



# The Feasibility of Teaching Translation in the Undergraduate Level in the Yemeni Universities

A post-doctoral research

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## خلاصة البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى الإشارة إلى المشاكل التي سببت إخفاقات ملحوظة في مسيرة برنامج تدريس الترجمة في مرحلة البكالوريوس ، فمن خلال استبيان تم توزيعه ومقابلات فردية مع مدرسي برنامج الترجمة - والتي في معظمها تعكس بطريقة موضوعية مشكلات الطلاب واحتياجاتهم أيضاً في كل من جامعة صنعاء (كلية اللغات - قسم اللغة العربية والترجمة) وجامعة العلوم والتكنولوجيا (كلية العلوم الإنسانية - قسم اللغة الإنكليزية والترجمة) على وجه الخصوص وجامعات أخرى ممن يدرسون الترجمة في مرحلة البكالوريوس كتخصص. يستطيع القارئ في نهاية هذا البحث أن يستنتج أن العملية التعليمية في البرنامج والتي تبدأ من التسجيل والقبول وحتى التخرج وما بعده تحتاج مراجعة حيث تهدف هذه العملية برمتها إلى الوصول إلى تلبية مطالب الطالب بتأهيله على الوجه المقبول ورفد السوق بكوادر ترجمة مؤهلة.

مذ أن بدأت التدريس في برنامج الترجمة ثم أصبحت لاحقاً مشرفاً أكاديمياً على البرنامج في جامعة العلوم والتكنولوجيا ، واجهت الكثير من التحديات التي تعترض مسيرة تدريس الترجمة كتخصص لنيل درجة البكالوريوس. وبناءً على هذا تم اختيار كل من جامعة صنعاء وجامعة العلوم والتكنولوجيا في هذه الدراسة كونهما الرائدتان للجامعات الحكومية والأهلية ،



وكون بقية الجامعات اليمنية تعيش ظروفًا مشابهةً لهتين الجامعتين ، بل أن ظروف الكثير منها أسوأ حالاً ، وبالتالي فإن نتائج وتوصيات هذه الدراسة قد تمثل الحد الأدنى من متطلبات عمل برنامج ترجمة ناجح ، كما أنه بإمكان الجامعات - في المنطقة - التي تمر بظروف مشابهة لهتين الجامعتين الاستفادة من مخرجات هذه الدراسة. وهذه المشاكل في مجملها هي تقريباً محل إجماع كل من المدرسين والطلبة ، وكون المدرسين في الميدان هم الأكثر جدارة بتشخيص هذه الصعوبات فقد أخذت آراءهم بجدية واهتمام كبيرين حيث أن الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة هو الخروج ببرنامج ناجح ومؤهل لتدريس الترجمة.





## Abstract

This paper attempts to investigate challenges and difficulties that might have caused several recognizable setbacks when running the translation program at the university level. The investigation process was carried out through a questionnaire and interviews with translation instructors who also tried to give objective reflections to their students' problems and needs. Thus, the rules, standards, literature and infrastructure of the entire process of translation program, which starts from admission up to graduation, are likely to be, thoroughly, reconsidered so that they might cater for the needs of the students and the market.

Having taken the mission of being a translation instructor and, later, a program coordinator at (UST), I experienced a handsome number of challenges that both instructors and undergraduate students of translation might have faced. Two benchmarking universities; Sana'a University (SU) and University of Science and Technology (UST) were chosen to represent Yemeni public and private universities respectively. Other universities live either similar or even worse conditions. This means that the outcome of this paper can meet the minimum requirements for setting up a successful translation program. Moreover, most of the problems discussed and the solutions suggested are applicable to the universities in the region which are living similar conditions bearing in mind the differences between these academic institutions. The problems of the program are so common that instructors and students might have arrived to a consensus about. The solutions presented by the translation instructors, who have seen more than they have believed in, were seriously demonstrated and discussed. The ultimate goal of all of these measures taken is to bring translation program to a success.





**Key words:** translation, body of knowledge, requirement, translation program, Sana'a University (SU), University of Science and Technology (UST)

## Introduction:

*Globally, this is the age of mass communications, of multi-media experiences and a world where audiences demand to share the latest text, be it film, song or book simultaneously across cultures. Nor has the development of English as a world language slowed down the process of translation; it has, on the contrary served to emphasize the significance of translation, as questions of cultural practice appear on the agenda. Susan Bassnett (1996:20–21)*

Bessnett's statement has indeed put a rational justification for what is going on with translation studies these days. Translation teaching programs have gained more attention to whatever the country is ideologically, economically, politically or even culturally oriented. Public as well as private educational organizations are witnessing revolutionary trends and changes in their syllabi so that to meet the demand of the market which continually and continuously hires translators and interpreters to fill both interlinguistic and/or intercultural gaps.

Yemen, despite being a developing country, is no exception. A handful of state-run and private universities have launched their own undergraduate translation programs and unveiled their wish to take the lead in providing the market with supposedly qualified translators. This emergence, of course, has its pros and cons. The debate has always been on the feasibility and the practicality of developing a translation program for undergraduates. This controversy that took place after sometime of running these programs has raised several questions, or perhaps doubts:





- Can translation be taught?
- What do we expect from an undergraduate student?
- What are the wants and the needs of these students?
- Do these programs cater for their needs and interests?
- Is translation under or a post graduate study?
- If not, what are the difficulties that hinder the program from achieving its ultimate goal?
- How can we overcome or find solutions for these pitfalls and difficulties so that we can reach the ultimate objective of the translation program?
- How and when can practice be offered to meet the professional orientations of Translation Studies?

All these questions and some others related to the topic will be answered directly and indirectly throughout this study, either in its literature review which projects others experiences and endeavors, or from the findings of the study which will focus on the perspectives of those who are directly involved in translation teaching programs and their curricula development in the Yemeni public and private universities.

The methodology of this study is overwhelmingly qualitative. It is, on the one hand, is taken through the literature of the topic where the researcher has tried to find similar studies to similar experiences in similar conditions in other countries like Palestine (Gaza strip), Iran, and Egypt where English is not used as a second language. It is rather a foreign language. The researcher, on the other hand, has distributed a questionnaire to the translation instructors to get a gradable result in terms of reasons, requirements or factors with respect to the topic discussed. Those whom I could not get access to, they had short interviews through personal meeting or even through telephone conversations.





## The rationale for this study

Having discussed the problems of the translation program in the undergraduate level with reference to two benchmarking universities in Yemen, this paper aims at finding solutions for such subtleties that might hinder the processes of translation teaching and learning. The output of this paper will not be confined to the two subject universities. They would rather be strategies for establishing and correcting current translation programs in other universities and academies that are under similar conditions. This, in turn, would be reflected on the development of the country in this aspect. A sufficient outcome would be seen on the horizon. That's to say, providing the market with professionally-qualified and well-equipped translators and interpreters will dramatically improve the flow of information, quantitatively and qualitatively, from and to other nations.

## Review of Literature:

Since the translation teaching program for undergraduates has just recently emerged, little research and studies about its practicability has been done yet at least in this region. On the one hand, this encourages researchers and theoreticians to conduct more studies about the subtleties that face this program and the reasons of these subtleties. The researcher, on the other hand, undergoes certain difficulties in finding enough research that highlights the problem through others' experiences.

When launching this program, the first and foremost question that triggers in one's mind is; *can translation be taught? In his article "Is translation teachable?"*, Massoud Azizinezhad declares that there is no a clear-cut answer whether translation is a science





to be taught, a skill, or a craft to be trained. Peter Newmark insists that:

*"What translation theory does is, first to identify and define a translation problem; second, to indicate all the factors that have to be taken into account in solving the problem; third, to list all the possible translation procedures; finally, to recommend the most suitable translation procedure, plus the appropriate translation." (Newmark: 1988)*

Newmark (ibid: 1988) suggests that translation is a craft of replacing a text in SL into another in TL. Azizenzhad insists that translation is an art since it, sometimes, involves subjectivity:

*"It sometimes becomes highly dependent on the idiosyncrasies and intuition of the translator. Like composers and painters, translators often find their own moods and personalities reflected in their work." (Azizenzhad: 2006)*

The reader of this brief idea about the identity of translation can conclude that translation is an integration of science, skill or craft, and art. This means that translation can be taught, especially when we learn that translation theory is based on a solid background of both linguistic and literary theories on which translation theory is built up. Furthermore, translation is a skill which means that translation instructors need to be good skillful trainers who can bring out skillful creative trainees.

### **Translation program: under/post-graduate program**

There are two different approaches that represent two different opinions concerning the possibility of teaching translation as an independent area of specialization in the under-graduate or post-graduate level. On the one hand, a handsome number of translation theoreticians and designers deny the possibility to teach translation in the undergraduate level, supporting their argu-





ment the translator at this level has not, supposedly, acquired the languages and had an excellent command of the two languages, namely; the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). This camp, therefore, strongly support that the translation training can be given after this level when the trainee would have had enough language skills and knowledge:

*“The preference for short postgraduate Master-level programmes hides a truly training-oriented view. The implication is that once language skills have been mastered (this is to be achieved at BA level), the translation-specific value added can be acquired in one or two years at most.” (Silvia Bernardini, 2004)*

Prof. Constanza Gerding-Salas (2010) put a supposedly profile for the translation student. This profile specifies the requirements needed for the translation student that the reader might doubt finding the minimum of these requirements in the Yemeni universities:

- Sound linguistic training in the two languages
- Knowledge covering a wide cultural spectrum
- High reading comprehension competence and permanent interest in reading
- Adequate use of translation procedures and strategies
- Adequate management of documentation sources
- Improvement capacity and constant interest in learning
- Initiative, creativity, honesty and perseverance
- Accuracy, truthfulness, patience and dedication
- Capacity for analysis and self-criticism
- Ability to maintain constructive interpersonal relationships
- Capacity to develop team work
- Efficient data processing training at user's level (an introductory course is NOT enough)
- Acquaintance with translation software for MT and MT edition







The American Translators Association declares that completing a translation program does give a student certain skills but does not necessarily provide any assurance that these skills will find a ready market.

*“The ATA, therefore, advises institutions to provide students with as much ‘real-world’ practice as possible and to specialize themselves as soon as possible, so as to become competent professionals” (Tinsley 1973)*

María González Davies (2004) gives a raise to the two different approaches in teaching translation:

*“At the POSI6 meeting held in London in 1998, it became clear that different countries favour different approaches to translation training. In some, it is conceived as an undergraduate degree and in others, especially in mainly English-speaking countries, it exists mainly as a postgraduate degree.”*

Before this, Davies (2004) gave an account to the Spanish experience that in 1970s and 80s, it was a three-year high diploma after high school in three Spanish Universities. From 1991 up to now, however, translation programs have gained full degrees with nineteen translation degrees in the undergraduate program, as well as eleven postgraduate and nine doctoral programs which makes Spain has one the highest output of translation per year. From 2003, about 26% of all publications in Spain were translations from other languages.

The establishment of translation as a university degree in Spain came against the prevalent view that translation was a non-academic study and, thus, not suitable for a university framework which encouraged those who oppose this idea to establish translation professional associations as potential sources of market competitors. Besides, since there were no PhD holders in translation





to teach in the program till 1995, the university hired the associates in philology who were part-time translators. (Davies, 2004).

- **Experiences in the Region**

Sahar Farrahi Avval (2012) admits that Iranian students suffer from weakness in their general English After being accepted in the translation program. Avval explains that this weakness is believed to be the base of a good translator's competence. Avval adds:

*“The students are supposed to earn 133 to 135 credits to graduate and get a BA. About 70 to 72 credits are earned for specific courses of translation and 4 credits for language learning.” (ibid, 2012)*

Avval adds that out of the 133 to 135 credit hours, 70 to 72 are earned for specific courses in translation in addition to 4 credits for language learning. What adds insult to the injury in the Iranian experience is the overloaded subjects with different texts on economy, politics, literature, journalism, etc.:

*“Those texts are overloaded with a great number of new words which are learned for the exam and then immediately forgotten. This process also discourages students from using creativity in their translation. Another point to be mentioned here is that the direction of translation is mostly form English into Persian.” (Avval, 2012)*

Avval (ibid, 2012) concludes with some recommendations; a qualifying program should begin before entering university, an entrance exam should administered, students should be given courses of translation studies in first two terms, and the program should be injected with new powerful materials.





Moustafa Gabr conducted a case study in partial fulfillment of the requirements of his MA degree. The case study investigated the process of translation-program design and implementation at the undergraduate level in the English departments of Egyptian national universities, represented by the Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University, which is the second largest national university in Egypt in terms of number of colleges, facilities, faculty members, and students.

*“The principal objective of this study was to investigate the attitude of the undergraduate students towards three basic elements in the translation programs. The secondary objective was to explore the students' understanding of the theoretical aspects of translation and their personal efforts to develop their translation skills”. (Gabr, M. 2002)*

Remarkably, in his historical overview, Gabre (ibid; 2002) mentioned that there used to be a translation program in Ain-Shams University that discontinued due to logistic difficulties such as the large number of students whose demands cannot be met when they are distributed into group. Furthermore, the inadequate number of teaching hours is another reason. Besides, he noticed the following:

- All the Egyptian public universities teach translation only as a compulsory subject.
- There is no a systematic approach in teaching translation in these universities, it is rather arbitrary.
- Students do not have any access to the real market documents.

Shockingly, in his conclusion, Gabr (ibid; 2002) gave a raise to the problems of translation program in the English departments in the Egyptian universities that, I think, similar to those problems from which our programs suffer such as; unqualified teachers, random selection of materials, severe shortage of the facilities,





non-existence of team work, and insufficient coordination to the program.

Amer, W. (2010) conducted a study about the situation of translation program in Palestine (Gaza strip). He gave a clear account to the translation subject:

*“All departments of English offer translation courses at the undergraduate level as obligatory courses, but what is actually offered is quite arbitrary and depends almost entirely on personal initiatives on the part of tutors”. (Amer; 2010)*

Amer adds that most of translation instructors in Gaza are not qualified enough to teach translation since they are not specialized in translation. Their degrees are, rather, in literature or linguistics. In his conclusion, Amer declares that the outcome of translation program in the undergraduate level should not be considered professional:

*“It can be concluded from the discussion above that undergraduate courses of translation in Gaza universities should make their objectives clearly explicit, so as to enlighten students and teachers alike. The ambiguous standing objectives should by no means be allowed to mislead teachers and students into believing that the training is professional.” (Amer, 2010)*

When looking at admission regulations at those universities which operate English programs in general and translation in particular, and in addition to the relatively high score of secondary school, the observer might conclude:

- Some universities ask the student to score upper-intermediate or advanced in language proficiency test (TOEFL) as a pre-condition



to be admitted in any English program such as UAE University, Qatar University and King Saud University.

- Some Universities like Qabus University ask the student to go through a foundation year (before the four year program). In this year the student takes an integrated language program to qualify the student the meet the demands of the program intended.

### **The Status of English language in Yemen**

It would, perhaps, be redundant to point that Arabic is the only first language that all the Yemeni people use. Even the 500 Jews (0.002% of the population of Yemen) use Arabic as first language and Hebrew is only used when they perform their religious rituals and prayers. Like other nations, when it comes again to translation most of the readers, if not all, unanimously declare that English, as the world lingua franca, take the second position. This means that the process of translation in Yemen is within these two languages, namely English and Arabic as either ST or TL. This triggers a question whether English, in Yemen, has measured up to the level where that it occupies the position of SL or TL. In other words, is English a second language where English is dominant in several domains like media, business and even economy, like India, Pakistan and Kenya, or it is a foreign language as it is in Turkey and China?

Unfortunately the answer of this is: English is a foreign language in Yemen. This means that due to historical and social reasons. English occupies no status in traditional life in Yemen whatsoever. English however gained importance in some academic as well as professional fields. Even in Yemeni public schools, English is taught as a peripheral subject from grade seven. Furthermore, in some areas, especially villages, English is not taught seriously to the extent that some high school leavers cannot say the English Alphabets.





This background of the Yemeni student determines that when he joins a university, his level is, generally, relatively poor in comparison to those who use English as a second language in some other countries such as India, Pakistan, Malaysia and Kenya. This is not to mention the poor performance of the standard Arabic which is only used in limited formal situations like media. What adds insult to injury is, unlike other language programs, translation implies that the student has at least a satisfactory command of the two concerned languages which, in this context, are standard Arabic and English.

### **An overview on translation program in the Yemeni Universities**

In this paper, I would like to discuss the possibility of teaching translation at university level with reference to the most well-known two state-run and private universities which are here respectively mentioned as Sana'a University (SU) and University of Science and Technology (UST). These two educational institutions have taken the lead in the Republic of Yemen in inaugurating this program. They, however, have undergone several pitfalls and difficulties to a great extent.

It is worth mentioning that most of the universities in Yemen try to take the communicative approach as their method of English language teaching especially at junior levels so that the student is expected to acquire the language through, I would say, the language itself, which is English in this context. Although this, method is good for the students to acquire the language in a quasi-natural way, it might, in my opinion, hinders the translation program, which comes later, from creating links between equivalents between both source and target languages. This difficulty, actually, is based on the presupposition that students have acquired English language, in our case. I will add insult to injury when you learn that a considerable number of the students do not measure up to senior level where





translation program starts. In the following, the reader will take a clear idea about the difficulties that these two major universities are undergoing and this, in turn, provokes us to search for the answer for our inquiries.

### Translation program at SU:

SU started this program within the Arabic studies department named as Arabic and translation program in the academic year 2005-2006. This program was, deliberately, elaborated within the department of Arabic Studies due to many apparently rationale reasons:

1. To eliminate the number of students who enroll in the department of English is so much that qualified instructors could hardly cover their classes.
2. To attract a handsome number of students to join Arabic Studies department which was deserted by students who regard it instrumentally and materialistically unattractive.
3. To equip the translation students with a good background knowledge of Arabic along with English linguistics.

Translation program, unfortunately, has undergone several setbacks.

1. Students, who were supposed to academically and professionally bilinguals, graduated with *Alexander Pope's* "little knowledge" which was certainly dangerous. It was so because they did not receive sufficient knowledge within their limited number of credit hours. Like the man who could not serve two masters, Arabic and translation studies could achieve progress in two tracks simultaneously. They neither studied pure Arabic linguistics and literature, nor did they, satisfactorily, study English and translation theory which is basically taught in English.





2. The number of students who study in every classroom is usually more than 50 students and sometimes much more. This unacceptable number of students in an applied science such as translation, intolerably, violates the academic standards of teaching.

This problem has provoked people in charge faculty of languages to hold a three-hour symposium on February 2nd, 2011 to which I was invited to discuss and find the possible solutions for this problem. They, unanimously, agreed on raising recommendations to the academic affairs of the University to close translation program in Arabic Studies department and establish it again in English department in the next academic year 2011-2012. Unfortunately these recommendations were not even taken seriously because of the political crisis that Yemen witnessed later on. It is worth mentioning that a new campus has been built for the faculty with equipped language and interpreting labs to be furnished within the coming year.







## Translation program at UST:

UST, on the other hand, perhaps is several steps ahead of SU. UST, of course, have their own translation program, for which I am responsible, within English department where student can receive more teaching practical hours and the infrastructure is much better. The situation in the university, however, is not that promising. UST is suffering from the following problematic facts:

1. Being a private university, UST accepts students most of whom are not qualified enough to practicing English skills not to mention studying translation theory and doing it which is deeply based on linguistic and literary backgrounds. This is despite of the placement tests and the remedial classes the students receive.
2. Some of the students who have a satisfactory command of English do not have this command in their mother tongue, standard Arabic, which is basically difficult even to its native speakers.
3. The students may achieve a certain progress in translation of one genre of the texts, political for example, but they do not do so in another genre such as legal or religious. This poses some difficulties in evaluating the level of students.
4. It seems to be that even the most qualified students would meet the least satisfaction from evaluators in translation performance because of time that the students had spent to promote their linguistic performance.
5. Concerning interpreting students hardly do it because it is too difficult for undergraduate students to be done professionally it is rather taught as three introductory subjects; on-sight translation, consecutive interpreting and simultaneous interpreting.





Objectively speaking, UST is currently trying to overcome such difficulties through putting some standards and taking some measures some of which are already taken. These measures are;

1. The number of students in every class does not exceed 30 students which can help in creating a reasonable atmosphere to practice translation.
2. Mid-equipped language labs (computer labs) are installed to enable students get easy access to computer applications and internet services.
3. The university is, currently, considering installing two interpreting labs to help in putting the students in a quasi-natural environment of simultaneous interpreting.
4. Another forthcoming project which is launching a translation center in which students can be immersed in a natural environment of translation under supervision of professional translators. This center, in return, becomes a community service center through which people can get a professional authentic accredited translation for a reasonable price.
5. The university is looking forward to hiring more qualified translation instructors and trainers to contribute in bearing promoting the performance of the program.





### The body of knowledge of the two universities:

The body of knowledge of this program in both SU and UST is represented with the number of the input credit hours for the whole program. The following table displays the distribution of these hours regardless of the additional practical hours that might be added to the credits especially to those of UST. It is worth mentioning that each subject in both department and program requirements are 3 teaching hours.

No.	University	University Requirements	Faculty Requirements	Department Requirements		Program Requirements		Total
1.	SU	3	-----	117		39		159
				51English	66Arabic	30English	9Arabic	
2.	UST	25	4	65 English		39 English		133

Having noticed the previous table the reader may notice the followings:

- In terms of the input credits, SU has a larger input than that of UST. SU has only one subject (3credits) as a university requirement and the remainder 52 subjects (156 credits) is dedicated to both department and program requirement whereas UST has 25 credits for university requirements (the subjects have 1, 2, 3 or 4 credits), and 4 credits as faculty requirements. The remainder UST credits (104 credits) are specified for department and program requirements.
- In terms of the access to the foreign English language which, typically, more difficult than the native Arabic, UST seems has the upper hand to SU. Beside the recently elaborated 300 teaching hours of English language lessons (about 6 courses in the language center) from university requirements for only two subjects; English1 and English2, and 2 credits (in addition to 1





practical teaching hour) to teach the subject research methods in English as a faculty requirement, UST has 104 credits in both department and program requirements to be taught using English as its metalanguage (the language of explanation). This number, roughly, is more than that of SU (81 credits).

- When it comes to teaching Arabic as the normally used language either as SL or TL, SU has the upper hand of using Arabic either as a process or a product to those of UST. SU uses Arabic 78 credits in comparison to 21 credits in UST. SU instructors, therefore, on the one hand, complain about the allegedly the program which is overloaded with Arabic subjects. UST instructors, on the other hand, suggest injecting the program with some courses that give rise teaching Arabic literature, linguistic and rhetoric.
- The prerequisite of the program is mainly represented by department requirements which are concerned with enhancing the students' language skills as well as it lays the foundations of language knowledge (especially linguistics and literature) which supposedly qualify students to meet the program requirements.
  - 1- SU has specified 39 subjects (117 credits) for department requirements; 22 subjects (66 credits) of which are taught in Arabic (to teach Arabic linguistics and literature) and the remainder 17 subjects (51 credits) are in English (to teach English linguistics and literature). The students of this program complain that their level could be better if the department gives them less Arabic subjects than the current number and give more attention to the foreign language which is English in this case.
  - 2- UST on the other hand only specified 59 credits to teach English linguistics and literature. This means that the students do not have hours to teach Arabic linguistics, rhetoric and literature except the 6 credits of the university to teach Arabic





language (1) and Arabic language (2). This may justify the considerable weakness of using standard Arabic especially in speaking.

- More specifically, the study focuses on the program requirements which assumedly contain the solid ground knowledge of translation as a theory and a practice. SU, in the one hand, has specified 33 credits to teach translation. This number, in my own perspective, is not enough to teach translation and interpreting theoretically and practically. UST, on the other hand, has specified 45 credits which might succeed in meeting the demands of this program.
- In addition to the department requirement, and instead of lecturing 6 credits for the two university requirement subjects; English (1) and English (2), UST specified language courses that last up to 300 teaching hours (to score up to 450 in TEOFL, or pass level 2B or even higher) in its language center. Student of translation program, therefore, can take use of this measure so that they can have a satisfactory level to peruse the program.

### **The perspectives of instructors:**

Due the scientific nature of such an applied translation paper, which investigates the possibility of teaching translation as an area of specialization in the undergraduate program, it might be ideal to carry out a scrutinized investigation about this subject with those who are involved in the process of teaching translation, translation instructors and program coordinators (if available). The questionnaire was made taking in consideration the following:

- Due to the difficulty in getting access to translation instructors in the universities and to avoid the take-in-the-rush interviews, an open-ended question was distributed to them to answer. This is





to guarantee freedom of thinking and not to limit them to certain choices.

- It is worth noting that the overwhelming majority of the translation instructors in Yemen are not specialized in translation studies. As far as the academia considered the number of PhD holders in Yemen is more or less than five. This justifies the resorting to the qualitative method to support the quantitative side.
- The researcher, therefore, distributed the questionnaire to fifteen instructors. Seven of which are Ph.D holders (five teach in both SU as a permanent post and UST on hourly basis, and two teach in Amran University and UST on hourly basis). The other eight instructors teach SU, UST, Saba University and Al-mustaqbal University.

Starting with the routine introduction in which the researcher thanks the subject for his cooperation and mentions the topic of the study, the main question is the following:

**Tick in ONE square next the statement you agree with:**

- Teaching translation cannot be taught in the undergraduate program. It should, rather, be taught in the postgraduate level. *(If this, state in the following space your reasons thoroughly)*
- Translation can be taught in the undergraduate level effectively and efficiently if some requirements are met. *(If this, state below the requirements needed)*
- Teaching translation is currently being done effectively and adequately. *(If this, state the factors that have led to this success)*

After that, a space was allocated to write down either the reasons of teaching translation in the postgraduate level, the





requirements of making translation program more effective and successful if it can be taught in the undergraduate level under certain conditions, or the factors that have, already, brought translation program in the undergraduate level to a success because teaching translation is currently being done effectively and adequately.

### **Validity and reliability of the questionnaire**

The considerations mentioned above bring validity to this questionnaire since it pinpoints to the problem and the logical possibilities with respect to translation teaching at university level. Besides, it is reliable because this questionnaire and the result of the study can be generalized to all Yemeni state-run or private universities that open a translation program or a department. This is because the study focuses, as I mentioned earlier, on the two benchmarking public and private universities, namely; SU and UST. That is to say, the other public and private universities that that elaborate translation program within their faculties live very similar conditions to the these two universities. The researcher has born in mind that the answer of the questionnaire is just exclusive to one choice. This is due to the exclusive logical nature of the study. If, therefore, a subject chooses more than one choice, and it did not happen, his answer would become invalid.

### **Analysis of the study**

After exposing the data of the questionnaire to an acid test, the findings of the study are the following:

- All the subjects of who did the written questionnaire are not specialized in translation. Moreover, due to logistic difficulties, the researcher could not have enough access to the only two translation PhD holders to do the written questionnaire. He, then, interviewed them and asked them the same question to be answered





aurally.

- Seven of the subjects are PhD holders (two are in specialized in translation, three in specialized linguistics and two are specialized in literature). Besides, no one of the other eight MA holders is specialized in translation (four are specialized in linguistics, three majored in literature, and only one who majored in English language teaching). They do so due to the severe shortage of specialized translation instructors.
- Amazingly, and to the contrary of my expectations, no one of the subjects has chosen the first or the third choices. They unanimously have chosen the second choice which means that they, all, have agreed on the possibility of teaching translation in the undergraduate level if the requirements and prerequisites to bring the program to a success are properly utilized. The following table, clearly, shows this result:

No.	STATEMENT	Agreement
1	Teaching translation cannot be taught in the undergraduate program. It should, rather, be taught in the postgraduate level.	0
2	Translation can be taught in the undergraduate level effectively and efficiently if some requirements are met.	16
3	Teaching translation is currently being done effectively and adequately.	0

- As a matter of fact, having declared that translation can be taught in the undergraduate level, the subjects presupposed that their decision does not necessarily mean that translation cannot/mustn't be taught in the post-graduate level. That is to say, undergraduate is the minimal level where translation can be taught as a theory and practice. 'This is clear when the subjects have not unanimously chosen the third choice at the same time they preconditioned the second choice.







- **The result of the questionnaire that shows the requirements needed to have a successful translation program in the Yemeni universities**

NO.	REQUIREMENT	VALUE
1	Before university, students should receive solid background knowledge in English, especially in grammar and vocabulary.	16
2	The university should provide the needed tools for practicing translation.	13
3	Students need to receive intensive field training.	12
4	The university should provide the university with enough references (books, journals, etc...) to understand translation theory through theoretical subjects and reading in the library.	12
5	Translation teachers should be highly qualified.	10
6	Like other programs, prior to its foundation, those who are in charge of establishing translation program should bear in mind the demand of the market for translators and interpreters, and to specify the fields needed such as legal translators, literary translators and so forth so that they can adapt their demand of the market to their syllabi.	9
7	Students should have a good command of standard Arabic grammar, vocabulary and rhetoric.	8
8	Beside translation subjects, other subjects need to be taught in the fields of linguistics (social linguistics pragmatics, discourse analysis, applied linguistics, comparative linguistics etc...), and literature (figures of speech, prose and poetry appreciation, drama and novel, criticism approaches etc...)	8
9	Students should take translation subjects from early stages in the undergraduate level (not form level three).	2





- As it is obvious in the above table, all the subjects did not agree on one requirement except one (the first in the table). All the subjects have preconditioned the enrollment of students of translation program with at least a good command of English as the second language.
- Some of the subjects have neglected the requirement of having a good command of Arabic on assumption that they are Arabic natives, whereas some others reassured the importance of having an excellent command of standard Arabic.
- It is worth noting that the subjects did not mention the requirements as they are worded in the in the table. Since the questionnaire requires open-ended essay answer, the ideas were taken from the subjects even they have different wordings.
- The previous requirements were mentioned by instructors of both SU and UST.
- Some instructors, on the other hand, have mention requirements to that are exclusive to SU in particular and the other public universities which run this program in general. The following table shows these requirements.

NO.	REQUIREMENT	VALUE
1	The university should accept <i>Muwazi</i> or parallel system students (a system receives students who did not score efficiently in high school, so they pay much higher tuition fees than their normal regular peers) after going through a language proficiency language test so that to merge them with their general system fellow students.	7
2	Translation program should not be within Arabic and Translation department, it, rather, should be elaborated as an independent program within English department or as an independent translation department.	6





3	The university should qualify skillful specialized translation instructors and hire well qualified foreign lecturers and trainers.	1
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- Besides, some UST instructors have suggested other requirement directed to UST in particular and other private universities in general. The following table shows these requirements:

NO.	REQUIREMENT	VALUE
1	UST needs to put more effective and strict English proficiency test for students since this test goes like a formality.	5
2	If accepted to the translation program, low performance students need to go through an intensive English courses as well as extra remedial classes to improve their language skills and pre-translation program courses.	3
3	Due to their limited number, the boys need to receive more attention from the university so that they do not feel marginalized or discriminated.	1

### The conclusion of the study:

Based on the literature review of this study which highlights the theoretical background of the study as well as the experiences of the others, and the survey that gave a clear account to the problems of running the translation program, the reader of this paper can come to the conclusion that teaching post-graduates translation is more doable and practical teaching under-graduate. If teaching undergraduates happens, the following requirements needed to be taken in one's accounts with reference of both SU and UST, or each of them.





Concerning the two universities (SU and UST):

- 1- Since translation implies that the student, fundamentally, has to master the two languages, the level of proficiency in English of students who enroll to the program is noticeably low. The linguistic potentials of the majority of students do not go hand in hand with the prerequisites of translation program.
- 2- The number of credit hours can be reconsidered to meet the needs of translation students. This can be done through adding more practical hours.
- 3- Subject distribution needs to be set up from the first year to cater for the theoretical and practical aspects of the two languages.
- 4- The infrastructure of translation program, such as multi-media labs, projectors, interpreting labs, a library, journal and periodical subscription, and a translation center, can be installed in a way that it could satisfy both the practical and the theoretical activities.
- 5- SU and UST should put a strict pre-requisite system. The student, for example, cannot go to advance writing without passing the previous writing subject. He also should not be allowed to take on-sight translation without passing the reading package subjects and so forth.
- 6- Putting guidelines such as the demand of the market and the academia can play a vital role in setting up the program orientations and goals, establishing its infrastructure, and curriculum designing and developing.
- 7- To avoid arbitrariness, the overall program should be set up systematically and consistently under a unified vision and mission, subject distribution and course description, and teaching methods to get a unanimous ILO.
- 8- As a craft, translation program should elaborate intensive





(quasi) real-environment sessions for doing translation, and students need to be informed that they have not become professionals yet till they immerse themselves in the market after finishing their theoretical and training requirements.

- 9- Well-qualified and sufficiently-equipped translation lecturers are in demand. Therefore, the two universities need to hire more specialized translation instructors and trainers and/or give more training to those who are available.
- 10-Countries and NGO(s) can contribute and collaborate to bringing the translation program in Yemen to a success.
- 11-I would farther pinpoint to the importance of employing translation alumni forums and activities that would enhance their skills and ability to leverage and get integrated with their marketplaces.

With respect to SU:

- 1- SU should suspend its program in Arabic department and leave it for pure Arabic subjects. It, rather, can open a new department named; Department of Translation or emerge it as a program in the department of English (beside the English program) to be named Department of English and Translation bearing in mind keeping some Arabic subjects as core subjects.
- 2- Since translation is a practical field, SU needs to eliminate the number of students to at most 30 students in every classroom.
- 3- SU needs to increase the program requirements from 33 credits to at least 39 credits so that it can add some missing subjects in its program.
- 4- For the sake of equality within the same organization, SU needs to practice the same policy with both the regular and parallel (Muwazi) systems in terms of lecturing time, instructors and other teaching policies.





With respect to UST:

- 1- UST needs to make a strict admission test for candidate students to accept the qualified students. For those who are not qualified enough, they either can get a two-year chance to acquire the language before they get to the program which starts in the third year, or are given a language foundation year before the four-year program.
- 2- Standard Arabic language is essentially required as subjects within the program subjects. This is through elaborating the program with some Arabic courses in linguistics, literature and rhetoric.
- 3- UST needs to eliminate the number of university credit hours to the minimum so that students can clear their minds to the program assignments.
- 4- UST needs to pay more attention the male students who feel discriminated due to their little number. The department, thus, needs to take some measures to deal this problem so that the number of male students increases satisfactorily.





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**Appendix: a sample of the questionnaire to distributed to translation instructors**

- Dear Teacher/professor,

I am, currently, conducting a study on (**The Feasibility of Teaching Translation in the Undergraduate Level in the Yemeni Universities**). I will be thankful if you worked on this questionnaire so that it can contribute to reach the sound conclusion to the topic mentioned that may bring the process of teaching translation to a success.

**Tick on the square next the statement you agree with.**

- Teaching translation cannot be taught in the undergraduate program. It should, rather, be taught in the postgraduate level. *(If this, state in the following space your reasons thoroughly)*
- Translation can be taught in the undergraduate level effectively and efficiently if some requirements are met. *(If this, state below the requirements needed)*
- Teaching translation is currently being done effectively and adequately. *(If this, state the reasons below)*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. \_\_\_\_\_

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**The Feasibility of Teaching Translation in the Undergraduate Level  
in the Yemeni Universities**

5. \_\_\_\_\_

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6. \_\_\_\_\_

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7. \_\_\_\_\_

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8. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Comments:**

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Thank you very much,  
Dr. Essam Al-Mizgagi  
Coordinator of translation program at UST- Yemen

