Effects and Students' Perspectives of Blended Learning on English into Arabic Translation

Arab Journal of Applied Linguistics
e-ISSN 2490-4198
Vol. 4, No. X, May 2019, 50-80
© The Authors
http://www.arjals.com

Abdelhamid Ahmed
Core Curriculum Program, Qatar University, Doha, Qatar &Faculty of Education, Helwan University, Cairo, Egypt.

Ahmed Fathy Ibrahim
PhD Candidate at Graduate School of Education, Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt.

Abstract

Translation constitutes a problem for many students worldwide and Arab students in particular due to the ineffective approaches to the teaching of translation. The current study aimed at measuring the effect of a proposed blended learning programme on developing Egyptian secondary students' translation skills from English into Arabic; and exploring students' perspectives on this proposed programme. Social constructivism informs this study as its theoretical framework. This study adopted a mixed-methods research design with quasi-experimental research design and semi-structured interviews. Participants were divided into experimental and control groups, with 20 students each. Results showed that the blended learning programme proved significantly more effective in developing the translation skills of the experimental group students. Moreover, students' perspectives on the benefits and challenges of using the blended learning programme were reported. Theoretical and pedagogical implications for the teaching of translation using blended learning are provided.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Translation Skills, English/Arabic, Students' Perspectives, Mixed Methods, Egyptian learners of English.

Introduction and Background

Translation, as the fifth language skill, in the language classroom represents an essential element of students' linguistic and communicative competence that prepares them for real-life situations in their studies and future jobs (Naimushin, 2002). Translation is defined as "the process of translating words or text from one language into another; and the written or spoken rendering of the meaning of a word, speech, book or other text, in another language" (Stevenson, 2003, p. 1889). The present study is limited to the process of translating words or text from English into Arabic, by secondary school students.

The ability to produce an accurate and correct translation from/to a second/foreign language constitutes a challenge to student translators for two reasons. First, translation teaching has a complex nature, which requires more dynamic pedagogical methods (Li, 2006). Second, many approaches to teaching translation require more flexibility and adaptability to students' needs and building bridges between language teaching and translation pedagogy (Carreres, 2006).

Previous research has shown that Arab students encounter some problems while translating from English into Arabic. For example, the literal translation of the English passive voice sentences from English into Arabic is a common problem (Khalil, 1993). This problem was attributed to the little attention paid to the non-equivalency syntactic structures between Arabic and English and translation procedures. Other research showed that Arab students face some translation problems at the level of syntax, layout and content of the legal texts written in English (Farghal & Shunnaq, 1992). Moreover, Farghal (1995) cited five lexical/discoursal translation problems encountered by Arab postgraduate students, when they translate from English into Arabic: Translation of metaphorical expressions; translation of English phrasal verbs; students' altering of impersonal English pronouns for personal ones; finding formal and functional equivalence of lexical items; and missing the thought relationships between sentences (i.e. addition, contrast, and cause/effect). In addition, Thawabteh (2011) indicated that Arab students encounter many linguistic, cultural and technical problems when subtitling from English into Arabic. Furthermore, Faris and Sahu (2013) found that 70% of the participants, in an Iraqi university in their senior year at College of Education,

encountered difficulties in the translation of English collocations into Arabic.

In the current study, the authors did a preliminary analysis of students' responses to a translation task in their final English exam and an informal interview with ten students. It was revealed that first-year secondary school students encounter some problems with lexical, grammatical, morphological, syntactic, and pragmatic skills while translating. These translation problems might be attributed to two reasons: Traditional classroom teaching which is often regarded as ineffective and boring (Ury, 2004); and the paucity of systematic approaches to the teaching of translation skills (Kiraly, 1995).

Due to the rapidly increasing communication and network technologies, some new instructional delivery and learning approaches have been developed to provide students with more meaningful learning experiences (Lim, & Morris, 2009). One of these new instructional delivery approaches is blended learning upon which the most effective uses of technology in the classroom focus (Vaughan and Garrison, 2005). It does not only offer more choices, but it is more effective (Singh, 2003). Furthermore, students in Blended Learning (BL) environments have performed better than those adopting self-study because BL combines collaborative and interactive learning as well as teacher-directed instruction (Means et al., 2013).

Blended learning has been defined as a combination of face-to-face and computer-assisted learning in a single teaching and learning environment (Neumeier, 2005, p. 164; Dudeney and Hockly, 2007, p. 137). In the current study, blended learning is operationally defined as a teaching/learning environment in which 60% of instruction is face-to-face regular classroom instruction, and 40% is Computer-Assisted Translation Learning (CATL) in the school computer lab.

From a theoretical perspective, blended learning is based on social constructivism theory (Vygotysky, 1987). Social constructivism assumes that learners socially construct knowledge while making sense of their learning (Driscoll, 2000). From a social constructivist perspective, knowledge does not take the form of objective truth that is unquestionable, however, it is created through learners' engagement in a meaning-making process in which they collaboratively form, develop, and construct explanations (Jonassen et al., 1995; Vrasidas, 2000; Driscoll, 2000; Cobb, 2005). Fosnot (1996)

highlighted that Vygotsky paid much attention to how learners and their peers converse, question, explain and negotiate meaning while sharing varied perspectives and views. In other words, meaning making takes place through rich conversation between learners and exchanges of views based on their life experiences (Jonassen, 1999; Jonassen et al., 1995). Based on this understanding, Woo & Reeves (2007) emphasised that social constructivism supports meaningful learning that takes place through dialogic interaction among learners in the meaning-making process. This dialogic interaction among peers is believed to mediate learners' linguistic knowledge construction and contributes to the learning process in the L2 classroom (Swain, 1998, 2000, 2010; Swain, Lapkin, Knouzi, Suzuki, & Brooks, 2009).

In line with the social constructivist perspective, the present researchers adopted Bersin's (2004) programme flow model and Neumeier's (2005) framework to guide their blended learning design. The programme flow model is a step-by-step curriculum that combines different media into a chronologically-sequenced programme. Three benefits characterise this model: (1) It creates a deep level of commitment and completion rate; (2) it enables the instructor to track progress formally; and (3) it fits into the normal flow of classroom training (Bersin, 2004, p. 61). Moreover, Neumeier's (2005) parameters that describe and conceptualise a blended learning environment for language learning and teaching purposes helped the researchers develop their BL programme with mode, model of integration, distribution of learning content, language teaching methods, involvement of learners and location of teaching.

From a pedagogical perspective, many researchers have spotlighted the impact of blended learning approaches on developing students' learning. For example, Singh and Reed (2001) highlighted that using blended learning yields the following benefits: Enhancing learning effectiveness; optimising development cost and time; and optimising business results. Other benefits of blended learning include richness of pedagogy; accessing knowledge; social interaction; cost-effectiveness; personal agency; and ease of revision (Osguthorpe and Graham, 2003). Hockly (2011) adds that blended learning is needed for three reasons: Students expect the integration of technology in their language

learning; students expect to fit their education within their busy lives; and the ministry of education in some contexts expects teachers to blend their instruction.

Research also showed that blended learning has a positive effect on learning outcomes, students' retention and achievement, and students' positive perceptions at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. At the undergraduate level, a research study explored the effect of blended learning on 1431 students' retention and achievement and examined students' perceptions of blended learning (López-Pérez, Pérez-López, & Rodríguez-Ariza, 2011). Findings revealed that blended learning has positively contributed to reducing students' dropout rates and improving their final exam marks. However, students' perceptions of blended learning depended on some factors such as their age, background, blended learning activities, class attendance, and final marks. Similarly, Lim & Morris (2009) investigated the effect of some learners and teachers' variables on the learning outcomes of a blended learning course. Results showed that learners' age, prior experience with distance learning, preferred delivery format, and average study time were some variables causing the difference in the learning outcomes. Correspondingly, Owston, York & Murtha (2013) examined undergraduate students' perceptions of four aspects related to blended learning courses: Students' satisfaction, BL convenience, engagement, and views about learning outcomes. Findings showed that blended learning worked well with high achievers who reported overall satisfaction with the course, preferred the blended learning format, and found the course more convenient and engaging. However, low achievers were not capable of coping with the blended learning environment. In another study, blended learning, in the form of wikis, blogs and forums positively affected students' perceptions of their EFL writing in Japan and indicated that it is a suitable medium that enabled students to differentiate between the different English writing styles (Miyazoe, & Anderson, 2010).

At the postgraduate level, Chen & Jones (2007) conducted a study in which they surveyed MBA students at an American university to compare students' assessments of course effectiveness and satisfaction in a traditional classroom teaching and a blended learning one in which online learning was the primary teaching method with some few classroom meetings. Generally, both groups of students reported positive perceptions

about the course, instructor, and learning outcomes. Most students in the blended learning course revealed that they would take other courses using blended learning; felt they gained an appreciation of the essential course concepts; and reported that the blended learning course improved their analytical skills. However, the students were more satisfied with the clarity of course instruction in the traditional classroom. Despite being similar in the final learning outcomes, this research suggests that both courses can be improved if certain aspects of each course were incorporated into the other.

Research highlighted some challenges associated with blended learning. Boelens, De Wever, and Voet (2017) analysed 20 studies to identify the problems of designing blended learning environments. Results indicated that a limited number of studies offer learners control over the realisation of the blend; monitoring students' progress and personalisation take place online, while social interaction takes place in the first introductory face-to-face meetings; and finally, instructional activities that foster a collaborative and affective learning atmosphere are paid attention to. Similarly, Stracke (2007) investigated the views of three students who left a blended learning course in which learners studied independently on a computer, along with the regular face-to-face instruction. Findings revealed that the students left the blended learning course for three reasons. First, they perceived a lack of support and connection between the regular face-to-face and CALL. Second, they perceived a paucity in the usage of the paper medium for reading and writing. Finally, they rejected the computer as a means of language learning.

The interest in the current research is based on some theoretical and pedagogical considerations. Theoretically, the researchers seek to explore (i) if the proposed blended learning programme, with its theoretical and pedagogical underpinnings, can prove effective in developing students' translation skills; and (ii) if blended learning can provide meaningful learning and communication in the translation classrooms. Pedagogically, the findings of this research seek to provide empirically-based evidence that proves the effectiveness of blended learning in the translation context. Besides, the findings of the current study could help education practitioners and stakeholders make informed decisions and adjustments to teaching practices, curriculum development and

assessment of translation.

In response to research calls to explore the impact of blended learning on achieving more meaningful learning experiences (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004) and in light of the theoretical and pedagogical considerations discussed earlier, the aims of the current study are twofold: (i) To explore the effect of a proposed blended learning programme on developing Egyptian first-year secondary school students' translation skills from English into Arabic; and, (ii) to explore students' perspectives on this proposed blended learning programme. Therefore, the current research attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of the proposed blended learning programme on developing Egyptian first-year secondary school students' translation skills from English into Arabic?
2. How do Egyptian first-year secondary school students perceive the proposed blended learning programme?

Method

Research Design

The current study used a mixed-methods research design that is comprised of quantitative and qualitative components. Quantitatively, a quasi-experimental research design was adopted whereby an experimental group and a control group were used to investigate the effect of a blended learning programme (i.e. the independent variable) on Egyptian secondary school students' translation skills from English into Arabic (i.e. the dependent variable). The experimental group was taught using the blended learning programme, while the control group was taught using traditional classroom teaching. The experiment lasted for eight weeks. The proposed blended learning programme involved a face-to-face component where the teacher taught a specific translation skill, with its sub-skills for an entire week (i.e. three classes in a traditional classroom and two classes in a computer lab at school). For each week, the teacher would explain the lessons and involve the students in some in-class activities for three sessions, and then he would take his students to the computer lab for the other two classes to practise each

specific skill on computers (i.e. watching the videos, doing activities and exercises, answering quizzes, and using bilingual dictionaries).

Both groups were taught by the same teacher (i.e. none of the two researchers tool part). Both groups had the same number of face-to-face hours of teaching (i.e. nearly 16 hours per semester). The control group students received traditional classroom teaching in translation in the form of translation rules and answering translation questions. However, the control group did not receive any practice in the computer lab. Assignment of the control and the experimental groups was entirely random. Qualitatively, a semi-structured interview schedule was developed to explore students' perspectives of the blended learning programme on developing their translation skills from English into Arabic.

Participants

Forty Egyptian male secondary school students aged 15-16 years, participated voluntarily in this study. They were divided into two equal groups of 20 participants.

Table 1

Research Questions vis-à-vis Data Collection and Analysis

Research Questions	Data Collection	Data Analysis	Participants
1. What is the effect of the proposed blended learning programme on developing Egyptian first-year secondary students' translation skills from English into Arabic?	1. Pre/Post-Test 2. Translation Skills Checklist 1. Blended Learning Programme	Statistical Analysis Using SPSS Independent Paired Samples T-Test Black Modified Gain Ratio	Control Group (20 students) Experimental Group (20 students)
2. How do Egyptian first-year secondary school students perceive the proposed blended learning programme?	Semi-structured Interviews	Thematic Content Analysis (Radnor, 2001)	10 Participants from the experimental group

The students selected were enrolled in a secondary school for boys. They were in their first year in a public secondary school in Cairo, Egypt in the second semester of the school year (2013-2014). They all studied English as a Foreign Language (EFL) as a

compulsory course. This course seeks to develop students' listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation skills. Ten experimental group students accepted to be interviewed and to report their views on the proposed blended learning programme.

Purposive sampling and accessibility criterion (Silverman, 2001) were used. All 40 students signed an informed consent form and volunteered to participate in the current study. Table 1 shows the research questions vis-à-vis data collection and analysis.

Data Collection

The present researchers developed a translation skills checklist, a pre/post-test, the proposed blended learning programme, and a semi-structured interview schedule.

Translation Skills Checklist

After reviewing the literature, doing a preliminary analysis of the students' responses to the translation question in their final English exam and analysing students' most common translation problems through an informal interview with ten random students, a translation skills checklist was developed. This checklist consisted of lexical, grammatical equivalence, morphological, pragmatic, and syntactic skills. These skills

Table 2

Test Specifications

Question	Skill	Items	Question Type	Points
1	Grammatical	10	Multiple Choice Questions	10
2	Lexical/Morphological	5	Matching	5
3	Syntactic	5	Response Questions	5
4	Pragmatic	5	Response Questions	10
Total		25		30

were divided into sub-skills (See Appendix A). The developed translation skills checklist was reviewed by five Arabic/English translation lecturers in three Egyptian universities to determine the degree of importance of each skill/sub-skill. The final checklist included only skills that had been approved by four out of five jury members (i.e. representing a minimum of 80%).

Pre/Post – Translation Test

Based on the translation checklist, a pre/post-translation test (See Appendix B) was designed to assess the student's translation skills. The test consisted of 4 questions, with 30 items covering all translation skills. Table 2 shows the test specifications.

Five Arabic/English translation lecturers in three Egyptian universities validated the test. The test was also administered twice on a pilot sample on two different occasions, four weeks apart, in a previous semester. The researchers used Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient formula, where (r) = 0.853. The test proved reliable according to the result of the test-retest procedure.

The Blended Learning Programme

The blended learning programme comprised pre-treatment, treatment and post-treatment.

Pre-treatment

The pre-treatment stage consisted of orientation and pre-testing. First, the students in the experimental and control groups were pre-tested in the assessed translation skills. The independent samples t-test was used to compare the mean scores of both groups in the pre-test. There was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of both groups. Second, the participants in the experimental group took part in the orientation session to know how to use the blended learning programme effectively (i.e. access to the programme, the videos, activities, quizzes, bilingual dictionaries and teacher and computer feedback).

Treatment

After reviewing the literature related to blended learning, the researchers decided to adopt Bersin's (2004) programme flow model of blended learning and Neumeier's framework (2005) (See Introduction and Background). After the orientation week, each category of skills was taught in an entire week and the last two weeks were devoted to an overall review and practice. Table 3 shows the programme specifications.

Table 3

Programme Specifications

Programme Duration	Classes per Week	Class/Lab Duration	Orientation Duration	Face-to-Face Teaching	Computer Lab Sessions	Academic Year
8 Weeks	Five classes	45 minutes	One week	3 Times a Week X 7 Weeks = 21 Classes (60%)	Twice a Week X 7 Weeks = 14 Sessions (40%).	Second Semester of 2014

The proposed blended learning programme involved a face-to-face component where the teacher teaches a specific translation skill, with its sub-skills for an entire week. For each week, the teacher explains the lessons and does some in-class activities in the classroom for three classes, and then he takes his students to the computer lab for the other two classes to practise each specific skill on computers (i.e. watching the videos, doing activities and exercises, answering quizzes, and using bilingual dictionaries).

In the first week, which included the orientation session, the teacher set up the programme following the blended learning model. To avoid technical errors, the teacher uploaded the online activities to the school lab computers where each student has his computer for the entire duration. The teacher has his computer where he monitors the progress of all 20 students on their computers in the lab. Two types of feedback were available to students: Computer feedback and teacher feedback. The computer feedback allowed the students to see their scores immediately and permitted several attempts. The teacher-graded activities were open-ended and required the teacher to assign a score and give feedback. Also, formative and summative assessments were used.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The researchers developed the semi-structured interview schedule which asked students about their views on using the blended learning programme. Ten students from the experimental group volunteered to be interviewed. Each interview lasted for 10 minutes. The interview was conducted in Arabic as preferred by interviewees for ease of expression.

Data Analysis

After the experimentation, the students in both the experimental and control groups were post-tested. Results of the test were analysed statistically using SPSS. Moreover, the interviews were transcribed in Arabic and returned to the interviewees to ensure credibility through respondent's checking (Given, 2008). Then, two professional bilingual translators translated the interview transcripts. The researchers analysed the translated transcripts using thematic content analysis (Radnor, 2001). Data were analysed into themes and sub-themes, and coded using pseudonyms to protect the interviewees' identity.

Ethical Issues

The two researchers abided by the ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018). First, permission was obtained from the concerned school. Second, participants were told about the research purposes and their voluntary participation. Third, they agreed to participate in the study voluntarily. Moreover, they were told that they have the right to withdraw from the current study for any reason and at any time and were assured that their identity would be kept private, confidential and anonymous for research purposes only.

Results

This section presents the results of the quantitative and qualitative data analyses. The two groups were post-tested to assess students' achievement in the specified translation skills. Data obtained from the pre/post-translation test were statistically analysed using SPSS. The independent paired samples t-test and Black's ratio were used to measure the effect of the proposed programme. The research questions and hypotheses guided the data analysis procedures.

Effects of Blended Learning on Translation

Research Question 1

What is the effect of the proposed blended learning programme on developing Egyptian

first-year secondary students' translation skills from English into Arabic?

Research Hypothesis

H1 There will be a statistically significant difference at 0.05 level between the experimental and control groups in the specified translation skills in the post-test mean scores in favour of the experimental group.

H0 There will not be a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level between the experimental and control groups in the specified translation skills in the post-test mean scores in favour of the experimental group.

Data analysis shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups post-test mean scores in the following translation skills: Lexical, grammatical, morphological, syntactic, pragmatic and the total test score in favour of the experimental group (See Table 4) as the t-values respectively = 24.607, 24.168, 33.317, 23.706, 39.342, and 55.517 where $p < 0.05$. Hence, the hypothesis is proved, and the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 5 indicates that Black's modified gain ratio in the overall test scores and each translation skill ranged from 1.21 to 1.48. This means that the blended learning programme proved statistically effective in developing experimental group students'

Table 4

t-test values for the mean scores between the two groups' post-test in the specified translation skills

Translation Skills	Control		Experimental			
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance level
Lexical	3.45	2.206	16.73	1.892	24.607	
Grammatical	3.033	2.413	17.133	2.012	24.168	
Morphological	3.566	2.192	18.166	0.874	33.317	0.05
Syntactic	3.36	2.120	15.89	1.543	23.706	
Pragmatic	2.410	1.546	16.233	1.023	39.342	
Total Test Score	12.883	4.401	69.766	3.328	55.517	

To measure the effects of the proposed blended learning programme, the researchers used Black's modified gain ratio for the experimental group.

Table 5

Black's Modified Gain Ratio for the experimental group

Translation Skills	The Ratio of Modified Gain	Significance Level
Lexical	1.24	Acceptable
Grammatical	1.48	Acceptable
Morphological	1.21	Acceptable
Pragmatic	1.36	Acceptable
Syntactic	1.28	Acceptable
Overall Test Scores	1.33	Acceptable

translation skills. The effect found is attributed to the fact that the online component was administered in a lab with the presence of the teacher.

Students' Perspectives on Blended Learning

Research Question 2

2. How do Egyptian first-year secondary school students perceive the proposed blended learning programme?

Analysis of the semi-structured interviews revealed students' perspectives on the use of a blended learning programme. Benefits and the challenges of using the blended learning programme were the main themes that emerged from the data analysis.

Benefits of Blended Learning

Figure (1) shows the benefits of the blended learning programme as revealed by the study participants.

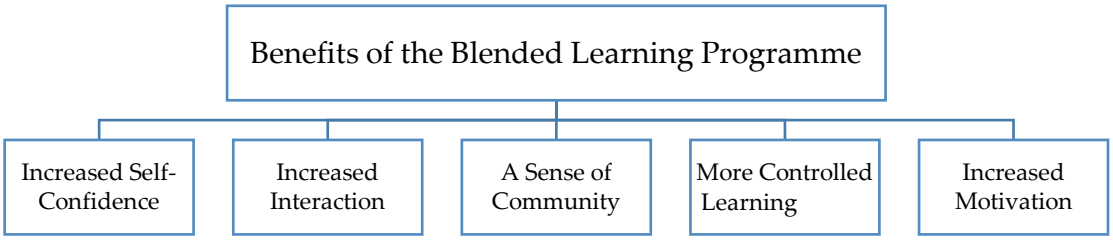

Figure 1. Benefits of the Blended Learning Programme

Increased self-confidence

First, Atef highlighted that blended learning increased his self-confidence in translation as follows:

> *This translation course was flexible. The immediate computer feedback and the teacher's feedback were complementary. The feedback received increased my self-confidence in translation. (Interview, benefits of blended learning, increased self-confidence, Atef).*

Increased Interaction

Second, Ammar commented on the increased interaction that distinguished blended learning programme thus:

> *It has been a very beneficial course for all of us. The teacher encouraged us to interact and engage in fun and interesting activities to develop our different translation skills. We enjoyed the individual, pair work and group work. The shared responsibility between us was helpful. For example, my partner would be looking up words in the bilingual dictionary, and I would be correcting any grammatical mistakes in the translation. (Interview, benefits of blended learning, increased interaction, Ammar).*

A Sense of Community

Moreover, Alaa referred to the sense of community that was shared among all classmates in the following words:

> *Through this course, we developed a sense of community as a group. We exerted all efforts to help each other and share our knowledge. For example, I am good at grammar skills; therefore, I help other classmates who have some grammatical problems. On the other hand, other classmates help me with syntactic structures that are a bit problematic for me. You feel as if the entire class is one family. (Interview, benefits of blended learning, a sense of community, Alaa).*

More Controlled Learning

Additionally, Ahmad stated that blended learning gave him more control over his learning:

> *What I like most about this translation course is that you control your learning. You are given a chance to learn without any time pressure. What we do not complete in one class, we come back to the lab to complete the next class. You are free o consult a dictionary, a classmate or the teacher when you are in doubt. (Interview, benefits of blended learning, more controlled learning, Ahmad).*

Increased Motivation

Furthermore, Mohammad spelt out how blended learning increased his motivation He said:

> *To be honest, the computer lab sessions in which we watched video clips on different translation skills, did different activities, exercises, quizzes, and end of unit test motivated and enthused us to learn and complete all required tasks. (Interview, benefits of blended learning, increased motivation, Mohammad).*

Challenges of Blended Learning

Figure (2) represents the challenges of the blended learning programme as encountered by the study participants.

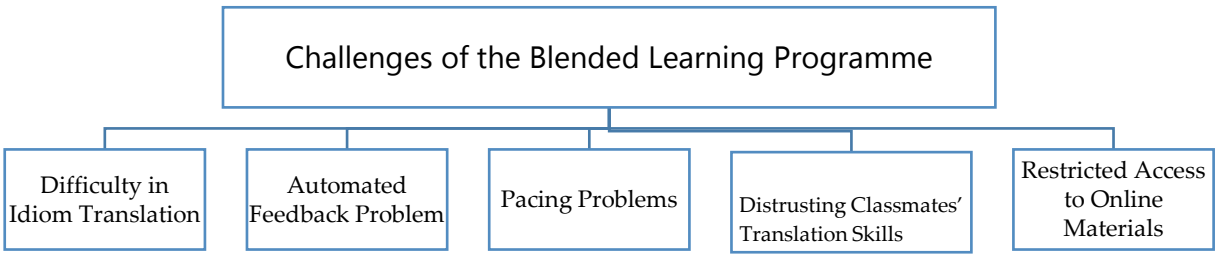

Figure 2. Challenges of the Blended Learning Programme

Difficulty in Idiom Translation

Khalid indicated that idiom translation constituted a difficulty for him and his classmates:

> *It was very challenging to translate idioms from English into Arabic. I know that this is our first experience with translation, but my classmates and I lacked the skills of idiom translation. (Interview, challenges of blended learning, difficulty in idiom translation, Khalid).*

Automated Feedback Problem

Abdelazeem noted that automated feedback restricted his development of translation skills thus:

> *Although the computer feedback was prompt, it was either true or false. It does not give us why it is false. I wish the computer feedback were more advanced giving us the source of the problem so that we can work together to solve it. (Interview, challenges of blended learning, automated feedback problem, Abdelazeem).*

Pacing Problems

Also, Ali reported that he encountered a pacing problem while using the blended learning programme.

> *I am a fast-paced learner. One challenge that I encountered was my classmate's slow pacing when we were assigned pair or group work. (Interview, challenges of blended learning, pacing problems, Ali).*

Distrusting Classmates' Translation Skills

Interestingly, Mahmoud showed that his classmates distrusted his translation skills:

> *When we did a peer review of my translation with another classmate, I can see that my classmate would go to double check the translation with the teacher. He trusts only the teacher as most classmates do (Interview, challenges of blended learning, distrusting classmates' translation skills,*

Mahmoud).

Restricted Access to Online Materials

Ismaeel was unhappy about the restricted access to the online translation materials. He expressed his view as follows:

> *I was really hoping that I can get access to the activities, exercises and the bilingual dictionaries at home. It was only restricted to the computer lab. I wanted to practice more and excel in translation. (Interview, challenges of blended learning, restricted access to online materials, Ismaeel).*

Discussion

The statistical results and students' views highlighted that the proposed blended learning programme proved effective, despite the reported challenges.

Effects of Blended Learning

The proposed blended learning programme did not only affect students' overall translation skills, but it also had a large effect on all translation skills.

Table 6

The effect size of the translation skills

Skills	Pragmatic	Morphological	Lexical	Grammatical Equivalence	Syntactic
Effect Size	39.34	33.31	24.60	24.16	23.70

Students' development in the specified translation skills could be attributed to some reasons. First, students' development in pragmatic skills might be attributed to explicit face-to-face teaching, which helped students know the conventions and rules of the target language (Jiang, 2006). Baker (2011) described pragmatics as the study of language in use to convey and communicate different meanings. In the current study, the participants found it easy to translate pragmatic communicative functions such as greetings, suggestions, invitations, and requests due to the use of blended learning that enhanced their pragmatic skills (Todorova, 2012). Second, students' development in the morphological skills may be due to the complexity of Arabic structure, word forms, and

use of vowel-free writing (Dichy, & Farghaly, 2003) compared to the simplicity of the English language which made it easy for students to understand and use the morphological structures. Third, students' development in the lexical skills is most likely ascribed to the use of blended learning that resulted in a substantive improvement in students' vocabulary skills (Banados, 2006; Sagarra & Zapata, 2008; Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010; and Al Zumor, Al Refaai, Bader Eddin, & Aziz Al-Rahman, 2013). In addition, the use of electronic feedback helped students improve their EFL writing skills in an Egyptian context (Seleim & Ahmed, 2009). Therefore, the teacher feedback in this blended learning programme contributed positively to improving students' lexical skills in Arabic and English. Finally, students' development in the grammatical skills could be due to the use of the blended learning programme that promoted learners' motivation and autonomy, offered flexible learning, gave immediate and detailed feedback, and enhanced student involvement and participation (Al-Jarf, 2005; Lee & Chong, 2007; and Sagarra & Zapata, 2008).

Students' Perspectives on Blended Learning

In reference to the benefits of blended learning, the participants reported that it helped them create a sense of community. As indicated in 3.2.1 above, they enjoyed their sense of community in the form of group work in the different class activities on which students were trained. Experimental group students were collaborative in their revision sheets before the post-test. In corroboration with this finding, previous research emphasised that students whose sense of community is strong are more likely to possess a higher level of cognitive learning (Rovai, 2002). Moreover, students reported that blended learning increased the interaction between the teacher and students based on the interactive activities in both class and the computer lab. Previous research highlighted that blended learning experiences are satisfactory and successful due to the interactive capabilities of the online component of the blended learning programme (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2003; Swan, 2001). Increased self-confidence was another benefit revealed by students. This finding was confirmed by previous research that endorsed blended learning for increasing students' self-confidence in learning if the

teacher was characterised by congruence, acceptance and emphatic understanding (Derntl, & Motschnig-Pitrik, 2005). Furthermore, participants indicated that blended learning facilitated their controlled learning. Garrison & Kanuka (2004) showed that blended courses are advantageous for enabling students to be independent learners capable of controlling their learning and fostering critical thinking and cooperative learning. Finally, the participants reported that blended learning increased their motivation to learn and develop different translation skills. Previous research showed that blended learning intervention programmes increased students' motivation, created positive learning attitudes and helped students obtain higher marks (Donnelly, 2010; Woltering et al., 2009).

Participants reported some challenges while using the proposed blended learning programme. First, idiom translation is a challenge encountered by the participants. In corroboration with previous research, translation of idioms in English and Arabic is a source of difficulty to translators (Awwad, 1990). Second, automated feedback was another problem faced by the participants, as the feedback received did not help them identify the problem or suggest solutions. In accordance with this, research highlighted that automated scoring is a system that gives us a general evaluation of basic writing skills without providing any details (Williamson et al., 2010) and does not assess the cognitive aspects of writing such as audience awareness, critical thinking, and argumentation (Zhang, 2013). Moreover, the participants revealed that working with a classmate of a different pace was problematic. Self-paced learning requires learners capable of managing their learning processes (Singh, 2003). Therefore, developers of blended learning programmes need to design activities that allow students to work at their own pace without impeding the progress of other students (Bonk, Olson, Wisher & Orvis, 2002). Distrust of classmates' level of translation compared to that of the teacher was another challenge that faced the participants. Brammer & Rees (2007) pinpointed that students' attitude of distrust toward their peers was a common problem in learning as most students would prefer a classmate whom they trust for their mastery of the required skills.

Implications

Some theoretical and pedagogical implications may be drawn based on the present study. Theoretically, the current study adds to previous research that shows how blended leaning is perceived from a social constructivist perspective to develop students' translation skills. This study has revealed how students worked together in class and in the computer labs to construct and share their knowledge of the different translation skills (i.e. watching videos, doing the activities and exercises, answering quizzes, and using bilingual dictionaries). Second, students' perspectives on the benefits of blended learning revealed that it provided meaningful and challenging learning in the translation classrooms. Blended learning increased students' self-confidence, interaction, controlled learning, motivation and created a sense of community. It also highlighted some challenges of the blended learning translation programme including difficulty in idiom translation, automated feedback problem, students' pacing problem, distrusting classmates' translation skills and restricted access to online materials. Third, framing blended learning, based on Bersin's (2004) programme flow model and Neumeier's (2005) framework, guided the researchers to develop their BL programme.

The current study provided the following pedagogical implications. First, findings of the current study provided empirical evidence of the effectiveness of blended learning on developing students' translation skills. Blended learning enabled the learners to develop their pragmatic, morphological, lexical, grammatical, and syntactic skills in translation. Moreover, the findings of the current study show that blended learning can be used as a pedagogical tool to increase students' self-confidence, interaction, motivation and controlled learning. BL can also be used to create a sense of belonging and community among learners and, as far as this paper is concerned, translation students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the blended learning programme proved effective in developing the five required translation skills in English and Arabic. The results showed that the translation sub-skills were developed at different rates as shown in the following sequential effect

size of the different translation skills (See Table 6). Variation in these rates may be due to the difference in the nature of the sub-skills, and both the time and effort needed for their development. In addition, students' perspectives of the blended learning programme showed that it increased students' self-confidence, interaction, controlled learning, motivation and reinforced a sense of community among them. Moreover, students reported some challenges that they encountered while using the blended learning programme such as the difficulty in idiom translation, automated feedback problem, pacing problems, distrusting classmates' translation skills and restricted access to the online materials.

Despite establishing a significant step to further understand the nature of blended learning and its effect on developing students' translation skills from English into Arabic among Egyptian secondary school students, the results of the current study need to be taken cautiously due to the study limitations: First, the sample size of 40 male secondary students is quite small, and results cannot be generalised. Second, the specified translation skills are only applicable to secondary school students in public schools; therefore, other translation skills might be added/deleted according to students' age, schooling system and educational level.

Further research could explore other issues related to English/Arabic translation. For example, a study comparing the effect of blended learning on the translation skills of Egyptian high school students of both genders is needed. Exploring the effect of blended learning on developing university students' translation skills is another possible topic for further research. Another study could investigate the effect of blended learning on developing EFL writing skills at the secondary public-school level in Egypt. Other future studies could explore the effectiveness of the blended learning approach on developing students' reading, speaking or listening skills among Egyptian EFL secondary school students.

References

Al Zumor, A., Al Refaai, I., Bader Eddin, E., & Aziz Al-Rahman, F. (2013). EFL students' perceptions of a blended learning environment: Advantages, limitations and suggestions for improvement. *English Language Teaching*, *6*(10), 95-111.

Al-Jarf, R. (2005). The effects of online grammar instruction on low proficiency EFL college students' achievement. *Asian EFL Journal*, *7*(4), 166-190.

Awwad, M. (1990). Equivalence and translatability of English and Arabic idioms. *Papers and Studies in Contrastive Linguistics*, *26*(57), 57-67.

Baker, M. (2011). In other words: *A coursebook on translation*. Routledge: London & New York.

Banados, E. (2006). A blended learning pedagogical model for teaching and learning EFL successfully through an online interactive multimedia environment. *CALICO Journal*, 533-550.

Bersin, J. (2004). *The blended learning book: Best practices, proven methodologies, and lessons learned*. John Wiley & Sons.

Boelens, R., De Wever, B., & Voet, M. (2017). Four key challenges to the design of blended learning: A systematic literature review. *Educational Research Review*, 22, 1-18.

Bonk, C., Olson, T., Wisher, R., & Orvis, K. (2002). Learning from focus groups: An examination of blended learning. *International Journal of E-Learning & Distance Education*, *17*(3), 97-118.

Brammer, C., & Rees, M. (2007). Peer review from the students' perspective: Invaluable or invalid? *Composition Studies*, *35*(2), 71-85.

British Educational Research Association [BERA], (2018). *Ethical guidelines for educational research, 4th edition*, London. https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethicalguidelines-for-educational-research-2018

Carreres, A. (2006). Strange Bedfellows: Translation and Language Teaching. The Teaching of Translation into L2 in Modern Languages Degrees: Uses and Limitations. Paper presented at the 6th Symposium on Translation, Terminology and Interpretation in Cuba and Canada. Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council. Available online at www.cttic.org/publications_06Symposium.asp

Chen, C., & Jones, K. (2007). Blended learning vs traditional classroom settings: Assessing effectiveness and student perceptions in an MBA accounting course. *The Journal of Educators Online*, *4*(1).

Cobb, P. (2005). *Constructivism: Theory, perspectives and practice*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

Derntl, M., & Motschnig-Pitrik, R. (2005). The role of structure, patterns, and people in blended learning. *The Internet and Higher Education*, *8*(2), 111-130.

Dichy, J., & Farghaly, A. (2003, September). Roots & patterns vs stems plus grammar-lexis specifications: On what basis should a multilingual lexical database centred on Arabic be built? In The MT-Summit IX workshop on Machine Translation for Semitic Languages, New Orleans.

Donnelly, R. (2010). Harmonizing technology with interaction in blended problem-based learning. *Computers & Education*, 54, 350-359

Driscoll, M. (2000). Psychology of learning for instruction, 2nd ed. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Dudeney, G. and Hockly, N. (2007). *How to teach English with technology*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Farghal, M. (1995). Lexical and discoursal problems in English-Arabic translation. *Meta: Journal Des Traducteurs/Meta: Translators' Journal*, 40(1), 54-61.

Farghal, M., & Shunnaq, A. (1992). Major problems in students' translations of English legal texts into Arabic. *Babel, 38*(4), 203-210.

Faris, A., & Sahu, R. (2013). The translation of English collocations into Arabic: Problems and solutions. *Adab Al-Basrah*, (64), 51-66.

Fosnot, C. (Ed.). (1996). *Constructivism: Theory, perspectives and practice*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

Garrison, D., & Cleveland-Innes, M. (2003, September). Critical factors in student satisfaction and success: Facilitating student role adjustment in online communities of inquiry. Paper presented to the Sloan Consortium Asynchronous Learning Network Invitational Workshop, Boston, MA.

Garrison, D., & Kanuka, H. (2004). Blended learning: Uncovering its transformative potential in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 7(2), 95-105.

Given, L. (Ed.). (2008). *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Sage Publications: United Kingdom.

Hockly, N. (2011). Five things you always wanted to know about blended learning (but were afraid to ask). *English Teaching Professional*, 75, 58.

Jiang, X. (2006). Suggestions: What should ESL students know? *System,* 34, 36-54

Jonassen, D. (1999). Designing constructivist learning environments. In C. M. Reigeluth (Ed.), *Instructional theories and models* (pp. 215–239), 2nd ed. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Jonassen, D., Davidson, M., Collins, M., Campbell, J., & Haag, B. (1995). Constructivism and computer-mediated communication in distance education. *American Journal of Distance Education, 9*(2), 7–25.

Khalil, A. (1993). Arabic translation of English passive sentences: Problems and acceptability judgements. *Papers and studies in contrastive linguistics*, 27, 169-181.

Kiraly, C. (1995). *Pathways to translation: Pedagogy and process*. Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press.

Li, D. (2006). Making translation testing more teaching-oriented: A case study of translation testing in China. *Meta, 51*(1), 72-88. Retrieved from: http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/012994ar

Lim, D., & Morris, M. (2009). Learner and instructional factors influencing learning outcomes within a blended learning environment. *Educational Technology & Society, 12* (4), 282–293.

López-Pérez, M., Pérez-López, M., Rodríguez-Ariza, L. (2011). Blended learning in higher education: Students' perceptions and their relation to outcomes. *Computers & Education*, 56, 818–826.

Miyazoe, T., & Anderson, T. (2010). Learning outcomes and students' perceptions of online writing: Simultaneous implementation of a forum, blog, and wiki in an EFL blended learning setting. *System*, *38*(2), 185-199.

Naimushin, B. (2002). Translation in foreign language teaching: The fifth skill. *Modern English Teacher*. *11*(4), 46-49.

Neumeier, P. (2005). A closer look at blended learning—parameters for designing a blended learning environment for language teaching and learning. *ReCALL*, *17*(2), 163-178.

Osguthorpe, R. and Graham, C. (2003). Blended learning systems: Definitions and directions. *Quarterly Review of Distance Learning*, *4*(3), 227–234.

Owston, R., York, D., & Murtha, S. (2013). Student perceptions and achievement in a university blended learning strategic initiative. *Internet and Higher Education*, 18, 38 – 46.

Radnor, H. (2001). *Researching your professional practice: Doing interpretive research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Rovai, A. (2002). Sense of community perceived cognitive learning, and persistence in asynchronous learning networks. *The Internet and Higher Education*, *5*(4), 319 – 332.

Sagarra, N. & Zapata, G. (2008). Blending classroom instruction with online homework: A study of student perceptions of computer-assisted L2 learning. *ReCALL, 20*(2), 208-224.

Seliem, S., & Ahmed, A. (2009, March). Missing Electronic Feedback in Egyptian EFL Essay Writing Classes. Online Submission, Paper presented at the Centre for Developing English Language Teaching (CDELT) Conference, Cairo, Egypt. ERIC (ED505841).

Silverman, D. (2001). *Interpreting qualitative data: Methods for analysing talk, text and interaction*. London: Sage Publications.

Singh, H. (2003). Building effective blended learning programmes. *Educational Technology-Saddle Brook Then Englewood Cliffs NJ-*, *43*(6), 51-54.

Singh, H., & Reed, C. (2001). A white paper: Achieving success with blended learning. Available online at www.p2partners.co.uk

Stevenson, A. (2003). *The new Oxford dictionary of English*. 2nd edition. Oxford University Press, United Kingdom.

Stracke, E. (2007). A road to understanding: A qualitative study into why learners drop out of a blended language learning (BLL) environment. *ReCALL, 19*(1), 57–78.

Swain, M. (1998). Focus on form through conscious reflection. In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 64–81). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Swain, M. (2000). The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue. In J. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (97–114). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Swain, M. (2010). Talking it through: Languaging as a source of learning. In R. Batstone (Ed.), *Sociocognitive perspectives on language use/learning* (112–130). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Swain, M., Lapkin, S., Knouzi, I., Suzuki, W., & Brooks, L. (2009). Languaging: University students learn the grammatical concept of voice in French. *The Modern Language Journal*, 93, 5–29.

Swan, K. (2001). Virtual interaction: Design factors affecting student satisfaction and perceived learning in asynchronous online courses. *Distance Education*, 22(2), 306 – 331.

Thawabteh, M. (2011). Linguistic, cultural and technical problems in English-Arabic subtitling. *SKASE Journal of Translation and Interpretation*, *5*(1).

Todorova, D. (2012). Promoting intercultural competence by means of blended learning: Application of forum exercises in beginners german language class in Jordan. In M. Strano, H. Hrachovec, F. Sudweeks and C. Ess (Eds.), *Proceedings of Cultural Attitudes Towards Technology and Communication*, (163-173), Murdoch University, Australia.

Ury, G. (2004). A comparison of undergraduate student performance in online and traditional courses. *Journal of Computing Sciences in Colleges*, *19*(4), 99-107.

Vaughan, N., & Garrison, D. (2005). Creating cognitive presence in a blended faculty development community. *The Internet and Higher Education*, *8*(1), 1-12.

Vrasidas, C. (2000). Constructivism versus objectivism: Implications for interaction, course design, and evaluation in distance education. *International Journal of Educational Telecommunications*, *6*(4), 339–362.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher mental processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Williamson, D., Bennett, R., Lazer, S., Bernstein, J., Foltz, P, Landauer, T., & Sweeney, K. (2010). Automated scoring for the assessment of common core standards.

Retrieved from http://research.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/publications/2012/8/ccss-2010-5-automated-scoring-assessment-commoncore-standards.pdf

Woltering, V., Herrler, A., Spitzer, K., Spreckelsen, C. (2009). Blended learning positively affects students' satisfaction and the role of the tutor in the problem-based learning process: Results of a mixed-method evaluation**.** *Advances in Health Science Education*, 14, 725-738.

Woo, Y., & Reeves, T. (2007). Meaningful interaction in web-based learning: A social constructivist interpretation. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 10(1), 15-25.

Zhang, M. (2013). Contrasting automated and human scoring of essays. *R & D Connections*, *21*(2).

Appendix A
Translation Skills Checklist

Main Skills	Sub-skills	Degree of importance		
		Very Imp.	Imp.	Not Imp
Lexical Skills	1- Using the most appropriate word form in translation from English into Arabic.			
	2- Identifying the best meaning that fits into the context.			
	3- Translating collocations and idioms appropriately.			
	4- Translating compound nouns, polysemy and confusable words.			
Grammatical Equivalence Skills	5. Producing grammatically- equivalent structures.			
	6. Translating different cohesive devices and conditional sentences correctly.			
	7. Translating different tenses from English to Arabic correctly.			
	8. Translating articles and adjectives accurately.			
	9. Translating verbs to be, to have, to do and modal verbs into Arabic.			
Morphological Skills	10. Analysing words into their morphological structures.			
	11. Translating affixed words.			
Pragmatic Skills	12. Translating different pragmatic structures effectively: communicative functions (Greetings, Suggestions, Invitation & Requests).			
Syntactic Skills	13. Translating declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentences correctly.			
	14. Translating different word order correctly.			

Appendix B

Pre and Post-Translation Test

TEST INSTRUCTIONS

Read the following test instructions carefully before you start:

TIME (30 minutes)

- Check that you have the complete exam paper.
- Make sure that your handwriting is eligible.
- Answer ***all*** four questions in this exam paper.
- Read the directions carefully.
- Make sure that all answers are correct (i.e. grammar, punctuation and spelling).
- Use clear language according to the standard written English/ Arabic.
- Write your answers on the separate answer sheet.
- Write your answer on the answer sheet against the question number.
- Lay your pen down immediately when the time is over.
- Hand in both the question paper and the answer sheet to the examiner.

Total score (30 marks)

Answer the following questions in this exam paper.

Question No. 1 (Grammar skills)

Choose the correct Arabic translation for the following sentences. (10 marks)

Item
1. I advise you to help your brother. a) انصحك أن تساعد أخاك b) انصحك أن تساعد أنت أخاك c) انصحك أنك تساعد أخاك d) انصحك أنت أن تساعد أخاك
2. This building is higher than our house. a) هذا المبنى أكبر ارتفاعاً من منزلنا b) هذا المبنى أشد ارتفاعاً من منزلنا c) هذا المبنى أكثر ارتفاعاً من منزلنا d) هذا المبنى أقل ارتفاعاً من منزلنا
3. We will buy a new car. a) سنشتري السيارة الجديدة b) سنشتري سيارة جديدة c) سنشتري السيارة جديدة d) سنشتري جديدة سيارة
4. The article is boring. a) كان المقال مملّ b) المقال مملّ c) المقال يكون مملّ d) يكون المقال مملّ

5. If you finish work early, I will visit you. a) إذا أنهيت عملك مبكراً ، فسوف أزورك b) إن أنهيت عملك مبكراً ، سوف أزورك c) إذا تنهي عملك مبكراً ، سوف أزورك d) لو أنهيت عملك مبكراً ، لزرتك
6. I studied hard, so I succeeded. a) ذاكرت بجد إلا انني نجحت b) ذاكرت بجد و نجحت c) ذاكرت بجد ثم نجحت d) ذاكرت بجد لذلك نجحت
7. She has her breakfast at 7:00 a.m. a) تحصل على افطارها الساعة السابعة صباحاً b) تمتلك افطارها الساعة السابعة صباحاً c) تتناول افطارها الساعة السابعة صباحاً d) تأخذ افطارها الساعة السابعة صباحاً
8. When I arrived home, my mother had cleaned the room. a) عندما وصلت الى المنزل كانت امي قد نظفت الحجرة b) عندما وصلت الى المنزل كانت امي تنظف الحجرة c) عندما وصلت الى المنزل قامت امي بتنظيف الحجرة d) عندما وصلت الى المنزل نظفت امي الحجرة
9. He hasn't eaten his breakfast yet. a) لا يتناول إفطاره بعد b) لن يتناول إفطاره بعد c) لقد تناول إفطاره d) لم يتناول إفطاره بعد
10. The doctor will come tomorrow. a) سيكون الطبيب قد جاء غدا b) سيأتي الطبيب غدا c) لن يأتي الطبيب غدا d) قد يأتي الطبيب غدا

Question No. 2 (Lexical /Morphological Skills)

Match the nouns and phrases in column (A) with their most appropriate translation in column (B) (5 marks)

	(A)		(B)
	Advice		امطار ثقيلة
	Worker		حصان السباق
	Horse race		نصيحة
	Heavy rain		هو يبدو حزيناً
	He looks blue		امطار غزيرة
			عامل
			ينصح
			سباق الخيل
			هو يبدو ازرق
			يعمل

Question No. 3 (Syntactic Skills)

Correct the Arabic translation of the following sentences: (5 marks)

Item
1. The glass was broken by Ali انكسر الكوب بواسطة علي ……
2. Do you like eating fish? هل انت تحب اكل السمك؟ ……
3. What is Mr. Stewart's job? ماذا تكون وظيفة السيد ستيوارت؟ ……
4. The students went to school إذهبوا التلاميذ الى المدرسة ……
5. Wash your hands! تغسل يديك! ……

Question No. 4 (Pragmatic Skills)

Translate the following sentences from English into Arabic: (10 marks)

Item
1. Let's go swimming. ……
2. I'm sorry that's not allowed ……
3. I'd like to invite you to my party ……
4. Could I borrow your pen? ……
5. I'd go along with that ……