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Study on the Application of Learning Community in Translation Teaching for English Majors

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Abstract

Learning Communities(LCs) have been applied widely in teaching due to their potential impact on learning outcomes and motivation. Driven by the need for highly qualified and skilled future professional translators, translation teaching for English majors has always been the research focus in the research community. However, traditional translation teaching modes have time, assessment, and outcomes restrictions. In this context, this study drafted an appropriate design of LCs in translation teaching for English majors and explored its feasibility and effectiveness. It adopted tests, questionnaires, and interviews to examine the effects of LCs on students' translation proficiency, knowledge of translation, and perceptions of LCs. Employing group comparisons of tests and questionnaires as well as a summary of interviews, this study found that translation teaching in LCs enhanced learners' translation proficiency and knowledge of translation. Meanwhile, the learners' satisfaction with the experimental teaching was quite high. Also, this study offers a range of recommendations for optimizing the application of LCs. These recommendations serve as valuable guidance for harnessing the full potential of LCs to achieve educational goals.

Keywords

Learning community; Translation teaching; Translation proficiency; Knowledge of translation; English major; High education.

1. Introduction

The development of the 21st century calls for a high need for highly qualified and skilled future translators. Translation training in high education is exploring effective teaching modes to cultivate students' translation discipline. Being potential translators, English majors in universities are expected to have the following skills and qualities (Garrison, 2015): (a) teamwork skills; (b) to master translation theories and professional skills in the target language and source language; (c) to be innovative enough to apply professional knowledge of translation and (d) to grasp translation methods and techniques (Cheng, 2022). However, due to the lack of pedagogical and methodological principles (Nasr, 2022) translation teaching in high education is currently facing many difficulties and challenges. First, the translation teaching approach is rigid. Due to the deep-rooted traditional translation teaching concept, many teachers still cling to the traditional teaching approach (Rivera, 2019). They tend to use the grammar-based textbook as the blueprint (Valenti & Galimberti, 2015a), analyze the original text and its translation only from the micro level, explain the translations of famous articles by famous translators, and instill the relevant translation theories without paying attention to the students' personal experience in translation learning (Ning & Ban, 2022). Second, the evaluation of translation teaching is single (Zhang, 2021). Admittedly, teaching evaluation is an indispensable part of the teaching mode. So far, deeply influenced by traditional teaching concepts, teachers tend to adopt summative assessment (Wilson-Armour,2020), evaluating the product of translation (ie., translated texts). Each assessment outcome

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contributes to the final assessment at the end of the learning process (Scriven, 1967);(Strijbos,2016). This ignores the students' involvement and feedback in learning, decreases their motivation (Zappatore, 2022), and thus, seriously hinders improving their translations and the acquisition of translation knowledge (Zhang, 2021). Third, the integration of online and offline teaching is relatively inadequate (Salamah, 2021b). Although some universities have adopted blended teaching (Gerber & Tobias, 2020), flipped teaching (Gondra & Aguiló-Mora, 2024) and collaborative translation (Zappatore, 2022), etc. as predominant practices, online and offline teaching is poorly connected, even completely separated due to teachers' insufficient perception of these creative concepts (Retnomurti et al., 2024). For example, some teachers simply regard pre-class previews and after-class reviews as online learning or take online resource uploading as online teaching. During these processes, there is inadequate online teaching or interactions between teacher and student. Thus, there is no unity or continuity between these teaching activities. Fourth, because of the imbalanced development of Translation Competence (TC) (Salamah, 2021a), which should be the starting point of all decisions regarding the design of translation teaching (Kiraly, 1995), learner's translations are poorly organized (Salamah, 2021a). At present, students' failure to effectively verify and compare the accuracy of translated texts is the main problem displayed in their translated texts, which, to a large degree, is caused by insufficient bilingual and specialized knowledge about translation (Golden & Karpur, 2013) (Valenti & Galimberti, 2015b). Therefore, the shortcomings in translation teaching mentioned above have been the main obstacles to cultivating qualified translators. Only by exploring pedagogical and methodological principles and then taking corresponding measures can translation teaching truly cultivate qualified and capable translators needed by society.

According to the existing literature, LCs have multiple advantages that may help to make up for the shortcomings of traditional translation teaching mode and improve the effectiveness of translation teaching. The research on LCs shows that learners would benefit significantly from the supportive environment provided by LCs (Salleh & Ibrahim, 2020a);(Fadeke Adeola Atobatele et al., 2024).

First, the teaching in LCs is no longer teacher-centered but student-centered. The learner is the subject of learning activities and the construction of knowledge; the teacher is the organizer and helper of learning activities (Fadeke Adeola Atobatele et al., 2024). Activities that facilitate the exploration of divergent perspectives, collaborative thinking (Garrison, 2015), and problem-solving (Voogt & Roblin, 2012); (Wen & Zhang, 2020) are the main parts of teaching activities.

Second, the dimensional assessments in LCs promote learner's engagement and persistence. Group assessment (Strijbos, 2016) individual assessment as well as peer assessment (Sridharan et al., 2018) are adopted in LCs to evaluate group members' contribution to the group task, to stimulate learners' participation and persistence in learning and to reduce free-riding behaviors and social loafing (Johnston & Miles, 2004).

Third, LCs produce a positive impact on learner's learning outcomes. Intensive engagement with new knowledge helps them enhance knowledge acquisition and provides them with social support networks, academic resources, and communicative opportunities (Magana et al., 2023).

While the LCs mentioned above have been previously constructed in the teaching of various subjects but in the translation teaching for English majors, it is hypothesized that these findings may be transferable to the translation teaching (Almalki & Sabir, 2022). To test this hypothesis, we conducted an empirical study in a sample of undergraduate English majors (n=53) in China. During the intervention, we implemented several evidence-based LC methods in teaching and explored if LCs were associated with any change in learners' translation proficiency, knowledge about translation, and satisfaction with translation teaching compared with the traditional teaching mode.

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2. Review of Literature

2.1. Theoretical background of LC

The concept of LC was first articulated in 1995 by Earnest Boyer (Boyer, 1995) in *Learning Communities in Fundamental Schools* after F. Toennies had introduced the concept of community in his book Community and Society. Among scholars, LC is defined as: "...an organization of individuals who learn together with a shared mission and a shared vision"(Boyer, 1995), and "...a collection of individuals who share a common interest, engage in joint activities and collaborate in a meaningful manner to enhance their learning and knowledge" (Wenger, 1998). According to Dillenbourg (Dillenbourg, 1999a); (Dillenbourg, 1999b), a successful LC consists of (i) a collaborative environment i.e., in which meaningful connections with peers are established, and a supportive and inclusive learning environment is fostered by academic advisors, so that learners feel valued and accepted, (ii)a collaborative interaction, i.e., that members, including teacher, with equal status, share knowledge, collaborate, communicate and reflect on each other not only to achieve a common vision and accomplish a common task, but also to promote each other's growth and good interpersonal relationships, and (iii)a collaborative mechanism, i.e., that learning activities and initiatives promote intra-cultural or intercultural communication, peer mentoring programs and enhance learner's engagement, and thus promote their academic success with adequate access to academic resources, support services.

The principles of a successful LC should underpin both LC group features and structures (Love, 2012). According to Hankins, A., the high structure of groups is a key element to ensure effective communication within groups (Hankins, 2022). The present literature suggests that groups can consist of 3 to 4 students to avoid free-riding behavior (Cornejo Happel & Song, 2020). He also suggests that learners' characteristics, academic abilities, and background should be considered when grouping or these can be facilitators or barriers to engagement and effectiveness. Also, facilitators' guides are indispensable for participatory decision-making (Kaner, 2014). Further, facilitators should give timely feedback, and design appropriate systems of self-assessment (Varela et al., 1997) and peer assessment (Sivan, 2000); (Sridharan et al., 2018) to promote learners' engagement and motivation (Li & Grion, 2019).

2.2. Empirical background of LC

Over the past decades, LCs have been widely discussed worldwide, in teaching, education management, and scientific and engineering training. At present, many studies are exploring the rationality and feasibility of applying LCs. The focus of academic discussions and practical LC application have proved the positive impacts of LCs. LCs were believed to be helpful for developing learners' decision-making skills (Kaner, 2014), sense of belonging (Peacock & Cowan, 2019), and communicative competencies (Wong et al., 2022). Furthermore, Horne sorted out that LCs facilitate learners developing soft skills in research and development projects (Van Horne & Rakedzon, 2024). Fadeke Adela also found that LCs have produced significant impacts on learners' career philosophy (Fadeke Adeola Atobatele et al., 2024). Besides, LCs also contribute to academic performance and professional development (Salleh & Ibrahim, 2020b), because learners' engagement was positively correlated with the level of professional knowledge, self-efficacy, and self-professional beliefs (Wen & Zhang, 2020). Rumiantsev declared that situational factors, learning activities, and learning outputs were highly correlated (Rumiantsev et al., 2023). According to him, LCs provide learners with an active learning environment, which helps develop their cognitive, perceptual professional skills, meta-cognitive abilities, and social collaborative skills.

Despite the benefits of LC for teaching and learning, challenges in its application have also been discussed. One challenge is to optimize the design of LCs in teaching(De Hei et al., 2016). For

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example, how should teachers organize learning activities to make students' positive role fully played and to minimize teachers' role of guidance is under investigation. Another challenge is how to effectively assess students' performance in LCs (Meijer et al., 2020). One more challenge is to maximize learners' acceptance and satisfaction of LCs. According to Mohammed, the acceptance of an LC applied in translation may be influenced by group culture(Mohammed, 2020).

Besides, the available literature on LCs reveals that LCs have not yet made major inroads into translation teaching (Retnomurti et al., 2024), with only a few theoretically based descriptions of how to incorporate LCs into EFL (Almalki & Sabir, 2022); (Salamah, 2021b), with undergraduate English majors being relatively under-researched (Zappatore, 2022), though its research interest is soaring.

3. Research Questions

To remedy the current issues in translation teaching, we capitalize on a golden opportunity offered by an undergraduate course in translation in 2023, where, we implemented an empirical teaching of LC. Specifically, the empirical teaching consists of three parts, the collaborative learning before, in, and after class, to address the following research questions:

Question 1(Q1): Does the LC help improve the quality of learners' translations?

Question 2(Q2): Does the LC help improve the knowledge about translation?

Question 3(Q3): What is the acceptance of the application of the LC in translation teaching for English majors?

4. Methodology

4.1. Participants

The participants were 53 third-year English majors (M=10; F=43; mean age= 20.42 years, SD=0.80), from a university in the southwest part of China1. According to the pilot test questionnaire, all of them take Chinese as their mother tongue and English as their first foreign language. Before this study, none of them had any experience studying abroad. None of them had received professional and systematic translation training or taken translation-related courses. Besides, 84.62% of them had passed the Test for English Majors Band 4 (TEM-4, a compulsory and standardized proficiency test for English majors in China), being at a reasonable proficient level of English to work with authentic language in translation teaching (Zappatore, 2022). Another reason why they were selected to be the participants is that they were to undertake the Test for English Majors Band 8 (TEM-8, higher than TEM-4). The translation part in TEM-8 is so challenging that they had an immediate need for focused instruction in translation, especially in Chinese-English translation.

The participants were randomly divided into two classes. One of the classes was randomly selected as an experimental class (EC, N =27) and the other as a control class (CC, N=26).

4.2. Instruments

Test for English Majors Band 8(TEM-8)

To establish the homogeneity of language proficiency, the subjects were given a test of translation, which was randomly chosen from the translation tasks of the TEM-8 test papers. With a full score of 100, a higher score reflects the learner's better translation proficiency.

Questionnaires

Questionnaire 1 was used as the pre-test and the post-test to determine the students' translation knowledge, which was designed based on the pedagogical design of this study and the definition of knowledge about translation sub-competence proposed by PACTE Group

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(PACTE GROUP, 2017), mainly testing learners' knowledge of translation processes, translation methods, and translation techniques.

This questionnaire employs a five-point Likert scale: "1" represents "hardly ever," "2" represents "seldom," "3" represents "sometimes," "4" represents "often," and "5" represents "almost always". The questionnaire contains 19 items, and scores between 19 and 95 are possible. A higher score reflects the learner's better mastery of this aspect.

It was tested to have good reliability and validity by SPSS 27.0, with an internal consistency coefficient of 0.860, overall reliability (Cronbach's Alpha= 0.864, n = 118), and overall validity (KMO and Bartlett's Test= 0.798, p= .000) more than 0.7, the reliability and validity for each element higher than 0.7 (p=.000).

Questionnaire 2 was used to gauge students' satisfaction with the experimental teaching in EC. It was designed based on the pedagogical design of this study, with 20 questions carefully designed. It employs a five-point Likert scale: "1" represents "strongly disagree," "2" represents "disagree," "3" represents "hard to say," "4" represents "agree," and "5" represents "strongly agree," and scores between 20 and 100 are possible. A higher score reflects the learner's better acceptance and perception of LC.

It was tested to have sound reliability and validity by SPSS 27.0, with an internal consistency coefficient of 0.860, the overall reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.922, n =118), and the overall validity (KMO and Bartlett's Test = 0.824, p= .000) more than 0.8, the reliability and validity for each element higher than 0.7 (p= .000).

Interview

The study finally conducted semi-structured interviews to digress and probe the students' attitudes toward the experimental teaching. The outline of the interview consists of 6 questions, 4 of which cover some of the core questions in Questionnaire 2 to re-verify the authenticity of the data in that part of Questionnaire 2. The other 2 questions were semi-open-ended questions regarding students' acceptance of various links of teaching activities in the learning community model (reflection journals, collaborative group work, intra- and inter-group sharing, and multi-dimensional evaluation); and their satisfaction with the setup of teaching translation in this semester.

4.3. Procedure: Data collection

The experiment was conducted during the autumn semester of 2023, and all data used in this study were gathered by tests, questionnaires, and interviews. The first survey was administered after pilot tests in the first lecture of the semester. The students were asked to finish the pre-test within 20 minutes without checking any reference or dictionary. The data collection procedure of tests rigidly followed the grading process of the translation test in TEM-8.

Then, they were asked to finish the pre-questionnaire about translation knowledge (Questionnaire 1) within 5 minutes. After the experiment, the remaining surveys were conducted. The students were given the post-test after a pilot test in the last lecture of the semester. Then, they were asked to finish Questionnaire 1 within 5mins. The content of this survey remained unchanged, students were asked to finish it without a pilot test. After that, students in EC were asked to finish Questionnaire 2 within 5 minutes. The data from these two questionnaires were distributed and collected by the APP platform, named Wen Juanxing(WJX) in China.

Finally, 9 students from EC were randomly chosen to be interviewed during the same period of the following day. Each interview was conducted between 15 and 25 minutes. During the interview, the researcher made every effort to reduce the halo effect. The whole interview was recorded by a voice recorder.

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To adhere to the research ethics regulations, the participants were informed of the purpose of the study, and that their participation was voluntary. Also, any personal data collected by this study would be de-identified, treated confidentially, and deleted after the completion of the study.

4.4. Procedure:

To answer the research questions presented above, this study adopted a pretest/post-test two-treatment design that would allow both within-group and between-group comparisons (Møgelvang et al., 2023). Besides, Questionnaire 2 and interviews were adopted to explore further about the experiment.

The LC learning intervention

The intervention study lasted one semester, 135 minutes for each lecture per week, 18 weeks in total. It consists of (i) pretests to assess the participants' translation proficiency and knowledge of translation, (ii) two treatments in EC and CC, (iii) post-tests to evaluate the participants' differences in translation proficiency and knowledge of translation, and (iv) a questionnaire and interviews to explore the participants' perceptions and attitudes toward the LC interventions.

To minimize the empirical error, the same teacher conducted all lectures for the two classes at the same stage of the same semester. And the teacher used the same translation textbook to teach the same translation learning content with the teaching equipment of the same conditions.

During the experiment, EC received translation instruction in an LC, while CC received it in a traditional teaching mode, with the teacher teaching translation theories, analyzing the original text and translation only from the micro level, explaining the translation of famous articles by famous translators, and evaluating students' translations based on the assignment given by the teacher (Cheng, 2022); (Retnomurti et al., 2024).

Figure1. Teaching flow of learning activities in LC

The construction of the LC in this experiment followed the LC principles, especially the LC group features and structures (Love, 2012). Meanwhile, all learning activities designed took positive

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interdependence and individual accountability (Cornejo Happel & Song, 2020), facilitators, and barriers to engagement and effectiveness (Kaner, 2014) like students‘ characteristics into consideration. During the experiment, the facilitators (the teacher and the first author) made many efforts to give timely online and offline feedback. Further, they also designed systems of self-assessment (Varela et al., 1997) and peer assessment (Sivan, 2000); (Sridharan et al., 2018) related to the learning activities to promote learners‘ engagement and motivation (Li & Grion, 2019). The teaching flow in the LC is displayed in Fig. 1.

4.5. Statistical analyses

The collected scores of tests and descriptive data from Questionnaire 1 were analyzed to investigate the impacts of the LC activities on learners’ (1) translation proficiency and (2) knowledge of translation. Since the participants involved in each class were fewer than 30, a range of confirmatory analyses were conducted through SPSS Statistics 27.0 (IBM Corp, 2021). First, factor structure, exploratory normal distribution, and internal consistency were tested by running factor analyses, and descriptive analysis before doing the formal t-test. Then, two independent sample t-tests, two paired sample t-tests, and two ANCOVA tests were conducted to compare whether the two classes performed differently on the two aspects, with the alpha value for achieving statistical significance being .05 (two-tailed) (Cronbach, 1951). In addition, the figures for each dimension were calculated and analyzed in detail to examine the LC’s impacts on different aspects of knowledge about translation.

The last research question was answered by analyzing the learners’ responses to the items in Questionnaire 2 and the semi-structural questions in interviews to examine different perceptions of the affordances and constraints of the LC in this study. The figures for each dimension in Q2 were calculated and analyzed in detail to explore the learners’ perception of the LC in this study. Also, the learner’s feedback on various links to the learning activities designed in this experiment was summarized and analyzed.

5. Results

All variables met assumptions of normal distribution and acceptable reliability (Cronbach, 1951) in two sets of data (Table A. 1).

Table A.1 Tests of Normality for tests and questionnaires (Q1) in EC&CC

Tests of Normality

			Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk			Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Class	N	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	Std.Error	Statistic	Std.Error
Pre-test	EC	27	.133	27	.200*	.925	27	.153	.795	.448	.977	.872
	CC	26	.135	26	.200*	.938	26	.121	.455	.456	.880	.887
Post-test	EC	27	.111	27	.200*	.944	27	.156	.299	.448	1.001	.872
	CC	26	.122	26	.200*	.949	26	.222	.062	.456	.974	.887
Difference between tests	EC	27	.111	27	.200*	.957	27	.318	-.177	.448	-1.067	.872
	CC	26	.102	26	.200*	.947	26	.196	-.584	.456	-.312	.887
Pre-Q1	EC	25	.126	25	.200*	.964	25	.505	.192	.464	1.005	.902
	CC	25	.171	25	.259	.927	25	.272	.198	.464	1.532	.902
Post-Q1	EC	25	.117	25	.200*	.958	25	.377	.740	.464	-.966	.902
	CC	25	.094	25	.200*	.962	25	.462	-.401	.464	.980	.902
Difference between Q1	EC	25	.093	25	.200*	.972	25	.687	-.144	.464	.328	.902
	CC	25	.139	25	.200*	.932	25	.095	.413	.464	-1.302	.902

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Pre-Q1=pre-questionnaire1;Post-Q1=post-questionnaire1.

Difference between Q1=

pre-questionnaire-post-questionnaire (EC); pre-questionnaire-post-questionnaire(CC).

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Research Question 1: Does the LC help improve the quality of learners' translations?

As Table B.1 shows, 53 students took the tests of TEM-8, with CC (N = 26), and EC (N = 27). Through repeated Independent Sample Tests, we found that the two interventions in EC and CC have both produced positive effects on students' translation texts, with a significant increase in the mean of post-test in EC (M = 89.41, SD = 3.62) and in CC (M = 86.23, SD = 5.96), t(51)= -2.357,d= - .53, 95%CI[-5.8825, -.4708], P = .022, < .05.

Table B.1 Means, standard deviations, and independent-samples T-tests for the study variables in EC&CC.

Independent-sample T-tests							
	Class	N	Mean	SD	t	P	d
Pre-test	EC	27	78.8889	2.99144	t(51)	.184	.02
	CC	26	80.3846	4.89961	1.347		
Post-test	EC	27	89.4074	3.61896	t(51)	.022	-.53
	CC	26	86.2308	5.95522	-2.357		
Pre-Q1	EC	25	47.4000	11.75798	t(48)	.725	-.127
	CC	25	46.4000	7.87930	-.353		
Post-Q1	EC	25	70.12	8.238	t(48)	.001	-1.128
	CC	25	62.88	6.418	-3.466		

However, according to the results of the paired sample test (Table B.2) and one-way ANCOVA (Table B.3, 4) the translation teaching in the LC has produced more positive effects on students' translated texts than the traditional mode of translation teaching, with a significant difference in the score of the post-test in EC and CC, sig. (.000)<.05. And the mean score of the post-test in EC outperformed that in CC, with a great gap of 3.18 in the mean score of the post-score (89.41) in EC and that (86.23) in CC. The learners in EC were able to improve their translation proficiency in the LC.

Table B.2 Means, standard deviations and Paired-samples T-tests for the study variables in EC&CC.

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)	d
Pair 1 EC	Pre-test-Post-test	-10.5185	3.40102	.6545	-16.070	26	.000	-3.093
Pair 2 CC	Pre-test-Post-test	-5.8462	4.60167	.9024	-6.478	25	.000	-1.27
Pair 1 EC	Pre-Q1-Post-Q2	-22.72000	12.95994	2.59199	-8.765	24	.000	-1.753
Pair 2 CC	Pre-Q1-Post-Q2	-16.48000	8.56894	1.71379	-9.616	24	.000	-1.86

Table B.3 Descriptive statistics of Post-test

Dependent Variable: post-test of TEM-8			
Classes	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
EC	89.4074	3.61896	27
CC	86.2308	5.95522	26
Total	87.8491	5.11557	53

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Table B.4 Inferential Statistics of Post-test

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: post-test of TEM-8

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	587.682a	2	293.841	19.004	.000	.432
Intercept	110.311	1	110.311	7.134	.010	.125
Pre-test of EC&CC	454.023	1	454.023	29.363	.000	.370
Class	234.407	1	234.407	15.160	.000	.233
Error	773.111	50	15.462			
Total	410386.000	53				
Corrected Total	1360.792	52				

a. R Squared = .432 (Adjusted R Squared = .409)

Research Question 2: Does the LC help improve the knowledge about translation?

What is more, the translation teaching in both classes promoted learners' acquisition of translation knowledge, with a rise in the mean of post-questionnaire 1 in EC (M = 70.12, SD = 8.24), t(48)= -3.466, d= -1.128, 95%CI[-11.429, -3.041], p<.05 (Table B.1).

Furthermore, the results of the one-way ANCOVA (Table B.5, 6) and Paired Sample Test (Table B.2), show that the translation teaching in the LC has produced more significant effects on students' translation knowledge than the traditional mode of translation teaching, with a significant difference in the score of post-questionnaire 1 in EC and CC, sig. (.000) <.05. And the mean score of post-questionnaire 1 in EC greatly outdid that in CC, with the mean score of 70.12 and 62.88, respectively. This reveals that the LC constructed in the EC was helpful for the improvement of students' knowledge of translation.

Table B.5 Descriptive statistics of Post-questionnaire

Dependent Variable: post-questionnaire 1

Classes	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
EC	70.1200	8.23772	25
CC	62.8800	6.41820	25
Total	66.5000	8.17225	50

Table B.6 Inferential Statistics of Post-questionnaire

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Post-questionnaire 1

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	793.709a	2	396.855	7.525	.001	.243
Intercept	7177.042	1	7177.042	136.083	.000	.743
Pre-questionnaire	138.489	1	138.489	2.626	.112	.053
Classes	623.241	1	623.241	11.817	.001	.201
Error	2478.791	47	52.740			
Total	224385.000	50				
Corrected Total	3272.500	49				

a. R Squared = .243 (Adjusted R Squared = .210)

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Besides, to further analyze the effect of LC on students' mastery of different aspects of translation knowledge, this study further counted the data of the respective dimensions in the pre-test and post-test of Questionnaire 1 for both classes. The details are shown in Chart B.1.

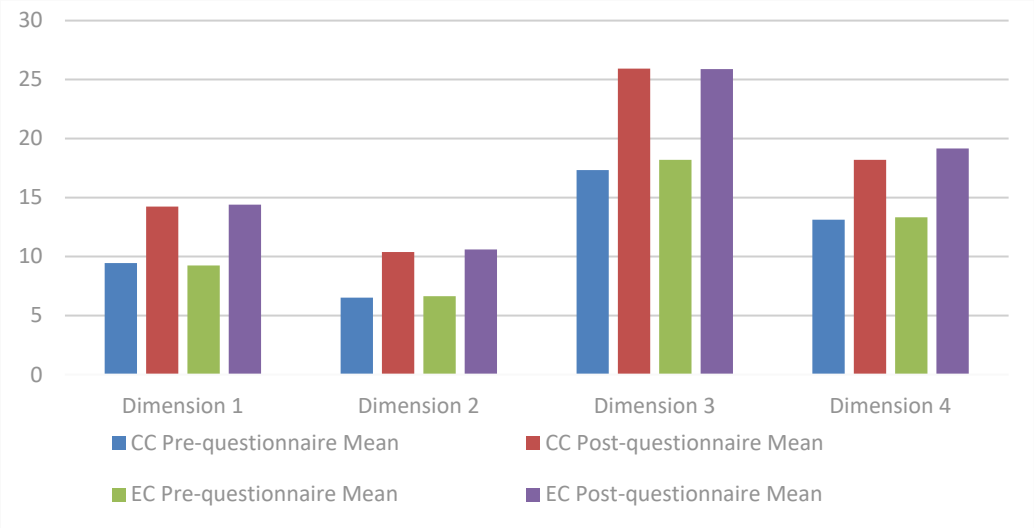

Chart B.1 Descriptive Statistics of the Results of Questionnaire 1

As shown in Chart B.1, after one semester of translation instruction, the students in both classes have made improvements in all aspects of translation knowledge, though they were at a lower level before the translation instruction. This is consistent with the findings of the overall data analysis of this questionnaire in the above section. Specifically, the figures for the 4 dimensions in CC and EC were relatively low, with 9.44, 9.24 for Dimension 1, 6.52, and 6.64 the second; 17.32, 18.20 for the third; and 13.12, 13.32 for the fourth.

However, after the translation teaching, the figures for these four dimensions increased separately. Nevertheless, the scores for EC were relatively higher than those for CC. Specifically, compared with the students in CC, those who were in EC were more familiar with the translation process, including the pre-translation preparation and post-translation proofreading, with a mean score of 14.40 in EC and 14.23 in CC. Similarly, the figures for Dimension 2 (10.60) and Dimension 4 (19.16) in EC were also higher than those in CC (D2:10.38, D4:18.19). This indicates that the LC helped students understand and apply different translation methods, like recreation, and literal translation, and promoted them to communicate with their classmates and teacher to solve the problems in translation practice.

By contrast, there was no significant gap between the scores of Dimension 3 in CC (25.92) and EC (25.88) after the teaching experiment. This might be resulted by the limited teaching periods, which makes it rather challenging for students to master all translation techniques.

Overall, compared with figures for CC, students in EC have made relatively more improvement in the four dimensions of translation knowledge, especially in understanding the importance of pre-translation preparation and proofreading after translation. In such a learning environment, students were more likely to adopt positive methods to cope with the difficulties and challenges in translation practice.

Research Question 3: What is the acceptance of the application of the LC in translation teaching for English majors?

To answer the third research question, the study sent out Q2, which is about the students' perceptions of the LC applied in translation teaching. Besides, another nine students from EC were interviewed during the same period. The results of Q2 are listed in Table B.7.

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Table B.7 Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire 2

Dimension	N of items	Min	Max	Sum	Mean	Level	N=23	Percent (%)
Dimension 1(Q5-15)	11	33	55	55	50.261	1	0	.000
						2	0	.000
						3	1	4.348
						4	1	4.348
						5	21	91.304
Dimension 2(Q18,20,21)	3	6	15	15	10.130	1	0	.000
						2	3	13.043
						3	7	30.435
						4	10	43.478
						5	3	13.043
Dimension 3(Q2,3,4,19)	4	11	20	20	16.957	1	0	.000
						2	0	.000
						3	2	8.696
						4	7	30.435
						5	14	60.870
Dimension 4(Q16,17)	2	5	10	10	8.261	1	0	.000
						2	0	.000
						3	4	17.390
						4	9	39.130
						5	10	43.478
Total Score Mean			100 85.609					

As Table B.7 displays, the majority in EC gave positive responses to the teaching instruction in LC, with all 4 dimensions being over level 3. For Dimension 1, the majority (95.652%) in EC were satisfied with the design of translation learning, which took learners' individuality into account, so that the students' subjectivity was also somewhat manifested. Besides, they also accepted the role of the facilitator, who is conducive to in-depth communication between the students and thus promoting translation learning.

A similar pattern can be found in the figures for Dimension 3. As high as 91.305% of the students were satisfied with this translation course curriculum, translation materials, and evaluation methods in the experimental teaching. Only 8.696% of them were moderate in these aspects.

Similarly, the figures for Dimension 4 display that 82.608% of the students agreed that their interest and confidence in translation learning have been promoted in the learning environment of LC.

However, for Dimension 2, only 56.521% of them held that their translation competence, including discourse competence, had improved after receiving the translation instruction in EC. 30.435% of them had not found distinct improvement in this aspect; even 13.043% negatively believed that their discourse competence had improved much after a semester's learning.

Results of interviews

Question 1:

According to the 9 interviewees, translation teaching activities in LC helped to improve their interest in translation learning, for the LC provides a communicative environment, which boosts the chances of communication between students, especially for students who are at a lower level of proficiency and who are more introverted. The differences between students' translations directly aroused their curiosity, which led to in-depth discussion and wondering "why others think that way" (S1).

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Meanwhile, students' anxiety in learning translation was reduced in LC. Student 2 confessed that at the beginning of the course, he was anxious about the translation task because of the lack of vocabulary, improper expression of sentence patterns, etc. But, as the teacher encouraged communication and sharing within groups, he felt it easy to complete the translation task because he was no longer "alone" in a group.

For Questions 2 and 3, most interviewees declared that the engagement in teaching activities in LC also helped them understand and absorb the relevant translation theories and techniques. While engaging in these activities, their responsibility for group achievements also motivated them to explore much. S3 confessed that " I am embarrassed to muddle through when I see that everyone else is working hard", and "After all, everyone else has done so much, so I have to try my best to share some of it (the task)".

When asked about their views of reflective journals, 8 out of 9 interviewees held a positive attitude towards it, which helped summarize insights and reflections on translation practices in time (S4) and absorb translation knowledge and translation skills (S6).

Similarly, they viewed that the intra- and inter-group interaction helped them "visualize the relevant translation theories," "internalize different translation techniques" (S4), and further correct their translations (S5). Also, they were in favor of giving or random sharing within groups because it could make up for the lack of keeping track of too much content in class (S2).

Again, most of the students agreed with the attempt at multidimensional evaluation but were hesitant about intra-group evaluation, for "scoring among classmates is not very objective and gets in the way of face between classmates" (S8), "For the consideration of subject scores, the scores for this part are relatively high" (S7), and "Maybe group scoring is more objective" (S4).

However, some students held mediate (S8) and even negative (S9) attitudes towards LC because of inadequate communication and participation with group members and misunderstanding of the concept of LC. S8 replied, "There is very little communication. One reason is that I am quite introverted. The communication between boys and girls..." (Researcher's speculation: he feels uncomfortable communicating with girls). S9, on the other hand, held that "the process of cooperation is a waste of time" and that "assigning tasks within the group only makes students tend to do what they are good at and discard or hide what they are not" "...hinder the development of the weak parts". He also claimed that "Especially when time is limited, our group tasks were mainly accomplished through 'jigsaw puzzles' among group members.

When it comes to the suggestions for the LC, the interviewees came up with plenty of ideas. 6 out of 9 respondents indicated that the amount of group tasks was kind of heavy for their present situation. Although the interaction showed many advantages, 4 interviewees suggested that it took much time. Two students (S8, 9) declared that they accustomed themselves to the traditional mode of translation teaching. Respondents (7 out of 9) indicated that literary translated texts were more interesting, and could be the learning task, compared with those of current affairs.4 students indicated that the percentage of intra-group evaluation should be lowered to adjust the validity of the multidimensional evaluation.

In response to the last question, eight students indicated that texts in the current translation textbooks are suitable for their level at this stage in terms of richness and difficulty, except for literary and political texts. However, since this course is directly related to the professional translation competence of English majors, the hours of the existing curriculum are not enough. 3 students even suggested to extend this course to two semesters. Another 6 students advised to increase the frequency of lectures instead of the present schedule.

To sum up, the majority of EC recognized the effectiveness of the translation teaching in LC. During the teaching process, the students found that the feedback, collaboration, communication, and evaluation were contributing to their improvement in translation text and

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that the teaching activities organized in EC promoted their interest and confidence in translation learning.

6. Discussion

6.1. Main findings

This study aims to construct an LC in translation teaching for English majors and explores if the LC mode was associated with any change in learners' translation proficiency, translation knowledge, and perception of LC. Based on the between-group comparison and the results of Questionnaire 2 and the interviews reported above, the research questions can be answered below in the discussion part.

Research Question 1:

The significant difference in the mean scores of post-test in both classes the translation instruction in LC had practically meaningful effects on student's translation proficiency. The mean score in EC was significantly higher than that in CC, which revealed that the learning activities in LC had more positive effects on students' translation proficiency than in traditional translation mode.

Two main contributing factors in LCs could improve learners' translation proficiency. First, the teacher could dominate learning activities and improve the learner's reflective thinking abilities in LCs (Shek et al., 2021). Teachers could first integrate learner's proficiency levels in English and distribute appropriate learning tasks to different groups, within which learners could complete the individual tasks through personal efforts and collaborative learning. During this process, based on learners' reflection journals, teachers could further reflect and adjust learning activities, avoiding the revelation of individuals' weaknesses. Second, learner's motivation could be improved in a collaborative learning environment(Park et al., 2019), in which they could be motivated to engage in learning activities (Lee, 2021), by interpersonal connections, and a sense of belonging (Park H, 2022) and a sense of responsibility. Therefore, the quality of translated texts was enhanced as they engaged much in translation practices.

Research Question 2:

A similar pattern can be seen in the mean scores of Q1 in both classes, which reveals that the translation instruction in LC had produced positively meaningful impacts on student's translation knowledge. With a significantly higher mean score of post-questionnaire in EC compared with that in CC, the learning activities in LC had more positive effects on students' translation knowledge than in traditional translation mode.

One contributing factor to this positive performance is that LCs provide the learners with communicative and collaborative learning with members and facilitators, which could greatly improve language acquisition (Seo E, 2018); (Cao & Yu, 2023). During this process, group leadership could establish and activate interactions. Frequent communications and interactions made it possible for learners to contact the relevant knowledge and skills frequently (Shek et al., 2021) thus facilitating them to construct knowledge.

Another contributing factor is the features of sharing learning outcomes in LCs. Through sharing revised translations, learning resources reflection journals, etc., learners could foster their motivation (Kim & Park, 2018); (Lee, 2021); (Ng & Latife, 2022) and reduce their anxiety and stress in translation tasks (Hilliard et al., 2020).

Research Question 3:

Also, the analysis of the results of Q2 and interviews indicates the positive perception and acceptance of the LC in translation teaching. Besides the factors discussed above, there seemed to be other contributing factors to this statement. LCs are creating a supportive and interactive environment (Pagán et al., 2020), so that learner's interest in translation learning is activated

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and promoted. They could discuss and share their views with peers and facilitators. The diversifying assessment adopted in LCs also promoted learners' motivation and engagement (Ahmed Abdel-Al Ibrahim et al., 2023). Self-assessment (Ahmed Abdel-Al Ibrahim et al., 2023) and the innovative trying of a reflection journal after each translation practice allow learners to reconsider the strategies they employed on their own.

6.2. Findings in light of previous research

Compared our findings on the effects of LC on the outcomes with those in the previous research on LCs, we identify several correspondences, but also novelties. Like this study, previous studies demonstrate that LCs help learners produce more learning outcomes in various aspects. LCs could enhance the effectiveness of foreign language learning (Kim & Park, 2018), facilitate knowledge acquisition(Lee, 2021) foster learning motivation (Ng & Latife, 2022), and mitigate learner's anxiety (Hilliard et al., 2020). The intra-group and inter-group interaction in LCs allows for the exchange of different perspectives, learning resources, and constructive feedback, which deepens understanding, reflection, and learning (Pagán et al., 2020). The peer assessment adopted in LCs promotes learner's motivation, engagement, and self-efficacy (Ahmed Abdel-Al Ibrahim et al., 2023).

However, this study also contributes to the understanding of problems in LCs sorted out from the collected research. First, unlike traditional teaching, teaching in LCs is time-consuming and requires learners to invest more time and energy (Hancock & Hancock, 2021). Then, effective communication and collaboration is highly needed (Su, 2021). Thus, facilitators have to make efforts to reduce the communication barriers between introverted students. The second issue of LCs is designing effective evaluation methods that can appropriately and adequately examine learner's performance and impact fair grading (Chung et al., 2021) otherwise, the objectivity and effectiveness of self-assessment and peer assessment will be reduced. Another issue in LCs may be student's passive learning (Seo E, 2018); (Cao & Yu, 2023). Influenced by the traditional examine-oriented education for a long time (Retnomurti et al., 2024), students lack the initiative to explore relevant references (Ng & Latife, 2022) and cannot accustom themselves to such autonomous learning. Then, the facilitators' positive role in guiding, inspiring, facilitating, and adjusting learning activities was the key to remedy this situation (Zhang, 2021). Furthermore, the reflection journal adopted in this study also helps learners consolidate their understanding and metacognition. Then, timely feedback from facilitators is needed to help them solve difficulties.

6.3. Limitations and strengths

Being rigidly designed and carried out though, this study is limited to several aspects. First, the small size (only 53 samples) in this study reduces the power of the statistics to explore some potential effects of the LC in this study. It is advised that future research include a larger participant pool. Second, this study investigated the short-term effects of LC on the learner's translation proficiency. The results were limited as they only revealed that this group was able to cope with literature translation texts. Yet, this is not sufficient to detect their development of translation proficiency in other styles of translation texts. Therefore, it desires more research on the effects of LCs on different styles of translation texts, including ESP. One more limitation is its application to improve translation proficiency and knowledge of translation. Future research may explore the effects of LCs on other sub-competences of translation. The last restriction is the use of sole pre-and post-tests for data collection. Future studies are expected to use different instruments to collect more trustworthy qualitative statistics and provide a deeper exploration of students' translation process.

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7. Conclusion

To conclude, this study adds new and valuable knowledge about LCs applied in translation teaching for English majors. First, it designs an LC construction and concludes with the positive effects of LC on learning outcomes compared to the traditional translation mode. Second, the findings suggest that LCs are feasible and acceptable in translation teaching for English majors. Our findings are in alignment with theories in LCs, sense of belonging, self-confidence in learning, interest, learning outcomes, and metacognition. Finally, teachers developing translation teaching for English majors are expected to consider student-centered approaches in their course design and to explore and implement LCs to promote teaching effectiveness.

Note1 The sex distribution reflected the gender imbalance in the large population of English major students in the university.

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