Revision Teaching and Revision Competence Acquisition in Iranian Universities: An Exploratory Study[1]

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Abstract

Revision is an indispensable part of the translation workflow in the industry; however, its definition remains ill-defined and its status has been marginalized in the translator training (Robert, 2008). The aim of this article is fourfold. In the first part, a survey was conducted, prior to the start of the revision course, to investigate students' attitudes towards revision, their background knowledge, and competence. In the second part, a quantitative grading scheme, based on Mossop's (2019) formula, is proposed and employed to evaluate students' acquisition of revision sub-competences, following the above-mentioned course. The third part of the study entails the discussions on the efficacy of the contents and methods chosen in translator training curriculum in Iranian universities and the impact of such training on students' acquisition of revision sub-competences. This study finally ends with some insights and suggestions on the best ways to tailor revision courses to the needs of professionals in the translation industry.

Keywords: Revision, Revision competence acquisition, Translator training

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1. Introduction

It is only recently that the revision of translations has attracted the attention of Translation Studies (TS) scholars; therefore, its status is still quite marginalized within TS (Robert, 2008). According to Mossop (2011), the publication of the European standard for translation services EN 15038 in 2006, which requires every translation to be revised by a person other than the translator, has partly triggered the growing interest in revision within TS.

EN 15038 (2006) defines revision as the process carried out by "a person other than the translator" and requires the reviser to "examine the translation for its suitability for purpose" which includes the "comparison of the source and target texts for terminology consistency, register, and style" ("EN 15038," 2006, p. 11). In addition, this standard distinguishes revision from what Mossop (2019) refers to as self-revision by calling it "checking" and defines it as the process of checking the translation, upon completion, by the translator himself or herself ("EN 15038," 2006).

The Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) at the European Commission published a manual on revision in 2010. According to this manual, the term "revision" is defined as the comparison of the translated text with its original text and it includes both types of thorough revision (the bilingual reading of the translated text and its original) and cross-reading (unilingual reading of the translated text and checking against the source text only if there is something nonsensical). Based on text categories, DGT (2010) also establishes two levels of quality controls, i.e. Level 1 corresponding to a high level of quality control and Level 2 corresponding to a less exacting level of quality control.

Galiano (2016) in the paper entitled "Translation Revision: Fundamental Methodological Aspects and Effectiveness of the EN-15038:2006 for Translation Quality Assurance" first mentions the fundamental methodological aspects to be

taken into account in the revision of translations; namely, the revision principles (revision cost-effectiveness, minimal corrections, and justification for the changes made), the management of human resources (the profile of the translators and revisers), and the instructions for the revision (the revision brief, i.e. the revision type, mode, and procedure) and then considers three controversial aspects regarding translation revision in the EN-15038:2006 standard, i.e. "the definition of the term *revise* and the description of the *revision process*, professional competences and experience of revisers, and the aspects to verify in translation process stages" (Galiano, 2016, pp. 10–12).

Robert (2008) in the paper entitled "Translation Revision Procedures: An Explorative Study," based on the results of a survey conducted among Belgian translation agencies and the review of the literature, identified four translation revision procedures namely, "(1) the reviser reads the TT alone, refers to ST when he thinks there is a problem and makes changes; (2) the reviser compares ST with TT and makes changes; (3) the reviser reads the TT, makes changes, then compares ST with TT, and makes additional changes if necessary; (4) the reviser compares ST with TT, makes changes, he reads the TT and makes additional changes if necessary" (Robert, 2008, p. 20).

According to Robert (2012), the most complete typology of revision parameters is the one proposed by Mossop (2019). This typology consists of fourteen parameters, divided into five categories, Category A - Transfer (accuracy and Completeness), Category B - Content (Logic and Fact), Category C - Language (Smoothness, Tailoring, Sub-language, Idiom, and Mechanics), Category D - Presentation (Layout, Typography, and Organization), Category E – Specifications (Client specifications and Employer Policies). According to Mossop (2019), there are two types (self-revision and other-revision); two procedures (comparative or bilingual re-reading and unilingual or monolingual re-reading) and two levels

(macro-level checking and micro-level checking) of revision. The definition of revision referred to in this paper is the one used by Mossop (2019).

2. Methodology

In order to gather data for this research, two major methods of the participant-oriented research, i.e. conducting a survey to find out the senior translation students' attitudes towards revision, their background knowledge and competence, and the product-oriented research, which consists of preparing a draft translation of dubious quality, asking the students to revise it and then evaluating and marking the students' revised text based on the quantitative grading scheme were used.

2.1. Survey

2.1.1. Participants:

Twenty-eight B.A students majored in Translation studies, who previously hadn't passed the revision course entitled "Writing and Revision" designed in the translator training curriculum in the Iranian universities, volunteered to take part in this survey of whom 17 (60.7%) were male and 11 (39.3%) were female. In order to avoid, any ambiguity, the survey was written in the Persian language.

2.1.2. Design of the Survey:

The survey consisted of a sum of twenty-one questions of which the first part was composed of sixteen questions that inquired about the students' background knowledge and competence of revision and the second part was composed of five questions that assessed the students' attitudes towards revision.

For the first part, the students had to choose an option from a four-point Likert-based scale. Below are the values of the scale:

Hasn't been taught: 1, Mentioned briefly: 2, Has been taught: 3 and Thoroughly explained: 4.

The scale used for the second part of the survey consists of five points based on the Likert scale. The values of this scale are presented below:

Strongly disagree: 1, Disagree: 2, Undecided: 3, Agree: 4, Strongly agree: 5.

To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, the test-retest method was implemented on 12 subjects. Besides, Cronbach's alpha was calculated to be 0.82. (The survey is presented in the Appendix section of this paper).

2.2. Developing the Quantitative grading Scheme and Formula for Calculating Scores
Participants

A total of twenty-eight students took part in the evaluation process from two different universities. Of these students, 19 (65.5%) were female, while 10 (34.5%) were male.

2.2.1. Preparation of the Draft Translation

To evaluate the student's acquisition of revision sub-competences following the revision course, specifically the ability to detect problematic passages and the inability to notice errors, a 437-word chunk of the draft translation of dubious quality in the genre of the marketing previously outsourced to a novice translator was selected and a wide variety of problems such as inaccuracies, additions, and subtractions, illogical, nonsensical errors, punctuation errors, idiom errors, poor sentence connectors, inconsistencies, mistranslations, and errors in the level of language were inserted in the text. While some other problems like cross-references, glossary, hidden text, tags/links, technical procedures, and local market suitability were eliminated to help students focus on the inserted errors.

2.2.2. Distribution of the Draft Translation

The draft translations prepared were distributed in the electronic format via sending e-mails to the volunteer students and they were asked to revise the text on

screen rather than on paper to determine whether students, after passing the revision course, can properly leverage the features of the Microsoft Word Office, in particular the Track Changes and Comment functions in the revising process.

2.2.3. Brief

Before the start of the revision process, the students were given a brief containing such instructions as to who the final users of the translation would be (the users would be the general public so it is important to pay special attention to language and tailoring parameters); what use will be made of the translation (the users are going to make decisions based on the content of the translation whether to buy or not to buy this product, so transfer and content parameters are important in this case); and where the text will be used (this translation text is for publication on the webpage of a high-tech company so the text should be highly readable).

In order to increase the likelihood of finding errors, the students were advised to carry out both the bilingual re-reading of the translation with the focus on the micro-level errors and the unilingual re-reading of the translated text with the focus on the macro-level errors.

2.2.4. Adopting the Quantitative Grading Scheme

The quantitative grading scheme is developed based on Mossop's (2019) fourteen revision parameters (accuracy, completeness, logic, facts, smoothness, tailoring, sub-language, idiom, mechanics, layout, typography, organization, client's specification, and employer's policies) and the three degrees of seriousness of errors (critical, major and minor).

The set of codes to mark the student's revision competence was developed through the combination of the first three common types of revision problems:

Failing to notice the need for a change (Fn); i.e. The changes which are needed but the reviser fails to notice the problematic areas.

Time-wasting (Tw); i.e. The errors which are introduced by the reviser and make the quality of the translation worse, or the inadequate changes made by the reviser; i.e. the reviser has managed to notice the problematic areas but the changes made were not adequate to improve the translation, or the unnecessary retranslation; that is, the translation was fine by the reviser has decided to unnecessarily revise it.

Contributing to quality (Cq); i.e. the translations need to be changed and the reviser adequately made the change and improved the quality (Mossop, 2019).

In addition,

The three degrees of seriousness of errors as follow:

Critical (C); i.e., The errors which not only have a negative impact on the readers' understanding but also have health and safety, finances, the legal consequences for the client.

Major (M); i.e. The errors which lead to misunderstanding of the main point of the message on the part of the readers.

Minor (m); i.e. The errors which are caused due to inattentiveness and don't have serious consequences neither on the readers nor the clients (Mossop, 2019).

2.2.5. Formulas for Calculating the Scores

Three formulas have been developed, based on Mossop's (2019) formula, to calculate the revision competencies of the students based on the above-mentioned three common revision problems:

Score One: Fn ÷ X × 100 (The number of unnoticed errors divided by the number of all errors multiplied by 100)

Score Two: Tw ÷ X × 100 (The number of time-wasting errors divided by the number of all errors multiplied by 100)

Score Three: Cq ÷ X × 100 (The number of contributing to quality errors divided by the number of all errors multiplied by 100.

3. Results and Findings

In this section, the data collected from the survey of twenty-eight students and the results obtained from evaluating the students' revised texts in two different universities are presented.

3.1. Results of the Survey

In order to provide answers to the survey's two main questions; namely, the students' revision background knowledge and competence as well as their attitudes towards revision. The survey was divided into two sections. The first section consisting of sixteen questions designed to provide an answer to the former question and the second part consists of five questions aimed to answer the latter question.

3.1.1. Students' Revision Background knowledge and Competence

This section of the survey which consists of the sixteen questions was also further subdivided into four sub-sections; namely, the knowledge of the basic concepts of revision, the technology aids to revision, the parameters to check during revision, the procedures for quality assessment. In order to better display the result, each set of data has been accompanied by a chart.
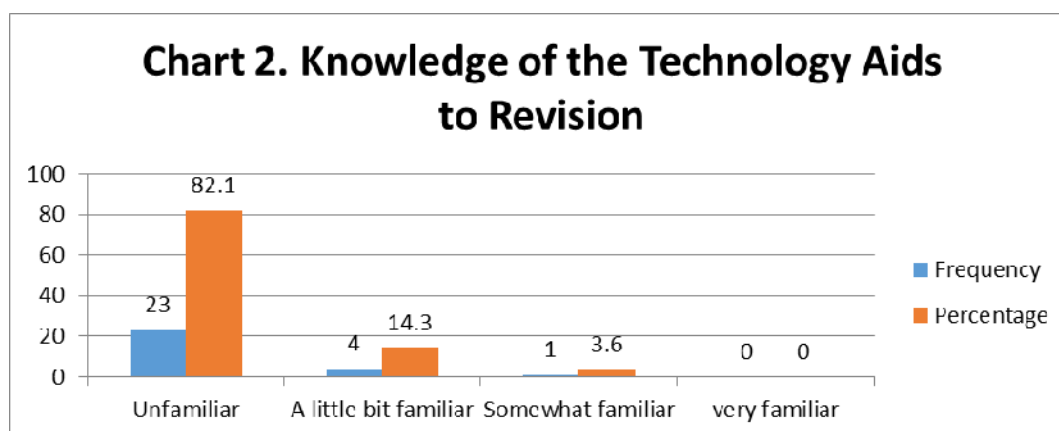
3.1.1.1. Knowledge of Basic Concepts

In order to understand to what extent the students were familiar with the basic concepts of revision, the first four questions of the survey were designed to provide an answer to the above question, and Chart 1 displays the data as follows:

Chart 1. Knowledge of the Basic Concepts
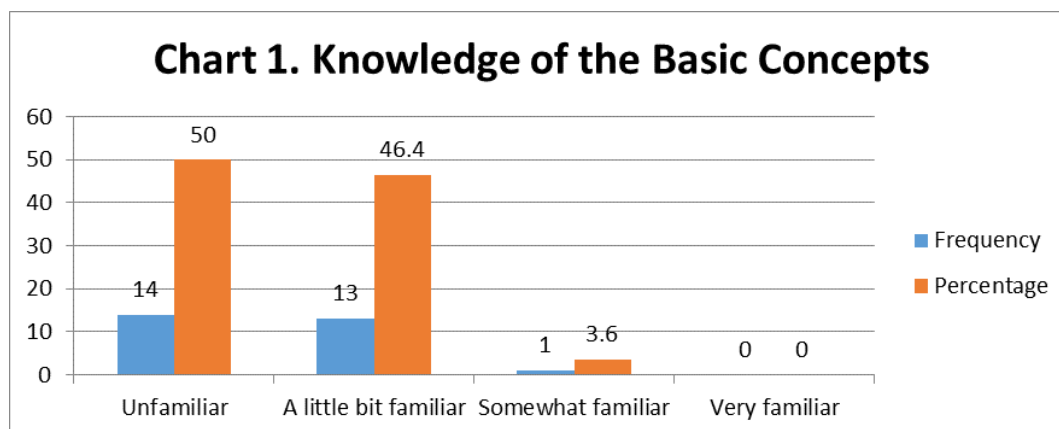
It can be seen from the above chart that half of the students felt that they were unfamiliar with the basic concepts of revision, while no student declared that they were very familiar with these concepts. Similarly, nearly half of the students also stated that they were a little bit familiar.

### 3.1.1.2. Knowledge of the Technology Aids to Revision

In order to understand to what extent the students can leverage the technology aids while revising a text, especially the main features of the Microsoft Word Office; that is, Track Changes and Comment functions, the next four questions of the survey were designed to provide an answer to the above question, and Chart 2 displays the data as follow:

It can be observed from the above chart that the majority of the students (82.1%) felt that they were unfamiliar with the technology aids to revision. Again, the percentage of the students who felt that they were very familiar is 0.0.

### 3.1.1.3. Knowledge of the Parameters to Check during Revision

In order to understand to what extent the students knew which parameters to take into account during revision, the next four questions of the survey were designed to provide an answer to the above question, and Chart 3 displays the data as follows:

Chart 3. Knowledge of the Parameters to Check During Revision
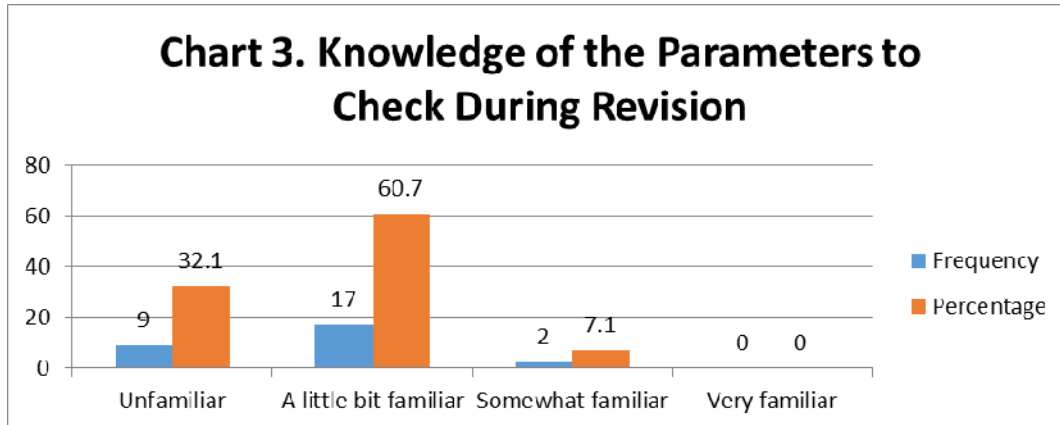
As it can be seen from the above chart, the majority of the students (60.7%) felt that they were a little bit familiar with the types of parameters to take into account while revising, Around 32.1% stated that they were unfamiliar which the parameters; the minority of the students (7.1) stated that they were somewhat familiar with the parameters and unfortunately no student declared that they were very familiar with the parameters.

3.1.1.4. Knowledge of the Procedures for Quality Assessment

In order to understand to what extent the students were familiar with the procedures they should adopt for quality assessment, the next four questions of the survey were designed to provide an answer to the above question, and Chart 4 displays the data as follows:

**Chart 4. Knowledge of the Procedures for Revision**
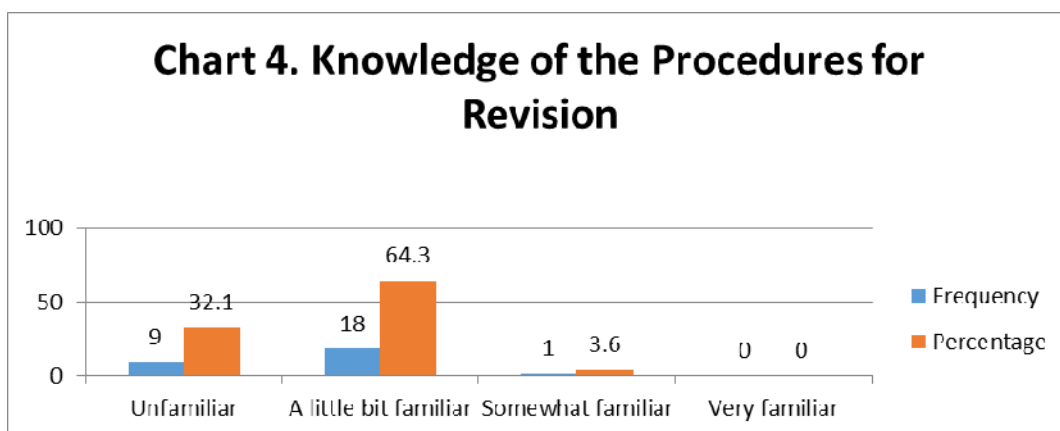
As it can be seen from the above chart, the majority of the students (64.3%) felt that they were a little bit familiar with the procedures they should adopt for revision. Around 32.1% stated that they were unfamiliar with the procedures; the minority of the students (3.6) stated that they were somewhat familiar with the procedures and unfortunately no student declared that they were very familiar with the procedures.

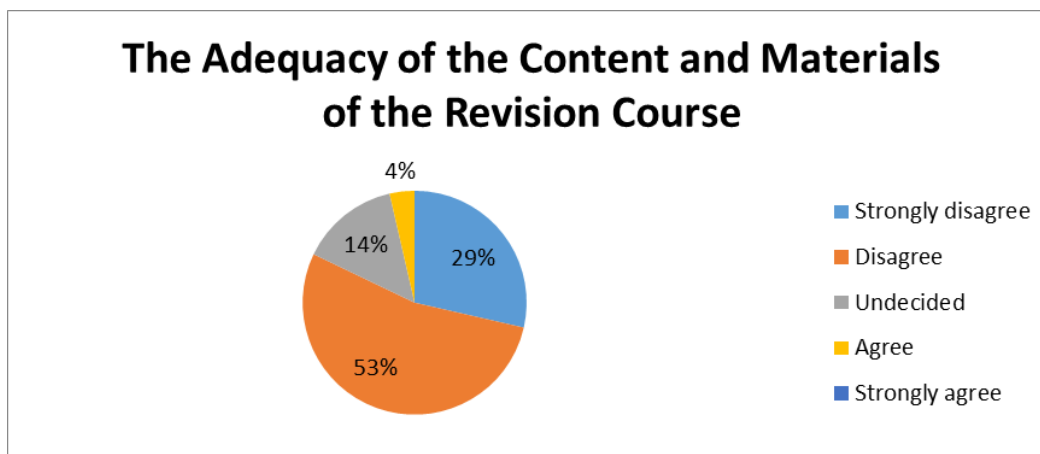### 3.1.2. Students' Attitudes towards Revision

3.1.2.1. The Incorporation of an Effective Revision Course

This section of the survey which consists of five questions was designed to evaluate the students' attitudes towards the incorporation of an effective revision course in the B.A. translator training curriculum and whether they think such incorporation is necessary.
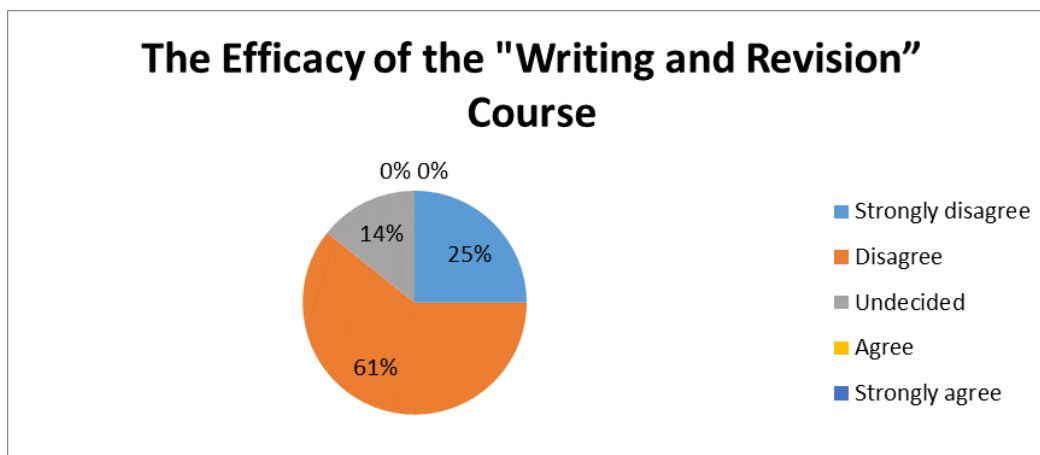
The Incorporation of an Effective Revision Course in the Translator Training Curriculum
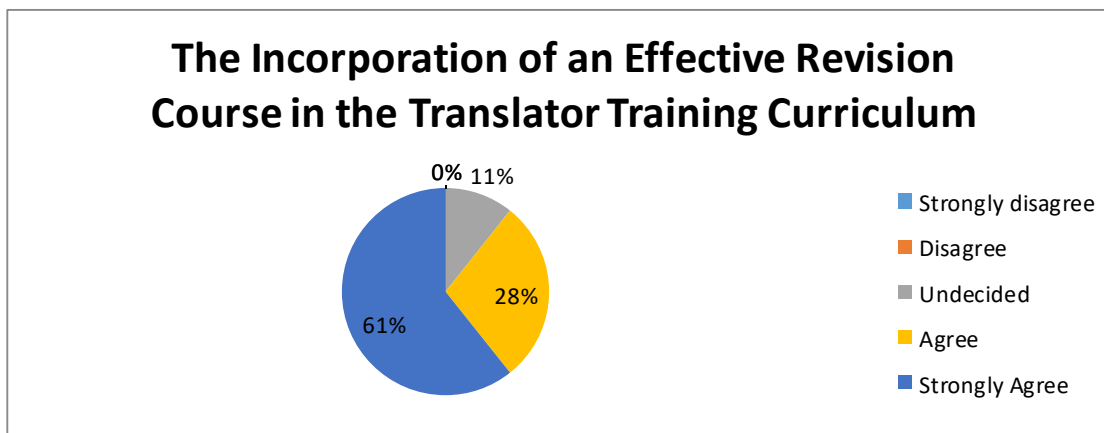
As depicted above, most students (60.7%) agreed with the incorporation of an effective revision course in the B.A. translator training curriculum.

3.1.2.2. The Adequacy of the Contents and Material of the Current Revision Course

The Adequacy of the Content and Materials of the Revision Course

4%
14%
29%
53%

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Agree
- Strongly agree

As depicted above, most students (53.6%) were not satisfied with the adequacy of the contents and materials taught during the current revision course.

3.1.2.3. The "Writing and Revision" Course in the Syllabus was Effective Enough to Acquire Revision Competence

The Efficacy of the "Writing and Revision" Course

0% 0%
14%
25%
61%

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Undecided
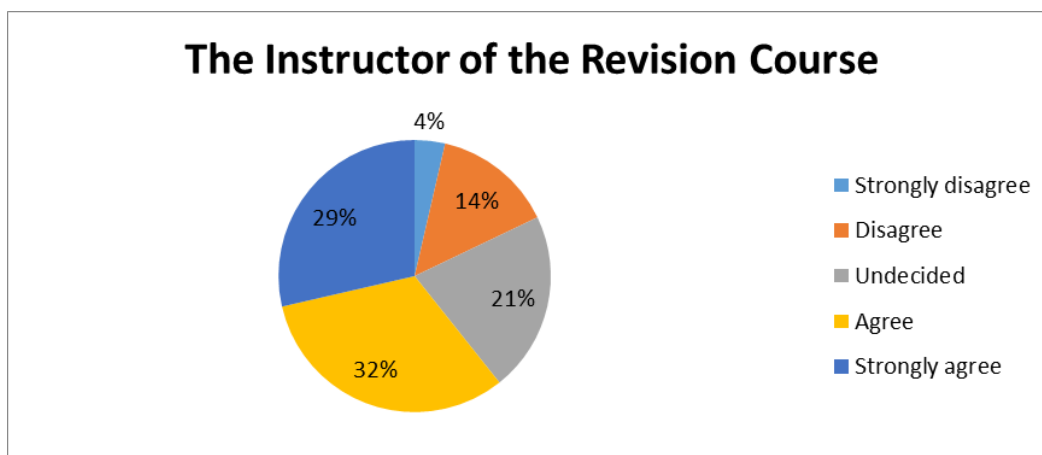- Agree
- Strongly agree

As depicted above, most students (60.7%) were not satisfied with the efficacy of the current "Writing and Revision" course.

3.1.2.4. The Acquisition of the Revision Competence
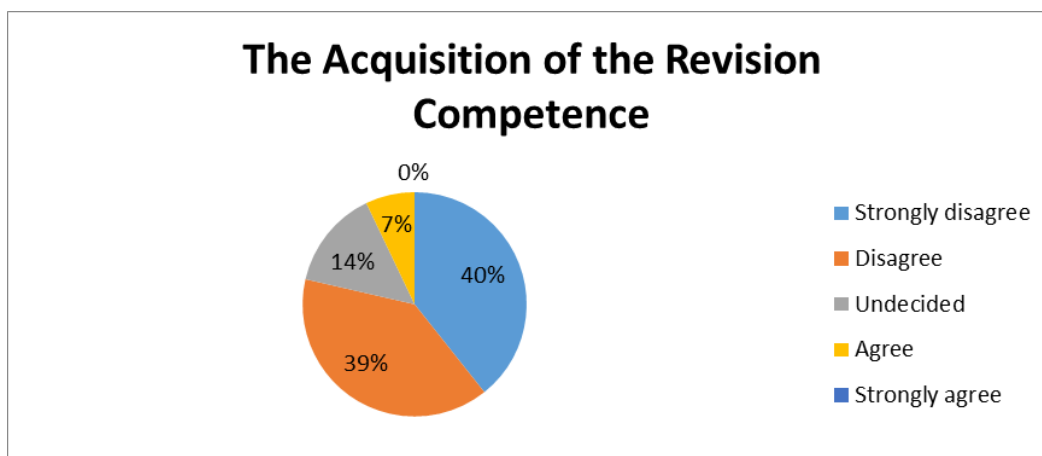
As depicted above, most students (78.6%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the adequacy of the revision competence they acquired so far.

3.1.2.5. The Instructor of the Revision Course

As depicted above, most students (60.7%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the fact that the revision course should be taught by a professor who is an expert in the field of translation, rather than a Persian language professor.

3.2. Evaluating the Students' Revision Competence Acquisition Using the Grading Scheme and the Formula

For evaluating students' revision competence acquisition, following taking the "Writing and Revision" course, first a 437-word chunk of the draft translations

of dubious quality in the genre of the marketing containing thirty-seven errors were sent to the e-mails of twenty-eight volunteered students and they were asked to revise the text on screen using the Track Changes and Comment functions of the Microsoft Word Office.

After the students sent back the revised texts, the researchers first went through each text and evaluated the students' revision efforts using the codes as outlined in the table below:

Types of changes	Definition
FnC errors	Failing to notice the need for the change of a Critical error.
TwC errors	The translation was fine but the unnecessary change resulted in a Critical error.
CqC changes	There was a critical error and the reviser adequately improves the translation.
FnM errors	Failing to notice the need for the change of a Major error.
TwM errors	The translation was fine but the unnecessary change resulted in a Major error.
CqM changes	There was a Major error and the reviser adequately improves the translation.
Fnm errors	Failing to notice the need for the change of a Minor error.
Twm errors	The translation was fine but the unnecessary change resulted in a Minor error.
Cqm changes	There was a Minor error and the reviser adequately improves the translation.

Once the texts have been properly coded by the researchers, the coded texts were used to calculate the students' grades using the three formulas as mentioned below:

**Score One**: Fn ÷ X × 100 (The number of unnoticed errors divided by the number of all errors multiplied by 100)

Score Two: Tw ÷ X × 100 (The number of time-wasting errors divided by the number of all errors multiplied by 100)

Score Three: Cq ÷ X × 100 (The number of contributing to quality errors divided by the number of all errors multiplied by 100

In the following, the average scores of these twenty-eight students were calculated using the codes and formulas and displayed along below chart:

Average Number of Each Type of Changes	Formula	Score
Average Number of the FnC errors: (2)	FnC ÷ X × 100	6.06
Average Number of the TwC errors: (5)	TwC ÷ X × 100	15.15
Average Number of the CqC changes: (3)	CqC ÷ X × 100	9.09
Average Number of the FnM errors: (7)	FnM ÷ X × 100	21.21
Average Number of the TwM errors: (14)	TwM ÷ X × 100	42.42
Average Number of the CqM changes: (6)	CqM ÷ X × 100	18.18
Average Number of the Fnm errors: (11)	Fnm ÷ X × 100	33.33
Average Number of the Twm errors: (8)	Twm ÷ X × 100	24.24
Average Number of the Cqm changes: (2)	Cqm÷ X × 100	6.06

The above data are also presented in the below chart.
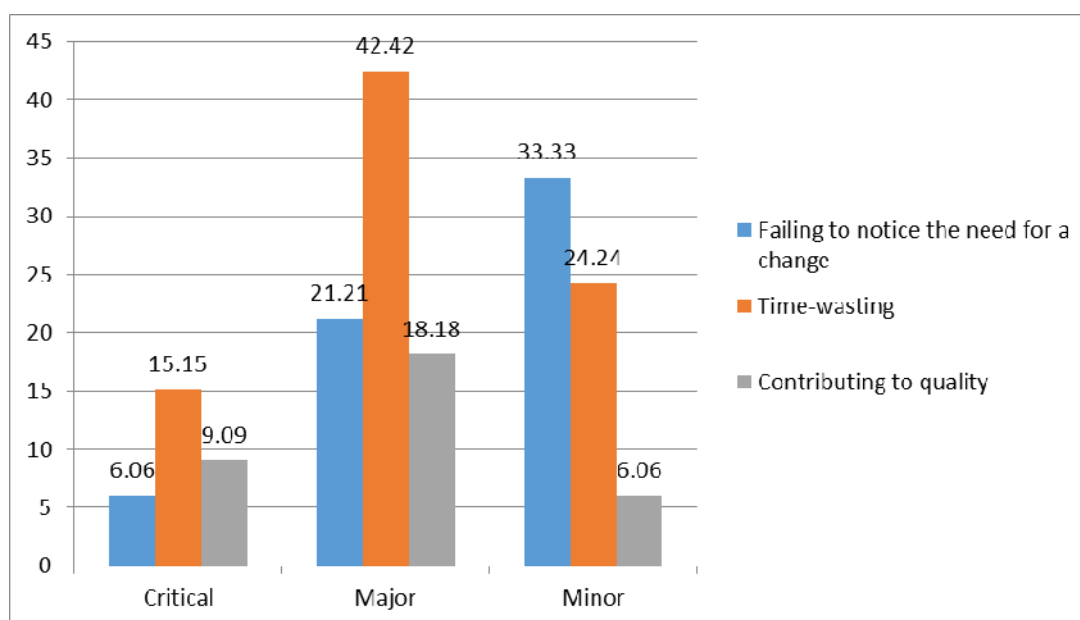
As it can be seen from both the Table and the Chart, more than eighty percent (81.81%) of the students' effort during revision was devoted to making time-wasting changes and the general tendency among the students was to improve the quality by re-translating the whole sentences or phrases rather than improving the quality by making small changes. Also, as the data indicates, around 60.6% of errors were never detected by the reviser which is a high percentage and only

33.33% of the changes made by the students contributed to the overall quality of the translation which is considerably low in comparison with the former figures.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

As the data collected from the survey of the students studying at the University of Isfahan and the Sheikh Bahaei University indicated, almost all students felt the need for the inclusion of an effective revision course in the B.A. translator training curriculum as the majority of them stated that the contents and materials taught during the current revision course "Writing and Revision" do not adequately meet their needs.

4. 1. The Reasons for Ineffectiveness of the Revision Course

In the survey which was carried out, prior to taking the revision course, all students did recall that their instructors telling them how important it is to revise their translations but they didn't recall that their instructors advised them how they should go about the task of revising their own or other people's translation. According to the students' statements, they have never learned the procedures and parameters for carrying out an effective revision.

In addition, as the results of the evaluation of student's revision competence acquisition indicated, the students either over-revised the draft translation by re-translating the sentences, i.e. making many time-wasting changes or under-revised it by failing to detect the problematic areas in the translation that needed some changes. That is to say, the current revision course presented has not managed to equip the students with the sub-competences required of a linguist in the translation market to provide the revision service but why is that so?

The contents and resources taught at the revision course train students to become the "language guardians" (Mossop, 2019). That is, they mainly teach the students the causes of the content and transfer errors like calques, borrowings, and false friends, etc. and the instructor who is a professor of the Persian language asks

translation students to identify the causes of the errors and guard against the unidiomatic transference from the source language, which is mostly the English language, to the target language, which is mostly the Persian language.

However, there are points in the translation where calques of the source language terms and expressions are quite fine, perhaps the only choice the translator may have. In addition, in the translation industry, the reviser should be able to identify the types of the error rather than the causes of the errors. Furthermore, as the result of the survey indicated around 82.1% of the students were unfamiliar with how to leverage the features of the Microsoft Word Office into the revision process. In other words, the results of this study, which investigated the revision sub-competences of twenty-eight translation students in two major universities of Isfahan province, indicated that there was a discrepancy between the materials taught at the current revision course and the sub-competences required of the reviser at the translation market.

4.2. Recommendations for Tailoring the Revision Course to the Requirements of the Industry

In today's translation market, the role of the revision task is even more important than the role of the translation task. Indeed, many translators nowadays translate by revising as translations are more commonly generated by the computer, in particular the Translation Memory and Machine Translation (Mossop, 2019). Having said so, learning to leverage the features of Microsoft Word Office for revision is just the minimum knowledge students should be equipped with. That is, in order to operate smoothly in the translation market, students should learn how to revise the computer-generated translations.

In addition to the usage of the technology in the translation process, students should learn the different procedures (monolingual or bilingual/comparative re-reading) for carrying out the revision task, the different parameters (accuracy, completeness, smoothness, tailoring, and client specifications) they should take into

account while revising texts of different types, and the different degrees of revision (full or partial check) that should be applied to texts of low, medium and high risk.

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آموزش ویرایش و کسب مهارت‌های ویرایشی در دانشگاه‌های ایران: مطالعۀ اکتشافی[1]

احمد کبیری[2] و مرضیه ایزدی[3]

چکیده

ویرایش جزء جدایی‌ناپذیر جریان کار ترجمه در این صنعت محسوب می‌شود، با این وجود تعریف دقیقی از آن ارائه نشده است و نقش آن در آموزش مترجم به حاشیه رانده شده است (رابرت، ۲۰۰۸). اهداف این مقاله به چهار بخش تقسیم شده است. بخش اول شامل انجام نظرسنجی به منظور بررسی دیدگاه‌ها، مهارت‌ها و دانش پس‌زمینۀ دانشجویان پیش از شروع دورۀ ویرایش است. در بخش دوم، یک مدل کمّی برای نمره‌دهی به متون ویرایش‌شدۀ دانشجویان و ارزیابی آن‌ها، براساس فرمول موسوپ (۲۰۱۹)، طراحی شده است و مهارت‌های ویرایشی دانشجویان، پس از اتمام دورۀ فوق‌الذکر، سنجیده شده است. بخش سوم شامل بحث در مورد اثربخشی منابع و روش‌های آموزشی مورد استفاده در دروۀ ویرایش در دانشگاه‌های ایران و تأثیر آن‌ها در فراگیری مهارت‌های ویرایشی توسط دانشجویان است و بخش چهارم به بیان نقطه‌نظرات و پیشنهادهایی در مورد متناسب‌سازی دورۀ ویرایش با نیازهای واقعی مترجمان حرفه‌ای در محیط‌کاری ترجمه پرداخته است.

واژه‌های راهنما: ویرایش، کسب مهارت‌های ویرایشی، آموزش مترجم

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