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Fostering Language Mediation through Collaborative Translation Learning: A Pedagogical Shift

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Abstract

This qualitative case study investigates how collaborative learning fosters language mediation skills in translation education. Conducted at Institut Prima Bangsa, the study involved 50 purposively selected participants (40 students and 10 instructors) actively engaged in translation pedagogy. Data were collected through interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, with methodological triangulation applied to ensure validity. Thematic analysis revealed that collaborative learning enhances translation accuracy, strategic thinking, cultural sensitivity, and adaptability through student engagement, peer interaction, problem-solving, and technology use. Rather than applying a cause-effect framework, the study provides nuanced insights into how collaboration enriches translation competence, emphasizing the pedagogical value of interactive, student-centered approaches in cultivating language mediation proficiency.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, translation education has experienced significant transformation, largely driven by the evolving demands of global communication and the rapid advancement of digital technologies (Ardiansyah et al., 2021; Duan et al., 2018; Zedadra et al., 2019). The increasingly complex nature of translation tasks—often requiring intercultural sensitivity and multilingual competence—has prompted a pedagogical shift toward more collaborative and learner-centered approaches. In particular, collaborative learning has emerged as a promising strategy to develop students' language mediation skills, which are crucial for managing meaning across linguistic and cultural boundaries (Hogan et al., 2023; Zedadra et al., 2019). A growing body of research has demonstrated that collaborative learning in translation pedagogy not only promotes critical thinking and enhances problem-solving capabilities but also deepens students' understanding of how meaning is constructed and negotiated in multilingual contexts (Chase et al., 2019; Isnaeni et al., 2018; Setyaningsih et al., 2021). Such approaches do not merely facilitate knowledge acquisition; they cultivate reflective practices and intercultural awareness—essential competencies for future translators operating in globalized professional environments.

Despite these encouraging findings, there remains limited empirical evidence on how collaborative learning influences language mediation within diverse educational contexts. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the role of collaborative learning in fostering language mediation skills among students engaged in translation education. The research focuses on identifying the pedagogical elements—such as peer discussion, group decision-

making, and the integration of digital tools—that contribute most significantly to developing translation competence.

This study's significance lies in its contribution to the evolving discourse on translator training. By examining the pedagogical impact of collaborative learning through qualitative inquiry, this research offers valuable insights for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers seeking to enhance translation education in the digital age. The findings are expected to support the development of evidence-based instructional strategies that promote more dynamic, interactive, and effective learning environments for translation students.

Additionally, working together in groups helps not just with teamwork but also encourages students to think about their work and keep checking how they translate, which makes them more involved in meaningful language activities (Ardiansyah et al., 2021; Setyaningsih et al., 2021). Integrating digital technologies into translation education has further amplified the impact of these collaborative practices. Studies indicate that implementing technology-enhanced project-based learning environments improves students' comprehension of translation strategies and enhances the quality of their translations (Gil-Jaurena & Kucina Softic, 2016; Zedadra et al., 2019). This synergy between technological innovation and collaborative pedagogy is pivotal in advancing translation competence through active mediation practices.

Given this context, critically examining the pedagogical implementation of such approaches, including their benefits and challenges, is essential. Future research must continue to explore how collaborative, technology-supported models can be optimized to meet the evolving needs of academic and professional translation settings (Ahmad, 2022; Akareem & Hossain, 2016; Minarti & Hakim, 2022).

Collaborative learning, grounded in sociocultural theory—particularly Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)—posits that learners attain higher levels of understanding through guided peer interaction rather than isolated, individual effort (Suoth et al., 2022). In translation education, working together helps students engage in important discussions, solve problems strategically, and improve their language skills through teamwork (Berns et al., 2016). Empirical evidence has consistently demonstrated the pedagogical value of cooperative learning in translation studies. For instance, Zedadra et al. (2019), drawing on Martell's findings, revealed that collaborative translation methods significantly enhance students' confidence, self-esteem, and classroom participation. Similarly, research by Lara-Clares and Valera (2024), building on the work of Kargar and Ahmadi, indicated that group-based translation activities contribute to a more effective acquisition of pragmatic knowledge. Their findings concluded that students engaged in collaborative tasks exhibit greater linguistic sensitivity and cultural awareness compared to those learning independently. Furthermore, Ahmad (2022), referencing Gopferich, underscored that collaborative translation promotes cognitive flexibility—an essential competency for professional translators operating within increasingly complex and multilingual contexts.

Language mediation was recognized as a foundational concept in translation education, as articulated in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Green, 2022). It refers to facilitating communication between speakers of different languages through practices such as paraphrasing, summarizing, and translating. The CEFR underscored mediation as a core competency for language learners, particularly for its potential to bridge linguistic and cultural divides (North & Piccardo, 2016). Within the context of translation education, mediation skills were viewed as essential for ensuring that translators conveyed not merely the literal meaning of a source text but also its embedded cultural and contextual subtleties. Pym argued that effective mediation entailed a process of dynamic decision-making in which translators negotiated meaning to preserve the original intent while adapting the message for target-language audiences. In this regard,

collaborative learning environments offered fertile ground for developing mediation competencies. Through interaction, peer feedback, and shared problem-solving, students were better equipped to address the cognitive and cultural challenges inherent in translation (Risku & Dickinson, 2017).

Despite the substantial benefits of collaborative learning, its effective implementation requires addressing several challenges. A primary concern is group dynamics, since successful teamwork depends on constructive interactions and equitable contributions from all participants (Schaeffer et al., 2019). Instructors should guide students in developing conflict-resolution strategies and collaborative competencies to mitigate misunderstandings. Assessment in collaborative contexts poses another challenge: evaluating individual contributions within group tasks remains complex. Kiraly, as cited in Sholeh et al., (2020), recommends portfolio-based assessment to promote fairness and transparency in collaborative translation exercises. Moreover, technological proficiency is essential, given the growing reliance on computer-assisted translation tools and online collaboration platforms (Pangondian, 2019).

Prior research prioritized the integration of emerging technologies, interdisciplinary frameworks, and longitudinal research designs to advance collaborative learning in translation education. Malmkjaer (2019) demonstrated that immersive tools—such as virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI) environments—provided real-time feedback and offered authentic multilingual translation simulations. Moreover, interdisciplinary studies that bridged translation studies, applied linguistics, educational theory, and AI research were essential for developing comprehensive pedagogical models. These holistic approaches ensured students acquired the multifaceted competencies required for sustained professional translation practice.

Redefining translation learning through collaboration presents a promising approach to enhancing language mediation skills. By embedding collaborative strategies into translation pedagogy, educators can equip students with the necessary competencies to navigate the complexities of translation in a globalized world. Collaborative learning fosters linguistic and cognitive development and prepares students to become effective mediators across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. As translation education evolves, integrating collaborative methodologies will ensure that students develop both the technical and interpersonal skills required for successful translation careers.

This study also acknowledged that the effectiveness of ICT integration in English language teaching depended on various contextual factors, such as institutional support, teachers' digital literacy, and students' access to technological resources. Warschauer (as cited in Purnomo et al., 2018) highlighted that successful ICT implementation required a well-structured pedagogical framework rather than mere technological adoption. Furthermore, the digital divide remained a critical issue, as infrastructure and internet access disparities hindered the equitable use of technology in education (Selwyn, 2017). This limitation underscored the need for policies that ensured ICT accessibility for both teachers and students across diverse learning environments.

In addition, the study recognized the evolving nature of educational technology, as emerging tools such as AI and adaptive learning systems transformed traditional teaching approaches (Murphy-Judy, 2016). These advancements necessitated continuous teacher training and professional development to maximize the pedagogical potential of ICT (Purnomo et al., 2018). The role of blended learning models, as discussed by Garrison and Vaughan (as cited in Lee et al., 2024), also presented a promising direction for future research, as these approaches combined face-to-face and online instruction to enhance learning outcomes. Despite these pedagogical benefits, researchers such as Bax (as cited in Syathroh, 2022) argued that many ELT practitioners still struggle with integrating ICT effectively due to resistance to change and limited institutional support.

Methodological triangulation through classroom observations and document analysis ensured a more rigorous examination of ICT implementation to strengthen the study's findings. Creswell in Ishtiaq (2019) emphasized the importance of using multiple data sources to enhance research validity and reliability. Bradley (2020) incorporated teacher regarding student engagement in technology-enhanced learning. Future studies should further investigate how different ICT tools influence language acquisition, particularly in relation to speaking and writing skills, as suggested by Beatty (Roberts & all, 2020).

In conclusion, while this study offers valuable insights into the integration of ICT in ELT at secondary and tertiary levels, its limitations highlight the need for further research in primary education and informal learning settings. Additionally, expanding the scope to include quantitative analyses could provide a more comprehensive view of ICT's impact on language learning outcomes. The evolution of educational technology necessitates ongoing exploration into best practices for ICT adoption, ensuring that English language teaching remains responsive to the demands of the digital age.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the role of collaborative learning in enhancing language mediation skills within translation education. A case study approach detailed the participants' experiences in a real educational environment, offering valuable insights into how working together helped improve their translation skills. This study did not apply a cause-effect framework but explored key themes: collaborative learning (student participation, peer discussions, problem-solving, and technology use) and language mediation skills (translation accuracy, strategy application, cultural sensitivity, and decision-making). The 50 participants (40 students and 10 instructors) from Institut Prima Bangsa were purposively selected for their active involvement in translation education, ensuring diverse perspectives. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, ensuring methodological triangulation. Thematic analysis was employed to identify emerging patterns, with triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing used to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the findings. The interview instrument used in this study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Interview instrument

Participant	Question Focus	Sample Questions
Students	Learning experience	How does collaborative learning improve your translation skills?
	Peer discussions	Can you share an instance where group work helped resolve a translation issue?
	Cultural sensitivity	How do group activities enhance your understanding of cultural nuances?
Instructors	Teaching methods	How do you implement collaborative learning in translation courses?
	Student progress	What improvements have you observed in students' mediation skills?
	Challenges & solutions	What are common challenges in collaborative translation, and how do you address them?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Classroom observations and in-depth interviews revealed that collaborative translation learning significantly enhanced students' translation accuracy and strategic awareness. Students who engaged in peer discussions could identify errors, negotiate meanings, and apply appropriate translation strategies more than those working individually. These

findings were consistent with prior studies emphasizing the social-constructivist value of collaborative learning in translation education. Participants commonly expressed that group work created a space for mutual correction and reflection, as one student noted.

> "When we translated together, I realized many mistakes I didn't notice before. My friends pointed out better words or cultural meanings I missed." (Student 7, Interview Transcript)

Another participant emphasized how collaboration encouraged strategic decision-making:

> "We discussed translating word-for-word or adapting the meaning to fit the cultural context. It helped me understand that translation is more than just accuracy—it's also about being appropriate." (Student 12, Interview Transcript)

These reflections showed that working together made students more accurate on the surface and helped them think more deeply and understand different cultures better—important parts of language mediation. As shown in Table 2, students working collaboratively scored higher in translation tasks across accuracy, cultural appropriateness, and strategy application.

Lecturers also highlighted noticeable improvements. One instructor explained:

> "Students in collaborative groups asked more questions and used dictionaries critically. They also seemed more confident in justifying their choices." (Lecturer 3, Interview Transcript)

Such insights reinforced the role of collaborative learning as a pedagogical shift that aligned with real-world translation practices, where negotiation, justification, and peer review are integral.

The data also underscored a shift from translation as an individual skill to a dialogic process. This transition illustrated the development of language mediation, where students acted as co-constructors of meaning. The inclusion of peer dialogue supported students' reflection on linguistic, cultural, and contextual factors, fostering translator autonomy and reflexivity.

As illustrated in Table 2, students engaged in collaborative translation activities achieved higher levels of accuracy, suggesting that peer feedback, shared strategies, and joint decision-making contributed to more effective translation outcomes. These findings supported previous research emphasizing the pedagogical value of interactive learning environments in fostering linguistic precision and critical thinking in translation education.

Table 2 Comparison of translation accuracy between individual and collaborative learning

Text Type	Translation Accuracy Individual	Translation Accuracy (%)-Collaborative
Academic	80%	89.4%
Literacy	75%	81%

The data analysis revealed that students who engaged in collaborative translation demonstrated significantly higher accuracy than those who worked individually. The overall accuracy levels increased by approximately 17% in the collaborative learning group, indicating that peer interaction and constructive feedback enabled students to select more appropriate word equivalents. This improvement was consistent with Vygotsky's theory of social interaction-based learning (as cited in Suoth et al., 2022), which posited that cognitive development is facilitated through cooperative engagement and dialogic processes. The findings further suggested that collaborative translation exercises within the curriculum constituted an effective pedagogical strategy for enhancing students' linguistic precision and problem-solving skills in translation tasks. Students who collaborated were more likely to reflect critically on lexical choices, adjust their interpretations based on peer

suggestions, and adopt translation strategies aligned more closely with the target language's cultural and contextual nuances.

In addition to enhancing translation accuracy, collaborative learning contributed significantly to developing students' problem-solving skills, particularly in navigating linguistic and cultural complexities. During group translation sessions, students consistently demonstrated improved decision-making abilities regarding lexical choices, sentence construction, and interpreting subtle semantic nuances.

These collaborative dynamics encouraged learners to engage critically with one another's suggestions, often leading to negotiated decisions that enhanced the overall quality of the translated text. For instance, students were observed revising awkward or overly literal phrases based on peer input, ultimately producing more natural and culturally appropriate translations.

Moreover, the collective discussion of meaning and context enabled students to address translation challenges more effectively than when working alone. By analyzing alternative renderings together, they could consider different perspectives and adopt strategies that balanced accuracy with readability. This process supported linguistic development and fostered cognitive and interpersonal growth as students learned to justify their decisions, accommodate differing views, and reflect on their translation strategies.

These findings aligned with previous research highlighting the pedagogical value of collaborative translation. Collaborative approaches enhance linguistic proficiency and cognitive awareness, helping students internalize the skills required for real-world translation tasks. The results of the present study thus underscore the importance of integrating structured group work into translation training, as it cultivated students' ability to navigate complex translation problems and supported the development of flexible, context-sensitive solutions. Improvement in problem solving and decision making skills is shown in Figure 1.

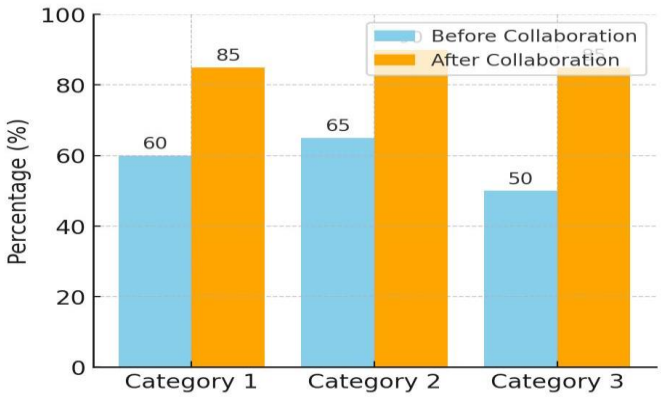

Figure1 Improvement in problem-solving and decision-making skills

The data analysis revealed that collaborative learning positively impacted students' translation accuracy across several key linguistic dimensions. The students demonstrated an improved ability to select more appropriate and contextually relevant words in the lexical or diction category. This improvement was largely attributed to peer discussions and constructive feedback during group translation sessions, which enabled learners to reflect critically on vocabulary choices and consider alternative expressions that better conveyed intended meanings.

In relation to syntactic structures, the frequency of errors in sentence construction significantly declined among students who engaged in collaborative translation activities. By working together, students revised and refined one another's drafts, leading to translations that were more grammatically accurate and more fluid and natural in the target

language. This peer-assisted process helped mitigate common syntactic errors, such as incorrect word order, subject-verb agreement, and overly literal constructions.

Furthermore, in the cultural translation domain, collaborative learning was crucial in enhancing students' ability to interpret and convey implicit and culturally bound meanings. Through dialogue and peer clarification, students were exposed to diverse viewpoints that enriched their understanding of idiomatic expressions, culturally specific references, and nuanced meanings that might have been overlooked in solitary translation efforts. This collaboration aspect proved particularly beneficial in developing the students' intercultural competence, a vital component of professional translation practice.

These findings were consistent with Risku's (2014) assertion that a collaborative approach in translation training sharpened linguistic competence and fostered cognitive and metacognitive growth. The interactive process of negotiation and revision supported the development of higher-order thinking skills, including critical evaluation, adaptability, and the ability to navigate complex linguistic and extralinguistic challenges.

The collaborative framework served as a bridge between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, helping students internalize practical strategies for solving authentic translation problems. By integrating structured group work and peer engagement into the translation pedagogy, educators could better equip students with the competencies required in dynamic and culturally diverse translation contexts. Thus, the results suggested that collaboration was beneficial and essential to cultivating well-rounded, reflective, and competent translators.

In addition to linguistic and cultural gains, collaborative learning environments also promoted metacognitive awareness among students. As they worked in groups, students became increasingly conscious of the cognitive and strategic processes they employed during translation. They were encouraged to articulate their reasoning, justify lexical and syntactic choices, and critically evaluate multiple translation options. This structured reflection contributed to a more deliberate and systematic approach to translation, moving students beyond intuitive or automatic responses toward intentional decision-making.

The collaborative setting also fostered a heightened sense of responsibility and accountability. Students tended to review and revise their work more carefully before presenting it to their peers, motivated by the knowledge that others would evaluate and possibly challenge their contributions. This dynamic promoted a culture of mutual support and continuous improvement, where constructive criticism was welcomed as a learning tool rather than perceived as a personal critique.

Over time, students developed stronger self-monitoring habits, enabling them to refine their translation strategies independently. This skill is particularly critical in professional translation contexts, where practitioners are expected to continuously assess their work's accuracy, fluency, and cultural appropriateness without relying on external validation. By engaging in peer-led evaluation and reflective dialogue, students gained the ability to critically appraise not only the product of translation but also the process itself—an ability that aligns with the core competencies required in professional translation.

These findings echoed the pedagogical perspectives of scholars such as Kiraly (2016), who emphasized the importance of social constructivism and situated learning in translator education. The data supported the idea that metacognitive engagement in collaborative tasks enhanced learners' autonomy, deepened their critical awareness, and improved translation performance across cognitive, linguistic, and intercultural domains.

Beyond the linguistic and cognitive advantages, collaborative translation activities enhanced students' interpersonal and communication skills. Effective translation requires linguistic competence and the ability to negotiate meaning, resolve conflicts, and respond constructively to feedback. Through group work, students learned to navigate divergent viewpoints and employ diplomatic strategies to reach consensus on translation decisions.

These interactions reflected the dynamics of real-world translation practice, where professional translators routinely collaborated with editors, clients, and subject-matter experts to produce refined and contextually appropriate texts. The group-based setting allowed students to simulate these authentic workflows, developing soft skills crucial in professional environments.

Furthermore, the social dimension of collaborative learning fostered greater motivation and sustained engagement. Students reported that the interactive nature of group tasks made translation exercises more stimulating and enjoyable. The opportunity to discuss, debate, and co-construct meaning in a supportive setting contributed to a more participatory learning atmosphere.

These findings aligned with contemporary perspectives in translation pedagogy, which emphasized the necessity of equipping students with technical skills and the interpersonal competencies required in the workplace (Kiraly, 2014). In this context, collaborative translation served as a pedagogical bridge between academic instruction and professional application. Ultimately, integrating collaborative learning into translation education improved students' accuracy and cultivated critical thinking, adaptability, and communication skills indispensable for success in the translation profession.

The interview results revealed that students who worked in groups developed a stronger metacognitive awareness of the strategies they employed during the translation process. This heightened awareness enabled them to reflect critically on their linguistic choices, evaluate alternatives, and apply deliberate strategies to resolve translation challenges. As a result, their translations exhibited greater efficiency and improved overall quality.

Students consistently reported that the collaborative setting encouraged them to verbalize their reasoning, justify their lexical and structural decisions, and engage in reflective discussions about the translation process. This reflective practice deepened their understanding of translation principles and helped internalize strategic thinking, which is essential for professional-level performance.

These findings corroborated earlier research suggesting that metacognitive engagement plays a pivotal role in developing translation competence (Göpferich, 2013; Ehrensberger-Dow & Massey, 2019). The process of articulating one’s thoughts and receiving peer input fostered a habit of self-monitoring, which is widely recognized as a key indicator of cognitive maturity and professional readiness in translation education.

Table 3 Changes in translation strategies before and after collaborative learning

Translation Strategy	Before Collaboration (%)	After Collaboration (%)
Literal strategy	52.8%	35.2%
Adaptation strategy	21.3%	40.7%
Transposition strategy	15.6%	23.1%
Reduction/expansion strategy	10.3%	18.6%

The data analysis revealed a significant shift in students' translation strategies due to engaging in collaborative learning. The use of literal translation strategies decreased markedly, from 52.8% to 35.2%, indicating that students became more conscious of the need for flexibility in rendering meaning across languages. This decline suggested that peer discussions and constructive feedback played a crucial role in encouraging students to move beyond word-for-word translation and to consider more contextually appropriate and semantically nuanced alternatives.

Moreover, the frequency of adaptation strategies increased substantially, rising from 21.3% to 40.7%. This shift demonstrated that students developed a greater capacity to adjust and modify meaning to align with the linguistic and cultural norms of the target language. Such a transition reflected an enhanced awareness of pragmatic considerations in translation, as learners increasingly prioritized communicative intent and naturalness over strict structural fidelity to the source text.

These findings aligned with prior studies, emphasizing that effective translation requires linguistic competence and strategic decision-making informed by intercultural awareness. The student's ability to employ more sophisticated strategies suggested that collaborative learning environments fostered the cognitive flexibility and critical thinking necessary for high-quality translation.

Furthermore, the increase in transposition and reduction/expansion strategies suggested a deeper comprehension of translation's syntactic and semantic dimensions. Transposition, which involved shifting grammatical structures while preserving meaning, became more prevalent, indicating that students grew more proficient in restructuring sentences to enhance readability and fluency in the target language. This strategic flexibility demonstrated a heightened awareness of how grammatical form and communicative function interact in cross-linguistic contexts. Similarly, the more frequent use of reduction and expansion strategies highlighted students' improved ability to manage textual density. Rather than relying on literal transfers, they learned to condense or elaborate content thoughtfully, ensuring that the translated texts maintained clarity and coherence without unnecessary additions or omissions. These adaptations reflected an emerging sense of rhetorical balance, where students prioritized the communicative intent of the message over strict equivalence. These findings were consistent with the social constructivist theory proposed by Kiraly (Setiyaningsih & Subrata, 2023), positing that translation competence is rooted in technical know-how, contextual sensitivity, and critical reflection fostered through interaction. Within the collaborative environment, students were exposed to diverse reasoning patterns and alternative interpretations, which improved their translation accuracy and enhanced their ability to handle complex linguistic structures more systematically and reflectively. This evolution in strategy use and increased metalinguistic awareness signaled a pedagogical breakthrough where students moved from passive knowledge application to active, socially constructed understanding, thus aligning their performance more closely with professional translation standards.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that collaborative learning significantly improves students' translation accuracy, problem-solving skills, and cognitive and communicative competencies. Thematic findings from interviews, observations, and document analyses consistently show that learners become more engaged and reflective in their practices when translation is approached through peer interaction and shared meaning-making. These results underscore the effectiveness of cooperative strategies—such as group translation tasks and peer feedback—in enhancing learners' ability to mediate meaning across languages in both academic and real-world contexts. Drawing from these results, the study proposes a paradigm shift in translation pedagogy: from teacher-centered models to student-centered, collaborative learning environments. This shift enables learners to acquire technical translation skills and soft skills such as teamwork, intercultural negotiation, and self-regulated learning—competencies crucial for professional translation practice in the 21st century. However, this study is not without limitations. The qualitative design, while offering rich insights, limits the generalizability of the findings. Future research may incorporate mixed-methods approaches or larger cross-institutional samples to validate and expand upon these results. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce subjectivity that should be triangulated with performance-based assessments. Despite these limitations, the study provides important implications for curriculum designers, translation educators, and institutional policymakers. It encourages the integration of structured collaborative components within translation programs to better align educational outcomes with industry expectations and intercultural realities.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

The first author was responsible for conceiving and designing the research study, collecting data, and analyzing data using appropriate statistical or qualitative methods. Additionally, the first author drafted the initial manuscript, covering key sections such as the introduction, methodology, results, and discussion. The second author contributed significantly to developing the theoretical framework and literature review. Furthermore, the second author assisted in interpreting the results and validating the data analysis. The second author also carried out a critical revision of the manuscript to enhance content quality and language clarity. Lastly, they coordinated the manuscript submission process and maintained communication with journal editors.

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