

Title: “EFL prospective teachers as prospective translators; Exploring the practices of teaching and Learning Translation in faculties of Education in South Valley University”.

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EFL Prospective Teachers as Prospective Translators

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Abstract

This study explores the actual practices of preservice teachers of the faculty of education in learning and studying translation as well as the practices of university instructors in teaching and evaluating translation. Tools included two questionnaires and guided interviews with the instructors. Students-teachers of the faculty of Education were shown to lack most of the basic skills of translating and instructors seemed to be dissatisfied with the current practices of course design, teaching and evaluating translation tasks.

Introduction:

Many studies found out that teaching translation in most Departments of English in Faculties of Education in Egypt is confined to mere practice and intuition on the students' part, with the emphasis laid on judging the quality of their output (Kamel 1990 Al Maghreby 1995, Nodstoga 1988, Attia 1975 Massoud 1995,1988, Abdel Rahman 1996, Abdel Sadek 1990). Translation classes rarely include any type of analysis or help provided on systematic basis as far as translation problems and ability are concerned. Abdel Raheim (1998) points out that the absence of clear objectives of teaching translation, random choice of unrelated passages, and the irrelevance between the type of training students get and final examinations they sit for, all contribute to the low-quality performance of students. Gabr (2002) investigated the practices of teaching and studying translation in Egyptian governmental universities, however, his main focus was on translator education in these institutions. The focus in this study is on EFL teacher education in translation. Gabr's work (2002) though comprehensive –as it covered all the governmental universities and faculties that educate translators, didn't cover the area of South Valley in Egypt. South Valley University includes five

major regions in Egypt; Sohag , Qena, Luxor, Aswan and the Red Sea South Valley University includes four faculties of Education as well as three faculties of Arts where translators and teacher/translators are educated.

The present study seeks to explore the actual practices of teaching translation on the part of university instructors and learning translation on the part of students in the department of English in the faculty of Education.

Purpose of the study:

This study was conducted to achieve the following objectives:

1. To investigate and describe the actual practices of a sample of English Majors of Qena faculty of Education in studying and learning translation.
2. to Investigate and describe the actual practices of translation instructors in South Valley University, Qena, Sohag, and Asswan.
3. To identify the difference, if there is any, between the learning strategies and the actual study practices between first and fourth year students in the faculty of Education.

Tools of the study:

The study utilized the following tools:

1. A questionnaire for students to determine the actual practices of learning translation in Qena Faculty of Education.
2. A questionnaire for instructors to determine the actual practices of teaching translation in Qena Faculty of Education.

Design of the students' questionnaire:

This questionnaire consisted of 20 statements distributed on 4 dimensions, and students were required to read the statements and check one of three columns; *Always, Sometimes, or Never*. The four dimensions were: statements related to students' practices in studying Translation,

statements related to students' practices when facing problems of untranslatability, statements related to students' practices before the final test, and statements related to students' practices in the test when facing unseen passages. The questionnaire consisted of 10 negative statements and 10 positive statements, distributed as shown in table (1)

Table (1)
Distribution of positive and negative statements in the Students' questionnaire according to the four dimensions

Dimensions	In studying Translation	When Facing a problem	Before the test	In the test	Total
No. of Positive statements	2 , 5 , 7 , 4 , 6 , 8	10 , 11	16	19	10
No. of Negative statements	1 , 3	9 , 12	13 , 14 , 15	17, 18 , 20	10
Total	8	4	4	4	20

Sample of the study:

The questionnaire was administered on 200 randomly selected students from Qena Faculty of Education , English Department. 100 students were enrolled in the fourth year, and the other 100 were enrolled in the fourth year.

Validity of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was submitted to a jury of TEFL, and educational psychology experts. Some of their comments included adding some other phrases like "Translate passages from sources other than the course you study" in this questionnaire.

Experimental Treatments:

Students' responses were collected and tabled in percentages. Students were encouraged to add whatever they think is a problem or an actual practice that was not included in the questionnaire items.

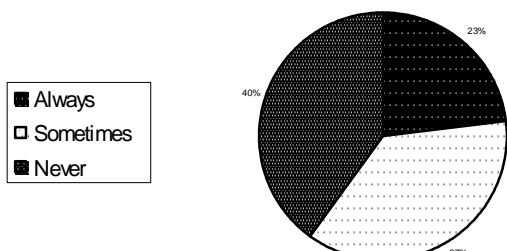
Results of the students' questionnaire:

Responses of the 200 students were collected and tabulated as shown in the following tables , graphs and diagrams.

Table (2)
Responses of First year students

No. of statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
1	45 %	55%	1%
2	20%	40%	40%
3	16%	31%	52%
4	42%	45%	13%
5	80%	14%	6%
6	60%	37%	3%
7	8%	28%	64%
8	0%	48%	52%
9	15%	51%	34%
10	11%	51%	38%
11	28%	54%	18%
12	4%	25%	71%
13	47%	28%	25%
14	61%	31%	8%
15	27%	45%	28%
16	16%	42%	42%
17	1%	31%	68%
18	6%	17%	77%
19	74%	20%	6%
20	6%	17%	77%

Percentages of 1st Year Ss Mean Responses to the Positive Statements



Percentages of 1st Year Ss Mean Responses to the Negative Statements

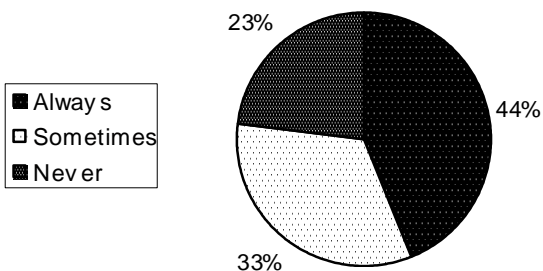
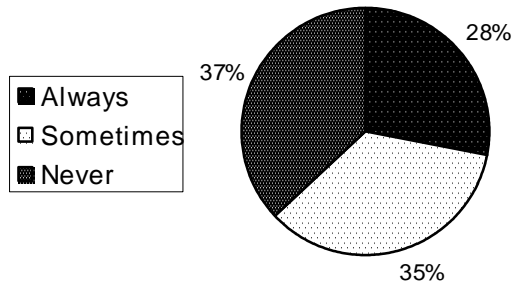


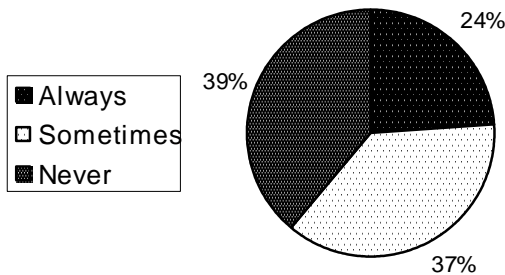
Table (3)
Responses of Fourth year students

No. of statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
1	25%	75%	0%
2	14%	72%	14%
3	10%	40%	50%
4	49%	45%	6%
5	68%	27%	5%
6	44%	36%	20%
7	27%	37%	36%
8	5%	36%	59%
9	17%	59%	24%
10	16%	46%	38%
11	11%	36%	53%
12	48%	28%	24%
13	63%	29%	8%
14	31%	50%	19%
15	18%	42%	40%
16	45%	35%	20%
17	2%	15%	83%
18	21%	18%	61%
19	62%	36%	2%
20	3%	14%	83%

Percentages of 4th Year Ss' Mean Responses to the Positive Statements



Percentages of 4th Year Ss' Mean Responses to the Negative Statements



The tables and diagrams show clearly the following points:

1. the difference between the practices of the first and the fourth year students is not big, in fact these practices are very close to each other. This is shown in the percentages of their mean responses to the positive as well as the negative statements; (37 % of the first year mean *NEVER* responses to the positive statements as compared to 40% of the fourth year students' , 44% of the first year mean *ALWAYS* responses to the negative statements as compared to 40% of the fourth year students') This in turn raises a more important issue; that is a large number of students in the English Department don't improve any

skills , or at least the major skills, of translating through four whole years of instruction.

2. 3% of first year students and 2% of the fourth year students confess, although it is very hard to do, that they will *ALWAYS* cheat in the test if they are faced with an unseen passage. 17% and 14% of them , respectively, declare that they may *SOMETIMES* do. While 17% of first year and 36% of fourth year students report that they will *SOMETIMES* ask the instructor to change the passage to be translated in the test. This shows that first years students have even more insight into the nature of the process of translating in tests more than that of the fourth year. This shows also that fresh students who join the English Department are ready to learn and obey the instructions and the protocols of the university according to the nature of the subject, and that through these long four years they acquire bad habits of limiting themselves in the boundaries of the selected passages in the course that is by its turn not so well organized.
3. 45 % of the first year students as well as 63% of the fourth year students report that they *ALWAYS* ask their instructors to allocate certain passages for them to memorize before the test, while no one of the first year as compared to only 5% of the fourth year students say that they translate passages from sources other than the course they study.
4. 31% of the first year and 15% of the fourth year students confess that they may *SOMETIMES* panic and stop translating if they face an unseen passage in the test.
5. The questionnaire results show also that students, in both groups, follow unsystematic procedures in the process of translating; 45% as compared to 72% respectively say that they *SOMETIMES* translate word by word, 51% and 59% of them say that they may *SOMETIMES*

continue translating even if they are not convinced of their translation if they face a problem or a structure they cannot translate.

6. 74% of the first year students say that they will depend on their own linguistic skills if they face an unseen passage in the test of translation, while only 62% of the fourth year students say that they will do the same. This shows , as mentioned before, that freshmen are ready to improve their skills if they find assistance while students who have majored in English for four years have almost lost their motivation in the process of developing skills and improving one's language abilities. They may have done so due to the ill-structured courses, the unsystematic methods of teaching and the lack of motivating activities.
7. It is noticed also that the additional comments of the first year students are so similar to those of fourth year students, both groups commented that the major problems they face in translating are the choice of appropriate meanings of new words, the rephrasing of difficult structures and that they found translation from Arabic into English more difficult than translation from English to Arabic because, they say, they cannot render the English equivalent to the Arabic original or that they do not know how to use an Arabic- English dictionary. The similarity of first and fourth year students' comments is a further indicator to the underdeveloped level of fourth year students.

Design of the Instructors' Questionnaire:

This questionnaire consisted of 27 statements that describe the actual practices of university instructors in teaching and testing translation. The statements were distributed on 4 dimensions, and instructors were required to read the statements and check one of three columns; *Always*, *Sometimes*, or *Never*. The four dimensions were: statements related to

instructors' practices in designing translation courses, statements related to instructors' practices in teaching translation, statements related to instructors' practices when designing the final test, and statements related to instructors' practices when scoring the final test. The questionnaire consisted of 2 negative statements and 25 positive statements, distributed as shown in table (4)

Table (4)
**Distribution of positive and negative
 Statements in the Students' questionnaire according to the four dimensions**

Dimensions	Designing Translation Courses	Teaching Translation	Designing final tests	Scoring the test	Total
No. of Positive statements	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14,15	17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22	24, 25, 26, 27	24
No. of Negative statements			16	23	2
Total	4	10	7	5	26

Sample of the study:

The questionnaire was administered on 15 University instructors who teach translation in the faculties of Education , South Valley University in Sohag, Qena and Asswan. These were the only people who teach and test translation in the whole University.

Validity of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was submitted to a jury of TEFL, and educational psychology experts. Some of their comments included a recommendation for conducting the instructors' questionnaire through guided interviews.

Experimental Treatments:

Instructors' responses were collected and tabled in percentages. In order to overcome the problem of sincerity in responding to the questionnaire items, personal interviews were conducted to discuss with the instructors the four major dimensions of the questionnaire, and instructors were encouraged to add their comments that were not included in the questionnaire items.

Results of the study:

Through reviewing instructors' responses to the questionnaire items, it was noticed that most instructors tended to check the *SOMETIMES* column for fear of appearing socially inappropriate and as a way of keeping in the middle position. Hence the personal interviews with each one of the instructors tend to discuss with the instructors their actual practices. The interviews showed the following points:

1. Most instructors (9 out of 15) declared that they had no training in course design nor in linguistic theories , that their major is Literature and that they teach translation without certain systematic lesson plans or course design techniques.
2. Some instructors (6) said that they were delegated to teach this subject in place of the senior instructors who do not care about this subject.
3. Most instructors (10) stated that they differentiate between the selected materials for Arts students and those for Education students.
4. Some instructors (6) stated that the only needs assessment they conduct before the process of course design is considering the linguistic level of the students through indicating their study years' results.
5. Most instructors (12) said that they follow the discussion method in teaching translation, that they may *sometimes* ask students to conduct a research work in which they translate part of the textbook.

6. Almost all (14) instructors said that don't follow certain lesson plans in teaching translation, rather they teach according to the level of proficiency and motivation found in the students they teach.
7. Only one of the instructors stated that she allows students to take the dictionary with them to the test room.
8. A good number of instructors (9)said that they choose seen passages for the students when designing the test.
9. 12 instructors reported that they look for the overall meaning as well as choice of words when scoring the test.
10. No one of the instructors said that they share any other rater with them in the process of scoring the final test due to the lack of university instructors and to the limited time and the big burden imposed on language instructors at the university level.
11. Most instructors (13) stated that they need to have a model of good translation course and good translation test to follow in their teaching, declaring their practices as nonsystematic and outdated.

Conclusion:

The overall results show that there is a bad need for designing a systematic programme for developing basic translation skills for first year English majors in the faculty of Education. This shows also that there is a need for a systematic translation test that measures translation ability. This pilot study is the basis of an ambitious work that begins with indicating the skills and subskills of translation in order to build upon them a suggested translation course.

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Appendices :

- 1- Students' questionnaire
- 2- Instructors' questionnaire

A questionnaire

On translation learning strategies

Dear Students,

In order to improve the quality of the translation courses taught for you, we need your answers to the following questions. This is not a test. No marks are given for your answer. There is no right or wrong answer. Just put a tick (\surd) under (*ALWAYS*) if you always do what is in the statement , (*SOMETIMES*) if you do it sometimes, and under (*NEVER*) if you don't do it.

<i>Translation learning strategies</i>		<i>Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
When you study translation , you ...				
1.	<i>Look up the dictionary for each and every new word.</i>			
2.	<i>Understand the overall meaning without referring to the dictionary.</i>			
3.	<i>Translate word by word.</i>			
4.	<i>Translate sentence by sentence.</i>			
5.	<i>Rephrase the sentence after finishing translation</i>			
6.	<i>Rephrase the structure of the whole passage according to the target language (the langue translated into , not translated from).</i>			
7.	<i>Identify the level of the language used ; standard , slang , poetry, journalism,..</i>			
8.	<i>Translate passages from sources other than the course you study; newspapers, magazines, internet printouts,..</i>			
	Others , please specify : _____ _____ _____ _____ _____			
When you face a problem (structure) that you cannot translate, you...				
9	<i>Continue translating even if you are not convinced of your translation.</i>			
10	<i>Refer to the instructor for advice.</i>			
11	<i>Refer to similar texts in which you encountered the present structure.</i>			
12	<i>You quit translating , and seek the version of one of your colleagues</i>			
	Others , please specify : _____ _____ _____			

<i>Translation learning strategies</i>		<i>Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>			
Before the test , you ...				
13	<i>Ask the instructor to allocate certain passages for you</i>			
14	<i>to study.</i>			
15	<i>Memorize the allocated texts with their “best” translations.</i>			
16	<i>Divide the work of translating among a group and take what every one wrote without further revision.</i>			
	<i>Divide the work of translating among a group and take what every one wrote making revisions.</i>			
	Others , please specify :			
	<hr/>			
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When you face an unseen passage in the test, you...				
17	<i>Get panic and stop translating.</i>			
18	<i>Ask for the instructor and try to change the passage in</i>			
19	<i>the test.</i>			
20	<i>Continue translating depending on your linguistic skills</i>			
	<i>Try to cheat.</i>			
	Others , please specify :			
	<hr/>			
	<hr/>			

<i>Translation learning strategies</i>		<i>Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>

A questionnaire

On translation teaching strategies

Dear Prof./Dr. _____

The researcher is conducting a study that proposes an educational model for teaching translation. As part of the data collection section, the study investigates the actual practices of translation teaching and evaluation strategies. You are kindly requested to respond to the following items by putting a tick (√) under ONE of the three columns entitled ; *Never* ,*Sometimes*, or *Always*.

Thank you

<i>Translation teaching strategies</i>		<i>Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
When you design a translation course , you ...				
1.	<i>Identify students' needs.</i>			
2.	<i>Identify market needs.</i>			
3.	<i>Define objectives for the course.</i>			
4.	<i>Prepare materials that are relevant to the field of the students' specialization ; Arts, Education .</i>			
5.	<i>Design students' and course evaluation instruments , other than the final test.</i>			
	Others , please specify : _____ _____ _____ _____ _____			
When you teach translation, you...				
6	<i>Follow a certain linguistic theory.</i>			
7	<i>Follow a certain educational theory.</i>			
8	<i>Use the lecture method of teaching.</i>			
9	<i>Use the discussion method of teaching.</i>			
10	<i>Use the problem solving method of teaching.</i>			
11	<i>Use the technique of case study.</i>			
12	<i>Use audiovisual aids.</i>			
13	<i>Use the technique of role-playing.</i>			
14	<i>Follow a certain lesson plan for each translation session.</i>			
15	<i>Discuss problems of untranslatableability, and suggest solutions.</i>			

<i>Translation teaching strategies</i>		<i>Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
	Others , please specify : <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>			
When design the final test of translation , you ...				
16	<i>Choose passages that have been taught to the students (seen passages).</i>			
18	<i>Choose unseen passages.</i>			
19	<i>Choose passages that are relevant to students' work; Arts, Education, ...</i>			
20	<i>Present difficult words in simple structures.</i>			
21	<i>Present simple words in difficult structures.</i>			
22	<i>Allow students to take dictionaries with them to the test room</i>			
	Others , please specify : <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>			
When you score the final test, you...				
23	<i>Look for spelling mistakes.</i>			
24	<i>Look for structure mistakes.</i>			

