TEACHING TRANSLATION THROUGH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

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Abstract: *The way translation is traditionally taught has often been criticized for not adequately preparing students for the demands of the modern professional landscape. As digital technologies continue to transform various industries, translation education must evolve to equip students with relevant skills. Recent discussions about different approaches to teaching translation highlight the growing need to integrate digital tools into the learning process.*

Key words: *computer-assisted translation (CAT), digital technologies, machine translation (MT), technology-driven approaches, translation education, translation technologies.*

Introduction

This paper explores the role of digital technologies in translation education, focusing on the benefits and challenges they present. The increasing use of machine translation (MT) and computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools has reshaped the competencies required in the field. While some traditional skills have become less relevant, others—such as technical proficiency and critical evaluation of automated outputs—have gained importance (Pym, 2011). By analyzing digital resources used in translation programs at several European universities, this paper argues for a balanced approach that combines traditional translation methods with technological advancements.

Current Trends in Translation Education

Translation education today stands at the crossroads of traditional methods and modern innovations. A well-rounded program should develop not only students' linguistic and cultural competencies but also their ability to work professionally and ethically in a digital environment (Gouadec, 2007). Moreover, translation training must reflect changes in the industry, ensuring that graduates are prepared for new demands, such as post-editing machine-generated translations and managing digital translation projects.

The integration of technology in translation studies brings both opportunities and ethical challenges. On the one hand, digital tools enhance efficiency and broaden students' access to resources. On the other hand, reliance on technology raises

concerns about data security, professional integrity, and the diminishing role of human translators. As Cronin (2013) points out, while technology facilitates translation, it also shifts the perception of the translator's role, requiring professionals to adapt to a more collaborative and technology-driven work environment.

The Role of Digital Technologies

Digital technologies in translation cover a wide range of tools, including both hardware (such as computers and mobile devices) and software (such as CAT tools, online dictionaries, and terminology databases). These tools not only support the translation process but also enhance the overall learning experience by making training more interactive and accessible.

In educational settings, translation technologies can be used for several purposes:

- CAT tools help students manage large translation projects efficiently by storing previously translated segments.
- Terminology databases ensure consistency in translated texts.
- Machine translation systems, when used alongside human editing, provide insights into automated translation strengths and limitations (Bowker & Ciro, 2019).
- Online collaboration tools enable students to work in teams, simulating real-world translation workflows.

However, simply introducing digital tools into the classroom is not enough. It is essential to consider the learning objectives behind their use. If the goal is to improve students' ability to evaluate translations critically, then the focus should be on understanding machine translation errors and refining post-editing skills. If the goal is to prepare students for the job market, then training in project management software and CAT tools becomes essential.

Key Competencies for the Digital Age

Successful translation is not just about language proficiency—it also requires technical, ethical, and professional skills. Pym (2011) emphasizes the need for translators to develop multifunctional competencies, including:

- The ability to assess and correct machine-generated translations
- Familiarity with industry-standard software
- Strong research skills for terminology management
- Ethical responsibility in handling confidential materials

Moreover, ethical considerations are an essential part of translation training. Translators must navigate issues such as intellectual property rights, confidentiality,

and bias in machine translation. Latour (2005) highlights that ethics in translation go beyond academic discussions and directly impact professional practice, reinforcing the need to integrate ethical training into translation programs.

Challenges and Opportunities in Digital Translation Training

Despite its benefits, integrating digital tools into translation training presents several challenges:

1. Limited access to resources – Many advanced CAT tools are expensive, making them inaccessible for students and some educational institutions.
2. Outdated curricula – Many translation programs have been slow to adapt to technological advancements, leaving gaps in students' skills.
3. Complexity of digital tools – Some translation software has a steep learning curve, requiring additional training for both students and instructors.
4. Ethical and professional concerns – The rise of machine translation raises questions about the role of human translators and the long-term impact on the profession.

However, these challenges also present opportunities. Universities can collaborate with technology providers to offer students free or discounted access to essential tools. Additionally, programs can integrate hands-on training with digital platforms, ensuring that students graduate with both theoretical knowledge and practical experience.

Teaching Strategies for Digital Translation

To effectively teach translation in a digital age, educators must go beyond traditional lectures and adopt interactive, technology-driven approaches. Some effective strategies include:

- Project-based learning: Assigning students real-world translation projects that require the use of CAT tools and terminology management systems.
- Blended learning: Combining online modules with in-class discussions to provide flexibility and hands-on experience.
- Collaborative exercises: Encouraging students to work in groups, simulating professional translation teams.
- Critical analysis of digital translations: Training students to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of machine-generated translations.

As Pym (2011) notes, the goal of translation education is not to replace traditional skills with technology but to create a balanced curriculum that incorporates both linguistic expertise and digital proficiency.

Conclusion

Digital technologies are reshaping the way translation is taught and practiced. While technological tools offer new opportunities for efficiency and collaboration, they also require careful integration into translation curricula. Educators must strike a balance between traditional linguistic skills and the technical competencies needed in a digital work environment.

Moving forward, translation training should focus on enhancing students' ability to use digital tools effectively while maintaining critical thinking, ethical awareness, and professional adaptability. The key challenge is ensuring that technology serves as a support mechanism rather than replacing essential translation skills. By combining theoretical insights with hands-on experience, translation programs can better prepare students for the evolving demands of the profession.

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