Perceptions of student-centered learning in online translator training: findings from Jordan

Ogareet Khoury*
Al-Ahliyya Amman University, Amman, Jordan

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ABSTRACT
On January 5th, 2021, the Jordanian Ministry of Higher Education released its 2021–2023 directives for online learning at the institutions of higher education which stressed the significance of implementing a student-centered learning (SCL) in online education. In compliance with the Ministry’s vision, the present study investigates the enhancement of SCL in translator training in Jordan from the perspective of students and teachers at five Jordanian universities. This study is the second phase of an empirical mixed methods research in which the first phase surveyed 109 students from three universities. The sample of this phase consisted of 148 senior translation students and ten translation teachers in which students were surveyed using closed-ended questionnaires and teachers were interviewed. SPSS IBM 28.0.0 and NVIVO 12 were used for data analysis. The results revealed that students agreed on the implementation of four out of seven student-centered learning facets and teachers showed a general propensity towards the enhancement of SCL. However, some reservations and challenges were raised with relation to teamwork, time management and peer review.

1. Introduction

Before the outbreak of the pandemic, translator training programs in Jordan have always been offered in a face-to-face mode. Online learning has been imposed on all education institutions since March 2020 (World Bank, 2020). Since then, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education have been issuing several directives on how to adapt to the new learning mode. Maintaining a student-centered learning (SCL) approach in online education was stressed in the latest directives released by the Ministry of Higher Education in January, 2021.

As a translation instructor, the researcher of this study was interested to investigate whether SCL -as a new mode of education in Jordan- is enhanced from the perspective of students. For the past thirty years, empirical research in translation pedagogy has been yielding translation competence theories and models that were employed in the curricula design (Göpferich, 2009). For instance, the translation competence models developed by EMT (2017) and PACTE (2003 and 2011) were used in the design of most European universities’ curricula and had a tremendous impact on the development of translation competence. Similarly, empirical research conducted on teaching practices and methods contributed remarkably to improving translation teaching methodology (e.g. Kiraly’s empirical research in 1995, 2000 and the most recent study in 2015). According to Malena (2003) such empirical studies had positive impact on translation education worldwide. On the other side of the spectrum, translation educators can detect pitfalls in translator training, gearing them towards corrective actions in constructive research. The present study is no exception. Probing into actual practices in translation teaching helps in detecting drawbacks that can be transformed into corrective actions. As student-centered learning starts with the teacher (McCarthy, 2015), this study serves as a teacher-student forum where pitfalls are unveiled and corrective actions are made available for educators to apply.

The following section presents a literature review of student-centered learning, followed by methodology, results, analysis, pedagogical implications, conclusion, recommendations and scope for future research.

2. Literature review

A review of previous studies which tackled the notion, techniques and challenges of SCL is reflected herein below. In addition, this section summarizes research conducted on SCL in conventional and online translator training. The concluding subsection (section 2.3) presents a summary of empirical studies conducted in the Jordanian context on
translator training highlighting the gaps that need to be bridged and how this study contributes in bridging such research gap.

2.1. Student-centered learning

Teaching approaches and methods, in different disciplines, have evolved remarkably with the emergence of communicative, humanistic and social constructivist approaches. The common ground among them is placing the learner at the core of the learning process; i.e. a student-centered learning approach (SCLA).

Methods and techniques of student-centered learning include but are not limited to focus on the performance and achievement of learners (Harden and Crosby 2009), thus allowing learners’ input to be included in the curricula and syllabi design, in addition to encouraging creativity and interactive group work (Brown 2001; Weimer 2002).

It can be noted that concepts of SCL lie somehow in a gray area in relation to the methods and techniques associated with it. However, it was found that the core facets of SCL are autonomous, experiential and problem-solving learning within a collaborative environment (Jones, 2007). This revolves around the notion of enabling learners to build their own knowledge rather than just being passive recipients of information (Estes, 2004).

There has been some questioning of the applicability of student-centered learning in online education. Several studies concluded that online courses can be of great success in applying student-centered learning if designed well. In an empirical study by Bonk et al. (2013), online learners reported that online courses enhanced their interpersonal professional skills as well as their abilities to fix problems independently. In the work of Blood-Siegfried et al. (2008), authors argued that despite the essential role of technology, SCL success in online instruction mainly depends on learners and teachers’ practices. Mccombs (2015) pointed out that SCL methods can be applied effectively if supportive institutional environment was provided. Some of the challenges raised in SCL for online courses included ensuring effective collaborative work at a distance and motivating students to show active attendance and participation (e.g. McLoughlin and Luca, 2002; Alexander, 2006; Brindley et al., 2009). Research-based strategies were suggested to overcome such obstacles such as defining group tasks clearly and providing learners with sufficient training and supportive sources.

2.2. Student-centered translator training

The applicability and efficacy of SCL in translation education was highlighted in several theoretical studies on translation pedagogy and translation competence (e.g. Kiraly, 1995; Dollerup 1994; Klaudy 1995). Student-centered learning is believed to be enhanced through the enhancement of several methods, among which is task-based teaching (Nunan 2004). Task-based teaching is a highly advocated method which facilitates SCL in translation pedagogy (Gonzalez Davies, 2004; Hurado Albir 2015).

Student-centered learning was taken further by framing SCL within authentic learning and social constructivism (e.g. Kiraly 2006; Gonzalez Davies, 2004). Nevertheless, empirical research on SCL in translator training is still under-developed especially in contexts where teacher-centeredness has been prevalent.

Don Kiraly contributed remarkably to the implementation, enhancement and development of SCL in translator training within a competence-oriented teaching methodology. A great deal of the suggested methods and techniques of SCL in traditional and online translation pedagogy is rooted in the research work done by Kiraly throughout over twenty years (e.g. Kiraly, 1995, 2000, 2006, 2015). Kiraly’s work was influential in SCL that several empirical studies in SCL translator training -including this study- were guided by the methods and techniques suggested by Kiraly (Malena, 2003).

2.3. Translator training research within the Jordanian context

Empirical research on translator training in Jordan has been gaining momentum in the past twenty years. Some empirical studies have investigated the competence of graduates at the undergraduate level from the perspective of teachers, employers and students (Khoury, 2017) while others tackled the appropriateness of curricula to the needs of trainees and demands of the job market (e.g., Yousef, 2004; Mahasneh, 2013; Al-Batineh and Bilali, 2017). All of the aforementioned studies were prominent in the Jordanian context and provided insights into how there seems to be a gap between curriculum design and the actual demands of the market. However, while the curricula design reflects what is taught, there is still a need for pragmatic reflections on the actual teaching methods applied and the activities performed inside the classroom. When competence of graduates is questioned -as revealed in Khoury’s study (2017)- teachers’ practices have to be investigated as well. Even when the methodology of teaching is included in any course syllabus, it is not uncommon to have a contradiction between what has to be done and what is actually done. Therefore, there is still a need for research that probes into whether teaching methods along with the in-class activities do foster a competence-oriented translator training.

To the knowledge of the researcher of this paper, there have been no published works on SCL in translator training in Jordan except for this research with its two phases. The first phase was conducted during the second term of 2019–2020 where a group of researchers surveyed senior translation students -using open-ended questionnaire-on the enhancement of SCL (Khoury et al., 2021). Responses reflected a general positive attitude towards the enhancement of SCL in online education. The three SCL facets that seemed to be of an issue for respondents were related to enhancing collaborative work among students, in particular working in groups and exchanging reviews in addition to poor time management. The reasons given by students, included but were not limited to, not being assigned group projects or tasks and not being trained to provide constructive feedback (Khoury et al., 2021). Among the recommendations of the research first phase was probing into teachers’ reflections on students’ responses to get some interpretation from the other side of the spectrum. In response to those recommendations of, this phase included the voices of teachers as key stakeholders along with an additional batch of students covering the five universities that offer translator training at the undergraduate level. The following section presents the design of the research including its theoretical framework, methods and materials used for data collection and analysis.

3. Research design

3.1. Research questions

The study poses the following two questions to which it attempts to find answers:

1. What are students’ attitudes towards the questioned SCL facets in online translator training?
2. What are teachers’ reflections on students’ responses/attitudes?

3.2. Theoretical framework

The framework of the present study is guided by the teaching methods and techniques suggested and used by Kiraly at et al. (2015) in an empirical study on SCL in online translator training. According to the study, facets which reflect an actual practice of SCL in a given translation module are: teamwork, autonomy and responsibility, time management, formative peer assessment, authentic project work, absence of teacher-centered instruction and students’ reflection on their own work. These facets were used as questionnaire items in closed-ended questionnaires administered to students on which teachers reflected in semi-structured interviews.
3.3. Data collection and analysis methods

The current study used mixed methods research (MMR). It’s an explanatory sequential design (Creswell et al., 2003) where qualitative data from teachers’ interviews explain quantitative data collected from students’ questionnaires since qualitative data test what people do and qualitative data provide understandings behind behaviours (Silverman, 2001). The purpose of using MMR is to complete the picture by getting reflections and/or interpretation of teachers on students’ attitudes since SCL enhancement starts with the teacher (McCarthy, 2015).

In the first phase of the research, 109 students from three universities were sampled to comment on SCL enhancement in open-ended questionnaires during second term of 2019–2020. The recommendation of the first phase study was to probe into teachers’ perceptions towards students’ attitudes. Therefore, this phase included teachers’ voices (10 respondents) along with an extended sample of students (148 respondents) -as shown in table 1- from five universities during the second term of 2020–2021. Data from students were collected quantitatively while teachers’ reflections were collected qualitatively to benefit from both methods. An anonymity was assured, pseudonyms were used in the citation of interview quotes.

A Likert-style survey was administered to a total of 161 senior translation students at the five universities which offer translator training at the undergraduate level in the capital city. Out of the 161 questionnaires, 148 questionnaires were responded to with an average number of participants ranging between 27 to 31 from each university which was satisfactory as it secured acceptable ratio of participation. The selected sample was confined to senior students since those were expected to have experienced two years at least of face-to-face learning before universities switched to full online learning. Their experience of the two modes of learning is believed to have given them a chance to provide informed judgment. The SCL suggested by Kiraly et al. (2015) were formulated into a four-point scale; strongly agree → strongly disagree (Appendix 1).

Two translation professors (referred to as teachers throughout the research paper) were interviewed from each university in semi-structured interviews. The selection of teachers was based on fulfilling a basic criterion; a teaching experience of no less than 4 years in the university. Interviews -which were recorded and transcribed- were conducted after quantitative data from students’ responses were analyzed. Table 1 below provides a summary of participants who responded to closed-ended questionnaires and personal communication interviews.

Questionnaires and questions of interviews were piloted for validity, reliability and full compliance with research ethics. They were endorsed and signed by the Committee of Academic Research at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Al-Ahliya Amman University (Decision Number: 20-1-13). IBM SPSS statistical analysis software version 28.0.0 was used for data analysis. Quantitative results were presented in descriptive statistics; e.g., (mean score, frequencies and standard deviation). SPSS data files were imported into NVIVO 12 as classification sheets for combined analysis.

Likert questionnaires were tested for internal consistency. As determined by a Cronbach’s alpha, the scale had a high level of internal consistency of 0.82. The coefficient of reliability value for each item indicated a moderate reliability level ranging from 0.72 – 0.87 as illustrated below in Table 2.

4. Results and analysis

4.1. Quantitative data: students’ perception

To answer the first research question stated in section 3.1 on students’ attitudes towards SCL, students’ responses in the closed-ended questionnaire were analyzed. Table 3 below presents descriptive statistics in compliance with IBM SPSS output sheets.

Results presented in Table 3 revealed that students generally agreed that online translator training at the sampled universities is SCL-oriented. Their views were positive towards the enhancement of each of the following: autonomy and responsibility, absence of teacher-centeredness, reflection on their learning and authentic translation projects with mean scores of 3.5, 3.2, 3.1 and 2.8 respectively. It can be noted that autonomy and responsibility, absence of teacher-centeredness and reflection on learning showed mean scores between agreement and strong agreement. Interestingly, there is an interplay among the three facets as they all reveal empowerment that is transferred from the teacher to students and are within the core of SCL (Jones, 2007). On the other side of the spectrum, responses of students reflected disagreement as regards the enhancement of time management, team work and peer review with mean scores less than 2.5. These three facets are also inter-related (Daly, 2014) as they are associated with the ability to perform interactive group projects, i.e., collaborative work. Therefore, it can be argued here that the facets related to empowering self-learning were perceived positively while those related to team interaction seemed to be points of concern from the perspective of students. This grouping of facets and their pedagogical implications are discussed further in section 5.

4.2. Qualitative data: teachers’ reflections

To answer the second research question stated in section 3.1 on teachers’ reflections towards students’ responses, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the sampled teachers. To have a general view of their perception of SCL, the interviews were initiated with a general question on how they perceive SCL in translator training. The subsequent interview questions only focused on the three SCL facets that received negative perception from students with a mean score less than 2.5 to unveil opportunities for improvement. Responses of teachers were integrated and subcategorized in NVIVO 12 according to concurrence and disjunction. Pedagogical implications of teachers’ views in light of students’ responses are discussed further in section 5. The following section is confined to the collected data.

4.2.1. Teachers’ general perception of SCL

With reference to the results in Table 3, it can be noticed that students agreed that there was an absence of teacher-centeredness in favor of student-centered learning. The teachers’ perception deduced from the

Table 1. Number and distribution of participants.

| University | No. of Teachers Personal communication interviews | No. of Students Closed-ended questionnaires |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| University 1 | 2                                              | 31                                       |
| University 2 | 2                                              | 27                                       |
| University 3 | 2                                              | 30                                       |
| University 4 | 2                                              | 29                                       |
| University 5 | 2                                              | 31                                       |
| 10 Teachers | 148 Students                                   |                                          |

| Item | Cronbach’s Alpha (%) | N of Items |
|------|----------------------|------------|
| 1    | 0.86                 | 7          |
| 2    | 0.78                 | 7          |
| 3    | 0.74                 | 7          |
| 4    | 0.79                 | 7          |
| 5    | 0.82                 | 7          |
| 6    | 0.87                 | 7          |
| 7    | 0.86                 | 7          |
interviews showed a propensity towards SCL. As some of them commented, “student-centered learning proved to be a great learning approach”; “students show better results in student-centered learning”; “I fully agree student-centered learning should be enhanced by all school and university teachers” (Yanni, personal communication, April 25, 2021).

However, they pointed out some challenges in enhancing certain SCL methods. According to interviewees, the prevalent teaching method in Jordanian schools is teacher-centered learning with little or no empowerment given to students. For teachers, a sudden switch from teacher-centered to student-centered learning poses a real challenge for both the teacher and the students. As a teacher stated, “I prefer to assign them individual tasks so that each of them independently consumes when it requires spending time on training students to manage the course which risks a full coverage of the syllabus”. (Saeed, personal communication, April 28, 2021).

The fact that the selected universities for this study accept high school students with a GPA of 60% without imposing any additional entry requirements (e.g. Yousef, 2004; Khoury, 2017) leaves teachers in a state of uncertainty about the academic abilities of students to be fully empowered. It raises questions as regards their readiness to act as key role players in the learning process. Challenges faced by teachers in applying full SCL were similarly reflected in other studies (e.g. Boddy et al., 2003; Kazempour, 2009; Keys and Bryan 2001; Tamim and Grant 2013).

When exposed to students’ responses to SCL facets, teachers were asked to comment generally on facets which reflected positive attitudes before moving to detailed reflections on facets which were not seen as enhanced by teachers.

As for the positive responses with respect to autonomy and responsibility, absence of teacher-centeredness, reflection on learning and handling authentic translation projects, teachers’ reflections are summarized in the following concluding paragraph of this section.

Teachers stated that efforts were exerted in empowering students to be key and central role players in the learning process. Aspects of empowerment—such as identified by teachers-included consulting students on the material to be included and the type of assignments to work on and assessment methods. Online learning was seen as a supportive mode for enhancing students’ independence as they were trained to take responsibility in handling assignments via Moodle or Microsoft Teams which needed continuous follow up and commitment to deadlines. Interviews’ extracts stated, “working at a distance made students more alert, independent and responsible as they felt they were already missing face-to-face interaction and thus continuous follow up was the only way to catch up”; “assignments, projects and assessments were processed via online learning management systems” (Hannah, personal communication, April 25, 2021). “It was each student’s responsibility to check date of posting assignments and accomplish them independently” (Awn, personal communication, April 26, 2021).

As shown in Table 3, enhancement of teamwork, time management and peer review were not seen as enhanced. Teachers’ commentary on students’ responses with respect to these facets are presented and discussed below in sub-sections 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 4.2.4.

### 4.2.2. Teamwork

As for students’ responses to enhancement of teamwork, the mean score was 2.3 in Table 3 which indicated disagreement. Teachers’ feedback on students’ attitude came as follows in eight interviews. For teachers, individual work was preferred in online classes because working in groups conceals effort of each student thus preventing individual and fair assessment especially that students are out of sight when their cameras are turned off. This practice of turning off cameras turned out to be common among online learners as revealed in some studies (e.g. Castelli and Sarvary, 2021). Furthermore, working in groups where one or two outstanding students may outperform other group members is believed by teachers to make average or weak students more dependent. One teacher stated, “I prefer to assign them individual tasks so that each student can be assessed separately” (Yanni, personal communication, April 25, 2021). Others perceived grouping as a time-consuming activity where each group has to be given a task to work on while being observed which delays the progress of the course work. In addition, it was also seen as an activity which creates some unwanted noise for students might get engaged in mutual conversations rather than work on the given task. Such concerns related to noise and time constraints were highlighted in some studies on educational environment at Arab universities. A study conducted by Ghabra (2012) pointed out that classes at some Arab universities are overloaded with students which eventually obstructs proper interaction among students.

Interestingly, there were also some questioning of the efficacy of grouping and its relation to activating students’ roles. Some teachers’ responses showed that they perceived grouping to be suitable at schools

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### Table 3. Students’ responses to the enhancement of SCL facets.

| Facets                                      | Strongly Agree % | Agree % | Disagree % | Strongly Disagree % | Mean Score | Std. Deviation |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------|---------|------------|--------------------|------------|----------------|
| **Absence of teacher-centered learning**    |                  |         |            |                    |            |                |
| Time management                             | 20%              | 50%     | 7.1%       | 0%                 | N/A        | 4.8%           |
| **Autonomy and Responsibility**             |                  |         |            |                    |            |                |
| Strongly Agree %                            |                  |         |            |                    |            |                |
| 20%                                         | 50%              | 7.1%     | 0%         | N/A                | 3.2703     | .65564         |
| **Authentic translation projects**          |                  |         |            |                    |            |                |
| Strongly Agree %                            |                  |         |            |                    |            |                |
| 20%                                         | 50%              | 7.1%     | 0%         | N/A                | 5.2570     | .57671         |
| **Reflection of students on their own learning** |                  |         |            |                    |            |                |
| Strongly Agree %                            |                  |         |            |                    |            |                |
| 20%                                         | 50%              | 7.1%     | 0%         | N/A                | 3.5213     | .67870         |
| **Peer review and assessment**              |                  |         |            |                    |            |                |
| Strongly Agree %                            |                  |         |            |                    |            |                |
| 20%                                         | 50%              | 7.1%     | 0%         | N/A                | 3.2162     | .58211         |
but not appropriate for university students. Working in pairs was preferred as an alternative for it allows more focused work in a quieter atmosphere.

In addition, it seemed to teachers that absenteeism became a common practice among online learners which adversely affected in-class teamwork. One interviewee was quoted as saying, “they seem to be online when they are not actually present, we all know that; in online courses, being connected does not mean one is attending” (Linn, personal communication, April 29, 2021). Absenteeism in online courses was discussed in the study conducted by Alexander (2006) in which the author argued that from students’ perspective, online learning offers flexibility as regards time and place of study and therefore they do not attach due importance to synchronous learning.

On the other side of the spectrum, two teachers seemed to believe that online learning enhanced teamwork through creating groups on social media platforms; an option which was not considered in traditional classroom teaching. ‘Social media groups were used to share difficulties and solutions in the translational tasks they are given including technical issues which enhanced group work outside the classroom’, as quoted by one teacher (Jaber, personal communication, April 29, 2021). From teachers’ perspective, it was much easier for students to share documents on Moodle and Teams platforms in handling group assignments or translation projects. In general, students’ responses and most teachers’ comments showed that teamwork may be an issue at translator training programs in the sampled universities. Further implications of such findings are discussed in section 5.

4.2.3. Peer review and assessment

With reference to Table 3, it can be noticed that enhancing peer review and assessment got the lowest mean score in students’ responses. As per teachers, peer review and assessment seemed to pose one more challenge for several reasons. There is a misconception among students that they can derive greater benefits from teachers’ guidance as a reliable source of knowledge. Teachers seem to unanimously agree that students themselves, when encouraged to benefit from peer review, do not feel confident about the added value of their peers.

As quoted in interview extracts, “Students do not qualify for reliable peer assessors as they lack the required skills” (Adel, personal communication, April 26, 2021). In online learning mode, peer review seemed more challenging from teachers’ perspective; ‘online peer review and assessment requires high technicalities in using translation assessment tools and computer-assisted translation’, one teacher commented (Salem, personal communication, April 27, 2021).

Teachers stated that they do their best to facilitate exchange of views and peer assessment, however, students seem reluctant to provide or receive feedback on the quality of their translations. One main obstacle, identified by teachers, was students’ little awareness of technology-facilitated tools in peer assessment. Students were not well-oriented to track changes on windows or use the interactive computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools for quality assessment. In addition, teachers referred to immaturity of students in peer assessment which they showed in face-to-face and online learning. Their assessment methodology seemed to be outdated as they considered the word as a translation unit which is linguistic-based assessment that fails to provide natural translation. Some of the teachers attributed this to reasons such as “students’ unawareness of the assessment criteria and rubrics” (Saeed, personal communication, April 28, 2021). This deficiency led to ineffective use of computer-aided assessment.

According to all interviewed teachers, ability to provide peer review and assessment was generally under-developed, especially when that practice was conducted online as it required more skills in using computer-aided tools. Pedagogical implications of teachers’ perception regarding peer review are discussed further in section 5.

4.2.4. Time management

According to students’ responses in Table 3, the mean score for enhancement of time management was 2.2 (disagree) which is the second lowest mean score after peer review. According to teachers, one main reason why time could not be managed wisely by online learners was attending online lectures while being engaged in work or house chores. Teachers revealed that male students were attending classes from their workplace while female students were attending classes while doing house chores. As reflected in one interview extract, “students miss classes or show passive presence because of work or family commitment; they compensate by listening to the recorded lectures in the afternoon when they have to work on course assignments. This resulted in very poor time management” (Moore, personal communication, April 28, 2021).

In many cases, students relied on replaying recorded lectures on Microsoft Teams instead of attending live-streamed classes. As reflected in teachers’ comments, “recorded lectures are expected to serve as make-up material for an excused absence or revision material for exams, but unfortunately our students tended to miss most real time classes knowing that recorded lectures are always available”. “Watching recorded lectures instead of attending real time lectures became the norm rather than an exception” (Jaber, personal communication, April 29, 2021). For teachers, that indicated students’ unawareness of the significance of synchronous learning and resulted in poor time management. These practices of online absenteeism were also seen as adversely affecting teamwork (see 4.2.2).

Most comments revolved around the notion that work and family commitments were prioritized over active class participation and accomplishment of course tasks. The economic deterioration Jordan witnessed since the outset of the pandemic set different priorities for students and their parents.

Another factor which adversely affects time management from teachers’ perspective was working in a noisy distracting environment when learners were experiencing long hours of curfew while surrounded by all household members. Interestingly, some interviewees stated that curfew conditions affected them as much as it affected students. As unveiled by teachers, complete lockdown, which lasted for some months in Jordan, resulted in sleeping disorders and affected everyone’s biological clock and thus time management. Such concerns were echoed in a study by Leone et al. (2020) which raised the negative effects of lockdown on human sleep patterns, chronotype and social jetlag.

Female teachers seemed to fully understand the chaotic status Jordanian women went through during the lockdown. One female teacher commented saying, “to tell you the truth we went through the same experience; house atmosphere may not always guarantee a high quality online lecture due to noise and distraction we had in the background from our children”; “It affected our concentration and time management.” (Awn, personal communication, April 26 2021). Giving online lectures from home while surrounded by everyone posed a new lifestyle on teachers and students which required some time to adapt to.

In the following section, the researcher discusses the pedagogical implications of students’ responses and the teachers’ reflections discussed in the section above.

5. Pedagogical implications

Results presented in section 4 showed that students generally agreed that autonomy & responsibility, absence of teacher-centeredness, reflection on learning and engagement in translation authentic projects were enhanced by teachers in online learning in which autonomy and responsibility reflected strong agreement. On the other side of the spectrum, students showed disagreement as regards the enhancement of teamwork, peer review, i.e. collaborative work along with time management. Teachers’ reflections provided interpretation on why the enhancement of these SCL aspects was hindered.

It is worth mentioning here that the facets reflecting positive responses were found to be interrelated within an overarching aspect as it was the case with those showing negative responses. Autonomy, absence of teacher-centeredness, empowerment to reflect on learning and work on authentic projects were described as featuring the core of student-centered learning; for they indicate a shift in power from the teacher to
the learner fostering independence of the latter (Rogers, 1983; Jones, 2007). On the other hand, it was found that there was an interplay among teamwork, peer review and time management in the sense that they are all features of collaborative work. Ability to work within a group necessarily implies ability to provide and accept peer review, i.e. collaborative work. Obviously any collaborative work in translation projects entails group tasks that are shared by team members to be accomplished within a certain timeframe, i.e. requiring time management (Suárez, 2021; Hartley, 2009; Daly, 2014; Perminova, 2018). Nevertheless, time management remains a requirement in handling any translation project whether within a group or individually.

To sum up, it can be argued that the overarching aspect of facets responded on positively is empowerment and independence of learners while the overarching aspect of facets responded on negatively is ability to work within a team effectively. In fact, this can trigger the following question: was the over-enhanced autonomy and independence at the expense of cooperating and interacting with peers? There may be no definite answer to this question at this stage, however, such findings indicate that students are more trained to work as free-lancers (individually) than they are as in-house translators (in groups) in which the former requires autonomy and the latter requires collaborative work.

Another valid question can to be posed here: what is the relationship between SCL enhancement and the development of translation competence? As seen in the literature review (section 2), SCL has been generally recommended as a competence-oriented approach, thus, the interplay between each SCL facet and translation competence is clarified further below.

The design of a given translator training program can be seen as a process of three phases. In phase one, curriculum designers lay the foundation of the program that is operationalized by teachers’ pedagogical methods in phase two. As a result of phase one and phase two, translation competence gets developed to prepare students for the job market in phase three. Therefore, the role of teachers in the application of SCL is crucial (McCarthy, 2015). Any missing link in the three phases, as shown in Figure 1 below, breaks the chain and results in failure of providing competent translators to the market.

It is the ultimate aim of any translator training program to develop the translator's competence (Schaeffner and Adab, 2000: x; Hurtado Albir, 2015). Translation competence is defined as the knowledge needed to translate or ‘the knowledge and skills the translator must possess in order to carry out a translation’ (Bell, 1991: 43). Competence-based training (CBT) is not only about what to teach but how to teach; i.e. pedagogical approaches (e.g. Kiraly, 1995, 2000; Hurtado-Albir, 2015). Competence-based training (CBT) normally aims at developing all intended competences to prepare competent graduates for a competitive job market (Pym, 2003; Beeby, 2004; Gahr, 2007).

According to several translation competence models (PACTE 2003; 2011; EMT, 2017), all student-centered learning facets were integrated with certain competences. In PACTE’s model (2003, 2011) competent translators are expected to have acquired bilingual competence, bi-cultural competence, instrumental competence, professional competence and strategic competence. Teamwork, peer review and time management which were responded on negatively, constitute integral parts of the professional and strategic competences in PACTE’s model (2003, 2011). In the EMT model (2017), they are integrated within the personal and interpersonal sub-competence. For instance, the instrumental competence as defined by PACTE is ‘the knowledge related to the use of documentation sources and information technologies’ (PACTE, 2003: 17) which is integrated into the professional competence in the same model. Therefore, if the facets related to collaborative work are not enhanced, then the competences associated to them are adversely affected.

Since enhancement of collaborative work and time management is associated with personal, interpersonal and professional competences, it is worth investigating how the development of these competences is likely to be affected along with the consequences thereof. According to Hartley (2009), ‘the practice of individual translators working directly with clients is in relative decline’ in favor of in-house translators working collaboratively on translation projects (Hartley, 2009: 106). In the works of Petrova (2019) and Hartley (2009) skills that are required for translators to secure a job as in-house translators include ability to work within a team, exchanging review and conducting group translation projects using computer-aided tools in translation and assessment within certain timeframe. A similar argument was mirrored in the works of Kenny (1999), Kornacki (2018) and Olvera-Lobo et al. (2009). The implications of the findings herein indicate that the interpersonal and professional competences, if were not fully developed, opportunities of securing a job in a competitive market may remain a question.

Some challenges such as absenteeism, passive presence, difficulties in adapting to a new mode of learning, limited abilities in using computer-aided tools for peer review and assessment were found to be associated with online learning mode. Some other challenges were found to be irrelevant to the mode of learning such as poor academic abilities of students to act as teamwork players or assessors –from the perspective of teachers. However, some studies have suggested certain strategies to eliminate obstacles of collaborative work and time management. These include but are not limited to, identifying clearly the type of tasks team members are to work on, giving them enough time to prepare for the group task, ensuring learners’ skills in using technology effectively in peer review and assessment (Brindley et al., 2009; Alexander, 2006; McLoughlin and Luca, 2002). The study conducted by Jones (2007) recommended working on small groups of three if students are talkative and more if students are less talkative. This indicates that there are opportunities for improvement to overcome the raised challenges in the present study which is discussed in the following section.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

Responses and reflections of the two groups of respondents show a propensity towards enhancing student-centered learning as four of the seven SCL facets seemed to be enhanced. Facets that are enhanced from students’ perspective are those related to abandoning teacher-centeredness in favor of activating students’ role, responsibility and independence which were found to be in the core of SCL as discussed in section 5. In response to research question 1 and research question 2 in section 3.1, students had a positive attitude towards the enhancement of student-centered learning in translator training and teachers showed propensity towards SCL. However, the challenges highlighted in students’ responses with respect to enhancement of teamwork and time management were commented on and interpreted by teachers.
As discussed in section 5, enhancing autonomy, responsibility and independence is needed in free-lancing while teamwork skills are required for employment in translation service provision. Since translator training tend to prepare students for both practices, opportunities for improvements are discussed herein below.

Findings of this phase of research comply with those in the first phase. In the first phase teamwork, peer review and time management were also perceived by students as points of concern. Such a conclusion confirms that these facets seemed to pose actual challenges in enhancing SCL in translation programs. To overcome the drawbacks which risk the development of interpersonal skills and professional competence, corrective actions need to be taken for a comprehensive development of translation competence and thus securing a job in the translation market (Pym, 2003; Beeby, 2004; Gabr, 2007). Therefore, the following research-based recommendations are listed as corrective measures that can be considered by academic institutions and teachers themselves:

1. Encourage and develop teamwork through small group techniques to avoid unneeded noise and bilateral talks (Kiraly, 2006; Jones, 2007).
2. Prepare learners to be active in the group task by defining the nature and content of the task and providing them with necessary sources and resources (Alexander, 2006; Brindley et al., 2009).
3. Enhance active presence and participation in online courses through ensuring appropriate use of technology (Vonderwell and Zachariah, 2005).
4. Include computer-assisted translation (CAT) in the study plans while ensuring effective use of it in the accomplishment of online group translation projects to compete in a digitalized translation market (Kornacki, 2018; Pym, 2003).
5. Train students on providing constructive criteria-based peer review using effective tools which promote critical self and peer assessment (Wang and Han, 2013; White, 2009).
6. Train students to use their time wisely by relying on CAT tools in addition to coaching them on how to prioritize their tasks. Courses such as Study Skills and Life Skills can be of great benefit.

7. Contribution and scope for future research

This research with its two phases is the first in the Jordanian context to investigate SCL application in online translator training. The methodology of the research allowed a provision of a meeting point between perceptions of two stakeholders and revealed how each SCL facet can be associated with the development of a certain translation sub-competence or skill.

The study contributes to research in translator training by adding a new factor to the questioned competence in previous studies as discussed in Literature Review (section 2.3). However, this study with its two phases can by no means be exhaustive. Based on findings, future studies can conduct comparative studies, for instance, between SCL perceptions in face-to-face compared to online learning mode to investigate whether similar challenges are faced. Questions that could be posed in future research may include, ‘are responsibility and independence enhanced in face-to-face education the same way they are in online learning?’ or ‘is teamwork enhancement challenging in face-to-face as it is in online learning?’

Alternatively, a similar study can be conducted by including more universities in Jordan for generalizability of results or by extending the sample to universities in the Arab region where additional methods such as direct observation can be used.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

Ogareet Khoury: Conceived and designed the experiments; Performed the experiments; Analyzed and interpreted the data; Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

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