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Article in *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer* · October 2019

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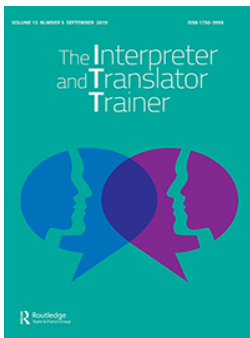
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To cite this article: Maria del Mar Haro-Soler & Don Kiraly (2019) Exploring self-efficacy beliefs in symbiotic collaboration with students: an action research project, *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*, 13:3, 255-270, DOI: [10.1080/1750399X.2019.1656405](https://doi.org/10.1080/1750399X.2019.1656405)

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ARTICLE



## Exploring self-efficacy beliefs in symbiotic collaboration with students: an action research project

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### ABSTRACT

This paper presents a participatory action research project in which teacher-researchers, student-researchers and student-subjects collaborated on a research project in a working-group format to investigate constructs related to the translator's psychological 'self'. The pedagogical approach adopted for managing the working group, based on social constructivist principles and a view of knowledge development as an emergent, collaborative process, was found to have boosted the students' self-efficacy beliefs regarding themselves as researchers, as the results of a focus group analysis revealed. Moreover, through the symbiotic collaboration between teachers and students in the working group, a preliminary two-section questionnaire for measuring students' self-perceptions as translators was validated over the course of the project, thus enhancing the value of this research tool for studying learners' self-efficacy beliefs. A key focus of this chapter will be on a shift in emphasis from 'translator training' and 'training the translator trainer' towards 'translator education' and 'educating the translator educator'.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 20 March 2019  
Accepted 26 July 2019

### KEYWORDS

Collaborative learning;  
authentic research project;  
emergentist pedagogical  
approach; translator's  
psychological 'self'; action  
research

## Introduction

The current situation in terms of formal programmes that prepare teachers to train translators still reflects the landscape described by Dorothy Kelly (2008) over a decade ago: 'It must be said that there is very little systematic training, whether it be initial or continuing, available for trainers in the specific field of translation'. In the absence of systematic programmes for learning how to teach translation, we assume that would-be teachers essentially develop their teaching skills (individually and collaboratively) with little or no assistance. The situation becomes even more difficult when teachers attempt to help their students deal with their self-perceptions as translators. As the teachers participating in the study by Haro-Soler (2017a) explained, they felt it was essential that they be able to help students trust their abilities as translators, that is, to assist them in developing realistic self-efficacy beliefs. They acknowledged, however, that in the absence of teacher educational measures to this end, they tried to achieve this objective intuitively. This illustrates the need to further investigate self-efficacy beliefs from an educational perspective and through empirical studies, following research by authors

such as Hjort-Pedersen and Faber (2009), Yang, Guo, and Yu (2016), or Haro-Soler (2017a, 2017b, 2018a, 2018b, 2019a, 2019b), in order to be able to identify approaches to teaching and learning that will allow translator educators to enhance the development of their students' self-efficacy beliefs, among other self-perceptions.

What we will be presenting here is a multi-faceted research/teaching/learning project in which established teacher-researchers worked collaboratively with translation students to investigate topics in the domain of Translation Psychology<sup>1</sup> with the goal of having teacher-researchers learn about the translator's psychological 'self' right along with their students. It was hoped that the teachers could expect to learn about the social construction of knowledge as an alternative to teacher-centred instruction, and that their students could acquire research skills and the confidence to think and work autonomously while developing their teamwork ability. Both teachers and students stand to learn a great deal together about the topics at hand: the translator's self-perceptions, such as self-efficacy beliefs, self-concept, self-confidence and self-esteem, all of which will be defined later in this paper. The pedagogical approach presented here is closely linked to the one that has been under development at the University of Mainz for the past 20 years for fomenting the emergence of professional translation skills through authentic project work.

This article introduces a collaborative research project that was begun in October 2017. The plan originally called for research on an existing questionnaire on translators' self-perceptions to be undertaken in a conventional manner, that is, by a pair of translation teacher-researchers. But as the project got underway, what was initially expected to be a straightforward questionnaire validation procedure by experienced researchers began to evolve into a collaborative enquiry synergistically involving both teachers and students, not only on the translator's self-concept, but also into the very functions and roles of translation students and teachers in translator education as well as Translation Psychology research. While the resulting dynamic development of this partial project was neither planned nor expected at the outset, the metamorphosis it has undergone is very much in tune with our pedagogical epistemology. John W. Creswell, the influential expert on qualitative research in the social sciences, has referred to the dynamic, autopoietic quality of qualitative research as 'emergent design', based on the understanding that social phenomena tend to be complex, non-linear and unpredictable (Creswell 2007, 39). From a qualitative, interpretivist research perspective (which the authors of this contribution share), a plethora of modifications to the research roadmap and the potential outcomes of a project can be expected to emerge as it evolves. It was this underlying acknowledgement of the inherently dynamic nature of social science investigation which, in the case of the action research project reported on here, paved the way for considerably more far-reaching and consequential outcomes than the mere validation of a questionnaire.

We are certain that we have only begun to scratch the surface when it comes to understanding the translator's self-concept and other self-perceptions, among which are self-efficacy beliefs. But we do believe that the tentative results of our project suggest some promising paths towards recasting and expanding the roles of translation students and educators in the learning/teaching/research process. The main focus of this article will be on our collaborative research procedure and its implications for translator education – and the education of translator educators.

## Translator training or translator education?

The value of a learning-centred and learner-centred, social-constructivist approach to translator education has been investigated and discussed extensively in the translation education literature during the first two decades of this new millennium and may be said to have achieved considerable respectability (see, for example, Kelly 2005). But today, as machine translation and other technological advances play an ever-increasing role in the translation professions, some may question the future function (and even the very necessity) of translator education, and hence of translator educators. Perhaps mere ‘training’ in the use of machine translation and other translator’s tools (*techne* in Aristotelian terms) is all that will be required in future. However, in line with our social constructivist view of learning, we defend the assumption that education in a broad sense – including the acquisition of knowledge of translation theory (*episteme*) and the development of practical wisdom (*phronesis*) – remains an essential task of Translation Studies departments – in addition to providing ‘training’. We will attempt to show how the research project reported on here may help shed some light on how the social constructivist approach we have adopted thus far can be enhanced to reposition multi-faceted human translators – and translator educators – in 21st century translator education.

### The origin of the translator’s self-concept construct

About 30 years ago, having called for a shift in perspective on translation processes from a predominantly linguistic focus to a doubly-articulated internal (psychological) and external (social) perspective based on J.R. Firth’s socio-linguistic interpretation of the nature of language, one of us (Kiryaly 1990) identified three interrelated ‘contexts of situation’ that can be seen as the nexus of three translation-relevant worlds. These are the context of situation in which the original text is situated (CS<sub>1</sub>), the one in which the target text is integrated (CS<sub>2</sub>), and the third one, which is the cognitive locus of the translation process. With reference to the translator’s context of situation (CS<sub>3</sub>) Kiraly states that:

An important external manifestation of the CS<sub>3</sub> is the translator’s self-concept: the image of the translator’s social role, the translator’s appraisal of his or her competency for translating a particular text and understanding of responsibility toward the other personalities in the translation context of situation (author, commissioner, user and reader). (Kiryaly 1990, 100)

Although he provided no empirical evidence, a second claim was that:

The translator’s self-concept is a mental construct that serves as the interface between the translator’s social and psychological worlds. The self-concept includes a sense of the purpose of the translation, an awareness of the information requirements of the translation task, a self-evaluation of [one’s own] capability to fulfill the task, and a related capacity to monitor and evaluate translation products for adequacy and appropriateness. (Kiryaly 1990, 100)

In initiating the action research project reported here, the researchers involved undertook to delve deeper into the multi-faceted psychological self-concept construct hypothesised by Kiraly (1990). Of particular interest to us was the possibility of eventually discerning ways and means of enhancing the development of students’

self-concept over the course of their programme of studies. In addition, we believed that the overall project could shed light on the translator's psychological 'self' and thus help satisfy the need identified by several translation scholars (Fraser 2000, 116; Atkinson and Crezee 2014; Haro-Soler 2017a).

### **Initiating the project: a draft questionnaire**

The objective of the first stage of the project was to review and validate a draft questionnaire adapted from three published survey templates designed to measure constructs related to the translator's psychological 'self': 1) the General Self-efficacy Scale (Schwarzer and Jerusalem 1995); 2) the Multidimensional Self-concept Scale (Fleming and Courtney 1984); and 3) the questionnaire on the translator's self-concept published by Göpferich (2008). This new instrument was expected to help fill the gap identified by several scholars that have claimed that it is necessary to design and/or adapt instruments to measure the various 'self' constructs within the context of Translation Studies (see Bolaños-Medina 2015; Haro-Soler 2018b, 2019a). Such instruments would allow researchers to study the potential relationships between these constructs, analyse the effects that self-related constructs can have, for instance, on the quality of the translation product or on the translation process (decision-making), as well as study the impact that teachers' attitudes in the classroom, teaching practices and educational approaches can have on the development of these self-perceptions, which should make it possible to focus on them in translator education programmes in an empirically and theoretically justified manner.

It is important to note at this point that researchers have not always agreed on the conceptual differences between the constructs related to the translator's psychological 'self', and thus the terms used to refer to them are often used confusingly as synonyms, not only in Translation Studies (Haro-Soler 2018b), but also in the field of Educational Psychology (see Pajares 1997). Therefore, one of the aims of the project was to gain an awareness, through collaborative dialogue involving both teachers and students, of the similarities and differences between these constructs. As Prieto Navarro (2007, 102) states, identifying and understanding these differences is important for both theoretical and empirical purposes, especially when it comes to the measurement of the constructs. Consequently, clearly defining the constructs that were going to be measured with the tripartite questionnaire was an essential first step towards judging its validity.

### **Integrating the students as actual co-researchers in the project**

Before setting the stage for the project, the decision had already been taken by the second author to offer a graduate seminar on the translator's self-concept in his university's translator education programme in the winter semester of 2017–18. The structure of the course was inspired by the action-research study presented by Risku (2016) in which she investigates the feasibility of having MA students participate in authentic research projects on translation-process related topics as a form of early 'research training' (Risku 2016, 1). Risku's interpretivist pedagogical epistemology parallels ours and has in fact been a significant source of inspiration for it (Kiralý 2000, 2016). A key pedagogical concept we share is that of 'situated learning', which we

understand to be a process of cooperative knowledge creation involving authentic action in the real world. The key features of situated learning identified by Risku (2016, 13–14): collaboration, construction, self-organisation, application in a social action context, use of common artefacts, feedback and reflection, are all characteristics that we also hold to be essential facets of a truly educative classroom. An educational approach very similar to the one presented in Risku (2016) has been under development for several years now at the University of Mainz and has been used with a similar degree of success in a series of ‘research-training’ seminars (see Kiraly, Massey, and Hofmann 2019).

A disappointing outcome of Risku’s study was that ‘... the action-research project described in this article had only limited success in making the students full participants in the sociocultural practice of translation research’ (Risku 2016, 14). This outcome (documented in participants’ questionnaire responses collected following the completion of the project) is all the more surprising as the objectives of the project included precisely the participation of the students as actual researchers in an authentic research project. As Risku reports, however:

Three of [the students] felt they were not involved because their own contributions lacked scientific relevance: the analysis they had done for their seminar papers had not produced any ground-breaking insights that were of real significance to the research project. (Risku 2016, 10)

Several students in Risku’s study also reported that they believed that the research they were doing had essentially already been done, making their own work seem irrelevant. For this action research project, an attempt was made to modify the design of the course to enhance the students’ perception that their research efforts were authentic and relevant. As will be explained below, unforeseen circumstances forced us to make changes (or rather allow them to emerge) in the structure of the seminar, which, in the end, provided an environment that appears to have been far more conducive to fomenting the feeling of having participated actively in a real research process than was the case in Risku’s study.

Along with the opportunity to partially replicate Risku’s action research experiment on using situated learning for research training, the partial project at hand also offered an opportunity to further investigate the approach to collaborative learning that has been a key feature of a series of seminars and project-based courses over the last few years (see Kiraly, R  th, and Wiedmann 2016; Kiraly, Massey, and Hofmann 2019). In a nutshell, the social-constructivist and emergentist approaches to translator education (see Kiraly 2000, 2013, 2014) have evolved into a comprehensive view of learning that rejects conventional one-way, top-down transmission of knowledge and skills and the asymmetrical distribution of power and authority in the teacher-centred classroom.

### Organising the project

As mentioned above, the project was initially designed as a seminar, but only four students actually signed up for the course, which meant there were not enough of them to meet the minimum enrolment requirement. The four MA students who did register, however, were so interested in the topic of the translator’s self-concept that the decision was taken by the second author and a colleague to change its format into that of a collaborative ‘working group’ comprising both teachers and students.

The fact that what was originally planned as a formal seminar was recast as a less formal working group affected the nature of intra-group interactions radically. From the very first session, it appeared clear to everyone present that while different types of competence were represented within the group, the conventional teacher-as-knowledge-provider/student-as-knowledge-recipient dichotomy had virtually disappeared. In effect, our research project had come to strongly resemble our collaborative translation classes, marked by shared authority and responsibility for every aspect of the learning/enquiry process. Our weekly working group sessions were moderated informally by the second author (as the nominal convenor of the seminar) but discussions were replete with contributions initiated by all three facilitators as well as all four students. From the very start, it was clear that the students would need to play a major role in our deliberations because they would be able to empathise with the perspective of other students whom we would be asking to respond to questionnaires about their self-concept.

### **Working group sessions**

The initial working group session was devoted to discussing the above-mentioned draft questionnaire (comprising the three sections taken from published questionnaires) to identify potential weaknesses and room for improvement. Our main objective, then, was to review and revise the questionnaire, which we would then attempt to validate by distributing it to a large number of students.

Working on the questionnaire to help investigate the nature of the translator's self-concept was not the students' only motivation for wishing to participate in the working group. Being MA students, they were all faced with the prospect of undertaking a thesis before completing their degree, and all of them expressed an interest in learning about qualitative research in general and survey research in particular. It was felt by both the facilitators and the students that having the latter actually work on the questionnaire at hand would provide significant opportunities to learn about the principles and practice of survey design – with a significant authentic component.

We focused on the draft questionnaire in our second session. From the group's first joint contact with it, questions arose regarding the constructs we expected to be dealing with: the translator's self-concept, self-esteem and self-confidence. In addition, a fourth concept, the translator's 'self-efficacy beliefs', was added to our deliberations thanks to the research that the first author was conducting on this concept at that time (Haro-Soler 2018a). The first author participated in the working group as one of the three facilitators throughout her stay as a visiting scholar at the University of Mainz.

In order to make it clear to the reader what we understand by all these similar concepts, we will present below the definitions that our working group agreed upon through the discussion of existing literature in Educational Psychology and Translation Studies, and by using the questionnaire as the starting and the ending point of the discussion. The concepts and their definitions will be presented according to their level of specificity, that is, from the most specific (i.e. the translator's self-efficacy beliefs) to the most general (i.e. the translator's self-concept).



### ***Self-efficacy and self-efficacy beliefs***

*Self-efficacy* is a relatively recent term in Translation Studies<sup>2</sup>. It was introduced by Bandura (1977) in the field of Psychology to refer to ‘the belief in one’s capability to execute required actions and produce outcomes for a defined task’ (Wood, Atkins, and Tabernero 2000, 431). If we analyse this definition, two essential characteristics of self-efficacy can be identified: it is the self-perception of one’s own abilities, and it is task-specific. Therefore, as Bandura (1986, 413) explains, self-efficacy, understood as a form of self-perception, does not refer to the abilities that people actually have, but to what they believe they can achieve with those abilities, even though the term *efficacy* appears to refer to actual abilities. In this article, in order to avoid the confusion that this term might entail, we have chosen to adopt the terminological distinction proposed by Haro-Soler (2018a, 2019a) to refer to the two components of the efficacy construct. Thus, the abilities that a person actually possesses to perform a specific task will be referred to in the remainder of this article as *self-efficacy*; whereas the individual’s perception of these abilities will be referred to as *self-efficacy beliefs*. As Haro-Soler explains, these two terms are used as synonyms in the literature in Educational Psychology and, more particularly, in Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, where self-efficacy and self-efficacy beliefs play a major role. However, the distinction made between these two terms allows for the use of a more precise terminology that better reflects the two concepts we are dealing with. If the task to be performed is translation, *self-efficacy beliefs* would represent a translator’s or a translation student’s confidence in their ability to translate the text at hand under the specific conditions and situational constraints stated in and implied by the brief or assignment.

### ***Self-confidence***

Self-confidence is ‘a general capability self-belief that often fails to specify the object of the belief’ (Schunk and DiBenedetto 2016, 40). In other words, self-confidence, like self-efficacy beliefs, is one’s perception of one’s own abilities, but, unlike the latter, it is not task-specific.

Some authors have also contextualised the construct of general self-efficacy beliefs, which has been defined as ‘a generalized sense of self-efficacy that refers to *global confidence* in one’s coping ability across a wide range of demanding or novel situations’ (Scholz et al. 2002, 243), and which has been measured with the general self-efficacy scale designed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). Nevertheless, according to the definition presented, where general self-efficacy beliefs represent the perception of one’s own general abilities, and taking into account the differences between self-efficacy beliefs and self-confidence as previously stated, ‘general self-efficacy beliefs’ would actually correspond to the concept of self-confidence in accordance with the terminology used in this paper.

### ***Self-esteem***

Self-esteem is an individual’s perceived sense of his/her own self-worth (Schunk 1991, 210; Pajares 2000) and therefore differs from self-efficacy beliefs and self-confidence in that it is a self-perception of one’s social and personal value (Pajares 2000), not of one’s abilities. As Pajares (2000, para., 7) explains, self-efficacy relates to the question ‘Can I do that task?’, whereas self-esteem is linked to answers to ‘How do I feel about myself?’

### **Self-concept**

A self-concept 'represents one's general perceptions of the self in given domains of functioning' (Bong and Skaalvik 2003, 5) and includes perceptions of one's competence accompanied by beliefs of self-worth (Pajares and Miller 1994, 194; Bong and Skaalvik 2003, 8). This is why several authors (Shavelson and Bolus 1982, 3; Schunk and Pajares 2009, 39) consider that self-concept embraces self-confidence (the self-perception of one's abilities) and self-esteem (the sense of one's self-worth). Compared to self-efficacy beliefs (the self-perception of one's abilities to perform a specific task), or self-confidence (the self-perception of one's general abilities), self-concept is much broader, and even though it can be linked to certain functional domains, it does not relate to specific tasks or activities (Bong and Skaalvik 2003, 10). This is in line with the pioneering work by Kiraly (1990, 10), who conceived the self-concept as a general construct including a) the image of the translator's social role; b) the translator's appraisal of his or her competency for translating a particular text, which corresponds to the concept of self-efficacy beliefs; and c) an understanding of responsibility towards the other actors in the translation context of situation.

The three parts of the draft questionnaire that were intended to measure self-confidence, self-concept and self-esteem led our working group to investigate, analyse and reflect on the differences and similarities between these constructs, as well as the translator's self-efficacy beliefs. Once the meaning of each of these concepts and the relationship between them were clear to us, the working group focused on the questionnaire again and discussed the sub-constructs that each of its sections and each of its items seemed to measure. During our deliberations, it became apparent to the working group that the third section of the initial questionnaire, adapted from Göpferich's (2008) self-concept scale, did not appear to measure a form of *self-perception* at all, but instead the respondents' perceptions of what translation activity comprises and of what the translator's role is. The working group discussed and was aware of the fact that Göpferich's (2008) self-concept scale had been designed to study translational self-concept through the respondents' conceptualisations of the translator's role. Nevertheless, Göpferich's translational self-concept does not exactly correspond to a form of self-perception, that is, to the respondents' general perception of themselves as translators (see the definitions presented above), but to what they think the translator's role involves. As the general aim of the project at hand was to study the translator's psychological 'self', a decision was taken not to include this last section in the revised version of the questionnaire.

After our fourth working group session, in the week of 15 November 2017, the first two sections of the initial questionnaire were distributed to approximately 50 students, of whom 38 completed them. The data were analysed using the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)*. The General Self-efficacy Scale had shown considerable internal consistency in various studies conducted with international samples, so it was not surprising that, in our study, its reliability was found to be adequate ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ). As for the second section of the questionnaire, that is, for the six items that had been adapted to the field of Translation Studies from the Multidimensional Self-concept Scale, reliability was found to be inadequate ( $\alpha = 0.56$ ).

These results were discussed in our fifth working group session. Even though the reliability rate for the General Self-efficacy Scale had been shown to be acceptable, the discussion in our working group helped us identify a number of minor improvements that could also be made to some of the items. As for the adapted Multidimensional Self-concept Scale, apart from the fact that its reliability rate had been found to be unacceptable, our working group was aware that this section of the questionnaire lacked face validity, because, for instance, answer options were not always coherent with respect to the way in which the items had been written. For example, time ratings such as ‘almost never’, ‘not very often’, ‘quite often’ and ‘very often’ are not coherent answer options for a question such as ‘When you have to read a source text and understand it for a translation assignment, how worried or concerned do you feel about it?’.

The four students worked in pairs for the following two weeks to improve the first and second sections of the initial questionnaire and their suggestions were discussed and critiqued by the whole group in our weekly sessions. Finally, the revised version of the General Self-efficacy Scale was considered to be acceptable by all of the students and teachers in our working group. However, although the two students working on the adapted version of the Multidimensional Self-concept Scale (section 2 of the initial questionnaire) had improved it to a great extent in light of the definitions presented above, our working group determined that some of the questions in this section seemed to measure self-confidence, self-esteem and even general efficacy. We had already agreed on an instrument to measure self-confidence (the General Self-efficacy Scale). Due to the fact that, as explained above, we had decided not to focus on general self-esteem in our working group project, but to look instead at self-efficacy beliefs, our working group agreed not to include Section 2 in the revised version of the questionnaire that we would attempt to validate. Instead, the English version of the Translator’s Self-efficacy Beliefs Scale that the first author had designed for, and used in, her dissertation was incorporated into our questionnaire, as all members of the working group considered it appropriate and useful for our project. It must be noted that the Spanish version of this scale had been validated by a panel of seven experts in the domains of translator education and questionnaire design, and its validity had also been tested in a pilot study. As for its reliability, it had showed significant internal consistency ( $\alpha > 0.8$ ; Haro-Soler 2018a). Table 1 summarises the main steps followed and the main decisions made before validating the revised version of the questionnaire.

**Table 1.** From the initial questionnaire to the revised version.

<b>Draft questionnaire</b>	Section 1: General Self-efficacy Scale (Schwarzer and Jerusalem 1995) Section 2: Multidimensional Self-concept Scale (Fleming and Courtney 1984) (adapted) Section 3: Göpferich’s (2008) Self-concept Scale
<b>First round of discussions</b>	Section 3 of the initial questionnaire would not be included in the revised questionnaire
<b>Distribution of the first version of the revised questionnaire</b>	Section 1 and 2 of the initial questionnaire
<b>Second round of discussions</b>	Revision of sections 1 and 2 Section 2 was finally replaced by the English version of the Translator’s Self-efficacy Beliefs Scale (Haro-Soler 2018a)
<b>Revised version of the questionnaire</b>	Revised version of the General Self-efficacy Scale English version of the Translator’s Self-efficacy Beliefs Scale

After agreeing on the revised version of the questionnaire, our working group acted as a panel of experts to assess (and confirm) the content and face validity<sup>3</sup> of each of its two scales. The internal consistency of each of the two scales was also tested. In order to do so, the revised questionnaire was distributed to MA and BA students at the FTSK ( $n = 125$ ), and Cronbach's Alpha test was applied to their responses. The results of this test were satisfactory, as the reliability rate for the revised General Self-efficacy Scale was found to be adequate ( $\alpha = 0.79$ ) and for the Translators' Self-efficacy Beliefs Scale it was found to be even higher ( $\alpha = 0.89$ ). This means that the revised version of the initial questionnaire that our working group collaboratively elaborated exhibited content and face validity and also revealed significant internal consistency.

### **The students' perceptions: a focus group study**

As the students played a major role in the working group, we considered it essential to collect their perceptions of the social-constructivist/emergentist pedagogical approach adopted for managing it, based on symbiotic collaboration between teachers and students. Their perceptions could then contribute to developing teachers' understanding of how students respond to different learning environments and of how these environments may contribute to their careers and impact their self-efficacy beliefs. More specifically, we used a focus group format to collect qualitative data on the students' perceptions of: a) the educational approach adopted; b) the students' role and that of teachers within the working group; c) their learning experiences as participants in an authentic research project; and d) the way in which their experiences as part of the working group might contribute to their careers as translators and/or researchers.

To achieve these aims, a qualitative focus group session was set up. The four students in our working group participated in this focus group session, which was organised following the methodological specifications described by Winlow et al. (2013, 294) and Krueger and Casey (2015), among others. The focus group session was held in English on 15 December 2017 and lasted approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes. The session was moderated by the two co-authors, using a semi-structured script of nine questions (see [Appendix 1](#)). An audio recording was made of the entire session and written permission was obtained from the participants to record and quote their conversation for research purposes. They were also informed that their anonymity would be guaranteed, and they all signed a consent form.

It should be noted that the functioning of this final focus group was different from the way in which teachers and students in the working group had worked during the semester. Interaction within the working group was characterised by a multi-directional learning approach where knowledge emerged through collaborative learning between teachers and students, as previously described. But during the focus group session, the teachers' role consisted of eliciting views and opinions of the students related to the themes that had been identified for the focus group study. The teachers, functioning essentially as moderators, intervened primarily to ask questions when necessary and to make sure that all of the objectives of the focus group were met.

Once the recorded discussion had been transcribed by the co-authors (and verified by the student participants), the qualitative data were analysed (classified and organised within four main categories that correspond to the four specific objectives already

mentioned) and interpreted. The results obtained are presented in the following section. For the purpose of illustration, some of the most representative student statements from each category have been included.

### Focus group results

The four students in the working group, all of whom participated in the focus group study presented here, explained that they considered the discussion that took place in each of our working group sessions to be very positive, as opposed to the discourse that generally emerges in conventional, teacher-centred traditional classes: ‘Everyone was asked for his or her opinion [...], which may be missing in other classes when we just read literature or what has been written or said about a topic’ (P2). They also highlighted the fact that their opinions mattered and that members in the working group took each other seriously. This facilitated what they called active learning and led them to feel empowered and have ‘the feeling of being needed or necessary for this group effort’ (P4). Moreover, this seems to have allowed our working group to become ‘a real team’ (P3). ‘I think we have really developed a group dynamic, which I think is rare in other classes’ (P4).

The four students also highlighted that they were aware of the fact that each member in the working group had different competences which, in collaboration with the others’ competences ‘helped us reach our goal’ (P4). As one student explained: ‘I liked the fact that we came together at different stages of knowledge development, but each one of us contributed equally’ (P3). Far from being seen as ‘authorities’, the teachers were described as guides by one of the participants (P2) and facilitators by another (P1), even though a third student explained that she had the feeling that we were all learning from each other: ‘It was like you [the teachers] were learning with us ... We all learned from each other’ (P4).

Without exception, the students’ comments reflect the positive impression the students had of the collaboration between themselves and the facilitators in our working group, where everyone learned from the others, where everyone’s opinions counted and where each member of the team was understood to have competences or knowledge to offer, all of which constitute the foundations of social constructivist learning. The students also stated that, even though ‘in another context or in another class’ dealing with psychological constructs and working on an instrument to measure them could be ‘hard to grasp’ or ‘very boring’ (P4), the particular pedagogical approach adopted in this course allowed them to effectively learn about the constructs involved, questionnaire design and qualitative research:

But I like the insights that I have obtained because the process was creative. If I had learned about this topic in another course with enormous reading assignments, I would not have learned anything, I’m afraid. [...] I am taking away a lot of knowledge about qualitative research from this class but I think it’s mainly because of the way the class was organised. (P3)

What is more, the four students declared that they felt they would be able to apply the competences and knowledge that they had acquired during the semester in future research projects, which seems to indicate that their confidence as researchers (self-efficacy beliefs) had grown. This increase in their confidence was also apparent to the facilitators, who

realised that, as the semester progressed, the four students showed far more confidence in their own views when making or defending their proposals. Furthermore, the four students stated that they were aware of the fact that they were participating in an authentic research project, which had a positive impact in their motivation: 'It was like I was contributing to the future of translation studies in some sense, which is great. I mean, after we had read so much about so many theorists and researchers, I felt our turn had come' (P2).

To sum up, the students' experience as part of the authentic project presented in previous pages, where the teachers and the students in the working group collaborated as equals to make knowledge emerge creatively out of chaos, appears to have contributed to empowering them to pursue a career as researchers if they choose to do so. In the words of two of them:

Now I want to do research. I want to do something on my own. I want to find a topic I am enthusiastic about and that I'm really interested in and try to show it to the world. (P2)

I feel like sharing it with others. I feel like I want to spark interest in other students to show that this doesn't have to be boring [...] [and] that you don't have to be alone while doing research. [...] Because research is often considered something that people do alone. They imagine enemies everywhere, which is not true. We should learn from each other and with each other. (P4)

### By way of a conclusion

While our initial research question revolving around the translator's self-concept is very interesting in and of itself, another focus here has been on seeing the processes of learning, teaching and doing research as an interwoven strategy for improving the autodidactic approach that seems to be the virtually universal model for educating translator educators in the absence of specialised academic programmes.

The communities of research and teaching practice seem to have provided a suitable environment for learning how to teach translation for the past half century and will presumably continue to do so in the future as well, as there are still, to our knowledge, very few translator educator education programmes in operation or on the horizon. The pedagogical project reported on here is hardly meant to serve as a model for other teacher-researchers to follow. Instead, it is intended to serve as an example of how learning (in the sense of education rather than training) can be seen as an emergent (largely unscripted, exploratory, largely unpredictable and self-organising) process for facilitators and students. This can be seen to apply to learning how to do research as in the case of our project just as it does to the authentic translation project tradition that has developed at the University of Mainz over the past two decades. In both cases, instead of setting out to instruct students efficiently by spoon-feeding them with knowledge, teachers can accompany their students on adventures in translation, with an authentic research question to be investigated or a translation project to undertake, complete and publish.

The teacher's knowledge and experience (*episteme*, *techne* and particularly *phronesis*) do not turn the teacher into a fountain of truth that can be distributed efficiently and effectively to students for consumption and regurgitation. Experience, in our view, is much more something like familiarity with the terrain. The teacher's or researcher's experience predisposes them to being guides for accompanying students as they experience authentic practice (as translators and researchers) themselves. What is needed, we feel, at least



when it comes to complex learning, involving the development of skills and capabilities for making sensible and ethical judgements, is an epistemological willingness to step down from the pedestal of the all-knowing pedagogue. We need to move beyond transmission-related metaphors for teaching and learning, which suggest that knowledge is located in the teacher's head and can essentially be transferred to the heads of students. From an emergent perspective on teaching, learning and research, we do indeed make the road by walking.

## Notes

1. Translation Psychology is a sub-discipline of Translation Studies (Jääskeläinen 2012; Bolaños-Medina 2016) which entails the study of translators-in-action as complex individuals functioning as holistic entities. It thus deals with the underlying emotional, cognitive, behavioural and social factors at play, as well as their interactions with the translators' professional environment and with other agents participating in this environment (Bolaños-Medina 2016, 59).
2. See Haro-Soler (2019a) for a review of the main studies performed on this topic and on translator's self-confidence.
3. According to Fink (2003, 31–33), the validity of a scale refers to how well it measures what it is intended to measure. There are different types of validity, such as face validity, which involves a 'casual assessment of item appropriateness', or content validity, 'a subjective measure of how appropriate items or scales seem to a set of reviewers who have some knowledge on the matter'.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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## **Appendix 1. Focus group script**

### **Students' perceptions of their learning experience as part of the working group and of an authentic research project:**

1. How would you describe your experience as part of our working group? Has it been beneficial for you? In what sense?
2. Do you have a clearer idea now of the different constructs related to the translator's psychological self? Why? If so, what has contributed to that? Are you more familiar now with qualitative research? And with the process of design and validation of a survey? Why? If so, what has contributed to that?
3. What else have you learnt during the working group project?
4. In your opinion, are you able to apply what you have learnt through your experience in the working group project to other research situations? Why? How could you do so?
5. Have you been aware of the fact that you were participating in an authentic research project? Why? What were the consequences of that (if any)?

### ***Students' perceptions of their role and the role of teachers within the working group***

6. How would you describe your role within the working group? Why? Have you felt that you were empowered with responsibility? Why? Have you had a voice in the decisions made or not? Why? How do you think that your role affected your learning and that of teachers?
7. How would you describe the role of teachers within the working group? Why? How do you think that their role affected learning?

### **Students' perceptions of the multi-directional learning approach adopted**

8. What do you think of the educational approach adopted? Why? Has it facilitated learning? How?

### **Students' perceptions of the impact of their experience as part of the working group on their careers as translators and/or researchers:**

9. Do you think that your experience in the working group project may help you in your career as researchers and/or translators? Why? If so, how?
10. Do you have more confidence in your research skills now than at the beginning of the working group project? Why? What and/or who (teachers, peers) has contributed to that? How?