

On the Relationship Between University Translator Training Programs and the Translation Market Requirements: The Case of English Translation Graduates and Postgraduates of Imam Reza International University

Shahrzad Kazemi Jovein

Imam Reza International University, Mashhad, Iran

Ebrahim Davoudi Sharifabad (Corresponding Author)

Baqir al- Olum University, Qom, Iran

Email: e.davoudi@bou.ac.ir

Mohammad Yazdani

Imam Reza International University, Mashhad, Iran

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Abstract

The training of specialized human resources and the utilization of their expertise represent the primary concerns of universities and the higher education system. The efficacy of translator training programs has been increasingly scrutinized, with a particular emphasis on the explicit delineation of the link between their curricula and the market in which their graduates are ultimately employed. The objective of the present study was to ascertain the relationship between the university translator training programs at Imam Reza International University and the requirements of the translation market, with specific focus on the occupational status of translation graduates, and their attitudes towards the academic training, over the past 20 years. The study was mixed-methods with the online survey completed by 100 graduates by convenience sampling technique. Subsequently, through a snowballing approach, 23 graduates were selected for the semi-structured interview. Data analysis was performed in SPSS version 27; then, the data of interviews were analyzed based on the grounded theory in MAXQDA version 2020. The findings suggest that the majority of graduates perceive themselves to be inadequately prepared to enter the workforce. This sentiment is attributed to the absence of practical coursework, including innovative translation techniques and marketing skills aligned with the demands of the contemporary translation industry. So, there is a need for greater interaction between training and the market. The findings also indicated that modern translation technology and updated resources are not used to meet the market's need. Inviting employers and entrepreneurs to talk in the classes, holding specialized workshops, and having work placement components in the curriculum can be effective in creating a foundation for students' subsequent employment.

Keywords: Employability, English Translation Graduates, Translation Market Requirements, Translator Training Programs

1. Introduction

In recent years, the expansion of higher education institutions and universities has increased the number of graduates in most fields. To attract graduates to the job market, the universities need to identify the job market conditions and coordinate their training and curriculum programs based on them. (Momeni et al., 2011). Furthermore, higher education institutions and universities should be responsive to the future of graduates and the high costs that are spent on students each year, as well as it must be clear what are the beneficial results of training programs for the community (Bigdeli et al., 2012). Translation studies is one of the disciplines that universities have designed and provided many training programs around the world, in order to teach experts who can carry out language services, such as translation, interpreting, audiovisual translation, editing, adaptation, localization, and so forth (Ketabi et al., 2019). Moreover, translation studies are an academic discipline in which higher education institutions and universities have long-term training programs at BA or MA levels in order to teach professional translators around the world (Pym, 2009). As a matter of fact, few studies which have been done about the employment of translation graduates show that most graduates do not work as a translator or interpreter (Schmitt et al., 2016; Torres-Hostench, 2012; Toudic, 2017a; 2017b), thus, this vital problem can be due to the inefficiency in translator training programs in universities. Thus, "translator training programs should be under the needs of the society and market" (Esfandiari, 2015, p.25). The translator training programs in Iran "has failed to fulfill its goals in fully equipping trainees with determining skills and competencies demanded to work as translators and intercultural mediators in the labor market" (Khoshsaligheh et al., 2019, p.17). In the global translation industry and the significant role of the Persian-speaking community in it, the shortage of job opportunities is not the reason for the low income of the average translator. However, the inefficiency of the training programs in universities can be a reason that English and Persian translation graduates have not yet been able to achieve a suitable job (Khoshsaligheh et al., 2019). Imam Reza International University is one of the non-profit universities in Mashhad City, Iran, which has provided translation studies discipline at BA and MA levels in English-Persian language pair. The translation department was established at this university in early 2001, and MA level was offered in 2014. Given the relatively long history of translator training at this university and the absence of any documentation pertaining to the graduates of the English language translation program, the study attempted to determine the occupational status of translation graduates and to examine their attitudes towards the academic training they had received. Furthermore, the study examined the current state of the translation industry and profession in order to facilitate discussion of these practices with respect to market needs. The study focused on developing employability skills, teaching professional attributes, and any potential dichotomy between translation theory and practice related to training and the market.

2. Literature Review

Institutionalized translator training programs began to be established in many Western and Eastern European countries and the US in the early 1930s. These programs are certificates and vocational diplomas or undergraduate and graduate degrees. After that, "a number of political, economic and social changes were behind the growing need for translation services and led to the creation of independent translator training programs" (Al-Batineh & Billali, 2017, p.3). One kind of translator training program is long-term training offered by institutions and universities at BA or MA levels, which is a relatively recent phenomenon. (Pym, 2009). Since the 1990s, there have been many strong arguments for moving translator training away from general modern-language programs. This phenomenon occurs independent programs for the training of translators and interpreters in many cases. The long-term training programs can be pretty rich and diverse offering training in "computer skills, new technologies, business skills, a range of specialized translation areas, translation theory, perhaps translation history, and general humanistic courses available in the institutions that the ideal product of these programs would be a professional with a very rich skill set" (Pym, 2009, p.3). On the other hand, independent Masters-level programs can be more focused on the skills used by translators and interpreters with specific market niches or skill sets like literary and audiovisual translation or localization. Esfandiari (2015) suggested that translation instructors should use modern educational approaches to learning and knowledge acquisition based on their curriculum.

Translator training in Iranian universities suffers from many issues, such as the lack of specialized university instructors' translation with sufficient experience, and not having even translated a text. Furthermore, current translator training programs have been purely theoretical and students need to meet the current market demands professionally otherwise theoretical knowledge (Payandeh, 2015). According to Miremadi (2003), the translation graduates have not been the creators of notable works. Perhaps part of this failure may be attributed to the limitations of choosing a field of interest to enter the university in Iran, or even to blame the teaching method. Although there have been many years that translator training courses in Iran have been offered in higher education institutions. However, after many decades, there have been numerous professional translators among the graduates of these courses (Khoshsaligheh, 2014). Translator training has been receiving critical comments for several reasons, such as the syllabus and curricular design in Iran. It seems to "require an update to keep up with the varying dynamicity of the market demands". In Iranian higher education, two competencies in language and linguistics are critical for a prospective professional translator could use; also, in such a degree program, translation sum up what is eventually offered to the trainees to learn and acquire (Khazaeefar & Khoshsaligheh, 2010, p.137).

Today, there has been a substantial increase in the demand for professional translation services. The English language is a source language for translation most of the time, and many languages remain particularly strong for industry demands (Estela,

2013). As a result, the translation service market is growing in importance. Around 250,000 people are working in the global translation industry, and some sources estimate there are 300,000 translators worldwide (Gouadec, 2007). The companies make their services available through the Internet, and the need for the translation of websites and web content has grown. Businesses seek translation services in order to serve their customers and keep up with their demands, and individuals also use of service (Estimate, 2020). Although the translation market is a very fragmented market, it is a fact that the translation market is not heavily affected by the recession (Estela, 2013). However, most people believe that the translation market is turbulent and the translation quality is poor. Furthermore, the number of competent translators who can do a proper translation in terms of quality, speed, and price is minimal (Chan, 2013). The translation industry is facing risks. Over of four decades, the translation sector has gone through regular shifts of adaptation instigated by changes in the business and technological environment, and technology essentially takes over completely. The need for human translators is decreasing in the process when Google and Microsoft claim that their MT machine translation can be translated as well as human professional translators. However, this has led to heated debates both in academic and professional circles about what this so-called human parity really means (Meer, 2021). In similar, the translation market expects translators “to have a broad knowledge of the subject matter of the text, to use a large number of computer tools proficiently, and to be versatile in the sense that they can ultimately thrive collectively as members of a profession (Aula.int, 2005). Moreover, there is a clear shift from a focus on projects to a focus on clients. “A comprehensive understanding of the individual needs of customers is crucial – as is customer-oriented project management and the expectation of tailored services for a hugely diverse spectrum of requirements. Quality is also hugely important” (Tolingo, 2020).

It has an ancient historical translation in the land of Iran so Azarang (2014) believes that the unwritten translation in Iran probably dates back to the time of the arrival of the Aryayian. However, translation has undergone essential changes that have been influenced by political and cultural changes in the country, such as the Constitutional Movement and the Islamic Revolution. The concept of the translation industry in Iran began in 1389/2010 by the first companion of translation activists in Iran. This created a suitable ground for the development and expansion of theoretical and practical foundations and more attention to this industry. Arbabi (2012) claimed that the translation industry is triangular that consists of the university as a translator trainer, a translation institution as an organizer of the translation force and a provider of translation services, and the translation market. Now, the country's translation industry is facing problems at the level of governance, such as the lack of coherent vision and lack of managerial focus and, parallel work (Baradaran & Arbabi, 2015). In this study, attempts were made to answer the following research question:

RQ1: How and in what ways can significant gaps between the translation market requirements on the one hand and the translator training approach on the other hand be bridged at Imam Reza International University?

3. Methodology

The study defines the approaches used and then outlines the participants, strategy, and data collection methods selection of the sample and it presents how the data collection was analyzed.

3.1. Design

The current study adopted the descriptive, applied, and correlation analytical approach. The methodology applied in this study is a mixed-methods approach, including both quantitative and qualitative methods.

3.2. Participants

The study sample comprised graduates holding a translation bachelor's or master's degree from Imam Reza International University, located in Mashhad City, Iran, between 2001 and 2023. The sample size of the study was determined by using the Krejcie's and Morgan (1970) table. They were selected through convenience sampling technique. Subsequently, the researcher was held interviews with graduates, who did not complete the questionnaire, with using a snowballing approach after an online questionnaire survey.

3.3. Instrument

Based on the nature and objectives of the study, an online questionnaire survey should be used as an appropriate instrument for the quantitative part. The survey items were chosen from these researches (Rezvani et al., 1389; Hao & Pym, 2022; Torres-Hostench, 2012; Olalla-Soler, 2019; Yilmaz-Gumus, 2013) with some modifications to match the research questions. The language of the survey was Persian. It was validated by expert opinions. A semi-structured interview was developed for the qualitative part of the study. The interview, based on (Yilmaz-Gumus, 2013) with some modifications and it was validated by expert opinions, like the survey.

3.4. Procedure

The online questionnaire survey was translated, localized, and applied to the Porsline Website. In the next step, the head of the translation department submitted a formal request to the director of security, seeking authorization to access the information pertaining to the graduates of the translation program. Following the requisite approvals from the administrative staff of the university, the translation graduates were contacted via SMS to be informed of the researcher's intention. After that, the interview was held with graduates from those who did not respond to the questionnaire survey. All the interview data were collected online through social media.

3.5. Method of Data Analysis

The questionnaire survey was coded, examined, and analyzed to determine the mean, frequency, and percentage of each item in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) version 27 to analyze the data. The means, standard deviation, and effects were measured by Chi-square tests. Moreover, the interview data were transcribed and analyzed in MAXQDA Software version 2020. To analyze the data, grounded theory procedure (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was employed to achieve an emerging theory.

4. Results

The study provides the results of the survey and the semi-structured interview of graduates from the translation programs at Imam Reza International University.

4.1. Findings of the Online Questionnaire Survey

For the online questionnaire survey, the researcher received a total of 100 complete responses from the graduates. The majority of the respondents were female (69%), and others were male (31%). About in which year the graduates received their BA or MA degree in translation from Imam Reza International University, the respondents were divided into periods of five years by their graduation year. Therefore, most of them (52%) graduated between 2019 to 2023, (34%) graduated between 2013 to 2017, (9%) graduated between 2007 to 2011, and (5%) graduated between 2001 to 2006. Among the participants, most (70%) were employed and others (30%) were unemployed. Furthermore, the job of more than half of them (56.2%) were related to language services and others (43.8%) were not. In this regard, the questions were included in the survey with the aim of providing some valuable insights into the efficiency of the academic training of the Department of Translation at Imam Reza International University. At first, the respondents were asked how often the curricular components were dealt with (taught or practiced) during their study in translation. The response choices on a five-point scale ranged from dealt with constantly to not dealt with (see Table 1).

Table 1. How Often Course Components Were Dealt with In the Training Based on the Respondents

Components	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
Communication skills in A language	16	24	30	22	8
Communication skills in B language	4	17	33	33	13
Discourse analysis and pragmatics	7	33	35	18	7
Intercultural communication/cultural issues	6	35	34	20	5
Knowledge of linguistics	2	11	41	33	13
Professional work procedures and professional ethics	16	28	37	10	9
Research techniques	3	19	28	38	12
Specific field knowledge	4	28	34	25	9
Terminology management	5	15	35	32	13
Text analysis	3	13	25	47	12
Translation criticism	3	21	30	36	10
Translation history	8	26	31	23	12
Translation practice	2	12	29	37	20
Translation technology	6	27	40	20	7

Translation theory	7	6	27	40	20
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The next question asked the respondents to rate the importance of the same components for their current professional work as a translator. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Importance of Course Components for Professional Work as A Translator Based on the Respondents

Components	Not important	Rarely important	Occasionally important	Fairly important	Extremely important
Communication skills in A language	0	0	5	19	76
Communication skills in B language	0	0	8	18	74
Discourse analysis and pragmatics	0	2	18	38	42
Intercultural communication/cultural issues	0	2	13	23	62
Knowledge of linguistics	2	8	17	31	42
Professional work procedures and professional ethics	0	6	19	26	49
Research techniques	5	16	30	24	25
Specific field knowledge	0	2	14	25	59
Terminology management	1	2	9	27	61
Text analysis	0	3	15	22	60
Translation criticism	4	16	25	22	33
Translation history	19	36	25	16	4
Translation practice	0	4	8	6	82
Translation technology	1	6	12	20	61
Translation theory	13	25	30	19	13

The respondents were asked how well their academic training prepared them for their professional work as translators. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. How Academic Training Well Prepared for Professional Work Based on the Respondents

Preparation	Frequency	Percent
Very badly	14	14
Badly	13	13
Only basic preparation	44	44
Fairly well	24	24
Extremely well	5	5

Thereupon, the relationship between sex variable and how well did your academic training prepared for your professional work as a translator index is provided below.

Table 4. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.790 ^a	4	.594
N of Valid Cases	100		

Table 5. Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by ordinal	Gamma	.010	.168	.062	.951
	Spearman correlation	.006	.102	.063	.950 ^c
Internal by internal	Pearson's R	.024	.103	.236	.814 ^c
N of Valid Cases		100			

The results of the chi-square independence tests ($\chi^2=2.79$) indicate that the significance level of the test is greater than 0.05 (sig=0.59), suggesting that there is no statistically significant relationship between sex and professional preparation of students through academic training.

Next, the relationship between age group variable and how well did your academic training prepared for your professional work as a translator index is provided below.

Table 6. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	35.649 ^a	16	.003
Likelihood ratio	24.926	16	.071
Linear-by-Linear association	.407	1	.524
N of Valid Cases	100		

Note: a. 18 cells (72.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .05.

Table 7. Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by ordinal	Gamma	.093	.130	.710	.477
	Spearman correlation	.070	.100	.698	.487 ^c
Internal by internal	Pearson's R	.064	.116	.636	.526 ^c

N of Valid Cases	100
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Note: a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.
 b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.
 c. Based on normal approximation.

The results of the chi-square independence tests ($\chi^2=35.64$) indicate that the significance level of the test is less than 0.05 (sig=0.003), thereby demonstrating a statistically significant relationship between the age group and the professional preparation of students through academic training. Thus, in younger age groups, fundamental preparation has been completed.

Last, the relationship between graduation year variable and how well did your academic training prepared for your professional work as a translator index is provided below.

Table 8. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.668 ^a	12	.473
Likelihood ratio	12.383	12	.415
Linear-by-Linear association	2.021	1	.155
N of Valid Cases	100		

Table 9. Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by ordinal	Gamma	-.205	.135	-1.523	.128
	Spearman correlation	-.156	.103	-1.560	.122 ^c
Internal by internal	Pearson's R	-.143	.102	-1.429	.156 ^c

N of Valid Cases	100
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The chi-square independence test ($\chi^2=11.66$) indicates that the significance level of the test is greater than 0.05 (sig=0.473), suggesting that there is no statistically significant relationship between graduation year and professional preparation through academic education.

In the following, there was an open-ended question about the existence of forms of interaction with the translation market in the training program they had undergone. All graduates indicated that there was no interaction in general, and thus 31 graduates provided commentary on these matters. The comments are reported below in three main areas: (1) Trainers are reluctant to use new training materials in line with the translation market. (2) There is no focus on learning about the profession rather than teaching theories. (3) Training programs do not introduce students to the job market. It also was asked about the desirability of the forms of interaction in future training practices. The results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. How Desirable the Forms of Interaction Between Training and The Market Based on the Respondents

Interaction	Highly undesirable	Undesirable	Indifferent	Desirable	Highly desirable
Academics translating professionally on the market	5	2	15	38	40
Employing professional translators as academic staff	3	2	7	40	48
Using real-world texts for translation teaching activities	1	5	22	27	45

Using real-world texts for assessment activities	1	5	22	27	45
Using electronic tools in translation teaching	2	4	8	42	44
Work placement components in the curriculum	1	2	14	36	47
Inviting people from the profession to talk in the classroom	1	1	8	27	63
Organizing educational activities in collaboration with professional bodies	2	3	7	32	56

In the last question, the graduates had to decide if they wanted to continue their studies in the future, they would choose the translation again. All of them replied, and the answers are shown in Table 4.11.

Table 11. Contribution Of Choosing the Translation Again for Further Study Based on the Respondents

Item	Frequency	Percent
Much lower	33	33
Lower	20	20
About the same	13	13
Higher	13	13
Much higher	21	21

4.2. Findings of the Semi-structure Interview

In this paper, the semi-structured interviews were carried out with 23 graduates of university translator training programs in both genders. The 22 graduates were female and one of them was male. Of the 23 graduates, 15 were currently employed in the field of language services, while the remaining eight were unemployed. The majority of graduates from university translator training programs were currently employed as foreign language teachers at the secondary education level or in academic institutions. The remaining individuals were freelancers and work from their own residences. In this regard, the graduates were asked about the difficulties and challenges encountered in the role of translator in Iran.

Consequently, the graduates were able to articulate the issues they face and to identify solutions to address them. A significant topic addressed by all interviewees was the economic challenges and limited income associated with translation work, which often does not provide a sufficient livelihood. In this regard, the first interviewee (I1) emphasized that translation is a time-consuming endeavor that requires significant energy expenditure, yet offers no financial compensation. This issue had the effect of reducing the motivation of the translators, who consequently require a greater investment of time to complete the translation process. Consequently, when they invest less precision and time in translation, their efficiency was also adversely affected. One graduate (I8), who was a freelance translator on a website, asserted that the low cost is a consequence of the high workload. In some instances, clients have been known to withhold payment due to the use of machine translation, despite the fact that the translation method remains consistent across all texts.

Similarly, based on the responses of eight of the interviewees, it can be posited that a significant proportion of individuals with an average knowledge of a foreign language, such as English, are engaged in the role of in-house or freelance translators, with expertise in unrelated disciplines. Furthermore, the fourth interviewee (I4) asserted that there is no distinction between an individual who is merely proficient in English and one who has undergone academic training in translation. This assertion has the potential to limit the opportunities available to translation graduates. The twenty-third graduate (I23) claimed that the market is not homogeneous. Some individuals equate low prices with poor quality, leading clients to perceive the translation as of inferior quality and to question the reasonableness of the price. Another crucial issue highlighted by interviewees is the absence of an official translation guild that provides financial and moral support to translators at the governmental level.

The following section presents findings regarding the translation job market in Iran. In particular, it explores the extent of competition and the interplay between different labor forces among recent graduates. Some respondents indicated a lack of awareness, while others offered divergent perspectives. In the view of five interviewees, the translation market is characterized by intense competition. Similarly, I19 stated that, given the considerable number of individuals employed in the field and the

prevalence of professionals, competition is intense. Conversely, the seventeenth interviewee (I17) asserted that numerous individuals lacking academic qualifications receive diminished compensation for translation projects, thereby undermining the standing of professionals. Furthermore, I4 posited that “competition in the translation market is more prevalent in the freelance sector, as employers typically entrust their translation projects to freelance translators due to the lower wages and greater accessibility associated with this model”.

In a separate report, two respondents indicated that there is a significant amount of unfair competition due to the involvement of irrelevant individuals and the saturation of the market with translators. In terms of economics, one of the graduates (I20) highlighted that the discrepancy in pricing and the absence of a fixed price point contribute to a highly competitive market. Conversely, the appeal of official translators is also competitive due to the scarcity of opportunities and the dearth of requests for translators, as observed by the fourth interviewee (I4). The sixteenth interviewee, I16, indicated that competition is more prevalent in the domain of English-to-Persian translation. Conversely, three interviewees asserted that no competition exists within the translation market.

The subsequent section elucidated which region is more economically advantageous in the domain of translation, as determined by the graduates' assessments. Of the twenty-three individuals who were interviewed, seventeen provided comments, while the remaining individuals did not possess the requisite information. Consequently, eight of the interviewees asserted that translation documents represent the most prosperous area. Secondly, the translation of general topics, academic and scientific articles required by professors and students is a popular field of work. Similarly, the quality of translations from Persian into English is superior to that of translations from English into Persian. Furthermore, the interpretation is a more prosperous avenue of enquiry, given that it yields a higher income and is more complex than the other approaches. Moreover, the field of interpretation is economically advantageous, with higher income potential and a more intricate structure than other areas of specialization. Additionally, the translation of contemporary and widely read literature, such as works on psychology, is encouraged, particularly by those engaged in the translation process and the subsequent dissemination of these translated works on social media platforms. Two interviewees had indicated that they specialize in the translation of contracts for business entities. Only two respondents indicated that media translation, such as subtitling and website localization, is a lucrative field.

One of the primary concerns addressed in this study is the relationship between translator training programs and the translation marketplace. In this regard, the interviewees were asked as to whether the translator training programs had an impact on their professional work, as well as the knowledge gained from the training programs and their current activities within the translation market. Additionally, the graduates were asked regarding the optimal forms of interaction and the most beneficial training materials for preparing students for the market. The discrepancy between training programs and the market was a prominent topic in the interviews, with all participants discussing the importance of integrating theoretical and practical aspects in translator training. Half of the respondents asserted that theoretical instruction is essential for translator training and that a comprehensive understanding of theory is a key differentiating factor between translation graduates and other translators in the market. I1 highlighted the necessity of integrating theoretical knowledge with practical application, emphasizing the importance of not merely memorizing theory without utilizing it in professional contexts. Similarly, the second interviewee (I2) asserted that “in the classroom, there is a considerable focus on theoretical subjects, which precludes the possibility of making them applicable to students in practice. To illustrate, in the future, when an individual performs a translation and the client requests justification for that translation with respect to a particular phrase or sentence, they can elucidate their methodology using the theoretical frameworks they have acquired”.

As indicated by I3 and I9, a considerable number of theoretical subjects are not applicable in practical settings and are not kept up to date. Additionally, ten interviewees observed that the instruction is perfunctory and the emphasis is on theoretical knowledge without sufficient depth. Moreover, the requisite skills are not imparted, and there is a paucity of courses dedicated to their acquisition. In response to this question, all of the interviewees provided their opinion on the proportion of theoretical and practical content in the curriculum, indicating which would be more beneficial for their future careers. In general, the majority of respondents indicated that practical courses should receive greater attention than theoretical ones (60% practical, 40% theoretical). As posited by I6, the typical student's approach to the learning process is one of passive reception and memorization, with a subsequent decline in retention. Students are required to translate a considerable number of texts and to undertake self-assessment at the university level until they graduate. It is unlikely that they would experience stress when encountering a text and translating it. Moreover, ninth-year graduates asserted that a theoretical foundation at the postgraduate level, coupled with a focus on practical application at the undergraduate level, would be more beneficial. Four graduates indicated that the practical is 70 and the theoretical is 30. One respondent, I22, asserted that 90% of the curriculum should be devoted to practical training. A mere five of the respondents indicated a preference for an equal emphasis on practice and theory. According to one of them (I10), it is better to be 50 percent skill, and others should be divided between theory and interpretation.

The subsequent theme pertains to accurate work placements and professional issues, which represent the primary focus of the study. Consequently, it is regarded as a pivotal element in aligning training practices with the demands of the market. In this regard, two-thirds of the interviewees indicated that the training program lacked sufficient information about the actual job market, work opportunities, and conditions for translators, marketing skills, and interaction with the client. Consequently, the students demonstrated limited knowledge about these aspects. In this issue, I2 stated that during her study, trainers did not provide sufficient guidance regarding the options available to graduates, the process of seeking employment, and the identification of potential clients. Additionally, they did not sufficiently address the challenges and weaknesses inherent in the market. Upon graduation, the translation student is confronted with a radically different environment. Similarly, I12 underscored

the dearth of discourse on the job market within the field at the university level. It appears that there is a necessity for the incorporation of additional courses pertaining to entrepreneurship and translation marketing within the university curriculum. Alternatively, these subjects could be addressed through workshops, which may not be a sufficient solution. The thirteenth interviewee (I13) asserted that a business course at the postgraduate level would be a superior addition to the curriculum. Similarly, I23, a translator trainer, posited that although a course on the translation market exists, it is not practical and cannot address the nuances of actual work placement.

The final theme addressed the use of translation technologies in the teaching process. In the current era, the advent of technological advancement has led to the emergence of numerous software applications and online dictionaries that facilitate more effective and accessible translation processes for translators. The graduates highlighted the absence of training in translation technologies in the classroom, noting that translation is still predominantly conducted with paper and pen. Moreover, the interviewees identified a lack of emphasis on the distinction between translation branches, interpretation skills, and audio-visual translation. In the following section, the respondents were asked to comment on the impact of their training on their subsequent professional careers. The majority of graduates stated that the training they received at the university was inadequate preparation for the job market. Moreover, nine graduates indicated that the university training programs were satisfactory and had provided them with familiarity with new topics. In regard to this matter, I23 asserted that the university had adequately prepared them to the extent of approximately 50 percent. The efficacy of the curriculum is contingent upon the pedagogical approach employed by the instructors. While the subject matter is predominantly theoretical, the professors are able to draw upon their own experiences in the actual labor market to illustrate the practical implications of the theoretical concepts. It is therefore beneficial for the professors to discuss their own challenges and missteps, thereby enabling the students to avoid similar pitfalls upon graduation.

As previously stated, the academic training materials deemed essential and beneficial, and thus more appropriately situated within the curriculum, were itemized in table 12:

Table 12. Academic Training Materials Based on The Views of The Interviewees

No.	Academic material
1	Internship or visit to a real work environment
2	Real task-based learning
3	Translation technology
4	Providing information about the labor market, ethics, and interaction with the client
5	Marketing methods
6	Freelance skills
7	Fast translation skills
8	Interpretation skills and speaking English in classes
9	Working with different styles of texts and technical know-how
10	Conducting translation workshops at the university

During the course of the interview, a survey was conducted on the potential of teaching a third language at the university level. The languages under consideration included Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Arabic, Hindi, Russian, and Turkish, all of which have significant business and tourism connections with Iran. The crux of the matter is that students of translation are keen to acquire one of these languages, whereas the university is only able to offer tuition in one of them. The majority of graduates expressed positive sentiments regarding this proposal. Two graduates highlighted the value of the experience, citing the acquisition of a third language as a key benefit. I19 posited that it would be advantageous if students were compelled to learn one of these languages concurrently with other subjects. In accordance with the demands of the market and the allure of foreign languages, any third language will be welcomed, as asserted by the tenth interviewee. I1 recommended that the university should offer instruction in one of these languages, such as Chinese, and assume the associated risks. I18 stated that the university is capable of offering instruction in this area, although the specific content and approach may vary depending on the interests and needs of the students. Six respondents asserted that learning a third language is beneficial, yet the university is unable to offer instruction due to insufficient time, lack of familiarity with the subject matter, and a dearth of qualified instructors. The twenty-third participant indicated that the university has the capacity to conduct workshops or offer courses to teach a third language.

Finally, the interviewees were asked about the extent to which the university serves as a conduit between academic and professional spheres, as well as the degree of assistance it can provide in this regard. The graduates expressed disparate perspectives. The second interviewee asserted that the university is unable to adequately prepare students for the labor market. In many cases, individuals who have not attended university may possess the requisite skills and knowledge to perform better in the workforce through self-study. The most significant issue is the lack of pedagogical expertise among translator trainers. Similarly, I3 asserted that the university can provide assistance, but it is not in a position to resolve the issues, given that the

core challenge lies in an over-saturated translation market. I7 asserted that numerous methods exist for achieving the desired outcome, yet these are not being implemented. I11 and I22 stated that the level of education is minimal, offering only a degree. In contrast, the six interviewees indicated that the university can play a constructive role and that it is highly effective in this regard.

Moreover, I5 and I12 have indicated that the university should prioritize the skills, abilities, and experiences of students, with the objective of aligning the academic curriculum with the actual work environment. Students are furnished with information regarding the labor market. I6 posited that the university can facilitate its graduates' integration into the labor market, given that individuals who pursue academic studies are typically inclined to pursue gainful employment. Moreover, the tenth interviewee underscored the potential for the university to facilitate this transition through educational courses and specialized workshops led by professionals. The I6 indicated that it has a constructive influence on the formation of future relationships. The thirteenth interviewee posited that a university can serve as an effective conduit between academic learning and practical experience if it cultivates student engagement. I14 additionally asserted that a university's capacity to undergo significant internal reforms is a crucial factor in its ability to fulfill this role. In all other respects, the quality is average. The twenty-one claimed that the effectiveness of the university in supporting its students is a crucial factor in the students' academic success.

5. Conclusion

In recent years, the crisis of unemployment and poverty, especially among university graduates, has been on the rise in Iran. To this end, it is vital that universities and higher education institutions are aware of the subsequent career paths of their graduates, the ways in which they apply the knowledge and expertise gained at the university level, and the challenges and limitations they encounter. The present study examined the relationship between the university translator training programs at Imam Reza International University and the translation market requirements. The findings of the quantitative and qualitative analyses indicated that over half of the graduates perceived that their academic education at the university had only partially addressed their needs in the professional context. Additionally, they held a predominantly negative perception of the university's role in preparing them for employment.

In this regard, all graduates concur that there is a need for more substantial interaction between training and the market. Furthermore, they assert that the elements that prepare students for the market should be incorporated into the translation curriculum. In light of the graduates' perspectives, it is imperative that translator trainers receive education in the field of translation and possess a robust understanding of the market. Consequently, the more they are cognizant of market demands, the more adept they should be at responding to market needs in their curriculum design. Even if the training program incorporates guest speakers from the profession, it can have a beneficial impact. Conversely, the translation market employs graduates of translation programs who possess the requisite skills to constitute a well-qualified labor force. Consequently, the greater the number of market stakeholders who interact with training institutions through an apprenticeship in a real-world setting for students and graduates, the more training programs can utilize authentic texts for translation teaching activities. However, there may be challenges associated with the use of real-world texts, such as students' lack of cooperation and limited class time. In such cases, the instructor can utilize texts that were originally commissioned by actual clients in the market and assume the role of a client in the classroom. Additionally, stakeholders can provide feedback to these institutions. In this manner, the university can assist its alumni in securing gainful employment, as the field of academic translation is currently a highly sought-after profession. Graduates can utilize their academic training to translate books and research for the university. Moreover, it would be advantageous to incorporate market-training components into the curriculum, including rapid translation through technological assistance, professional work procedures and ethics, marketing concepts, and translation from Persian into English. This would facilitate the translation of renowned Iranian works and the dissemination of Iranian culture and religion on a global scale. It is thus imperative that all trainers in a given program become fully acquainted with the realities of the market and the challenges that await trainees upon entering it.

It is therefore necessary to address the challenges associated with professional status and training in a more structured manner, involving the integration of diverse competencies. In light of the fact that the translation market has become a significant commercial entity in the contemporary era, it is evident that notable shifts have occurred within the translation market in recent years. In the contemporary translation market, there has been a notable decline in the hiring of translators by government and non-government organizations. Concurrently, the advent of machine translation and artificial intelligence has led to the emergence of a novel work arrangement termed "freelance and/or remote translator." Additionally, the publication of books and magazines has witnessed a decline. These developments have influenced the perceptions of contemporary graduates regarding the training they have received. It is thus incumbent upon translators to engage in a range of activities, some of which extend beyond the confines of mere translation. The characteristics of entrepreneurship can be taught, and students can be assisted in becoming acquainted with the concept of entrepreneurship and its effects, including creativity, encouragement of innovation and growth, and enhancement of self-confidence and risk-taking. Subsequently, individuals with a creative mindset are able to identify promising concepts, transform them into novel and viable opportunities, and ultimately offer a valuable service to users.

It is recommended that students at the university level be encouraged to develop and acquire additional knowledge and marketable skills outside the university environment. Consequently, even translators recognize that translation is constrained to conveying a source text and reproducing it in the target language. It is anticipated that the study will have implications for the training of translators and the design of curricula. Firstly, it is essential that the desired elements are present in all programs that

are designed with a view to being launched onto the market. To achieve this, it is essential to establish closer collaboration with stakeholders from outside the academic realm. Secondly, it is essential to consider the translation market/industry, which is currently undergoing a process of globalization. Consequently, the training provided should align with this trend. In conclusion, employability skills should not only be integrated into the theoretical curriculum, as is the case with other courses, but also into the practical aspects of the program, in the form of realistic and applicable learning objectives and assessments. With sufficient institutional backing, it is possible to integrate employability and enterprise skills into training programs. However, for academia and industry to truly bridge the gap, there must be collaboration. The present study has sought to offer recommendations for aligning university training with the demands of the labor market. Other future researches can focus on how might different teaching methods or curriculum changes impact the preparedness of students for the translation market? What are the specific skills that employers are looking for, and how can these be better integrated into translator training programs? A systematic investigation of this subject area can facilitate the resolution of existing challenges and the enhancement of the training system for translators in academic institutions, thereby improving the employability of their graduates.

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