Freelance Translation in Algeria: An Investigation of the Status, Needs, and Training Challenges

الترجمة الحرة في الجزائر: دراسة في الحالة، الاحتياجات ورهانات التكوين

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Abstract:

The present paper reports on an investigation of the status of freelance translation in Algeria. It sketches out the main issues and hurdles related to freelancing in the Algerian market. Hence, it handles the threefold challenge consisting of training (appropriate syllabus design in translation), market organizing (developing platforms of freelancing and facilitating translators' interventions), and ethical implications considering (legal and institutional texts). For the sake of the study, an e-survey was delivered to graduates of translation from different Algerian Universities. The study expects that translation training programs need to take into account freelancing techniques and skills though it is the most prominent type that translators discover once they graduate. Among the main findings of this study: there is a considerable hiatus between translation training and the translation market in Algeria regarding freelancing, and the fact that this type of profession is still unknown for most translation graduates.

Keywords: Freelancing, translation, profession, training, ethics, market.

ملخص:

تسعى هذه الورقة البحثية إلى دراسة وضع الترجمة الحرة في الجزائر من خلال التطرق إلى الرهانات الثلاثة التي تحيط بها وهي: التكوين وتنظيم السوق والنظر في الاعتبارات الأخلاقية المرتبطة بها. أما التكوين، فتقترح الدراسة إدراج تقنيات الترجمة الحرة ومهاراتها في البرامج المخصصة للترجمة في الجامعة الجزائرية؛ وأما تنظيم السوق فيكون من خلال تطوير أرضيات إلكترونية ومواقع مخصصة لعروض الترجمة؛ وأما النظر في الاعتبارات الأخلاقية، فيختص بالجانب القانوني والتنظيمي لهذه الممارسة الترجمية. لأجل ذلك، تستند الدراسة على البيانات التي توصل إليها

الباحث من خلال استبيان إلكتروني وُزع على خريجي الترجمة من مختلف الجامعات الجزائرية. تفترض الدراسة وجود

فجوة كبيرة بين برامج التكوين ومقتضيات سوق الترجمة الحرة، كما أنه من مخرجاتها أنه، وبالرغم من أن الترجمة

الحرة أصبحت ظاهرة عالمية، إلا أن الكثير من خريجي الترجمة في الجزائر لم يسبق له وأن مارسها وهذا راجع

لأسباب سترد في متن الورقة البحثية.

كلمات مفتاحية: الترجمة الحرة، مهنة، تكوين، أخلاقيات، سوق.

1.   INTRODUCTION

Any training program requires considering the market's needs and idiosyncrasies. Without such a norm, the training is unrealistic and lacks pragmatic usefulness. Hence, a deep and thorough analysis of the market is crucial in designing the appropriate syllabus. In this context, syllabus design had long been the major interest of didactics scholars; questions such as: what lessons and activities should be included? What kind of skills are to be stimulated? What are the tools and technologies to be integrated? Constitute the essential questions to be asked before suggesting training in any specialty. When it comes to translation, training represents a multifaceted challenge for educators for the following reasons; the diversity of translators' profiles (literary, legal, scientific, audiovisual, freelance, etc.), the needs of the translation market, the ability to train translators regarding local and international contexts, the development of translation competence and other considerations that make translation teaching a grueling task.

It is a prerequisite that the translation market in Algeria knows a new facet of practice, freelancing which remains a real terra incognita for many graduates. The gap noticed in this context is the lack of skills development in translation programs in different Algerian universities. Therefore, the present study unearths the following research problem: What is the status of freelance translation in Algeria? It explores this new practice from three parameters: Training, market organization, and ethical implications. As for training, the study shows the importance of integrating freelance skills and technology in translation teaching to familiarize learners with this practice. Market organization refers to the possibility of creating platforms and websites that may help freelancers to get new offers and opportunities. The ethical implication is concerned with the legal texts that organize this practice and preserve freelancers' and clients' rights and duties. In

light of the above research problem, a number of research questions are asked: What is the importance of freelance in the Algerian market? How could translation educators integrate freelance techniques and skills into the translation syllabus? And how can a freelance translation be legally framed? The study's central hypothesis is that freelance translation is still a newborn practice in Algeria; neither the university nor the market is well prepared to organize this practice.

The importance of conducting such a study arises from the fact that freelance translation is the first attempt to work for new graduates and because professional translation in Algeria is limited to legal ones with some modest offers from other sectors. For the sake of the study, a qualitative-quantitative mixed approach is adopted. The researcher collected data from a questionnaire that was delivered to graduates of translation from different Algerian universities as well as from the analysis of websites devoted to freelance translation in Algeria. Among the study's main findings, translation graduates find difficulties in practicing freelance translation because they did not tackle it during their training, which raises the problem of syllabus design, and there should be a legal framework that organizes freelance translation.

2. Literature Review
2.1. Freelance Translation: The Concept

Freelance, also known as the « gig economy,» has become one of the main characteristics of our era. In various fields, for financial and time constraints reasons, freelancers are highly demanded. Etymologically, the first use of the word in English was in 1819, referring to a mercenary soldier that does not belong to the ordinary army (Merriam Webster). Freelance is a portmanteau of "free," indicating that the person is not a regular element, and "lance" (war weapon) means that he does not have an official oath for the lord. The term was first coined by the Scottish novelist and historian Walter Scott (Wiktionary). The word is now used to describe a person who works for himself, deliberate of any institutional membership. Mitchell (2005) puts to the fore the main advantages and disadvantages of freelancing. He argues that freelancing offers freedom, career control, flexibility, specialization in a given domain, a variety of fields of work, and a rich lifestyle in the sense that a freelancer can pursue other tasks. As for the

disadvantages, lack of employment security, absence of career coherence, and lack of retirement provision are the most striking drawbacks.

In Translation studies, literature in freelance translation is still unraveled. Except for some humble mentions of the concept when dealing with data tools of research and analysis, there is no theoretical framework that tackles the concept in detail. Moreover, we do not find an entry for "Freelance Translation" in the "*Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*" (Baker and Saldanha 2020), or in specialized translation studies dictionaries such "*Dictionary of Translation Studies*" (Shuttleworth and Cowie 2014), "*key-term in Translation Studies*" (Palumbo 1995), or "*Terminologie de la traduction*" (Delisle and Lee-Jahnke's 2009). This shows to what extent is this field of study neglected by translation studies. In this context, it is worth mentioning that there is one book that uses the concept of "freelance translation" in its title, and it is Pietrzak and Kornacki's (2021)'s "*Using CAT Tools in Freelance Translation: Insights from a Case Study*."

Freelance translation is used in translation studies as opposed to in-house translation, the type of translation that is undertaken by hired translators who work for an institution or a company. Gouadec (2007) defines freelance translators as self-employed translators who do not belong to any institution or company. He highlights the voluntary aspect of freelancing and the dual relationship between the translator and his client (they both decide on the amount of translation as well as the deadline). Pietrzak and Kornacki (2021) developed Gouadec's (2007) typology of the translation profession and suggested the following distinction between in-house translators and freelance translators:

In-house Translators	Freelance Translators
1. in-house translators: translators working for a company, institution, or organization.	1. freelancers
2."temping": temporarily hired translators.	2. Translators working for publishing companies
3. translation company translators	3. Second-job translators: translators who consider translation as their second job.
4. agency staff: professionals and managers of translation projects.	4. Part-time translators: freelancers or salaried translators who translate more

5. "on-site" translators: translators working for a company and providing their services to another company on the basis of a contract.	than their duty.
	5. Occasional translators: translators who work occasionally.
6. translation outsourcing project manager	6. Remote translators: distance translation.
7. "invisible" translators: professionals who undertake translation but are hired under another profile, such as manager, secretary, reviewer, etc.	

Table 01. In-house vs. freelance translators, according to Gouadec (From Pietrzak and Kornacki 2021).

From the same perspective, Bowker (2023) puts forward that freelance translators may work with companies on the basis of a contract to undertake translations and different language services but by always preserving their "autonomous" profile. The main advantage of freelance translation, according to Bowker (2023), is flexibility (of location, specialization, timing, costs, etc.), and the most challenging thing is the marketing aspect of the work since freelancers are obliged to find, contact and maintain clients and relationships. Pietrzak and Kornacki define freelance translators as: "translators who are either self-employed (more frequently) or take commissions based on a contract for specific work (less frequently) and work for, usually, two or bigger LSPs (Language Service Providers) or any other company that does not hire its own in-house translators." (2021: P. 07).

Kushner (2013) tackled the notion of freelance in machine translation; he argued that freelance translation rejects the automation of language and, accordingly, translation practice. Instead, he came up with the concept of "algorithmic culture," which consists of the intervention and integration of the human mind in computational activity. According to Common Sense Advisory's survey, in which 3700 translators took part, 84% of them declared having worked as freelancers (Morkens 2017). Olohan and Davitti (2017) explored the way trust is built in translation projects between the project manager and the client, from one side, and between the project manager and freelance translators, on the other. They indicate

to what extent trust is important as a dynamic process in any translation project. They found out that communication techniques and discursive strategies are crucial to building such a strong and trustworthy relationship between the three parties. Some studies relate the emerging and ever-growing demand for freelance translators to globalization. Cronin (2020) puts forward that freelance translators are more demanded than in-house translators. Exploring freelance translation status in UK, Lambert and Walker (2022) noticed that translators feel underpaid. Thus, translation rate-setting in the UK must be reconsidered. They studied the issue by focusing on the interaction between status, perceptions, and regulations and suggested new channels that may regulate freelance translation prices, such as academic institutions, industry associations, LSPs, and translators themselves.

Freelancing is represented by a set of platforms and websites; *ProZ.com* is one of the main freelance translators' workplaces; announcements, rate settings, deadlines, and conditions are all set between clients and their translators. In Algeria, there is so far no platform dedicated to freelance translation, but some initiatives on social media like Facebook pages and groups have been created in order to gather translation community, such as the Algerian Network of Graduates of Translation Departments and Institutes, which aims at posting announcements of jobs mainly for freelance translators.
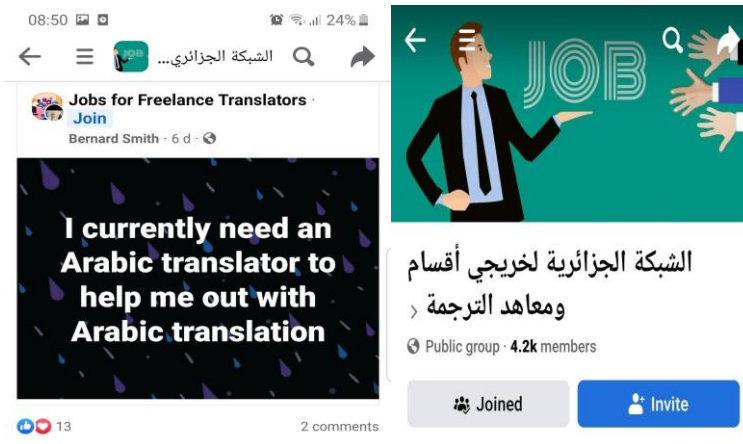

Figure01. Facebook Group: *Algerian Network of Graduates of Translation Departments and Institutes*

2.2. Freelance Translation and Translation Issues

It seems plausible that the first issue that encounters freelance translators is invisibility. Freelancers are not represented by any association or organism, even when they translate; it is the agency or LSP's name that is mentioned. It is true that sometimes freelancers have their own relationships and companies they work with, but they still do not have real status and recognition among the translation and language services community, as well as insurance and retirement rights. In Algeria, there is still no law that may regulate the work of freelancers in various fields. It stays a temporary practice and not a real job.

Ethics is a controversial issue in translation studies, and it is more problematic when it comes to freelance translation. How could we designate an ethical framework for a practice that is not even legally regulated? Ethics assume that there is a set of laws that defend people involved in the field and sanction the transgressors. Yet, it is not the case in freelance translation. As for ethics, clarity, truth, trust, and understanding have been the main standards of ethics, according to Chesterman (2016). These ethical considerations should be adopted in freelance translation. Among the others, trust is the most important one since freelance translators are "unknown" to the client or the initiator. Trust refers to the moral relationship between different parties of the translation contract. Freelancers must build this norm through the respect of confidential information, deadlines, and pricing, as well as good communication skills.

Dealing with translational issues of freelance translation leads us to tackle the issue of translator training in Algeria. Translation is taught in two national institutes (University of Algiers 02 and University of Oran 01), an Arab institute in Algiers, and in master training in different Algerian universities in foreign language departments. Techniques of freelancing must be taught since it is the first opportunity to graduate translators and a fertile market on the national and global scale. Different translation competence models (PACTE 2003, Göpferich 2008, EMT Expert Group 2009, Kiraly 2013) stipulate that translators must master different techniques that allow them to explore new horizons; however, none has tackled the "professional competence". PACTE's (2003) model is an example of translation competence which asks translators to be more prepared for translation tasks; bilingual sub-competence refers to the linguistic knowledge required in translation. Extra-linguistic sub-competence deals with three main elements: bicultural knowledge, encyclopedic knowledge, and subject knowledge.

Instrumental sub-competence is the ability to use different tools that help translators to find the appropriate equivalents, such as CAT tools, corpora, term banks, databases, etc. Knowledge about translation sub-competence refers to the mastery of techniques and strategies of translation to overcome different problems and obstacles; psycho-physiological components are mainly related to psychological and cognitive skills such as memory, attention, critical thinking, tact, resistance to pressure and stress, etc. Finally, strategic sub-competence is the most important one; it deals with the ability to know and detecting translation problems in the source text.
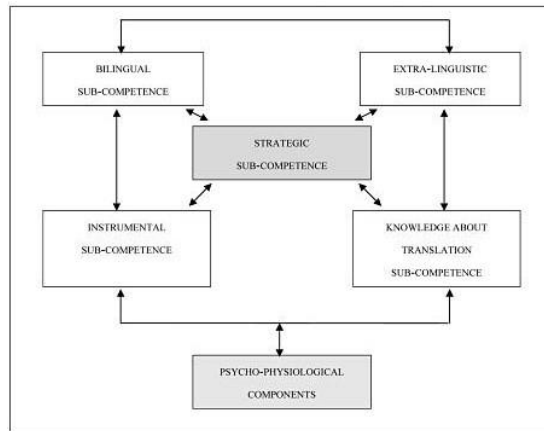

Figure 02. PACTE (2003) Translation Competence Model

We notice that there is no mention of professional requirements; freelancing is different than institutional in-house translation, and working in the legal field is utterly different than in the audiovisual sphere. Hence, professional sub-competence, the ability to deal with each field aside, is crucial in any translation competence model and, accordingly, in any training of translators.

2.3.   Freelance Translation as a Translation Project

Translation studies are recently paying more attention to translation project management, viz., handling translation as a project from conception to the delivery of the final product. Freelance is an ideal example of a translation project. The announcement of the translation brief, the delimitation of the Skopos, the negotiation with the client or initiator, the process of translation, the

documentation, and the delivery are all parts of translation project management (TPM). Here are some models of TPM:
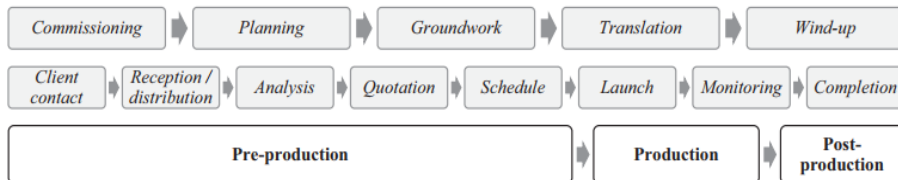

Figure 03. Translation Project Management Models. (From top to bottom): Rico Pérez (2002), Matis (2014), International Organization for Standardization (2015). (Taken from Walker 2023).

Translation project management allows freelance translators to better organize their works and show professionalism since, as mentioned before, one of the main issues of translation ethics is trust that cannot be built unless freelancers show respect of the deadlines and the whole translation project.

3. Methodology
3.1. Research Problem

The present study aims at answering the following descriptive research problem: "What is the status of freelance translation in Algeria?"

3.2. Research Questions

Given the aforementioned research question, a set of questions must be tackled:
- To what extent is freelance important in today's Algerian market?
- How to implement freelance techniques in the translation training syllabus?
- Is there a legal regulation of the work of freelance translators in Algeria? If not, how to prepare it?

3.3. Research Hypotheses

The study stipulates that freelance translation in Algeria witnessed significant development, but there are problems related to the legalization of the practice as well as training-related issues.

3.4.   Research Rationale and Importance

The research is important for the following reasons:

- The freelance translation is the first door opened to recently graduated translators;
- In Algeria, the translation profession is limited to legal translation (no admission contest since 2011), and some humble offers in other fields (companies, administration, etc.); however, freelance is omnipresent and nonrestrictive;
- Internationally, the freelance market is the most fertile and vivid one for translators;

3.5.   Research Design

This study is a participant-oriented research that aims at exploring freelance translation in Algeria. It is a qualitative, quantitative, mixed approach.

3.6.   Data Collection

  Regarding the research problem, a questionnaire was delivered electronically to graduates of translation from different Algerian universities. The aim is to test the position of freelance translation in the Algerian market, the perceptions and motivations of translators, the gap between training and the market, and the needs of those involved in this field. Moreover, the second tool of research was the analysis of websites and platforms dedicated to freelance translation.

4. Results and Discussion
4.1.   General Information

The first part of the questionnaire dealt with general information regarding the participants, such as age, sex, academic degree, etc. Here is data collected in this context: 71% of participants were female, and 29% were male. The age varies between 23 and 55 years old. 33% of respondents hold Ph.D. degrees in translation studies, 17% are preparing their Ph.D. thesis, 42% have master's degrees in translation, and 8% have license degrees.

	Yes	No
Do you consider freelance translation as a job?	88%	12%
Is there an Algerian platform for freelance translation?	19%	81%
Do you think that there is a legal framework for freelance translation?	30%	70%

Table 02. General Statistics of the Survey

4.2.   Experiencing Freelance Translation in Algeria

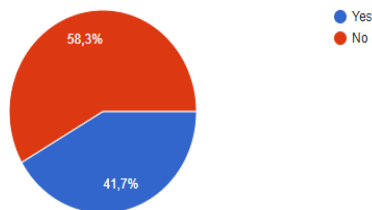have you already worked as freelance translator ?

Figure 04. Experiencing Freelance Translation

The majority of Algerian graduates of translation having participated in our study did not experience freelancing despite its omnipresence in different online platforms such as *ProZ*, *Gengo*, *Translators café*, etc. This raises the question of the awareness of Algerian translators vis-à-vis freelancing and the role of institutions and universities in spreading the culture and practice of freelancing. Besides, one must mention that it is not merely the responsibility of universities but also some financial considerations since freelancing requires a set of economic conditions like credit cards which are not always easy to get.

4.3.   Freelance Translation Skills.

When asked about the skills required in freelancing, respondents argue that CAT tools, time management, and communication skills, in addition to basic linguistic competence (mastery of the source and target languages). These answers join what we have tackled above in translation competence (PACTE model). We argued earlier that in addition to these skills, "professional skills" peculiar to freelance translation must be mastered since some of the respondents have no idea about freelancing platforms.

4.4. Freelance Translation in the Algerian Training Programs

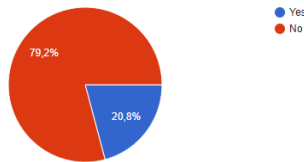Have you studied about freelance translation during your graduation ?

Figure 05. Freelance Translation and Training

79% of translators recognize that they did not study freelancing during their graduation, and approximately 21% assert that they did. The problem is that new types of translation, like freelancing, localization, or audiovisual translation, are still unfound in our training programs. Specialized translation training should tackle units devoted to freelance translation techniques since not all graduates of translation can master the details of freelancing. In this context, 92% of respondents think that freelancing must be included in translation training programs of the great importance of this kind of translation.

4.5. Translators' Perception Towards the Main Constraints of Freelancing in Algeria

It has been noted that the main problems freelance translators encounter in Algeria are a lack of remote job opportunities, the absence of a real market for translators, the absence of Algerian translation agencies, the absence of legal status (the point we will discuss later), etc. Hence, the problem is threefold: academic (absence of specialized curricula), legal (absence of legal regulation), and economic (limited opportunities).

4.6.   Ethical Issues of Freelance Translation

When asked about the ethical issues of freelance translation, respondents mention a set of legal and moral considerations of freelancing; the most common answers are liability, confidentiality, trust, and professionalism of translators. The respondents agree that the absence of a legal framework hinders the development of freelance translation in Algeria. It goes without saying that translation ethics is a controversial and wide issue in translation studies; any ethical system must be enhanced by laws and regulations.

5. CONCLUSION

The present paper aims to explore the status of freelance translation in Algeria. Hence, it relied on a survey dedicated to graduates of translation and data collected from the literature of the field. The paper reveals that freelance translation needs more interest and organization. The field should be reconsidered from three main sides: legally, through the development of laws and regulations that meticulously define the rights and duties of both freelancers and clients; economically, by facilitating remote job and financing systems; and academically, by developing curricula that take into account the new insights of translation profession as freelancing. Further studies in the field may work to suggest a detailed ethical law of freelancing in Algeria or to develop a platform for freelancers.

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7. Appendix

Freelance Translation in Algeria: Survey

Hello, we are conducting a study about freelance translation in Algeria. We will be grateful if you help us answer this survey. The findings will be used for purely scientific purposes. Thank you so much.

Sex: Male   ☐   Female   ☐

Age: ………

Academic Degree: ………….

Current Profession: …………

Have you already worked as a freelance translator: Yes ☐   No   ☐

If yes, what are the skills required by this type of translation?

Have you studied about freelance translation during your graduation? Yes   No

Do you think that translation curricula must contain lessons about freelancing? Yes   No

What are the constraints of working as a freelancer in the Algerian context?

If you have already experienced freelance translation, what are the types of texts or products have you translated?

Is there an Algerian platform or website for freelance translators? Yes   No

If yes, would you name it, please?

Do you consider freelance translation as a job? Yes   No

Do you think that there is a legal framework for freelancing in Algeria? Yes   No

What are the ethical issues of freelance translation?

Further suggestions ?