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International Journal of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning

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Research Paper Open Access

Enhancing Translation Performance through E-Learning Platforms: A Case Study Using Blackboard

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Abstract
In translation education, the emergence of e-learning has facilitated a move away from the traditional teacher-centered approach in which the instructor takes full responsibility for what goes on in the classroom to a more learner-centered approach whereby learners participate actively in the learning process. This study aims to investigate the impact of allowing translation students to provide feedback on their classmates' work through the Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS). By employing a pre-test/post-test design, the study compares the performance of two groups of students: an experimental group in which students provided feedback on their classmates' work and a control group in which feedback on the students' translation was only provided by the course instructor. The study results indicated that students in the experimental group outperformed their counterparts in the control group in the post-test, suggesting that the treatment (i.e. giving the students the opportunity to give feedback on their classmates' translation) had a positive impact on their learning. The students in the experimental group were interviewed to find out about their experience in taking part in the learning process. They generally showed a positive attitude toward being active in their own learning.

Keywords: Feedback, student-centered learning, teacher-centered learning, e-learning, Blackboard

INTRODUCTION

Background

In recent years, the integration of technology into higher education has transformed traditional teaching methodologies, particularly in language and translation training. With the growing availability of online learning management systems (LMS), instructors have increasingly explored alternative instructional approaches that foster student autonomy, collaboration, and engagement beyond the classroom setting. Blackboard, one of the most widely used LMS platforms in universities worldwide, offers a range of tools that support content delivery, student interaction, and feedback mechanisms, all of which can be leveraged to enhance learning outcomes.

Translation is not only a mere transfer of linguistic aspects from one language into another. Thus, translation training, by its nature, involves the development of linguistic as well as analytical skills. In traditional translation classrooms, students usually have their translated texts checked only by the course's instructor. While this method provides expert guidance, it often limits the opportunity for peer collaboration and self-reflection. The use of Blackboard helps in creating a more interactive learning environment wherein learners can share their work, engage with peer feedback, and learn from diverse perspectives.

This study invistigates the impact of incorporating Blackboard learning into translation training. More specifically, it compares the performance of two groups of translation learners: a control group that receives traditional, and in-class instructions and feedback from the course's instructor, and an experimental group that submits the translated texts via Blackboard and have these texts checked by their classmates and provided by peer feedback. The study aims at assessing how this technological intervention influences the students' translation performance, their engagement in the learning process, and the enhancement on their learning experience.

By exploring the pedagogical benefits and limitations of using Blackboard in translation instruction, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on digital learning tools in language education and offers practical insights for instructors seeking to enhance their teaching methods through blended or fully online approaches.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the use of peer feedback via Blackboard now being widely accepted in many teaching environments, it has not been used in a translation context at Qassim University in Saudi Arabia. In socio-cultural contexts such as the Arab world, where traditional authority structures position teachers as the only source of knowledge (Al-Sawalha, 2016; Mynard & Almarzouqi, 2006), using peer feedback and novel tools such as Blackboard can present some challenges. Students may resist peer comments or prefer teacher feedback due to perceptions of authority and gender dynamics (Saba, 2015; Van Ginkel et al., 2017).

This paper investigates whether integrating Blackboard into translation classrooms at Qassim University provides opportunities for collaborative and student-centered learning as well as enhancing autonomy and peer interaction whilst recognizing that successful implementation depends on addressing cultural attitudes toward peer feedback and ensuring that students are adequately trained to provide constructive evaluations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent decades, translation pedagogy has gradually shifted from traditional teacher-centered approaches to more student-centered and collaborative models that are supported by technology. In the teacher-centered approach, the instructor is the main source of knowledge and the students passively receive information (Hancock et al., 2002). By contrast, student-centered instruction repositions the teacher as a facilitator, encouraging learners to construct knowledge through active participation and peer interaction (Hancock et al., 2002; Resta & Laferrière, 2007). One example of student-centered instruction is collaborative learning, which has been defined as "the instructional use of small teams so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning" (Johnson et al., as cited in *Towards an E-Learning Platform*, 2010, p. 322). Such approaches align with Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction in developing learners' cognitive abilities.

The development of e-learning platforms has facilitated the move toward more student-centered methods in translation classrooms. The European Commission defined e-learning as the use of multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve learning through access to resources and collaborative exchange (Ehlers & Pawlowski, 2006). In the context of translator training, researchers have noted that the lack of specialized e-learning platforms makes it difficult to replicate real-life translation tasks (Al-Batineh et al., 2021; Baker, 2011). Moreover, studies have demonstrated the value of web-based collaborative learning (WCL), which enables trainees to access online dictionaries, corpora, and parallel texts while promoting autonomy and responsibility (Galán-Mañas & Albir Amparo, 2010). Alshehab (2013) found that translation students taught through e-learning platforms outperformed those in traditional classroom settings.

Blackboard, as one of the most widely used learning management systems (LMS), has been shown to support blended and online learning by breaking spatial and temporal constraints, providing access to communication tools, and fostering interaction (Bradford et al., 2007; Pusuluri et al., 2017). Its features, which include discussion forums, blogs, and wikis, encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing (Marachi & Quill, 2020). Research has also highlighted Blackboard's ease of use, flexibility, and ability to reduce technical barriers, all of which allows students to focus on learning tasks (Boulos et al., 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2006). In language learning contexts, Blackboard has been associated with enhanced communication, improved study skills, and increased student confidence (Al-Giny & Al-Rahili, 2016; Manegre & Gutiérrez-Colón, 2023).

A growing body of research highlights the role of peer feedback in translation training, facilitated by online platforms. Although early scholarship suggested limited advantages of peer feedback in translation studies (Min, 2006), subsequent studies have reported its benefits. Peer review has been found to promote critical thinking, self-evaluation, and social interaction skills (Boase-Jelinek et al., 2013; Shen et al., 2017). It provides learners with timely, constructive feedback, which is often perceived as less threatening than teacher correction (Wu & Schunn, 2020; Wood & Kurzel, 2008). Moreover, engaging students in reviewing others' translations helps them develop metacognitive awareness and apply evaluative criteria to their own work (van den Berg et al., 2006). In translation classrooms, specifically, teamwork and peer review contribute not only to linguistic development but also to interpersonal competence (Kelly, 2005; Barros, 2011).

Despite these benefits, peer feedback faces some challenges, particularly in socio-cultural contexts such as the Arab world, where traditional authority structures position teachers as the sole source of knowledge (Al-Sawalha, 2016; Mynard & Almarzouqi, 2006). Students may resist peer comments or prefer teacher feedback due to perceptions of authority and gender dynamics (Saba, 2015; Van Ginkel et al., 2017). To address this, scholars argue for structured peer feedback training that enhances students' assessment skills and fosters trust in the process (Alqassab et al., 2018).

In sum, the literature indicates that integrating Blackboard into translation classrooms provides opportunities for collaborative and student-centered learning while enhancing autonomy and peer interaction. At the same

time, successful implementation depends on addressing cultural attitudes toward peer feedback and ensuring that students are adequately trained to provide constructive evaluations.

METHOD

Research Questions

This research asks two questions:

1- To what extent does using Blackboard for peer feedback improve students' performance in a translation classroom compared to teacher-led feedback?

2- How do students perceive the practice of providing peer feedback through Blackboard in a translation learning environment?

Research Context

The study was conducted in the fall semester of 2025 in the Department of English Language and Literature at Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. A practical course in translation named "Translation in the Humanities" was chosen to implement this study. In this course, students are exposed to different texts in the fields of the humanities, such as legal, religious, psychological, and sociological texts, in addition to media texts. During the semester, students are asked to translate these different texts from English into Arabic and vice versa.

Twenty seven students were enrolled in this course during the fall semester of 2025. They were divided randomly into two groups, with thirteen students in the control group and fourteen in the experimental group. Two different teaching methods were used for the groups. For the experimental group, students were asked to translate texts at home and upload their translations onto Blackboard. Then, their classmates were asked to look at and provide feedback on the quality of these translations. In class, students were asked to revise their translations based on the feedback that their classmates had provided on Blackboard. On the other hand, students in the control group were taught using the conventional method of teaching translation. This method involved the instructor distributing a source text to the students in class and asking them to translate it. When they finish translating, he/she verbally corrects the students' errors and gives them the correct version of the translation.

Research Design

This study utilizes a "mixed-method" approach as a way to collect data for analysis, using more than one method for data collection. One of the main reasons for using this approach as a research method is that it provides "triangulation", which can increase confidence in the research data, reveal distinctive findings, and provide a better understanding of the problem being investigated (Thurmond, 2001). According to Shreve and Angelone (2010), triangulation is "the use of two or more data acquisition methodologies within a single study to improve the quality, validity, and reliability of the research findings" (p. 6).

Many scholars argue in favor of a mix-methods approach to research. For instance, Greene (2015) highlights that mixed-method research offers "the possibility of meaningful engagement with and dialogue across not just different types of methods and data but also different logics of inquiry, different ways of knowing, and thus different perspectives on understanding" (p. 608). Due to the nature of the research questions posed in this study, a mixed-methods approach seemed to be most appropriate as it "allows us to tackle complex topics […] with a flexibility that surpasses that of the qualitative or quantitative approaches alone" (Meister, 2018, p. 77). The present study is concerned with understanding the impact of engaging students in the learning process by allowing them to give feedback on their classmates' performance by commenting on their translations on Blackboard. The performance of students who went through this treatment was analyzed quantitatively and compared to their counterparts in the control group, who were taught using the traditional method of teaching translation that entails translating in the classroom and having the instructor comments on the quality of the students' translations. This quantitative analysis was followed by qualitative analysis of the students' interviews to attain a wider picture and gather more details about students' involvement in the assessment process.

Instruments

To answer the research questions, various instruments were used in this study. Pre-test/post-test was used to compare the performance of the experimental and the control groups to see if the treatment, (i.e., asking students to provide feedback on their peers' work via Blackboard) had any impact on their performance compared to those who did not give or receive any feedback and solely depended on the instructor's feedback. Additionally, students in the experimental group were interviewed to find out how they perceived their involvement in the learning process whilst they were active in providing feedback on the work of their classmates and receiving feedback on their own work from their classmates. To minimize any linguistic barriers and allow participants to articulate their experience comfortably and accurately, the interviews were conducted

in Arabic, which is the participants' native language, then translated into English by ChatGPT-5.2 to minimize the researcher's subjectivity when transferring the content of the interviews. The translated interviews were then checked by two professional translators for meaning accuracy.

Research Procedure

In the first week of the fall semester of 2025, students were randomly assigned to one of the research groups: experimental and control. Students with odd numbers in the students' attendance list were assigned to the experimental group while their classmates with even numbers were assigned to the control group. The researcher had meetings with the students in each group and explained their roles in the learning that was to take place. Students in both groups were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any time if they felt uncomfortable with the treatment. Consent forms were signed by students in both groups.

After this introductory week, the study took place. On a weekly basis, the students in the experimental group were provided with a text to translate before they came to class. After translating, they uploaded their translations onto Blackboard, where their classmates in the same group were able to look at them and give feedback on the quality of the translations. In addition to the task of translating, each student in the experimental group was required to give feedback on the work of three classmates. By the end of this process, each student had at least three versions of feedback from his classmates. When they came to class, the students were asked to revise their translations based on their peers' comments and provide a second version of the translation. On the other hand, students in the control group were provided with the text in class and asked to translate it there and then. When they had finished translating, the instructor went through it line-by-line and discussed the translation with the students.

Finally, at the end of the semester, students from both groups were asked to take the post-test to see how their performance had improved throughout the semester. Additionally, students in the experimental group were interviewed by the researcher to obtain more details and in-depth information about their experience participating in the learning environment. The time and location of each interview was arranged at the students' convenience.

Data Elicitation

In order to investigate the impact of engaging students in the learning process by asking them to provide feedback on their peers' work on Blackboard, different tools were used in a mixed methods approach that involved pre-test/post-test and interviews. This approach provides triangulation, which can increase confidence in the research data, reveal distinctive findings, and lead to a better understanding of the problem under investigation (Thurmond, 2001). Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to analyze the data obtained in this study. The quantitative aspects of the data were extracted from the pre-test/post-test, whereas the qualitative data were obtained from analyzing the students' interviews at the end of the study. To answer the first question, the numerical data that were obtained from the students' pre-test and post-test in both groups (i.e., the experimental group and the control group) were statistically analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to see if there was a significant difference in the performance of each group.

The second phase of data analysis involved conducting a qualitative analysis of the data collected from the interviews with students in the experimental group in the study. The researcher checked the interview transcripts for repetitions, similarities, and differences as a way to recognize emerging themes in the participants' experiences. A theme here refers to a "major dimension, major aspect, or constituent of the phenomenon studied; expressed more simply, a partial descriptor of the phenomenon" (Tesch, 1987, p. 230).

Results

As mentioned earlier, the students in the experimental group were engaged in the learning process by being required to provide feedback on the work of their classmates through Blackboard. In order to examine the impact of this treatment, their performance was compared with that of their counterparts in the control group. Students in the two groups were tested at the beginning of the semester (pre-test) and at the end of the semester (post-test) to compare their results and to determine whether the treatment enhanced the performance of the students in the experimental group. The mean scores on both tests were calculated for each group, and a t-test was conducted to compare the post-test results of the two groups. Before proceeding to the results of these tests, the scores of students in both groups on the pre-test and post-test are presented in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1. PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST GRADES OF STUDENTS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS

S	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
1	3	4.15	3	3.6
2	2.5	4.3	3	3.7
3	3	3.5	3	3.5
4	3.8	4.5	3.5	3.5
5	4	4.2	4.5	4.35
6	2.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
7	3.5	4.4	2.5	4.2
8	3.5	4.2	4.5	4.1
9	3	4.25	4.5	4.1
10	3.5	3.9	3.55	3.9
11	4	4.9	2	3
12	3	4.5	1.5	4
13	4.2	3.5	3.6	4.05
14	2	3.5		

The mean score of both groups on the pre-test and post-test is presented in Table 2, and the results of the t-test of the post-test are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 2. MEAN SCORE OF THE GRADES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND THE CONTROL GROUPS IN THE PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST

Type of test	Experimental Group	Control Group
Pre-test	3.25	3.28
Post-test	4.09	3.80

TABLE 3. RESULTS OF THE T-TEST COMPARING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND CONTROL GROUP IN THE POST-TEST

Group	No	M	SD	t	df	sig.
Experimental	14	4.09	.357	2.18	32	0.036*
Control	13	3.80	.383			

P value <0.05

The results of the pre-test and post-test for the experimental and control groups shown above indicate that the students in the experimental group outperformed their counterparts in the control group on the post-test. As shown in Table 2, the mean score for the experimental group's students in the pre-test was 3.25 while it was 3.28 for the control group's students. Looking at the post-test results, students in the experimental group had a higher mean score of 4.09 compared to their peers in the control group with a mean score of 3.80. Additionally, the t-test that was carried out, shown in Table 3, indicates that the differences between the results of the two groups on the post-test were statistically significant as the *P value* was less than 0.05. These results indicate that the treatment (i.e., requiring the students to comment on the work of their classmates on Blackboard) had a positive impact on the performance of students in the experimental group. These findings resonate with the results obtained by Alshehab (2013), who found that translation students taught via e-learning platforms outperformed those who were taught using traditional classroom methods.

Several key themes have been revealed by the analysis of the students interviews in regard to the use of Blackboard to enhance the translation learning experience, highlighting both the benefits as well as the challenges of this approach.

Difficulties in Peer Review

The majority of students reported some difficulties when reviewing their peers' translations. These challenges were mainly related to the difficulty understanding the context of the translation, variability in translation quality insurance, and the length of some texts. For instance, one student mentioned that *"Some texts were long, which made it difficult to be precise, and I might miss some details in my review of my classmates' translations".* Another student explained, *"Translation variability makes it hard to provide consistent feedback".* Moreover, some students highlighted that written communication might be at times less clear than oral explanation.

Enhancement of Translation Skills

Students consistently underscored that peer-review process helped them improve their translation skills. Having the opportunity to look at others' work exposed them to some alternative strategies, encouraged them to expand their vocabulary, and increased their awareness of common errors. One interviewee stated, *"having the opportunity to review my classmates' work helped me notice that I often translate in a rush, and that helped me improve my word choice in the future"*, while another commented, *"Receiving feedback from my classmates helped me identify common mistakes and avoid the in the future"*. Some students also reported that their engagement in the learning process helped them developing a larger repertoire of lexical equivalents and some more alternative translation strategies.

The Distinction between Peer Feedback and Instructor Feedback

Many students highlighted a clear distinction between the feedback they received from their classmates and that of the course's instructor. They believe that peer feedback often focused on surface-level issues such as spelling, punctuation and minor errors. In contrast, the instructor's feedback was perceived as more comprehensive and technically accurate, addressing both structural and theoretical aspects of translation. One student explained, "*Peer feedback is somewhat correct, but the instructor's feedback is more accurate because they have deeper knowledge of the subject"* while another stated, *"Peers provide informal feedback, whereas the instructor provides advice based on professional expertise".*

Flexibility of Remote Learning

Students continued highlighting the advantages of using Blackboard for translation tasks, particularly the flexibility it offered. Working remotely allowed students to manage their time, research unfamiliar vocabulary, and reflect before providing feedback. One student noted, *"Using Blackboard gave us enough time to translate and think before giving feedback"* while another explained, *"Remote translation allowed me to work at my own pace and look up words I did not understand, which is not always possible in class".*

Integration of Traditional and Digital Learning

The majority of the students suggested that combining the flexibility of Blackboard learning with in-class interaction would be more effective for translation learning. This hybrid approach allows learners to benefit from technology while still engaging in real-time clarification and discussion with classmates and especially with the course's instructor. One participant observed, *"Blackboard should complement direct interaction with classmates and the course's instructor to achieve the best results"*, emphasizing the importance of balancing both methods.

Overall Positive Experience

All the students described the experience as highly positive and productive. They reported increased confidence in their translations, the ability to learn from peers' mistakes, and improved overall translation quality. As one student noted, *"The experience was excellent and made translation more effective and comfortable"* while another commented, *"Using Blackboard was highly beneficial in enhancing my translation skills and correcting my mistakes".*

DISCUSSION

In response to the two questions posed in this study, the findings indicate that students in the experimental group outperformed their counterparts in the control group. Additionally, they had a positive attitude toward giving feedback on the work of their classmates. In her book *Multiple Voices in the Translation Classroom: Activities, Tasks and Projects*, González-Davies (2004) called for the integration of students' voices in the learning of translation. One of the most crucial aspects of this learning is the provision of feedback on students' learning. Despite the valuable feedback it provides, the instructor's feedback alone is not sufficient. Students need to have the opportunity to provide feedback on their classmates' work and receive feedback on the work they do from their peers. In spite of not being as accurate as the instructor's feedback, peer feedback has two distinctive positive features: it is available in greater quantity and with greater immediacy (Topping, 2009). Moreover, students may react more receptively to peer feedback than to that provided by the instructor, hence the peer review method can encourage a more collaborative and collegial learning environment, wherein productive and insightful learning can take place (Reiber, 2006).

Receiving feedback might be beneficial to students' learning, but providing it holds the same potential. Nicol (2010) argues that, "when students regularly give feedback on the assignments of peers […] they develop the ability to recognize what characterizes a quality assignment and about the different ways it can be produced: they learn that quality does not come in a pre-defined form, rather there is a spectrum of possibilities" (p. 510).

Looking at the work of others gives students insight into their own performance when they complete a certain task, which ultimately contributes to reviewer learning. Dunlap and Grabinger (2003) maintain that, "the process of reviewing someone else's work can help learners reflect on and articulate their own views and ideas, ultimately improving their own work" (as cited in Dunlap, 2005, p. 20). Participants in this study admitted that they learnt a lot by looking at their classmates' work. They looked at the strongest aspects of their classmates' translations and tried to imitate them later when they were working on their own texts. Additionally, when they spotted errors in their classmates' translated texts, they tended to avoid making the same mistakes when they translated a text. So, the process of conducting a peer review will be reflected in their own work in later stages, hopefully improving it. This is what Perkins and Salomon (1992) meant by "transfer of learning". Students transfer whatever they learn when assessing their peers' work to their own translation work, applying any knowledge gained from the assessment to their own work.

One last factor that may have contributed to the improvement in the performance of the treatment group's students is their knowledge that their work was going to be reviewed and assessed by their classmates. When students know that their peers will read and assess their work, they become motivated to work harder and produce better work every time (Bryant & Carless, 2010). Pope (2001) echoes this view when he says that, "the knowledge that the work will be rated by peers seems to induce students to write to a higher standard" (p. 243). Finally, giving students the opportunity to be active participants in their learning through providing feedback on the work of their classmates has been proven to have a positive impact on their learning. As translator educators, we need to encourage students to be active participants in the learning process, and one way to do that is to implement e-learning and integrate it with traditional in-class learning to get the best learning experience for our students.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the impact of empowering translation students by giving them the tools necessary to take over their own learning, asking them to utilize the Blackboard Learning System to provide feedback on their classmates' translations and receive feedback on their own work. To gather data for this study, two instruments were administered. Firstly, a pre-test/post-test was used to collect quantitative data to explore the impact of giving students the opportunity to provide feedback on their classmates' translations through Blackboard on their learning of translation. Secondly, qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interviews with the students participating in the study to get in-depth insights into their perception of actively participating in the learning process.

The study presented significant evidence that students in the experimental group outperformed their counterparts in the control group, indicating that the treatment had improved the quality of their performance. Furthermore, the students had an overall positive perception of a learning process that allowed them to be positively active. Having the opportunity to receive feedback from more than one source, i.e., their peers and the course instructor, allowed the students to be aware of the strongest as well as the weakest aspects of their performance. Additionally, when students looked at the translations of their classmates in order to provide them with feedback, this allowed them to look at the same work they had translated from a different angle, which ultimately improved their own performance. On the other hand, some key challenges were reported by the participants of the study, including the difficulties associated with the process of providing feedback, with some students thinking that only the teacher is capable of tackling such a task.

Based on the study's findings, integrating E-learning into translation classrooms is highly recommended. Using the Blackboard Learning System gives students the opportunity to participate actively in the learning process. Integrating the feedback given by the course instructor with the feedback received from classmates through Blackboard can raise students' awareness of the problems that they may have and hence improve the quality of their work.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the limited size of the sample in this study, which might be considered in future research. Any future research could include both genders to look at how the students' gender might impact the way in which they give and receive feedback from their classmates and also how the views of males and females might differ in terms of their involvement in the learning process as a consequence of having the opportunity to give and receive feedback from classmates.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researcher would like to thank the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research at Qassim University for financial support (QU-APC-2026).

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