An Assessment of the Context of Teaching Translation to Undergraduate EFL Students at Koya University

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ABSTRACT

In today's globalized world and with the emergence of advanced technology, there is an increasing demand for translation services to facilitate cross-cultural communication. Despite the existence of advanced translation technologies and tools that can facilitate and speed up the process of translation, these tools are not completely reliable since they cannot take into consideration contextual and cultural issues, which play a crucial role in understanding the meaning of a text. EFL undergraduate students who want to make a career in translation need to be equipped with different linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge and skills to be able to meet the market requirements. This study aims to assess the context of teaching translation to EFL undergraduate students at the Department of English (DENG)/ Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS) of Koya University to find out whether the translation course offered in the department matches the objectives for which it has been designed in terms of content, methodology of teaching and the resources allocated. The study also aims to identify the gaps and the obstacles facing the teaching of the discipline in an academic and professional way and accordingly make some recommendations to fill in the gaps. Data collection was done through two semi-structured questionnaires, one for teachers and the other for students. Twenty university teachers and sixty six students of the third and fourth year stages of the DENG/FHSS of Koya University of the academic year (2023-2024) were involved in answering the questionnaires. The main findings of the study indicate that the course is inadequate in terms of content, teaching methods and allocated resources; therefore, it does not meet its objectives.

KEY WORDS: Assessment, Context, Teaching Translation, EFL Undergraduate Students, Koya University.

1. INTRODUCTION

Translation has been practiced by man since ancient times due to its importance in transferring knowledge and information across cultures. In today's globalized world and with the emergence of advanced technology, the demand for translation services has been increasing to facilitate cross-cultural communication. Despite the existence of advanced translation technologies and tools that help speed up the process of

translation, these tools can never replace the human translator because they lack the creativity that the human mind possesses. EFL undergraduate students need to possess a wide range of skills if they want to become competent translators and to meet the translation market requirements.

As a field of study, translation is studied at universities either at a special department or as a general course at the departments of English. Teaching translation at a special department receives enough time and attention, which help the students to develop their skills and knowledge and to make a career in translation. As a subject or general course at the English departments, which is the concern of this study, translation often has a secondary status compared to the other language skills and is given marginal importance and limited time, which is not sufficient to cover enough materials and to get enough practice that equip students with the necessary skills and

knowledge required to become qualified translators both academically and professionally.

1.1. A Brief History of Teaching Translation at Koya University

In the mid-2000s, (2004-2006) Koya University had a College of Translation. Later, following the Koya University order number (4098/29/7) on 10/10/2006 to reorganize the University colleges, the College of Languages was established and the College of Translation became a department within this College (Koya University Graduation Program, 2008-2009, p.45-6).

The department continued and was able to graduate several batches of students. Some of the top students were also able to join MA and PhD programs but not in translation, because no MA and PhD programs in translation were available due to the lack of translation professors to teach and supervise postgraduate studies.

In 2010, Koya University was restructured from college system to faculty system to enhance the interaction between similar academic fields (Koya University.org). As a result, the Translation Department was merged with the English Department to form the current Department of English (DENG) under the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS).

1.2. The Current Situation of Teaching Translation at DENG/FHSS/Koya University

The Department of English (DENG) of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS) of Koya University has been established with the aim of preparing professional translators and interpreters for the job market in addition to preparing teachers as stated under its mission and vision. The department offers a general translation course to the third stage students in two semesters. The first semester is dedicated to Translation Theories and the second to Translation Practices with three credit hours per week for each semester. The main focus of the course is mostly on written translation while interpretation has been excluded from the curriculum since interpretation requires different skills and facilities to practice and needs expert instructors to teach it. The instructors who teach the course and design its content, although qualified, are all specialized in English language and linguistics rather than translation. The class environment is not suitable in terms of class size, which sometimes exceeds 40 students and the seating organization does not allow mobility and group work, in addition to lack of teaching labs and teaching aids. While, academically, the course can help students to acquire some basic principles and general knowledge about translation, professionally, it by no means helps them become competent and professional translators or

interpreters bearing in mind that about half of the students of the department want to make a career in translation after graduation (see Table 2.B under the results of the study).

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Based on the information mentioned above, the current context of teaching translation in this department seems to be unsatisfactory to achieve the objectives of the department in offering the course; therefore, there is need for reconsidering the whole situation, identifying the gaps and taking necessary action to improve it. This study is an attempt to address this problem.

Similar assessment studies have been conducted about the translation courses offered at the English departments of other universities of the Kurdistan Region (See the literature review of this study); however, this kind of assessment has not been conducted at the DENG/FHSS of Koya University. This study is an attempt to fill in this gap.

1.4. Research Questions

The study aims at answering the following questions:
1. Is the general translation course adequate in terms of content, teaching methods and the resources allocated to it, e.g. time, teaching cadre and other facilities?
2. Does the course achieve the objectives for which it has been designed? If not, where are the gaps and what are the problems?
3. What can be done to make the teaching of translation in the department more effective and productive in order to achieve the objectives of the department in offering the course?

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Translation

Translation has been defined by many scholars in relatively different ways; however, all of them agree that translation is rendering the meaning of a text from the source language (SL) into the target language (TL) by using linguistic and extra-linguistic equivalents in the target language. Below are some example definitions:

Newmark states that translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text .This process, according to Newmark, is much more complicated in practice than it seems to be on the surface because using another language means that you pretend to be a different person rather than yourself (1988, p.5).

House (2014, p.1) defines translation as "the result of a linguistic- textual operation in which a text in one language is re- produced in another language". However, as she suggests, "this linguistic- textual operation is

subject to, and substantially influenced by, a variety of different extra- linguistic factors and conditions". According to House, the interaction between the linguistic and extra-linguistic (i.e. contextual) factors makes translation a complicated process.

The above definitions prove that the focus of translation is on meaning; however, meaning is not only the product of translating the linguistic elements in a text but also the extra-linguistic factors that affect the meaning, such as the situational and cultural contexts and this makes translation a difficult task.

2.2. Translation versus Interpretation

In this study, the term translation is used to refer to both translation and interpretation; however, they differ from each other in many respects.

According to Schaffner (2004, p.2), translation and interpretation are "two modes of mediated communication". They share many features; however, due to differences in the working conditions and practices of translators and interpreters, they require different skills.

In Written translation, the translator transfers the meaning of the source text (ST) by replacing it with the equivalent vocabulary and grammatical structures of the target text (TT), while in interpretation, the interpreter listens to a message in the source language (SL), grasps its meaning and transfers it orally into the target language (TL). Therefore, in addition to very good linguistic and cultural knowledge of both languages, each type requires a different set of skills, abilities and facilities (Al-Khalil, 2014, P.6).

The key skills required by written translation are very good comprehension and text analysis skills, in addition to very good writing skills while interpretation requires extraordinary listening skills, a very good memory, excellent public speaking skills and also speed in transferring from one language to another since an interpreter has to translate in both directions at the same time (ibid). Translators, therefore, "have to be good writers and not necessarily good speakers, while interpreters have to be good speakers (and, in dialogue interpreting, good social mediators) but not necessarily good writers" (Gile, 1995, in Gile, 2004, p.13) .

Interpretation has different modes requiring different skills. The two main modes are simultaneous and consecutive interpretation. Simultaneous interpreting involves "delivering a speaker's words in another language in real-time". The interpreter sits in a booth and translates the speaker's speech immediately using headphones and a microphone. This mode is extremely important in international conferences. It requires a lot of mental efforts; therefore, interpreters must have excellent linguistic expertise and quick-thinking ability (Tirosh, 2024, p.1). In consecutive interpretation, the interpreter listens to a speech while taking notes and delivers the translation in pauses. This type is mostly used in business meetings (ibid). In this case the interpreter has to have very good note-taking skills in addition to the other skills.

Similarly, Gile argues that "translation and interpreting share much, both as professional activities and as research activities". Both translators and interpreters have to be familiar with different strategies to deal with translation/interpretation problems and how to apply these strategies (Gile, 1995b in Gile, 2004, p.13).

The above explanation shows that translation and interpretation involve different sets of skills; therefore, to become good translators or interpreters, students need to acquire these skills and get enough time to practice them.

2.3. Teaching Translation to EFL Undergraduate Students

The main objective of an undergraduate translation program is to prepare professional translators who will be able to meet the needs of the translation market. (Aminzadeh, 2021, p.287). According to Kiraly (2000) undergraduate translation programs which mainly focus on developing the learners' linguistic competence are incomplete because translation is a "textual-linguistic product within a specific cultural context". Therefore, linguistic knowledge is only a partial requirement for becoming a competent translator (in Aminzadeh, 2021, p.289).

As translation has now become an effective tool of intercultural communication, it involves skills and activities beyond a textual-linguistic operation. This new role of translation also requires a shift in the teaching methodology from teacher -centered to student-centered learning, which involves the students' active participation and decision making in the process (Aminzadeh, 2021, p.289).

According to Florenza and Luigi (2010, p.7), over the last few years, there has been a great need to adapt translation practices and training at the university level to suit the rapidly changing requirements of the translation market. Based on their experience, Florenza and Luigi state that "buyers and employers have definite expectations of new graduates in translation, and they are finding that the universities fall short of meeting their expectations regarding the skills and preparation for being on the workplace". The main challenges faced by the employers when employing the university graduates are the graduates' inability to deal with specialized translation, terminology and information technology in addition to their lack of cultural knowledge, and practical training and also their inability to work independently or in a team to solve problems and maintain and develop social relations while on the job (ibid).

Kornacki (2010, p.23) thinks that students of translation are only taught some basic purely linguistic

translation skills. Therefore, when they graduate and start their career they face difficulties and realize that translation requires a number of technical skills and proper application of translation technologies. He suggests that "teaching such skills should become a part of the curriculum" and "our role as teachers of translation should be to introduce our students to the trade and to show them how the market works" (ibid, p.15).

Another important aspect of translation that students of translation need to be made aware of is translation ethics. CHUO (2016) proposes including ethical issues of translation in the translation curricula from an early stage so that the students "become more aware and better acquainted with their new professional responsibilities". This will help translators avoid problems in the workplace.

The above suggestions by the different scholars indicate the need for extending the translation curriculum to include other translation-related subjects, such as cultural issues, translation technologies and translation ethics in order for the university graduates to meet the needs of the current translation market. They also imply making changes in the teaching methods and the role of the teachers who teach translation.

2.4. Academic versus Vocational Translation Programs

Both academic and vocational translation programs involve theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Both require professional linguistic and cultural knowledge of the source and the target languages and need training in Computer Assisted Translation (CAT) tools and translation ethics; however, they differ in their objectives and teaching approaches (Anggini & Helmanto, 2023. P. 109).

The main objective of an academic translation teaching program is to develop the learner's understanding of the translation studies and to prepare them for research, academic careers and postgraduate studies in the field. Therefore, the academic translation field takes a more theoretical approach and deals with broader translation-related topics such as translation history, translation theory, cross-cultural communication, and sociolinguistics. The curriculum is designed in such a way that motivates "critical thinking, research, and the exploration of translation as a social, cultural, and linguistic phenomenon" (ibid).

The main objective of a vocational translation program is to prepare professional translators for the job market. Therefore, the focus of such programs is on training students on practical and job- related skills (Rehm, 1989, cited in Anggini and Helmanto, 2023, p.109).

However, both programs are essential because as suggested by Baker (2011), translation professionals need to have both vocational and intellectual skills because their work profoundly influences the lives of the people who use their services (p.2).

According to Venuti (2017, p.1), the emergence of the field of translation has resulted in the development of standard translation programs that prepare students for the job market or for obtaining a higher degree in translation. These programs involve both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in translating and interpreting. The theoretical knowledge is related to different disciplines, such as linguistics, literary and cultural studies, sociology, etc. and the teaching material contain different text types and genres related to different translation fields e.g. legal, medical, commercial, social, etc.

Thus, translators are required to have a very good knowledge of different areas relevant to their field. That is why translation students need to receive a very good background knowledge and training to be able to meet the challenges they face in real world situations (Cozma & Dejica-Cartis, 2013, P11 cited in Anggini and Helmanto, 2023, p.1109).

2.5. Developing the Students' Translation Competence

Laver and Mason, (2018, p.21) suggest that translation competence is "a key concept in translation pedagogy, identifying the complete range of skills and aptitudes required to be a practising translator".

Similarly, the PACTE[1] research group (2003, p.15-16) argue that in order to be a good translator, translators need to be competent. The model of translation competence suggested by the PACTE group consists of a system of five inter-related and hierarchical sub-competences that translators need to have in order to be able to carry out the transfer process from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL) successfully These are:

(1) **Bilingual sub-competence**: this includes knowledge about the SL and the TL at the lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and discursive levels, which enables translators to communicate in the two languages and helps them understand the similarities and differences between them.

(2) **Extra-linguistic sub-competence**: it involves cultural knowledge about the SL and the TL and encyclopedic or real-world knowledge about the translation topic.

(3) **Knowledge about translation**: this involves knowledge about translation units, types, procedures, methods, and processes; and also translation problems

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[1] PACTE= Process in the Acquisition of Translation Competence and Evaluation is a Spanish research group formed in (1997).

and techniques used for dealing with the problems; in addition to knowledge about the functions of translation in different socio-cultural contexts, including professional translation practice and the translation market.

(4) **Instrumental sub-competence**: this refers to the knowledge of using documentation sources, and information and communication technologies related to translation (e.g., dictionaries, encyclopedias, translation memories, Compute Assisted Translation (CAT) tools, etc.)

(5) **Strategic sub-competence**: This involves knowledge about how to make the translation process efficient. This is done through planning, implementing, and evaluating the translation process and product and using the other sub-competences to identify translation problems and procedures to deal with them in an efficient manner.

(In Aminzadeh, 2021, p.290-291)

The above-mentioned sub-competences cannot be developed within one-year time and in the absence of necessary resources and facilities.

2.6. The Context of Teaching Translation to the EFL Undergraduate Students in the Kurdistan Region: Literature Review

In the Kurdistan Region there are several public universities, which offer translation courses either within a separate department or within their English departments. The aim is to equip the undergraduate students with the necessary academic and professional skills and knowledge in translation that can prepare them for the job market or to get a higher degree in the field after graduation.

Searching the websites of the different public universities in the Kurdistan Region (KR), the researcher observed that the following public universities offer translation courses either in a separate department or within their English departments or both:

1. **University of Sulaimani/ College of Languages** has a Translation Department
2. **Saladdin University-Erbil/College of Languages/ English Department** offers translation courses to the third- and fourth-year students.
3. **Duhok University/ College of Languages** has a Translation Department. It also offers translation courses within the English Department to the third- and fourth-year students.
4. **Kurdistan University-Hewler/ School of Social Sciences/ Department of English Language and Translation** offers a BA degree in English Language with a minor in Translation.
5. **Koya University/ Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences/ Department of English** offers a translation course to the third-year students.

6. **Garmian University/ College of Languages/ English Department** offers a translation course to the third-year students.
7. **Soran University/ Faculty of Arts/ English Department** offers a translation course but to which stage(s) is not mentioned in their website.
8. **University of Raparin/ College of Education/ English Department** offers a translation course (English to Kurdish Translation) to the third-year students in two semesters.

As can be observed in the above sample of the KR public universities, the system is different among the universities. Some universities have translation departments and others offer translation courses within their English departments, while some have both. There is even inconsistency in the system for the universities that offer translation courses within their English departments. Some only offer translation courses to the third stage, while others offer them to the third and fourth stages.

2.6.1. Previous Studies

Studies assessing the context and the challenges of teaching translation within the English departments of the Kurdistan Region reveal a number of obstacles and shortcomings that face the translation programs in these departments. To take a few examples:

A recent study entitled "Evaluating the Context of Translation Courses in the Departments of English in Kurdistan Region, Iraq" was conducted by Poulis (2023) aiming at a summative evaluation of the effectiveness of the context of translation courses in the Departments of English of the Colleges of Languages at Salahaddin University- Erbil, University of Sulaimani, and University of Duhok. The study attempted to answer the following research question: What are the teachers' and students' perceptions with regard to the effectiveness of the context of teaching translation courses in the Departments of English of the above-mentioned universities? The study adopted a quantitative method using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire (two parallel questionnaires, one for teachers and the other for students with difference in some items) based on the C (context) component of Stuffelbeam's CIPP (2003) evaluation model. The sample population were (125) teachers from the three universities mentioned above in the academic years (2016-2017) and (2017-2018), and (120) fourth-year students who had studied the course for two successive years, (40) from each of the three universities. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The results revealed that

- teachers were satisfied with only (37.5%) of the questionnaire items, while students were satisfied with only (20%) of the items, which proved that the context of

teaching translation in the English departments was unsatisfactory,

- Teachers and students were also not satisfied with the classroom environment especially in terms of class size and with the two-year duration and the credit hours allocated to the translation courses. They though that the allocated time was not enough to cover all the translation knowledge and skills, and

- although the students agreed that their teachers had good knowledge about translation, they were unsatisfied with the teaching methods they used.

Another study was conducted by Poulis (2020) entitled "Students' Assessment of the Translation Material in the Departments of English in Kurdistan Region- Iraq" with the aim of assessing the students' perception concerning the effectiveness of the translation materials of the translation courses offered at the English departments of Saladdin University, Sulaimani University and Duhok University in the academic year (2017-2018). Data collection was done via a quantitative questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. The sample population of the study comprised (120) randomly chosen fourth-year students who had been through the course for two successive years, (40) students from each university. The research question was: To what extent are Kurdish learners satisfied with the current materials of the translation courses offered in the Departments of English of the above-mentioned universities? The findings revealed the following:

- The majority (91.4%) of the students were unsatisfied with the translation materials, which indicated that the translation materials were beyond most of the students' expectations.

- The course content was not based on market needs and the students' needs were not considered in choosing the course content. Students had little role in the selection of the materials of the translation courses and the materials used in the third and fourth stages were not complementary.

Another research was conducted by Al-Kalil (2014) entitled "The Challenges of Teaching Translation to Undergraduate Students". It aimed at tackling the problems of teaching translation and interpretation to EFL undergraduate students in the Kurdistan Region universities and suggesting some modern methodologies for teaching it. The study was based on the researcher's own experience as a former instructor, a practitioner of translation and a researcher in Translation Studies, and on examining some BA translation programs of some universities in the Kurdistan Region-Iraq. It came up with the following results:

- The BA program of the English language has not been standardized by the Ministry of Higher Education.

Therefore, the translation syllabuses are not unified among the English departments across the region.

- The objective(s) of the translation course is/are not clear whether to teach translation just for academic purposes or also for vocational purposes.

- The course duration and the credit hours allocated to teaching translation are not enough to cover all the content of the course and to practice the different skills involved in translation.

- The focus of the courses is mainly on written translation rather than interpretation because interpretation needs different skills and facilities which are not available such as language labs and audio-visual aids also expert translators to train the students.

The results of the above studies indicate that there are similar problems and shortcomings across the region in the courses offered within the English departments.

This study, although similar in many respects to the above-mentioned ones, it is conducted in a different context, with a different aim. It assesses the context of teaching translation against the objectives of the department in offering the course to find out whether the current situation of teaching the course is in line with the objectives. Therefore, it takes a broader view of the context of teaching the translation course, including the adequacy of the course content, the allocated resources, the quality of the instructors who teach the course and whether there is need for expert teachers, the students' attitude about studying translation in relation to their future career, etc. and also asks for the instructors and students' suggestions to improve the course since they are the main stakeholders in the teaching/learning process and can best identify the problems and suggest suitable solutions to them.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Data Collection

Method

Data collection was done through designing two semi-structured questionnaires, one for teachers and the other for students. To assess the validity of the two questionnaires, they were given to a jury of five expert teachers with very good experience and background knowledge in translation and with several years of teaching experience in the field. The questionnaire included three sets of questions: 1) personal information (2) Course-related questions in the form of options (3) an open-ended question requiring the participants' suggestion and recommendations to improve the teaching of the translation course. The last two sets were somehow similar in both the teachers' and students' questionnaires (See the appendixes of the study).

Sample Population

Twenty (20) teachers (14 male and 6 female, including 11 with MA and 9 with PhD degrees) of the Department of English (DENG) of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS) of Koya University of the academic year (2023-2024) participated in answering the teachers' questionnaire. Their teaching services in the department ranged round (1-15+) years. Eight (8) of them had experience in teaching the translation course with a teaching service of (1-10) years. (See tables 1 A and 1B under the results of the study).

The students' questionnaire was answered by (66 out of 70) students of the same above-mentioned department and of the same academic year. (36) students from the 3rd year (15 male and 21 female) and (30) students from the 4th year (15 male and 15 female) (See table 2 A).

3.2. Data Analysis Procedures

The analysis of the data was done by tabulating the results for each question and giving the numbers and percentages of the participants' choices. The last table contains a summary of the participants' suggestions to improve the course in general. This is followed by a detailed discussion of the results.

4. RESULTS and DISCUSSION

4.1. Results

(1) Personal Information
Teachers' Personal information

Table (1A) Number, Gender, and Academic Degrees of the Teacher Participants

Number	Gender[1]	Academic Degrees
20	14 males= (70%)	11 MA= (55%) 9
	6 females= (30%)	PhD=*(45%)

[1] The disparity in the number of male and female teachers is due to the fact that the number of male teachers in the department is larger than that of female teachers.

Table (1 B)
Teachers' Teaching Experience

Teaching experience	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	15+ years
	6= (30%)	4 = (20%)	2 = (10%)	8= (40%)
Have you taught translation?	Yes: 8= 40%	No: 12= 60%		
Teaching experience in translation	1-2 years	5-5+ years	9-10 years	
	4= (50%)	2= (25%)	2 = (25%)	

Table (1C) Teacher's Knowledge about Translation and Their Ability to Teach It

Very good background knowledge and ability to teach it	Limited background but can develop their knowledge and teach it	Little experience and not interested in teaching it
9 = (45%)	5= (25%)	6 = (30%)

Table (1 D) Teachers' Knowledge about Interpretation and Their Ability to Teach It

Very good background knowledge+ ability to teach it	some background but can develop their knowledge and teach it	Little experience and not interested in teaching it
2= (10%)	10= (50%)	8= (40%)

Students' Personal Information:

Table (2 A) Stage, Number, and Gender of the Students

Stage	Number	Gender
3rd year students	36	15 Male= (41.66%) 21 Female= (85.33%)
4th year students	30	15 Male= (50%) 15 Female= (50%)
Total number of students	66	30 Male= (45.45%) 36 Female= (54.54%)

Table (2 B) Students' Career Preference

Participants	Translator/interpreter	Teacher	Others
66 students	32= (48.48%)	12= (18.18%)	22= (33.33%)

Table (2 C) Knowledge about Translation and Where They Got the Knowledge from

Participants	Very good knowledge 37= (56.6%)	Limited knowledge 29= (43.93%)	
66 students	Developed myself on my own	From the college course	From both
	15= (22.72%)	9 = (13.63%)	42= (63.63%)

(2) Course-Related Questions

Table (3)
Adequacy of the Translation Course Syllabus

Participants	Adequate	Not Adequate
20 Teachers	3= (15%)	17= (85%)
66 Students	23= (34.84%)	43= (65.15%)

Table (4)
Participants' Opinions about the Duration of the Course

Participants	One year is enough	More time needed
20 Teachers	2= (10%)	18= (90%)
66 Students	13= (19.69%)	43= (65.15%)

Table (5) Participants' pinions about the Stages at Which Translation Should be Studied

Participants	All the 4 stages	2nd-4th year	3rd and 4th year

20 Teachers	7= (35%)	6= (30%)	7= (35%)
66 Students	48= (72.72%)	8 = (12.12%)	10 = (15.15%)

Table (6) Participants' Choices about Whether Written Translation and Interpretation Should be Taught Together or as Two Separate Courses

Participants	Together	As two separate courses
20 Teachers	3= (15%)	17= (85%)
66 Students	19= (28.78%)	47= (71.21%)

Table (7) Participants' Choices about the Need for Specialized Teachers

Participants	Expert teachers needed	English Teachers can teach written translation but not interpretation	English teachers can teach both
20 Teachers	11= (55%)	7= (35%)	2= (10%)
66 Students	43=(65.15%)	23= (34.84%)	0 = (0%)

Table (8) Participants' Opinions about Whether Students Need to Get Specialization in Certain Translation Fields or Get General knowledge about Different Translation Fields

Participants	Need specialization	Need general knowledge
20 Teachers	3= (15%)	17= (85%)
66 Students	26= (39.39%)	40 = (60%)

Table (9)
Participants' Suggestions to Improve Teaching Translation in the Department

Teachers	- Interpretation should be included in the syllabus and should be taught as a separate course in the 4th year. - Extending the duration of the course - More focus should be placed on practice. - The focus should be on all aspects of English language and culture, including grammar, idiomatic expressions, figurative language , etc. - Incorporating authentic materials using authentic texts, such as newspaper articles, literature excerpts, and professional documents to expose students to real-world translation challenges. - Incorporate collaborative learning activities e.g. group translation projects and peer review sessions. - Using translation to enhance English language learning i.e in teaching the language skills.
Students	- Giving more time and credit hours to translation. - Studying translation in all the four stages of college or at least from the second year onwards - More focus on practice and oral translation. - Including interpretation in the curriculum and teaching it as a separate course. - Involving students in group translations and giving them more assignments and activities. - Involving students in real-world activities both in translation and interpretation; taking students to different workplaces to practice their translation and interpretation skills in real-world situations. - Exposing students to more problem-based translations and allowing enough time for discussing the problems with feedback from the teacher. - Revising the curriculum/syllabus and dividing it according to level among the four stages i.e. from the more basic to the more advanced.

4.2. Discussion

Tables (1A, 1B, 1C and 1D) show personal information of the teacher participants. Tables (1A and 1B) show the gender, academic degree and teaching services of the teacher participants. These are already explained under the Sample Population section. Tables (1C and 1D) show the teachers' background knowledge about translation and interpretation and their ability to teach it. (45%) of the teachers state that they have very good background knowledge about translation and the ability to teach it while (25%) say they have limited background

knowledge but that they can develop themselves and are interested in teaching translation. This indicates that a number of the English language teachers (both MA and PhD) have very good background knowledge about translation and the ability to teach it, and others who are interested in teaching translation but need some training or self-development in the field so as to be able to teach it. However, this number may not be enough if the course is extended to other stages.

With regard to interpretation, only (10%) of the teachers say they have very good background knowledge about interpretation and are able to teach it; however

(50%) say that they have some knowledge and can develop themselves in the field to be able to teach it, and (40%) have very little knowledge and are not interested in teaching it . This proves that there is lack of interpretation teachers; therefore, if interpretation is included in the course, there will be need for bringing in some expert interpreters to teach it and to train some of the English teachers of the department, in addition to the teaching aids and facilities required to practice it.

The two above tables show the need for human resources, training and teaching facilities, especially for teaching interpretation.

Tables (2A, 2B and 2C) contain personal information about the student participants. Table (2A) shows the stage, number and gender of the student participants. These are already explained under the Sample Population section.

Table (2 B) is about the students' career preference**.** As the table shows, the majority of the students (48.4%), state that they prefer to make a career in translation or interpretation after graduation, which means that they need to be well prepared for the job market

Table (2C) shows the students' background knowledge about translation. (56.6%) claim that they have very good background knowledge about translation, while (43.93%) say they have limited knowledge about translation, which, according to them, is not enough to become professional translators.

With regard to where they got the knowledge about translation from, (22.72%) claim that they have developed themselves on their own; (13.63%) state that they learned from the college course, while (63.63%) say have they learned from the course and they also developed themselves.

Tables 2B and 2C show that about half of the students have joined the department to make a career in translation. They also indicate that the translation course has had some good effect on some of the students but it needs to be made more effective so that all the students can benefit from it. They also show that a good number of students are interested in translation and are keen on developing themselves in the field and with better motivation and training they can become professional translators. These results imply that there is need for improving the quality of teaching by improving the course content, the teaching methods and aids and the quality of the teaching staff who teach it.

Table (3) shows the participants' opinions about the content of the translation course. As shown in the table, Only (15%) of the teachers and (34.84%) of the students think that the course content is adequate, while (85%) of the teachers and (65.15%) of the students agree that the syllabus or the course content is not adequate as it only contains some basic knowledge about written translation and nothing about interpretation.

This indicates that the majority of the teachers and the students are unsatisfied with the syllabus as it does not cover all the necessary information and skills needed and it does not contain anything about interpretation, which is an important component of translation. Therefore, the syllabus needs to be revised to include interpretation and more translation- related subjects which help students to develop their translation competence.

Table (4) shows the participants' opinion about the duration of the course. As shown in the table, the majority (90%) of the teachers and (65.15%) of the students agree that the one-year time is not enough to acquire all the translation skills and knowledge and to get sufficient practice.

As with regard to the stages at which translation should be studied, there is difference in opinion among the participants but as shown in **Table (5**), the majority of the students (72.72%) and (35%) of the teachers prefer that translation should be studied at the four stages of college education, (35%) of the teachers and (15.15%) of the students suggest it should be studied at stages three and four while (30%) of the teachers and (12.12%) of the students suggest that studying translation should start at least from the second stage.

Tables (4 and 5) both indicate that the course is not given enough time and there is need to extend to other stages in order to be able to cover all the necessary materials and to give students enough time to acquire the knowledge and skills step by step from basic to more advanced.

Table (6) shows that (85%) of the teachers and (71.21%) of the students suggest that translation and interpretation should be taught as two separate courses to give each enough time and focus. This implies that translation and interpretation involve different sets of skills and require different facilities, activities, time and teachers.

Table (7) answers the question whether teaching translation needs specialized teachers or the English language teachers can teach both translation and interpretation. (55%) of the teachers and (65.15%) of the students prefer teachers of translation to be experts; (35%) of the teachers and (34.84%) agree that English language teachers can teach written translation but that interpretation needs expert teachers, while only (10%) of the teachers and (0%) of the students agree that English language teachers can teach both translation and interpretation. This implies that expert teachers are preferred to teach the course especially for interpretation; however, some of the English language teachers are qualified to teach written translation but only a small minority can teach interpretation. Perhaps with some training, more English language teachers will be able to teach both translation and interpretation.

Table (8) answers the question whether students need to obtain general knowledge about the different fields of

translation or they need to get specialized in one or more fields. (85%) of the teachers and (60%) of the students agree that students should get general knowledge about translation as it gives them more chance to find jobs after graduation, while (15%) of the teachers and (39.39%) of the students agree that students need to get specialized in one or more translation fields in the advanced stages of their education as this will enable them to get focused professional knowledge in their fields This implies that the translation program should be comprehensive to include knowledge about the different fields of translation and the skills required by each field.

Table (9) shows the teachers' and students' suggestions to improve teaching the course. Examining their responses, it can be observed that they have raised some similar issues, such as including interpretation and studying it as a separate course to give it enough time and focus, giving more time to practice, extending the course duration, using authentic materials and creating the chance for students to practice the translation and interpretation skills in real-world situations, using student-centered methods of teaching and collaborative learning activities, and exposing students to problem-solving tasks and peer review sessions. Another suggestion by the teachers is using translation as a tool in teaching the other language skills. The students also suggest revising the course content and dividing it according to the students' levels among the different stages of studying translation so that students will have time to absorb the material step by step.

These suggestions indicate that the teachers and the students are already aware of the gaps and shortcomings of the course and they have reasonable suggestions to improve it.

To summarize the above discussion:

1. The course is not adequate in terms of content, teaching methods and duration,

2. There are challenges and problems facing the teaching of the course, such as lack of human and non-human resources, lack of facilities and teaching aids, insufficient time to practice the translation skills, absence of interpretation in the syllabus and lack of resources to teach it, in addition to other obstacles like inappropriate classroom environment in terms of both class size and seating arrangement, which restricts mobility and group work activities, non-use of student-centered methods and activities, etc.

This proves that the context of teaching translation in the DENG/FHSS of Koya University is unsatisfactory to help students become academic and professional translators or interpreters.

The above two points answer the first two research questions, while the third research question is answered by the suggestions mentioned by the participants in Table

9 and also the points mentioned under the Recommendations section of this study.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study assessed the context of teaching translation to EFL undergraduate students at the Department of English (DENG)/ Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS) of Koya University. As the results show, the context of teaching translation at the department proves to be unsatisfactory to achieve the objectives of the course, which is preparing competent and professional translators and interpreters due to the different problems and challenges mentioned in the previous section of this study. This indicates that there is a mismatch between the objectives of the department in offering the course and the current direction the course has taken. Therefore, there is need to revisit the objectives of the department in offering the course and match them with the inputs required by the course in order to obtain the desired outputs.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study and the previous assessment studies mentioned under the literature review, the study has come up with the following recommendations to fill in the gaps and to make the translation courses within the English departments more effective not only at Koya University but at the universities across the Kurdistan Region:

1. The Ministry of Higher Education should take action to unify the BA translation program within the English departments throughout the region in terms of course duration, stages of studying translation and the syllabus, and accordingly to design or suggest subjects and textbooks for the different stages in which translation is taught.

2. Setting clear objectives for the translation courses offered within the English departments based on a needs assessment of the translation market and the needs of the students and providing the necessary resources and facilities to achieve the objectives.

3. To change the title of **The Department of English** (DENG) of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS) of Koya University to **The Department of English Language and Translation** to give more prominence and due concern to translation and to expand the scope of translation in the department because originally this department has been established with the aim of preparing translators more than teachers.

4. Allocating more time to teaching translation in terms of both the stages of studying it and the weekly credit hours given to teaching the course so that students can get

Koya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (KUJHSS)

sufficient theoretical knowledge and practice and build their full competence.

5. Extending the translation curriculum to include interpretation, sight translation, translation technologies, translation ethics and other translation-related subjects and providing the necessary facilities and resources.

6. Teaching translation and interpretation as two separate courses due to the different skills, facilities and resources required by each, setting appropriate syllabuses for each course and providing teaching facilities for each.

7. Improving the classroom environment in terms of class size and seating arrangements and using student-centered methodologies in teaching translation and interpretation such as collaborative learning, group work, peer review sessions and problem solving assignments and tasks to make students responsible for their learning and mastering the skills.

8. Incorporating translation activities into the teaching of the other language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing as translation is a very effective tool in learning a foreign language. In this way translation and language will be integrated so that one reinforces the other.

9. Raising the students' cultural awareness by incorporating teaching English culture within the other language skills in the form of different cultural activities and exercises.

10. Conducting translation and interpretation training courses for the English language teachers so as to be able to teach both courses in an academic and professional manner.

11. Conducting training courses for teachers and students in using the different translation technologies.

12. Facilitating coordination and cooperation among the instructors of the departments of English that offer translation courses and between translation instructors and expert translators and interpreters across the region.

13. Building a bridge between the translation departments, English departments and the translation market so as to find and ensure job opportunities for the graduates.

14. Opening MA and PhD programs in translation in order to prepare specialized cadres to teach it. It is time to start this project.

However, conducting research and making suggestions without taking action by the relevant parties is fruitless and is a waste of time and efforts. Therefore, the researcher hopes that her efforts will bring about some positive change to improve the context of teaching translation across the region in general and at Koya University in particular.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX (1)

Teachers' Questionnaire
An Assessment of the Context of Teaching Translation to Undergraduate EFL Students at Koya University Teachers' Questionnaire

(1) Personal Information
Please tick (√) the appropriate box or option
1. Gender: Male **Female**
2. Academic Degree: MA   PhD
3. How long have you been teaching in the department?
     1-5   6-10   11-14   15+

3. Have you ever taught translation to undergraduate students?
Yes
No
4. If yes, for how many years?
5. Background knowledge about translation
a. I have very good background knowledge about translation and I can teach translation to undergraduate students with confidence.
b. I have some limited background knowledge about translation as a discipline, but I can develop my background and teach translation with confidence
 c. I have little experience about translation and I'm not interested in teaching it.
6. Background knowledge about interpretation
a. I have enough background knowledge about interpretation that helps me teach the skill to undergraduate students with confidence.
b. I have some background knowledge and experience about teaching interpretation and with some efforts I can teach it.
c. Interpretation needs different skills and facilities, which makes it more difficult to teach. Being so, I feel I can't teach interpretation in a professional way.
(2) Course-Related Questions
1. Adequacy of the translation course:
a. The general translation course studied at the department of English/ FHSS gives students adequate theoretical knowledge and sufficient practice in both written translation and interpretation that make them ready for the job market.
b. The department's general course only gives some basic theoretical knowledge and limited practice in written translation and almost nothing about interpretation; therefore it is by no means enough to equip students with all the necessary skills required to become professional translators.
2. The time allocated to teaching translation at DENG/FHSS
a. The one year time allocated to teaching translation is enough to get all the knowledge and skills involved in translation and interpretation and enough time to practice.
b. Translation requires more time and one year is not enough for mastering the necessary translation and interpretation knowledge and skills and to get enough practice.
3. The stages at which translation should be studied as a separate skill at the department
a. all the four stages b. at least from the second stage to the 4th stage c. in the third and 4th stages
4. Adequacy of the translation course syllabus:
a. The current syllabus is fine and students can develop themselves through practical experience while on the job.
b. There is need for a more focused and comprehensive syllabus in both translation and interpretation based on the needs analysis of the translation job market.
5. Translation and interpretation
a. Written Translation and Interpretation can be studied together in one course.
b. Written Translation and Interpretation should be taught as two separate courses because they involve different skills and practice.
6. Need for specialized teachers for translation and interpretation
a. The teachers teaching translation and interpretation should be experts in translation and interpretation
b. It would be better if there are some specialized teachers for Interpretation; however, the English language teachers at the department are able to teach Written Translation.
c. The English language teachers can teach both skills.
7. Students' need for specialization in the different fields of translation
a. At the advanced stages, students, based on their interest, need to get specialized in some specific field of translation such as legal, political, medical, business, tourism, media etc. translation so that they can get focused professional knowledge in their fields.
b. Students need to get good background knowledge in the different fields of translation so that they will become generalist translators and be able to have more chance to get jobs.
8. Any suggestions to improve the quality of teaching the Translation Course in the department?

APPENDIX (2)

Students' Questionnaire
An Assessment of the Context of Teaching Translation to Undergraduate EFL Students at Koya University Students' Questionnaire
(1) Personal Information
Please tick (√) the appropriate box or option.

1. Gender: **Male**   **Female**

2. Stage: **Third**   **Fourth**

3. Career preference after graduation
a. translator / interpreter   b. teacher   c. others

4. Background knowledge about translation
a. I have very good background knowledge about translation and interpretation that helps me to become a professional translator/ interpreter after graduation
b. My background knowledge about translation and interpretation is very limited to become a professional translator or interpreter after graduation.
5. Where did you get your background knowledge about translation?
a. I have developed myself on my own b. I have learned from the college course
c both

(2 Course Related Questions
Please tick (√) the appropriate option:
1. The time allocated to teaching the translation course
a. The one- year time allocated to teaching translation is enough to get all the knowledge and skills involved in translation and interpretation.
b. Translation requires more time and one year is not enough for mastering the necessary translation knowledge and skills and to get enough practice.
2. The stage(s) at which translation should be studied at the department in order to become competent.
a. all the four stages b. at least from the second stage to the 4th stage c. in the third and 4th stages

3. Adequacy of the translation course syllabus:
a. The course syllabus studied at the department of English/ FHSS/ Koya University gives students adequate theoretical knowledge and sufficient practice in translation that maks them ready for the job market after graduation.
b. The general course syllabus only gives some basic theoretical knowledge with limited practice in written translation and is by no means enough to equip students with all the necessary skills required to become skilled and professional translators or interpreters.
4. Interpretation
a. Interpretation is included in the course syllabus and is given enough time along with written translation.
b. Interpretation is not included in the course syllabus because it requires time and different skills, facilities and practice**.**
5. Teaching Written Translation and Interpretation
a. Written Translation and Interpretation can be studied together in one course.

b. Written Translation and Interpretation should be taught as two separate courses because they require different skills and practice.
6. Students' need for specialization in the different fields of translation
a. At the advanced stages, students, according to their interest, need to get specialized in some specific fields of translation such as legal, political, medical, business, tourism, media, etc. translation.
b. Students need to get good general background knowledge and the necessary skills in all the fields of translation so that they will become generalist translators in the field and be able to have more chance to get jobs.
7. Need for specialized teachers in translation
a. The teachers teaching translation and interpretation should be specialized in translation and interpretation
b. It would be better if there are some specialized teachers for interpretation; however, the English language teachers at the department are able to teach written translation.
c. The English language teachers are able to teach both translation and interpretation
8. Any suggestions to improve the quality of teaching the translation course at the department?