Flipped Translation Training: The Student Perception

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Abstract

Traditional translation classroom focused on lectures and in-class translation exercises. The advancement of technology has improved the hardware and software of a translation classroom. Translation Memory tools has become the fundamental requirement, and the integration of Statistical Machine Translation with translation workflow has been prevalent. On the one hand, translators benefit from technology advancement in easier access to digital resources, such as online corpus and terminology bank. On the other hand, translators can cooperate with remote translators to complete a bulk task. The reuse and recycle of translated texts through cooperation made translation work easy. However, the continued technological development also suggests a need to reform the way we educate translators.

In order for the students to actively engage in classroom activities, master the use of translation-assisted tools, and create an autonomous learning environment, this study flips translation training by extending lessons outside the classroom via online media. Students take time outside the class

to watch online resources and actively participate in in-class activities, discussions, and increased interactions with the teacher and classmates in the class so as to strengthen learning effects. Questionnaires and interviews were conducted to understand students' perception of a flipped classroom.

Introduction

Traditional translation teaching relies on the transmission of knowledge, where instructors teach translation skills through lectures and provide sample translations. The introduction of e-learning into language teaching in the 1980s enabled students to learn through electronic media such as computers, interactive TVs, CDs, and the Internet. This led to the development of web-based instruction and technology-induced translation pedagogy (Tsai, 2013). Bo and Li (2011) suggested that more studies should be conducted in the areas of translation pedagogy, diversified teaching models, and objective teaching concepts.

In traditional translation teaching, the main responsibility of teachers is to find and correct errors in student translations, thus exemplifying the standard teaching method. By contrast, in the text model, translation is considered a static product. However, Yin and Xu (2005) stated that the enhancement of translation competence and quality should be a gradual process, and that translation teaching should emphasize learning processes and methods, especially the route to acquiring translation knowledge and skill. Peer reviews and group discussions provide sufficient guidance for student translations.

Kiraly (2000) proposed constructive translation teaching, in which students learn from practice. Teachers are, according to Kiraly (2000), the managers of translation projects, whereas students are the demonstrators as well as the people who encourage and help others. Students aim to develop translation competence. The constructive approach to translation teaching emphasizes the cultivation of individual experience through the interaction between students and external environments. However, some objectivist scholars have claimed that overemphasizing direct experience and student-centered teaching affects the transmission of translation experience from the teacher to the students and that the instruction might not be systematic or economical.

Bo and Li (2011) stated that both the constructive approach and the objectivist approach are complementary and can be integrated into an objectivist-constructivist theoretic approach, in which the accumulation of related knowledge is the foundation and direct experience is the method, and the foundation and the method are closely related. The accumulation of related knowledge should be taught through objectivist lectures and direct experience can be gained through constructive translation project workshops.

Traditional translation curricula focus on lectures and in-class exercises. The advancement of technology has improved the hardware and software of a translation classroom; translation memory tools have become a fundamental requirement, and the integration of statistical machine translation with translation workflows has become prevalent. On one hand, translators benefit from technology advancement because of easier access to digital resources such as online corpora and terminology banks. On the other hand, translators can collaborate with remote translators to complete a bulk task. The recycling and reuse of translated texts through collaboration have facilitated translation work. However, continued technological development also suggests a need to reform translation instruction.

The revolution in translation training has compelled translators to learn to use online resources and translation-assisted tools. However, learning and applying new software are time-consuming. In the SDL Trados Studio computer-assisted software, for example, one command may generate various results; students may skip steps and forget to select a language or convert files. These problems must be solved immediately before proceeding to the next step. Therefore, substantial class time is wasted in waiting for these problems to be solved.

Flipped Classroom

The flipped classroom, an innovative teaching method, was introduced to utilize classroom time efficiently. The flipped classroom refers to reversing the sequence of course content with homework. Thus, students can preview the course through online videos, and class time is used to apply learning, discuss, or interact with teachers and classmates. This method was first mentioned in Baker (2000) and Lage (2000). Many people learned about this pedagogy through online videos, and it was thus widely accepted and applied. Notable drivers of the flipped classroom include two chemistry teachers at Woodland Park High School, who uploaded their lecture videos to youtube for remedial teaching, and Salman Khan, the founder of the Khan Academy, who started out by recording videos to teach math and was later noticed and invested by Bill Gates.

The flipped classroom is based on the student-active learning method, with a focus on students engaging in classroom activities and familiarizing themselves with the use of technology tools, to create an autonomous learning environment and strengthen learning effects. Prince (2004) defined autonomous learning in which students engage in meaningful activities and contemplate their learning outcomes. Garfield (1995) stated that active participation and feedback to teaching activities are the main factors for improving student learning effects. The curriculum should be designed based on the learning process and learning effects instead of what the teacher knows (Biggs & Tang, 2007). In addition, student-centered learning can benefit students more profoundly (Baeten, 2010; Prince, 2004). The flipped classroom emphasizes student-active learning by moving active learning and student participation into the classroom.

Like all 'student-oriented' pedagogies, teachers try to give the classroom back to the students by allowing students more time for discussions and become active learners while teachers step back to play supporting roles. However, Perng (彭明輝,

2014) raised three questions concerning this teaching approach: (1) How do teachers ensure students have previewed the lessons? (2) What are the roles and responsibilities of teachers in the class? (3) Would the learning effects of students replacing teachers be better than teachers lecturing all the way through? Behind his doubts were concerns over slow learners, fearing they might be the sacrifice of this 'trendy' approach.

In response to Perng's worries, Yeh (葉丙成, 2014) stresses the objective of a flipped classroom is to motivate students, so classroom management is of great importance to the success of student engagement. Demonstrating his own examples on motivating students, Yeh grouped students into groups of three, and students of the same group will be required to work together and solve a set of problems related to the assigned preview. If any group member did not preview the lesson, the score that they share would be affected, thus by way of a sense of responsibility, students are triggered to preview lessons for fear of being the weakest link.

With regards to the roles and responsibilities of teachers in class, Yeh said that in his probability class, while the students are working on the questions assigned during class hours, he would walk around to spot students with learning difficulties. By participating on the spot and observing how students solve problems, he could immediately identify questions that might be harder for the students or areas where needs more explanation, so that learning problems can be solved in the first instance. With this approach, the learning effects of students in his class is a lot better off, thereby answering the third question proposed by Perng.

For students to actively engage in classroom activities, to master the use of translation-assisted tools, and to adapt to an autonomous learning environment, we flipped translation training by extending lessons outside the classroom through online media. Although students should take time outside class to watch online

resources, they should actively participate in in-class activities and discussions and increase interactions with the teacher and classmates to strengthen learning effects. Questionnaires were administered and interviews were conducted to understand student perceptions of a flipped classroom to improve translation training.

Research Method

The subjects of this study were 30 students in two translation courses. Translation is a compulsory course for undergraduate students in the Department of Language and Literatures. This course is taught in a small-class setting with a maximum of 15 students. The enrollees were junior and senior students from the department.

The course is divided in half, with the first half taught using the flipped classroom method and the second half taught using the traditional teaching method. Some of the course contents, such as translation strategies and translation analysis, were displayed in slides. Regarding the use of computer-assisted translation tools, the students were encouraged to download a trial version at home and watch the video tutorial. During class, the students were assigned to translate text by using SDL Trados Studio. Learning difficulties, which emerged during the translation process, were addressed.

Bo and Li (2011) revealed that most translation studies have focused on the teaching of literary translation. Practical translation instruction, such as legal translation, financial translation, and document translation, is rare and does not comply with the learning needs of society. Therefore, the involved translation course combines practical fields including journalistic translation, technical translation, technology news translation, children's literature translation, and song translation. These texts

were selected by the students at the beginning of the semester and approved by the teacher on the basis of text difficulty, manageable word count, and the language quality of the text. After learning the translation strategies, translation exercises related to the practice were conducted to strengthen student learning effects. Regarding complex or confusing concepts, the students engaged in group activities and discussions to complete the assigned work and facilitate learning.

Table 1

Syllabus – Flipped Classroom Method

Week	In-class activities	Assigned previews
1	Course introduction *First questionnaire	First translation strategy unit powerpoint preview
2	First translation strategy exercise	Second translation strategy unit powerpoint preview
3	Second translation strategy exercise	Third translation strategy unit powerpoint preview
4	Third translation strategy exercise	SDL Trados Studio video tutorials
5	SDL Trados Studio in practice	Notes on journalistic translation strategies
6	Journalistic translation group activity	Journalistic translation exercise analysis
7	Journalistic translation group presentation	Notes on technical translation strategies
8	Technical translation group activity	Technical translation exercise analysis
9	Technical translation group presentation	*Second questionnaire

As can be seen in Table 1, the first questionnaire was administered in the first week, and the second questionnaire administered after 9 weeks of flipped classroom method. The first questionnaire (see Appendix 1) included basic information such as translation experience, Chinese/English proficiency level, and motivations and expectations. In addition to these, perspectives of students to translation training were asked, which include how students would learn best in a translation classroom and the importance of in-class activities and homework assignments to their learning effects. The second questionnaire (see Appendix 2) asked students whether they had previewed assigned lessons, and how many times have they previewed the lessons. If they have, how helpful did they find lesson previews/in-class participation/homework to their learning effects. If they didn't preview assigned lessons, students were asked to give reasons as to why they had not done so.

Table 2

Syllabus – Traditional Teaching Method

Week	In-class activities	Assigned previews
10	Technology news translation	Technology news translation homework
11	Technology news translation	Technology news translation homework
12	Travel text translation	Travel text translation homework
13	Travel text translation	Travel text translation homework
14	Children's literature translation	Children's literature translation homework
15	Children's literature translation	Children's literature translation homework
16	Song translation	Song translation

		homework
17	Song translation	Song translation homework
18	Wrap-up	*Third questionnaire

In the second half of the semester, traditional approach was adopted. Lectures were given in-class and translation homework assigned to be completed and submitted off-class. The third questionnaire was administered in the final week. In the third questionnaire (see Appendix 3), students were asked to evaluate the activities and methods that they believe to have the best learning effects. They were asked to analyze the pros and cons of lectures and whether they have enough resources in-class and off-class to help their learning.

The three questionnaires were created using Google Forms, and students were asked to fill out the three questionnaires in-class. A total of 30 responses were collected for each set of questionnaire.

Research Findings

Pretest results revealed that more than half of the students believed that a translation class should be student-centered at the beginning of the semester: In addition, over 95% of the students valued the importance of in-class participation and homework assignments in a translation class. Although none of the students considered a lecture effective for achieving the optimal learning effects at the beginning of the semester, most of the students expected to learn through individual study, followed by translation homework, group study, and, finally, in-class translation activities.
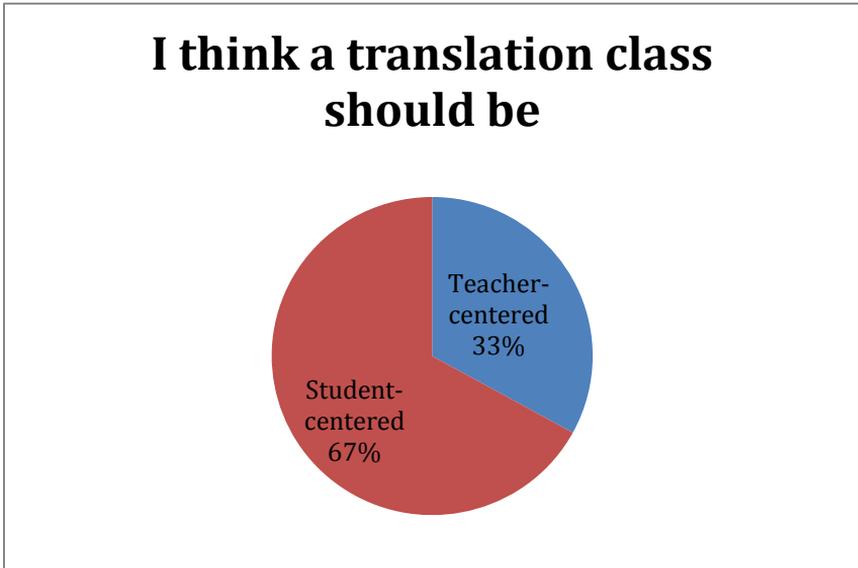
I think a translation class should be

Teacher-centered 33%

Student-centered 67%

Figure 1. Students' perceptions of translation training

Students' perception for achieving positive learning effects coincides with Yin and Xu (2005), who stated that a traditional teacher-centered translation classroom has transformed into a student-centered classroom. Teachers are no longer the authority in the classroom. On the contrary, teachers must learn with students and consider their needs, interests, strengths, and weaknesses during curriculum design. The traditional model, in which students passively accept assigned tasks, does not consider a student's need for an autonomous learning environment.

The second questionnaire was administered at the middle of the semester. After 8 weeks of the flipped translation class, the students were asked whether they had previewed the lessons beforehand in their three assignments. For the first assignment, 81% of the students had previewed the lesson. Those who had not previewed the lesson attributed the cause to forgetfulness. In the second assignment, all the students had previewed the lesson. However, in the third assignment, 87% of students had previewed the lesson but 13% had forgotten.
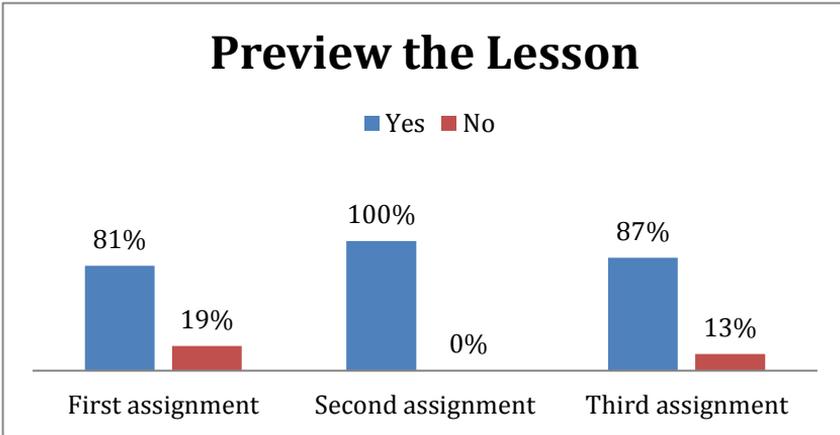
Figure 2. Percentage of lesson previews

The students were asked to rank from 1 to 5 whether previewing the lessons helped their learning effects, with 5 being most helpful; the average was 4.45, indicating that most of the students were positive in previewing the lessons. When asked to rank how suitable it was to integrate a flipped classroom into a translation course, most of the students considered it appropriate. They also reported that the flipped classroom helped their learning effects. This finding is significant at the 0.05 level. When asked to rank how helpful the lesson previews, in-class activities and discussions, and homework assignments were to their learning effects, the students considered all three teaching methods extremely helpful to their learning, particularly the in-class activities and discussions, followed by the homework assignments.
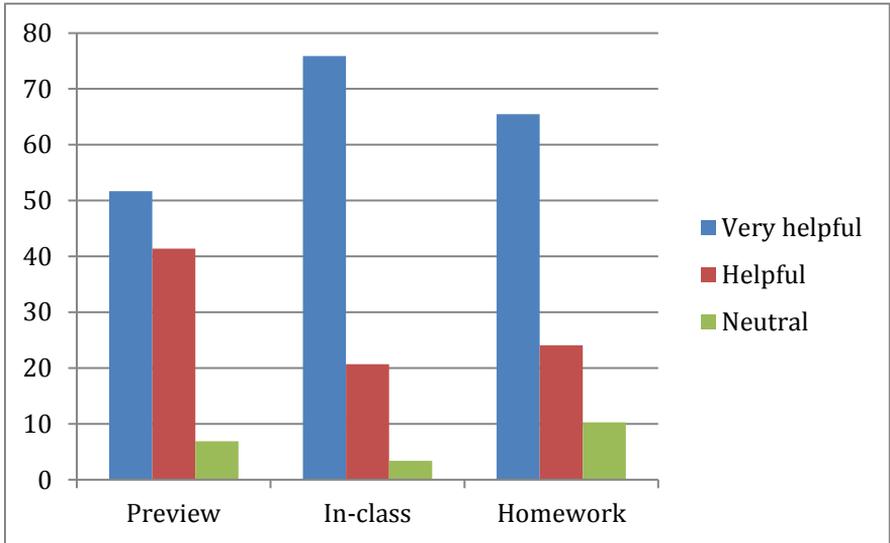
Figure 3. Students' perceptions on the helpfulness of lesson previews, in-class activities and discussions, and homework assignments to their learning effects

Regarding the instruction of computer-assisted translation tools, 69% of the students had previewed the video tutorial. They were encouraged to download a trial version at home, but only 10.3% of them had done so and tried out the program before the lesson. During class, translating tasks involving the use of SDL Trados Studio were assigned to the students. The students considered the in-class assignments extremely helpful to their learning, more helpful than previewing the video tutorial.

The third questionnaire was administered in the final week. After 8 weeks of the traditional teaching method, the students were again asked to rank the activities according to how much they believed they learned from them. The posttest results (see Figure 4) were distinct from the pretest results.
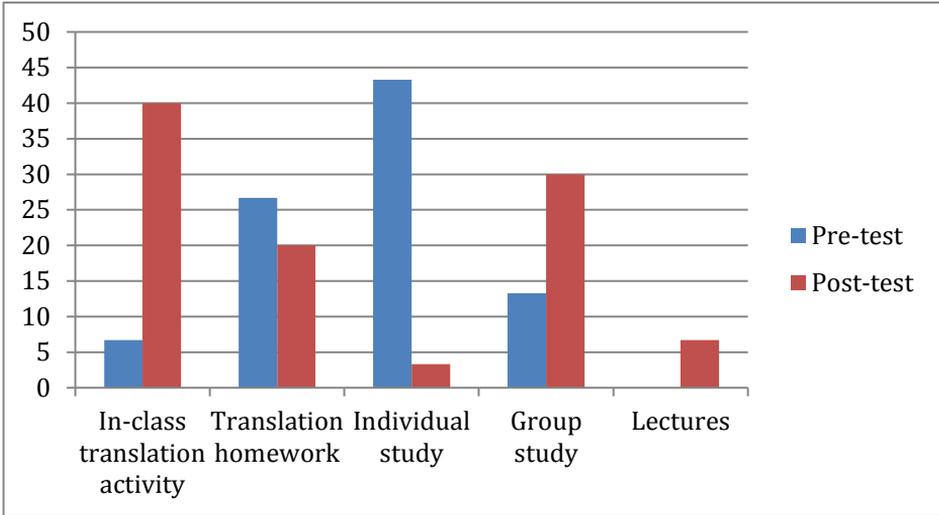
Figure 4. Students' perceptions on the helpfulness of in-class translation activity, translation homework, individual study, group study, and lectures to their learning effects

We determined that the preference for individual study at the beginning of the semester was least supported at the end of the semester. In-class translation activities, which were not favored at the beginning of the semester, were highly valued at the end of the semester; group study yielded similar responses. This indicated that the students encountered the effects of in-class translation activities and group study in their learning effects and that translation was learned more effectively by applying other resources including computer hardware and software and interactions with classmates and the teacher.

Conclusion

In this study, we flipped the traditional approach to translation teaching. The literature on the flipped classroom indicates that student activeness in the classroom generates positive results. At the beginning of the semester, we observed that the students had some idea of how they expected to be taught. Most of them expected a translation class to be student-centered,

in which they learn through in-class activities and homework assignments, mostly individually. This revealed how little they expected to interact with other people in the class.

After 8 weeks of the flipped translation class, the students considered the lesson previews, in-class activities and discussions, and homework assignments were extremely helpful to their learning, particularly the in-class activities and discussions. The posttest results after 8 weeks of the traditional teaching method were distinct from the pretest results. The preference for individual study at the beginning of the semester was least supported at the end of the semester. In-class translation activities and group studies were highly valued at the end of the semester.

From the perception of the students, translation was learned more effectively by utilizing resources including computer hardware and software and interactions with classmates and the teacher. Most of the students also considered a flipped classroom appropriate for translation teaching, and they reported that the flipped classroom helped their learning effects.

The findings from this research can be applied to support translation pedagogy and curriculum design. Student translators, teachers and researchers can benefit from the results analyzed in this study. Future research can be directed to investigate the learning outcome of the students before and after the flipped classroom.

Acknowledgement

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從學生觀點看翻轉翻譯教學

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摘要

　　傳統的翻譯教學著重於實作與課堂講述。科技的進步為翻譯教學軟硬體上帶來許多的轉變。為了讓學生更融入課堂教學，更熟練科技工具的使用，進而打造自主學習環境，本研究將採用翻轉教室，透過線上影音設備及註解，將課程延伸至教室外，以順利完成指派作業和小組練習。透過問卷調查與訪談，了解學生對於翻轉教學的看法，可進而改善翻譯教學。

關鍵詞：翻轉教學、翻譯教學、自主學習