

A study on general notions about translation among students enrolled in the department of Translation and Interpreting

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Abstract

The purpose of this longitudinal study was to investigate the Translation and Interpreting Department students' general notions about translation at the beginning, in the middle, and in the final year of their education. The participants were prep year, second year, and fourth-year students who were enrolled in the Department of Translation and Interpreting at Adana Alparslan Tırkeř Science and Technology University between 2015 and 2020. The data were collected through the General Notions about Translation Questionnaire developed by Orozco (2000) and interviews conducted with randomly chosen students in the department. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis methods. The data collection tools aimed to explore changes in students' perceptions about general notions about translation throughout their education. The results showed that the participating students' general notions about translation indicated changes in several aspects throughout their education in the department. How students defined translation in general, elements that intervene in translation, basic unit of translation, kinds of translation, instruments that can help translators, vocabulary problems, and ideas about a translator's knowledge and performance were found to have changed according to the class level they were enrolled in. The findings are expected to shed light on the translation education processes and explore changes in students' notions.

Keywords: Translation, education, translator, general notions about translation

Mütercim Tercümanlık bölümüne kayıtlı öğrenciler arasında çeviri ile ilgili genel kavramlar üzerine bir çalıřma

Öz

Bu boylamsal çalıřma, Mütercim Tercümanlık Bölümü öğrencilerinin çeviri ile ilgili genel algılarının eğitimlerinin başlangıcında, ortasında ve son yılında incelenmesini amaçlamaktadır. Katılımcılar, Adana Alparslan Tırkeř Bilim ve Teknoloji Üniversitesi Mütercim Tercümanlık bölümüne 2015 ve 2020 yılları arasında kayıtlı olan hazırlık, ikinci sınıf ve dördüncü sınıf öğrencilerinden olmuřtur. Arařtırma verileri Orozco (2000) tarafından geliştirilen Çeviri hakkındaki Genel Görüşler Anketi ve rastgele seçilen öğrencilerle yapılan görüşmeler yolu ile toplanmıřtır. Toplanan veriler betimleyici istatistikler ve içerik analizi yöntemleri ile analiz edilmiřtir. Kullanılan ölçme araçları öğrencilerin eğitimleri boyunca çeviri ile ilgili görüşlerindeki deđişimleri incelemiřtir. Çalıřmadan elde edilen veriler, öğrencilerin çeviri ile ilgili görüşlerinin bölümdeki eğitimleri boyunca çeřitli açılardan deđiřime uğradığını göstermiřtir. Öğrencilerin çeviriyi genel olarak nasıl tanımladıkları, çeviriye etki eden faktörler, çevirinin temel birimi, çeviri

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türleri, çevirmene yardımı olabilecek araçlar, kelime sorunları ve çevirmenin bilgi ve performansı konusundaki görüşlerinin kayıt olunan sınıf düzeyine göre deđişim gösterdiđi tespit edilmiştir. Çalışmadan elde edilen verilerin öğrencilerin çeviri ile ilgili görüşlerini ortaya çıkararak çeviri eğitimi süreçlerine ışık tutması beklenmektedir.

Keywords: Çeviri, eğitim, çevirmen, çeviri hakkındaki genel görüşler

Introduction

Translation is defined as "a transfer process which aims at the transformation of a written SL (Source Language) text into an optimally equivalent TL (Target Language) text, and which requires the syntactic, the semantic and the pragmatic understanding and analytical processing of the SL text" (Wilss, 1982, p. 134). Nida and Taber (1982, p.12) also stated that "translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style".

According to Orozco (2000), the definition of translation should involve five factors: a) languages (comprehension skills in the foreign language and production in the target language; b) text as the unity to translate; c) extra-linguistic parameters (encyclopedic knowledge, cultural knowledge, specialist knowledge, etc.) communication act (client, function, reader, etc.); e) mental process (a process which is not limited to languages but which includes mental abilities).

Having a good command of at least two languages is essential for translation and interpreting department students because a translator is assumed to be "a bilingual or a bicultural language user" (Tan, 2008, p.600). House (1997) stated that a translator's linguistic and cultural knowledge affects subjective interpretation and transfer decisions, which in turn determines the quality of translation. Therefore, translator training requires solid linguistic and cultural competence in both source and target cultures (Nord, 2005). However, linguistic and cultural competence is not sufficient to become a good translator. Delisle (1980) also stated that although linguistic competence is necessary, it is not sufficient for professional translation. Eruz (2004) also stated that linguistic knowledge is not the only condition for professional translation, but it is the prerequisite.

Translation competence is considered to involve several different sub-competencies (Alves, 2005) Competence is a concept that can be developed (Schäffner & Adab, 2000), and developing translation competence is the main goal of any translation program. Students enrolled in translation departments should be equipped with the skills and competences required in the profession. The literature involves various studies on translation competence, but the PACTE model could provide a comprehensive model for the central competences specific to translation. The sub-competences of the model include a) bilingual sub-competence, b) extra-linguistic sub-competence, c) translation knowledge sub-competence, d) instrumental sub-competence, e) strategic sub-competence, and f) psycho-physiological sub-competence (PACTE, 2003).

As reported by Kim (2006), the translation process requires important knowledge and skills ranging from "adequately researching the social and cultural context of the source text, to making the best possible use of dictionaries, general reference books and the internet" (p. 330). According to Gerding-Salas (2000), translator students should hold sound linguistic training in the two languages; knowledge covering a wide cultural spectrum, high reading comprehension competence and

permanent interest in reading; adequate use of translation procedures and strategies; adequate management of documentation sources; improvement capacity and constant interest in learning, initiative, creativity, honesty, and perseverance; accuracy, truthfulness, patience, and dedication; capacity for analysis and self-criticism; ability to maintain constructive interpersonal relationships; capacity to develop teamwork; efficient data processing training at user's level; and acquaintance with translation software for MT (Machine Translation).

On the other hand, in addition to the competence and knowledge good translators need to possess, there are a number of factors associated with the translation process. According to Birbili (2000), these factors include the linguistic competence of the translators, the translator's knowledge of the culture of the people under study, the autobiography of those involved in the translation, and the circumstances in which the translation takes place. A translator should be knowledgeable about these factors that intervene in a translation.

According to Orozco and Albir (2002), there are three indicators to make translation competence acquisition operational, which include behaviours in case of translation problems, behavior-related to translation errors, and general notions about translation. General notions about translation depend on students' views and attitudes towards translation. As the general notions about translation will have effects on the behaviours during translation problems, they should not remain unexplored. Since it identifies the whole process of translation (Orozco, 2000), identifying notions about translation has the potential to provide clues for educators. Assessment of problems, errors, and notions could help "any teacher, for any language combination and at any translation centre" to identify the progress of individual students (Schäffner & Adab, 2000, p. 206). According to Nord (1997), the lack of knowledge of translation notions causes translation errors.

No research tackles translation competence or the translation process as a whole, but only some of its aspects (Orozco & Albir, 2002). No studies seem to have made a longitudinal analysis of translation department students' general notions about translation throughout their five-year education in the department in Turkey. Identification of how general notions about translation and views about language change over the years in a translation department might give insights about the effects of the education provided. In this regard, this study aims to investigate translation department students' general notions about translation to detect changes throughout their translation education.

Method

This descriptive longitudinal study utilized the General Notions about Translation Questionnaire (GNTQ) (Orozco, 2000) and interviews as data collection tools. The data were collected in three academic years that included prep year, when the students did not start any formal education on translation; second year, when they were exposed to theoretical knowledge but had little experience in translation; and fourth year, when they had a lot of experience with translation and started to gain information about the working conditions. The data collection tools were administered at the end of the academic years when the students were enrolled in the prep year (GNTQs administered to 16 prep-year students in the 2015-2016 academic year), second year (GNTQs administered to 16 second-year students in the 2017-2018 academic year), and fourth year (GNTQs administered to 16 fourth-year students in the 2019-2020 academic year).

Data collection tools

Data collected in the present study were obtained through two data collection tools that included the General Notions about Translation Questionnaire and interviews.

1. General Notions about Translation Questionnaire (GNTQ): General notions about Translation Questionnaire depicts students' ideas and attitudes towards translation and aims to explore relevant factors regarding the abstract notion of translation (Orozco, 2000). It is a test made up of 14 items of three classes that include multiple-choice, true/false and open-ended items. Responses given to the items in the questionnaire reflect students' notions about translation as well as translation competence. The questionnaire administered in this study aimed to see the similarities and differences in students' responses throughout their prep-year, second-year, and fourth year of their education in the department.

2. Interviews: The data obtained from the General Notions about Translation were supported with the data obtained from the interviews conducted with 11 randomly chosen participants (7 females and 4 males). Except for one participant who was bilingual, all the participants who were interviewed learned English as a foreign language. The participants were interviewed about the changes in their notions about translation throughout their education in the department. The participating students were asked an open-ended question through the semi-structured interviews conducted. The questions was "What changes have you had in your views about translation throughout your education in the department?" The specific examples given by the students regarding this process enabled to elicit more detailed data about the associated factors.

Setting and participants

The present study was conducted in the Department of Translation and Interpreting at Adana Alparslan Türkeş Science and Technology University in Turkey. The department aims to train professional translators and interpreters who have the necessary knowledge and skills that will help them to compete in the translation services sector. While the preparatory year program helps learners to have an advanced level of English by improving four skills and grammar knowledge, courses starting from the second year gradually give way to more field-specific knowledge and practice.

The participants of the study were composed of three groups of students at the beginning, in the middle, and in the final year of education; in other words, when they were enrolled in the prep-year (n=16), second-year (n=16) and fourth-year (n=16) in the department. The purposive sampling method was utilised to select the participants enrolled in the department. As the study was conducted in a newly-established university, there was only one group of students (n=20) enrolled in the prep-year education in the department. Due to the data loss, analyses were performed with the data obtained from 16 students. The data collected in the second and fourth years involved this number of students. The participants' age ranged from 19 to 24. Apart from two bilinguals, all the participants learned English as a foreign language at school or with their own efforts and interest.

Data analysis

This study utilised frequencies and content analysis methods for the data collected from the GNTQ and interviews. According to Shapiro and Markoff (1997), content analysis could be considered valid and meaningful to the extent that the results are related to other measures. Similarly, Silverman (2006) reported that more accurate, comprehensive and objective findings could be obtained through a second source or a second method. This study utilised interviews to ensure the trustworthiness and triangulation of information obtained from other sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Relevant quotes were used to substantiate the findings of the study (Maxwell, 2005), and the relationships within and across the data sources were analysed.

The frequency of the expressions in the responses to the open-ended questions was presented in tables. Data collected from the interviews were presented in quotes from the participants' original utterances. Since the General Notions about Translation involves different kinds of questions including multiple-choice, true/false and open-ended items, the analysis included direct quotes, frequencies, and content analysis. The frequency of the students' utterances was calculated in all types of questions. The open-ended questions part was subjected to content analysis. The goal of content analysis is “to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon” under investigation (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992, p. 314). As stated by Weber (1990), qualitative content analysis involves an intense examination of language to classify large amounts of text into categories that represent similar meanings. For instance, the students' definitions of the translation included their original sentences while answers to the multiple-choice questions were presented using the number of times they were indicated. The data were read and reread to form the themes, and students' definitions were given as examples for the themes that were formed. For reliability purposes, the themes were also analysed by another researcher from the field of translation who is an expert in qualitative data analysis. The codes and excerpts provided were revised in line with the items agreed between the coders.

Findings

The first question in the General Notions about Translation Questionnaire aimed to identify the definition of translation from students' perspectives. The students were asked to define translation with one sentence using their own words. Table 1 provides the examples given by the participating prep-year students.

Table 1. Definitions of Translation by Prep-year Students (n=16)

Translation as an activity connecting cultures (f=6)	<p>Examples:</p> <p>“a window opening to a new world, connecting different cultures and people”, “communicating with other cultures”, and “a cultural interaction” “sending ideas, texts, and cultures to the other side by changing the language”, “understanding the rest of the world”, “making the world universal”,</p>
Translation as a fun and entertaining activity (f=4)	<p>Examples:</p> <p>“an enjoyable and helpful task for people from different cultures to understand each other scientifically, socially and psychologically”, “an entertaining lifestyle”, “a fun activity”</p>
Translation as a powerful activity (f=3)	<p>Examples:</p> <p>“limitless information”, “artistic word game full of rules”, “life knowledge and power”</p>
Translation as a bridge (f=3)	<p>Examples:</p> <p>“transportation between two different languages having different thoughts and feelings” “a profession that translates any kind of information from one language to another”, “transferring meaning and feeling to another language”</p>

As it is seen in Table 1, the participants mentioned *translation as an activity connecting two cultures* (f=6). They saw translation as an opportunity to learn about new cultures through the translated form, which also reportedly makes the world more understandable and universal for others. Another category was *translation as a fun and entertaining activity* (f=4). Translation was also perceived as a *powerful activity* that enables access to limitless information (f=3). Finally, translation was seen as a *bridge* as it makes the transfer of knowledge between two languages possible (f=3).

Table 2. Definition of Translation by Second-year Students (f=16)

Translation as a bridge (f=8)	Examples: “transferring the signs and words from one language to another”, “a bridge that binds two different cultures and languages”
Translation as an activity between SL and TL (f=5)	Examples: “finding the right equivalence”, “deciding on equivalent TL” “circumnavigating between SL and TL and also their cultures”.
Translation as an important activity (f=3)	Examples: “an art form where you give a message to the audience and have an impact on target readers”, “an activity that opens our doors around the world”

Table 2 presents the students' definitions of translation when they were second-year students. This year, the participants began to refer to languages as SL and TL. Translation as a bridge that transfers signs, words, and cultures from one language to another was the top-cited definition (f=8). More specifically, definitions included more specific terminology from the field, in this year, the participants mentioned the term equivalence (f=5) and the importance of translation as an activity that has an impact on readers (f=3). Fun, entertaining, and passionate sides of the activity were not emphasized in this year. Table 3 demonstrates the definitions provided by fourth-year students.

Table 3. Definition of Translation by Fourth-year Students (f=16)

Translation as a bridge (f=5)	Examples: “A bridge that enables both the translator and the reader go to other countries” “A communication tool or bridge between two cultures” “Bridging humanity under the same roof” “Conveying the source text to a target audience”
Translation as a source of information (f=5)	Examples: “is a need” “is a source of gaining new information” “a glorious door leading to new information, new worlds, cultures, and perspectives”
Translation as a powerful act (f=3)	Examples: “the power I hold in human communication and interaction” “many agents have a role in the process of determining the purpose of the translation” “a process where us translators hold to power to orient the text for a particular purpose in mind”

	Examples:
Translation as a process (f=3)	<p>“a development process that enables to discover new things”</p> <p>“the process and art of conveying specific information in one language to another language by considering the cultural elements</p> <p>“the process of removing the borders between countries</p>

Fourth-year students' definitions included the bridging nature of translation. The participants reportedly saw translation as a bridge that makes connections across countries for both translators and people benefiting from the translated text (f=5). The importance of translation as a need for society and as a tool to access information was the factors mentioned by the fourth-year students (f=5). However, there were some specific attributions to power as well (f=3). Finally, the process of translating was also highlighted by some participants (f=3). In the fourth year, the definitions included the importance and power translation has and the process of the translation activity.

The participants' definitions throughout the years demonstrated some differences in terms of a number of factors. For instance, the fun, entertaining aspect of translation was mentioned only in the prep year. An excerpt indicating this was as follows:

Excerpt 1

“I used to like English very much, and that was the main reason I wanted to learn it... I realized that language is much more beyond something that I like. It is a system, an amazing thing. I previously defined translation as an entertaining activity, something fun. However, it is much beyond a fun activity, it is a complicated process that involves so many factors”. (P3, a second-year student)

The complicated and difficult sides of translation were mentioned by most of the students interviewed. Some excerpts are as follows:

Excerpt 2

“Language has always been in my life as a bilingual person, but since the beginning of the first year, I've learned that my knowledge was very little”. (P4 a second-year student)

Excerpt 3

“When I started my education here, I suddenly realized that my knowledge is so insufficient”. (P1 a prep-year student)

Excerpt 4

“I had no idea that translating would be so mentally tiring and time-consuming...”. (P7 a second-year student)

The GNTQ required the participants to indicate their views about the basic unit of translation while translating. The participants were given the options of a) word, b) sentence, and c) something else. Table 4 demonstrates the findings regarding this question.

Table 4. Basic Unit of Translation

Prep year (n=16)	Second year (f=16)	Fourth Year (f=16)
Sentence (f=8)	Sentence (f=7)	Word (f=8)
Word (f=5)	Phrases (f=6)	Sentence (f=2)
Both (f=1)	Word (f=3)	Phrase (f=2)
Meaning (f=1)		

As it is shown in Table 5, answers to the question as to the basic unit of translation demonstrated a high frequency in the sentence option in the prep year and second year (f=8 and f=7 respectively) and a decrease in the fourth year (f=2). "Word" option was the top-cited item in the fourth year (f=8). Excerpts from the interviews are as follows:

Excerpt 5

"When I was in prep year, I was thinking that learning as much vocabulary as possible was the most important thing. Then I learned how phrases are constructed, how the way we construct these phrases affects both meaning and the meaning we convey. I began to think that phrases and sentences were the most important part of translation. However, now I realized how one single word can change everything, so I began to see the word instead of a sentence as the basic unit of translation". (P8 a fourth-year student).

The next question in the GNTQ provided the participants with a list of elements that might intervene in translation. These elements included the following items in the form: a) client, b) original author, c) socio-cultural environment, d) date of the original text, e) socio-cultural environment of the translated text, f) date of translation, g) original reader, h) final reader, i) function of the original text and j) function of the translation.

The top three items according to years are demonstrated in Table 5.

Table 5. Basic Elements that might intervene in Translation

Prep year (n=16)	Second year (f=16)	Fourth Year (f=16)
Socio-cultural environments (f=16)	Socio-cultural environment (f=13)	Client (f=14)
Socio-cultural environment of the translated text (f=13)	Client (f=11)	Socio-cultural environments (f=14)
Function of the translated text (f=13)	Function of the original text (f=10)	Socio-cultural environment of the translated text (f=14)
Function of the original text (f=12)	Function of the translation (f=10)	Original author (f= 12)
		Date of the translated text (f=12), Function of the original text (f=10) Function of the translated text translation (f=10)

*Numbers indicate the number of times these options were selected by different participants

The answers focused on "socio-cultural environments" throughout the years (f=16, f=13, f=14 in the prep-year, second-year, and fourth-year respectively), but "client" was included as a different element by the second-year students (f=11), and it was one of the top-mentioned element by the fourth-year students (f=14). The following excerpts from the interviews demonstrate the participating students' views about these factors:

Excerpt 6

"When I chose my career in translation, I had no idea about the client factor. Now I am about to graduate and I am a little stressed about the factors regarding clients, bosses, companies, etc." (P5, a fourth-year student).

Excerpt 7

"I thought that I would deal with the texts only; I mistakenly thought that I would have my translation task and my keyboard in front of me. I had no idea about the role of clients and other factors in the field such as audience, localization, different kinds of translation and interpreting, word limits, edits, and revisions, etc." (P10, a fourth-year student)

The GNTQ also aimed to find out students' views about what a good translator should know. The participants' responses regarding the top-three items are demonstrated in Table 6.

Table 6. What A Good Translator Should Know (Top-three Items)

Prep year (n=16)	Second year (f=16)	Fourth Year (f=16)
Culture (f=14)	SL and TL (f=12)	Advanced knowledge of Language Pair (f=9)
Vocabulary (f=13)	Culture (f=6)	
Good grammar (f=12)	Using time effectively (f=4)	Culture of the source language and target language (f=7)
		Basic translation strategies (f=6)
		Open-mindedness and objectivity (f=6)
		Time management, deadlines (f=6)

In the prep year, the top three items included culture (f=14), vocabulary (f=13) and good grammar (f=12). In the second year, while source language and target language (f=12) and culture (f=6) remained important, a newly added construct, using time effectively (f=4), was indicated as one of the top three items. As for the fourth year, although advanced knowledge of language pair (f=9) and knowledge of culture (f=7) were still the top-mentioned items, other factors mentioned reflected some factors from a translator's world: Knowledge of basic translation strategies (f=6), need for open-mindedness and objectivity (f=6), time management and dealing with deadlines, (f=6) knowledge about the topic (f=4), the author's aim/intention (f=4), awareness about own stance/ideology (f=3), awareness of strengths and weaknesses as a translator (f=3), and dealing with bosses and clients (f=2). The excerpts regarding culture and some other items are as follows:

Excerpt 8

"Before I came to this department, I used to think that English is composed of grammar and four skills only. Now I realize that language is more than just ordered words; language is a system...And you cannot separate it from culture. A translator should be aware of these factors" (P6, a second-year student)

Excerpt 9

"I have learned the importance of language and its impact on social and cultural life. I learned how using the language is very like drawing painting and the choice of colours can change the painting so much. I became more aware of the existence of language within life, and how it makes the job of a translator important and difficult." (P10, a fourth-year student)

Excerpt 10

"...I've learned to see the language not only as a means of communication but also as a cultural reflection. A translator should know the culture well and be able to reflect this knowledge in his translation". (P7, a second-year student)

The participants were asked about the instruments that can help translators, their responses are demonstrated in Table 7.

Table 7. The Instruments That Can Help Translators (Top-three Items)

Prep year (f=16)	Second year (f=16)	Fourth year (f=16)
Dictionary (f=16)	Bilingual and monolingual dictionaries (f=16)	Computer tools (f=11)

Books (f=6)	Computer tools (f=9)	
Grammar books (f=6)	Books (f=3)	Dictionaries (f=10)
Computer Programs (f=6)		Internet (f=7)
Internet (f=6)		
Encyclopaedias (f=3)		

The participating students' responses in the prep year included dictionary (f=16), books (f=6), grammar books (f=6), computer programs (f=6), internet (f=6), and encyclopaedias (f=3) as the most frequently mentioned items for the instruments that can help translators. The second-year students' responses included bilingual and monolingual dictionaries (f=16), Computer tools (f=9), and monolingual dictionaries and books (f=3) as the top three items, but there were more specific references to the names of the programs, and there were no mentions about grammar books. In the fourth year, the top-mentioned items were Computer Tools (f=11), dictionaries (f=10), and the internet (f=7) with specific reference to articles as well (f=5). Excerpts are as follows:

Excerpt 11

"As a translator I was imagining myself sitting at a table full of books, drinking my coffee, reviewing, scanning, and searching for something in these books to make my translation better. Well, the picture I have is so different now with the internet, various web pages, CAT tools, etc." (P3, a second-year student)

The participants were asked about the different kinds of translations that they thought a professional translator would be asked to do; Table 8 shows the answers.

Table 8. Different Kinds of Translations asked from a Professional Translator

Prep year (f=16)	Second year (f=16)	Fourth year (f=16)
I do not know (f=8)	Simultaneous Interpreting (f=12)	Legal Translation (f=13) Medical Translation (f=11)
Document Translation (f=3)	Literary Translation (f=11)	Technical Translation (f=10)
Book Translation (f=3)	Technical Translation (f=10)	Literary Translation (f=5)
Oral Translation (f=3)	Consecutive Interpreting (f=9)	Simultaneous Interpreting (f=5)
Essay Translation (f=3)		Consecutive Interpreting f=5)
Legal Translation (f=3)		

In the prep year, the most frequently mentioned answer to the types of translation a professional translator would be asked to do was "I do not know" (f=8), which indicates half of the participants. The second-year students had more specific answers such as simultaneous interpreting (f=12), literary translation (f=11), technical translation (f=10), *consecutive interpreting* (f=9). As for the fourth year, Legal (f=13), Medical (f=11), and Academic Translation (f=10) were the top-mentioned ones. An excerpt from the interviews is as follows:

Excerpt 12

“I used to think that I would have some formal documents to translate, I was not aware of the fact that translation has so many different types, and each requires some specific knowledge and experience” (P4, a second-year student)

Five questions in the GNTQ included True/False items. The participating students’ responses to these items are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9. The Participants’ responses to the T/F Items in the Questionnaire

Item	Prep-year	Second-year	Fourth-year
“All translators should be able to translate as efficiently into the foreign language as into their mother tongue”.	True: 14 False: 2	True: 14 False: 2	True: 16 False: 0
“A good translator should be able to translate all types of texts with the same degree of efficiency”.	True: 10 False: 6	True: 3 False: 12	True: 1 False: 15
“When a translator reads a text before translating it, the process is the same as for any other reader of the text”.	True: 4 False: 12	True: 2 False: 14	True: 0 False: 16
“A bilingual dictionary is the main instrument used to find an adequate equivalent in the target language”.	True: 12 False: 4	True: 9 False: 7	True: 10 False: 5 Partly True: 1
“The main problems encountered when translating are vocabulary problems”.	True: 7 False: 9	True: 4 False: 10	True: 8 False: 6 Partly True: 1

The first statement was “*All translators should be able to translate as efficiently into the foreign language as into their mother tongue*”. The majority of the participants were found to agree with this statement throughout their education (True=14, False=2 for the prep-year students; True=14, False=2 for the second-year students; and True=16, for the fourth-year students). Excerpts are as follows:

Excerpt 13

“I believe that a translator should be able to translate from and to the language pair” (P6, a second-year student)

Excerpt 14

“I cannot imagine a translator saying that he can only translate from one to another language but not vice versa” (P8, a fourth-year student)

The second statement was “*A good translator should be able to translate all types of texts with the same degree of efficiency*”. While in the prep year, the number of students who agreed with this statement was high (True=10, False=6), the second year (True=3, False=12) demonstrated a dramatic decrease in the number of students who thought a good translator should be able to translate all types of texts with the same degree of efficiency; these numbers were True=1 and False=15 in the fourth year.

Excerpt 15

“Now that we will become translators, we should do our best throughout our education to be able to translate all types of texts successfully” (P2, a prep-year student)

Excerpt 16

“Translating a legal document is different from translating a poem, or translation of a technical document requires different knowledge from translating an academic document. One cannot be proficient (or interested) in translating all these with the same degree of efficiency” (P8, a fourth-year student)

The third statement was “*when a translator reads a text before translating it, the process is the same as for any other reader of the text*”, which indicated 4 True and 12 False options for the prep year, only 2 True and 14 False options for the second year; and 16 False options for the fourth year students. The participants were found to gradually acknowledge that the process is different in reading and translation. An excerpt is as follows:

Excerpt 17

“Reading comprehension is a must in translation, but your brain is actively working in finding the equivalence of the words, phrases, and structures while it is reading a text to be translated. You keep saying: how would I translate this?”. (P5, a fourth-year student)

“*A bilingual dictionary is the main instrument used to find an adequate equivalent in the target language*” was the fourth statement. The number of “true” answers was higher in all three years (True: 12 vs False:4 in prep year; True=9 vs False=7 in the second year; and True=10 False=5, Partly True=1) in the fourth year. The increase in the false option and a very close number of “true” and “false” options in the second year are worth noting. An excerpt is as follows:

Excerpt 18

“Sometimes you need to double-check the use of a word you think you know very well. Choosing the right words requires a lot of search. It includes bilingual and monolingual dictionaries, web sites, images, etc.” (P9, a fourth-year student)

“*The main problems encountered when translating are vocabulary problems*” was the final statement. The number of “true” and “false” options were almost equal in the prep year (False:9 vs True=7 in prep year); however, in the second year, the number of True option decreased to 4, and that of False was 10 (True=4, False=10). As for the fourth year, True=8, False=6; Partly True: 1). Two excerpts are as follows:

Excerpt 19

“I never thought that translating could be so complicated. I used to think that I would translate, send the document, and not deal with the text again. Now I realize that it may require a lot of revision, and a need for major revision could be because of vocabulary choice as well. (P11, a fourth-year student)

Excerpt 20

“I used to think that I would check a dictionary to find an equivalence of a word; however, I sometimes spend hours to find the right word in a specific context, and the word I chose has so much impact and power. I used to think that vocabulary knowledge is vital for a translator, but I had no idea that choosing one word over another could make such a difference”. (P8, a fourth-year student)

The main findings obtained from the GNTQ and the interviews revealed a) while translation was initially considered as an activity from one language to another by finding equivalences of the source text, the definitions made in the following years focused more factors associated with translation as a process and profession, b) basic unit of translation changed from sentence to word, with emphasis given the decisive power of a single word; c) the role of client, which was not considered a factor in

prep-year, was mentioned as the top item associated with translation in the fourth-year; d) advanced knowledge of language pair stated in the fourth-year had only superficial level meaning in prep year, indicating the knowledge of vocabulary and grammar in English; and e) while specific translation fields were went unnoticed by prep-year students and only partly recognized by the second-year students, very specific references were mentioned by the fourth year students. Data obtained from the interviews were found to support the data obtained from the GNTQ.

Discussion

This study explored translation and interpreting department students' general notions about translation over the years throughout their education in the department. The data collected from the questionnaire and interviews explored these changes from different aspects.

The participants were asked to define translation in their own words in the beginning, in the middle, and in the final year of their education. The general definition of translation provided by the participating students indicated some changes from more general sense to specific terminology across the years. Orozco (2000) reported that students are expected to mention five factors for the definition of translation: a) languages (comprehension skills in the foreign language and production in the target language; b) text as the unity to translate; c) extra-linguistic parameters (encyclopedic knowledge, cultural knowledge, specialist knowledge, etc.) communication act (client, function, reader, etc.); e) mental process (a process which is not limited to languages but which includes mental abilities). In the beginning year of their education, the participating students focused on the production in the target language and mental process in their definitions of translation. However, while in the first years of their education they mentioned translation as a bridge between languages and cultures, they also stated that it is a fun activity that could be a passion. This finding could be related to the fact that the students in the department chose translation for their future career as they are knowledgeable about and interested in learning a foreign language. However, in the following years, they began to focus more on the communication act part and less on the entertaining side of translation, which could be the gradual effect of the courses in the department regarding the profession. The definitions provided in the last year highlighted the importance of process and power in translation. In a similar vein, the role of the client was mentioned only in the second year among the things that affect translation.

Both the questionnaire and the interviews indicated that the participants' views about translation went through changes over the years. The participants reportedly realized that the language they were interested in and thus led them to choose an English-major department was much beyond grammar knowledge and four skills. They reportedly became aware of the role of language in culture, thinking, and social life as well as its systematic nature that is beyond the existence of ordered words. Lotman's theory suggested, "No language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have at its center, the structure of natural language" (1978; p.212). Bassnett (1980) emphasized that language is "the heart within the body of culture", that is, they are both dependent on each other (p. 13-14). Interview results showed that the participants began to question and discover the relationship between language and culture, language and thinking, and language and social life more deeply.

Regarding the translation-related vocabulary issues, the participants were asked to indicate what the basic unit of translation is, whether they saw vocabulary as the main problem in translation and whether bilingual dictionaries are the main instruments that help translations. While in the beginning

year, vocabulary was the option that was highlighted the most, sentence and phrases were preferred more in the second year. However, in the final year, the word was indicated more again. The interview results indicated that students began to question and understand the importance of choosing the right word according to a specific context and field. Almost half of the students each year agreed with the statement that vocabulary is the main problem in translation. Stewart et al. (2010) also reported that choosing a word, a word in context, conventional two-word combinations, and the usage conditions of a word within a sentence are the primary problems. While some elements such as grammar books or books were mentioned less over the years, the role of dictionaries was mentioned consistently. However, it was also indicated that referring a bilingual dictionary for vocabulary problems is not always the only solution. Although the number of students who thought a bilingual dictionary is the main instrument, almost half of the students reportedly utilised some other sources such as web sites and visuals to find the right word. The literature involves studies showing that monolingual and online dictionaries enable a better understanding of contextual meanings and cultural connotations of vocabulary, which enhances translational skills (McAlpine & Myles, 2003) and indicating that monolingual dictionaries exceed the benefits of bilingual ones (Laufer & Levitzky-Aviad, 2006).

Elements that intervene in translation was one of the questions in the GNTQ. As stated by (Robinson, 2012), translation involves far more than finding target-language equivalents for source-language words and phrases. Translation also involves dealing with clients, agencies, and employers. At the beginning of their education in the department, the students mentioned the socio-cultural factors and functions. When they became second-year students, socio-cultural factors and function were also mentioned, but the client was added as the new item. In the fourth-year, they mentioned the client as the top item in the list. "The whats and the hows and the whys of translation are by and large controlled by publishers, clients, and agencies – not by universal norms" (Robinson, 2012, p. 199). Through their education in the department, the students seem to have realized this aspect of translation more and more every passing year.

Neubert (2000) stated that the translation profession demands "much, much more than linguistic knowledge" (p.5). The participants' ideas about what a good translator should know were limited to *culture*, *vocabulary*, and *good grammar* in the prep year. In the second year, while SL and TL and culture remained the same, *using time effectively* was added as a different factor. In the fourth year, as future translators, the participating students mentioned the advanced knowledge of language pair, culture, basic translation strategies, open-mindedness and objectivity, and time management. Knowledge of language pair and culture remained in the top-three list across the years. "The community of translators has always been aware of cultural differences and their significance for translation" (Robinson, 2012, p. 199). Students' reference to the translation norms and strategies as well as the importance of using time effectively could be related to their experience of translating in the courses provided by the department. Using time effectively was associated with students' discovering the time-consuming nature of translation, which was also supported by interview findings. The time-consuming nature of translation activity was indicated in the interview findings.

The participants were asked about the instruments that help translators. Grammar books and dictionaries were indicated as the most helpful instruments in the prep year. In the second year, there were more specific references to Computer tools and available machine translation tools. Machine tools systems sometimes produce mistakes, but there are many situations where MT systems produce reliable, if less than perfect, translations at high speed (Arnold, Balkan, Meijer, Humphreys, & Sadler, 1994). Students' higher reference to Computer tools and MT systems indicate their familiarity with the

translation process with the help of technology. Tan (2008) mentioned "instrumental competence" to refer to the knowledge and skills in consulting and using relevant dictionaries, encyclopedic references, internet resources, terminology banks, MT software, parallel corpora, and computers that help learners' translation (p. 600). Computer tools assist translators in various tasks. Ivanova (2016) listed these as translation memories, terminology extraction and recognition tools, alignment, localization tools, spell checkers, grammar checkers, auto-suggest dictionaries, and termbases (p.132). Over the years, the participants seemed to become more and more aware of these tools.

When the participants were asked different kinds of translations a translator would be asked to do over three years, their initial response was "I do not know" for the first year for half of the students. This response indicates students' insufficient knowledge about the future career they chose, which could also be supported by the interview findings. As their education went on, their answers ranged from literary translation and simultaneous interpreting to technical translation and consecutive interpreting; responses also included Medical Translation, Sight Translation, Legal Translation, Politics, Escort Interpreting, and Community Translation. One of the purposes of translation education is to enable students to translate with self-awareness and develop paradigmatic but flexible pedagogical strategies that, while created in specific contexts, are not limited to them (Baer, 2003). The courses that aim to prepare students for their future careers seem to have raised awareness.

The participants were found to believe that a translator should translate efficiently in both languages. Schools and departments of translation programs usually enrol students who are well-qualified in both languages, especially in L1, and devote most of the study time to students' development of translation skills and competence (Tan, 2008). "A good translator should be able to translate all types of texts with the same degree of efficiency" statement was considered to be true only in the prep year. In the following years of education, the participants were found to think less in this way. All translations are domain-specific, and no one is an expert at translating all types of texts of all subjects (Sun, 2011). The participants were found to become more aware of this fact in their education after prep year.

This study also sought the relationship between reading and translation as perceived by students. In the prep year, some of the participating students were found to think that reading and reading before translation had similar processes; however, in the fourth year, all of them were found to disagree with this idea, which was also confirmed with interview findings. This finding could be related to students' increased exposure to various translation tasks in second, third, and fourth years. Gerding-Salas (2000) emphasized the importance of high reading comprehension competence and permanent interest in reading for translators. However, the students find these processes different. Price, Green, and von Studnitz (1999) also found through PET (Positron Emission Tomography) scans that during translation more areas of the brain are activated, which implies that reading and translating are not identical.

The interview findings revealed important insights from students' perspectives. For instance, the participants highlighted that they began to realize more intensively how difficult it was to major in English. It is generally assumed that a translator should be "a bilingual or a bicultural language user" (Tan, 2008). However, researchers report that translation competence includes bilingual competence, bicultural competence, creative competence, thinking competence, expressive competence, extra-linguistic competence and transfer competence (Liu, 2003; Pym, 2003; Sin 2000). These competences that could be required in any translation task might cause learners to feel under pressure, see their knowledge insufficient, and find translation mentally tiring. Interview results indicated the difficulties

experienced by students. These difficulties were not experienced only by students learning English as a foreign language. The native speakers of English who were bilinguals from birth also mentioned the difficulties they had; the literature indicates a gap between good bilinguals and good translators, which could be bridged and filled by a translator training program (Liu, 2007). Therefore, it is important to equip translation students with the knowledge of both languages as well as the knowledge and skills required for translator competence.

The data collected in this study aimed to find out the changes in students' general notions about translation throughout their education in the department. The results showed that the students experienced changes in their general notions about translation. The education they received in the department was found to have contributed to these changes in several aspects. Translation education in this context was proven to develop students' skills and knowledge to become translators and to gain some understanding of the factors that make good translators.

Conclusion

This study revealed that throughout their education in the department, the students have gained the knowledge, skills, and competences required in the profession. The results of the present study showed that the students gradually increased their awareness about the factors associated with translation and translators. Translation competence is related to knowledge, skills, and aptitudes required for translating. Translation departments aim to help students to develop this competence and raise awareness about the factors associated with future translation tasks. However, as stated by Tan (2008), translators/translation specialists continue their translation education by themselves in all areas of language in their professional life as well.

Limitations

This study involved students from only one university and utilized qualitative data collection and analysis methods. Various data collection methods with a larger target group of participants from different universities would probably shed more light on the issue. In addition, as throughout the education in the department some new students were involved and some others left the university, some of the data collected might represent class level in the department rather than general notion changes reflected by each student. Finally, some other variables such as the elective courses taken differently, out-of-school experiences in translation, or personality traits might have had effects on the students' answers regarding the general notions about translation.

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