

A Philosophical Inquiry into the Teaching of Principles of Translation in Translation Departments at Iraqi Universities

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Abstract

Principles of Translations is defined as the most important subject for first-year students at departments of translation in all Iraqi universities because it is the first step towards making freshmen arm themselves with the essentials of translation that qualify them to build their skills. The study is about the assessment of teaching philosophies of Iraqi faculty members who teach the principles of translation subjects in different Iraqi universities. The researcher designed an eclectic model for assessment; it is a combination of the focus-group model and questionnaire in a hybrid model titled the focus-questionnaire model (fqm). He gathered articles from four participants who teach principles of translation in different Iraqi universities and received fixed answers of the fixed questions of the questionnaire. The hypothesis of the study is that Iraqi faculty members of different Iraqi universities are likely making use of student-centered approach to high extent in teaching principles of translation subject for first year student/ departments of translation. The results of the assessment verified the hypothesis mentioned above because almost 74% of participants make use of student-centered approach in teaching principles of translation subject

Keywords: Principles of translation, teaching philosophy, student-centered approach, teacher-centered approach, focus-questionnaire model

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1. Definition of Philosophy

The term philosophy is derived from two independent words, they are as follows: Philia/Philos + Sophia/Sophos which means love of wisdom. All teachers have a personal philosophy that colors the way they teach. It is worth mentioning that every single teacher's philosophy embraces what the teacher believes in education and his set of rules and principles that direct him in taking actions (Sayani, 2015: p. 1).

The Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

The philosophy of learning of each person is uniquely different in comparison with others because every single individual has his/her own philosophy which is based on certain beliefs, thoughts and values. It is worth mentioning that every learner is influenced by the following elements, they are highlighted as follows: Parental teaching, classroom teaching, Personal experience and Technology. The philosophy of teaching is not after spoon-feeding policy. In other words, teachers facilitate the process of learning for students in order to make them gain different skills that qualify them to work on their own future projects and make up their minds by employing their own problem-solving strategies. Students are learners in classroom, they are trained by their teachers to be good learners and teachers at the same time. Students are guided by their teachers in classroom. But they are guided by themselves in real life environment (Ibid:2).

2. Teaching philosophy elements

The philosophy of teaching and learning consists of different elements: Teachers, students, learning environment and teaching and learning connection.

Teachers: they are defined as the most important element in the teaching-learning circle.

Teachers can reflect upon their own philosophy and this point facilitates the process of:

- 1-Analyzing their own actions towards learners in the process of learning.
- 2-Identifying the discrepancies in the criteria, values, thoughts and values they adopt in teaching process.

3- Acting as positive role models because teachers don't teach their own students lessons based on curricula but also from their teachers' behaviors. The more teachers are positive, the more students acquire knowledge easily. To support the abovementioned view, Menninger says "what a teacher is, is more important than what he teaches." (Carr, 2004: p.38)

4-Making use of technology to facilitate learning process and help learners to know how to use it in the right way (Menninger, not dated).

For example:

In translation process, there are different types of technologies employed by translation agencies so as to facilitate their work:

Memory tools: they can store translation, and translators can reuse the translations of particular sentences in the new text taken from previous translated versions.

Machine translation: Google translate, Babylon, they are machines that can offer translation service but they are not reliable because they are not completely authentic.

Virtual platform: Zoom meeting and applications that can be employed by translators to meet with each other to discuss the translation of particular text and distributing responsibilities on members of the agency.

5-Trying to be as flexible as possible towards students' needs. In other words, teachers must modify their own curricula to fit their students' (learners) needs.

6-Arming oneself with passion. If teachers are passionate towards what they teach and make use of extra time to maximize their learning and teaching strategies, they will be creative. And their students are motivated to learn quickly (Mart, 2014: p. 437-442).

Students: learning process is the responsibility of both learners and teachers.

As for teachers, they have to be as interactive as possible in classroom environment in order to motivate students to actively participate in class activities. While learners (students) must come to class, be well-prepared for participation by reading the assignment in advance and raise questions (Brophy, 2004).

3.Learning environment

The environment of learning must be friendly and non-threatening one. Such environments encourage students to openly ask questions and raise their own viewpoints without fear (Kocoska, 2009: P. 2429-2431). Besides, social environment plays a major role in building a rapport between teachers and learners in academic and extra-curricular activities.

Through such activities the relationship between teachers and learners are strengthened and result to smoothen the learning process and make students focus on their studies (Thomas, 2002: p. 423-442).

For example:

Adding fun to academic activities

Dedicating the last five minutes of each lecture to a particular student to talk about his hobby in English and to share his/her experience with his/her teacher and colleagues.

3.1. The Connection between Teaching and Learning

The connection between teaching and learning is strong, they are deeply interrelated. Because teaching and learning process is a lifelong journey and it is not limited to classroom environment but also goes beyond that.

Teachers and learners (students) learn from each other. In other words, teaching-learning process has mutual benefit for both parties.

It is worth noting to highlight the important factor in learning process, it is curiosity, it motivates learners to questioning both teachers and learners' views and concepts and it results to reach out critical thinking level.

3.2.The Benefits of Asking Questions:

- 1-Provoking interests.
- 2-Stimulating depth knowledge
- 3-Permitting intellectual focus

It is super important to know that knowledge should be transformed into students' minds to be critical thinkers than rote learners. (McCollister, 2010:

p. 41-47)

The learning process must be based upon two points:

- 1-Content that is to be taught: what type of topic does the teacher teach?
- 2-Student style of learning: the teaching style that matches students' needs (Gardner, 1993).

For example:

If a university professor makes use of traditional approach of teaching (lecture-based approach) and integrates it with debate between students, the learners will learn from two dimensions and make a positive environment.

3.3. Learning from student's perspective

Learning is not based on content delivery only but also on a comprehensive planning. The latter is significant in accomplishing the objectives and goals (Baftable, 1997)

Example about education

The learning is based on the following steps:

- 1-Assessment: collecting information and references.
- 2-Planning: developing goals and objectives that match student's level.
- 3-Applying the plan (Strategy)
- 4- Evaluation: Evaluating students' level of learning by the employment of summative and formative approaches. (Huba and Freed, 2000)

Formative approach: helps teachers to evaluate student's achievement on an on-going basis e.g. (quizzes) while summative approach helps teachers get an overall assessment of students' progress e.g. (final exam) (Punjani, 2014: p. 11)

3.4. Teacher-student connection in classroom

In fact, teachers face two types of students in classroom, they are highlighted below:

Active students: their active involvement in class activities can help them to

think critically and lead them to make effort towards knowing the purpose of education.

Passive students: they are featured by not attending most of classes, not preparing the assignments not reading the homework,

Solutions: Teachers can work on assessing their situations to know their problems. Afterward, teachers can apply motivational strategies to make their passive students active ones in class, these strategies are presented as follows:

1-Giving them few assignments.

2-Guided reading.

3-Highlighting the most important topics only (Ibid).

The students (learners) receive their own teachers' feedback in two ways:
Positive or Negative.

If students welcome their teachers' feedback, it enables them to improve their performance.

If students don't welcome their teachers' feedback, teachers have to modify the way they present it to their own students and make it in a more positive way so as to be accepted by their students and result to developing their performance (Ibid).

4.Approaches of Teachings

There are two essential approached employed in teaching foreign language learners and translation trainees, they are highlighted in the table below:

Discipline Comparison in Teacher-Centered and Person-Centered Classrooms

Teacher-Centered	Person-Centered
Teacher is the sole leader	Leadership is shared
Management is a form of oversight	Management is a form of guidance
Teacher takes responsibility for all the paperwork and organization	Students are facilitators for the operations of the classroom
Discipline comes from the teacher	Discipline comes from the self
A few students are the teacher's helpers	All students have the opportunity to become an integral part of the management of the classroom
Teacher makes the rules and posts them for all students	Rules are developed by the teacher and students in the form of a constitution or compact
Consequences are fixed for all students	Consequences reflect individual differences
Rewards are mostly extrinsic	Rewards are mostly intrinsic
Students are allowed limited responsibilities	Students share in classroom responsibilities
Few members of the community enter the classroom	Partnerships are formed with business and community groups to enrich and broaden the learning opportunities for students

Note. From *Freedom to Learn, 3rd Edition* (p. 240), by C. Rogers and H. J. Frieberg, 1994. Columbus: Merrill Publishing. Copyright 1994 by Prentice-Hall, Inc., Upper Saddle River, NJ. Adapted with permission.

5. Data Collection

The researcher gathered a lot of information concerning the philosophy of the subject whose title is Principle of Translation from four Iraqi Universities, these universities are presented in the following table:

No.	University Name	College/Department	Teacher's Academic Rank	Teacher's Specialization	Name of Province
1	University of Duhok	College of Languages/ Department of Translation	Asst. Prof. Dr.	Linguistics and Translation	Duhok
2	University of Basrah	College of Arts/ Department of Translation	Instr. Dr.	Linguistics and Translation	Basrah
3	AL-Iraqia University	College of Arts/ Department of Translation	Instr.	Translation and Interpretation	Baghdad
4	AL-Mamoun University College	Department of Translation	Asst. Prof. Dr.	Linguistics and Translation	Baghdad

The researcher chose the abovementioned universities that are based in different parts of Iraq because he wanted to explore different approaches of teaching Principles of Translation and what are its teachers' views.

6. Methodology

The researcher developed a hybrid methodology to carry out his research in a good way. He depended upon questionnaire survey method and focus group one as well. As for the former, it is of two types, they are as follows: typically structured or at least semi-structured. The larger the group of participants, the greater the dependence on structured or fixed-choice questions. Fixed-choice questions permit answers to be categorized easily

and the wide range of possible answers from fixed or open-ended questions needs more elaborate coding plans to include most of the possible answers. While the latter part of the methodology is concerned with focus group of participants which embraces small number of participants who are assigned to answer certain questions. The researcher of the study merged modified questionnaire survey methods by creating a list of fixed questions with one single question about the philosophy of teaching principles of translation (article writing) to be answered by a focus group of faculty members from different Iraqi universities in order to explore their own teaching philosophies. He created this eclectic model of assessment of teaching principles of translation because it is an easy way to collect information with reference to teaching philosophy of Principles of Translation from different Iraqi universities that are based in different geographic areas. It is worth noting that the researcher named the hybrid model of teaching philosophy assessment (Li, 2000: pp. 29-296).

6.1. Principles of translation teaching philosophy assessment eclectic model

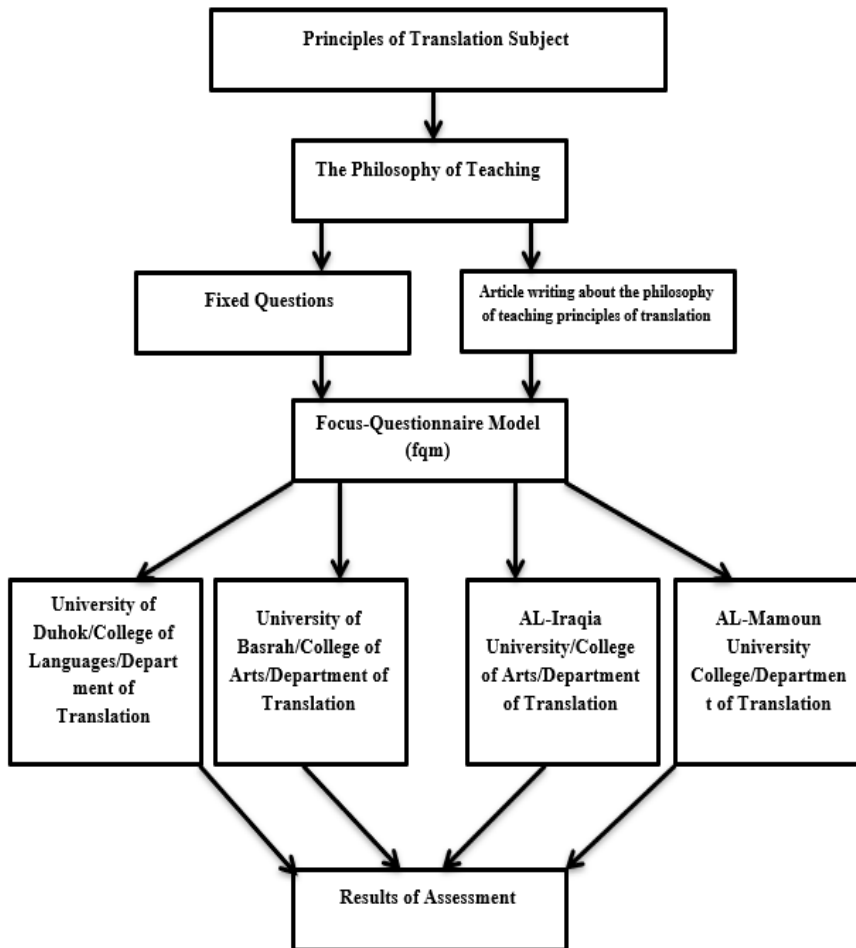


Figure (No.1) Principles of Translation Teaching Philosophy Assessment Eclectic Model

7. Assessment of Teachers' Approaches in Teachings Principles of Translation Subjects in Translation Departments of Iraqi Universities

The researcher gathered a lot of information with reference to the philosophy of teaching the subject whose title is Principles of translation from four participants whose majors are within the area of translation and whose academic ranks are either instructor or assistant professor (see 5. above). The data collected for assessment are of two different types, they are articles concerning the teaching philosophy of principles of translation and fixed questions in the form of questionnaire. As stated in the methodology (see 6. above), the researcher counted on an eclectic model of assessment (Focus-Questionnaire Model) of the subject of principles of translation teaching philosophy in Iraqi universities of different geographic areas in carrying out the practical part of the study.

7.1. The Articles

The articles are received from four Iraqi faculty members concerning their own teaching philosophy of principles of translation subject. They are presented below:

7.1.1. University of Duhok/College of Languages/Department of Translation

I believe that our students are our future. Each of them is able to bring something unique and special to the world. Teaching is an important and honorable occupation that demands commitment. As a teacher, I have the opportunity to affect my students' lives in a positive way. Moreover, I have to maintain the following:

1. Ensure that student learning needs are the primary focus of attention.
2. Have a positive regard for all students and ensure that respect is maintained inside the class all the time.
3. Believe in the ability of all my students to learn.
4. Trying to Foster independent learning.
5. Ensure that my students are actively engaged in learning experiences which deal with significant issues in their lives.

6. Embrace the constructivist learning approach.
7. Expect students to take responsibility for their learning.
8. Provide specific and positive feedback and encouragement to my students.

As a teacher my vision is to create an atmosphere that encourages curiosity and sheer determination. Our classroom is a place where students feel important, respected, cared for and believed in. I am a teacher who makes it possible for his students to reach their full potential, ask questions, learn from their mistakes, give and receive feedback, create and try their best.

7.1.2. University of Basrah/College of Arts/Department of Translation

As a teacher of the principles of translation into English class, I have my teaching philosophy and this philosophy is derived from the teaching aims which can be explained separately. First, the role of the teacher is not only transmitting information but also encouraging life-long learning, and this can be achieved by putting clear learning aims and by the practice of learning from mistakes. By this, I mean students learn from their translation mistakes/challenges. I ask students to translate different sentences from Arabic into English, collect their translations, discuss their translation mistakes and offer the correct translations in English. Second, during teaching principles of translation, I aim to focus generally on the competency of students and the basics of translation while translating from Arabic into English. This can be attained by discussing the translation of different sentences with different levels of difficulty as well as different translation strategies. Third, the right and clever use of translation online tools are one of my teaching aims. As we live in the current digital age, the mastery of basic technology and translator's online tools is a must nowadays. All these aims and others can also be accomplished by the material of the lectures I am personally designing, the assignments I am asking students to submit, and discussions I continually do with the students.

7.1.3. AL-Iraqia University/College of Arts/Department of Translation

My teaching philosophy with regard to principles of translation is based on a passion that has driven me to pay attention to my students in the first-year program. I want to teach them the basics of translation, how to translate a

simple sentence, how to translate types of sentences, how to differentiate between verbal and nominal sentences in translation not to mention translating tenses and aspects. All these topics are delivered to my students with the employment of student-Centered Approach and I make use of different concepts in teaching my freshman such as brainstorming, sitting them in pairs or groups so as to be active and be cooperative with their peers not to mention depending on different means of technology such as Computers, internet-based platforms like zoom meetings platform and emails. As for my passive students. I try my best to approach them by building a rapport with them knowing the difficulties they face on the personal level so as to be able to answer their problems and I give them motivational homework based on trophies such as extra marks and assigning them in extracurricular activities. Finally, teaching students' principles of translation subject requires great efforts from teacher's side in facilitating the process because this topic is defined as the first step towards professional translation skills.

7.1.4. AL-Mamoun University College/Department of Translation

I teach Principles of Translation into English. This course is usually given to first year students. It deals with translation at the sentence level. In teaching the course, we usually rely on the findings of contrastive linguistics, mainly contrastive grammar. So, we begin every class by briefing students about the similarities and differences between English and Arabic in as far as the topic at hand is concerned. This is usually followed by a good number of sentences for practice. We then move on to punctuation marks which are often of semantic function. Finally, we care about word choice which often displays considerable differences. The focus on the sentence level at this preliminary stage is important as the sentence makes the smallest meaningful unit of any text. We then move to sentence type and talk about sentence structure and sentence function through which we prepare the students to the idea of the relationship between structure and function and draw the translation trainees' attention that translation is a textual functional activity.

7.2. Fixed Questions (Questionnaire)

The information received from Iraqi faculty members in the form of questionnaire, the fixed questions and their answers are presented in the following table:

No.	Fixed Questions	University	Answers				
			Highly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Highly Disagree
1	Teachers' Centered Approach is appropriate for translation teachers teaching Principles of Translation.	Duhok				↓	
		Basrah			↓		
		AL-Iraqia					↓
		AL-Mamoun		↓			
2	Students' Centered Approach is feasible to for translation teachers teaching Principles of Translation.	Duhok	↓				
		Basrah		↓			
		AL-Iraqia	↓				
		AL-Mamoun	↓				
3	Principles of Translation Teachers employ brainstorming strategy in classroom.	Duhok			↓		
		Basrah	↓				
		AL-Iraqia	↓				
		AL-Mamoun		↓			
4	Principles of Translation Teachers act as facilitators in classroom.	Duhok	↓				
		Basrah		↓			
		AL-Iraqia	↓				
		AL-Mamoun	↓				

5	Principles of Translation Teachers are after knowledge transmission (spoon-feeding).	Duhok			↓		
		Basrah				↓	
		AL-Iraqia					↓
		AL-Mamoun			↓		
6	Principles of Translation Teachers are after knowledge construction creating a (life-long mental repertoire).	Duhok	↓				
		Basrah		↓			
		AL-Iraqia	↓				
		AL-Mamoun	↓				
7	Grouping and pairing are the suitable ways to let students share their knowledge with each other and be interactive in class.	Duhok	↓				
		Basrah	↓				
		AL-Iraqia	↓				
		AL-Mamoun			↓		
8	Sitting in rows is the appropriate way of students learning in classroom environment.	Duhok			↓		
		Basrah		↓			
		AL-Iraqia					↓
		AL-Mamoun		↓			
9	Lecturing is the best strategy of teaching Principles of Translation.	Duhok			↓		
		Basrah			↓		
		AL-Iraqia					↓
		AL-Mamoun				↓	

10	Interactive Strategy is best way of teaching Principles of Translation.	Duhok		↓			
		Basrah	↓				
		AL-Iraqia	↓				
		AL-Mamoun	↓				
11	White board is only good tool of teaching Principles of Translation.	Duhok		↓			
		Basrah				↓	
		AL-Iraqia				↓	
		AL-Mamoun		↓			
12	Multimedia tools combined (computer, data-show, presentation and illustration) are best tools used in teaching Principles of Translation.	Duhok		↓			
		Basrah	↓				
		AL-Iraqia	↓				
		AL-Mamoun	↓				
13	E-learning tools (Google Classroom, Zoom Meetings Platform and social media networks) are capable of helping teach teaching Principles of Translation actively during Covid 19 pandemic.	Duhok			↓		
		Basrah		↓			
		AL-Iraqia		↓			
		AL-Mamoun		↓			

14	Principles of Translation Teachers level of success in teaching is measured by students' averages and class participations.	Duhok			↓		
		Basrah			↓		
		AL-Iraqia		↓			
		AL-Mamoun		↓			
15	Principles of Translation Teachers can be their own evaluators.	Duhok		↓			
		Basrah		↓			
		AL-Iraqia	↓				
		AL-Mamoun		↓			
16	Students of Principles of Translation subjects can evaluate their own teachers.	Duhok					↓
		Basrah		↓			
		AL-Iraqia		↓			
		AL-Mamoun		↓			

8. Principles of translation teaching philosophy assessment

As stated in the in philosophy of teaching articles (see 7.1. above) and the questionnaire designed for the purpose in question (see 7.2. above). All the participants are pro-student-centered approach except for fourth participant who is in favor of teacher-centered approach to certain extent. The pro-student-centered approach teachers believe in the followings: they call for shared leadership in class, they are making use of life-long learning strategies in class, teachers are not the sole guide but they work as facilitators in learning environment. Teachers give students the opportunity to be part of decision-making process, rewarding students is the most significant component of encouraging them to be active, multimedia means

boost educational process in general and teaching principles of translation subject in particular. It is crystal clear that the Iraqi faculty members of different Iraqi universities are after student-centered approach in teaching principles of translation depending on their articles that are concerned with their teaching philosophies.

As for the questionnaire of the study whose main objective is to understand the teaching philosophies employed by Iraqi faculty members who teach principles of translation subject in different Iraqi universities. The questionnaire showed us fixed questions and fixed choices and the result is to present fixed percentages with reference to faculty members philosophy of teaching of principles of translation subject.

The results will be highlighted in the following table:

No. of Question of the questionnaire	Teacher-Centered Approach component	Student-Centered Approach Component	Neutral Choice
1	25%	50%	25%
2	0%	100%	0%
3	0%	75%	25%
4	0%	100%	0%
5	0%	50%	50%
6	0%	100%	0%
7	0%	75%	25%
8	50%	25%	25%
9	0%	50%	50%
10	0%	100%	0%
11	50%	50%	0%
12	0%	100%	0%
13	0%	75%	25%
14	0%	50%	50%
15	0%	100	0%
16	25%	75%	0%
Total Percentages	9.375	73.43	17.18

As explained in the table of questionnaire assessment results above, the participants of the focus-questionnaire model of assessment who belong to different Iraqi universities employ student-centered approach at a rate of 73.43% in teaching principles of translation subject for first year students/ Department of translation and they resort to teacher-centered approach by 9.375 % only and they were neutral in their responses at a rate of 17.18% only. In other words, the FQM found out that the student-centered approach is highly appreciated in teaching principles of translation subject depending on the articles of teaching philosophy where 75% percent of participants were in favor of student-centered approach and the same is almost true of the questionnaire where it highlighted fixed questions with fixed answers concerning these philosophies and received almost above 73 %.

Conclusions

It is concluded that the vast majority of Iraqi faculty members of different Iraqi universities who teach Principles of Translation subject make use of student-centered approach at high level. In other words, they resort to it by almost 70 percent. The study counted on an eclectic model designed by the researcher, it is a combination of focus group model with questionnaire one and he made it focus-questionnaire model (model). The results of collected articles with references to faculty members teaching philosophies showed that three out of four faculty members count of student-centered approach. In other words, 75% percent of participants employed student-centered approach and 25% made use of teacher-centered approach while the questionnaire results showed that almost 73.43% were in favor of student-centered approach, 9.375 were after teacher-centered approach and the neutral answers were 17.18%. the total result of both parts of assessment model of FQM is 74.215 of participants follow student-centered approach. Finally, the results highlighted above verified the hypothesis of the study.

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تحليل استقصائي لفلسفة تدريس مبادئ الترجمة في أقسام الترجمة في العراق

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المستخلص

تعد مبادئ الترجمة اهم مادة تدرس لطلبة المرحلة الاولى في اقسام الترجمة في جميع الجامعات العراقية لأنها تمثل الخطوة الاولى نحو تمكين طلبة المرحلة الاولى اتقان اساسيات الترجمة التي تؤهلهم لتنمية مهاراتهم الترجمة. تسلط الدراسة الحالية الضوء على تقييم فلسفة تدريس اساتذة مادة مبادئ الترجمة في مختلف الجامعات العراقية. واعتمد الباحث على الية تقييم انتقائية تتكون من الية المجموعة المتخصصة والية الاستبانة ودمجها سويا لتصبح الية المجموعة المتخصصة المدعومة بالاستبانة. وجمع الباحث المقالات التي ارسلها المشاركين في الدراسة الذين يدرسون مادة مبادئ الترجمة في مختلف الجامعات العراقية واجاباتهم المحددة على مجموعة من الاسئلة المحددة في الاستبانة المصممة لهذا الغرض. وتشير فرضية الدراسة الى ان من المرجح ان اساتذة الجامعات العراقية المختلفة الذين يدرسون مادة مبادئ الترجمة يعتمدون الى حد كبير على الية التعليم التي تتمحور حول الطالب أكثر من الاعتماد على الية التعليم التي تتمحور حول الاستاذ. واثبتت نتائج التقييم الى ان اساتذة مادة مبادئ الترجمة في مختلف الجامعات العراقية يعتمدون بنسبة ٧٤٪ تقريبا على الية التعليم التي تتمحور حول الطالب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مبادئ الترجمة وفلسفة التدريس والتعليم الذي يتمحور حول الطالب والتعليم الذي يتمحور حول الاستاذ والية المجموعة المتخصصة المدعومة بالاستبانة.