The Effect of Translating Inspirational Quotes on the Motivation of Senior University Students Majoring in English Translation[1]

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Abstract

Inspirational quotes are concise expressions with precious meaning and encouraging effect, which are widespread nowadays in social media and many public places. These sentences are applied in many educational and psychological contexts to increase motivation, fulfillment, and determination in individuals suffering from anxiety, depression, and stress. Despite the intriguing features of inspirational quotes, there is restricted research on their impact on translation trainees. The present study investigated the effect of translating inspirational quotes on the motivation of senior students majoring in English translation at Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman. To this end, 30 participants selected based on purposive sampling were randomly assigned to an experimental and a control group. The participants of the experimental group practiced translating inspirational quotes in six weekly sessions, while the control group obtained no intervention. The motivation level of both groups was measured through the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) before and after the treatment period. The results indicated a significantly positive effect of translating inspirational quotes on the students' motivation. The study sheds further light on the positive effects of practicing inspirational quotes in academic settings.

Keywords: motivation, translating inspirational quotes, translation trainees

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1. Introduction

Inspirational quotes are succinct sayings with precious meanings that stimulate and positively affect their readers (Braida et al., 2022). These sentences are prevalent in social media and many public places such as academic environments, sports clubs, and working offices (Braida et al., 2022). Considering the popularity of inspirational quotes among students, trainers can apply such sentences in academic settings (Al-Jarf, 2021; Zeiger, 2018). Zeiger (2018) mentioned several benefits of inspirational quotes in education. First, teachers can improve their students' speaking skills by selecting a controversial quote and then asking them to discuss it. Second, inspirational quotes can be utilized to enhance students' comprehension skills. Eventually, trainers can instruct grammar and vocabulary through inspirational quotes. They can analyze quotations to teach sentence structure and also clarify terms whose meanings are complicated for students in quotations. But suggestions for the use of such quotes aren't just language teaching oriented. Inspirational quotes are applied in many educational and psychological contexts to promote motivation, fulfillment, and determination in individuals struggling with tension, depression, and stress (Bedrov & Bulaj, 2018).

Motivation is defined as "the process whereby goal-directed activities are instigated and sustained" (Schunk et al., 2014, p. 5). Additionally, motivation is significant in translation training from two aspects; first, it can improve learning and performance in students (Schunk et al., 2014). Second, translation trainers can better instruct trainees when they realize trainees' motivators (Liu & Yu, 2019).

As mentioned previously and also confirmed by Bedrov and Bulaj (2018), applying inspirational quotes in academic settings may influence the motivation of trainees. However, to the knowledge of the present researcher, no academic research has been conducted into the effect of translating inspirational quotes on the translation trainees' motivation. Therefore, in this study, the researcher endeavored to realize if translating inspirational quotes can significantly affect the motivation of

senior translation students of Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman (a province in the southeast of Iran). Consequently, the following research question was formulated:

Does translating inspirational quotes have any significant effect on the motivation level of senior English translation students of Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman?

Furthermore, the following null hypothesis was formed:

Translating inspirational quotes has no significant effect on the motivation level of senior English translation students of Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman.

2. Review of Literature

Based on the investigations of the researcher and further confirmed by Liu and Yu (2019), a large portion of the studies on inspirational quotes are done in the fields of teaching and psychology, and there is a dearth of research on the utilization of such sentences in the translation discipline.

Laeli and Kusumaningrum (2018) stated that inspirational quotes are prevalent sentences in social media with many fans worldwide; individuals utilize these quotes in their communications to state their expression. They define inspirational quotes as a set of intelligent sentences that originate from the experiences of successful or famous individuals in their lives. They recommended that translation trainers apply these quotes in translation classes as an approach to instruct translation trainees.

Miller (2020) also stated that quotations could be applied to alter the classroom atmosphere. For example, teachers can arouse enthusiasm among students by using quotes based on wordplay or quotations that demonstrate a new perspective on life. They suggested that faculty, counselors, and parents could utilize quotations and literature as a treatment called bibliotherapy to solve students'

problems. Moreover, trainers can apply inspirational quotes as a tool for conveying moral messages to their students through concise language (Ameri, 2010).

Learners' motivation is one of the areas supposed to be affected by inspirational quotes. "Motivation is a theoretical construct used to explain the initiation, direction, intensity, persistence, and quality of behavior, especially goal-directed behavior" (Brophy, 2010, p. 3). Moreover, according to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are among the most famous classifications of motivation. Based on Schunk et al. (2014), intrinsic motivation is defined as a kind of motivation that causes individuals to participate in an activity because of their internal desires. In other words, internally motivated people work on an activity just because of its enjoyment and without expecting external rewards or praise. However, extrinsic motivation is a type of motivation that is dependent on external factors such as prizes and grades. It is needed to mention that both types of motivation are beneficial to learning (Schunk et al., 2014).

Furthermore, motivation is claimed to be a prominent factor in education since it affects the trainees' learning performance (Dörnyei, 2005). In fact, motivated students are more active and enthusiastic in class. Therefore, they pay more attention to the lesson, and due to this motivation, their learning and performance levels develop highly (Schunk et al., 2014). Considering the importance of motivation in learning quality, translation trainers should pay attention to trainees' motivation in the classroom and utilize resources that can increase motivation and interest in trainees (Liu & Yu, 2019). Applying demotivating and uninteresting instructional materials and activities can weaken the trainees' motivation and interest.

Concerning the importance of motivation in translation studies, Ameri and Ghahari (2018) examined motivating and demotivating factors in Iranian translation trainees. The study was conducted through the use of a questionnaire

and also interviews with undergraduate students from two universities. The results demonstrated that the main motivators of Iranian trainees were external encouragement, social prestige, and certificates. Furthermore, the prime factors that demotivated Iranian trainees were related to teachers, administration, and facilities.

One of the other few studies done focusing on motivation and the field of translation was conducted by Akdağ (2019). He investigated the translator trainers' role in improving their students' motivation using the Goal Orientations Scale. The researcher concluded that motivated students are more active in classroom and participate enthusiastically in translation tasks. Therefore, based on this willingness, their translation performances enhance. The researcher suggested that teachers can motivate students better when they comprehend students' achievement goals. Accordingly, the educational syllabus should be adjusted to the students' achievement goals if it aims at boosting their motivation.

Regarding the few studies done concerning motivation and translation quality in general and inspirational sentences in specific, the present study was an attempt to address the mentioned gap and investigate the effect of using such quotes on the translation trainees' motivation enhancement in Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman.

3. Method

In this pre-experimental study, the researcher investigated the impact of translating inspirational quotes as a class activity on the motivation level of research participants. To this end, the researcher resorted to a questionnaire to collect data. The following sections provide more information about the research instrument, participants, data collection procedure, and data analysis.

3.1. Instrument

The required data for this study was collected through the printed form of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ). The MSLQ designed by

Pintrich et al. (1991) is a Likert-scale instrument to assess motivation and use of learning strategies by college students. As indicated by the designer, the scale benefits from robust validity and reliability (Pintrich et al., 1993; Wang et al., 2022). It consists of two parts; A) the motivation section and B) the learning strategies section. Each section has its advantages; however, in the present study, the researcher resorted to only the results of the motivation section. The motivation part of MSLQ (see Appendix A) is composed of thirty-one items, which can be assessed on a scale ranging from 1(Not at all true of me) to 7(Very true of me).

3.2. Participants

Based on purposive sampling, thirty senior English translation students at Shahid Bahonar University were selected for the present study. They were chosen due to their more academic experience in translation techniques and optimal language proficiency level. This group of participants consisted of twenty-four females and six males. The total number of eligible participants for the research was restricted since there was only one group of senior translation trainees at Shahid Bahonar University. The age range of the participants was from 21 to 25.

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

Before starting the data collection, the researcher expounded the research project for a translation trainer to get his satisfaction with conducting the data collection process in his class. When the researcher realized that the translation trainer welcomed the research project, it was time to take the subsequent step.

After selecting the sample including 30 senior translation students, the researcher clarified the research project for them. He mentioned that the data collection process included eight weekly sessions, with all participants required to attend the first and last sessions. Additionally, each session would last around fifteen to twenty minutes and would take place in the final quarter of the class. After explaining the research project to the students, the researcher inquired whether they

consented to participate in the data collection process. Eventually, the researcher realized that all the participants were inclined to participate in the research.

As the next step of the study, the 30 subjects selected based on purposive sampling were randomly assigned to two groups namely control and experimental, and resultantly each included 15 students.

The researcher then distributed the motivation questionnaires among the two groups to determine their initial motivation level (pre-test). After roughly fifteen minutes, the participants delivered the completed questionnaires to the researcher, and the researcher terminated the first data collection session.

In the next six subsequent sessions, the researcher and students practiced translating inspirational quotations in the last quarter of the class while the control group didn't have such a treatment. In the experimental group the researcher based on the time necessary, covered between three to six inspirational quotes (see Appendix B) from BrainyQuote (https://www.brainyquote.com/) and QuoteFancy (https://quotefancy.com/) each session. The inspirational quotes belonged to successful and influential people such as Thomas A. Edison, Martin Luther King, and Steve Jobs. The translation practice was done based on peer and teacher interaction and was in general under the teacher's supervision.

In the final session, the researcher handed out the motivation questionnaires to all members of the control and experimental groups to assess their motivation level at the end of the experiment period (post-test). After about fifteen minutes, the participants filled out the questionnaires and gave them back to the researcher.
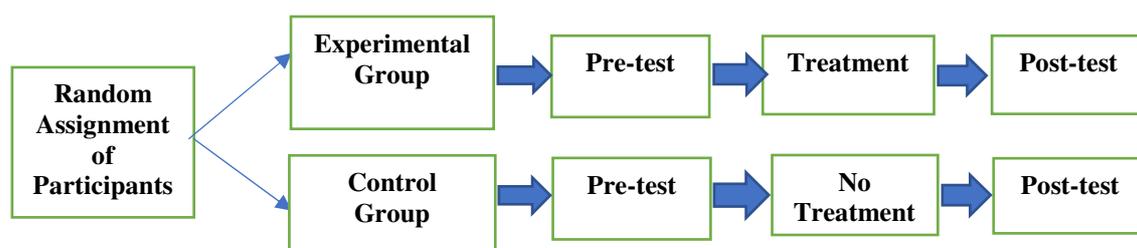

Figure 1. *Schematic Representation of the Quantitative Phase of the Study*

3.4. Data Analysis Procedure

For the assessment of the collected data, the researcher applied SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 26 as the statistical software. Moreover, the researcher made comparisons between the collected data through independent and paired samples t-test analyses to make logical inferences. These comparisons included the following: First, a comparison between the pre-test and post-test performance of the control group (intra-comparison). Second, a comparison between the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group (intra-comparison). Third, a comparison between the control group's pre-test and the experimental group's pre-test (inter-comparison). Fourth, a comparison between the control group's post-test and the experimental group's post-test (inter-comparison). Tests of normality, homogeneity of the groups in terms of the pre-test assessments of the variable, and homogeneity of variance were also probed. Eventually, the researcher applied graphs and tables to demonstrate the data analysis.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics of the Variable

The descriptive statistics of the variable by group are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics of the Variables by Group*

Group		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Variance
Control Group	Pre-test (Motivation)	15	108.00	145.00	127.8000	11.47793	131.743
	Post-test (Motivation)	15	110.00	164.00	132.3333	16.30367	265.810
	Valid N (listwise)	15					
Experimental Group	Pre-test (Motivation)	15	102.00	173.00	127.0667	19.80067	392.067
	Post-test (Motivation)	15	108.00	188.00	151.0000	19.52654	381.286
	Valid N (listwise)	15					

4.1.1. Participants' Grouping

The study included a total of 30 participants, who were divided into two groups: the control group and the experimental group. Therefore, each group comprised 50% of the total sample size.

Table 2
Group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Control Group	15	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Experimental Group	15	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 indicates that there were no missing data for any of the participants, as the "Valid Percent" column is the same as the "Percent" column for each group. Overall, the table demonstrates a balanced distribution of participants across the control and experimental groups, which is important for ensuring the validity of any comparisons or conclusions drawn from the study.

4.1.2. Descriptive Statistics of Motivation Pre-test Scores

Among 15 participants in the control group, the minimum score obtained on the motivation pre-test scores was 108, and the maximum score was 145 ($M = 127.80$, $SD = 11.48$). The figure is presented below:
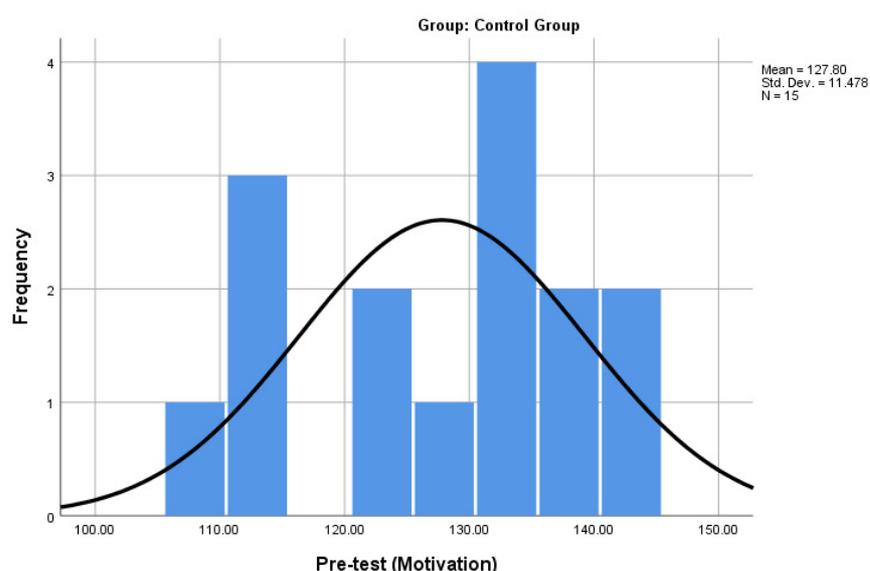

Figure 2. *Motivation Pre-test Scores: The Control Group*

For the experimental group's pre-test motivation scores, the range of scores was from 102 to 173, with a mean score of 127.07 (SD = 19.80). The figure is presented below:
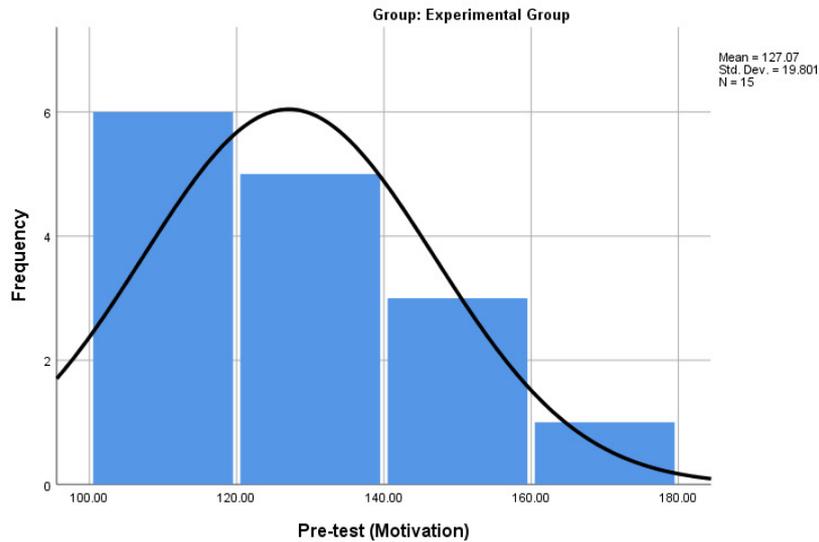

Figure 3. *Motivation Pre-test Scores: The Experimental Group*

4.1.3. Descriptive Statistics of Motivation Post-test Scores

Among 15 participants in the control group, the minimum score obtained on the motivation post-test scores was 110, and the maximum score was 164 (*M* = 132.33, *SD* = 16.30). The figure is presented below:
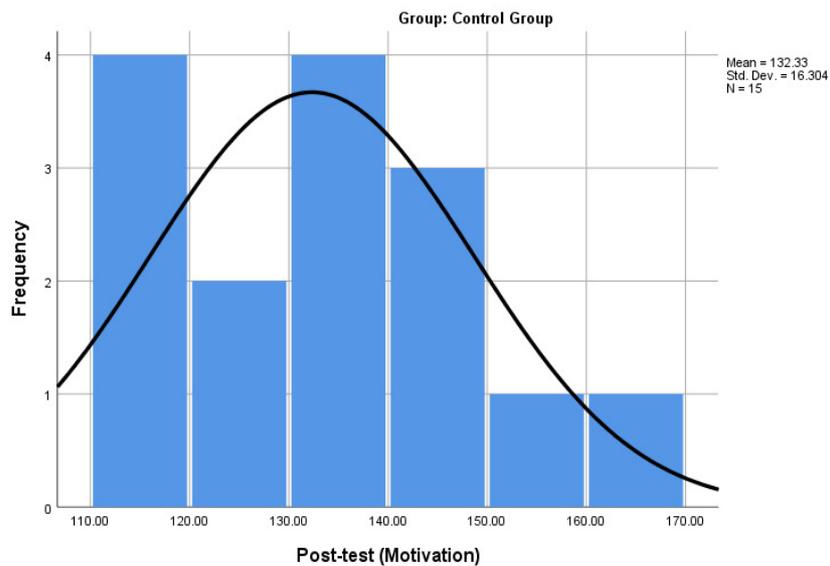

Figure 4. *Motivation Post-test Scores: The Control Group*

For the experimental group's post-test motivation scores, the range of scores was from 108 to 188, with a mean score of 151.00 (SD = 19.53). The figure is presented below:
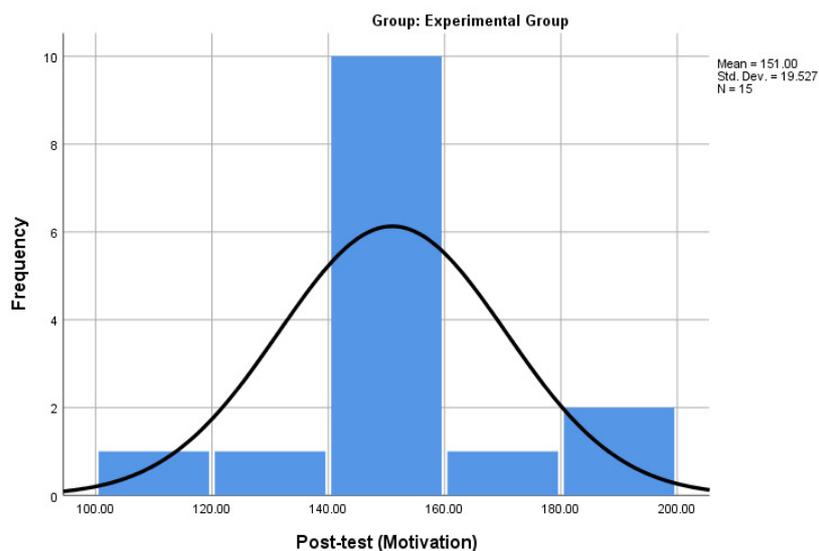

Figure 5. *Motivation Post-test Scores: The Experimental Group*

4.1.4. Tests of Normality

The assessment of the normality of the data in each group was analyzed via Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk estimates (Table 3).

Table 3
Tests of Normality

Group		Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Control Group	Pre-test (Motivation)	.176	15	.200*	.937	15	.346
	Post-test (Motivation)	.160	15	.200*	.943	15	.416
Experimental Group	Pre-test (Motivation)	.139	15	.200*	.936	15	.339
	Post-test (Motivation)	.254	15	.060	.880	15	.088

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The results did not show significant deviations from normality since the p-values in all cases fall above the significance level of .05. Therefore, it is safe to conduct parametric analyses in terms of the normality assumption.

4.2. Homogeneity of Groups in Terms of Pre-test Assessments

Prior to conducting the main study, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups. The purpose of this analysis was to ensure homogeneity between the two groups at the outset of the study (Table 4).

Table 4. *Homogeneity of Groups in Terms of Pre-test Assessments*

	GROUP	N	Mean	t	df	Sig.
Pre-test Motivation	Experimental	15	127.06	.124	28	.902
	Control	15	127.80			

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics for the pre-test assessments of motivation for both the control and experimental groups in the study. The motivation scores for the control and experimental groups were 127.8000 and 127.0667, respectively. Furthermore, the standard deviations for motivation were 11.47793 and 19.80067 for the control and experimental groups, respectively.

Table 4 also shows the results of the independent samples t-tests performed to compare the means of the pre-test assessments of motivation between the control and experimental groups. Levene's test for equality of variances was first performed, and the results showed that the assumption of equal variances was met for motivation (F = 3.959, p = .056).

The t-test results also showed no significant difference between the control and experimental groups in terms of their pre-test scores, whether equal variances were assumed (t =.124, df =28, p = .902) or not assumed (t =.124, df = 22.454, p = .902). The mean difference between the two groups was .73333, indicating that

the control group had slightly higher pre-test scores than the experimental group. However, this difference was not statistically significant.

Overall, based on these results, it can be concluded that there were no significant differences between the control and experimental groups in terms of their pre-test assessment motivation, indicating that the groups were comparable at the beginning of the study.

4.3. Answering the Research Question

In order to investigate the research question of the current study regarding the impact of the intervention of translating inspirational quotes on the motivation of senior students majoring in translation at Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, between-group and within-group analyses were run. First, to probe any between-group differences in motivation post-test scores, an independent-sample t-test was run (Table 5). The assumptions of homogeneity of variance and normality were explored before launching the main statistical analyses. The results did not show any deviations from the presumed assumptions.

Table 5. *Independent-Sample T-test for Motivation Development in Two Groups*

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.
Post-test (Motivation)	Control Group	15	132.3333	16.30367	-2.842	28	.008
	Experimental Group	15	151.0000	19.52654			

An independent-sample t-test was conducted to compare the post-test motivation scores between the control and experimental groups. The experimental group had a significantly higher mean score (M = 151.00, SD = 19.53) than the control group (M = 132.33, SD = 16.30), t(28) = -2.842, p = .008 (two-tailed), with a medium effect size (Cohen's d = -0.69).

Levene's test indicated that the assumption of equal variances was met, F(1, 28) = 0.002, p = .969. However, the results of the t-test were confirmed with equal variances not assumed, t(27.136) = -2.842, p = .008 (two-tailed), with a medium

effect size (Cohen's d = -0.69). The mean difference was -18.67, with a standard error of 6.57. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranged from -32.12 to -5.21, indicating that the experimental group had significantly higher post-test motivation scores than the control group. The boxplot is presented below:
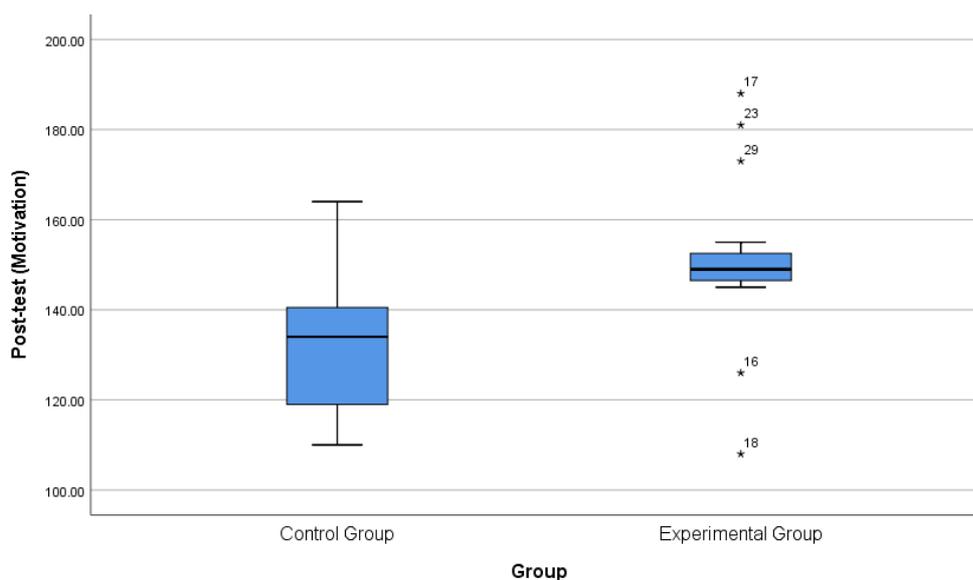

Figure 6. *Post-test Motivation Development in the Control & Experimental Groups*

Second, to probe any within-differences between pre- and post-test motivation scores in each group, two paired-samples t-test analyses were run (Table 6). The assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were explored before conducting the main statistical analyses. The results did not show any deviations from the presumed assumptions.

Table 6. *Paired-Samples T-test Analyses for Motivation Development Pre & Post-test Scores in Two Groups*

Group			Mean	N	SD	r	t	df	Sig.
Control Group	Pair 1	Pre-test (Motivation)	127.8000	15	11.47793	.681	-1.470	14	.164
		Post-test (Motivation)	132.3333	15	16.30367				
Experimental Group	Pair 1	Pre-test (Motivation)	127.0667	15	19.80067	.794	-7.340	14	.000
		Post-test (Motivation)	151.0000	15	19.52654				

A paired-sample t-test was conducted to compare the mean scores of motivation between the control and experimental groups before and after treatment. Both groups included 15 participants. The results are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6 shows that the mean score for motivation in the control group was 127.80 (SD = 11.48) before the treatment and 132.33 (SD = 16.30) after the treatment. The mean score for motivation in the experimental group was 127.07 (SD = 19.80) before the treatment and 151.00 (SD = 19.53) after the treatment. The paired-sample t-test revealed a correlation coefficient of r = .68, p = .005 for the control group, and r = .79, p = .000 for the experimental group.

The paired-sample t-test indicated that there was a significant difference in mean motivation scores between the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group, t(14) = -7.34, p = .000, with a large effect size (d = 2.39). However, there was no significant difference in mean motivation scores between the pre-test and post-test in the control group, t(14) = -1.47, p = .164, with a small effect size (d = 0.38).

Overall, the results suggest that the treatment had a significant positive effect on motivation in the experimental group but not in the control group. The experimental group had a much larger effect size compared to the control group, indicating that the treatment had a stronger impact on their motivation levels. The boxplot is presented below:
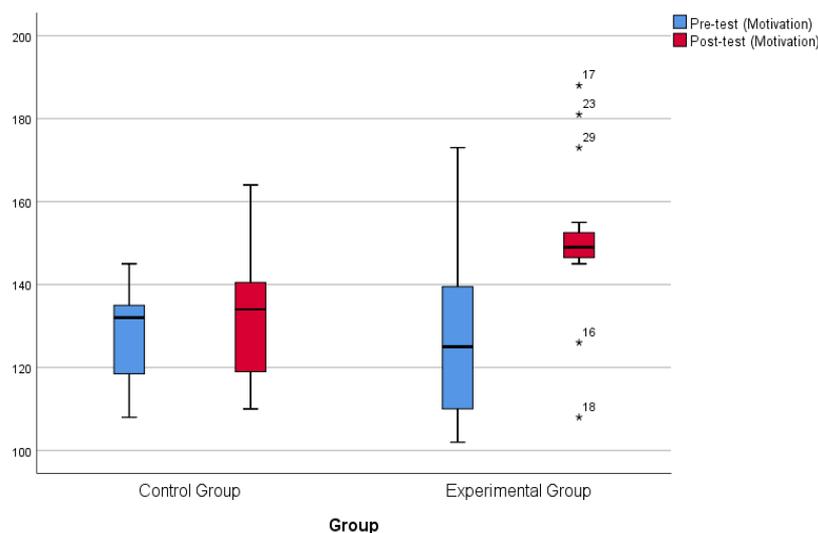
Figure 7. *Boxplot for Motivation Pre- and Post-test Assessments in Two Groups*

5. Discussion

The results indicated that translating inspirational quotes positively affected the motivation level of senior English translation students of Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman. Therefore, the null research hypothesis was rejected, and it was concluded that translating inspirational quotes can lead to the trainees' motivation enhancement.

As mentioned before, there is a dearth of research on the application of inspirational quotes in translation studies. However, there are some roughly relevant studies which are worth mentioning. In this research, applying inspirational quotes in translation classes led to an improvement in participants' motivation, which is consistent with Bedrov and Bulaj's (2018) claim. By considering the point that inspirational quotes are popular sentences among students (Al-Jarf, 2021; Zeiger, 2018), translation trainers can utilize these sentences in classrooms as a strategy to instruct translation. Moreover, given the positive role of motivation in elevating learning and performance levels (Schunk et al., 2014), translating inspirational quotes in classes can boost motivation in trainees, and through this motivation, translation learning can occur more effectively in students.

In addition to their motivational effects, translating inspirational quotes can also have other benefits. For instance, Miller (2020) mentioned that inspirational quotes can help change the atmosphere of classrooms. Therefore, translation instructors can use this idea and incorporate inspirational quotes into their classes, particularly when they feel that the content of a course might be dull or unengaging for their students. Furthermore, one of the distinctive features of inspirational quotes is their didactic content (Ameri, 2010). By applying these sentences in classes, trainers can educate their students on ethics in addition to translating. So those involved in materials development are highly advised to include such quotations in their textbooks as a means to enrich the respective content.

6. Conclusion

The current study can be construed as an initial advancement toward the investigation into the impact of translating inspirational quotes on translation trainees. The findings of this research clearly demonstrated the positive impact of translating inspirational quotes on the participants' motivation. However, it is necessary to exercise caution while interpreting the results of this research because of the small sample size of participants. Therefore, future research could further inspect the impact of translating inspirational quotes on motivation of senior translation students of other universities to realize whether the findings of this study could be generalized. Future studies could also be conducted on different groups of participants, like sophomores and juniors to realize whether their findings converge with the results of this study. Furthermore, subsequent researchers could examine the long-term effect of translating inspirational quotes on participants' motivation to compare their findings with the current study, which focused on the short-term impact of translating inspirational quotes. Finally, future research could compare the performance of translation trainees in translating inspirational quotes and other texts they usually translate in translation classes and detect the possible difference in quality.

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Appendix A. A Short Version of the Motivation Part of MSLQ (Pintrich et al., 1991)

1. In a class like this, I prefer course material that really challenges me so I can learn new things.

2. If I study in appropriate ways, then I will be able to learn the material in this course.

3. When I take a test, I think about how poorly I am doing compared with other students.

4. I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course in other courses.

5. I believe I will receive an excellent grade in this class.

6. I am certain I can understand the most difficult material presented in the readings for this course.

7. Getting a good grade in this class is the most satisfying thing for me right now.

8. When I take a test, I think about items on other parts of the test I cannot answer.

Appendix B. A Sample of Inspirational Quotes

1. "Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up" (Thomas A. Edison).

2. "Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase" (Martin Luther King).

3. "Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower" (Steve Jobs).