

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

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Abstract

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

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

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Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

Feedback in Higher Education

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

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

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

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

beginning of the course (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). In the context of translator education, integrating internal and external feedback enables learners to make more informed choices, from lexical and syntactic decisions to pragmatic and cultural considerations, during the translation process. This dual-feedback mechanism both enhances the accuracy and quality of translations, and makes learners more autonomous, and metacognitively aware (Khalili, in press; Khalili, 2025b). It also leads to the development of strategic translation skills; this is a process which indicates the importance of feedback as an essential component of proactive learning (Khalili, 2025b).

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

Framework Proposal

Feedback in translation classrooms plays a critical role due to the cognitively demanding and multi-layered nature of translation tasks, which require linguistic accuracy, textual coherence, pragmatic and cultural appropriateness, strategic choice-making, etc. Integrating feedback systematically within pedagogical practice enables learners to develop metacognitive awareness.

To propose the framework, Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick's (2006) seven principles of good feedback practice is adapted to translator education, providing a strategic, evidence-informed model for fostering learner autonomy, self-regulation, and reflective decision-making.

Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006, p. 205) identified the following seven principles for good feedback practice:

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

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

1. Clarifying Performance Standards

Establishing what counts as high-quality translation performance is a prerequisite for effective learning; students can set meaningful learning goals only when they have a clear understanding of what those goals entail and what they are expected to work toward (Sadler, 1989; Black & William, 1998; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). A recurrent challenge in translator education is the misalignment between instructors' and learners' perceptions of course objectives: what the teacher considers the target outcome often differs from what students assume the goal to be (Hounsell, 1997; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). As a result, the feedback provided by the instructor may

become only partially useful or even irrelevant from the learner's perspective, because the feedback is oriented toward the instructor's internalized objectives rather than the student's assumed ones. This mismatch produces confusion, limits the student's ability to act on feedback, and ultimately hinders performance development (Hounsell, 1997; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

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

Clarifying what counts as successful translation is not limited to describing abstract criteria. Learners need concrete illustrations of what quality looks like in practice. For this reason, instructors are encouraged to use exemplars of performance, to use Orsmond's et al. (2002) terms, including rubrics, annotated model translations, and illustrations of typical errors. Rubrics can demystify expectations by detailing components such as lexical precision, syntactic appropriateness, coherence, pragmatic alignment, and cultural sensitivity. Annotated model translations further illuminate the reasoning behind linguistic and strategic choices, enabling learners to observe how experts navigate alternative solutions, justify decisions, and adapt to contextual constraints.

From an analytical standpoint, pre-tests play an additional diagnostic role by revealing students' initial levels of knowledge and skill. This baseline enables instructors to tailor their explanations of high-quality performance more precisely, address recurrent misconceptions, and emphasize strategic behaviors that learners should monitor during subsequent translation tasks. Pre-tests also help students themselves identify gaps between their current abilities and the expected learning outcomes. When used in combination with explicit criteria and illustrative exemplars, such diagnostic information reduces uncertainty, prevents students from relying on guesswork, and encourages a more strategic approach to translation tasks. Over time, this clarity supports the development of self-regulation and metacognitive awareness, encouraging learners to internalize performance standards and progressively refine their translation competence.

2. Facilitating Structured Self-assessment

Once learning goals and performance standards have been clearly articulated, the next pedagogical priority is enabling learners to evaluate their own progress in relation to those standards. Research consistently demonstrates that self-assessment enhances learning outcomes, as it fosters metacognitive awareness, strategic monitoring, and a sense of ownership over learning (Boud, 1995; McDonald & Boud, 2003). To cultivate this capacity, instructors must design structured self-assessment tasks that require active engagement with one's own work rather than passive reception of teacher's feedback.

In practical terms, self-assessment can take multiple forms. On the basis of what Cowan (1999) argues, one common approach in translation classes can be asking students to correct their own completed translation tasks, identifying recurring errors, strengths, weaknesses, and areas requiring deeper strategic attention. This process encourages students to externalize and scrutinize the reasoning behind their linguistic and textual choices instead of relying solely on the teacher's evaluative lens (Cowan, 1999). Another effective method involves peer-assessment, where students evaluate one another's translations using shared criteria. Interestingly, studies have shown that learners often overlook or minimize errors in their own assignments but display significantly greater

accuracy and critical attention when analyzing the work of peers (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Engaging with peer output therefore sharpens evaluative judgment and refines learners' internal standards for quality, which is essential for the development of autonomous translators (Boud et al., 1999; Gibbs, 1999).

It should be noted that empirical findings indicate that receiving teacher feedback prior to engaging in self-assessment can enhance students' ability to identify weaknesses and areas for improvement in their work (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). This sequencing allows learners to better calibrate their self-evaluation, integrating expert guidance with their own reflection, and thereby making self-assessment a more effective tool for promoting learning and metacognitive awareness (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

From an analytical standpoint, integrating diagnostic tools such as the Motivational Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) provides insights into learners' motivational dispositions and self-regulatory tendencies. For instance, students with low self-efficacy may need more explicit prompts, structured reflection templates, or teacher-modeled examples to guide effective self-assessment. In contrast, learners demonstrating stronger self-regulatory profiles may benefit from open-ended reflective tasks that allow greater autonomy. In both cases, self-assessment functions as a dynamic feedback mechanism: it provides learners with immediate, internally generated information about their current performance relative to expectations, enables detection of performance gaps, and informs strategy adjustment for subsequent tasks.

Ultimately, consistent engagement in self-assessment cultivates a mindset in which learners no longer perceive translation quality as something determined externally by the instructor but as a standard they are capable of monitoring, interpreting, and improving on their own. This shift lies at the heart of SRL and is essential for developing confident, autonomous, and reflective translators.

3. Delivering High-quality Information

An essential component of effective formative assessment is the quality of external feedback provided by instructors. Regardless of course type or learners' proficiency, useful feedback must be timely (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004), concise enough to maintain students' engagement, and designed not only to identify strengths and weaknesses but also to offer clear corrective guidance (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Constructive criticism, when balanced with encouragement, fosters the confidence needed for sustained improvement (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Crucially, feedback should help students progress toward greater self-regulation, equipping them with the insight required to monitor and self-correct future performance independently (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). This reinforces the first principle: feedback can promote self-correction only when it is aligned with transparent goals and assessment standards clarified at the outset of the instruction.

In translation classrooms, providing high-quality external feedback involves responding not only to what learners translated but also how they approached the task. Effective external feedback pinpoints issues of lexical accuracy, cohesion, register, and cultural appropriateness. It explains the underlying source of the problem (e.g., misinterpreting a communicative intention, ignoring genre conventions), and offers practical direction for revision rather than leaving students to infer the correct solution.

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

Peer-feedback activities, when guided by clear criteria, complement instructor's feedback. Learners often detect issues more readily in peers' translations than in their own, making peer review an

efficient way to deepen attention to standards and develop evaluative judgment. AI-assisted translation tasks can also serve as a supplemental external source of feedback when used thoughtfully. Comparing their own output with AI-generated alternatives encourages students to analyze why certain choices are more effective. The aim is not to accept AI suggestions blindly, but to use them as opportunities for contrastive reasoning.

Also, reflective journals or brief post-task commentaries can strengthen the feedback cycle without becoming a separate focus. When students articulate the reasoning behind their choices, instructors can target feedback more precisely, creating a loop in which external guidance and learner reflection reinforce each other.

4. Encouraging Dialogic Interactions

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

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

In fact, the aim is not to give more comments, but to create a more interactive space; this is a shift that directly supports evaluative judgment and autonomous translation practice.

5. Encouraging positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem

Instructors can have a positive or negative impact on students' self-esteem. One effective way to foster a positive impact is through high-quality feedback. Research shows that when a course includes multiple low-stakes assessment tasks and students receive frequent, constructive feedback rather than being judged solely through grading and marking, their performance improves significantly. Conversely, courses that emphasize high-stakes assessments, where only students' success or failure matters, tend to shift students' attention from learning to final outcomes and impede the development of SRL.

For graded translation quizzes and projects, instructors can implement an iterative feedback cycle. After students submit their draft translations, the teacher provides detailed, constructive feedback pointing out areas for improvement. Students then revise their work based on this guidance before final grading. This process ensures that feedback is timely, actionable, and focused on enhancing both translation quality and strategic decision-making. By emphasizing the learning process over the

immediate grade, students can gradually build confidence, self-esteem, and autonomy while engaging with high-stakes translation tasks.

6. Bridging the Gap Between Current and Desired Performance

A central requirement for narrowing the gap between current and desired performance is that learners must be given the opportunity to act on the feedback they receive. Feedback becomes effective only when students re-engage with the same task and demonstrate improvement; without this observable change, it is impossible to claim that feedback has fulfilled its purpose (Boud, 2000). Although resubmission is less common in higher education, since instructors often move on quickly after delivering feedback, it remains one of the most powerful mechanisms for verifying whether learning has genuinely occurred (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). In translation training, revision and resubmission opportunities can be integrated into assessed tasks such as translation quizzes and major translation projects. After students receive targeted feedback, they revise and resubmit the same piece, allowing instructors to evaluate the extent to which learners have implemented improvements. Applying this cycle selectively, due to time constraints, keeps the workload manageable while ensuring that feedback leads to demonstrable progress. Revision cycles transform feedback from a passive transmission of information into an active learning tool. The comparison between the initial and revised versions shows whether students merely recognized their errors or actually adjusted their decision-making processes. This strengthens SRL by encouraging iterative refinement rather than superficial correction, ensuring that improvement is both intentional and measurable.

7. Using Feedback to Inform Instructional Designs

In contrast to earlier principles, which were related to information provided for students, this final principle emphasizes that feedback also flows from students to instructors. Learners' performance offers important facts about the effectiveness of instructional methods, the clarity of task goals, and the adequacy of scaffolding (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). By observing patterns of error, recurring misunderstandings, or areas where students consistently struggle, instructors gain insight into how teaching strategies may need to be adjusted (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). This interpretive use of student performance is a fundamental element of responsive pedagogy and supports continuous refinement of curriculum and practice.

In translation training, examining students' reflective journals, MSLQ, peer-review discussions, draft translations, and in-class problem-solving activities helps translation instructors identify persistent difficulties. These observations inform adjustments in task design, the sequencing of texts for translation, and the level of scaffolding needed. By modifying instruction in response to these patterns, instructors ensure that teaching remains aligned with learners' needs rather than predetermined assumptions. Aggregated insights from reflective tasks and classwork provide a class-wide diagnostic picture, enabling instructors to refine lesson planning, reinforce neglected competencies, and intervene where strategic development is weak. This creates a reciprocal feedback loop in which instructional decisions evolve in response to student performance, ensuring that the learning environment remains adaptive, targeted, and pedagogically coherent (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

Conclusion

The present study sought to operationalize Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick's seven principles of good feedback practice within the specific pedagogical context of translator education. Although these principles were originally formulated as general guidelines for higher education, their relevance to translation training becomes evident once the centrality of self-regulation, strategic decision-making, and iterative performance improvement in the translation process is acknowledged. By aligning instructional practices with these principles, translation classrooms can evolve from product-oriented spaces into environments that cultivate reflective, autonomous, and strategically competent translators.

In conclusion, the proposed framework underscores a dual perspective on feedback in translator education. On one hand, principles one through six primarily address feedback directed at learners. These include clarifying goals and standards, fostering self-assessment, ensuring high-quality and constructive instructor input, promoting dialogue and peer interaction, supporting motivation and self-esteem, and encouraging iterative revision. Collectively, they serve to enhance students' strategic competence, metacognitive awareness, and autonomous learning capacities, equipping them to navigate complex translation tasks with confidence and reflective judgment.

On the other hand, the seventh principle highlights feedback flowing in the opposite direction; this time from students to instructors. By observing learners' performance, reflecting on patterns in journals, peer discussions, and submitted translations, educators gain critical insight into the effectiveness of their teaching, the appropriateness of tasks, and emerging gaps in student understanding. This reciprocal perspective positions feedback not merely as a tool for student improvement, but as a dynamic mechanism; and emphasizes that effective feedback is a two-way system: while the first six principles guide learners toward self-regulation, skill development, and autonomy, the seventh principle ensures that instructors receive actionable insight from classroom interactions. In this way, feedback functions as both a driver of student growth and a lens for reflective teaching, reinforcing a holistic, sustainable, and learner-centered approach to translator education.

Ultimately, addressing feedback in a structured, principled manner contributes to the further systematization of translator education. Historically, classroom design in translation training has rarely been grounded explicitly in educational and learning theories. However, with growing awareness among translation instructors, there is increasing potential to base course design on these foundational principles, integrating both pedagogical insights and educational technologies. By doing so, translation classrooms can become more coherent, effective, and learner-centered, providing students with the conditions to develop autonomous, reflective, and strategically competent translation skills.

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