Teaching Translation Technology in the Age of COVID-19: An Analysis of Data Gathered in Jordanian Universities

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic forced universities worldwide to adapt to distance learning (e-learning and online learning) in varying degrees dependent on the type of teaching involved. Jordanian universities started distance learning at the outbreak of Coronavirus in Jordan in early March 2020. The current paper investigates the challenges involved in teaching lab-based courses at the translation departments in Jordan, namely computer-assisted translation, consecutive and simultaneous interpreting (English into Arabic and vice versa), audiovisual translation, and website localization. According to Paulina Pietrzak and Michał Kornacki (2021), a number of standards should be taken into consideration to design courses to ensure that the online translation training environment is totally distributed in complementary space. Moreover, the current paper aims at proposing solutions to overcome the challenges in question. The rationale behind selecting the courses was that teaching and attending these courses require specialized labs with specific software. Data was collected via an online survey which addressed the instructors. Analysis of the survey with reference to the seminal work of Pym (2016) revealed serious challenges encountered by instructors such as decreasing motivation and, at the same time, flagged opportunities for e-learning such as flexibility in teaching.

KEYWORDS: translation technology, translation lab courses, online teaching, COVID-19

1. Introduction

With the outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in late 2019, universities worldwide were forced, due to lockdowns, curfews and other safety measures, to switch to distance learning as opposed to face-to-face learning, in many cases regardless of the nature of the course or specialization. All Jordanian universities switched to distance learning at the first outbreak of Coronavirus in Jordan in early March 2020. In this context, it is crucial to explain that other terms have been used to refer to non-face-to-face learning; Hodges et al. (2020) suggest the term 'remote emergency teaching' as opposed to online/distance learning. The former takes place amidst a state of emergency without much planning, while the latter is planned and carefully designed. Examining the status of online learning in all disciplines and departments is necessary specifically in countries that often depend completely on face-to-face teaching. Online teaching can be considered as a new experience for almost all students and professors at Jordanian universities (Al-Batineh et al. 2020; Darwish et al. 2023; Al-Shboul et al. 2013; Badran 2014). The sudden transition from face-to-face to online learning certainly created challenges and opportunities for instructors in Jordan. Thus, investigating the status quo of a given academic discipline, in this case translation programs, can provide decision makers with information about the nature of the changes needed to meet the requirements of the new online academic era. These changes can include curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, and assessment methods. Exploring the previously mentioned aspects in the context of translation and interpreting studies is a priority to all parties involved because many courses are taught in specialized laboratories equipped with specific tools and software. To be conducted effectively, these courses need specialized paid-for applications that are only installed in the laboratories, and some courses, such as interpreting, have an interpersonal nature. This article contributes primary data and discussion relevant to broader policy as well as practical teaching and curriculum-design decisions.

In a report on an online symposium, entitled *Innovation in Translator and Interpreter Training*, Daniel Gouadec (2000) gave the following answer to the question "Can distance-learning techniques be used?"

> Yes, distance-learning can be used in the training of translators. We use it for a Translator's Diploma. The problems are just about the same as with any other type of distance-learning on any kind of subject or skill. I wouldn't say distance teaching is satisfactory: it is just an answer to extreme situations (Gouadec 2000:17).

In the context of translation teaching and training, José Ramón Biau Gil explains that "online education involves efforts that are different from those demanded by face-to-face classes" (2003:95). It is clear that both Gouadec (2000) and José Ramón Biau Gil (2003) indicate that online learning in the context of translator training can involve challenges in general, as well as those related to teaching translation technology. In Jordan, teaching translation as a major is a well-established practice as many universities in Jordan offer courses that are taught in labs either at the MA or BA levels. Face-to-face teaching and learning is the norm in all Jordanian public and private universities (Al-Shboul et al. 2013; Badran 2014). In this context, Al-Salman and Haider admit that "although some instructors occasionally used some forms of e-learning tools during the 2000s, the traditional face-to-face teaching-learning model was the norm" (2021:287). However, with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, universities all over the world and in Jordan were forced to switch to online teaching. It is important to carry out case studies to evaluate the experience of teaching various translation courses online in different parts of the world since studies on the impact of COVID-19 often prioritize developed countries and only little attention has been provided to developing countries (Al-Salman and Haider 2021). Such case studies can be of great help to translator training programs and decision makers in these programs. The current research project surveyed 55 translation instructors in Jordan and aims to identify the major challenges instructors face while delivering these courses online. The following sections and subsections introduce the historical background to teaching translation online followed by a brief presentation of materials and methods. This is followed by detailed findings, discussion and conclusions.

2. Teaching Translation Online: A Historical Overview

Translation teaching methods can be classified into three main approaches: teacher-centered, student-centered and e-learning-centered. All three of these apply to the teaching of translation in Jordan and all three were impacted by the pandemic, as we show in this article. However, the particular focus here is on e-learning.

Teaching methods in translator training are predominantly either teacher-centered or student-centered. The teacher-centered approach, or the traditional approach, is an approach in which students are passive receivers of information and teachers are the possessors of knowledge. In this approach, teachers talk, and students listen. The students' answers are evaluated as wrong or correct. House (1980:7-8, cited in Sonia Colina: 2003:51) provides a detailed description of a traditional translation classroom in which the students are asked to translate a text sentence by sentence until they arrive at a "correct" translation, which is usually the instructor's translation. This learning experience is frustrating for students and affects their learning process negatively. Sonia Colina (2003) criticizes the traditional role of the instructor as a knowledge transmitter in the traditional translation approach. She believes that such an approach "exemplifies what has been referred to as the "Atlas complex", referring to the ancient Greek myth in which Atlas is condemned to hold the whole world and all its troubles on his shoulders. In this case "the instructor suffering from Atlas Complex" controls everything in the classroom. So "He/She is a knowledge transmitter, and his/her students are passive recipients whose task is to imitate the teacher's knowledge and performance as closely as possible" (2003:52). In the foreword to Kiraly's (1995) book, *Pathways to Translation: Pedagogy and Process*, Gregory Shreve criticizes the "authoritative" role of the teacher in the traditional classroom. He argues that "the translation classroom does not need to be authoritarian, with the teacher as the keeper of the flame of translation truth (1995:xiii). Kiraly (1995) also criticizes the teacher-centered approach in which translation is only perceived as a linguistic transfer from one language into another.

The changing roles of both students and teachers and the emergence of the constructivist approach to teaching that began in the 1970s paved the way for student-centered methodologies. Sablonnière et al. maintain that "practices associated with the teacher/expert approach are

opposed by the school of 'constructivism', that we refer to here to the student-centered approach" (2009:2). As for translator training, the advent of competence models in the 1990s (Schäffner 2000; Fox 2000; Kelly 2005) laid the foundation for student-centered methodologies. In this regard, Mariona Carrové argues that "general concern about the way translation is taught has triggered off during the 90s the appearance of several theoretical frameworks on translator training models (Kußmaul [1995] and Gilè [1995]) and a boom in the number of published course books for trainee translators (e.g. Bell 1991; Nord; 1991; 2 Baker 1992; Delisle 1993) which is a step in the right direction towards the design of better teaching methodologies" (1999:2). The emergence of the constructivist approach to teaching and the advent of the competence models all suggest that translator training started to be geared toward a student-centered approach, with all the approaches and techniques that may fall under it, around the 1980s. It could also be argued that the trend toward a student-centered approach began in the 1970s, and translator training started to adopt some competence models in the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. This period witnesses a shift from teacher-centered approach to student-centered approach. The constructivist approaches started to take place in several translation training programs as many professors finished their higher education from Universities in the West (such as the USA and the UK) and started teaching in Jordanian universities. In other words, those newly graduated professors try to implement what they have practiced in Western universities here in Jordan.

The new "student-centered approach" includes a range of models and techniques, such as (1) Profession-based learner-centered approaches, (2) Process-centered approaches, (3) Cognitive and psycholinguistic research applied to training, (4) Task-based approaches, (5) Socioconstructive approach, (6) Project-based approach, and (7) Communicative approach. We will focus on three of these approaches, namely, the socioconstructive approach, the communicative approach and the task-based approach. Each of these models or approaches stresses the importance of the student in the learning-teaching process.

The roles of teachers in student-centered approaches are different from their roles in teacher-centered approaches. Colina (2003) argues that the role of the teacher in the student-centered

approach should be providing guidelines throughout the learning process, not providing prefect translations. Lea et al. put forward the following principles of student-centered approaches:

1. The reliance on active rather than passive learning;
2. An emphasis on deep learning and understanding;
3. Increased responsibility and accountability on the part of the student;
4. An increased sense of autonomy in the learner;
5. An interdependence between teacher and learner;
6. Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship;
7. A reflexive approach to the teaching and learning process on the part of both teacher and learner (2003:322).

The advent of technology and the Internet has affected almost every aspect of our lives and fields of knowledge, including the fields of translation and translation training. Advanced technologies and the Internet are being integrated in almost all teaching approaches. This integration has led to what is called "e-learning", which can be seen as a facilitator to the teaching and learning process.

Muhammad et al. state that e-learning is "the use of various technological tools that are web-based, web distributed, or web capable for education" (2016:285). Alcalá López suggests that the best definition for e-learning could be "the space where education and IT meet" (2001:9). In the same manner, Pym defines e-learning as "the use of electronic tools in training programs, in this case in the training of translators. The concept is close to what is elsewhere known as 'open and distance learning' (ODL)" (2001:1). When these early texts were written, the authors were not aware of the importance which would come to be attached to e-learning during the pandemic.

The e-learning era can be divided into two phases: the pre-Internet or computer-assisted learning phase, and the Internet phase. The latter phase includes two approaches or techniques: blended learning and online learning. In the beginning of the 1980s, computers became popular. Thus Computer-Assisted Learning (CAL) appeared in many fields. Yeo Richard argues that CAL and Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) are synonymous, referring to the act of "using computers to teach people" (1972:167). Fictumova Jarmila stresses that "training of translators, like translation itself, has become computer-bound" (2004:2). Similarly, Alcalá López focuses on the importance

of CAL in translator training, arguing that "Computer aided teaching was the great development and integration was the key word" (2001:4). Jarmila argues that "translation teachers have the option to use new Learning Management Systems to provide direct access to links on the Internet and familiarize the students with the reality of working with electronic texts in the virtual environment" (2004:3). Such early research provided a basis on which teachers and curriculum designers were able to build when faced with the Coronavirus crisis.

The second phase of e-learning started with the spread of Internet usage in the beginning of the 1990s. During this phase different types of e-learning appeared and different definitions for these types were provided. Some scholars distinguish between blended learning (b-learning) and electronic learning (e-learning). María Salinas states that "the so-called blended learning (b-learning) is a learning methodology using both face-to-face classes and e-learning and tries to combine the advantages of both" (2007:2). María Salinas (2007) clarifies that in translator training this kind of b-learning includes different tools and web-applications, such as questionnaires (also called quizzes), chats, Wikis, forums, glossaries and workshops. These applications can be used in the classroom and outside to facilitate the learning process and produce more effective outcomes. Blended learning has proved invaluable in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Nowadays, these applications have become more popular in academia. Many studies have tackled the issue of b-learning, which reflects the importance of this type of learning in all fields, including translator training. Poole et al. state that "the growing interest in blended learning in Higher Education is indicated by the increasing number of studies in this area" (2006:308). Alcalá López conducted a study that revealed the importance of e-learning in translator training. She states that "the need for taking distance teaching, and especially web-based translator education more seriously seems quite urgent" (2001:2). She also speaks about the use of these applications in translator training, "they use mailing lists, chat platforms and several other tools to help teachers and students meet each other after university hours, exchange work assignments, views and comments, etc." (Alcalá López 2001:10).

The second type is online learning, where an entire course or even a whole program is taught over the web, i.e., without the need for face-to-face teaching. Alcalá López explains that in

online teaching "entire courses are designed, implemented, taught on the Web and from a distance. The same applies to the teaching, testing and assessment process" (2001:10). In translator training, Gil Biau expounds that "there is a huge demand for online courses" (2006:1) and that such learning requires more time from students with low computer skills "in order to attain the course objectives" (2006:6). Recently, a number of studies tackled the intricacies of online teaching and learning during COVID-19. Al-Batineh et al. (2020) call for developing and designing collaborative online tools for the purpose of training translators remotely. They insist that all stakeholders should be involved in this endeavour, such as trainers, trainees, and developers. In the context of COVID-19, Darwish et al. (2023) show that COVID-19 has impacted the communication of both able-bodied and disabled persons due to the shift in learning and teaching during this period. Al-Wazna (2021) highlights a number of challenges related to teaching translation remotely during COVID-19, such as weak internet services (poor signal), lack of computer literacy and the absence of student-teacher interaction. He proposed some solution to overcome such challenges including, but not limited to, improving the internet infrastructure and using specialized remote teaching platforms.

Jordan hosts a number of translator training programs and offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees. At the same time, and to respond to the growing need for translators, many English language departments offer minors in translation studies in addition to a number of general translation courses within their study plans, such as Al-Ahliyya Amman University and The Hashemite University. Here, it is crucial to mention that teaching translation technology whether in a face-to-face environment or online settings should be a priority for researchers in the field of translation and interpreting studies as technological competence has become a prerequisite for translators in the current era. The importance of examining teaching practical translation courses stems from the fact that these courses are usually supposed to be taught in specialized labs. Thus, teaching these courses online may involve challenges at various levels, such as the curricula, software, and teaching methods. Consequently, the current survey was sent out to translation instructors in the following Jordanian universities: Yarmouk University (BA and MA in translation), Jadara University (BA and MA in translation), Jerash University (MA in translation), Applied Science Private University (MA in translation), University of Petra (MA in translation), Al-Zaytoonah University (MA in translation), Mu'tah University (BA in translation

minor), Al-Ahliyya Amman University (MA in translation), and The Hashemite University (BA in English with a number of translation courses). All these universities either have BA and MA programs in translation or BA and MA programs in English language and literature where a number of translation courses are offered.

3. Research Questions

The current study seeks answers for the following questions:

1. To what extent have the curricula, teaching methods, tools, methods of assessment, and software used to teach translation lab-based courses changed from pre-COVID-19 to post-COVID-19 periods?
2. What are the main challenges and opportunities for teaching translation lab-based courses online?

4. Materials and Methods

In order to explore the situation of teaching a number of lab-based translation courses, including courses on computer-assisted translation, consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, English into Arabic and vice versa, translating films and documentaries, audiovisual translation, and localization, the researchers distributed a survey to 55 lecturers in the translation and English departments in public and private universities in Jordan. The survey was designed to identify the attitudes of lecturers who teach the previously mentioned courses in terms of the used curricula, teaching methods, methods of assessment, and software pre and post COVID-19. All the questions in the survey were multiple-choice questions, but the respondents were provided with spaces to give additional comments on questions related to curricula, teaching methods, assessment tools and software. These questions/statements give the teachers an opportunity to articulate their preferences and, at the same time, provide valuable research data. The survey thus encourages self-reflexivity by the respondents.

5. Results and Discussion

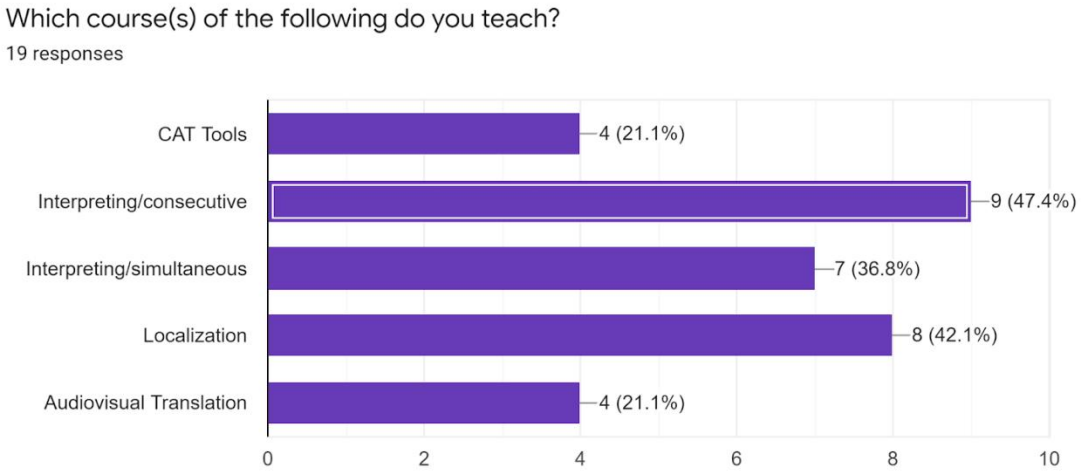
The following sub-sections analyze the participants' responses to the questions in the survey. The participant responses the reveal the following results:

Answers for the first survey question:

Question/ Statement: Which of the following courses do you teach?

(Figure 1)

Names of courses taught by the participants



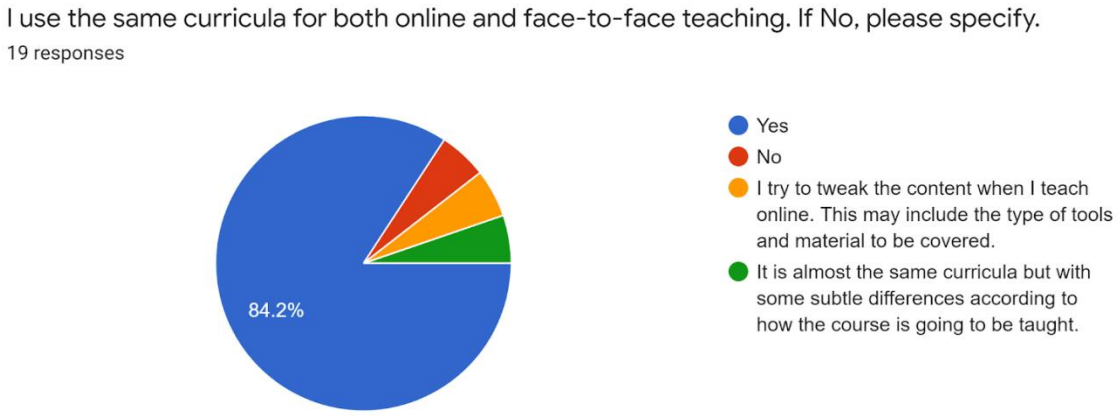
All participants were asked to identify the courses that they teach. Four participants indicated that they teach the CAT tools courses, 16 participants pointed out that they teach interpreting courses (simultaneous and/or consecutive), 8 participants reported that they teach localization courses, and 4 participants indicated that they teach audiovisual translation courses. It is evident that the majority of the participants teach interpreting courses, but not localization, CAT tools, and audiovisual translation courses.

5.1 Curricula

Question/Statement: I use the same curricula for both online and face-to face lab-based teaching. If No, please specify.

(Figure 2)

Curricula used to teach online and face-to face lab-based courses



It is evident that the majority of the participants (84.2%) use the same curricula to teach online and face-to-face lab-based courses. The rest of the participants (15.98%) suggested that they have changed the material but have not explained how and why. It can be argued that the participants follow the course description that each department already has for all the offered courses. Changing the course description or even the obligatory or elective courses might be problematic and challenging for the teaching staff in any public or private university in Jordan as the process should pass several administrative procedures and/or committees at the department, faculty, and university levels. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the course descriptions of these courses were developed on the assumption that they are to be taught face-to-face. Consequently, it is suggested that translation departments revisit the already established course descriptions and, possibly, give instructors more freedom in adjusting these course descriptions to meet the requirements of the new urgent situation and for future similar situations, i.e., being obliged to teach online. As the participants had the opportunity to leave additional comments to their answers in the survey, one comment reads: “I may use tools that are not used before”. Another participant mentioned that “Searching for programs specially designed for interpretation courses”.

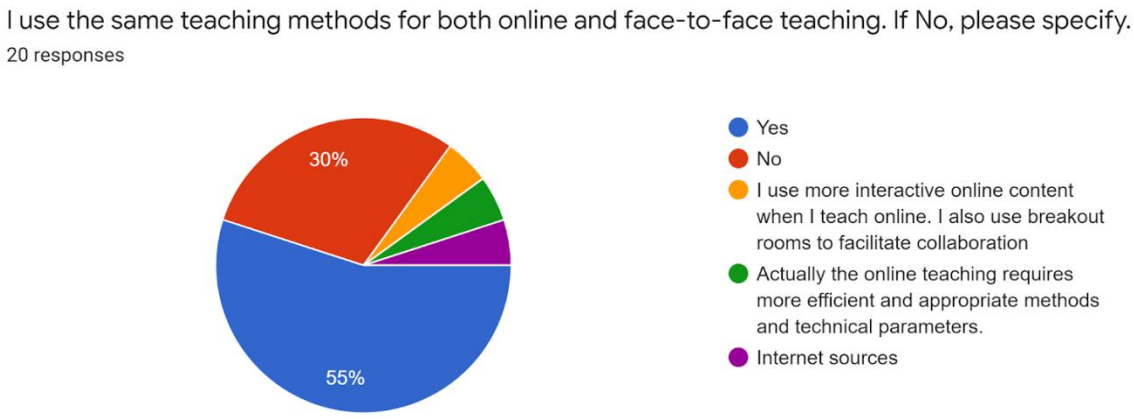
These comments might open the door for future research. The responses certainly suggest that further research and development in this area would be welcomed by some teachers. For example, software companies can develop technology solutions, including tools and programs, that are specifically dedicated for teaching interpreting online.

5.2 Teaching Methods

Question/Statement: I use the same teaching methods for both online and face-to-face teaching. If No, please specify.

(Figure 3)

Teaching methods for both online and face-to-face lab-based courses



The participants in the current survey were not asked to identify the specific method they adopt to teach the four courses in question. However, they were asked whether they used the same teaching approaches for both online and face-to-face classes or not. It is important to mention that the focus of the current paper is not to identify whether instructors use teacher-centered or student-centered approaches. We assume, based on the discussion above, that teacher-centered approaches are not effective and thus should not be used by translator trainers to teach translation. To this end, 55% of the participants indicated that they use the same approaches for both online and face-to-face courses. On the other hand, 45% suggested that they have changed some of their

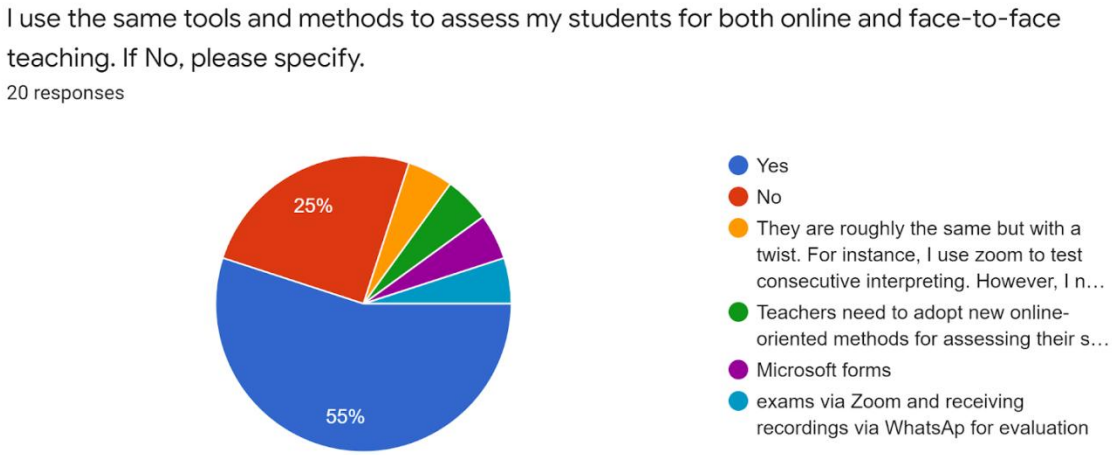
approaches when teaching online courses. Some of the participants cast light on the importance of the instructors' technological competence and the need to incorporate 'appropriate' methods to teach online courses. The latter suggestion indicates the tendency toward using models and techniques from the student-centered approach.

5.3 Tools and Methods of Assessment

Question/ Statement: I use the same tools and methods to assess my students for both online and face-to-face teaching. If No, please specify.

(Figure 4)

Tools and methods of assessment for both online and face-to face lab-based courses



Before reporting the findings related to tools and methods of assessment, it is crucial to provide a general overview of assessment methods in the field of translation studies. Several scholars examine translation assessment and suggest frameworks for translation quality assessment. For example, Anabel Galán-Mañas and Amparo Hurtado Albir (2015) provide a detailed description of assessment methods and techniques:

> The concept of assessment is broader, however. It includes gauging to what degree a student has certain skills or knowledge, and judging the results

> obtained on the basis of established criteria or objectives. The information that makes assessment possible can be based on data and observations arising from tests, from direct personal interaction, or from the monitoring of day-to-day work (2015:64).

In the same manner, Kiraly explains that "these philosophical underpinnings will form the essential conceptual foundation that will inform, justify and link together all subsequent stages of teaching, from curriculum and syllabus design to the creation of classroom techniques and methods of evaluation" (2003:3). It is clear that all stages of teaching must be linked to each other. In other words, once you plan to teach any given course online you are expected to adjust the curricula, syllabi, teaching methods, techniques and methods of evaluation. In translator training, there are several techniques and methods to evaluate student learning outcomes, such as project work, reflective essays and student self-evaluations (see Doherty and Kenny 2014, and 2020; Rodríguez-Castro 2018). Sonia Colina (2013) describes two major approaches to evaluate translated texts: equivalence-based and non-equivalence-based (functionalist) approaches.

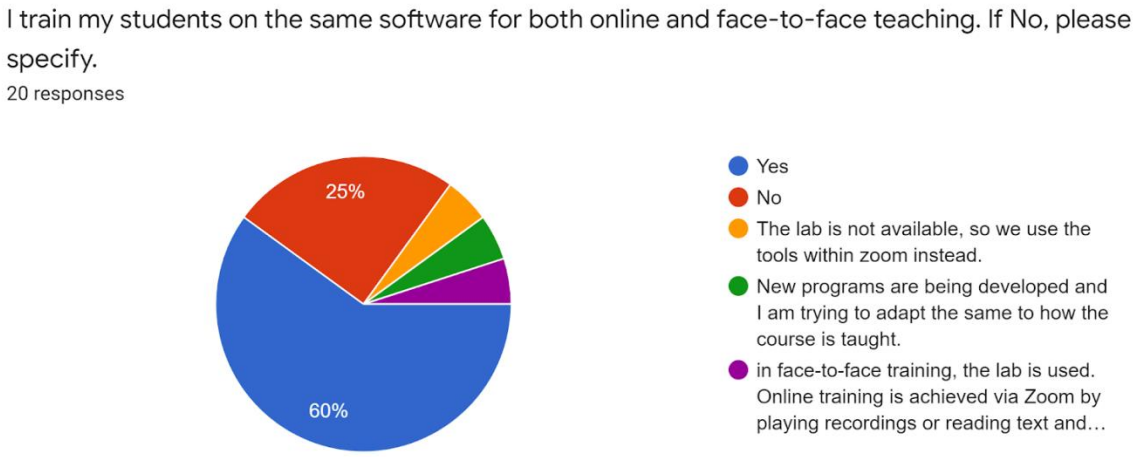
Figure 4 shows that 55% of the participants use the same tools and methods to assess their students for both face-to-face and online courses. However, the rest, i.e., 45% of the participants report that they use different methods and tools to assess their students depending on the teaching environment. These different methods and tools reported by the latter group might provide researchers with ideas for future research. For example, one participant clearly casts light on the difficultly of assessing certain competencies in online teaching namely, simultaneous interpreting. The participants excluded this important competence from the evaluation process simply because teaching it online requires technologies that the platforms used in many Jordanian universities to teach online courses do not offer. Here, it is worth mentioning that all Jordanian universities use either Zoom or Microsoft Teams to teach synchronous online courses. Another participant suggests the need to adopt 'online-oriented methods' to evaluate students without explaining what these online methods are. Consequently, modifying the curricula and the teaching methods to suit the nature of online teaching should be accompanied by revising the methods and techniques used to evaluate students. For example, Celia Rico (2017) suggests 'ePortfolio' as a means to evaluate students.

5.4 Software Used

Question/ Statement: I train my students on the same software for both online and face-to-face teaching. If No, please specify.

(Figure 5)

Software used to teach online and face-to-face lab-based courses



It can be claimed that translation and technology are inseparable for many pedagogical and industrial contexts (see Frank Austermühl 2014; Pym 2003, 2016; Daniel Gouadec 2007). Accordingly, the appropriate type of software or application used to teach a translation course depends on the nature of the course. Many scholars provided different typologies of translation technology tools (see Hutchins and Somers 1992; Enríquez Raído and Austermühl 2003; Doherty 2016). However, the typology suggested by Paulina Pietrzak and Michał Kornack (2020) seems comprehensive. First, technology in regular translation includes word processors, Computer-Assisted Translation Tools (CAT), Translation Memory (TM), Machine Translation (MT), Content Management System (CMS), Translation Management System (TMS) and Graphics Software. Second, technology in audiovisual translation incorporates AVT, and localization tools. Third, technology in interpreting includes video remote interpreting (vri), bring-your-own-device interpreting (byod), interpreting management systems (ims) and automatic (speech-to-speech) interpreting.

In the current study, the participants were asked to indicate whether they use the same software for both online and face-to-face teaching. 60% replied that they use the same software while 40% explained that they use different types of software. 25% demonstrated that they use different software without explaining the nature of this software, and 15% clarified that they benefit from the platforms used to deliver these courses, such as Zoom and Teams.

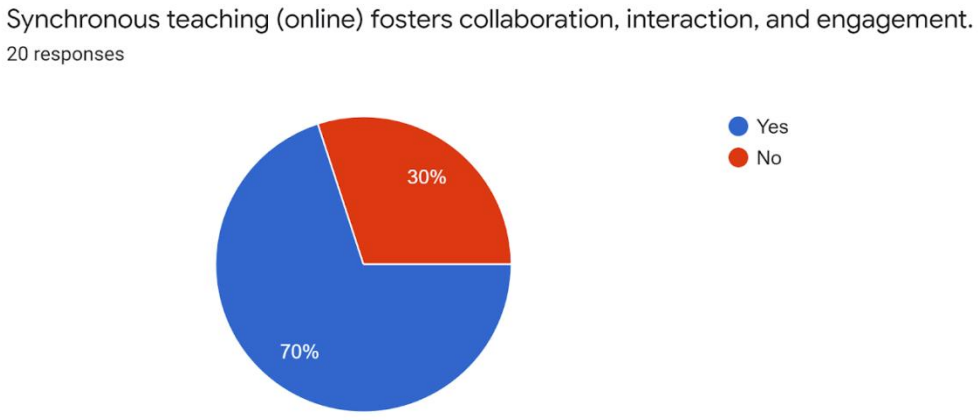
It is clear that all participants employ the functionalities of the platform/s they use to teach these courses. Using the 'share screen' feature embedded in most e-learning platforms can explain the tendency toward using the same teaching methods in teaching both online and face-to-face courses, specifically in the case of CAT tools and localization courses. Yet, it seems that instructors who teach interpreting courses because of the absence of labs face challenges in teaching such courses online. Thus, they seek the help from within the platform used to both record and play the media files.

5.5 Pros of Synchronous Teaching

Question/Statement: Synchronous teaching (online) fosters collaboration, interaction, and engagement.

(Figure 6)

Advantages of synchronous teaching



Turning to online teaching can involve positive and negative aspects whether this adoted voluntarily or reluctantly. Interestingly, 70% of the participants stated that synchronous teaching (online) fosters collaboration, interaction and engagement. This significant percentage shows the positive attitudes toward online teaching from the viewpoints of the instructors of the courses in question. Moreover, regardless of the obvious challenges in adopting the appropriate teaching methods, assessment techniques and applicable software, the current paper shows a general positive attitude of translation instructors toward online teaching. Unfortunately, the current paper does not account for the perspectives of the students. This would require a further investigation which could supplement our present findings.

5.6 Challenges for Synchronous Teaching

Question/Statement: What are the main challenges of synchronous online teaching for translation lab-based courses? 18 responses.

The challenges of online teaching of lab-based courses as seen from the instructors' perspectives can be grouped thematically into 4 categories:

1. Software and technical issues
2. Engagement and interaction
3. Evaluating students
4. Student abuse: cheating and plagiarism.

It is clear that the instructors face various challenges in teaching lab-based translation courses. These challenges might negatively impact the teaching and learning experiences for both students and instructors. At the same time, it is the responsibility of translator training programs to take these challenges into consideration and propose doable and visible solutions to overcome them. First, for software and technical issues, translator training programs are strongly encouraged to invest in applications and software that can fit the nature of synchronous teaching. For example, using cloud-based CAT tools can serve the nature of online courses where instructors and students are not required to download such software on their computers. Second, as for engagement and interaction, it must be admitted

that due to universities' general policies and departmental grading methods, students find it comfortable to just turn off their cameras and mute their microphones. That is to say, students are not obliged to switch on their cameras or even their microphones. Moreover, instructors cannot allocate more than 10% of the total course marks to participation. This can be solved by, for example, by altering the nature of evaluation and allocating more marks to participation and in-class activities. On the other hand, instructors are strongly invited to reconsider their teaching methods to further encourage students to be engaged in the class. Here also, we would welcome other studies regarding students' evaluation of their online learning experience. Such studies can ask students directly about reasons for being engaged or not in classes. Third, as long as there are issues with teaching lab-based translation courses, the methods of assessing students should be re-evaluated. Moving away from traditional approaches to evaluating/assessing students (exams: first, mid, and final), instructors and translator training programs are recommended to consider other methods, such as portfolios, e-portfolios, projects, etc. Finally, cheating and plagiarism require identifying the reasons behind such conduct and developing solid solutions by incorporating different stakeholders, such as students, instructors, translation departments, and universities.

5.7 Opportunities from Synchronous Teaching

What are the main opportunities from synchronous online teaching for lab-based translation courses? 17 responses.

The main opportunities mentioned by the participants can be summarized in the following:

1. Recording classes
2. Flexibility in teaching the courses
3. Providing more sources to students
4. Students collaborative work

The participants in the current research identified a number of opportunities from synchronous online teaching for lab-based translation courses regardless of the observed

challenges. First, the participants considered 'recording classes' and making them available for students to watch at their convenience as a positive aspect. By doing so, instructors can specify less time for reviewing the 'last class' and may not need to re-teach the class as students have the chance to watch it over and over. We also note that instructors prefer to record classes at times convenient to them instead of going online and teach synchronously in cases of emergencies. This helps so much when teaching practical components. Students can access the recordings at any time, which facilitates and enhances teaching-learning processes. Second, regarding flexibility in teaching the courses, we assume that instructors have more freedom in using the different functionalities included in the platforms they use, such as Zoom, Teams and Moodle. These platforms, in general, have various resources and methods for presenting the class, evaluating students, and even getting students involved and engaged, such assignments, quizzes, questionnaires, interactive content, meetings, URLs, lessons, discussion forums, etc. Many of those functionalities can also be used to provide students with various sources regarding the content of the course. Finally, the participants recognized students' collaborative work as an advantage in synchronous online teaching for lab-based translation courses. Actually, it can be assumed that such collaborative work is done only through activities, assignments, and projects designed by instructors that require group work. In this context, it is important to mention that collaborative work, in its broadest sense, refers to "a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together" (Dillenbourg 1999:1).

According to Pym (2011), there are many reasons for e-learning, and at the same time, there are many reasons against e-learning. He summarized the reasons for e-learning as follows: the needed communication skills, tandem learning, and student needs. On the other hand, Pym summarized the reasons against e-learning as: investment of resources, student concerns, and decreasing motivation. However, he suggested many strategies to solve the arguments against e-learning. These strategies included making everything very clear, deeply interactive lessons, planned asynchrony, tandem tasks, establishment of e-learning communities, and rationalization of resources. That is to say, whether it is because of COVID-19 or for any other reasons translator training programs should be prepared to deal with similar situations, i.e., online learning. Moreover, no one can deny the drastic changes that affected the field of

translation studies in terms of the nature of translators' work and also the courses offered. In this context Kenny (2020:30) stresses the vital role of technology for translators as she claims that "an understanding of contemporary translation is almost impossible without such knowledge.". In the same vein, Pym (2003:114) suggested many years ago that "the teaching of translation technology is worth discussing because it can be done badly." Finally, the results of the current research are in line with Pym's (2014) proposed challenges for e-learning, i.e., investment of resources, student distress, heterogeneous learning communities, and learning motivation, but our research shows how the impact of COVID-19 has brought about developments beyond Pym's predictions and concerns. However, the findings of the current research go beyond Pym's proposals. In other words, the findings of the current research show that curricula, teaching methods, tools of assessment, and software should be revisited when teaching technology courses online.

6. *Conclusion:*

This study probed online teaching and learning of lab-based courses during COVID-19. Basically, it tried to contrast the nature of teaching lab-based courses before and after COVID-19. It was revealed that most instructors used almost the same teaching material, software, and methods of assessment. This can be attributed to the sudden transition from face-to-face to online classes mandated by COVID-19. Instructors identified a number of challenges of synchronous online teaching including, software, technical issues, assessment, and student abuse. However, instructors also noted a number of opportunities offered by synchronous online teaching including, recording classes, teaching flexibility, and abundance of resources.

The challenges of online teaching of lab-based courses as seen from the instructors' perspectives can be thematically grouped into four categories: software and technical issues, engagement and interaction, evaluating students, and student abuse: cheating and plagiarism. Moreover, the main opportunities mentioned by the participants can be summarized as: recording classes, flexibility in teaching the courses, providing more sources to students,

and student collaborative work. The challenges and opportunities revealed in the current study, to an extent, go hand in hand with Pym's seminal work (2016).

Pym (2014) summarized the challenges of e-learning in four domains: investment of resources, student distress, heterogeneous learning communities, and learning motivation. The first challenge refers to the time consumed and effort exerted to both create a web-based course and keep things running smoothly. Pym further explains that "instructors rarely have all the skills necessary to produce attractive and useful websites, and students also need time to master the basic tools of e-learning interaction" (2014:3). The second challenge has to do with both the linguistic and social problems associated with dealing with computers and the Internet. These challenges, as explained by Pym, may lead to student distress. The third challenge refers to the asymmetric linguistic and technical competencies that may arise from the different ages and cultural backgrounds that a given class may include. The last challenge refers to difficulties that both instructors and students suffer in creating motivating environments.

Pym (2014) suggested ways and strategies to solve the afore-mentioned problems: making everything very explicit, highly interactive lessons, controlled asynchrony, variable workloads, tandem tasks, creation of a learning community, and rationalization of resources. Some of the challenges and suggested solutions discussed by Pym are, in one way or another, related to the current case study. However, the following are the main challenges of e-learning as mentioned in the survey. First, the most prevailing challenge is technology and Internet access for all students. Second, students may not take e-learning seriously and instructors may not be able to evaluate students effectively as they cannot prevent cheating due to the lack of interaction. The third challenge is related to lack of proper infrastructure, students' readiness to learn, and communication or interaction. Fourth, cheating and submitting similar answers is another challenge. The fifth challenge is connected to the availability of Internet access, unequal access to technology, and the number of students in each class. Finally, there is no way to make sure that the students are really attending even when they are connected to the used platform such as Zoom.

The first challenge suggested by Pym 'investment of resources' might present a solution for the challenges encountered by the participants in the current case study. That is to say, translator training programs are strongly called to act quickly and adjust the courses they offer to suit the e-learning requirements and characteristics in terms of the curricula, teaching methods, assessment tools, and software used to teach online lab-based translation courses. The second and the third challenges suggested by Pym have to do with students but at the same time can be utilized in the context of instructors. This means translator training programs are required to enhance instructors' technological competences, i.e., how to deal with computers and the Internet, by offering training sessions for translation instructors in general and those who teach lab-based translation courses in specific. The last challenge refers to difficulties that both instructors and students suffer in creating motivating environments. As Pym suggests, making everything very explicit and creating highly interactive lessons can help in creating motivating environments and consequently increasing engagement and interaction amongst students.

In short, moving toward online teaching in translator training programs necessitates the need to systemically and regularly revise curricula, teaching methods, assessment methods and used software. Moreover, there is an equal need to equip instructors with the necessary skills, competencies, tools in order to effectively and efficiently teach synchronous online lab-based translation courses. This article maps some of the recent developments in the Jordanian context.

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