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# A Didactic Approach to Curriculum Renewal on the Basis of Market Demands: A Grounded Theory Study

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## Abstract

This study aims to provide sufficient information on the issues of the current approaches, materials, and curricula employed in the field of Translation Studies. To do so, the researcher investigated the demands of the market and the vocational realities so as to come to an understanding of the curriculum drawbacks. Furthermore, this study provides a review on the current trends used by academic institutions and private sector in Iran. As a phase of the adopted model, several semi-structured interviews were held with authorities in the market of translation, and then the gathered data. Having analyzed the data, a number of themes emerged, the most important of which were the skills pertinent to technology and computer assisted translation. Finally, a number of recommendations were made to improve the official curriculum of Translation Studies. To the future researchers, this study provides baseline information on the recent status of translator teaching trends.

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**Keywords:** Curriculum renewal, grounded theory, market demands, interviews, curriculum needs-analysis.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. A brief review of the problem

The translation industry has enjoyed a great deal of attention and popularity within the last decade, and well, this development seems to be continuing. Furthermore, the academic community as well as the market are facing a huge and growing demands for expertise in translation and interpretation as a consequence of poor translation products

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which are usually found in third-world countries; furthermore, the researchers are well aware of the damages a poor translation, either as a process or a product, can have on the formed body of knowledge of a community (Paul, 2009). Also, the emergence of new technologies and gadgets has also been of great importance. This issue has been, to a great extent, neglected in the current translation courses and curriculum. This study aims to examine the principles underlying the current curriculum being used in Iran for training translators. The researcher will reflect on the recent works on the nature of translation competence. The researcher was to explore the possibilities of a more dynamic understanding of the nature of translation reflected in the current curricula employed in universities and the private sector. The researcher investigated the educational and vocational potentials of translation studies so as to give tips on reconsideration of the current materials, syllabi and curricula used in Iran.

It is believed that the consideration of these issues in a curricular framework is to recognize the ideological potential of curricula themselves which can affect the prioritization of convinced associations between learners (translators) and society.

### *1.2. The stated objectives of the field of translation studies in Iran*

The educational system practiced in Iran is vastly known to be of the centralized type, that is, each level depending on the rules and regulations is passed and also issued by Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. In general, as stated by Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, objectives of translation programs at M.A. and PhD levels in universities are listed below:

Table 1. Stated objectives of translation studies programs by the ministry of higher education

<i>Priority</i>	<i>Stated Objectives</i>
1	To train researches who are willing to conduct research within the domain of translation
2	To train qualified instructors for courses of translation
3	To train researchers for providing reasonable curriculum materials for translation courses
4	To promote instruction of translation courses for trainees
5	To separate courses of translation from those of language teaching
6	To promote instruction of theories to trainees of translation
7	To remove the constant need for specialized translation instructors
8	To encourage students of translation to continue their studies in Iran
9	To promote translation across the country

Discuss the relevant related literature, but do not feel compelled to include an exhaustive historical account. Assume that the reader is knowledgeable about the basic problem and does not require a complete accounting of its history. A scholarly description of earlier work in the introduction provides a summary of the most recent directly related

work and recognizes the priority of the work of others. Citation of and specific credit to relevant earlier works are signs of scientific and scholarly responsibility and are essential for the growth of a cumulative science. In the description of relevant scholarship, also inform readers whether other aspects of this study have been reported on previously and how the current use of the evidence differs from earlier uses.

At the same time, cite and reference only works pertinent to the specific issue and not those that are of only tangential or general significance. When summarizing earlier works, avoid nonessential details; instead, emphasize pertinent findings, relevant methodological issues, and major conclusions. Refer the reader to general surveys or research syntheses of the topic if they are available. Demonstrate the logical continuity between previous and present work. Develop the problem with enough breadth and clarity to make it generally understood by as wide a professional audience as possible (APA, 2010). Do not let the goal of brevity lead you to write a statement intelligible only to the specialist.

### *1.3. Research Questions*

The central research question of the qualitative grounded theory inquiry is:

Are graduates of Translation Studies program from Iranian universities ready to meet the demands of the market?

This main question includes a number of sub-questions as follows:

1. What are the underlying criteria based on which graduates of Translation Studies programs are employed in the market?
2. What are the drawbacks of the current translation training programs in Iran regarding the present market demands and vocational requirements?
3. What measures, in terms of the curricula, syllabi and materials; are needed to be taken so as to meet the standards and requirements of translation market in Iran?

## **2. Review of related literature**

Translator training has dealt with quite a few challenges concerning educational practice, material development, curriculum design and also possible contributions of research. Primarily, among these challenges, we need to mention the influence of translation memories, machine translation, content management systems, concordance tools as well as the localization industry. We can no longer see them as mere instrument helping the translator; they essentially change the nature of translation itself, making the professionals not work from continuous texts but from pre-translated discontinuous chunks and data bases, hence increasing the significance of review processes. Mossop is undoubtedly right when he says that ‘[i]f you can’t translate with pencil and paper, then you can’t translate with the latest information technology’ (2003: 20), but the sense of the

verb ‘to translate’ may not be the same on both sides of that equation. An linked challenge is the need to expand highly specialized programs, like advanced short-term courses, that cater for areas such as localization, audiovisual translation, applied terminology, and the different types of translation as well as interpreting. This might be with a sharp decrease in courses that are specialized in terms of language directionality, especially as student groups become more linguistically mixed nowadays, and as work into the translator’s L2 has become a permanent feature of professional practice in several countries. The researcher of this study believes that the response to changes in the market thus requires considerable rethinking of the present curricula. Employing of electronic communication for class interaction and learning materials of all kinds is nowadays a common feature of many programs abroad, but much remains to be discovered about how we can employ it in the professional way.

### *2.1. Research on translator training vs. translator education*

The variety of training contexts could account for the reason behind quite a few rival methods implemented in translation classrooms. A practically helpful distinction made is the one stated by Kiraly (2000) between ‘translation competence’ versus ‘translator competence’, actually Kiraly (2003) as a broad difference between translator training and translator education. Training is accordingly coupled with linguistic skills and the requirement to generate an acceptable translation, which is translation competence in essence. The acquisition of this can be a mixture of both the given instruction and practice, which is the kind of training is the one that professional translators are to undergo. Translator education, in contrast, identifies the need for would-be translators to learn a variety of interpersonal skills and expertise, besides the required theoretical base. Learners are to learn how to be interactive with other translators, and also with writers, managers and clients. They do not only deal with technical linguistic information; they are to be trained how to place and assess information for their own work. Likewise, they are not to just deal with professional standards as they see their translations being corrected; they should also gain the skill to find out about the standards and ethical principles, basically in the course of working on authentic professional projects.

## **3. Methods**

Exploring needs of the current Translation Studies market is an important educational and social concern because the phenomenon can have huge effects on the employment of students who have graduated. To do so, a Grounded Theory approach has been adopted.

Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggested research to be a continual process of data collection, followed by analysis, leading to questions, followed by more data collection, and so on. Creswell (2008) suggested research is a personal journey, pursued along two

different courses or routes in very different ways, and the decision to conduct qualitative or quantitative research is fundamentally a choice to either explore or explain data. A possible third method, namely the mixed-method, reflects a combination of the two primary approaches, when neither method alone provides sufficient insight to the problem.

### *3.1. Confidentiality*

Salkind (2009) and Yin (2009) expressed the significant need to ensure human participant protection within the study's research endeavor. The informed consent statement indicated assurance that each participant's answers were and will be kept confidential. The confidentiality of all research participants and data was ensured throughout the research study as outlined in the Confidentiality Statement Form. To protect the privacy of the organizations wherein incivility may have occurred or was observed, the research participants was not asked where he or she experienced the incident, nor was the name of the organization recorded.

### *3.2. Participants*

The targeted population was publishers and managers of recruitment sections of translation centers and travel agencies. The sample was drawn from the three publications ,four translation centers and a travel agency. The sample consisted of participants who have been responsible for recruitment sections for at least one year preceding the interview, were aged between 25 and 65, and included editors, business professionals and publishers in Tehran, Mashhad and Neyshabur.

### *3.3. Instrumentation*

The main instrument used in this study was the semi-structured interview, the questions of which were designed by the researcher after a comprehensive review of related literature, and some informal interviews with graduates of the program. The protocol (Appendix I) was then revised by experts in the field. The questions were asked in Farsi since the target population was neither fluent nor competent in English. The semi-structured interviews included 4 main parts including different sub-questions. Interviewers were also asked to add any further remarks of theirs so as not to miss any issues at hand.

### *3.4. Data Collection*

Nine steps were anticipated and followed in the data collection process and included:

- (1) Contact potential organizations (including publications, state and private translation centers) to conduct research,
- (2) Secure approval,
- (3) Request list of potential participants from supporting organizations,
- (4) Call each potential participant, inviting them to volunteer
- (5) E-mail each participant confirming time, date, and location,
- (6) Initiate pre-interview discussion, and
- (9) Commence data collection.

At the onset of each interview, the research participants were again informed that the interview would be recorded. They were informed that if at any time, upon expressing a desire to either cease the recording and convert to hand written notes, or cease the interview completely, the recording, all notes would be deleted immediately. Audio recordings only occurred with the explicit consent of the participant.

### *3.5. Data Analysis Procedures*

The study used a combination of systematic and emerging design concepts (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). In the initial analysis of interviews, various established coding protocols were used to develop the emerging theory. The researcher used the seminal Strauss and Corbin (1990) model of open, axial and selective coding. Open coding forms initial broad categories from the information gathered; axial coding then focuses on a specific category, connects open-coded groupings, and views them in relation to other categories; and finally, selective coding develops a theory based on the interrelationship between the categories from the axial coding process.

Glaser (1978) noted that grounded theory intends to form a systematic generation of theory, and is systematically acquired from social research. The data analysis method used for the current study was the two phases of coding for use in the current study of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). These phases included the initial process of developing categories, and the focused process of providing initial codes to sort, synthesize, and organize data. Data analysis involved a thorough exploration of the data generated in the interviews.

## **4. Results**

*4.1. Research question I: What are the underlying criteria based on which graduates of Translation Studies programs are employed in the market?*

After categorizing the data, as explained in the data analysis section, the responses of the interviewees were grouped into different themes. The following emerged themes address the first research question of the study.

#### *4.1.1. Theme 1: Skills and requirements needed*

This category is actually the most relevant emerged theme to research questions of the current work. Regarding skills and requirements needed by employers in the market, 15 unique responses emerged from the data. Some of these responses included: enjoying a proficient command of a foreign language (14 out of 16 participants, or 87%), making use of their background knowledge to deal with texts (11 out of 16 participants, or 68%), having a good command of writing in their mother tongue (11 out of 16 participants, or 68%), excellent reading and comprehension skill in the target and native language (10 out of 16 participants, or 62%), being well-read and specialized in specific subject matters (10 out of 16 participants, or 62%), general knowledge, awareness of current and world events and target culture (9 out of 16 participants, or 56%), and awareness of structures which can pose challenges to translation works (8 out of 16 participants, or 50%)

The majority of the participants cited enjoying a proficient command of a foreign language as a necessity for the prospective translators. Also the importance of translators background knowledge and their command of their native language (that is Frasi) was explicitly mentioned for several times. Basically, by looking at the results, it can be said that translators academic education is of huge influence when it comes to employment, contrary to the common belief that only a good command of a foreign language would suffice.

Discussing the skills and requirements of a good translator, there have been several comments on translators native language proficiency especially in terms of writing. Participant 1 was a strong believer in translators command of Persian language to the extent that he believed an applicants' way of speaking in Farsi would reveal a great deal about him/her. As for the skills, participants 2,3,13 stated that knowing idiomatic use of language and colloquial expressions is what distinguishes a good translators, as translator13 said "I always notice so many problems in translation of idioms and expressions from Farsi to English and the other way around" (P13).

#### *4.1.2. Theme 2: Personality traits deemed to be important for the employers*

This category is in accordance with the main research questions. Personality traits which are deemed to be important for the employers can be of significance since these aspects can be teachable factors included in the materials taught to students, and can lead the researchers to a better understanding of the needs and drawbacks of the program. Considering all responses fallen into this category, 11 unique responses emerged. Some of the responses included: showing confidence in what they are going to do (11 out of 16 participants or 68%), having the spirit to accept challenges and new

situations (8 out of 16 participants or 50%), willingness to change and being flexible at times of problems (7 out of 16 participants or 43%), punctuality and being able to meet deadlines (7 out of 16 participants or 43%), having a modest and respectful type of character (5 out of 16 participants or 31%). Self-motivation, organization and discipline was considered to be important (5 out of 16 participants or 31%). The next emerged category was applicants' talent for customer service (for tasks like contacting clients, talking to them, and collecting payments).

Other less frequent responses which constituted a category but with less than 20 percent were:

- Having a positive attitude toward working as a translator
- Ability to be non-judgmental and remain neutral
- Attention to detail
- Initiative, imagination, and intellectual curiosity and motivation

Showing confidence in what they are going to do, having the spirit to accept challenges and new situations and willingness to change and being flexible at times of problems were among the first three important factors to which the participants referred.

#### *4.1.3. Theme 3: Experience and background of the applicants*

This category is relevant to the main research questions as these experiences can be transferable through workshops and course materials. Besides, needed background information can also be of great use when it comes to recommendation for curriculum modification of the program. Based on this thematic category five patterns emerged. The majority of the participants responded that having experience in translating projects related to the genre of the project is of significance in their decision (11 out of 16 participants, or 68%). Another category which emerged was the importance of academic education in Translation when it comes to employment, contrary to the common belief that only a good command of a foreign language would suffice (9 out of 16 participants, or 56 percent). Another category was the experience of living in a foreign country (5 out of 16 participants, or 31%).

#### *4.1.4. Theme 4: Applicants' familiarity with technology- related tasks*

Applicants' familiarity with technology was one of the most referred issues that employers spoke of. After the open codes were analyzed and categorized, seven different categories were identified under this heading. It was repeatedly mentioned that university programs, and even translator training programs which are held by the private sector, would almost never consider this aspect of the profession although it is widely known that it can have a huge contributing effect on the final work and process of translation. The ability to work with word processing software- with more than basic functions was the most referred item in the whole interviews held in this research (14 out



of 16 participants, or 87%). Another salient category emerged was the ability to make use of CAT- computer assisted technologies, which was also mentioned by the majority of research participants (12 out of 16 participants, or 75%). Online terminologies and dictionaries were referred to as one of the most important sources of translation works specially technical ones, to which 8 participants referred (50%). In addition to these, there were some other categories emerged which are reported in the following table.

#### *4.2. Research Question II: What are the drawbacks of the current translation training programs in Iran regarding the present market demands and vocational requirements?*

Regarding the drawbacks, deficiencies and problems of the current program employed in Iranian universities for Translation Studies master's degree, the following theme emerged.

##### *4.2.1. Theme 5: Opinions regarding deficiencies in the graduates in programs of translation studies*

In accordance with research questions and the interview protocol, the participants mentioned their opinions regarding the drawbacks of the program at different times. Based on this thematic category, nine unique categories emerged from the responses. Among which the first one to emerge was translators' unfamiliarity with technological equipment to facilitate translation, as the same subject was also raised in parts in which the interviewees were asked to recommend solutions for the observed issues; second category emerged was that of applicants' not being able to put their theoretical knowledge into practice, the third salient category was their lack of technical knowledge and specialization in a specific topic; after that translators' lack of communicative skills to present their work and proposals, as well as their lacking editing and revision skills were brought up.

Some of the responses in this regard were, "I think they should be taught how to handle basic tasks using the internet, libraries and reference books, you get a better sense of what the realities of a text and its context is when you have the sufficient skills to acquaint yourself with the culture and context of where the text comes from" (P12). P7 stated that "I believe graduates and students of these programs are never able to specialize in a field as for their translation work unless they themselves get to be very interested in a subject, it seems there is no technical and specialized interest growing in academic settings".

#### *4.3. Research questions III: What measures, in terms of the curricula, syllabi and materials; are needed to be taken so as to meet the standards and requirements of translation market in Iran?*

Regarding the ways through which the current educational program can improve and adapt itself to the realities of the market, the following theme emerged.

#### *4.3.1. Theme 6: Ways in which university programs can meet future demands of the market*

This theme emerged especially in response to one of the items in the protocol which required interviewees to add any suggestions or recommendations they see necessary in the applicants' educational background. They were shown a list of courses and materials covered in Translation programs at master's level and asked to express their views on courses. This theme was in direct relation to the purpose of the research. Categories which emerged under this theme are mostly related to Translation Studies curriculum and syllabus covered at university. For example, the majority of participants felt university programs lacked in practical interpretation skills, practical writing skills and translation software training.

Having been shown the syllabus and the credits students of Translation Studies should pass, despite their not dealing with interpretation tasks whatsoever, the majority of them recognized the need for courses in simultaneous/ consecutive translation skills. About half of the participants agreed that university courses are to familiarize students with technical terminology of some common subjects. In this regard, Participant 5 stated "graduates of university need to specialize in a subject to be practical and useful in the market as now there is an increasing need for translator of legal texts and documents, which is a rare sight"

## **5. Discussion of the findings**

The themes emerged in the current study show the importance of several concepts which have not been considered/mentioned in similar studies. Significance, relevance and explanations of each theme/category, in terms of theoretical background of the study, are mentioned as follows. It should be noted that from each theme, only the relevant and salient categories have been chosen to be illustrated in details.

### *5.1. Theme 1: Skills and requirements needed*

As mentioned in the result section, this category is actually the most relevant emerged theme to research questions of the current work. As the objective of the present study was to find out about the requirements of the market, the researchers have asked the interviewees to share their opinions, comments and interests in this regard. Doing so, we came to a comprehensive list of needs, skills and also qualifications required by the market. As mentioned in the result section, working in the market of translation, both as a translator and an interpreter, one must have the ability to demonstrate his/her skills in a way that meets the demand of the market, employers and also clients. The current

qualitative study shows the existing gap between the realities of the market and the abilities, skills and qualifications of translators. Regarding skills and requirements needed by employers in the market, the most important skill employers talked about was translators' proficient command of a foreign language (14 out of 16 participants, or 87%), which is, expectedly, required by almost every prospective employer. Practice and research, both, have stressed the importance of proficiency of L2 in language translation. For example, Kolb and Steward (1994) introduced the revised Hierarchical Model of Bilingual Memory which showed a strong connection between L2 words and their corresponding meanings as the level of proficiency increases.

Secondly, the skill which was considered to be an important factor for a successful translator was believed to be the ability to make use of one's background knowledge to deal with texts (68% of the participants stated that, directly/indirectly). Relevant to the previous concept as it is, the researchers believe that this was considered to be an important factor since experience, L2 knowledge, cultural awareness, etc. are, to some extent, subcategories of this theme. As it was mentioned by Kavaliauskiene (2004), there is actually a clear connection between reading and writing, i.e. they are interdependent and reciprocal processes, and at the same time are personal and social activities, which as you would expect intersect in the process of learning (Kavaliauskiene, 2004).

The ability to make use of one's background knowledge is justifiably mentioned by several participants because of two possible reasons. First, just knowing about a language, a culture or concept is obviously not enough; however, what comes to be of significance is the capability to expand their knowledge beyond a specific context and apply it to a wide range of possibilities. The notion of L1/L2 Transferability has long been worked on in SLA; yet the findings have been quite inconclusive.

Moreover, having a good command of writing in one's mother tongue (11 out of 16 participants, or 68%) was pointed out as one of the most important factors. Cognitively speaking, it is known that prior learning can either facilitate or hinder subsequent learning, so transfer may be actually at work when non-native speakers start to write in L2. However, here the focus of the interviewees was not this transferability but translator's creative writing abilities, as they have mentioned during the interviewee session for several time. It can be justified in this way that usually a cause of translation difficulties is known to be translators' inability to retrieve, address and write appropriate lexis in a limited time. Therefore, a greater resource of lexis in L1 would be of huge importance to the final product of translation, which is well noticed by the employers.

Above-mentioned facts about translation would actually lead us to the next themes which emerged as two of the significant results of the study, i.e. excellent reading and comprehension skill in the target and native language (10 out of 16 participants, or 62%) as well as being well-read and specialized in specific subject matters. A keyword in the former theme mentioned is the word "specific subject matter". As it is mentioned

repetitively in this work, translators spatiality in particular subject matters is of great importance, since employers, or the market in general, call for a more technical command of specific subjects in order to deal with texts from different genres.

### *5.2. Theme 2: Personality traits deemed to be important for the employers*

As it was mentioned in the previous section, this category is in accordance with one of the research questions as it aims at finding out about the characteristics which are deemed to be important for being employed in the current market. Knowing the personality traits which are actually of importance to the employers can be a useful factor since these aspects, as mentioned before, can be transferred and taught through the materials, syllabus and course objectives to students, and can lead the researchers to a better understanding of the needs and drawbacks of the program. According to this thematic category, nine unique categories emerged from the responses which were fully presented in the previous section. It is worth noting that Munday (2009) believes in the significance of cognitive and psychology sciences in translation studies. This concept is also presented in the works of Boeree (2006) and Coba (2007) who could demonstrate that translator' personality and cognitive styles, actually, have a pivotal role in the translations processes.

Possible explanations for the results under this construct can be found in psychology, especially the view that behavior is/can be the outcome of personality and situational factors (this has been referred to as “interactionism” by Hampson (2001). It is noteworthy that when we apply this concept in translatorial behavior, interactionism considers translation as the result of a translator's personality and situational factors. It can be said that situational factors here can include a wide range of factors, e.g. age, gender, education and experience-as-translator, expectations from the translator and even their ideology in other aspects of life.

### *5.3. Theme 3: Experience and background of the applicants*

This category is would be an important issue which will be addressed in the implication part as it is relevant to the main research questions. It is believed that these experiences can be transferable through workshops and course materials. As mentioned in the results section, needed background information can also be of great use when it comes to recommendation for curriculum modification of the program. Based on this thematic category five patterns emerged. Naturally, the majority of the participants responded that having experience in translating projects related to the genre of the project is of significance in their decision (11 out of 16 participants, or 68%). It is of importance to notice that the participants stressed that the translators are to be experienced in a specific genre that is ‘experience’, as a concept, is defined in a special way. Looking into the data, another category which emerged was the importance of

academic education in Translation when it comes to employment, contrary to the common belief that only a good command of a foreign language would suffice. As it is a very tricky task to distinguish a good translator from a good user of a language, mostly institutions and organizations prefer to rely on the educational background of the applicants. It is a sign of a bright future in the business since translators who have actually been in contact with theories and fundamentals of translation might be going to occupy prospective positions, which can lead to a better quality of translated works. Experience of living in a foreign country was also of importance to some of the participants, which shows a tendency to go for more culturally aware applicants. Basically, translation in itself is a difficult process, especially when the translator faces items related to the culture of the source text. Such items pose possible problems if there is no intercultural interaction between the source language and the target language (Newmark, 1998).

#### *5.4. Theme 4: Applicants' familiarity with technology- related tasks*

A concept which was mentioned by several participants of the study was that of Translation memories (TMs) which programs are creating databases of source-text and target-text segments in such a way that the paired parts can be used and re-used. These tools, as recognized by the participants of the study, are priceless aids for the translation of any text that has a lot of repeated words or phrases, which can be in different genres, e.g. user manuals, computer products and versions of the same document. It goes without saying that the employment of translation memories tools speed up the translation process and can also cut down on costs and time spent on a given work. This has led to greater demands for these translation services from the side of managers and employers, specially those who have kept themselves up-to-date with the latest technologies in the field.

The ability to work with word processing software- with more than basic functions was the most referred item in the whole interviews held in this research. Another salient category emerged was the ability to make use of CAT- computer assisted technologies, which was also mentioned by the majority of research participants (12 out of 16 participants, or 75%). Online terminologies and dictionaries were referred to as one of the most important sources of translation works especially technical ones, to which 8 participants referred (50%). Use of online dictionaries is also of huge importance since they are greatly invaluable resources which can improve a translation product if the translator knows how to use them. There are several resources ranging from technical online terminology websites to general encyclopedias which come in handy when translators face difficulty translating cultural, local or very specialized concepts.

### *5.5. Theme 5: Opinions regarding deficiencies in the graduates in programs of translation studies*

As the researcher pointed out in the review of related literature, Hlavac (2013) emphasized that coming up with minimum standards and skill levels required for translators to perform a given task would basically be on the basis of marketplace needs, industry capabilities and availability of training/teaching trends. This issue is also mentioned in several ways by the participants of the present study.

In accordance with research questions and the interview protocol, the participants mentioned their opinions regarding the drawbacks of the program at different times. Based on this thematic category, nine unique categories emerged from the responses. Among which the first one to emerge was translators' unfamiliarity with technological equipment to facilitate translation, as the same subject was also raised in parts in which the interviewees were asked to recommend solutions for the observed issues. This category is very much linked to one of the previous sub-themes mentioned under the technology heading in the previous part. What is obvious is the fact that university programs, in this field, hugely lack in presentation and introduction of technological devices and approaches to translation. It seems that currently there is no priority in this regard. This issue calls for much more attention from the decision-makers and curriculum designers. The second category emerged was that of applicants' not being able to put their theoretical knowledge into practice. As said by Munday (2004), with no theoretical framework, one cannot generalize anything. In order to bring objectivity into debates regarding various aspects of translation, theory is of great importance. Translation theories attempt to focus on frameworks onto which each and every translator can apply their translation strategies and know the factors that may have influenced them or/and other translators. Bajo et al. (2001) have established the same thing as they stated that knowing about teachable skills in translation can make a translator distinguished since the current professional world calls for a greater specification and awareness of the theories and multidisciplinary knowledge of translators.

The third salient category was their lack of technical knowledge and specialization in a specific topic, which was explicated in the previous part. The categories emerged under this theme are used and cited in the implication part.

### *5.6. Theme 6: Ways in which university programs can meet future demands of the market*

As it was mentioned, this theme emerged especially in response to one of the items in the protocol which required interviewees to add any suggestions or recommendations they see necessary in the applicants' educational background. They were shown a list of courses and materials covered in Translation programs at master's level and asked to

express their views on courses. This theme was in direct relation to the purpose of the research. Categories which emerged under this theme are mostly related to Translation Studies curriculum and syllabus covered at university. For example, the majority of participants felt university programs lacked in practical interpretation skills, practical writing skills and translation software training. Referring to the work of Razmjou (2001), it is shown that the majority of deficiencies concluded in her work are still present. This is to say that market demands are basically in accordance with the previous research conducted in Iran. Ramzju (2001) actually came to the conclusion that graduates of the program lack in proficiency- both in the first and second language, exposure of students to diverse, reading courses in kinds of content which offer socio-cultural aspects of language, specialized readings, courses which are designed around writing in a range of styles again in both languages, courses which introduce the techniques and principles needed for editing, punctuation, as well as note taking , courses which can increase translators sensitivity to the differences in both languages, etc. Almost all items of this list is mentioned by the participants of the present study. Furthermore, she proposed additional courses to be a part of the curriculum of translator training programs in Iran, which were all pointed out in the first section of the current work.

Having been shown the syllabus and the credits students of Translation Studies should pass, despite their not dealing with interpretation tasks whatsoever, the majority of them realized the need for courses in simultaneous/ consecutive translation skills. About half of the participants agreed that university courses are to familiarize students with technical terminology of some common subjects.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study aimed to present information on the issues of the current approaches, materials, and curricula employed in Iran in the field of Translation. To do so, the researcher investigated the perceptions of employers, project managers and managers of translation centers to explore the demands of the current market, the vocational realities of the field so as to come to a clear understanding of the drawbacks of the training/teaching system that we currently have in Iran. Moreover, this study provided a review on the current trends employed by academic institutions like universities and the private sectors which are established to work on Translation Studies field.

Exploring the needs of the current Translation Studies market is an important educational and social concern because the phenomenon can have huge effects on the employment of students who have graduated. To do so, a Grounded Theory approach has been adopted.

As Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggested, this kind of research is to be a continual process of data collection, followed by analysis, leading to questions, followed by more data collection, and so on.

The qualitative research method was appropriate to the current exploration into of the current Translation Studies market. Within qualitative studies, grounded theory approach permits researchers to create a general explanation of the explored phenomenon (Creswell, 2008). The quantitative method was not appropriate to the current research, as quantitative research is employed to describe and explain a phenomenon.

To do so, we ran semi-structure interviews, based on a prepared protocol, with 16 participants who were employers in publications, managers of translation centers and managers in travel agencies. The interviews were recorded and then reviewed intensively so that the researcher could code the related data and then organized the codes to come up with certain categories and themes. Based on the analysis of 16 participant interviews, seven thematic categories emerged.

In the discussion section of the research, the emerged themes were then analyzed and discussed, and their relevance to the theoretical background of the study was illustrated. The previous studies done in this regard were also put into perspective. In the implication part, the researcher is going to present notions concerning the possible ways through which the current curriculum offered at master's level of Translation Studies program can be enriched and modified.

### *6.1. Implications*

As the study aimed to find out about the current conditions, standards and demands of the translation business, in this section, the researcher has put the gathered data in perspective in order to come up with recommendations through which the current educational programs of Translation Studies can cover these areas and bridge the gap between education and the current market for the graduates. Hence, a list of recommendations are made which include points regarding the curriculum renewal, syllabus design and material development for programs of Translation Studies in Iranian universities, specially at Master's level.

In addition, this section covers the answer to the last stated research problem which asked what measures could be taken to improve the current curriculum of the program.

### *6.2. Recommended courses*

Based on the deficiencies the participants of the study mentioned as well as the recommendations they made after they had reviewed the curriculum of translation studies program, the researcher came up with a list of courses which are believed to be necessary to enhance the chances of succeeding in the current market.

- Courses in translation practice in different genres (Theme 1)
- Courses in writing in the foreign language (Theme 1)



- Courses in reading comprehension in the foreign language (Theme 1)
- Courses in which students are familiarized with basic cultural concepts of other popular cultures (Theme 1)
- Courses familiarizing students with a higher level of general knowledge (Theme 1)
- Specialized translation courses ,particularly in subjects such as law and business (Theme1)
- Courses in simultaneous and consecutive interpretation (Theme 6)
- Courses in writing and reading in comprehension of students' native language (Theme 6)
- Courses in translation software and machine translation (Theme 4)
- Courses in revision and editing skills (Theme 6)
- Courses in technical vocabulary and idioms in different genres and subjects (Theme 5)
- Course on tour guiding (Theme 6)
- Courses in projects and business management (Theme 5)
- Courses in basic computer programs such as word processing ones (Theme 4)

### *6.3. Recommended activities*

- Familiarizing students with foreign cultures (Theme 6)
- Holding workshops to encourage and teach critical thinking skills (Theme 1)
- Encouraging teamwork through class management activities (Theme 1)
- Improving students' research skills (Theme 1)
- Working on presentational skills (Theme 1)
- Holding workshops to work on writing in different genres (Theme 1)
- Encouraging students to read more extensively (Theme 1)
- Setting English proficiency criteria for students to enter the program (Theme 1)
- Practicing meeting deadlines in translation projects (Theme 2)
- Working on translation project management skills (Theme 2)
- Encouraging activities which may lead to self motivation, such as self initiated projects (Theme 2)
- Holding practical workshops in translation evaluation (Theme 2)
- Communication between universities and translation centers (Theme 6)
- Familiarizing students with socio-cultural varieties of language (Theme 4)
- Practical workshops on computer-assisted translation (Theme 4)
- Providing information and instructions on tour leading positions (Theme 6)
- Providing specialized information on technical subjects (Theme 6)

- Working on electronic terminology tools (Theme 4)
- Workshops on editing skills (Theme 5)

The mentioned lists have been extracted from the data gathered through the interviews with the participants. It is noteworthy that, in order for the findings of the study to be implemented practically, the recommendations are to be delivered to the ministry of higher education and other decision makers. The courses can be included, added or considered in the curriculum of the program; and the activities listed above can be incorporated in the objectives, activities and procedures employed in the programs of translation studies in Iranian universities.

#### *6.4. Recommendations for Further Research*

The current study, as stated in the Limitations section, due to the scale and nature of study, did not consider other all areas in which a graduate of translation studies program can work in. A more comprehensive research can look through the demands of the market investigating the employers' perceptions in Banking systems, travel agencies, airports, simultaneous translation service centers, etc. Furthermore, the results of this research calls for a deeper look into the curriculum, training systems and physical conditions of universities of students of translation studies since the drawbacks and deficiencies seem to be rooted not only in the curriculum but also in the training programs of teachers and professors. The current study investigated the Master programs of Translation Studies students while the need is also felt for a comprehensive work to explore the demands of students in bachelor programs of the field.

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## **Appendix A.**

### Interview Protocol

#### 1. Introduction

- Introduction of the researcher
- Interviewees' job and position description
- An introduction of the research

#### 2. Criteria and standards of the organization

- Personality criteria
- Academic criteria
- Language competency criteria
- Non-language criteria
- Importance of experience and background

#### 3. Criteria for evaluating translated works

#### 4. Weaknesses of translators and applicants and their sources

#### 5. Predictions about the future of the market based on the current curriculum

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#### 6. Recommended solutions for the current offered curriculum of translation studies programs

#### 7. Further comments

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