The Effect of Discussion-based Evaluative Judgment on the Translation of Narrative Texts

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ABSTRACT: The current quasi-experimental study, examined the effect of discussion-based evaluative judgment on the translation of narrative texts by Iranian university students studying translation studies. To this end, 40 Iranian EFL translation students studying at the Islamic Azad University North Tehran Branch were selected based on convenience sampling. The Oxford Placement Test (OPT) and a translation pretest were administered to ensure the homogeneity of the contributors prior to the treatment. The participants were then assigned to the Evaluative Judgment Translation Group (EJTG n=20) and the Traditional Translation Group (TTG n=20). During 16 sessions, the EJTG was taught translation through evaluative judgments as a treatment, while the TTG experienced translation via the traditional way. After the treatment stage, the participants were given a translation posttest. The overall result implied that the EJTG, taught through evaluative judgment with group discussion, significantly outperformed the TTG. The study has some implications for EFL/ESL students in translation education. For the theoretical phase, it can offer some suggestions for investigators who are attentive in developing a model for the translation course. Regarding the practical phase, all teachers could use evaluative judgment and cooperative discussion in their translation courses. In fact, evaluative judgment and collaborative strategies occupy a prominent role in the translation achievement of students in academic contexts. These strategies could be effective in enhancing EFL students' decision-making skills.

KEYWORDS: Collaborative Translation, Discussion-Based Learning, Evaluative Judgment, Joint Problem Solving

I. INTRODUCTION

Many methods have been used for language teaching, but no one has yet been able to come up with a convincing model for which method should be used for which group of students (Amiri & Rabbani, 2019). As a branch of language education translation education is no exception. Translation is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and requires attention to many different aspects on the part of the translator (Munday, 2001). The transition from product to process is closely tied to more intensive training for translators. This approach helps to improve the quality by understanding the different procedures to achieve the quality of the ultimate product (O'Connor, 2004).

The most cumbersome responsibilities for translators is decoding the terms involving creative strategies. Trainee translators usually fail to find these strategies to translate some texts since the strategies and theories that they know are mainly theoretical, and when it comes to practice, they face severe problems in terms of problem-solving (Sabramiz, 2017). Thus, translation has recently come to be understood as a specialized effort that indorses "learners' autonomy and responsibility towards quality" (MaruendaBataller&Santaemilia-Ruiz, 2016, p. 97). Besides, Gile (2009) emphasizes that translation training should resemble actual translation work. The most innovative approach to translation education has developed since 1990s. It has highlighted students' role as the protagonists of the learning process (Kiraly, 2005). Needless to say, practice-oriented translation education is an urgent need in the field of translation. Studies showed that those students experienced teacher-student cooperation in class setting achieved more than others (Beiki et al.,2020 a; Mohammadi et al., 2022; Sanders & Horn, 1998).

Far from the traditional methodology to translation teaching, translation scholars advocate building collaborative learning environments (Kelly, 2005). The collaborative view of language teaching has received considerable attention in recent years. It generally focuses on student pair work or group work that leads to student-centered classes rather than teacher-centered classes (Dillenbourg, 1999). In such collaborative classes, students will manage the pace of their learning and the development of lessons

themselves (Panitz, 1996). The translation course also develops educational methods that consider not only on the outcomes but also on the translation procedure.

In educational settings, discussion can help students attain a novel insight of the discussion topic (Parker, 2003). Discussion comprises a set of aptitudes (Parker & Hess, 2001) and educators need to conduct a dynamic discussion in class setting which enhances students' cooperation. According to Pomerantz (1998), classroom discussions can offer the chance to students to practice academic discourse and the process of knowledge transformation, offer enough opportunities for teachers to engage students, and finally supply a forum in which students can articulate and express their own ideas and foster them in the process. Concerning group discussion and collaborative task implementation in the university context, it is significant to motivate students, enhance their self-assurance and meet their needs and comforts (Nunan & Lamb, 1996). Group task implementation would create an enjoyable atmosphere in the class setting and improve learners' self-esteem and self-confidence (Dornyei&Csizer, 1998).

Besides, judgment is also one of the various mechanisms that play a main part in education and stimulates evaluative judgment throughout the formative assessment process (Lee-Jahnke, 2005). Evaluative judgment is the capability of decision-making about the quality of task (Tai et al., 2018). This type of judgment is usually characterized by a selection of options that can be arranged hierarchically. However, it is very cooperative in making more impartial choices and is effective in developing the learner's skills. It is recognized that the normal cognitive process requires specific organization and order. In addition, if a particular order is required, "it is necessary to make decisions, allow students to make decisions, and establish standards in all situations" (Lee-Jahnke, 2005, p. 95).

Consequently, this investigation aimed to examine the impact of incorporated evaluative judgment based on group discussion on the translation achievement of a cluster of Iranian-English translation students from Islamic Azad University North Tehran Branch. The results would help trainee translators to extend the range of strategies to apply in translating narrative texts, and it could also improve methods in teaching translation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Collaborative translation can be done through a variety of processes, depending on time zone and nationality. Conventionally, translators working on large projects work independently from each other. Then, they merge those translations later on different platforms (Li et al., 2015). This would result in time-consuming post-processing and incorporation of diverse styles and word usage in translation. On the contrary, advances in technology have allowed translators to work together on a single platform such as computer-aided translation tools. Collaboration on a particular stage permits translators to cooperate, provide immediate feedback to other translators, and guarantee the uniformity of the ultimate result (Kelly, 2005). Studies' findings revealed that using distributed cognition and distributed expertise as a theoretical perspective mediated the way for students to visualize their expertise and negotiation of meaning. Besides, in an educational context, it enhanced students' skills beyond the translation-specific skills critical for qualified translators (Li et al., 2015; Prieto-Velasco & Fuentes-Luque, 2016; Puzio et al., 2013).

In this regard, Zhao (2016) compared lecture-based education versus discussion-based education among undergraduate students by evaluating immediate and long-term retention of knowledge of students. Findings revealed that discussion-based learning was effective in enhancing learners' retention and attainment. Besides, Yu (2020) examined the process of online collaborative translation and highlighted the different roles played by participants through mutual engagement. Findings suggested that collaborative translation was a semantic negotiation experience in which participants engaged in shared practices while playing different roles at different stages. In the same vein, Huang et al. (2020) investigated students' perceptions concerning the practice of collaborative translation in the Chinese setting. Findings highlighted that the students' translation skills improved significantly and they preferred to work on collaborative translation. In addition, self-efficacy for joint translation after the intervention was relatively high. Recently, Al-Shehari (2022) designed a model of collaboration for translation activity. In this regard, 21 medium-length Wikipedia articles were translated by university students. The findings revealed that involving students in discussions on translation and language choice with the translators helped them produce better translations.

In line with collaborative tasks, discussions can assist learners to learn by talking to peers via engaging in justification and reflection in classes (Shafiee Rad, 2019). Recently, there has been a cumulative interest in the dialogic form of learning English (e.g., Chappell, 2013; Farid et al. 2022; Lima & von Duyke, 2016; Lindfors, 1999; Mercer, 2000; Rashtchi& Beiki,2015; Sullivan & Daphne, 2012; Von Duyke, 2013; White & Peters, 2011). Discussion can be effective if accompanied by promoting students' judgment. In this regard, Tai et al. (2018) highlight that evaluative judgment provides a reason for the implementation of particular teaching techniques. It can be characterized as an ability which take into account learners' motivation and attitude. Several studies have been conducted concerning discussion-based learning and co-translation activity (e.g., Cowan, 2010; Gyogi, 2019; Puzio et al., 2013; Huang et al., 2020; Yilmaz, 2010; Zwischenberger, 2022), which presented that involving students in discussions on translation and language choice with the collaborators could help them produce better translations and practice decision-making strategies. Besides, some studies have been directed in the Iranian academic context regarding this issue. For instance, Kargar et al. (2012) examined the effectiveness of practical instruction involving collaborative translation and structured input in generating apology utterances. The findings showed that collaborative translation resulted in deeper processing of both

pragmatic and socio-pragmatic knowledge. Recently, Bayat et al. (2021) investigated the consequence of teacher-supported discussion-based education on developing students' decision-making ability. Findings revealed that students with mixed assistance in the discussion-based education achieved better in learning and using decision-making ability. Besides, students supported by modeling in the discussion practice accomplished better than other groups in using decision-making skills.

The present study examined the impact of evaluative judgment teaching with group discussion activities on the translation ability of some Iranian translation students. The subsequent research question assisted the investigators achieve the goal of this study:

RQ1: To what extent does discussion-based evaluative judgment instruction affect the translation of narrative texts among Iranian university students studying Translation Studies?

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

Forty intermediate level Iranian EFL translation students were designated from Islamic Azad University North Tehran Branch using convenience sampling. The participants' age ranged from 20 to 25 years old, and they were selected from two intact classes, with $n1=n2=20$. The learners in the experimental cluster, called the Evaluative Judgment Translation Group (EJTG), were taught translation through evaluative judgment, while the control group, called the Traditional Translation Group (TTG), was taught translation via the traditional method.

B. Instruments

To attain the objectives of the investigation, the investigators used two instruments. Firstly, the Oxford Placement Test (OPT), was used to evaluate the contributors' level of language proficiency. The reliability of the test was.75. Secondly, a translation test chosen from Techniques of English Translation (Pazargadi, 2018), was used as both the pretest and posttest. The translations were evaluated by two instructors based on Khanmohammadi and Osanloo's (2009) correction pattern. Consequently, the inter-rater reliability indexes of pretest and posttest was (.93) and (.94).

C. Procedure

The two classes met once a week with a 90-minute within 16weeks. The participants studied "A Survey on Translation" (Javaherian, 2018), which covered loss and gain in translation, translation principles, translation strategies, transposition and maintaining the original text style. Additionally, they practiced translation during each session using narrative texts from "Translation and Translator" by Rashidi (2015) and "Techniques of English Translation" by Pazargadi (2018). Both groups studied the same course books.

- **Placement test**
  At the beginning of the term, the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was administered, and 40 intermediate students with scores between 40-47 were nominated as the participants of the study. The researchers mainly focused on intermediate learners due to the importance of communicative competence in group discussion.

- **Pretest**
  The instructor extracted a text from "Techniques of English Translation" by Pazargadi (2018) as the pretest. The translation tasks were corrected by two experienced teachers based on aforementioned scheme. Inter-rater reliability was computed and the mean of the two sets of scores was the learner's final score. Then, the classes randomly were assigned to (EJTG) and (TTG). The pretest assisted the researchers to guarantee that both clusters were homogeneous concerning translation skill.

- **Evaluative Judgment Translation Group (EJTG)**
  Twenty participants of EJTG were divided in to groups, each group consisted of five participants. In this cluster, students experienced evaluative judgment, inferencing, diagnosing and reasoning via joint-problem solving. The instructor encouraged induction and deduction among group members during translation task. Firstly, the instructor presented a narrative text in class and asked students read and elaborate the key concept of the text individually.

Subsequently, the instructor asked learners discuss about the main concept of the text together in small groups. At this stage the instructor inspired evaluative judgment through encouraging group discussion. The instructor guided group members and they jointly discussed together and predicted or guessed the suitable equivalent for difficult words, phrases, clauses and sentences in the given text. Then group members were given time for searching the meaning of new words in dictionaries. Subsequently, they discussed jointly about the meaning of difficult words, phrases, clauses and sentences, besides, they were mutually shared the choices of the target language and the identification of different parts were attained at this stage. It is worth pointing that concerning evaluative judgment activity, group members put extracted equivalents into a hierarchical order and they decided

about the most suitable option later during translation task implementation. At this stage, they experienced diagnostic strategy which led them from detection to action.

At the last phase, the students analyzed the whole text again and translated the given text individually in 20 minutes. At this stage, students experienced a self-evaluation activity based on his/her own reasoning and monitor translation task independently. It is worth noting that at the end of each session the teacher gathered translation tasks and evaluated them based on aforementioned correction scheme. The teacher evaluated the translation tasks and highlighted her comments on various aspects of translation.

- **Traditional Translation Group (TTG)**

Twenty participants experienced traditional teaching. In this group the translation text was presented and the teacher clarified new words, structures, and phrases and their equivalents. Then, learners independently translated the specified text through bilingual dictionaries and online databases. Lastly, the teacher gathered the individual students' translation and evaluated them based on mentioned correction pattern. The teacher assessed individual's task and highlighted her commentaries on student's translation task.

- **Posttest**

Finally, the participants in EJTG and TTG were retested to examine whether the treatment had any effect on their translation skill. The teacher designated a sample text from "Techniques of English Translation" by Pazargadi (2018), which was similar to those used in the training sessions. The learners in experimental and control cluster translated the text in 45 minutes, and the tasks were corrected by two experienced instructors based on the aforementioned scheme.

IV.   RESULTS

The present study was undertaken in order to investigate to what extent discussion-based evaluative judgment instruction affected the translation of narrative texts among Iranian university students studying Translation Studies.

A.   Analysis of the Hypothesis

Data were examined by independent-samples t-test and One-Way ANCOVA. These statistical techniques, besides their own specific assumptions, require normality of the data. The ratios of skewness and kurtosis to their respective standard errors follow the distribution of standardized scores (z-scores) (Raykov&Marcoulides, 2008; Coaley 2010; Abu-Bader, 2021). Thus, values within the ranges of ±1.96 indicate that the assumption of normality is retained. As shown in Table 4, all rations of skewness and kurtosis were lower than ±1.96, hence normality of the present data.

Table 1. Skewness and Kurtosis Indices of Normality

Group		N	Skewness			Kurtosis		
		Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio
Experimental	OPT	20	-.256	.512	-0.50	-.828	.992	-0.83
	Pretest	20	.030	.512	0.06	-.710	.992	-0.72
	Posttest	20	.112	.512	0.22	-1.351	.992	-1.36
Control	OPT	20	-.427	.512	-0.83	-.576	.992	-0.58
	Pretest	20	-.100	.512	-0.20	-.470	.992	-0.47
	Posttest	20	-.050	.512	-0.10	-.586	.992	-0.59

B.   Homogenizing Groups on Oxford Placement Test

An independent-samples t-test was performed to compare the means of the experimental and control groups on the OPT test to prove that the two groups were homogenous in terms of their general language proficiency prior to the administration of the treatments. Table 2 illustrates the outcomes of the descriptive statistics for the two group on the OPT test. The results showed that the experimental (M = 33.85, SD = 8.09) and control (M = 32.65, SD = 7.14) groups had roughly equal means on the OPT test.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics; Oxford Placement Test by Groups

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
OPT	Experimental	20	33.85	8.093	1.810
	Control	20	32.65	7.147	1.598

Table 3 shows the results of the Independent-Samples t-test. It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was retained on the OPT test. As shown in Table 3, the non-significant results of the Levene's test (F = .289, p > .05) indicated that the two groups were homogenous in terms of their variances on pretest of reading comprehension.

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The outcomes of Independent Samples t-test; ($t_{(38)}$ = .497, $p > .05$, $r = .08$ representing a weak effect size; 95 % CI [-3.68, 6.08]) specified that there was not any significant difference between the experimental and control groups' means on the OPT test. Therefore; it can be concluded that before treatment, the two groups were homogeneous with respect to general language ability.

Table 3. Independent-Samples t-test Oxford Placement Test by Groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.289	.594	.497	38	.622	1.200	2.414		-3.688	6.088
Equal variances not assumed			.497	37.427	.622	1.200	2.414		-3.690	6.090

C.   Exploring Null-Hypothesis

There isn't any statistically massive distinction between students' ability to translate narrative texts in the discussion-based evaluative judgment group and the traditional translation instruction group.

One-Way ANCOVA was run to investigate the experimental and control groups' means on posttest of translation of narrative texts after controlling for the effect of pretest in order to probe the only null-hypothesis. One-Way ANCOVA has three more assumptions; i.e. homogeneity of variances of groups, linearity, and homogeneity of regression slopes which are discussed below.

First; One-Way ANCOVA assumes that the variances of the groups are roughly equal on posttest of translation of narrative texts; i.e. homogeneous variances of groups. The non-significant results of the Levene's test (Table 4) showed that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was retained on posttest of translation of narrative texts ($F_{(1, 38)}$ = 2.06, $p > .05$). Therefore; it can be determined that the statistical null-hypothesis that there was not any significant difference between two groups' variances on posttest of translation of narrative texts was supported. That is to say; the experimental and control groups enjoyed homogenous variances on posttest of translation of narrative texts.

Table 4. Homogeneity of Variances Posttest of Translation of Narrative Texts by Groups

F	df1	df2	Sig.
2.061	1	38	.159

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

Second, One-Way ANCOVA highlights that there is a linear relationship between dependent variable (posttest of translation of narrative texts) and covariate (pretest). Table 5 shows the results of the linearity test. The significant results of the linearity test; i.e. ($F_{(1, 23)}$ = 109.46, $p < .05$, η^2 = .842 representing a large effect size2) specified that the statistical null-hypothesis that the relationship between posttest and pretest of translation of narrative texts performance was not linear was rejected. There was a linear association between pretest and posttest of translation of narrative texts performance.

Table 5. Testing Linearity of Relationship between Pretest and Posttest of Translation of Narrative Texts

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Posttest * Pretest	Between Groups	(Combined)	67.853	16	4.241	7.645	.000
		Linearity	60.718	1	60.718	109.463	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	7.135	15	.476	.858	.613
	Within Groups		12.758	23	.555		
	Total		80.611	39			
Eta Squared			.842				

Lastly; One-Way ANCOVA highlights that the linear relationship between pretest and posttest are roughly equal across the two groups; homogeneity of regression slopes. The non-significant interaction (Table 6) between covariate (pretest) and independent variable (types of treatment); i.e. ($F_{(1, 36)}$ = .952, $p > .05$, Partial η^2 = .026 representing a weak effect size3) showed that the statistical null-hypothesis that the relationship between pretest and posttest of translation of narrative texts was non-linear across groups was rejected. In other words; there were linear relationships between pretest and posttest of translation of narrative texts across the two groups.

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Table 6. Testing Homogeneity of Regression Slopes Translation of Narrative Texts

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Group	.091	1	.091	.327	.571	.009
Pretest	60.363	1	60.363	217.841	.000	.858
Group * Pretest	.264	1	.264	.952	.336	.026
Error	9.975	36	.277			
Total	12745.313	40				

Table 7 presents the descriptive statistics for the experimental and control clusters on posttest of translation of narrative texts after controlling for the effect of pretest. The outcomes presented that the experimental group (M = 18.28, SE = .118) had a higher mean than the control group (M = 17.30, SE = .118) after controlling for the effect of pretest.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics Posttest of Translation of Narrative Texts by Groups with Pretest

Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Experimental	18.286a	.118	18.047	18.524
Control	17.302a	.118	17.063	17.540
a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Pretest = 5.10.				

Table 8 displays the main results of One-Way ANCOVA. The results (F (1, 37) = 34.88, p < .05, partial η2 = .485 representing a large effect size) indicated that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group on posttest of translation of narrative texts after controlling for the effect of pretest. Thus, the null-hypothesis was rejected.

Table 8. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects Posttest of Translation of Narrative Texts by Groups with Pretest

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Pretest	62.933	1	62.933	227.412	.000	.860
Group	9.654	1	9.654	34.885	.000	.485
Error	10.239	37	.277			
Total	12745.313	40				

V. DISCUSSION

The outcomes presented that the experimental group educated through discussion-based evaluative judgment significantly outperformed the control cluster. The study is consistent with the social-constructivist perspective, which shows the cooperation and dynamic contribution of students in the social context of the class (Kiraly, 2005). It highlighted that using collaborative tasks as a classroom technique positively improved the translation abilities of students, and it can be used to encourage discussion-based translation activities in a university context to help learners master their translation skills. Thus, it can help the existing system of teaching translation to be more effective. Additionally, the findings align with the outcome of studies that showed the effectiveness of using collaborative translation in an EFL scholastic environment (Kargar et al., 2012; Huang et al., 2020). The outcomes of the current study also support Khosravani et al.'s (2013) investigation concerning collaborative task implementation as an effective activity in the translation class. Similarly, the findings are consistent with Al-Shehari's (2022) study that highlighted students' collaborative discussions in translation classes as an effective tool for providing better language choices and enhanced outcomes. Regarding new insights for additional study, this investigation did not make any efforts to probe contributors' attitudes concerning discussion-based evaluative judgments. Additional line of investigation is recording students' communicative communication to investigate the nature of such interactions and how they are verbalized in the learners' final translation.

VI. CONCLUSION

The objective of the present study was to examine the effect of discussion-based evaluative judgment on the translation of narrative texts on Iranian university students studying translation studies. The overall result implied that the experimental group taught through evaluative judgment with group discussion was significantly better than the control group. It could be pointed out that it was effective in boosting students' translation ability. The findings of this existing research could be effective in improving EFL students' decision-making ability and their skill to self-regulate during the translation process. In addition, the findings revealed that discussion-based translation and evaluative judgment are practical alternatives to the traditional translation classroom. It should also be noted that the students who participated in this study assessed their own translations, recognized their translation errors, and offered explanations for many different translation difficulties. The current study had some practical and

theoretical implications for EFL/ESL educators and learners in translation instruction. As for the theoretical phase, this study can present some suggestions for investigators in developing a model for the L2 translation course. Regarding the practical phase, all teachers could use discussion-based tasks in their classes. Discussion-based evaluative judgment created translating opportunities where students exchanged meaning and suggested feedback for revealing the meaning. Thus, it may be an altered technique of teaching translation to students in a university context. This investigation could also call material designers' consideration to synchronizing evaluative judgment with special discussion-based activities in translation textbooks. There might be more hastening in translation achievement with additional chances to do various sorts of discussion-based activities in the translation course books. This investigation was limited on the basis that the participants' motivation, and age and IQ could not be controlled by the researchers, though they might affect the results. Besides, the texts type was not accounted as a variable. The contributors' interests were another alternative the current investigation neglected.

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