items is believed to be more reliable and practical than essay type items for measuring translation ability (Ghonsoli 1985), it would be more realistic if a passage were also administered to the candidates of the study, to find the relationship between students ability in writing the translation and their ability in choosing the best answer among a number of choices in a translation test.

As for English program at the Iranian Educational centers, from kindergartens to the university levels, the following points are suggested:

1. Teaching both native and foreign language should have a definite objective and be clarified for both teachers and students, Yarmohammadi (1994).

2. Necessary facilities should be prepared by schools in which Content-based English is being taught.

3. Teaching English effectively at the primary schools should be encouraged.

4. Any educational and communicative need of the society should be a decisive factor for the EFL program at the high schools and junior high schools.

5. Importance of proficiency in native language requires that the objectives of teaching Persian Literature to students be clarified. Students are not expected to be literary people, rather, they are supposed to be familiar with the literary works, develop their creativity, and get familiar and enjoy the Literature culture, Yarmohammadi (1994).

6. Teacher training should follow a sound strategy. This is the key concept in EFL programs. It is very important to train interested, motivated, and knowledgeable teachers for junior high school and high school levels.

7. And last but not least, the English teaching program at the university is not an exception. The same considerations should be taken into account for the EFL higher education programs.

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presented in ANOVA analyses, too.

8. The superiority of males' performance on the tests did not follow a regular pattern.

9. On the basis of the factor analysis, translation ability is located on a separate factor indicating that it measures a construct, which is not necessarily measured by the proficiency test.

10. Statistical findings were supported by the answers of the students to the questionnaire.

11. Questionnaire results indicate that 42% of students had gained more than 70% of the score for the University Entrance Exam. 88% were successful students at the high school concerning their English lesson scores. 73% had chosen translation because it was their favorite major. 51% had attended the English institutes before attending the university.

Conclusion and Implications

Comparing the percentage of students who attended the institutes and the successful students in Konkoor we come up with a 37% of successful high school students who were motivated and prepared for their favorite field of study. This raises an important issue that our English curriculum needs more consideration. According to yarmmohammadi (1994), this problem is not limited to English as a course or major field, it is observed in other disciplines and in other countries, for that matter. Yarmmohammad (1994) states that there are many reasons for this situation, among which one can refer to the lack of enough motivation, not using the language properly, the large size of classes, the lack of motivated and efficient teachers, the aptitude of students, their native language proficiency, and the teaching materials. Another interesting issue is that most of the researchers in our country believe that we should only focus on the applied issues in teaching and learning. However, the theoretical foundations should equally be taken into consideration.

Although the translation test, which, had been administered in the entrance exam and had served as the instrument of this study, was quite functional, the original data of the pilot study needs more detailed analysis.

The ability for translation loaded on a separate factor in the factor analysis. It would be an interesting issue if the items of the test went under an extensive factor analysis to clarify what they actually measure.

Although administration of multiple choice
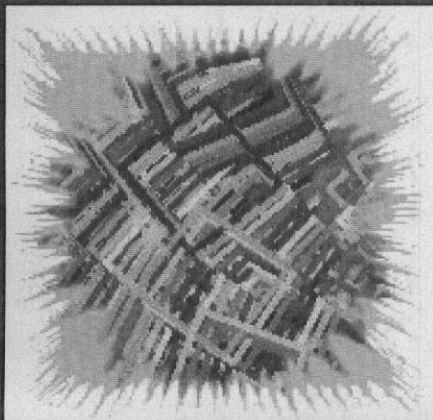
reading and writing.

Responses to the Questionnaire

An analysis of the 112 responses to the questionnaire gave rise to the following information:

40 percent of the students had gained the scores about 75% and 42 percent above 75% in The University Entrance Exam-KonKoor.

54% had gained the scores about 17 and 34% around 20 out of 20 in their English lessons, at the high school.

For 73.5% of students, Translation had been their favorite major.

68% wanted to continue their studies either to improve their translation ability or their English proficiency.

51% had attended English institutes between 2 to 24 semesters before their attendance to the University.

56% of students felt the responsibility for their own improvement or failure, from whom 38% believed that they had improved in both translation and in English proficiency.

66% had a positive view about their future. 33% were positive that they could continue their studies in their own field, and 30% believed that they could be functional in any job related to English language.

The responses to above questions were backed by those given to Likert type questions.

Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to find any relationship between the EFL senior undergraduates' translation ability and their majors, although the questions of the study were later extended to cover the relationship between the translation ability of students and their gender and the translation ability and the university in which the students study. The overall results on both instruments of the study gave rise to a number of points as follows:

1. Students majoring in translation in any branch of the Azad University performed better on the translation test than did those in other two majors.

2. Students of translation in the multi major branches like Karaj, Takistan, and Roodehen performed better on the translation test than did those in other two fields of study in the same branch.

3. Comparing the performance of students with the major of translation on the translation test, the following pattern was observed: The Central Branch, the North Branch, the Roodehen University, the Karaj University, and the Takistan University could be listed respectively with the first one holding the highest mean.

4. The effect of the university was also observed in the performance of students on the proficiency test. The pattern was exactly the same observed in the performance of students on the translation test.

5. The descriptive statistics supported the high reliability coefficients. The coefficients show the consistency of scores on both the translation test and the proficiency test.

6. Significant results of the ANOVA indicate a close relationship between the translation ability of the students and their translation majors. Translation students did better on the translation test than did the students studying Teaching English and English Literature.

7. The effect of the university in which students study was the third factor with significant results
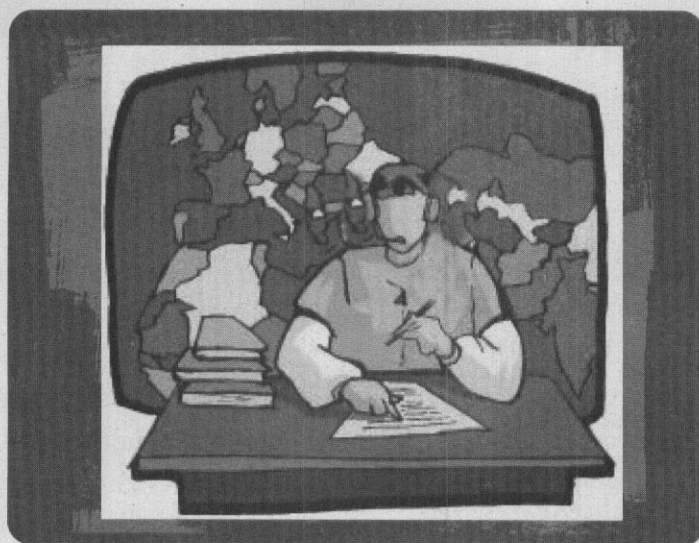
The results of the first analysis show that students of the Central Branch and the North Brach of the Azad University had the highest mean. The lowest mean, however, belonged to the students studying Translation at the Takistan University.

The descriptive statistics conducted for the performance of the three majors of different Universities on the proficiency test showed the following results: The Central Branch, North Branch, South Branch, Translation major of Roodehen, Translation major of Karaj Universities, Literature major of Karaj, Literature major of Roodehen, and Translation major of Takistan Universities showed the means of 56.69, 49.32, 42.71, 40.37, 39.29, 37.04, 36.60, 34.25, and 27.13 respectively.

According to the analysis, students of the Central Branch and the North Branch had the highest mean. The lowest mean belongs to the students studying Translation at the Takistan University.

The reliability estimate for the translation test and for the proficiency test are 0.88 and 0.93 respectively, using KR-21 formula.

The validity issue was considered from two perspectives: the correlations and the factor analysis. Since the correlation is the best available indicator of criterion validity, this measure, was used to estimate the correlation between the translation test and the criterion measure. Correlation was calculated to ascertain the extent to which the ratings of the proficiency test were indeed measuring the translation ability of students. The results of the correlation between the translation test and the TOEFL test were quit significant at the 0.01 level, although with a medium degree of coefficients. The correlation coefficients between the translation test and the grammar test turned out to be .55, the correlation between translation test and the reading turned out to be .49, and that between translation test and the total proficiency test was .56.

To measure the construct validity of the test, to see if the tests were using the same criteria, and to examine the patterns of correlations among the tests within and across each university, exploratory factor analysis was conducted. To minimize the number of variables that have high loadings on each factor, Varimax Rotation method was applied. The data from grammar, reading, translation tests fell on separate factors, indicating that they measure different constructs while each factor shares a minimum amount to the variables of

University test, 19 items and from the 51 items of the University test, 21 items whose discrimination level fell above 30 and whose difficulty ranged from 36 to 63 (Farhady, Jafar pour, Birjandi 1994) were chosen for the main phase. Reliability of the tests were also examined carefully, using KR-21 formula. Reliabilities for the test turned out to be 0.45 and 0.61 for the Azad and the State Universitie tests respectively.

The Main Phase

550 male and female senior students of translation, English Literature, and Teaching English participated in the main phase of the study. To find their possible difference in English language proficiency, a TOEFL test was administered to the sample to find their possible difference in translation, a test of translation was also administered. to know about the attitude of subjects toward their major, a questionnaire was also administered to a sample of the students of Translation. The subjects for this phase were students of translation from the Central Branch, the North Brach, and the South Brach of the Azad University, Karaj, Roodehen, and Takistan Azad Universities.

Administration of the two test in the pilot phase gave rise to a revised form of the translation test including 40 M/C items with accepted difficulty and discrimination levels. This test was administered with the 1986 version of the TOEFL test, which was used as a criterion. Based on the purpose of the study, the writing and the reading section of the test were administered.

The data gathered from the main phase were also subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS-the statistical package for the social science.

The two phases of the study were conducted with a one-semester interval.

The procedure for constructing the questionnaire was as follows: first, the participants were asked to write descriptively about their attitudes toward their field of study, their satisfaction with their achievement and their view about their future profession. Their ideas were then converted to a questionnaire with 9 M/C questions and 6 Likert type items.

Analysis of the data

Descriptive statistics were used to show the mean and variance of the scores on both test. The reliability indices were also calculated through the formula. Two sets of ANOVA and a t-test were used to compare the performance of participants on the tests, and to compare the performance of the male and female participants respectively. Also, to find the validity of the tests, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula was employed. Finally, the underlying constructs of the tests were distinguished through factor analysis. The results of the qualitative analysis of the questionnaire are presented below.

Results

Descriptive statistics of the performance of students in three majors on the translation test showed the means of 16.21, 15.49, 11.91, 11.85, 11.81, 11.67, 11.61, 10.54, and 10.01 for the Translation majors of the Translation majors of the Central Branch, of the North Branch, of Roodehen University, Literature major of Roodehen University, Teaching English major of the South Branch, Translation major of Karaj University, Teaching English major of Roodehen, Literature major of Karaj, and Translation major of Takistan Universities, respectively.

consisting of a proficiency test to measure the students' general knowlege in English, and a translation test to get an account of their translation ability were used.

Statement of the problem

According to Birjandi and Keyvanfar (1999) the Supreme Council of Programming for the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology in Iran has set the following two objectives for the undergraduate English Language Program for Translation:

1. To improve students proficiency in four skills of English language.
2. To develop translation ability and provide adequate opportunities for students to be able to translate different types of texts.

Authorities and instructors believe that the syllabus for translation is designed in a way to train competent translators in different types of texts, they assert that textbooks are chosen efficiently, and instructors do their best in transferring the knowledge to students. Meanwhile, they contend that the students of translation show difficulty in understanding and completing the academic work related to translation, and hence, the assumptions of the Supreme Council of Programming do not come true, students of Translation are not qualified enough when they graduate, and what they have gained is far below the objectives of the program. The mentioned situation was the incentive for conducting the present study.

This study was designed to test the following hypotheses:

1. There is no relationship between the ability of translation of students who major in translation and other EFL students, i.e. those who major in English Literature, and those in Teaching English
2. There is no relationship between the gender and the performance of the students who major in Translation and those who major in English Literature and those in Teaching, on a translation test.
3. There is no relationship between the location in which students study and their performance on the translation test.

Methodology

Procedure

This study consisted of two phases: the pilot phase and the main phase.

The Pilot Phase

In the pilot phase, two translation tests, which had been used for the admission of applicants to MA translation program in both Azad and State Universities, were used. Both forms of tests were administered to 145 senior EFL students of the three majors. The students were from the Azad University Central Branch, the North Branch, and the South Branch, and the Azad University of Roodehen. They took the two tests in the previous academic year. The test for the Azad University consisted of 40 multiple-choice items and the one used by the State Universities consisted of 51 M/C items. Both tests included items for translation from English to Persian and from Persian to English on different issues of political, economic, and legal documents, Islamic texts, and some idiomatic and literary terms.

The data collected in this phase of study were analyzed using Iteman software version 3.5 for the analysis of items. Out of 40 items of the Azad

as well as in the universities of Iran, the academic achievement of students who study translation has attracted considerable attention.

Curriculum for English Programs in Iran

The English curriculum in Iran consists of two phases: undergraduate program and graduate program.

A. Undergraduate Program

The English undergraduate program in Iran includes Translation studies, English Literature, and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). All applicants for language studies in general, and English Majors in particular have to take an entry examination (Konkoor) to start higher education.

BA in Translation

Students of Translation undergo a four-year instruction program. The classes are held about 18 hours a week in a 16-week semester. The whole course is run in English. During the first two semesters, students take basic English credits such as reading, listening, conversation, writing, and study skills. Teaching translation begins in the third semester. At this stage, students gain some linguistic background knowledge, terminologies and interpretation. Among other subjects of study, they take up some courses in Persian as well. From the second year, students are given some oral practices in translation, as well as contrastive linguistics and terminologies, which consolidate their skills in understanding the target language. The main topics they take in translation are as follows: the theoretical concepts of translation, interpretation, translation of simple prose, advanced translation of the prose texts, translation of economic and political texts, translation of

formal documents, literary translation, individualized translation, translation of journal articles, the usage of terminology in translation, and the translation of Islamic texts. In addition, students have to write a short term paper as their term projects corresponding to the objectives of the course. They take almost 30 credit units in translation in their major.

BA in Literature

Except reading, writing, oral proficiency, study skills and literature subjects, students who study English Literature, cover translation of simple texts, literary translation and surveying translated Islamic texts. They take 10 credit units to get exposed to translation studies.

BA in Teaching English

Besides taking more than 30 credits to help them develop their English skills and few credits in literature, the TEFL students, too, take about 10 credits in translation, including translation of simple texts, translation of prose and poetry, the usage of terminology in translation, and principles of translation.

B. Graduate Programs in Iran

MA in Translation

The MA in translation admits students with the BA in translation, English Literature and Teaching English majors. Students take a proficiency test and a translation test, preferably Multiple-Choice in format, for their entrance exam. As MA students, they don't get much practice in translation, but study about research in translation, theoretical principles of translation, educational philosophy, models of translation and research in translation, among others. In the present study an entrance examination for the MA program

about thirty years ago, cited in Farahzad (1993). Since then an interest emerged in studying translation and its evaluation strategy. Departments of translation in Iran present the course of Translation with the objectives of increasing students' general English proficiency and their translation ability. Although academic achievement of students who study Translation has long been of a major concern, it has not received enough attention. 550 senior students of three English majors, i.e. "Translation", "English Literature", and "Teaching English" participated in this study. A TOEFL and a translation test were administered to the three groups of participants to measure their language proficiency and translation ability respectively. The results of the application of the statistical analyses including reliability, validity, factor analysis and ANOVA on the three majors in different universities indicated that students majoring in translation performed better on both the translation test and the proficiency test than did those in other two majors. Some differences were also observed in relation to their place of education.

Key Words: *translation ability, translation major, translation test. general English proficiency.*

Introduction

Translation serves as a cross-cultural, bilingual communication vehicle among people, and hence, the translator plays the important role of a bilingual or multi lingual cross cultural transmitter by attempting to interpert concepts and speech in a variety of texts, as accurately and as faithfully as possible. In the past few decades, this activity has developed because of the rising international trade, increased migration, globalization, the recognition of linguistic minorities, and the expansion of mass media and technology (Gerding Salas2000).

Theorists of the early 19th century considered translation as a creative power in which cultural and social functions, languages, and literature with specific strategies could develop. The Mid 19th century witnessed the issue of translatability, literary criticism, and linguistics with the notion of separating translation from culture. Translation was considered as a process for communicating the foreign text through establishment of identity and analogy (Venuti 1986). The 1990s specifically observed the authority gained by translation studies. The period was flooded by translator

training programs and scholarly publishing (Venuti 2000). After its appearance in the academic field, for about two decades language teaching communities ignored translation. For a long time the purpose and place of translation in the educational systems was not known, its nature was misunderstood and it was taught in language institutes rather than universities (Darwish 1998). Since then a number of articles were written about translation and its evaluation system: Buck (1992), Stansfield et.al (1992), Waddington (2001), Riazi (2004).

Today, translation is flourished in many countries as an undergraduate and a graduate course with the objective of training professional and semi professional translators. Hence, translation as a formal professional activity with a theoretical background in faculties is of a higher level in relation to the style followed before, "when this subject was first included in our syllabus" (Darwish 1998).

Since its recognition as a field of study in more than 250 universities (Paknazar 1999) in the world,

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The Relationship Between Major and Translation Ability of Iranian EFL Undergraduates

چکیده

این مقاله به بررسی ارتباط توانایی ترجمه‌ی دانشجویان و رشته‌ی تحصیلی آنان می‌پردازد . طبق گفته‌ی نیومارک (۱۹۸۲)، تاریخ ترجمه و معرفی آن به صحنه‌ی آموزش به ۳۰ سال قبل برمی‌گردد . از آن زمان به بعد، ترجمه خود به عنوان یک رشته‌ی تحصیلی و هم‌چنین روش‌های سنجش آن، مورد توجه و مطالعه قرار گرفت . هدف رشته‌ی مترجمی در ایران، افزایش توانش عمومی زبان انگلیسی و توانایی ترجمه‌ی دانشجویان بوده است .

گرچه که موفقیت این دانشجویان همواره مدنظر مسئولان آموزش کشور بوده ، لیکن این امر چندان مورد پژوهش واقع نشده است . برای یافتن میزان توانایی ترجمه و توانش عمومی زبان انگلیسی دانشجوی رشته‌های مترجمی ، ادبیات انگلیسی ، و آموزش انگلیسی ، یک آزمون ترجمه و یک آزمون تافل به دانشجویان دانشگاه‌های آزاد واحد مرکز ، واحد شمال، واحد جنوب ، دانشگاه آزاد رودهن ، دانشگاه کرج و دانشگاه آزاد تاکستان ارائه شد . تحلیل آماری شامل تحلیل عامل‌ها و آنالیز واریانس نشان داد ، دانشجویان رشته‌ی مترجمی در مقایسه با دانشجویان رشته‌های ادبیات انگلیسی و آموزش انگلیسی ، از توانایی بیشتری هم در زمینه‌ی ترجمه و هم از نظر توانش عمومی زبان انگلیسی برخوردارند . عوامل دیگر مورد بررسی در این مقاله عبارت بودند از : دانشگاه محل تدریس ، جنسیت دانشجویان ، و رضایت یا نارضایتی ایشان از پیشرفت تحصیلی شان . نتیجه‌ی این بخش آماری در مقاله به تفصیل شرح داده شده است .

کلید واژه‌ها : توانایی ترجمه ، رشته‌ی مترجمی ، آزمون ترجمه ، توانش عمومی

Abstract

The present study investigates the relationship between the translation ability of students who major in Translation, and those who major in English Literature and in Teaching English. According to Newmark (1982) the history of translation and its introduction to the academic field date back to