0	60.0	.0000
3	23	0	7	27.8	.0000	34	21	3	6	18.6	.0001
5	17	2	11	15.8	.0004	35	28	0	2	48.8	.0000
6	17	3	10	15.8	.0004	36	28	1	1	48.6	.0000
7	23	0	7	27.8	.0000	37	29	1	0	54.2	.0000
10	20	2	8	20.0	.0000	Part III of the questionnaire (18 Items)					
11	19	1	10	16.2	.0003	38	22	2	6	22.4	.0000
13	17	0	13	15.8	.0004	39	27	0	3	43.8	.0000
14	20	4	6	15.2	.0005	40	30	0	0	60.0	.0005
16	20	3	7	15.8	.0004	41	24	1	5	30.2	.0000
17	28	1	1	48.6	.0000	42	19	11	0	12.2	.0022
18	21	2	7	19.4	.0001	43	30	0	0	60.0	.0005
21	23	0	7	27.8	.0000	44	28	2	0	48.8	.0000
22	22	2	6	22.4	.0000	45	27	0	3	43.8	.0000
23	18	2	10		.0082	46	18	1	11	14.6	.0007
24	19	2	9	14.6	.0007	47	20	3	7	15.8	.0004
25	24	1	5	30.2	.0000	48	26	1	3	38.6	.0000
Part II of the questionnaire (12 Items)						49	27	0	3	43.8	.0000
26	26	1	3	38.6	.0000	50	24	2	4	29.6	.0000
27	25	1	4	34.2	.0000	51	24	1	5	30.2	.0000
28	23	3	4	25.4	.0000	52	27	0	3	43.8	.0000
29	23	1	6	26.6	.0000	53	23	2	5	25.8	.0000
30	18	5	7	9.80	.0074	54	27	1	2	43.4	.0000
31	29	0	1	54.2	.0000	55	26	3	1	38.6	.0000

Discussions

Part I of the questionnaire focused on research question one, i.e. the skills and content materials needed in a translation curriculum. The frequency counts and the Chi-square results indicate that the respondents agreed with 17 items and rejected 8. In other words, the following points were extracted from the panels' suggestions:

I: Obviously, the first step towards planning a translation curriculum is to design courses so that the trainees achieve mastery of L1 and L2 proficiency. The four language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking have always been in focus; however, there seem to be some shortcomings:

1. Translation trainees need to be exposed to a variety of genres in L1 and L2 including Persian and English literature so as to get to a thorough and deep understanding of both languages.
2. 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 reading recently published articles and journals on theoretical and practical aspects of translation not only have a positive role in improving the trainees' reading skill in general, but also help them become more cognizant of what they are doing.
3. Critical reading and writing courses of Persian and English prose are also suggested since they familiarize the trainees with the differences between the two languages. 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 discoursal strategies in the two languages and improve the speed and organization of translation and interpreting process.

4. Translator trainees need courses on listening to different English tapes and writing their scripts; in this way, receptive and productive skills are practiced simultaneously.

5. Speaking courses can cover various topics. Improving the speaking skill can prepare the trainees for interpreting courses.

6. Familiarizing the trainees with using different sources of information such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, internet facilities, etc. through a two-credit course presented right at the beginning of the four-year program is also recommended.

7. The present undergraduate curriculum for translator training in Iranian universities lacks some key courses such as discourse analysis and text analysis. Moreover, introducing pragmatics and communicative functions of utterances to the trainees, expands their knowledge. Other suggested courses are dubbing, subtitling, sight translation, machine translation, and machine-aided translation.

II: Part II of the questionnaire focused on research question two. The frequency counts and Chi-square results indicated that the panel have agreed on all the 12 items of this part. The following points are suggested by the panel:

1. Shifting from teacher-centered orientation in classes to a more workshop-like one would help the trainees to solve their problems with peers and with supervision of their teacher. Assigning group tasks in preparing periodicals and wall-gazettes on translation, asking the trainees to justify their own and peers' works and asking them to participate in translation seminars and lectures and take notes to be discussed later in class, can develop self-confidence and decision-making techniques in them which in turn cannot be gained unless through establishing a friendly, flexible, encouraging, and active environment in class. Appreciating trainees' achievements rather than looking for perfection, and having a limited number of students in class are also emphasized.

2. Offering elective courses are particularly recommended. Elective courses are essential for the trainees since it gives them the chance to choose what they are really interested in.

III: Finally, part III of the questionnaire focused on research question three. The frequency counts and Chi-square results of this section indicate that the panel have agreed on all the 18 items of this part, too. In other words, the panel have agreed on the following points:

1. It would be motivating for the trainees who have just started their four-year program to be informed of the importance of translation which is a major intellectual discipline and is the key to international understanding and also of the vast world of communication in which competent translators and interpreters are needed.

2. Adopting a student-centered methodology with focus on discourse-oriented activities, establishing a friendly and communicative state of competition together with collaboration among peers, providing an academic environment in which recently published articles and books can be available for the trainees, introducing the trainees the ways of reaching and using sources of knowledge, providing situations so that students' translations can be published in college journals or local publications, assigning a training period for the trainees outside the university e.g., in translation offices, radio and television broadcast centers, newspapers and journals offices, etc. and finally administering a screening test (proficiency test) after the first two years of BA program --which is devoted to general English courses-- in order to distinguish those with good knowledge of L2 from others, would be vital incentives for translation trainees to work harder and get highly motivated.

On the whole, it can be concluded that the BA translation program in Iranian universities needs substantive changes with regard to the skills, techniques, and contents it covers, the strategies applied to teach these skills, and learners' motivation. Elimination of the above-mentioned deficiencies, will hopefully promote the efficacy of the curriculum to a great extent.

- This paper is extracted out of my MA thesis. So, I would like to express my sincerest thanks to my thesis advisor, Dr. A. Mehdi Riazi, for his valuable assistance and guidance. Also, I am most grateful to Dr. Farzaneh Farahzad for her careful reading of the drafts and insightful comments.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire No. 1

1. What skills do you think should be incorporated in English Translation Curriculum (BA program) to help the trainees adapt themselves to the new changes in their field?
2. How do you think the environment of learning should be in terms of teaching /learning, teacher-student relation, holding seminars, and group tasks, etc.?
3. What can be done to promote the motivation of the learners for their field of study (English Translation)?

Appendix B

Questionnaire No. 2

I. Do you think the following skills and techniques should be incorporated in English Translation (BA program) to help trainees adapt themselves to the new developments in their field?

1. Translation trainees should be exposed to a variety of genres in both languages.
2. "Classical Persian & English Literature" should be presented to students as reading courses.
3. "Modern Persian & English Literature" should also be presented in some other reading courses.
4. Translation students need a reading course of newspapers and journals in Persian (in the present curriculum this course exists just in English).
5. A reading course in "Advertisements, Announcements, Instructions, etc." in both L1 & L2 should be added.
6. A critical reading and writing course of Persian and English prose should be assigned.

7. Courses which introduce various styles of writing in both L1 & L2 should be included.
8. Writing reports in both English and Persian should be added.
9. Students should take a Persian letter writing course (in the present curriculum this course exists just in English).
10. Students need to take a course in note-taking (from lectures) in both L1 & L2 as a prerequisite for interpreting courses.
11. Students need to take courses in "Editing & Punctuation" in both L1 & L2.
12. Students need independent vocabulary courses in both L1 & L2.
13. Students need courses on listening to different English tapes and writing the scripts.
14. Students need to have speaking courses in English (there was a 2-credit speaking course until 4 years ago which is now omitted from the program).
15. Students need to take a course in "Applied Linguistics".
16. They need some courses on "Discourse Analysis" & "Text Analysis".
17. Familiarizing T.Ts with pragmatics and communicative functions of utterances is necessary.
18. Students need more courses in practical comparative translations i.e., comparing original texts with their translations (at the present curriculum there are 4 such credits just for Islamic Texts course).
19. Students need a course in "Socio-Linguistics".

20. Students need more courses on "Theories of Translation" (more than the 2 credits in the present curriculum).
21. Introducing the latest articles and journals on translation to translation trainees and giving them assignments to read them and give summaries, is needed.
22. A general course on using computers should be assigned.
23. A course is needed to familiarize translation trainees with "Machine Translation" & "Machine-aided Translation".
24. Students need to have courses on practicing "Dubbing, Subtitling, and Sight Translation".
25. Students need to have a course teaching them how to use different dictionaries, encyclopedias, internet facilities, and other sources of information.

II. Do you agree with the following statements in relation to the environment of learning in terms of teaching and learning, teacher-student relation, holding seminars & group tasks, etc. ?

26. Shifting from teacher-centered orientation in translation classes to a more workshop-like one is suggested.
27. We can develop self-confidence and decision-making techniques in translation trainees by giving them chances to justify their own and their peers' works.

28. We should let translation trainees “experience” making mistakes in their translations.
29. Giving students group tasks to prepare periodicals and wall-newspapers on translation is suggested.
30. Providing elective courses for translation trainees would be useful.
31. The number of students should be limited in translation classes (maximum 15 students).
32. Translation trainees should participate in translation seminars and take notes to be discussed later in classes.
33. The environment of the class should be facilitative, flexible, encouraging, and active so that students think and ask questions.
34. Physical conditions of the environment such as the size of the class, form of the class (U-shape classes are more friendly), light, ventilation, etc. affect the classroom progress.
35. Teacher-student relationship should be friendly (academic friendship).
36. The selected passages for translation in classroom should be interesting for translation trainees.
37. Focus should be on “progress” and not on “perfection”.

III. Do you think the following suggestions have any positive role in improving translation trainees’ motivation ?

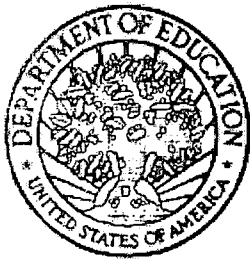
38. A student-centered methodology improves motivation.

39. We should provide situations so that students' translations can be published (e.g. in college journals, local publications, etc.).
40. Helping students to publish their outstanding translations in books or famous journals would increase their motivation.
41. Establishing a friendly and communicative state of competition in classrooms among peers would be helpful.
42. Collaboration would help more in improving students' motivation than competition.
43. Selecting meaningful and interesting materials is a vital incentive.
44. Allowing the trainees to translate material they are interested in for tasks and assignments can help.
45. Informing translation trainees that translation is a major intellectual discipline and is the key to international understanding, i.e. talking about the importance of the discipline and also informing them of the vast world of communication in which translators and interpreters are needed both in government and private sectors.
46. Having the trainees give lectures on their special areas of interest would be motivating.
47. Inviting professional translators to classes would be motivating.
48. Providing an academic environment in which recently published articles and books can be available to translation trainees would be motivating.
49. Creating a friendly atmosphere in classes with proper feedback from the teacher is needed.

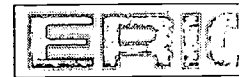
50. Giving interested students part-time jobs at the college --working as translators for a whole semester-- is motivating.
51. Assigning a training period for translation trainees somewhere outside university, for example in translation offices, etc. is motivating.
52. Familiarizing translation trainees with good translators and their works can be helpful.
53. Introducing the latest translations and researches undertaken in the area of translation to the trainees through publishing bibliographies of translation once a year at the college is needed.
54. Shifting from form-based, sentence-level orientation towards more discourse-oriented activities in translation classes is suggested.
55. As a way of increasing students' motivation, a screening test (proficiency test) should be administered after the first 2 years of BA. program so that those who pass, continue to study the specialized translation courses and those who don't, be given a certificate and graduated.

Item	Yes	mostly	unde- cided	to some degree	No	Item	Yes	mostly	unde- cided	to some degree	No
1						29					
2						30					
3						31					
4						32					
5						33					
6						34					
7						35					
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