



“Put yourself in their shoes”: a qualitative exploration of perceptions of effective translation teaching in universities

Zhi Huang
Macquarie University, Australia
jeffzhihuang@gmail.com

DOI: 10.12807/ti.111201.2019.a07

Abstract: This paper investigates perceptions of effective translation teaching in universities through a qualitative exploration. It builds upon the findings of previous survey research and uses focus groups and one-on-one interviews with Australian university translation teachers and students to investigate translation teacher qualities in more depth. The results show the key areas which are perceived to help create an effective translation teacher, which include: profound knowledge of languages and translation, mastery of translation skills and industry experience, engaging and communicative teaching methods, a humorous and inspiring personality, encouraging students in giving constructive feedback, and the ability to understand and help students develop independent learning skills. This study, particularly as it relates to classroom management and feedback given to students, can be applied to translation teaching and then extrapolated to teaching in general. In this way can all teachers find their own ways to motivate student thinking and achieve quality teaching, facilitating independent learning and making teaching outcomes more effective.

Keywords: effective translation teacher, effective translation teaching, teacher quality, university teaching, qualitative research

1. Introduction

The overall purpose of this paper is to identify, through focus groups and interviews, the perceptions of which essential qualities go into making an effective translation teacher from the perspectives of both students and teachers. Teaching effectiveness, as presented by Layne (2012) and Feldman (1988), is interpreted differently by students and teachers, and they would agree on the same three most important abilities – that teachers need to cultivate thinking skills, stimulate interest in the subject, and motivate students to learn. Teachers have different teaching styles and personalities that may have a positive or negative influence on students (Layne, 2012), so in order to be an effective translation teacher, it is essential to recognise and apply teaching styles that are likely to have positive influences on students. Therefore, it will be valuable for researchers to investigate what these qualities are, so that pedagogy can be informed, and translation teachers are able to achieve quality teaching within their own contexts.

This study follows on from a survey study in 2015, which focused on the perceptions of teachers and students on the effectiveness of translation teachers (Huang & Napier, 2015). Ninety-four students and twenty-two teachers from six universities participated in the survey study. The survey was completed through an online tool (Survey Monkey) and participants were asked to anonymously submit the survey online. Survey questions, both closed

and open-ended, covered various aspects of translation teaching and teacher quality, ranging from the most important aspects of teaching translation, definition of effective classroom teaching for translation, and personality traits for effective translation teachers, to teaching styles of effective translation teachers, as well as ways and types of feedback given to students, and effective teaching and assessment methods. The results showed that translation teacher effectiveness lies in three main aspects: personal traits; teaching methods; and feedback to students. Specifically, the main findings from the survey suggest that in order to be more effective, translation teachers need to demonstrate the following: profound knowledge of languages and translation, and mastery of translation skills and industry experience. They should also be engaging, flexible and humorous, using communicative teaching methods as well as encouragement in giving constructive feedback, and helping students for the purpose of independent learning.

This study draws upon data from focus groups and interviews with seven translation teachers with different levels of experience and nine students from different age groups, from two Australian universities at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, in order to investigate translation teacher qualities in more depth (Huang & Napier, 2015). This follow-up qualitative study presents the opportunity to reflect on issues raised in the survey study findings, with a focus on the following four themes: important aspects of translation learning and teaching, such as the ability to balance translation theory and practice, maintaining effective translation learning and teaching in the classroom, giving constructive feedback to students, and showing personal traits of effective translation teachers in classroom teaching (see Section 4). Data collected from the focus groups and interviews were analysed based on these themes. The results provide insight into the similarities and differences in teacher and student perceptions about what makes an effective translation teacher within the particular educational contexts of the study. The results also provide insight into perspectives of effective university teaching principles in general, and can thus be potentially applied to other teachers and disciplines in any higher education institution, so that all teachers can explore their own practice in order to achieve teaching effectiveness, motivate students towards independent learning and strive for quality teaching in their own fields.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 University teacher qualities and language teacher qualities

Ramsden (1992) conceptualises the various aspects of university teaching as illustrated in Figure 1. This figure indicates that in order to achieve good teaching, the “theory and context of teaching” are very necessary before teaching takes place, followed by reflection on experience. In higher education, good teaching not only encourages high quality student learning, but also has its own principles.

According to Ramsden’s key principles of effective teaching in higher education (2003, pp. 93-98), it can be seen that good teaching requires the teacher to engage students in the various classroom activities, to use proper assessment and feedback, and to give clear goals and intellectual challenge in classroom teaching so that students can follow and develop their own proficiency step by step.

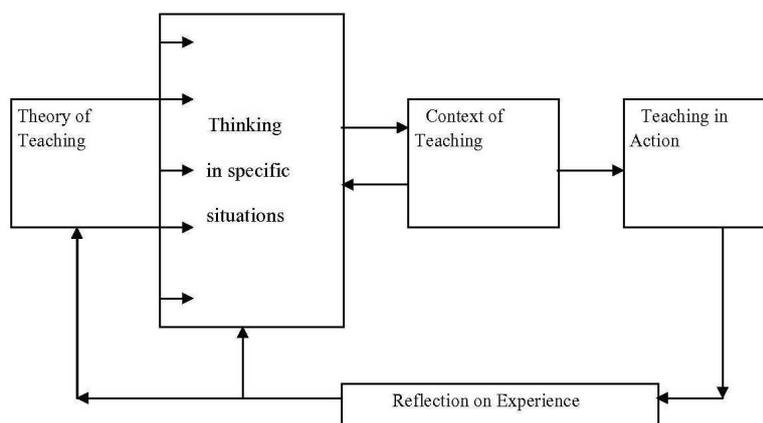


Figure 1: A model of teaching in higher education adapted from Ramsden (1992, p. 119)

Good teaching, state Tennant, McMullen and Kaczynski (2010), should extend and deepen student understanding based on their experiences and learning needs. The focus here is on students, because effective teaching, as Dunkin (1995, p. 24) points out, usually has four major facets: structuring learning, motivating learning, encouraging independence in learning, and “establishing interpersonal relations conducive to learning”. For translation teachers, these facets give rise to effective teaching in terms of the ability to structure teaching and learning in a more appropriate way, to demonstrate personal traits in encouraging students’ independent thinking, and to give constructive feedback so that students learn by reflecting on the feedback.

According to Ethell and McMeniman (2000, p. 88), effective language teachers “organize knowledge more efficiently in complex interconnected schemas and utilize it more effectively”. That is, it is essential for effective teachers to have both superior subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Language teachers also need to possess certain personal traits to be effective teachers. Researchers of English language teaching have defined personal traits required for language teachers and a list is shown as a summary in Table 1. These traits may also be applied to other teachers with expertise in different language-related teaching areas, such as translation.

Table 1: A summary list of personal traits of effective language teachers

| Researchers | Personal traits of successful English language teachers |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stronge (2002) | <i>caring, fair, respectful, enthusiastic, motivated and positive attitude.</i> |
| Protherough and Atkinson (1991, p. 22) | <i>ability to “arouse interest in everything”, professional, charismatic, enthusiastic, intelligent, boundless energy, capacity for hard work, inventive, open-minded, confident, resilient, have stamina, good sense of humour, playful, a lively imagination, flexible, tolerant, fair, compassionate, dedicated and adaptable.</i> |
| Wong and Wong (1998) | <i>ability to enthuse and inspire the students for life</i> |
| Batten, Marland and Khamis (1993) | <i>friendly and humorous, respectful and ability to encourage students.</i> |
| Biggs and Moore (1993) | <i>enthusiastic, encouraging, humorous, fair, flexible and organized.</i> |

Being an effective language teacher requires a combination of roles, not only as an organizer of different activities and an assessor or examiner, but also as a participant in both student development and self-professional development, and as an observer who seeks feedback and evaluates his or her own work (Harmer, 2001). This conclusion can be used as a reference to explore the effectiveness of translation teachers, because they also deal with language. One difference between language teachers and translation teachers

is that the latter may need to use more than two languages at a time in teaching, and this characteristic of multi-language management may require further or different qualities to achieve effectiveness. Although translation teachers must draw on many kinds of competence, such as strategic competence and transfer competence, and to different degrees than language teachers do, exploring language teacher effectiveness can have implications for research on translation teacher effectiveness.

As Neilson (2004) mentions, the effective language teacher is someone who encourages students to learn independently through interactive classroom activities. The teacher therefore needs to be aware of the challenges of the language and the stages of language-learner development, in order to provide ongoing help and support for students to take responsibility and learn languages more independently in the long run. In a previous study on what makes an effective English language teacher (Huang, 2010), the results show that effective language teachers possess personal qualities such as being responsible, patient, enthusiastic, kind, and knowledgeable in their role. More importantly, they have the strong ability to utilize effective teaching methods to teach students in accordance with their needs, and train them to learn in a communicative and independent way both in and out of classroom. They should not only act as a colleague and co-learner to students, giving them support and helping them solve all kinds of problems, but should also be regarded as a coordinator among colleagues, encouraging co-workers to develop themselves and work diligently as a team. The previous study (Huang, 2010) touched on general aspects of English language teaching and teacher effectiveness, but focused more on personal traits of the teacher in teaching practice. This study will build on connections between language teaching and translation teaching in terms of personal traits, and will throw light on more distinctive aspects of teaching in the translation classroom context, including classroom communication and feedback given.

2.2 Translation teacher and teaching research

Wilss (1996) was one of the first scholars to suggest that translation teaching requires experimentation and innovation. Over the last several decades, other researchers have introduced new theories and pedagogies as a result of the application of such innovations. For example, Nord (1991) introduced a functional perspective to translation teaching, combining professional realism and pedagogical progression. Kiraly (2000, 2014) proposed the application of social constructivist theory to translation teaching, which proposed a departure from the teacher-centred approach to a transformational/emergent learning focus. The theoretical framework of this study draws on social constructivism in learning, which was proposed by Vygotsky (1962) and developed further by Kiraly (2014) in relation to translator education, and he emphasised the importance of a teacher-student collaborative approach in translation education. Kiraly's early experience with English language teaching inspired his training approaches, and his research later in foreign language teaching and teacher education helped strengthen his conviction that "a humanistic, communication-based approach was indeed appropriate for the translation education classroom" (Kiraly, 2000, p. 9).

According to various translation scholars, based on their experiences and observations, translation teacher and teaching research tends to focus more on pedagogies used in teaching. There has been some research on the use of translation for language acquisition in various educational contexts – which is indeed an emerging field of inquiry that lies at a crossroads between Language Learning and Translation Studies. This field of inquiry has seen the emergence of scholars in Language Learning and Translation Studies who have strongly encouraged the use of real-life translation tasks in language learning environments (González Davies, 2004, 2014; Malmkjaer, 1998; Pym,

Malmkjaer & Gutiérrez, 2013). This is partly due to the fact that it is now acknowledged that the mother tongue/own language (OL) is present in the language-learner's mind at all times (Hall & Cook, 2012, p. 288); and hence the main goal of language teaching should be the creation of successful communicators (González Davies, 2014, p.12). Along these lines, scholars in the different yet interrelated fields of Translation Studies, Applied Linguistics and Foreign Language Teaching have recently conducted studies into the benefits of combining language learning and translation. Some of these are theoretical studies on the possibilities and limitations of this combination (Carreres & Noriega Sanchez, 2011; Malmkjaer, 2010); and others are empirical studies, most of which concern various methods of using translation as a pedagogical tool (e.g; Peverati, 2014; Schjoldager, 2004). It can be seen that a gap still exists, as far as we know, because most of the previous research focused on translator qualities, translation teaching competence, translation pedagogies and classroom translation teaching techniques, but there seems to be no systematic research on *teacher* qualities in translation teaching. Thus, this empirical study of translation teacher qualities seeks to partially fill this gap, in order to inform professional and general pedagogical practices in translator education. The main goal of this study is to identify translation teacher effectiveness, focusing on the following questions:

- 1) What are the personal traits of an effective translation teacher?
- 2) What are the perceptions of translation teachers as compared to student perceptions about effective translation teachers and teaching?
- 3) What pedagogical approaches does an effective translation teacher enact in classroom teaching?
- 4) What kind of feedback does an effective translation teacher give to students, and in what ways is feedback given?

3. Methodology

In order to address the above research questions, a multi-method study was designed to triangulate data and explore the perceptions of effective translation teaching from different perspectives. Building on the results of the previous survey research (Huang & Napier, 2015), the second phase of the research reported here consists of a qualitative study involving the use of focus groups and interviews (see 3.2 for more details).

3.1 Participants

Participants in this study were translation teachers and students from two higher education institutions in Sydney who had previously responded to surveys and provided their contact details. These translation teachers, plus current and former students from these institutions, were asked via email if they were interested in participating in the research project. General emails were also sent to department administrators, to gauge interest among students and teachers at relevant universities. These institutions were chosen because they have translation practice subjects as part of a degree in interpreting and translation studies at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in higher education institutions in Australia.

There were nine students, including one male and eight females, and seven teachers, including one female and six males involved as participants (See Table 2). Five teachers and five students were from University 1, while two teachers and four students were from University 2. The reasons students gave for studying translation predominantly fell into three categories: love of language and translation (5 students); eagerness to better communicate in a multicultural society (2 students); and willingness to be bilingual in order to

be more globalised (2 students). For teachers, the reasons to teach translation were: the love of teaching languages (4 teachers) and the joy that translation brought (1 teacher). Two teachers mentioned that they started to teach translation by coincidence but then found they really enjoyed it and it was a rewarding experience. All the teachers had qualifications in translation at Master's or Doctoral level.

Table 2: Profile of Respondents

| Teacher Participant | Length of experience in teaching translation | University that they teach at | Student Participant | Length of experience in studying translation | University that they study at |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Teacher #1 | 7 years | University 1 | Student #1 | 1 year | University 1 |
| Teacher #2 | 7 years | University 1 | Student #2 | 1 year | University 1 |
| Teacher #3 | 10 years | University 1 | Student #3 | 3 years | University 1 |
| Teacher #4 | 20 years | University 1 | Student #4 | 5 years | University 1 |
| Teacher #5 | 20 years | University 1 | Student #5 | 5 years | University 1 |
| Teacher #6 | 3 years | University 2 | Student #6 | 1 year | University 2 |
| Teacher #7 | 10 years | University 2 | Student #7 | 1 year | University 2 |
| | | | Student #8 | 3 years | University 2 |
| | | | Student #9 | 5 years | University 2 |

3.2 Process and analysis

Teachers and students who had indicated their willingness to be contacted again when they responded to a previous survey (Huang & Napier, 2015) were invited to participate in follow-up focus groups or interviews, to discuss their perceptions of effective translation teachers' roles in more detail. The study received ethics approval from the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee, as well as institutional approval from the other two participating universities. All participants were recruited through expressions of interest via e-mail to ensure that their participation in the project was entirely voluntary. All focus groups and interviews were audiotaped and transcribed for thematic analysis. In total, individual interviews were conducted with seven teachers one-on-one and four students in a group; and three focus groups and interviews with the remaining five students in each group were also conducted.

Prompting questions were sent to the participants beforehand to ensure that the discussions would be semi-structured (see Appendices 1 and 2). Questions included experience/behaviour questions (Questions 1, 2, 3, 9 and 13), opinion/belief questions (Questions 4, 5, 6, 7 and 12), feeling questions (Question 11) and knowledge questions (Questions 8 and 10). Teachers and students were asked relevant questions with each instrument being adapted slightly to account for their perspective (e.g., for teachers, the question started with "as a teacher, what do you like ...", and for students, the question started with "as a student, what do you like ..."). Questions covered various aspects of translation teaching and teacher quality, ranging from teaching philosophy (Question 7) and effective classroom teaching for translation (Questions 8 and 9), to the role of effective translation teachers (Questions 10 and 11) and ways and types of feedback given to students (Questions 12 and 13).

This study utilised a process of recurring thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to summarise the features of the data and collate the results into different themes. In particular, this study explored whether themes were similar or divergent across teacher and student perceptions. Data were collected and analysed to produce descriptions and reports of each theme.

4. Results and discussion

Themes derived from the data in this study include the four areas identified in a review of the literature, each having several sub-themes (see Table 3).

Table 3: Themes and sub-themes in this study

| Theme | Sub-theme |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) Important aspects in teaching and learning translation | 1.1) the differences and similarities of teaching translation as a teacher and learning translation as a learner 1.2) different perceptions on teaching translation theory |
| 2) Effective classroom teaching | 2.1) classroom interaction 2.2) student engagement |
| 3) Personal traits of effective translation teachers | 3.1) being humorous 3.2) being encouraging 3.3) being inspiring |
| 4) Assessment and feedback | 4.1) assessment tools 4.2) types of feedback 4.3) ways of giving feedback |

4.1 Important aspects in teaching and learning translation

All teacher and student participants agreed that there are differences between translation learning and translation teaching, and the respective roles entailed. Although many admitted that it was not an easy question, they mentioned that teachers have more responsibilities in evaluating translation, giving grounds for what has been translated, and justifying translation choices rather than just giving out the references. Some teachers also pointed out that they attach greater importance to the language teaching and learning aspect of translation education than students do. This may respond to a possible need for teachers to apply it in their translation education practice, so that both source and target languages can be covered appropriately. It is usually assumed that translators will be proficient in both the source and target languages, so it is inevitable for teachers to “engage students in language learning while they also teach them translation” (teacher#1).

There were two major differences regarding this theme, as indicated by the participants. One was that translation teachers and students tend to prioritise different things. Teachers need to focus on the translation process, on text analysis, and then on strategies, rather than just outcomes, in order to handle a range of translation challenges. In this process, one participant commented that teachers should be “a facilitator in the classroom, looking at the students’ backgrounds and their needs in order to bring their learning and their performance up to the expected standard” (teacher#4). Students, on the other hand, tended to have different expectations, and would take the results or learning outcomes very seriously. They would like to receive translation marks that are fair, clear, and black and white, although this may not be possible in reality. The question here is how to balance the focus on translation process and outcomes in translation teaching. Since outcomes come from the whole process of translation, effective translation teachers can first explain to students how the whole process works, and then guide them through so that they can reflect on it. This is unique in translation teaching compared to language teaching, because the teacher needs to consider the professional skills required for the students to become qualified translators in the industry, rather than just focusing on the languages themselves with a view to improving students’ language proficiency.

The other major difference was the different perceptions on teaching translation theory. Student responses indicated that translation theory and

practice should be separated in teaching and learning. One student noted: “just like driving a car and knowing as a mechanic how the car works and how to fix problems” (student#5). They argued that there may be plenty of translation studies scholars who have done little translation and are still good scholars in this area, and there may also be good translators who have done very little translation theory. Those who are interested in translation theory and would like to do more research should learn more theories, while those who want to be professional translators should have more time focused on translation practice. Having some basic translation and linguistic knowledge is essential, but not more than that (student#5).

Teacher responses in this part seemed to be in contradiction to student responses. They argued that translation theory is of great importance to students especially when they gain experience as a translator. Theories are distilled from practice, so if there is no actual experience to relate to, they can be very difficult to grasp. Translation theory and practice should always come together in learning and teaching, since they are inter-related. It would be better to introduce translation theories to students after they have practised doing translation for some time, because in this case they would have some experience to reflect on and could relate the theories to their experiences in a more effective way. Similar to the “reflection on experience” element found in the model of teaching in higher education (Ramsden, 1992, p. 119), both teachers and students need to reflect on their own performance in either teaching or learning translation in action, so that they are better able to relate the practice to the theories. In other words, a circle of learning and teaching in which theory and practice come together. This is another major difference between language teaching and translation teaching, since the latter needs to build up students’ professional skills and knowledge in order for them to be able to deal with languages as a career; while the former only aims at improving students’ language proficiency for better communication. The balancing of theory and practice would be a topic for vocational training in higher education – so in translation teaching, effective teachers would consider the importance of both and try to help students with their professionalism and capability of being qualified industry practitioners.

4.2 Effective classroom teaching

For effective classroom teaching, students and teachers alike mentioned classroom interaction, classroom management and student engagement. Classroom interaction refers to the communication process in classroom teaching, essential to the effectiveness of translation teaching and learning. In this process, not only can teachers know more about the students’ needs, their levels, their expectations, their ideas and thoughts, but they can also “motivate the students to be more independent in learning translation” (teacher#2), be “more critical about their own translation work” (teacher#6) and be “more responsible for their own improvement in learning” (teacher#7). On the other hand, students can develop their own ability in translation through interaction with the teacher, knowing that their needs are considered, their concerns addressed and their learning process well monitored. One student in the interviews shared a story of effective classroom interaction she had experienced: “one translation teacher she has met always likes to have someone answer questions, especially answer the questions in a wrong way, to interact with the whole class because she can find some points to discuss further on” (student#7). This kind of teacher preference for points of interaction correlates with the focus of effective teachers in language teaching, where learners’ needs and learner practice through communicative activities in class are put at a critical place, according to Davies and Pearse (2002).

Student engagement means the active participation of students in classroom activities. It was mentioned by most participants as an important

indicator for effective classroom teaching and they agreed that an effective translation teacher not only requires translation knowledge and skills per se, but also needs to be knowledgeable about ways to conduct classes. In other words, a good translator is not necessarily a good translation teacher. It would be a boring exercise if the teacher only passed on knowledge to students without encouragement, facilitation and motivation. Students will find themselves hampered if the teacher simply does not know how to facilitate their learning, how to adjust the pace according to needs, how to be flexible in unexpected situations, and how to be more adaptable under different circumstances. Good classroom management can always leave students feeling that they have benefited considerably from the class, in terms of “learning what they need, discussing what they question, and resolving the problems they have” (teacher#6). Many responses mentioned that giving constructive feedback in classroom teaching is a good way to improve student engagement. Students need individualized attention and continuous help from the teachers – so if the teacher can engage all students in the classroom activities and give each of them adequate attention, the learning outcomes for improving translation skills would be far better than just giving lectures without student engagement.

Participants also expressed some other ideas about effective translation teaching in the classroom. One teacher participant mentioned time management, stating it would be an important indicator to classroom teaching effectiveness because this could show that the teacher has a sense of class control with the awareness of making every minute worthwhile (teacher#2). This can also indicate how well the teacher has prepared the class and how confident the teacher is to be able to use every minute for high quality classroom teaching. Another teacher participant said that an effective translation teacher needs to be authoritative in procedure, to some extent, so that he or she can lead students towards a more appropriate way of reflecting and being critical towards student translation work (teacher#7). If students have different opinions on translation choices and have discussions for quite a long time, it is the teacher’s responsibility to take control and give feedback. It is not always good to be open to all possible suggestions from students, and when it comes to the translation product – especially with a view to examinations – the teacher should have the authority to make final decisions at the end of discussions, so as to guide students in a direction that develops their knowledge and skills more effectively.

4.3 Personal traits of effective translation teachers

Student responses regarding personal traits of effective translation teachers include being encouraging, inspiring, open to different opinions, humorous and intelligent. Teacher responses mainly cover the traits of being patient, flexible, encouraging, humorous, helpful and inspiring. This is similar to those preferred for effective language teachers (Batten, Marland & Khamis, 1993; Biggs & Moore, 1993; Protherough & Atkinson, 1991; Stronge, 2002; Wong & Wong, 1998), especially being humorous and encouraging.

Both parties mentioned “humorous” as an important factor in personal traits of an effective translation teacher. As one teacher participant pointed out:

Humour is certainly important but I feel though the sense of humour could be superficial in a sense that if that becomes the dominant feature then you can have a very popular teacher but perhaps not a teacher who can help you a lot in terms of your learning. But part of being able to learn is to be able to focus in class and be awake and when there is humour in class it certainly helps you in that direction. But there has to also be substance in class to go along with humour. (Teacher #7).

“Encouraging” and “inspiring” were also mentioned by both students and teachers. All participants agreed that if the teacher is encouraging and inspiring, students can always benefit from actively engaging in the class activities to help them learn in a positive environment, without fearing that their translation will be criticized. Sometimes it is also true that a teacher with an encouraging and inspiring personality can help students reach their highest potential and stimulate their independent learning in order for them to become more professional translators. This can be reflected through what one teacher said, “you have to think not only like a teacher, or an academic, or a practitioner, but also you have to put yourself in their shoes, in each student’s shoes and also try to engage everyone, so that in the end you can come up with a consensus” about the best translation (teacher#4).

Separate to language teachers’ personal traits, “being inspiring” was particularly singled out as a trait for effective translation teachers, because the process of translation requires creativity and flexibility to handle different languages and situations well. If translation teachers can inspire students in the process of translation practice, this will challenge their potential and help them exceed their current knowledge and skills. Students will benefit and be more creative and flexible in performing translation, thereby making the learning process more independent and effective.

4.4 Assessment and feedback

When asked about assessments, students thought that they could only get general comments on their translation performance in weekly assignments, which is not sufficient in their opinion. What they would prefer is to not only have weekly assignments, with comments on their performance individually, but also have more exams for which they received marks based on error deduction. They tend to prefer more individualized written comments and error deduction for their translation practice. In their eyes, there must be a correct translation version available or so-called “key” that they can refer to when reflecting on their own practice. It is true that NAATI translation examinations, through which candidates can be accredited or certified as a professional translator, were marked on error deduction, giving students an impression that they just need to avoid certain errors to obtain a pass. Although students are committed to ongoing improvement in translation and professional development in the industry, and there is no doubt that they wish to strive to be excellent, they need to obtain accreditation or certification if they wish to become a professional translator – whether it is to develop themselves to the fullest, or simply for practical purposes of employment. Passing the NAATI examination thus emerges as a main priority, and may be the reason why students focus more on error deduction and tend to be more exam-oriented. On the other hand, teachers raised the idea of combining exams and other assessment tools for better outcomes. The teachers felt that it is not inappropriate to use exams as a tool to monitor progress and performance in translation, but students need to be aware that being a professional translator is not all about passing exams, and their knowledge and skills cannot be evaluated solely through exams or tests. A combination of assessment tools is more effective to evaluate a student’s ability in translation and the potential to be a professional translator.

As for feedback, both students and teachers thought general comments were not sufficient. Students want more written feedback on their performance from the teacher, preferably with detailed explanations. They also prefer to have individual consultations with their teachers to discuss some translation issues on an individual basis, so that the teacher can give individualized comments to the student in order to achieve future improvements. However, teachers would rather give oral feedback in class to students as a whole group, because they think it is the easiest and most efficient way. Based on student

needs, more individualized feedback is preferred because students can receive more comments tailored to their own performance, and teachers can have a more thorough idea about the individual student's learning progress. For the content of the feedback, both students and teachers agreed that more should be included, such as comprehension of the source text, structure of the language, structural appropriateness, idiomatic expressions, cultural issues, target language naturalness, etc. This may lead to more work load for teachers, but only in this way can the learning outcomes be maximized. A marking criteria sheet could possibly be designed for the convenience of teachers to assess, and students to reflect on their own performance using journals or online blogs (Crezee, 2016). Teachers also thought that error deduction may not be a good way to give feedback because it would lead students to take the marks too seriously and ignore what they should learn from their mistakes. Sometimes it would also make students feel a lack of confidence and lose motivation for further learning. Students can develop critical thinking during the process of peer checking by evaluating their classmates' translation work. Teachers can also guide students to have discussions on some common problems arising from peer checking, giving them an opportunity to be more reflective so that they can learn from each other.

To summarize, participants identified that feedback on translation should come in various forms and be given in different ways, so that students can be exposed to a variety of approaches to translation that are inspired by and connect to different theories – such as functionalism (Nord, 2014; Reiss, 2014), and theories on cross-cultural aspects in translation and interpreting – in order to be more flexible in their approach to texts and more effective as translators (Asensio, 2007). The role of the translation teacher in this process is more that of a guide, collaborating with students to be more critical about their own translation; that is, translation teachers enable the students to develop as critical and reflective practitioners through open and communicative learning experience.

5. Limitations of the study

Before concluding we note that this research has certain limitations, and these should be taken into consideration when interpreting the data. Firstly, the number of participants may not have been large enough to show more comprehensive perceptions on the effectiveness of translation teachers. The participants were working with the Chinese and English languages, and there may be a number of intercultural or cross-cultural factors of potential influence in the students' thoughts and expectations. To get more in-depth insight on the topic of translation teacher effectiveness, classroom observations will be conducted in the next phase of the research, in which effective translation teachers will be observed and evaluated in terms of their classroom teaching and interaction management strategies, with consideration to intercultural and cross-cultural factors. Secondly, this research is limited to translation teachers in Australian universities. Although the responses discuss experiences specific to higher education institutions in Australia, more research needs to be conducted to extend the reach of this study and apply findings to translation teachers worldwide. What is more, the student participants in this research come from a particular cultural background and consequently tend to have similar attitudes toward learning, resulting in more limited variation in terms of their preferences about ways of learning and how feedback is given.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated the perceptions of students and teachers on the qualities of an effective translation teacher using focus groups and one-on-one interviews. Nine students and seven teachers from several universities in Australia participated in this study. An analysis of the data illustrates that an effective translation teacher can be identified through three main aspects: personal knowledge, skills and traits; teaching styles and methods; and feedback to students. In other words, an effective translation teacher can rationalize class structure, keep students motivated, and respond to student needs.

The results of the focus group and interview discussions reveal that according to participants an effective translation teacher should have broad knowledge and understanding of the different needs of students with regards to their varying skills and cultural backgrounds, to name just two aspects. The teacher should be affable, humorous, encouraging, inspiring, and ready to facilitate exercises and activities to help students to understand the course content from different perspectives and encourage them to practise on their own. That is to say, the teacher can elucidate general problems faced by the students, discover ways of overcoming them and demonstrate solutions in a specific way that helps students better understand the issues and undertake translation tasks successfully on their own. Students also need to reflect on their own translation process and translation choices in order to improve their translation skills.

In classroom teaching, an effective translation teacher presents translation as a problem-solving and decision-making activity where there is no single or 'ideal' solution, but rather several defensible ones. An effective translation teacher designs tasks, activities and projects that aim at engaging students to develop their own accountability and responsibility for learning. The main goal in teaching and learning is to help students become independent learners and problem solvers, thereby equipping themselves with critical thinking skills and the ability to explain the rationale behind their translation choices (Bernardini, 2004). Apart from citing a commitment to teaching, the study participants considered that it is important for an effective translation teacher to care about students and have the ability to articulate abstract, subjective and/or profound concepts in a way easily accessible to them.

In short, the findings suggest that being an effective translation teacher draws on the same traits as being an effective language teacher, but translation teachers need to extend the students' language use for the purposes of professional practice. Thus, the key traits of translation teachers include: profound knowledge of languages and translation, mastery of translation skills, industry experience, engaging and communicative teaching methods, being inspiring and humorous as a person, using encouragement in giving constructive feedback, and understanding and helping students for the purpose of independent learning.

This study can be applied to teaching generally, in terms of classroom management and feedback given to students. Effective teachers need to display openness so as to embrace new experiences and ideas in classroom teaching. As results have shown, effective translation teachers welcome new ideas and experiences from students and can encourage them to learn more independently and critically. At the same time, effective translation teachers are inspiring but constructive when giving feedback to students, so that the learning process is highly individualized. This can be applied to other disciplines as well, so that all teachers can find their own ways to motivate student thinking and achieve teaching quality, making independent learning possible and teaching outcomes more effective.

References

- Batten, M., Marland, P., & Khamis, M. (1993). *Knowing how to teach well: teachers reflect on their classroom practice*. Hawthorn, Victoria: Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Bernardini, S. (2004). The theory behind the practice: translator training or translator education? In K. Malmkjær (Ed.), *Translation in undergraduate degree programmes* (Vol. 59, pp. 17-29). John Benjamins.
- Biggs, J. B., & Moore, P. J. (1993). *The Process of Learning* (3rd ed.). New York: Prentice Hall.
- Carreres, Á., & Noriega-Sánchez, M. (2011). Translation in language teaching: insights from professional translator training. *The Language Learning Journal*, 39(3), 281-297.
- Crezee, I. H. (2016). The benefits of reflective blogs in language-neutral translator education. *FITISPos International Journal*, 3, 28-41.
- Davies, P., & Pearse, E. (2002). *Success in English teaching*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Dunkin, M. J. (1995). Concepts of teaching and teaching excellence in higher education. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 14(1), 21-33.
- Ethell, R. G., & McMeniman, M. M. (2000). Unlocking the knowledge in action of an expert practitioner. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51(2), 87-101.
- Feldman, K. A. (1988). Effective college teaching from the students' and faculty's view: matched or mismatched priorities? *Research in Higher Education*, 28(4), 291-344.
- González Davies, M. (2004). *Multiple voices in the translation classroom: activities, tasks and projects* (Vol. 54). John Benjamins.
- González Davies, M. (2014). Towards a plurilingual development paradigm: from spontaneous to informed use of translation in additional language learning. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*, 8(1), 8-31.
- Hall, G., & Cook, G. (2012). Own-language use in language teaching and learning. *Language teaching*, 45(3), 271-308.
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. London: Longman.
- Huang, Z. (2010). What makes a successful EFL teacher in China? A case study of an English language teacher at Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine. *English Language Teaching*, 3 (3), 20-28.
- Huang, Z., & Napier, J. (2015). Perceptions of teachers and students on the qualities of an effective translation teacher. *The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning*, 1, 1-23.
- Kiraly, D. C. (2000). *A social constructivist approach to translator education*. Manchester, UK & Northampton MA: St. Jerome.
- Kiraly, D. C. (2014). *A social constructivist approach to translator education: Empowerment from theory to practice*. Routledge.
- Layne, L. (2012). Defining effective teaching. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, 23(1), 43-68.
- Malmkjær, K. (1998). Love thy neighbour: will parallel corpora endear linguists to translators? *Meta:/Translators' Journal*, 43(4), 534-541.
- Malmkjær, K. (2010). Language learning and translation. *Handbook of Translation Studies*, 1, 185-190.
- Neilson, R. (2004). The role of the teacher. In C. Conlan (Ed.), *Teaching English language in Australia*. Perth: API Network.
- Nord, C. (1991). *Text analysis in translation: theory, methodology and didactic application of a model for translation-oriented text analysis*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Nord, C. (2014). *Translating as a purposeful activity: Functionalist approaches explained*. Routledge.
- Peverati, C. (2014). Translation in university foreign-language curricula as transferable generic learning: Challenges for pedagogy and research. *Translation Research Projects*, 5, 13-28.
- Protherough, R., & Atkinson, J. (1991). *The making of English teachers*. Open University Press.
- Pym, A., Malmkjær, K., & Gutiérrez, M. (2013). *Translation and language learning*. Luxembourg: European Commission.
- Ramsden, P. (1992). *Learning to teach in higher education*. London: Routledge.

- Ramsden, P. (2003). *Learning to teach in higher education* (2nd ed.). Oxon: Routledge Falmer.
- Reiss, K., & Vermeer, H. J. (2014). *Towards a general theory of translational action: Skopos theory explained*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Routledge.
- Ruiz-Funes, M. T. (2002). *On teaching foreign languages: linking theory to practice*, Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey.
- Schjoldager, A. (2004). Are L2 learners more prone to err when they translate? In K. Malmkjær (Ed.), *Translation in undergraduate degree programmes* (pp. 127-149). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Stronge, J. H. (2002). *Qualities of effective teachers*. Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Tennant, M., McMullen, C., & Kaczynski, D. (2010). *Teaching, learning, and research in higher education: a critical approach*. London: Routledge.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Wilss, W. (1996). *Knowledge and skills in translator behaviour*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.
- Wong, H., & Wong, R. (1998). *How to be an effective teacher: the first day of school*. Mountain View, California, USA: Harry K. Wong Publications.

Appendix 1

What Makes an Effective Translation Teacher? Questions to Teachers

1. How long have you been a translation teacher?
2. What professional qualifications do you have?
3. Have you received any teaching awards or translation awards since you became a translation teacher?
4. Why do you choose to teach translation?
5. From a learner's perspective, what issues do you think are important in learning translation?
6. From a teacher's perspective, what issues do you think are important in teaching translation?
7. Do you have any particular philosophy or beliefs about teaching translation?
8. How do you define "effective classroom teaching"?
9. What do you usually do to make your classroom teaching effective?
10. What do you think the translation teacher's role should be in and out of the classroom?
11. What is the relationship between yourself as a teacher and your students?
12. What types of feedback do you think should be given to students?
13. How do you usually give feedback to your students?

Appendix 2

What Makes an Effective Translation Teacher? Questions to Students

1. How long have you been a translation student?
2. Can you tell me more about your learning experience in detail?
3. Why did you choose to study translation?
4. What do you think is very important in learning translation as a learner?
5. What do you think is very important in teaching translation as a teacher?
6. Do you have any independent study skills in learning translation?
7. As a student, how do you define “effective classroom teaching”?
8. In your opinion, how can a translation teacher achieve effective classroom teaching?
9. What do your teachers usually do to make your classroom teaching effective?
10. What do you think the translation teacher’s role should be in and out of the classroom?
11. What is the relationship between yourself as a student and your teachers?
12. What types of feedback do you expect the teacher to give to you?
13. How do you usually receive feedback from your teachers?