



Exploring Translation Students' Perceptions about Designed Materials for Legal Translation Course

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Abstract

The present study intended to design some materials based on the guidelines of [González Davies \(2004\)](#) for 'legal texts and correspondence translation' course of graduate students majoring in translation studies. To this end, first a checklist on the basis of [Gentry and Gable's \(2001\)](#) model was designed to find out the participants' perceptions of the tasks. Next, the researchers designed related tasks based on [Gonzales Davies' \(2004\)](#) guidelines inspired by [Kiraly's \(2000\)](#) constructivist approach. In the third phase, the participants were given the designed tasks published in a book during 10-12 sessions. Finally, the researchers held a semi-structured interview with the participants to find out their perceptions towards classroom activities as well as their translation ability. The results indicate that the participants had positive perceptions regarding the designed tasks. The findings have implications for translation classroom courses.

Keywords: Legal Texts; Materials; Perceptions; Activities

1. Introduction

Through the past decades, the impact of translation on literature and culture became explicit. After that, different text types such as informative, persuasive, and literary entered the translation realm which concentrated on linguistic, psycholinguistic, terminological, and professional issues (Gile, 2009). As communication has grown, the role of translators became visible. Translation is divided into two categories, the practice of translation and the discipline of translation. The discipline of translation is an emerging and developing field of study (Munday, 2001). Constructivist theories which are based on the communication approaches have been a genuine concern for training methods in the main issues of translation in Europe during the recent decades (Gile, 2009).

According to Kiraly (2000), the learners' participation in class is necessary to construct the knowledge. The knowledge construction process is based on cognitive and social issues. Cognitive refers to whatever goes on person's mind, and social is about interpersonal, collaborative, and teamwork activities. Taken together, the constructivist and humanistic approaches to learning view translation training as involving communicative and interpersonal activities by creating challenging and enjoyable tasks (Gonzales Davis, 2004; Kiraly, 2000) which can, in turn, promote students' perceptions of classroom activities.

In the realm of translation training courses, as Parvaresh et al. (2016) noted, in Iran, the teaching methods and the corresponding materials do not seem to have moved in line with the recent educational approaches such as humanistic and constructivist ones. Indeed, they believed the current trend in most translation courses in Iranian universities is having students translate texts selected by the teacher in which they might have no interest or choice. They also contended that the tasks and activities are not often in correspondence with the course objectives and do not lead to efficient skill-getting of students and can even confuse them. Generally, in most of the translation classes in Iranian universities, both instructor and learner follow the instruction of "read- translate" (Parvaresh et al., 2016).

Legal texts and official documents have a major impact on the communication which is established among different societies. The main point here is that, translation of legal texts is obtaining an even more significant status in the globalized world. In our developing globalized world, it is essential to connect the legal and cultural issues among nations (Loiacono & Bertoli, 2018). So the main role of translators and their training process is prominent. Training translators is essential to transfer the complex and meaningful concepts which are behind the legal texts (Loiacono & Bertoli, 2018). So practical and innovative methods for instructing legal texts and official documents should be devised. According to Cao (2007), the translation process refers to whatever goes on the translator's mind. Cao (2007) stated that the reader can understand what happened



in every step of the translation process by reading the translated text. Therefore, the translation process plays the main role in preparing a proper translation.

This study which is consisted of four phases is indeed a mixed-methods study combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. The initial phase of the present study is designing a checklist to assess the needs and options of translation students in legal text translation classes, and to unlace what goes on their mind about the instructor, the environment, and the materials which are employed by the instructor. Observation is another method of data collection at this phase; the researchers observed legal documents translation course, to find the needs of the students as well as snags or weaknesses in the materials based on the environment of the classroom. In the second phase, the researchers designed relevant and practical tasks through the [Gonzales Davies \(2004\)](#) guidelines and categorized those tasks based on four variables of perceptions (choice, joy, interest, and challenge) to enable the teacher to teach in a way to promote the perceptions of the class activities and translation achievement. The third phase was applying those tasks in a real class as an experimental group to find the effectiveness of those designed tasks in enhancing translating achievement as well as students' perceptions of class activities through a quasi- experimental study. In the last phase, the researchers utilized a qualitative method to scrutinize the students' feedbacks and attitudes regarding the tasks implemented in the experimental class.

2. Review of the Related Literature

The shortcomings of the translation training in our country (Iran) which may be rooted in thoughts, values, and the main aspects of education in Iran have caused different problems. Several researchers found some of these problems but many others have to be examined more ([Parvareh, Pirnajmuddin, Hesabi, 2016](#)). Although most of these research studies led to general solutions, they indicated that the condition of translation training is not acceptable for our society ([Parvareh, et al., 2016](#)).

According to [Parvareh et al \(2016\)](#), the main problem refers to the inefficient content of the curriculum that is taught through non-practical approaches. Most of the translation instructors employ an endless and non-practical approach which is based on just linguistic factors which has both functional imperfections and numerous problems ([Parvareh et al, 2016](#)).

As stated by [Gonzalez Davies \(2004\)](#), in most of the translation classes both instructor and learner follow the instruction of "read- translate". Therefore, we can say that most of those classes in Iran are not practical and up-to-date for translation students, because they just focus on some linguistic factors, grammatical structure, and some irrelevant points which are not applicable for them. According to [Parvareh et al \(2016\)](#), in such classes learners just write

down whatever that their instructor writes on the board; they do not pay attention to the teacher and some of them do other irrelevant activities which indicate that they are boring and whatever that their teacher says is not interesting. Finally, this traditional method makes some students lazy and the rest of them become bored and confused in such classes.

Another problem refers to those books which are taught to learners. Generally, textbooks are considered as the main training source, but those textbooks are used for B.A translation students have been unsuccessful in this regard; there is no lesson plan for teachers to employ to cover certain lessons and there is no course description in those books to know the goals of the lesson (Parvareh et al, 2016).

Another issue which is so important refers to activities and tasks which are carried out in such classes. In most cases, activities are not related to the purpose of training and make the learner confused (Parvareh, et al., 2016). Parvareh et al. (2016) stated that the learner's engagement in the learning process is another point that should be attended to. When confusing and irrelevant tasks and materials are employed, learners are not interested in participating in-class activities and discussions; the class is not challenging for them, and effective learning cannot be met in those classes.

2.1. The Procedures: Activities and Tasks

According to Nunan (1989), as cited in (Gonzalez Davies, 2004), translation classes can acclimatize to the students by taking in different pedagogical approaches and focusing on pedagogic, or the core values of real life and applicable activities. Pedagogic activities help to realize these values and knowledge to apply them in real life. These skills will enable the students to perform based on professional standards (Gonzalez Davies, 2004).

The learners should also pay attention to different points before going through the translation process. The main factors which should be focused on are topic and subtopics, the translation assignment, the target reader, text type, and degree of formality. There are several other points and questions which should be taken to account before engaging in a translation process (Gonzalez Davies, 2004). The procedures should help the learners to probe points related to translation skill, or the basic tool which they need through the translation process, and help the teachers to recognize the distinctive features of their students (Gonzales Davies, 2004).

2.2. Activity

The ultimate goal of translation training is developing the learner's brain; it occurs through the learning by helping them to get the concepts and theories to apply



those theories in their translation (Gonzalez Davies, 2004). One of the most important ways to understand the concepts and various theories is relevant activities. In the recent past decade, activity-centered learning has been known as an applicable model to help learners to apply practical theories in their translation (Gonzalez Davies, 2004).

According to Gonzalez Davies (2004), activity is a concrete practice that help to get specific points and to familiarize students with theories and models. On the other hand, the students learn by involving themselves in practical activities; it means that they play a crucial role in the learning process by doing different relevant activities. By getting the learners actively entangled in their process of learning, the activity-based model persuades them to be independent thinkers and to solve the problems during the translation process.

2.3.Task

During learning process, the interaction among participants is a very important factor. It is a kind of process in which learners focus on essential elements which should be accomplished in their product (Gonzalez Davies, 2004). One of the most important methods to involve students actively in class activities is designing relevant and up-to-date tasks. Task acts as a bridge between students and their instructor; in other words, the teacher finds out whatever goes on the learner's mind by evaluating those tasks (Gonzalez Davies, 2004).

According to Gonzalez Davies (2004), the task has a major impact on effective learning. A task can make the learning process boring or completely vice versa. The practical task has eminent features which should be considered. The first one is the "linguistic complexity" which refers to textual features such as vocabulary, grammar and genre. The second one is the "communicative factor" which alludes to the relationship of those involved, participants, and topic. The last one is the "cognitive issues" which implies whatever goes on the translator's mind and whatever that a translator faces in the translation process (Gonzalez Davies, 2004).

3. Method

3.1. Participants

3.1.1. Participants of Phase One

To examine translation students' feedback on legal translation textbooks, a checklist was designed. It was implemented on a group of 60 translation students at the Imam Reza University of Mashhad in the second semester of 1397. These students had just passed a legal translation course.

3.1.2. Participants of Phase Three

Participants of phase three were translation studies students at a university in Mashhad, Iran. They were two groups: control and experimental. The control group comprised 50 translation students (32 male and 18 females) who contributed to the pre-test and post-test. The experimental group consisted of 43 female translation students who took part in the experiment.

The designed tasks were then implemented in the experimental group who were instructed via the designed tasks published in a book. The control group was instructed via the mainstream book.

3.1.3. Participants of Phase Four

The researchers observed the experimental group which consisted of 43 English translation students, to know the impact of those designed tasks on students' perception. They also held some semi-structured interviews with seven participants of the experimental group.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Test (NAATI)

National accreditation authority for translators and interpreters test (NAATI) was employed to find out the translation ability of students of the two groups. The NAATI test was taken both before applying tasks and after that, to find out the probable improvements of translation achievement. It was randomly chosen from the English to Persian Translator sample test of NAATI (National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters). This test was provided for the private use of candidates preparing for a NAATI test. It was given to the participants to translate from English into Persian. The translation text, as well as questionnaires, were given to the participants to take home and bring back after a while. Before conducting the NAATI test, the sample test kit was used, to make the situation comfortable for participants. It includes a handbook and script. The handbook is a useful tool to help participants in preparing for the NAATI translation test. The main goal of the handbook is a good indication that was given to the participants. The second one is the script which gives the participants an efficient illustration of the test.

Two raters as expert translators who were M.A graduate students were requested to evaluate and score the translations concerning the criteria chart which was taken from Waddington's model of translation assessment. [Waddington \(2001\)](#) has presented four methods to evaluate the translation quality



and examine the validity of those methods. One of those methods "Method C" is the most appropriate one for this research study. The researchers conducted method C to evaluate the result of the NAATI test. In this method, which is a holistic method, Waddington decided to separate accuracy of transfer and quality of expression based on the results of the research published by Stansfield (1992), which argued that there are two fundamental translation skills: Accuracy and Expression. The first one has to do with the transfer of ST content to TT; the second one has to do with form, and linguistic factors of the TT. The inter-rater reliability computed via correlation coefficient was found to be high ($r = 0.92$).

3.2.2. Students' perception of classroom activities scale

To evaluate students' perception of classroom activities, the researchers applied the translated version of students' perception of classroom activities scale which was designed and validated by Gentry and Gable (2001) and translated and validated by Ghanizadeh and Jahedizadeh (2015). The validity indices of the Persian version are as follows: $\chi^2 = 1025.99$, $df = 429$, $RMSEA = .062$, $NFI = .89$. The Cronbach's alpha estimates for each perception ranged from .71 to .80. (Interest = .86, challenge = .73, choice = .71, joy = .79). The 'Students Perceptions of Classroom Activities' instrument contains 31 statements evaluating four dimensions (interest, challenge, choice, and joy). The scale measures the four dimensions via a 5-point Likert-type response format (never, seldom, sometimes, often, and always). The participants were provided with directions on how to complete the scale.

Sample items for the "interest" dimension include: 1) I have enough time to conduct whatever that I am interested in 2) The topics which are discussed in class are interesting 3) The teacher involves me in interesting learning activities. Sample items for the "challenge" dimension are: 1) materials and supplementary materials are challenging 2) I have to think to solve problems in my class. Sample items for the "choice" dimension are: 1) it's possible for me to choose my teammate to conduct an activity 2) I can choose the materials which will be applied in class. Sample items that will be included in the "joy" dimension are: 1) I like what I do in class 2) I like pair work activities 3) the teacher makes learning fun. In this study, the reliability computed via Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.82.

3.3. Procedure

The researchers followed the following procedure in conducting the study:

3.3.1. The Procedure of Phase One

In the first phase, the researchers intended to know about the students' attitudes towards legal translation texts they typically work on in their classes. Most of the materials which are used for the class are traditional. So the researchers, before designing the tasks, should ensure their attitudes towards the texts they worked on. They conducted a need analysis via a triangulated approach integrating the attitudes of students and instructors. To do so, a checklist was utilized for translation studies students to pinpoint their attitudes.

3.3.2. The Procedure of Phase Two

In the second phase, the researchers designed related tasks based on [Gonzales Davies](#) guidelines (2004) and inspired by [Kiraly's](#) (2000) constructivist approach to improve the perception of classroom activities and translation achievement. To end, the researchers categorized different related and interesting tasks for legal texts translation. Multiple voices in the translation classroom is a book which is written by Maria Gonzalez Davies. In this book, the definition of the terms which are related to the translation process is clarified. About 40 interesting, enjoyable, challenging, and dynamic tasks were designed which were published in a book. To get a more profound view of the designed tasks, a sample of these tasks classified based on the four perceptions (interest, challenge, joy, and choice) are presented in the appendix.

3.3.3. The Procedure of Phase Three

In the third phase, there were two groups of English translation students studying at a university (Imam Reza International University) in Mashhad, Iran. The first one as an experimental group consisted of 43 learners and the second one as a control group comprised 50 learners. The researchers employed the tasks, but before employing the tasks, the level of perception and translation ability was determined. Therefore, a NAATI test as well as the 'perception of classroom activities' questionnaire as a pretest was administered in both experimental and control groups to know the differences between the two groups and their level of perception. After that, the designed tasks were applied to the experimental group for 10-12 sessions as supplementary materials. The students of the experimental group conducted those tasks after each lesson. They could do it at home or with their instructor. Those tasks were not applied for the control group; the mainstream book was taught in this group. The next step was the post-test administration to evaluate the perception of classroom activities as well as translation ability to find out the impact of the tasks on these constructs.

3.3.4. The Procedure of Phase Four

In the last phase, the researchers held semi-structured interviews with several (seven) experimental group participants to find out how the employed tasks in the



experimental group enhanced their perceptions towards classroom activities as well as their translation ability. They also observed some sessions and took notes.

In the interview, students were asked about the experience of being instructed with the designed materials. To find out the effect of those up-to-date tasks on students' perception, several questions were first asked indirectly. These questions led students to share and talk about their ideas and opinions related to the topic. Later questions focused more directly on the four perceptions and the process of learning.

4. Results

4.1. The Results of Students' Perceptions towards the Mainstream Materials Used in Legal Texts Translation Course.

To determine the content validity of the checklist, a group of experts (two psychometricians, three English translation educators) evaluated the quality of items in terms of clarity and comprehensiveness. Accommodating the experts' views resulted a more refined and comprehensible version of the scales. The scale was then administered to 58 translation students. The results are presented in the following table. As the table indicates, the mean score of the checklist is 70.10 which is lower than the mid score. So, it seems the participants did not have favorable attitudes towards the materials employed in the legal texts translation course.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Checklist

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Possible range	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total	58	30.00	117.00	30-150	70.10	25.87

To get a more profound insight into the results of the checklist, the descriptive statistics of each item were computed. The lowest mean scores were reported for items 3 (M= 1.98), 24 (M=1.93), and 25 (M= 1.89) followed by items 2 (M= 2.10), 4 (M= 2.08), 15 (M= 2.10), 18 (M= 2.08).

All in all, having scrutinized the items individually, the researchers further found that all four perceptions (joy, interest, challenge, and choice) were not well actualized in the materials and activities employed the 'legal texts and correspondence translation' course. In the second phase, the researchers designed different tasks and supplementary materials for legal text translation students.

About 40 interesting, enjoyable, challenging, and dynamic tasks were designed. In designing tasks, the practical and up-to-date guidelines proposed by [González Davies \(2004\)](#) were followed.

4.2. The Results of Pretest

4.2.1. The Results of Pretest on Translation Quality

To examine whether there is any significant difference between the control and experimental group regarding their translation quality (TQ), an independent samples t-test was run. The mean scores of TQ across participants in the control and experimental groups were slightly different: control ($M=5.09$, $SD=1.32$), experimental ($M=5.52$, $SD=1.81$).

To see whether this observed difference is statistically significant, an independent samples t-test was run. The results indicated that there is not a statistically significant difference between the two groups regarding the level of their TQ ($t= -.130$, $p=.19$). In other words, the two groups are homogenous regarding their level of TQ before the study.

4.2.2. The Results of Pretest on Perceptions of Classroom Activities

To ensure the participants of the two groups were homogenous in the level of their perceptions of classroom activities (joy, challenge, choice, and interest), a one-way between-groups multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was run. Four dependent variables were generated: joy, challenge, choice, and interest. The independent variable was group (control and experimental). Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity, with no serious violations noted. The results of MANOVA presented in Table 4.2 revealed that was not a statistically significant difference between the two groups on the combined dependent variables: ($F=.96$, $p= .43$, Wilks' Lambda=.958).

Table 2

MANOVA Table Displaying the Results of Perceptions across Control and Experimental Groups

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	
Level	Wilks' Lambda	.958	.96	4.00	88.00	.43



4.3. The Results of Posttest

4.3.1. The Results of Posttest on TQ

To examine whether the implemented materials enhanced translation students' translation achievement, an independent samples t-test was run. Table 3 below summarizes the descriptive results of English proficiency levels in two groups. As the table shows, the mean scores of TQ participants in the control and experimental groups are different: control (M=5.95, SD= 1.45), experimental (M=7.70, SD= 1.23).

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of TQ across Control and Experimental Groups

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
TQ	Control	50	5.95	1.45	.20
	Experimental	43	7.70	1.23	.18

To see whether this observed difference is statistically significant, an independent samples t-test was run. Table 4.4 presents the results of the t-test run on TQ. As can be seen, there is a statistically significant between the two groups regarding the degree of TQ ($t = -6.21, p = .00$). In other words, the treatment implemented in the experimental group was influential in translation students' TQ. The effect size computed via Cohen's d was found to be 1.30 which is a high magnitude according to Cohen's index.

Table 4

Independent Samples T-Test Showing the Results of Posttest on TC

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Translation	Equal variances assumed	.76	.386	-6.21	91	.00	-1.75	.28

Equal variances not assumed	-6.29	90.99.00	-1.75	.27
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4.3.2. The Results of Posttest on Perceptions of Classroom Activities

To investigate the effect of implemented materials on translation students' perceptions of classroom activities (joy, challenge, choice, and interest), the differences between the two groups on the perceptions scale were calculated in the post-test. The means of both groups in the post-test were shown to be different. As can be seen in Table 5, the mean of the experimental group in all four perceptions is higher than that of the control group.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics Showing the Results of Post-test on Perceptions

	Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
INT	Experimental	27.06	2.67	43
	Control	22.82	7.73	50
	Total	24.78	6.29	93
CHA	Experimental	24.79	5.24	43
	Control	21.62	8.24	50
	Total	23.08	7.16	93
CHO	Experimental	22.44	1.88	43
	Control	19.46	5.69	50
	Total	20.83	4.59	93
JOY	Experimental	27.83	6.46	43
	Control	23.34	9.58	50
	Total	25.41	8.54	93

To see if these observed differences are significant statistically, a one-way between-groups multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was run. Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity, with no serious violations noted. The results of MANOVA presented in Table 6 revealed that was a statistically significant difference between the two groups on the combined dependent variables (perceptions): ($F=3.12$, $p=.02$, Wilks' $\Lambda=.87$). The effect size computed via partial eta squared was found to be .12 which is a moderate magnitude according to Cohen's F . This implies that about 12 percent of the variance in perceptions can be accounted for by the materials utilized in the experimental group.



Table 6

MANOVA Table Displaying the Results of Perceptions across Control and Experimental Groups

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis Error df	df	Sig.	Partial Eta Square
Level Wilks' Lambda	.87	3.12	4.00	88.00	.02	.124

The follow-up analysis is represented in Table 7. It was conducted to see whether the difference holds across the four perceptions and if yes, which perception is more affected by the materials.

Table 7

MANOVA Table Displaying the Results of Three Types of Perceptions across Control and Experimental Groups

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Groups	Interest Post	417.52	1	417.52	11.76	.001	.114
	Challenge Post	232.41	1	232.41	4.71	.033	.049
	Choice Post	205.55	1	205.55	10.76	.001	.106
	Joy Post	467.56	1	467.56	6.80	.011	.070

As Table 7 demonstrated that this difference holds true across all three perceptions: Interest (F=11.76, p= .001, partial eta squared =.11), Challenge (F=4.71, p= .033, partial eta squared =.049), Choice (F=10.76 p= .001, partial eta squared =.106), and Joy (F=6.80, p= .011, partial eta squared =.070). As can be seen, the highest differences are observed in Interest and Choice perceptions.

4.4. The Results of the Qualitative Phase

This section presents the interview protocols extracted from the questions presented to the students to find out the effect of designed tasks on students' perception of class activities.

Table 8*Interview Protocols Extracted from the Interview*

Dimensions of students' perception	Interview extracts
Interest	<p>1) <i>Translation out of context and retranslation concerning the context are so interesting to me. Such a task was conducted several times in class. We used this method every week.</i></p> <p>2) <i>In most of the translation courses, the instructors are so serious and do whatever that they want. But in this class, the instructor was so flexible. I mean that the class was learner-oriented.</i></p> <p>3) <i>Most of our students were interested in participating in class discussion, since a positive competition existed among the teams. That was mainly due to the materials we worked on.</i></p> <p>4) <i>I learned different strategies which should be applied before going through the translation process. I understood the concept of the translation process and product from the book and it made me interested in doing my tasks.</i></p>



Joy

1) *The environment of our class even the tasks used were so enjoyable for me. It is clear that, when there is interest in class, joy will emerge as well.*

2) *I liked the explanations provided in the book before every task. Actually, by reading those explanations something came to my mind and I used them to translate effectively. It was so enjoyable for me.*

3) *Actually, our instructor explained about those brief steps which came before every task and it was so practical that made those tasks enjoyable.*

4) *In my point of view, the class was so enjoyable because we worked in a teamwork and we shared our opinions.*

Choice

1) *Because there were different interesting tasks and we could select one of them, it made us active. We could choose the task to do by ourselves. We had choice-right.*

2) *The material is divided into different parts. There were several team-work and every team-work could choose the task which they wanted. It was so applicable.*

3) *Even we have choice-right to choose the members of our team.*

4) *I could use the task in different ways to translate practically .*

Challenge

1) Those tasks were challenging for most of us since we didn't pass a legal text and official document translation before.

2) The competition among learners in different teamwork made the class challenging.

3) The strategies which should be applied before every task were challenging.

4) The activities and tasks were challenging but we pass this challenge by the joy and interest which were dominant in our class.

Overall, the results of the qualitative phase (interview analysis) were in line with those of the quantitative phase. It demonstrated that designed materials enhanced students' perception in four dimensions of interest, joy, challenge, and choice.

5. Discussion

The translation of legal texts has played a critical role in the contact between different peoples and cultures, and is gaining an even more important status in the globalized world. Virtually, any misinterpretations on the part of a translator in translating law and legal texts could lead to disputes and costly clashes. In our progressively globalized world, "the requirement to bridge the legal and cultural divide between nations is of growing importance" (Loiacono & Bertoli, 2018, p. 1). This in turn highlights the need for training translators of such texts that can accurately convey the intention behind translating legal texts (Loiacono & Bertoli, 2018). So, a special status for legal and treaties translation practices should be accounted for, given that as Cao (2007) noted this kind of translation had its idiosyncrasies.

As already mentioned, the official documents and legal texts are not attractive for translation students. The process of translation is boring, too. In most of the translation courses especially legal texts, the authority of the class is the university instructor, since the students have no information about various documents or legal texts. The teacher should transfer some information to them. In these conditions, the student usually memorizes a list of words and goes through the translation process. There is no choice for them. Learners may not feel relaxed by that boring method and materials. In other words, in these classes, students do not have favorable perceptions of class activities.



In the domain of translation training courses, as [Parvaresh, Pirnajmuddin, and Hesabi \(2016\)](#) noted, the teaching methods and the materials in Iranian universities do not seem to have moved in line with the recent educational approaches such as humanistic and constructivist ones

Perception of the class activities has a major impact on learning and teaching. The environment of the classroom, even the syllabus which is used by the teacher can also play a vital role in the translation process. According to [Anderman and Midgy \(1997\)](#), there are four aspects for students' perceptions of classroom activities: interest, choice, challenge, and joy.

As mentioned before, the first phase of the present study was conducting need analysis via a triangulated approach integrating the attitudes of students and instructors. To do so, a checklist was utilized both for translation studies students at university to determine their attitudes. The findings of this phase indicated that most of the students of legal text and official documents translation classes do not have favorable feelings towards mainstream materials. According to that checklist results, the researchers found that there is a need to design tasks and provide up-to-date and relevant material for legal texts and official documents translation students.

Having implemented the tasks in the experimental group, the researchers found that TQ as well as all four perceptions were positively influenced. The highest impacts were observed in Interest and Choice perceptions. The instructors normally count on the textbooks to imply the instructions and the textbook itself plays a crucial role in the learning process. The textbooks are not complete sources to answer all needs of the learners from different approaches. That's why supplementary materials can help both teachers and learners to improve their ability and achievement in the translation process.

As mentioned before, the approach presented in designing tasks was based on Kiraly's constructivism model which has several basic features:

- a) In this approach, projects and activities are fundamental factors of learning;
- b) there is a combination of theories and practice (the act of the translation);
- c) they enable the students to learn and translate without the teacher's guidance;
- d) learning process is not based on the traditional method, in which the learners do whatever that their instructor wants;
- e) there is widespread use of the practical principals and relevant translation theories;
- f) the instructor is a facilitator rather than a person who transfers the information and knowledge. Knowledge is indeed constructed by learners themselves, and
- g) learners learn how to communicate and think or even share the knowledge and information with other members through participation.

Virtually, the tasks were designed based on Kiraly's constructivism approach and the classes were conducted based on it accordingly, in which learners are the authority of the classroom and they share their information through the group working and participation. All these procedures employed in the experimental group would accordingly influence translation students' achievement and effective learning.

The results of the study indicated that the designed tasks had a significant impact on learners' perception of classroom activities at the end of the term. In creating a practical classroom environment, a great deal of energy should be exerted to turn the environment of learning more enjoyable; the enjoyable environment creates a challenging situation and makes the learners interested in participating in classroom activities and discussions. One of the fundamental issues in the learning process concerns materials that are used by the instructor. The tasks and supplementary materials should create a favorable feeling in learners and make them eager to involve in the translation process. As mentioned before, according to [Anderman](#) and [Midgley \(1997\)](#), there are four main variables for the perception of classroom activities (interest, challenge, choice, and joy).

The findings demonstrated that the designed materials seemed to create a learner-oriented atmosphere where the teacher just gave the clues to learners to receive the responses and solutions by themselves. The designed tasks helped the instructor to make the class more collaborative by asking learners to work with each other. Some tasks asked the instructor to give chance to learners to come in front of the class and explain the different strategies which were employed during the translation process for other students. It gave the students a sense of interest; it would be useful for learners to participate in group working and act as a teacher in the classroom. The teacher just helped them to find the solution of the problems faced during the translation process. So, learners' interest in their classroom was enhanced by employing the tasks which were cooperative and innovative.

Integrating fun activities into the translation process can make the class more enjoyable. One of the practical ways to have an enjoyable class is to shift the classroom which is based on the traditional method to a more modern one. In other words, when learners find a connection between whatever occurs in the translation process and their real life, they can understand more effectively and the process of learning will be more enjoyable. To this end, some tasks were designed that asked learners to act as a teacher for themselves and be in a center of the class. Another way for making the class more enjoyable was developing tasks that contained attractive pictures and made the learners more eager to take part in-class activities. Mainstream books for legal translation courses virtually did not have any entertaining pictures; so the learners would get bored in the classroom. There are some charming pictures in the designed supplementary material that would make the class activities more interesting. Classroom games



contained in the materials were another important factor that kept learners involved and enjoyed.

6. Conclusions

This study underscored the positive effect of supplementary tasks on the learners. University instructors should examine the class needs and wants of the learners and create different related tasks which enable learners to achieve their goals. In particular, based on the findings of the present study, it can be implied that if tasks are developed based on the needs and want of students derived from innovative learning approaches, students would experience more enjoyment, would be more interested and engaged, would benefit from a host of options available to them while facing with more learning-oriented challenges which are motivating by themselves. Positive perceptions of classroom activities, in turn, are expected to influence other aspects of learning from cognitive and metacognitive to emotional and motivational facets, given that as contended by [Ghanizadeh and Jahedizadeh \(2015\)](#), these perceptions reflect our emotions, expectations, learning, and needs, and shape our subsequent cognitive, metacognitive, emotional, motivational, and behavioral states.

In fact, learners go to a translation class to achieve a way to learn different theories and strategies for communication. So, the designed tasks can help learners to communicate. To teach communication, different perspectives should be taken into accounts such as the context, students' cognitive and metacognitive abilities, their needs and interests, etc. Teachers need to incorporate these perspectives to provide practical tasks for the learners.

As discussed earlier, in this study, a task-based constructivist approach to translation teaching was adopted. In so doing, the following principles in designing tasks and activities were taken into account:

- The interaction between all the participants of the learning setting;
- The collaboration among the students in the class and between teacher and students;
- The stimulation of multiple perspectives by utilizing a wealth of tasks;
- The inclusion of both process and product- oriented activities;
- The need to build bridges to fill the communication gap between students and teacher;
- The perception of teacher's role as guide, counselor, and informer;

- the perception of students' role as autonomous learners;
- learning through negotiation in a classroom environment as a combination of various tasks and discussion forums on ongoing translation issues;

The result of the present study can be beneficial for syllabus designers, teachers, curriculum and test developers, policymakers, material developers; it is hopefully expected to highlight for translator educators the significance of making effective modifications in their approaches to teaching translation by adapting appropriate materials and teaching approaches in their classes to suit learners' needs, wants, and interests. There is a consensus among educationalists (e.g., Ghanizadeh, 2017; Hossein, Ghonsooly, & Ghanizadeh, 2017)) that mentoring students to be effective members of society must constitute the core objective of the agenda of higher education. Equally important is that to bear in mind that for helping university students to evolve into effective lifelong learners, it is vital to encourage them to become independent, self-directed, and intrinsically motivated in their learning. This key requirement is primarily on the burden of university instructors facilitated by the selection of innovative and up-to-date materials.

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