

How Can Translation Teachers Care for Their Students? A Case Study on Verbal Persuasion and Translation Students' Self-Efficacy Beliefs

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ABSTRACT

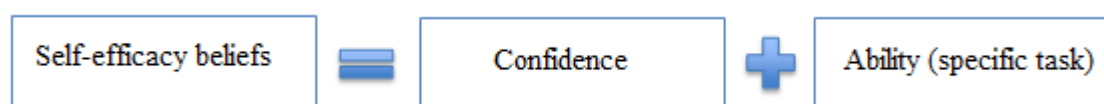
This paper presents a case study performed in three groups of a specialized translation course of the Degree in Translation and Interpreting offered at the University of Granada (Spain). It aims to analyze the impact that verbal persuasion by teachers can have on translation students' self-efficacy beliefs, that is, on their confidence as translators. More generally, this study was developed to shed light on teaching practices and pedagogical approaches that can have an influence on students' self-efficacy beliefs, thus attempting to fill the vacuum identified by several authors relative to self-efficacy beliefs in translator education. This case study, based on the comparison between groups, was developed following a mixed-method approach, where qualitative (interviews, classroom observation and focus groups) and quantitative techniques (a survey) were implemented. Results show that, according to the participant students' perceptions, verbal persuasion positively influenced their self-efficacy beliefs when persuasive comments were realistic, that is, when they corresponded to the students' real ability to translate. Therefore, a student-centred environment led by a caring teaching approach appears to be essential for verbal persuasion to work as a source of self-efficacy beliefs in translator education.

KEYWORDS: caring teaching approach; self-efficacy beliefs; student-centred approach; translator education; verbal persuasion

1. Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Their Role in Translator Education

One cannot reflect on the construct of self-efficacy beliefs without referring to Albert Bandura, who, in 1977, introduced self-efficacy beliefs in Psychology to refer to a *self-perception* of one's *ability* to perform a *specific activity* (Bandura 1977, 1986, 1997, 2006). Similarly, Humberto Blanco et al. (2011: 3) defined self-efficacy as the *confidence* that people have in their *abilities* to perform the task they attempt to execute. This is why in previous papers the author (Haro-Soler 2018a, 2019) has distinguished two main components of this construct:

Figure 1: Components of self-efficacy beliefs (adapted from Haro-Soler 2018a, 2019).



Although, as a form of self-perception, self-efficacy beliefs constitute a psychological construct, they have been studied in many fields (Bong 2002; Torre 2007), especially in Education (Pajares 1996). This is not surprising taking into account the benefits that trusting their own abilities can provide for students. In this respect, according to Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura 1986, 1997), where self-efficacy beliefs occupy a central position, this self-perception can increase motivation, influence decision-making and increase effort and persistence during a task. Self-efficacy beliefs can also facilitate the control of emotional states, such as stress or anxiety, and thus aid students to make the best use of their internal resources to solve the problems arising during the learning process.

Despite their benefits for students, as described above, self-efficacy beliefs have remained on the periphery of translator education for a long time, as David P. Atkinson and Ineke H. M. Crezee (2014) acknowledge. This may be related to the difficulty in establishing didactic objectives for a structured development of translation students' realistic self-efficacy beliefs in translator education programmes (Way 2009).

It was not until the last decade that several studies on self-efficacy beliefs in translation were performed. Some of them approached the translator's self-efficacy beliefs from a cognitive perspective (Muñoz 2014; Bolaños-Medina 2014), whereas others studied self-efficacy beliefs from the perspective of translator education (Atkinson 2012, 2014; Yang et al. 2016; Haro-Soler 2017, 2018a, 2018b), and a third group of studies combined both approaches (educational and cognitive) (Dam-Jensen and Heine 2009; Núñez and Bolaños-Medina 2017). Nevertheless, further research is still needed on this construct, especially from the perspective of translator education (Atkinson and Crezee 2014), since, although practices to develop students' self-efficacy beliefs during their education as translators have been *proposed*, very few *empirical* studies have been performed with this purpose. This is why several authors (Way 2009; Atkinson 2014; Atkinson and Crezee 2014; Haro-Soler 2017, 2018b) have underlined the need to empirically identify pedagogical approaches, teaching-learning practices and/or didactic resources that allow teachers to help their students trust the real abilities that they possess as

translators, that is, to incorporate realistic self-efficacy beliefs in translator education programmes, thus overcoming the difficulty that this may entail.

The current article contributes to filling this gap through an exploratory case study which aims to analyze the impact that verbal persuasion by teachers can have on the self-efficacy beliefs of the translation students participating in it. This case study analyzes verbal persuasion, one of the four sources of self-efficacy beliefs according to Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura 1997), in the context of translator education. In other words, it focuses on the materialisation of verbal persuasion in the translation classroom and its effect on translation students' self-efficacy beliefs, which has not been researched in Translation Studies before. This study also aims to analyze the reasons why verbal persuasion influenced (or not) the students' self-efficacy beliefs. Its final aim is, therefore, to shed light on how verbal persuasion can be used effectively by translation teachers as a way to start addressing students' self-efficacy beliefs in translator education programmes in a structured and explicit way.

This case study was performed in three groups of students (Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3) of the course 'Introduction to Specialized Translation (Spanish-English)', which is taught in the undergraduate degree in Translation and Interpreting offered at the University of Granada (Spain). A mixed methods approach was adopted, where qualitative (interviews, classroom observation and focus groups), and quantitative (a survey) techniques were implemented.

2. Verbal Persuasion as A Source of Self-Efficacy Beliefs

According to Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura 1986, 1997), self-efficacy beliefs originate from four sources of information: mastery experience, vicarious learning, physiological and emotional states, and verbal persuasion. In mastery experience, achievements can increase self-efficacy beliefs, whereas failures can decrease them (Bandura 1997; Pajares 1997). In vicarious learning, also known as observational learning, the achievements attained by others, who are perceived as models, are interpreted by the observer as his/her own achievements, and thus can foster the observer's self-efficacy beliefs. By contrast, the model's failures can lead the observer to doubt his/her own abilities to complete the task that the model was unable to perform successfully (Bandura 1997; Zeldin and Pajares 2000). As for physiological or emotional states, the appearance of negative emotions, such as stress or anxiety, and/or negative physiological states, such as pain or tiredness, can be interpreted by individuals as a

sign of inability and thus can decrease their self-efficacy beliefs to complete the task during which these states appear (Bandura 1997).

Verbal persuasion – the source of self-efficacy beliefs that is the focus of this study – refers to the comments by others on an individual’s ability through which they show their confidence in said ability and help the individual to trust in it. This means that verbal persuasion is based on the idea that when others trust someone’s ability to perform a particular task, they can help the individual believe in his/her own ability. However, others’ doubts about someone’s ability can lead the person to share these doubts and decrease his/her self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura 1997; Zeldin and Pajares 2000). Thus, the aim of verbal persuasion consists in “convincing people that they have the ability to succeed at a particular task” (Lunenburg 2001: 3).

The metaphor of the looking-glass self by Cooley (1902) illustrates how verbal persuasion works. Following this metaphor, others’ perceptions of an individual constitute the image that the individual perceives when looking him/herself in the mirror, based on which s/he generates his/her own self-perceptions.

Verbal persuasion is the source of self-efficacy beliefs that teachers use most frequently (Torre 2007). This is easy to understand if we take into account that verbal persuasion is the only source of self-efficacy beliefs where anyone, be they a model or not, can provide the individual with information that can contribute to the generation of this self-perception. However, to be effective, persuasive comments provided by teachers must be based on the *student’s real ability*. Otherwise, subsequent negative experiences (failures) will disconfirm unrealistic self-efficacy beliefs and may be accompanied by frustration (Bandura 1997; Schunk and DiBenedetto 2016).

Since to provide effective persuasive comments teachers must be aware of the ability of each of their students, it is essential that verbal persuasion takes place in a student-centred teaching-learning environment (Haro-Soler 2018a). One could also think that the so-called caring teaching approach may facilitate effective verbal persuasion, as in this approach teachers perceive each student “as a whole person, not just as a student” (Isenbarger and Zembylas 2006: 121). This means that special attention is paid to moral and emotional aspects, not only to technical or methodological ones (Gholami and Tirri 2012). Moreover, this approach is based on respect, proximity and mutual trust between teachers and students, which allows teachers to

be aware and to pay attention to their students' needs, attitudes and *ability* (Gholami and Tirri 2012). Therefore, verbal persuasion may be facilitated by and may be an indicator of a student-centred caring-approach, whereas it seems incompatible with a transmissionist approach, where the teacher plays the main role in the teaching-learning process and where the traditional hierarchy between the teacher and the students is maintained.

It is important to clarify that, especially for the analysis and interpretation of the results, this study distinguishes between positive feedback and verbal persuasion. In this sense, we have classified as positive feedback those comments provided by the teachers with which they highlighted positive aspects of the students' performance in a particular translation project or task, such as "you have done a good job", "you have solved all the translation problems successfully" or "you have done a thorough revision of the draft translation." However, verbal persuasion refers specifically to the comments provided by teachers to highlight the students' ability in an attempt to help them realize that they possess said ability. Examples of persuasive comments, provided by one of the teachers participating in the current case study and collected during classroom observation, include: "All of you are more capable than you think you are, you have a lot of good abilities as translators"; "Could you imagine three weeks ago that you [referring to all the students] were going to be able to translate this legal text so well? Look how well you have performed"; and "I know that you all can do it because I have seen during this course that you can".

3. A Case Study on Verbal Persuasion in Translator Education

As explained in Section 1, several authors (Way 2009; Atkinson 2014; Atkinson and Crezee 2014; Haro-Soler 2017, 2018b) have underlined the need to identify teaching practices and pedagogical approaches that allow for the incorporation of self-efficacy beliefs in translator education programmes, given the benefits that they can bring for (translation) students and despite the difficulty that this task may entail. Within this framework, an exploratory case study was performed on verbal persuasion provided by teachers and its impact on translation students' self-efficacy beliefs. More specifically, the following aims were pursued:

- 1) Discovering and analyzing the participant students' perceptions of the type of influence (positive, negative or inexistent) and the intensity of the influence (if any) that verbal

persuasion had on their self-efficacy beliefs as translators during the course where this study was performed.

- 2) Discovering and analyzing the reasons why verbal persuasion by teachers had influenced (or not) the students' self-efficacy beliefs.

As the aims established indicate, this study will shed light on the effectiveness of verbal persuasion as a source of self-efficacy beliefs in the case of translation students. Moreover, through the analysis of the reasons why verbal persuasion influenced (or not) the students' self-efficacy beliefs, this study will also shed light on the functioning of verbal persuasion in translator education, for instance, on the requirement(s) that verbal persuasion needs to fulfil to impact translation students' self-efficacy beliefs and on pedagogical approaches, teaching practices and/or scenarios that can facilitate the provision of effective persuasive comments.

Our case study can then be classified as action-research (Nunan 2007), since it derives from a problem detected in translator education and attempts to find possible solutions for it. In this respect, to contribute to satisfying the need to incorporate self-efficacy beliefs into translator education programmes and thus to overcome the difficulty that this entails (Section 1), this study approaches verbal persuasion and explores if and how it can be effectively used by translation teachers to help their students trust their confidence as translators.

Since this is an exploratory case study, no hypotheses were formulated, following the recommendations by authors such as Robert K. Yin (2013) or Elisa Calvo (2009). As Calvo (2009) explains, the function of an exploratory study is to approach and establish the foundations for a topic that has not yet been studied in detail. The results obtained can be later completed, contrasted or confirmed by subsequent researchers and finally used to establish hypotheses.

3.1. Course Where the Study was Performed

Our case study was performed in three groups of the course 'Introduction to Specialized Translation (Spanish-English)'. This is a semester-long course taught in the third year of the undergraduate degree in Translation and Interpreting offered at the University of Granada (Spain). In this course, students experience their first contact with the translation of scientific,

technical, economic and legal texts from their A language (Spanish) to their B language (English).

This course was selected due to several reasons:

- Most of the students enrolled must translate into their B language (English), with the insecurity that this can entail (Kiraly 1995). Thus, performing this study in ‘Introduction to Specialized Translation (Spanish-English)’ would allow us to analyze if verbal persuasion can positively influence students’ self-efficacy beliefs despite the lack of confidence that translating into a foreign language may cause.
- ‘Introduction to Specialized Translation (Spanish-English)’ is the only compulsory course of the degree where students must translate specialized texts belonging to the fields of Science, Technology, Economics and Law, as described above, with the insecurity that specialized translation frequently causes (LePoder 2010). Therefore, performing this study in said course would allow us to analyze if verbal persuasion can positively influence students’ self-efficacy beliefs despite the lack of confidence that not only translating into a foreign language but also translating specialized texts may cause.

3.2. Methodology

To achieve the aims described above, a mixed methods approach was implemented. Both quantitative (a survey) and qualitative techniques (interviews, classroom observation, focus groups) were implemented in this study. These methods were adopted as the author of this article shares the opinion of Glackin and Hohenstein (2017: 271), who highlight that “to achieve a more complete and comprehensive picture of [...] self-efficacy [beliefs] it is essential that traditional quantitative approaches are better triangulated and integrated with other sources of data, in particular lesson observations.”

The following methodological course was followed:

1) Interviews with the course teachers

A semi-structured interview was conducted before the beginning of the semester with each of the three teachers responsible for the three groups of the course where this study was to be performed. The aim of these interviews was to allow the author of this paper to familiarize

herself with the pedagogical approach, teaching practices and didactic resources used by each teacher before observing their lessons. This also allowed the author to discover if verbal persuasion was one of the practices implemented intentionally by the course teachers. The interviews lasted approximately one hour and were moderated by the author using the script by Haro-Soler (2018a).

2) Classroom observation

The author observed all the lessons of ‘Introduction to Specialized Translation (Spanish-English)’ in the three groups where it was taught. This accounted for a total of 12 hours of classroom observation in each of the 15 weeks of the semester. As David Nunan (2007) states, when observing lessons it is essential to elaborate and use a sheet including the practices that are to be observed so as to track them and facilitate their subsequent analysis. In this study the Observation Sheet, designed and previously used by Haro-Soler (2018a), was employed for each of the observed lessons. This sheet included the list of teaching practices that were going to be observed, among them, verbal persuasion by the teacher. For verbal persuasion, the sheet included a box where the author could easily mark if persuasive comments were delivered by the teacher in each lesson, and a second box to take note of each comment and of the context in which it was delivered (for instance, in classroom presentations). Moreover, following the recommendations by Gabriela Saldanha and Sharon O’Brien (2013), the Observation Sheet also included an open section where any other teaching practices or activities organised in the class (and not pre-established as categories to be observed) could be recorded. The aim of this open section was to collect information that, although initially may not seem relevant, could later facilitate the interpretation of the results (Saldanha and O’Brien 2013).

Therefore, thanks to the Observation Sheet, the author could make a detailed record of the occasions in which each of the course teachers resorted to verbal persuasion (among other practices that could influence the students’ self-efficacy beliefs). All persuasive comments were registered, as well as the exact context and time of their delivery.

Bearing in mind the aims of this study, it was not necessary for the author to intervene in the classroom as a participant-observer. Instead, she acted as an observer whose presence was hardly noticeable (she sat at the back of the class) to try to avoid the students and teachers modifying their behaviour when feeling observed (Hawthorne effect, Van Peer et al. 2012). It

must be noted that it was not the specific behaviour of teachers or students that was going to be observed, but the teaching practices implemented through the course. Therefore, the presence of the author in the classroom did not harm the validity of the observation. In this vein, it is also important to note that teachers and students were not informed of the object and specific aims of this study so as to avoid contamination of the results.

As explained in Section 3.3, all participants in the study (teachers and students) signed a consent form and agreed that the lessons could be observed.

3) The survey

This took the form of a questionnaire that students completed at the end of the semester. The design of the questionnaire was guided by the methodological recommendations of experts such as Nunan (2007), Van Peer et al. (2012), or Saldanha and O'Brien (2013), among others.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections. In the introductory section students were told that their collaboration was essential to improving translator education, and completion instructions were specified. The second section was entitled 'Students' profile' and included demographic questions and questions related to the academic background of the students (such as courses already completed or attendance in tutorial sessions). The third section, 'Perceptions of translator competence', included the Translator's Self-efficacy Beliefs Scale (Haro-Soler 2018a). This is one of the very few instruments existing nowadays in Translation Studies to specifically measure self-efficacy beliefs to translate. However, as the results obtained through this scale are not related to verbal persuasion, they have not been included in this paper. Finally, the section 'Perceptions of the course' consisted of a set of questions aimed at collecting the students' perceptions of the type of influence (positive, negative or non-existent) and the intensity of the influence, if any (barely influential, notably influential, very influential) that verbal persuasion (among other teaching practices) had had on their self-efficacy beliefs during the course. To select the teaching practices included in this section, a thorough literature review was carried out and previous qualitative studies of teachers' and students' perceptions were performed to identify practices that, according to the two groups in the teaching learning process, may influence translation students' self-efficacy beliefs (see Haro-Soler 2017, 2018b).

The questionnaire, designed, validated and employed by Haro-Soler (2018a) as part of her PhD dissertation, underwent a validation process based on the verdict of a panel of six experts in translator education and in questionnaire design, followed by a pilot study.

4) Focus groups

After the distribution of the questionnaire, focus groups were organized with students in each of the three groups of 'Introduction to Specialized Translation (Spanish-English)'. The aim of the focus groups was to obtain rich and detailed qualitative information on the time and place where verbal persuasion took place (if the teacher did not provide persuasive comments to the students in the classroom, but in tutorial sessions, for instance, which were not observed¹). Focus groups with students also aimed to shed light on the reasons why verbal persuasion had influenced the students' self-efficacy beliefs (or not) during the semester, that is, they aimed to shed light on the results obtained through the questionnaire and thus to facilitate their interpretation. Additionally, focus groups, together with the interviews conducted with teachers and classroom observation, allowed the author to analyze and understand why verbal persuasion did not take place in one or more groups, if this was the case.

As this methodological course shows, triangulation of the results, based on the implementation of different research techniques, forms the basis of this study.

3.3. Ethical Considerations

Permission was obtained by the author from the three teachers and all participant students to observe the course lessons for research purposes. The course teachers signed a consent form before the beginning of the course (at the interviews conducted with them) and the students did so at the beginning of the course. In this consent form they all agreed to voluntarily participate in this study, which would include classroom observation, the distribution of a questionnaire, and (group) interviews whose audio would be recorded. They were also informed that the data collected would be exclusively used for research purposes and always anonymously, and that

¹ Tutorial sessions were not observed as observation could have prevented the students from the privacy that tutorial sessions offer, which may be used by some students not only to solve doubts, but also to share with the teachers emotional aspects or personal circumstances affecting their learning. However, a record was kept of the number of times that each students attended tutorial sessions.

no potential harms were associated with this study. A letter with the ethical approval of this study was also sent to the Editorial Committee of this journal.

3.4. Participants

Three teachers participated in this study: teacher 1 (T1), teacher 2 (T2) and teacher 3 (T3). T1 was responsible for Group 1 of ‘Introduction to Specialized Translation (Spanish-English)’ and T2 was responsible for Group 2. However, both T2 and T3 were responsible for Group 3, where T2 was in charge of the first half of the course and T3 of the second half.

A total of 39 students participated in this study. Of them, 18 (46.2%) were enrolled in Group 1, 13 (33.3%) in Group 2 and 8 in Group 3 (20.5%). As for the number of participants, it must be noted that case studies are not carried out for statistical generalization, but to obtain in-depth data of a real-life phenomenon allowing for its understanding (De Vaus 2013; Saldanha and O’Brien 2013; Yin 2013). This is why “there is no correct number of cases” (De Vaus 2013: 240). In fact, case studies usually focus on small units of analysis, where triangulation becomes a key aspect (Susam-Sarajeva 2009). In this article the case of the course ‘Introduction to Specialized Translation (Spanish-English)’ was studied, following the criteria established in Section 3.1. This constitutes an embedded case study (Susam-Sarajeva 2009; Yin 2013), as it included 42 sub-units, or participants (39 students and 3 teachers). This number was considered to be adequate since our study was based on a mixed methods approach (triangulation) and since previous case studies in translator education were performed with a similar number of participants, such as that by Şebnem Susam-Sarajeva (2009), with 32 participants, or the study by Antonio Jesús Martínez et al. (2020), with 24 participants.

The majority (79.5%) of the participant students were women (77.8% in Group 1, 76.9% in Group 2, 87.5% in Group 3) and all the students were aged between 19 and 22, except for one (in Group 2) who was between 23 and 26 years old. All the students translated into a foreign language (English) during the course, except for a British student, who translated into her A language (English) and was thus not counted as one of the 39 participants according to the criteria set in Section 3.1².

² Note that the British student was enrolled in the course, but their responses were not used for this study according to criteria set in Section 3.1.

All the participant students (39) completed the questionnaire distributed at the end of the course. After collecting this instrument, the author obtained permission from each of the teachers to recruit volunteers in Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3 to participate in group interviews (or focus group sessions). A total of 14 students volunteered in Group 1, six volunteered in Group 2 and four in Group 3.

Following the recommendations of Krueger and Casey (2015), who state that there should be a maximum of ten participants in a focus group session if its aim is to understand a complex phenomenon (in our case, self-efficacy beliefs), the volunteers in Group 1 were divided into two focus group sessions according to their availability. Therefore, a total of four focus group sessions were organized (two in Group 1, with six and eight participants, respectively; one in Group 2 with six participants, and one in Group 3 with four participants).

Focus groups aim not to generalize the results obtained, but to *understand* the participants' view on a particular situation. In this study, the aim of focus groups was to understand the participants' perspective on *how* verbal persuasion had influenced their self-efficacy beliefs and on *why* this influence, if any (be it positive or negative) had occurred. In other words, results from focus groups would be triangulated with those obtained through classroom observation, interviews conducted with teachers and the questionnaire, all of which would allow for the *understanding* of the influence (if any) of persuasive comments by teachers on the students' self-efficacy beliefs.

All focus group sessions were held in the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting of the University of Granada in January 2017. They were moderated by the author using the semi-structured script available in Haro-Soler (2018a). Each session lasted about one hour and a half and its audio was recorded and later transcribed by the author. The resulting written material was reduced (classified and organized into different thematic blocks) and interpreted.

As the four focus group sessions were conducted in Spanish, the students' statements included in this article were translated into English by the author.

4. Results

4.1. Interviews with teachers and classroom observation

The interviews conducted with T1, T2 and T3 before the beginning of the course, as well as classroom observation, confirmed that the three groups of the course respected the official guidelines established for the undergraduate degree in Translation and Interpreting offered at the University of Granada. Accordingly, in the three groups the semester was divided in four thematic blocks, ordered as follows: technical translation, scientific translation, economic translation and, finally, legal translation.

Moreover, interviews with teachers and classroom observation allowed the author to detect that in the three groups of the course, students had to work in teams of five or six to prepare several translation projects during the semester. However, there were differences in the way collaborative work was organized in Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3. In Group 1 (with T1) each student in the team had to play a particular role when completing each translation project, roles that they had to interchange for each project. These roles were project manager, researcher, terminologist, translator, reviser and editor. Furthermore, once the project was completed, students had to present it in the classroom and justify their decisions to their peers and the teacher. In the presentation each student in the team explained the work s/he did depending on the role played, which allowed T1 to discover and be aware of each student's ability to translate and track their performance. In addition, presentations in Group 1 offered T1 time and space to provide students with constructive feedback.

In Group 2 (with T2) the students were not asked to play roles when completing each translation project; the distribution of the work among the team members was totally at their discretion. Furthermore, the students in this group did not have to present their projects in the classroom. Instead, T2 supervised their participation in the team and the work they did through Google Drive, as each team of students shared the documents related to each project not only with all the team members but also with T2 thanks to this online tool. This also allowed T2 to insert comments with constructive feedback in the shared documents, follow (and guide, if necessary) the translation process, as well as to be aware of the students' ability to translate and of their performance during the course.

In Group 3 (T2 and T3), interviews with teachers and classroom observation showed a combination of the two systems described above. More specifically, during the first part of the semester T2 followed the same system as in Group 2 (collaborative learning through Google Drive), whereas during the second part of the semester T3 followed the system described for Group 1 (collaborative learning based on role-play and classroom presentations).

Classroom observation also allowed the author to record the persuasive comments by the teachers and the context where they were delivered. In this respect, through the Observation Sheet described in 3.2, it was recorded that T1 used verbal persuasion in the classroom three times in the semester and his/her persuasive comments were targeted at the whole class. These comments and the date when they were delivered are presented in Table 1:

Table 1: Persuasive comments by T1.

Persuasive comments by T1	Date
“All of you are more capable than you think you are, you have a lot of good abilities as translators”	27 September 2016 (3 rd class, 2 nd week of the semester)
“Could you imagine three weeks ago that you [referring to all the students] were going to be able to translate this legal text so well? Look how well you have performed”	16 December 2016 (21 st class, 11 th week of the semester)
“I know that you all can do it because I have seen during this course that you can”	20 th January 2017 (last class, last week of the semester)

The first two comments were delivered by the teacher during classroom presentations of translation projects by the students, whereas the third one was also delivered in the classroom, but after a presentation by students, when T1 mentioned the final exam that students had to sit after the end of the course. However, no persuasive comments were observed in Group 2 or Group 3. It is important to be careful when interpreting these results, since the fact that persuasive comments were not registered through classroom observation does not automatically mean that T2 and T3 did not provide their students with persuasive comments. Another possibility would be that teachers resorted to verbal persuasion in a private time and space (in tutorial sessions or at the end of the class in a private conversation with a student, for instance), which prevented the author from registering such comments through classroom observation. Therefore, we will continue presenting the results obtained through the other

research techniques implemented in this study (survey, focus groups) to shed light on this aspect. Triangulation will thus become essential.

It is important to note that, even though few persuasive comments were provided by teachers and thus recorded, observation and the results obtained through it have been essential for triangulation (a key aspect in case studies). Apart from recording persuasive comments and their context, observation allowed the author, for instance, to identify the practices through which T1 and T2 tracked their students' ability (such as presentations based on role-play or collaborative work based on Google Drive), as well as to contrast and confirm all the information that T1, T2 and T3 provided in the interviews. In this respect, Saldanha and O'Brien (2013) explain that observation is a useful technique to check if what people say that they do is what they really do. Moreover, observation allowed the author to contrast and confirm the students' perceptions (for instance, of the transmissionist approach adopted by T3, see 4.3). Therefore, observation is central to the study and, without observation, it would not have been possible to obtain such a comprehensive view of verbal persuasion.

4.2. The Questionnaire

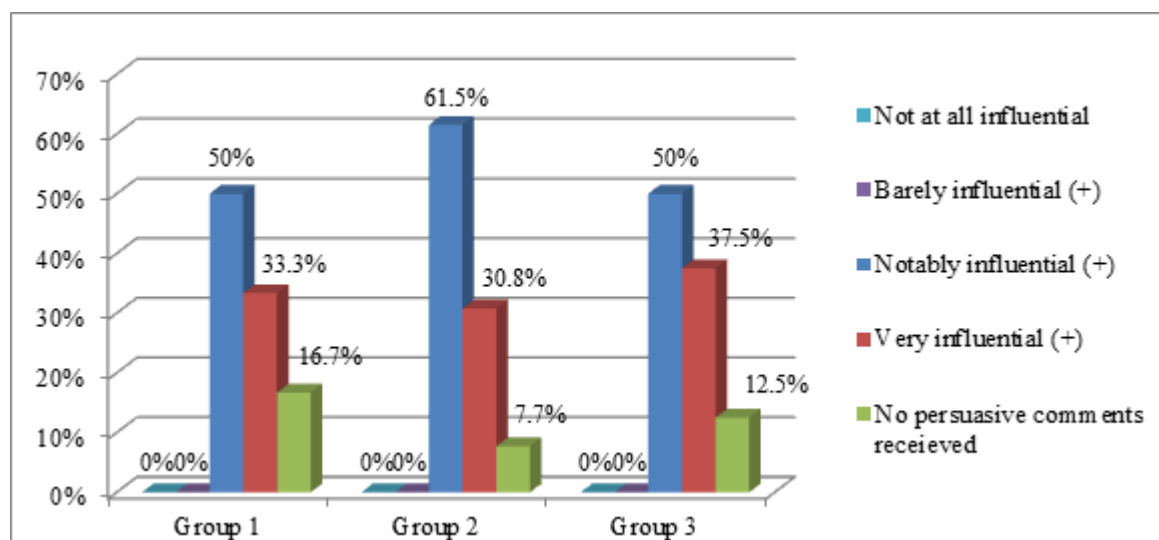
To discover and analyze the students' perceptions of the influence (if any) that verbal persuasion had on their self-efficacy beliefs during the course, a questionnaire was distributed at the end of the course. A definition of verbal persuasion, following Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura 1997), was included in the questionnaire with an example of a persuasive comment that had been collected in previous studies (Haro-Soler 2018b). The definition and example included were: "comments by the teacher on your abilities aimed to help you become aware of them or their evolution, such as 'I know that you can'".

Students had to indicate in the questionnaire if verbal persuasion had occurred during the course or if they had not received persuasive comments by the teacher. If verbal persuasion had occurred, students had to select if persuasive comments fostered (positive influence), diminished (negative influence) or had no influence on their self-efficacy beliefs. They also needed to indicate the intensity of this influence on a Likert scale with four answer options: Not influential at all (1), Barely influential (2), Notably influential (3), Very influential (4)³.

³ A Likert scale with four answer options was used to avoid the tendency to select the intermediate option that exists with five-option scales (Saldanha and O'Brien 2013).

The results obtained through the questionnaire are presented in Graph 1, which shows that all students who did claim to have received persuasive comments (83.3% of the students in Group 1, 92.3% in Group 2 and 87.5% in Group 3) found that they positively influenced their self-efficacy beliefs notably or a lot:

Graph 1: Influence of verbal persuasion on the students' self-efficacy beliefs.



It must be noted that although no persuasive comments were observed in Group 2 or Group 3, Graph 1 shows that most students in these two groups (92.3% in Group 2 and 87.5% in Group 3) indicated in the questionnaire that they had received persuasive comments (and all of them considered that these comments had influenced their self-efficacy beliefs notably or a lot). As explained in 4.1, the fact that persuasive comments were not registered through classroom observation did not necessarily imply that T2 and T3 did not provide their students with persuasive comments. Another possibility would be that teachers resorted to verbal persuasion in a private time and space, which prevented the author from registering these comments through classroom observation. Similarly, although verbal persuasion was observed in Group 1, 16.7% of the students in this group indicated in the questionnaire that they had not received persuasive comments by the teacher. Again, triangulation and, more specifically, focus groups, allowed us to shed light on these results and carefully interpret them. Focus groups also allowed us to understand the reasons why, according to the students, persuasive comments by teachers had positively influenced their self-efficacy beliefs during the course.

4.3. Focus Groups

The semi-structured script used by the author to moderate the focus group sessions on verbal persuasion was based on the following questions:

- 1) Did you receive persuasive comments by the teacher? If so, when and where? Can you remember some of them?
- 2) If you received persuasive comments by the teacher, did they influence your confidence as translators or not? If so, did verbal persuasion positively or negatively influence your confidence as translators? And to what extent?
- 3) Why or why not did verbal persuasion influence your confidence as translators?

4.3.1. Focus Group 1

In Group 1 all the students participating in the focus group sessions explained that verbal persuasion took place mainly in tutorial sessions that each of them had with T1. This coincides with the data collected through classroom observation, where only three persuasive comments by T1 were registered during the semester. What is more, the students in Group 1 who indicated in the questionnaire that they had not received persuasive comments (three students, 16.7%) were the only ones in this group who did not attend tutorial sessions with T1⁴. They did not participate in the focus group sessions, but we could confirm this thanks to the questionnaire, which included a question related to the attendance in tutorial sessions (see Haro-Soler 2018a). In this respect, it is important to note that the three students who indicated in the questionnaire that they had not received verbal persuasion (and who did not attend tutorial sessions) did attend the three lessons in which T1 delivered persuasive comments. This could mean that they did not perceive these comments as persuasive since they were delivered to the whole classroom and not specifically to them. However, there could be other reasons, such as a lack of attention on the part of the students or the fact that only three comments were delivered in four months of lessons. Since these three students did not participate in the focus groups sessions, we cannot shed light on this issue here, but this opens a future research line where the impact of individual versus group verbal persuasion could be explored.

⁴ The students were not obliged to attend tutorial sessions. It was their choice to meet T1 in one or more tutorial sessions. They could use these individualised sessions to ask for extra materials, ask for guidance or discuss personal issues with T1. The same occurred in the case of tutorial sessions with T2 and T3.

As for the reasons why verbal persuasion positively influenced their self-efficacy beliefs notably or a lot, the students in Group 1 participating in the focus group sessions explained that persuasive comments helped them trust their abilities to succeed at the assessment tasks, which decreased their anxiety. As has been explained in Section 1, according to Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura 1986, 1997), negative emotional states, such as stress or anxiety, may prevent the students from making the best use of their internal resources and thus hamper successful performance, which would decrease self-efficacy beliefs. Moreover, anxiety can be perceived as a sign of inability, which can also decrease self-efficacy beliefs. In the words of one of the participants: “T1 told me that I was going to attain a good level of performance in the exam taking into account my ability to translate and my level of English. This helped me a lot to be calm when facing the exam, which is a very important step”.

As the previous student’s statement also shows, participants in the focus group sessions organized in Group 1 highlighted that verbal persuasion had positively influenced their self-efficacy beliefs because it was “realistic”, that is, because it focused on their real ability to translate, which T1 was aware of⁵. In the words of another participant:

Persuasive comments have been effective due to how T1 has delivered them, because if someone who does not know you tells you: “You can”, it does not work. However, when T1 tells you: “you can do it, I know you can do it because I have seen that you have been able to do similar tasks during the semester”, you realize that s/he is right and that you have the required ability.

This is in line with the theory presented in Section 2, that is, with the main requirement that persuasive comments need to fulfil in order to be effective: they must deal with the students’ real ability, which teachers must then know. As explained in 4.1, T1 was aware of his/her students’ real ability thanks to classroom presentations, role-play during these presentations, and individual tutorial sessions. Moreover, supervision by T1 of their students’ ability was possible due to the caring teaching approach adopted by this teacher, whose lessons were characterized by proximity to and developing the trust of the students. In this sense, one of the

⁵ As the script used for moderating the focus group shows (4.3), following the methodological recommendations by experts in focus groups, the author/moderator did not introduce the idea of realistic versus unrealistic verbal persuasion. Instead, the participants themselves identified this distinction when answering the question “Why (or why not) did verbal persuasion influence your confidence as translators?”

students in Group 1 referred in the focus group session to the “proximity that T1 has with us [the students]” and explained that “T1 knows our names and always knows the level of each of us”.

4.3.2. Focus Group 2

The students participating in the focus group session organized in Group 2 considered that persuasive comments by T2 had positively influenced their self-efficacy beliefs notably or a lot (as they indicated both in the questionnaire and in the focus group session). They explained that T2 resorted to verbal persuasion in private conversations that s/he held with the students in the classroom, for instance, when solving the doubts they had. This explains why no persuasive comments were recorded through classroom observation, as they were not provided out loud by the teacher to all the students in the classroom.

The participants in the focus group session organized in Group 2 also explained that the individualized persuasive comments delivered by T2 positively influenced their self-efficacy beliefs because they were realistic, as with Group 1. In this sense, one of the participants explained that “[T2] helped you realize that if you had been able to perform successfully so far, you were going to be able to continue succeeding”. In this case, T2 was able to deliver realistic, and thus, effective persuasive comments because s/he knew their students’ ability thanks to the use of Google Drive. Whereas in Group 1 classroom presentations by the students based on role-play allowed T1 to track their students’ performance, collaborative work through Google Drive allowed T2 to do so. More specifically, each team of students shared the documents of their translation project with T2, who was able to follow the performance of the whole team, but also of each of its members. More particularly, this online tool allowed T2 to track the participation of each student in the translation process, the queries each of them inserted, and the translation alternatives each of them included⁶. Since T2 solved the doubts arising during the translation process through Google Drive or in the classroom, it was not necessary for most students enrolled in Group 2 to attend tutorial sessions, as they all indicated in the questionnaire and as the participants in the focus group explained during the oral session.

⁶ Note that the students and T2 shared these documents with the author of this paper, who could also observe the work done by the students and the comments inserted by T2 through Google Drive. It must also be noted that these documents are mentioned in this section to make it clear how T2 could track their students’ performance through Google Drive and thus deliver realistic comments and eliminate the need for tutorial sessions. As these documents were shared with the author, they constituted a valuable source of further information and contributed to triangulation.

It is also important to note that the participants in the focus group session organized in Group 2 referred to the “kindness” and “proximity [with the students]” of T2, who “always solved doubts or explained things to us with a smile”. These words relate to the caring teaching approach adopted in Group 2, where T2 paid attention to and was aware of their students’ ability and needs, and where s/he was able to create a learning environment characterized by mutual trust, proximity and respect. As happened in Group 1, this approach seems to have facilitated the delivery of persuasive comments by the teacher.

4.3.3. Focus Group 3

As explained in Section 3, T2 was responsible for the first part of the course and T3 was responsible for the second half for Group 3. According to all the participants in the focus group session, only T2 resorted to verbal persuasion. S/he did so in private conversations in the class (as s/he did in Group 2), and his/her persuasive comments were effective since s/he knew their students’ ability to translate, which was possible thanks to the use of Google Drive for the collaborative elaboration of the translation projects. Moreover, T2’s kindness and proximity were also referred to by the students of Group 3 participating in the focus group session.

On the contrary, the participants in the focus group session explained that T3 showed a “distant attitude” during the course. The lack of proximity of T3 with the students was also detected through classroom observation. To illustrate this statement it must be noted that, as recorded in the Observation Sheet, T3 did not know the name of each of his/her students, or, at least, did not use it when referring to each of them.

To this distant attitude, which contrasts with a caring teaching approach, we must add that, as recorded through classroom observation and as indicated by the participants in the focus group session, T3 adopted a traditional transmissionist teaching-learning approach in his/her classes. Proof of this is the type of feedback provided by T3, where only mistakes were highlighted and where their causes were not analyzed. In the words of one of the participants: “feedback provided by T3 was not good, since T3 simply identified wrong translation solutions and told us the correct alternative, but we need to know why to be able to improve.”⁷ Another participant

⁷ Due to space constraints, we will not analyze here the effect of feedback on self-regulated learning. See Haro-Soler (2018a) for a study on the impact that different types of feedback can have on translation students’ self-regulated learning and self-efficacy beliefs.

explained that since feedback provided by T3 focused only on the mistakes made, “during classroom presentations [s/he] was ready to have a lot of mistakes pointed out by the teacher and to see how T3 deleted the translation solutions adopted by the team and wrote the correct one without explaining why”. This negatively influenced this participant’s self-efficacy beliefs, as s/he thought that everything s/he did was wrong and because s/he received no explanations on how to improve for future projects. Another example of the transmissionist approach adopted in Group 3 relates to the hierarchy that exists between T3 and the students. As recorded through observation, this hierarchy was even patent in classroom presentations, which could have offered an excellent opportunity for the interaction between the team presenting, their peers and the teacher, that is, for the creation of a collaborative learning environment which could have helped the students to justify their decisions and understand the reasons behind their (in)adequacy (Haro-Soler 2018a). However, T3 did not favour this type of interaction. Instead, s/he acted as the main character delivering feedback focusing only on mistakes without helping the students reflect on their causes and, thus, making it difficult for them to self-regulate their learning, as the participants explained.

In addition, whereas in Group 1 each student had to present the work s/he had completed within the team depending on the role played, which allowed T1 to track each student’s performance and ability, in Group 3 the team members were allowed to choose only one or two members to present the whole project. This prevented T3 from paying attention to and being aware of the ability of each of the students in the team, and thus from being able to recur to (effective) verbal persuasion.

To sum up the information presented for Group 3, triangulation of the results obtained through the technique of the focus group and through classroom observation seems to indicate that in Group 3 the reason why verbal persuasion was not recorded in the Observation Sheet was not related to the time and space where it took place (for instance, in private conversations, as happened in Group 2). On the contrary, triangulation seems to indicate that T3 did not recur to verbal persuasion. This is not surprising if we take into account the transmissionist approach followed, where the teacher was “the guardian of the translatory truth” (Kiraly 1995: 99) and where the ability of each student could not be tracked. To this we must add the distant attitude adopted by T3, in contrast to the caring teaching approach, which in Group 1 and Group 2 seemed to facilitate verbal persuasion. All this would indicate that the percentages shown in

Graph 1 for Group 3, which reflect the positive influence that verbal persuasion had on the students' self-efficacy beliefs, refer exclusively to T2.

Table 2 summarizes the data presented in Section 4.3:

Table 2: Verbal persuasion by T1, T2 and T3.

	T1	T2	T3
Provides students with realistic persuasive comments?	Yes	Yes	No
Where/when?	Tutorial sessions	Private conversations (classroom)	----
Student-centred approach where individual ability is tracked?	Yes	Yes	No
Did persuasive comments positively influence the students' self-efficacy beliefs?	Yes	Yes	----

5. Conclusions

Our case study was performed to shed light on possible ways to incorporate self-efficacy beliefs in translator education programmes, thus contributing to satisfying the need to fill the vacuum relative to self-efficacy beliefs in translator education. More particularly, this case study explored verbal persuasion in the translation classroom and aimed to discover and analyze *how* and *why* persuasive comments by translation teachers influenced the students' self-efficacy beliefs.

It was performed in three groups of a specialized translation course of the University of Granada (Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3) and a mixed methods approach based on qualitative (interviews, classroom observation and focus groups) and quantitative techniques (survey) was adopted. Triangulation was thus essential to interpret the results.

According to the results, the majority of the students acknowledged that they had received persuasive comments by the teacher(s) during the semester-long course in which this study was performed. All of them indicated both in the questionnaire and the focus group sessions that verbal persuasion had positively influenced their self-efficacy beliefs notably or a lot. This positive influence occurred, as participants explained, because the persuasive comments delivered by two of the teachers (T1 and T2) were realistic, that is, they were delivered taking into account the students' real ability.

T1 and T2 could recur to realistic and thus effective verbal persuasion since they were aware of their students' ability, which they tracked in a student-centred learning environment where the principles of the caring teaching approach were implemented. More specifically, the proximity and mutual trust between these teachers and their students seems to have contributed to helping T1 and T2 pay attention and be aware of their students' ability. To this we must add the implementation of specific teaching methods where the students were the protagonists of the teaching-learning process. Classroom presentations based on collaborative work and role-play allowed T1 to know their students' real ability, whereas collaborative work through Google Drive allowed T2 to do so.

T3 was the only teacher of the three participating in this study that did not recur to verbal persuasion, according to the results. In this case, the transmissionist approach adopted, where the traditional hierarchy between the teacher and the students continues, as detected both through focus groups and observation, prevented T3 from tracking their students' ability and thus from providing the students with persuasive comments. The distant attitude adopted by T3, far from the principles of caring teaching, may also be related to the traditional approach adopted and also seems to have hampered verbal persuasion.

As for the scenarios where verbal persuasion by T1 and T2 occurred, the participants in the focus group sessions explained that it mainly took place in tutorial sessions or private conversations with the teacher in the classroom. The fact that T1 delivered three persuasive comments to the whole classroom that the participants in the focus group sessions did not mention, as well as the fact that three students in Group 1 stated that they had not received said comments although they attended the lessons in which they were delivered by T1 aloud, may indicate that individualized persuasive comments may be more effective than generalized ones. This will be the subject of future research.

The author of this paper is aware of the fact that this is an exploratory case study which needs to be completed with subsequent research in different courses, universities and countries and with a larger sample. The possibility to observe tutorial sessions to analyze the persuasive comments provided in this context will also be analyzed in future studies. However, despite its limitations, we consider that this study has contributed to filling the vacuum relative to the incorporation of self-efficacy beliefs in translator education programmes. Thanks to the results obtained teachers now know that, to be effective, it seems necessary that verbal persuasion corresponds to the students' real abilities. In this sense, this study has started to identify teaching practices that facilitate the tracking and awareness by teachers of their students' abilities (such as classroom presentations based on collaborative work or teacher-student collaboration through Google Drive). This study has also pointed out that a student-centred approach, especially when the principles of caring teaching are implemented, seems to facilitate the delivery of effective persuasive comments, and that individualised comments in tutorial sessions or private conversations seem to be an appropriate scenario for effective verbal persuasion.

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