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Enhancing SRL-Based Translator Education: A Framework for Offering High-Quality Feedback

Mahboubeh Khalili*

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism, University of Mazandaran, Babolsar, Iran

Abstract

Effective feedback has a pivotal role in translator education. However, its implementation has remained unclear as the nature of translation tasks is multidimensional. Thus, this article proposes a framework, which is grounded in the seven principles of good feedback practice identified by Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006), to integrate high-quality feedback into translation classrooms. The seven principles emphasize clarifying performance standards, promoting structured self-assessment, ensuring timely and constructive feedback, encouraging dialogic interactions, supporting learner self-esteem, enabling iterative revision, and examining student performance to refine teaching methods. The customized version for translation classrooms emphasizes the use of rubrics, annotated models, exemplars, reflective journals, peer review, group translation projects, and low-stakes assessment cycles to encourage autonomous and self-regulated learning. The holistic view of the process indicated the reciprocal nature of feedback: while learners benefit from targeted feedback and opportunities for revision and resubmission, instructors also gain insights into students' needs and the areas that call for pedagogical adjustment. When feedback is systematic ally aligned with the course goals, learning strategies, and metacognitive development, strategic competence, critical awareness, and autonomy in translation learners can be facilitated. In effect, the proposed framework offers a structured model that can enhance both instructional effectiveness and translation learners' performance, which contributes to the broader systematization of translator education.

Keywords: Translator education, learning theories, SRL, feedback, effective instruction

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*Corresponding author: m.khalili@umz.ac.ir

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Introduction

Feedback is a fundamental component of the teaching and learning process. Since it provides necessary information to the learners about their performance, it promotes students' growth and achievement in increasingly diverse, complex educational settings. In the past, feedback was often limited to grading and highlighting mistakes. In contrast, contemporary approaches emphasize its constructive function (Zimmerman & Paulsen, 1995). The value of feedback extends beyond just clarifying learning objectives; not only can it impact academic achievement, as performance can be evaluated in relation to the goals so that modifications could be made (Zimmerman & Paulsen, 1995), it can also improve learners' independence, metacognitive awareness, and engagement (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Panadero et al., 2017; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019; Mandouit & Hattie, 2023; Wang, 2024; Campos, 2025).

In translator education, in line with other fields, modern educational technologies and pedagogical innovations have further reshaped how feedback can be delivered. In fact, feedback should be more dynamic, accessible, and interactive these days (see Khalili, 2025b; Khalili, in press), as the current trend emphasizes personalized learning and active student engagement (Zimmerman & Paulsen, 1995; Popenici & Kerr, 2017; Hwang et al., 2020). Nevertheless, providing effective feedback remains a complex task for instructors. It is clear that feedback that is poorly structured, delayed, vague, negative-focused, irrelevant, or not personalized, can hinder students' motivation and self-growth (Weaver, 2007). To address these challenges, educators are encouraged to adopt strategies that promote clear communication with students, highlight their strengths and weaknesses, and maintain ongoing dialogue with them, all of which can cultivate a supportive learning environment that facilitates continuous improvement (Weaver, 2007).

In the field of translator education, the role of feedback becomes even more critical, due to the fact that the nature of translation tasks is really demanding and multidimensional. In translation classes, students are expected to develop not only linguistic competence, but also decision-making skills as part of translation competence; these skills closely align with the principles of self-regulated learning (SRL). Therefore, effective feedback in this context must extend beyond surface-level correction of translation errors; instead, it must support learners to monitor their translation choices, evaluate their strategic decisions, and reflect on their evolving translation skills. Such an approach is particularly important in contemporary translation classrooms where students often rely on AI-based tools. If these tools are used uncritically, they can inadvertently diminish the need for autonomous decision-making. Feedback presentation within an SRL-based pedagogical framework can be a solution to counter this risk, because it can guide novice translators toward being more critical about AI translation choices. It can also encourage systematic self-observation and self-reflection.

Even though the related literature highlights the multifaceted value of feedback in encouraging learners' metacognitive engagement and their autonomy, less attention has been devoted to customizing these insights into a structured, practical model which is specifically tailored to the pedagogical demands of translator education. The growing complexity of translator education, which is partly due to the emergence of AI technologies and the subsequent evolving professional expectations, underscores the need for a clear and research-informed framework that can guide instructors in presenting effective feedback. It must be mentioned that the present article does not aim to report any empirical findings; rather, its purpose is to propose a structured feedback framework, which is based on Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick's (2006) principles, for contemporary translation classrooms.

To gain a deeper understanding, it seems necessary to refer to the existing literature on feedback that forms the theoretical grounding of the current investigation. This is addressed in the following section.

Feedback in Higher Education

At the turn of the twentieth century, thinkers, such as John Dewey, advanced the notion of experiential learning, and highlighted the importance of reflection as a crucial component of the learning process (see Dewey, 1897/2018; Dewey, 1910; Dewey, 1916/1997). Such thinkers' insights provided an early theoretical foundation for looking at feedback not as an evaluative judgment only, but as part of a continuous learning cycle in which learners engage with and make sense of their own performance. In the following decades, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s, constructivism further emphasized that learners build understanding through cognitive processes including active interaction with their environment, a view which caused feedback to evolve into a more dialogic and formative practice. In fact, feedback was considered a tool that could encourage deeper self-reflection rather than merely serving to assess past performance with an emphasis on errors (Johannes & Haase, 2022; Mandouit & Hattie, 2023).

From these early ideas onward, feedback has been the subject of extensive inquiry, and it was examined from different perspectives. Generally, the research which has been carried out over these years can be categorized into three major themes: examining feedback in terms of its content, its modes of delivery, and its function (Narciss & Huth, 2004; Panadero & Lipnevich, 2022).

On the basis of what was reviewed above, it is essential to consider how feedback has been conceptualized within translator education, as cognitive and procedural requirements of this field make feedback particularly consequential.

In earlier translator education practices, especially in teacher-centered classrooms, feedback typically referred to the comments provided by the instructor, most often delivered post-task, provided only after students had completed the translation and presented their final product. In those classes, feedback served mainly as an evaluative mechanism. It was used as a tool to determine the correctness of the translation rather than guiding learners on how to grow. Classmates and the instructor would comment on the correctness or incorrectness of the translation, and the instructor would subsequently read what was considered the correct version for students to note down. However, as educational and learning theories gained prominence in translator training, not only did attention gradually shift toward incorporating feedback from peers, but with the pedagogical shift toward learner-centered and socio-constructivist models, considerable attention was directed to process-oriented feedback, that is, feedback delivered while the translation task is being performed. Research in translation pedagogy has begun to document the effects of this shift (see Khalili, in press; Khalili, 2025a; Khalili, 2025b; Sato & Lyster, 2012). Some studies on translator education have demonstrated when students and instructors exchange feedback during the task completion sessions, the quality of final translation improves and learners engage in more conscious reasoning, collaborative meaning-making, and self-regulated decision-making (Khalili, in press; Khalili, 2025b); this is in line with broader findings in educational psychology. As a whole, these developments illustrate a gradual shift from external, product-oriented feedback toward a process-oriented type which is more interactive and reflective. The recognition that effective feedback does not rely solely on external sources, and emerges from learners' self-evaluation and self-reflection is a natural extension of this shift. This type of internally generated feedback is evident in SRL-based pedagogical approaches in which learners constantly monitor and thus evaluate themselves, and adjust their own performance accordingly. In effect, effective feedback should encourage learners to engage in self-assessment and self-reflection, and help them identify and bridge the gaps between their current

performance and those goals that they set at the beginning of the course (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). In the context of translator education, integrating internal and external feedback enables learners to make more solid choices including linguistic and cultural considerations during the translation process. This mechanism, which is an essential component of proactive learning, both enhances the accuracy and quality of translations, and makes learners more autonomous, and metacognitively aware (Khalili, in press; Khalili, 2025b). It also leads to the development of strategic translation skills (Khalili, 2025b).

Although there is a lot of research on feedback in the field of education, the number of studies in the field of translator education is rather small. Moreover, even those studies often remain fragmented and lack an integrated structure that aligns external guidance, peer interaction, and internal self-regulation within a unified pedagogical model. This gap is addressed in the following section.

Framework Proposal

Feedback in translation classrooms plays a critical role due to the cognitively demanding and multi-layered nature of translation tasks that require linguistic accuracy, textual coherence, pragmatic and cultural appropriateness, strategic decision-making, etc. Considering these demands, it seems that feedback that is systematically conceptualized and pedagogically grounded can be more effective than feedback that remains implicit, incidental, and purely corrective. Therefore, the present study tries to adapt an established model of feedback by Nicole and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) to the specific requirements of translation classrooms, providing a strategic, evidence-informed framework for enhancing learner autonomy, self-regulation, and reflective decision-making.

Nicole and Macfarlane-Dick's (2006, p. 205) seven principles for good feedback practice are as follows:

1. It helps clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria and expected standards are clear);
2. It facilitates the development of self-assessment (self-reflection) in learning;
3. It delivers high quality information to students about their learning;
4. It encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning;
5. It encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem;
6. It provides opportunities to fill the gap between current and desired performance;
7. It provides information that can be used to shape teaching.

Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) presented these seven principles in a general educational context without restricting them to any specific discipline. In what follows, these principles are situated within the domain of translator education.

1. Clarifying Performance Standards

Establishing what counts as high-quality translation performance is a prerequisite for effective learning. Students can set meaningful learning goals only when they have a clear understanding of what those goals entail and what they are expected to work toward (Sadler, 1989; Black & William, 1998; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). A recurrent challenge in classes is the misalignment between instructors' and learners' perceptions of course objectives: what the teacher considers the target outcome often differs from what students assume the goal to be (Hounsell, 1997; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). As a result, the feedback provided by the instructor may be only partially useful or even irrelevant from the learner's perspective, because the feedback is oriented toward the instructor's internalized objectives rather than the student's assumed ones. This mismatch produces

confusion, limits the student's ability to act on feedback, and ultimately hinders performance development (Hounsell, 1997; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

One of the most effective ways to counter this confusion is to explicitly articulate both course goals and assessment standards (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Objectives that typically remain implicit in the instructor's mind should be made transparent through written documents to outline expectations, performance criteria, and required standards in a clear, accessible way (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). At the very least, instructors should provide straightforward verbal explanations that specify what they have in their minds about competent work (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) so that the complex nature of assessment criteria becomes more manageable and comprehensible for both instructors and learners.

Clarifying what counts as successful translation is not limited to describing abstract criteria. Learners need concrete illustrations of what quality looks like in practice. For this reason, instructors are encouraged to use exemplars of performance, to use Orsmond et al.'s (2002) terms, including rubrics, annotated model translations, and illustrations of typical errors. Rubrics can clarify expectations by showing what the instructor really means by linguistic accuracy and cultural appropriateness. Annotated model translations can illuminate the reasoning behind strategic decisions so that learners observe how experts navigate alternative solutions, justify decisions, and adapt to contextual constraints.

Moreover, pretests can be used too, as they serve a diagnostic role. Since they reveal students' initial levels of knowledge and skills, they are considered as a baseline assessment that helps instructors decide where to start their explanations. Also, pretests help students identify gaps between their current abilities and the expected performance. Such diagnostic information reduces uncertainty to a great extent when used in combination with rubrics and annotated model translations, and prevents students from relying on guesswork. Thus, it encourages a more strategic approach to translation tasks. Over time, this clarity supports the development of self-regulation and metacognitive awareness, and gets learners to internalize translation standards; as a result, their translation competence will be constantly refined.

2. Facilitating Structured Self-assessment

Once learning objectives and performance standards have been clearly explained, it is time for the next instructional intervention. Learners must be empowered to evaluate their progress in relation to those standards. Research indicates when part of the responsibility for assessment is delegated to the learners themselves, learning outcomes are enhanced because learners engage actively with their own work rather than receiving the teacher's feedback passively; this encourages their metacognitive awareness, strategic monitoring, and a sense of ownership over learning (Boud, 1995; McDonald & Boud, 2003).

In practical terms, this delegation can take two main forms: self- and peer-assessment (Cowan, 1999). On the basis of what Cowan (1999) argues, one common type is to ask students to correct their own completed translation tasks and identify areas that require deeper attention, including recurring errors and weaknesses. This is a process that encourages students to scrutinize the reasoning behind their own translational choices instead of merely relying on the teacher's evaluative feedback. Using peer-assessment is another effective method (Cowan, 1999), through which students evaluate one another's translations using some shared criteria. Interestingly, studies have shown that even though learners may often overlook or minimize errors in their own assignments, they display significantly greater accuracy and critical attention when analyzing their

classmates' work (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Engaging with peer output sharpens evaluative judgment and refines learners' internal standards for quality (Boud et al., 1999; Gibbs, 1999).

It should be noted that, according to empirical findings, when learners receive teacher feedback prior to engaging in self- or peer-assessment, their ability to identify weaknesses and areas for improvement is enhanced (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). This sequencing allows learners to better regulate self-evaluation. In effect, when expert guidance and self-reflection are integrated, self-assessment becomes a more effective tool for promoting learning and metacognitive awareness (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

Integrating the Motivational Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), as a further diagnostic tool, can also provide additional insights into learners' status of self-reflection which is a component of self-regulation (see Khalili, 2025b). The results of the MSLQ can help instructors identify students with low self-efficacy; thus, they can provide them with more explicit prompts and structured reflection templates, or even teacher-modeled examples to guide effective self-assessment. In contrast, learners who demonstrate stronger self-regulatory profiles may benefit from open-ended reflective tasks that allow greater autonomy. For both groups, self-assessment functions as a dynamic feedback mechanism: it provides learners with immediate, internally generated information about their current performance relative to expectations, and enables them to detect performance gaps and adjust their strategies for subsequent tasks as well. In fact, consistent engagement in self-assessment changes learners' mindset; they no longer perceive translation quality as something that is determined merely by the instructor; instead, they are capable of monitoring, interpreting, and improving on their own. This shift lies at the heart of SRL and is essential for developing confident, autonomous, and reflective translators.

3. Delivering High-quality Information

It is essential that the quality of the external feedback that is provided by instructors as a component of formative feedback be high. Regardless of course type or learners' proficiency, useful feedback must be timely (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004) and brief enough to maintain students' engagement. Additionally, it must be designed in a constructive way; this means not only should it identify weaknesses but also offer clear corrective guidance (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Also, when constructive criticism is balanced with encouragement, learners restore the confidence that is needed for sustained improvement (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). It is very important that feedback should help students progress toward greater self-regulation, and equip them with the insight required to monitor and self-correct future performance independently (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

Providing external feedback in translation classrooms involves both responding to what learners translated, and how they approached the task. High-quality feedback explains the underlying source of the problem, for instance, if a communicative intention is misinterpreted or genre conventions are ignored. More importantly, it must offer practical solutions for revision rather than just leaving students to infer the correct solution themselves.

Brief marginal annotations on drafts, such as highlighting an ambiguous syntactic choice and suggesting an alternative, help students understand the reasoning behind revisions without overwhelming them.

Peer feedback can complement instructor feedback if it is guided by clear criteria. As mentioned earlier, peer review is an efficient way to deepen learners' attention to standards and develop their self-reflection. Another supplemental form of feedback can be obtained through AI-assisted translation tasks. Learners can compare their own output with AI-generated alternatives; this

encourages them to analyze why certain choices are more effective (see Khalili, 2025b). The aim is not to accept AI suggestions blindly, but to use them as opportunities for contrastive reasoning (Khalili, 2025b).

Reflective journals and brief post-task commentaries can also strengthen the feedback cycle even if they are not the primary focus (Khalili, 2025b). When students articulate the reasoning behind their translation choices, instructors can target feedback more precisely, creating a loop in which external guidance and learner reflection reinforce each other.

4. Encouraging Dialogic Interactions

There is evidence that students often gain little from unidirectional, transmission-style feedback because they are not given opportunities to engage with, question, or make sense of the instructor's comments (Chanock, 2000; Hyland, 2000). For feedback to translate into learning, it must be dialogic: learners need chances to discuss proposed revisions, challenge interpretations, and negotiate criteria with the teacher (Freeman & Lewis, 1998; Laurillard, 2002); without such interaction, external comments risk remaining external: students receive the information but fail to internalize it (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

In translator education this argument has direct pedagogical implications. Peer dialogue and collaborative discussion are not merely part of the academic work; they are pedagogically potent because students frequently explain and justify translation choices to each other in ways that deepen understanding. Peer explanation can surface alternative perspectives, expose tacit assumptions, and reveal misunderstandings that a unilateral instructor comment might not. In effect, dialogic exchange supports SRL by forcing learners to articulate reasoning, evaluate options, and reconsider strategies in real time, activities that strengthen metacognitive awareness. To enable such dialogues in translation classrooms, instructors can engage students in structured peer-review with clear criteria and guided prompts so that peer comments are focused, relevant, and actionable; they can also design group translation projects to create natural contexts for negotiation and co-construction of meaning and style. Also, selective sharing of reflective journal entries can be used as prompts for class discussion rather than as private reports; this creates authentic occasions for dialogues that are grounded in students' own reasoning. In fact, the aim is not to give more comments, but to create a more interactive space; this is a shift that directly supports evaluative judgment and autonomous translation practice.

5. Encouraging Positive Motivational Beliefs and Self-esteem

There is evidence that instructors can have a positive impact on students' self-esteem, and providing high-quality feedback is an effective way to enhance it (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Research shows that in courses with multiple low-stakes assessment tasks, where students receive frequent and constructive feedback, their performance improves significantly. By contrast, in courses with high-stakes assessments, where only students' grades represent their success or failure, students' attention shifts from learning to final results, a process which hinders the development of SRL. To counteract this limitation, the feedback cycle can be repeated for those translation tasks and projects that need to be graded; this means that after students submit their draft translations, the instructor provides constructive feedback instead of grading, and points out areas which need improvement. Then students revise their work, and resubmit translations; final grading takes place at this point. This makes feedback timely and highly actionable; as a result, students whose confidence and self-esteem have been bolstered can feel more autonomous while engaging with high-stakes translation projects.

6. Bridging the Gap Between Current and Desired Performance

A necessary requirement for narrowing the gap between current and desired performance is that learners must be given the opportunity to act on the feedback they receive. Feedback can be considered effective only when students re-engage with the same task and demonstrate improvement; without this observable change, it is impossible to claim that feedback has fulfilled its purpose (Boud, 2000). Although resubmission is less common in higher education, since instructors often move on quickly after delivering feedback due to time constraints, it remains one of the most powerful mechanisms for verifying whether learning has genuinely occurred or not (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

As mentioned earlier, in translation training, revision and resubmission opportunities can be integrated into tasks that need grading such as translation quizzes and major translation projects. After students receive targeted feedback, they revise and resubmit the same task. If this cycle is applied selectively, not only can the workload be kept manageable, but it can also be ensured that feedback leads to demonstrable progress. Revision cycles transform feedback from a passive transmission of information into an active learning tool. The comparison between the initial and revised versions shows whether students merely recognized their errors without any further action or actually started to make some adjustments to their decision-making processes. This strengthens SRL by encouraging iterative refinement rather than superficial correction, and ensures that improvement is both intentional and measurable (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

7. Using Feedback to Refine Instructional Methods

In contrast to the previous principles, which were about the information provided for students, this final principle emphasizes that feedback also flows from students to instructors. Learners' performance provides important information about the effectiveness of instructional methods, the clarity of task goals, and the adequacy of scaffolding (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). When instructors observe patterns of errors, recurring misunderstandings, or challenging areas for students, they gain insight into the teaching methods that they use (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). This is an interpretive use of students' performance, which leads to the refinement of curriculum and practice.

In translation training, instructors can examine students' reflective journals, MSLQ, peer-review discussions, draft translations, and in-class problem-solving activities to identify problems that students constantly face. These observations lead to adjustments in task design, the sequencing of texts for translation, and the level of scaffolding that is needed; this means that teaching remains aligned with learners' needs rather than with some predetermined assumptions. Instructors can refine lesson planning, reinforce neglected competencies, and intervene wherever strategic development is poor. This is how a reciprocal feedback loop is created: instructional decisions evolve in response to students' performance; this ensures that the learning environment remains consistent, purposeful, and pedagogically coherent (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

Conclusion

The present study sought to operationalize Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick's (2006) seven principles of good feedback practice within the specific pedagogical context of translator education. Since these principles were originally developed as general guidelines for higher education, their relevance to translation training is acknowledged, especially when the teaching method is SRL-focused. When instructional practices are aligned with these principles, the translation classroom, which was

previously a product-oriented space, turns into a place where reflective and autonomous translators can be trained.

The analysis indicated that there is a dual perspective on feedback on the basis of Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick's (2006) seven principles. In fact, principles one through six primarily address feedback directed at learners, as mentioned earlier, including clarifying goals and standards, encouraging self-assessment, ensuring high-quality and constructive input, emphasizing the dialogic nature of feedback, supporting motivation and self-esteem, and providing opportunities for revision and resubmission. Together, these six principles serve to enhance students' translation competence and metacognitive awareness, and at the same time, make learners more autonomous and well-equipped to navigate complex translation tasks with confidence and reflective judgment. The seventh principle, however, highlights feedback that flows from students to instructors this time. When educators observe learners' performance and peer discussions, and reflect on patterns in students' journals, they gain critical insights into the effectiveness of their teaching methods, and subsequently, the appropriateness of tasks with respect to gaps in students' understanding. This approach sees feedback both as a tool for student improvement, and a tool by which instructors can adjust their teaching methods. In this way, feedback functions as both a driver of student growth and a lens for reflective teaching, reinforcing a holistic, sustainable, and learner-centered approach to translator education.

Ultimately, presenting feedback in a structured, theory-based manner contributes to the further systematization of translator education. In the past, classroom design in translator education was rarely based on theories of teaching and learning. However, there has been a recent trend in all academic disciplines, including translator education, towards becoming more and more research-based, which has provided an increasing potential for course design based on fundamental principles of teaching and learning. By doing so, translation classrooms can become more coherent, effective, and learner-centered; this gives students a chance to develop autonomous, reflective, and strategically competent translation skills.

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