

Challenges and Difficulties in Teaching Translation at Tahri Mohamed University of Béchar during COVID19 Pandemic

التحديات والصعوبات في تدريس الترجمة بجامعة طاهري محمد ببشار خلال جائحة كوفيد 19

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Abstract:

This paper investigates the challenges and difficulties of sudden emergency virtual translation classes in Algeria due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The objective of this study is to explore the great challenges and difficulties that impact online teaching and learning of translation at Tahri Mohamed University of Béchar during COVID-19 pandemic period. Thus, the study addressed these questions: what are the challenges and difficulties of distance learning and teaching of translation at TMU during the COVID-19 pandemic? What are the advantages and disadvantages of online learning and teaching translation? Is teaching translation online as effective as face-to-face instruction? In order to answer these questions, a questionnaire addressed to students of Béchar University and an interview with the teachers of translation. The research results found that the majority of both instructors and learners are with teaching and learning online, but they prefer the traditional one because they faced a lot of technical problems with moodle platform.

Keywords: Challenges; Difficulties; E-Learning; Online teaching and learning; Students; Teachers; Translation.

ملخص:

تدرس هذه الورقة البحثية التحديات والصعوبات التي تواجه فصول الترجمة الافتراضية الطارئة خلال جائحة COVID-19 في الجزائر. الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو استكشاف التحديات والصعوبات الكبيرة التي تؤثر على التدريس وتعلم الترجمة عن بعد في جامعة طاهري محمد ببشار أثناء جائحة كوفيد19. فكانت أسئلة البحث كالتالي: ما هي تحديات وصعوبات التعلم وتدريس الترجمة عن

بعد في جامعة بشار خلال جائحة COVID-19؟ ما هي مزايا وعيوب التعلم وتدريس الترجمة عن بعد؟ هل تدريس الترجمة عبر الإنترنت فعال مثل التدريس الحضوري؟ وللإجابة عن هذه الأسئلة اعتمدنا المنهج الوصفي، وهو عبارة عن استبيان موجه لطلبة قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة بشار ومقابلة مع مدرسي الترجمة؛ فكانت النتائج أن المدرسين والطلاب يحبذون التدريس والتعلم عبر الإنترنت، لكنهم يفضلون الطريقة التقليدية لأن اعترضهم الكثير من المشكلات التقنية عند استعمال مودل.

الكلمات المفتاح: تحديات؛ صعوبات؛ التعلم الإلكتروني؛ التدريس عبر الإنترنت؛ طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية؛ أساتذة؛ ترجمة.

1- Introduction:

The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply affected many fields and transformed its ways of working and communicating also. This shift was accompanied by an increase in demand for technology in specific areas like higher education which covers an essential area in the public. As a result, the demand for teaching and learning online grew as governments needed to inform and complete programs for the learners rapidly and accurately during the pandemic. From the beginning of the pandemic, researchers adopted virtual platforms and equipment to adapt to new ways of providing services, collaborating, training and conducting research, thus various ways appeared to transfer the courses to the learners through the net around the world, in addition to many guidelines and E-learning platforms. Under this urgent situation with several services and transformations on the increase, teachers played a key role and were able to quickly address new challenges to continue to provide adequate learning assistance and the essential information to students. Thus, due to this global crisis, educators have been moving further away from face-to-face instruction and toward online teaching as the most efficient way to support their students. Although transitioning to online teaching has many inescapable difficulties, online learning and blended learning play an important position in promoting knowledge and skills and enhancing ambitions, imagination and self-awareness (Sun and Chen 2016). Furthermore, launching online classes has shown great importance during the pandemic, and it is essential to record

these classes for future consumption. During the pandemic, many lectures were delivered and conceptualized by teachers with different instruments like Zoom, Facebook, YouTube, Skype, etc. teachers communicate with students and even parents for better guidance (Jena, 2020).

In Algeria, due to the covid-19 lockdown, the Algerian system of higher education has shifted to a virtual platform using Google Classroom and has provided an opportunity to make a revolutionary change in the teaching/learning process. Therefore, new virtual classes have appeared to continue the academic year programs during this serious pandemic. However, like in other developing countries, very few universities in Algeria could start online classes immediately after lockdown. At Bechar University, for instance, teaching has changed rapidly to the worst with the appearance of the covid-19 pandemic. Online learning and teaching are not easy to be adopted by teachers and students in the South, because many teachers experience a variety of difficulties due to a variety of reasons and factors like lack of internet; it was quite difficult for the Algerian authorities to be able to offer a high-quality internet connection to all the people, especially teachers and students. Moreover, this situation affects negatively the process of distance learning and software usage of online teaching using different virtual platforms. In addition to that, the Algerian teachers faced numerous challenges, including students' lack of motivation; a dilemma like this may harm the students, for example rejecting their studies.

This paper will explore the challenges and difficulties of sudden emergency virtual translation classes in Algeria due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A survey will be done at Tahri Mohamed University of Bechar. This paper will analyze feedback from both teacher and learner sides after experiencing online translation classes during the lockdown. Some interviews were arranged by the author to know TR students' views about online classes, the problems that they face and their expectations. It will also demonstrate some solutions to overcome the pitfalls and spice up the TR classes for the new online learners. Some most applied educational technologies and applications are discussed to turn the online TR classes effectively exciting. These all make TR classes interactive which turns them

into learner-centered classes' sine teacher-centered classes are sometimes monotonous to students. It will show how learners will learn easily to accept any new method not only during pandemic emergencies but also in the future to get the best out of the worst.

The objective of this study is to investigate the great challenges that impact online teaching and learning of translation at Tahri Mohammed University of Béchar during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic period. Thus, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the challenges and difficulties of distance learning and teaching of translation at TMU during coronavirus pandemic?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of online learning and teaching translation?
3. Is teaching translation online as effective as face-to-face instruction?

We can assume that the majority of both instructors and learners like teaching and learning online with the use of the net because it can facilitate learning for students and teaching in distance for instructors. However, they prefer the traditional method because they faced a lot of problems such as lack of internet, bad e-learning platform, problems with electricity and the materials needed.

2. Online Teaching and Learning of Translation

To teach translation at TMU during COVID19 Pandemic, teachers need technology. This new way of teaching translation is called E-learning. Logically, before discussing our theme about the difficulties and challenges that faced teachers of translation in this serious period, we need to know first what does **online education** mean? This new way provides opportunities to access and share information more easily and readily. Teachers and students will enter online communities of practice based on their interests rather than their geographical place. Moreover, E-learning is very important for education because it can enhance the learning experience and expand the scope of any lecture and tutor. It provides a variety of

resources to help teachers and students to be more innovative, imaginative, and resourceful in all aspects of learning.

Second, what does **teaching online** mean? To answer this question we must define this new term. Online teaching involves delivering a course individually or collectively over the internet. It is a kind and a technique of distance learning that is used to comprise courses distributed by e-mail, such as one-on-one video calls, group video calls, or other formal techniques anywhere such as at home, coffee shops, and at any time. Teachers are an essential component of online education, and the manner they teach can be influenced by their values (Cuban, 1993). They are a critical component in educational transformations (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Online teaching is most effective when delivered by instructors in their subject matter.

Thirdly **online Learning**: the fast evolution of technology in the entire world has made online or distance learning easy and flexible, it has a big impact on educational platforms (McBrien et al., 2009). The term online learning is defined as a process of learning and teaching by using the internet and technologies to transmit and participate in educational status (ibid). It is also called distance learning, e-learning and computer-mediated learning. In addition to that, learning online is the non-attendance of face to face interaction between the teacher and the student (Diaz and cartnal 1999). In online learning, students are independent, they can access any school around the world, they need a program that allows them to have the opportunity to learn at anytime, anywhere and this is not enough. Online learning has been defined by the instructional technology council as “ it is a process that you can deliver and participate learning to remote programs via internet, audio, video and interactive TV and so on , there are lot of instruments to learn online” (Holsapple& Lee-post,2006,p. 2). E-learning is one of the popular techniques used in the educational learning process. In higher education, online learning has a well-established function, and it has been found to have a significant impact on improving the efficacy of learning. On the other hand, traditional learning is a method of learning when students meet in physical classrooms (face-to-face interaction) for a

set period of time to learn about particular subjects or receive specific hands on job training and experience.

Finally, we can conclude that this new method of teaching and learning can have benefits and challenges. It provides convenience in terms of time and space, as well as effectiveness and flexibility. Students can offer globally recognized levels without having to attend classes through online learning. Being effective in delivering the course, replying to student emails, and getting used to online tools and infrastructure are all challenges that an online instructor faces. The value, efficiency, and quality of online teaching and learning are challenged by critics because online teaching and learning systems have not been able to convey instructor-student interactions. Online learners face challenges such as the requirement of self-directed learning and self-discipline, both of which can affect success or failure. Learners miss out on communication channels such as facial expression and peer-to-peer learning that are commonly taken for free in the traditional classroom.

Moreover; when students are sitting alone in front of a laptop, they are more susceptible to distraction and the online course material is interesting and provides enough engagement; the learner will become confused and may even quit. Students who are constantly interacting via technology may face struggles with emotional contact, and Schwartzman believes that the abilities needed to interact with a variety of people and deal with personality conflicts are more valuable than the capacity to navigate through a set of selecting choices. Furthermore, if you are studying a discipline that requires practice, online learning is sometimes challenging and this is the case with translation.

3- The Methodology of the Research:

3.1 Instruments: a questionnaire delivered to students and an interview with teachers.

3.2 Participants

Ten teachers at Tahri Mohamed University (Béchar) were the targets of this study, six were males and four were females. Their specialty is translation but they teach other modules too because at this university,

translation is taught in different departments as a secondary module, there is no special department for translation studies. The target students of this study were all students of the LMD system at English Department at Tahri Mohamed University (Béchar). All the students were chosen randomly. They were 80 students from different levels required to complete a questionnaire to see their practices, attitudes and opinions about learning translation online during the pandemic.

4. Data Collection:

4.1 Data Analysis of the Questionnaire

The majority of the students were females with the rate of 60% whereas the males were 40%. Their ages are between 19 till 22 years old. They are students with MA and BA Degrees. Some questions were asked to the students to know their perceptions toward learning translation during COVID19 period as below:

Item1: Are you with or against online learning?

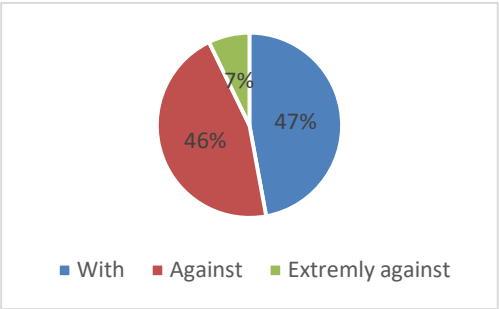


Fig1 : Student’s Attitude Toward Online Learning

The statistics cleared that 47.1% of participants agree with studying online. Whereas 45.7% were against learning online, and 7.2% of students were extremely against studying online.

Item 2: Do you enjoy learning translation online?

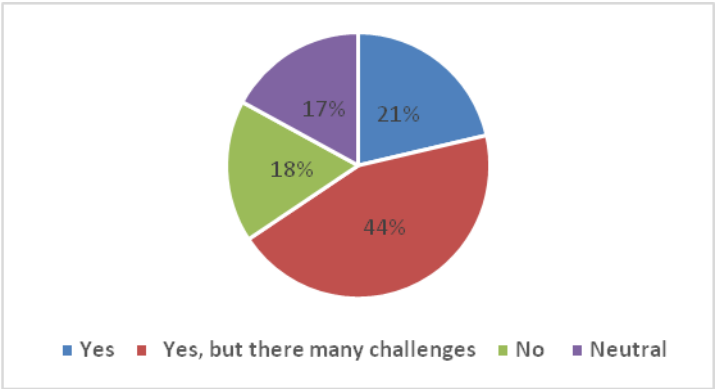


Fig.2: Student’s Enjoyment of Learning Translation Online

As the figure shows above, 21.4% of the students enjoy learning translation online, and 44.4% said they enjoy online learning but there are some challenges, and 17.1% are against this way and others with a rate of 17.1% are neutral.

Item 3: As a student, how was your studying translation during the quarantine?

The answer to this question is clear in fig.3 below. Regarding the students’ answers, 2.9% of participants said that studying translation during the quarantine was “great”, and 45.7% said that it was “good”, while the others 51.4% states that it was a “bad” experience.

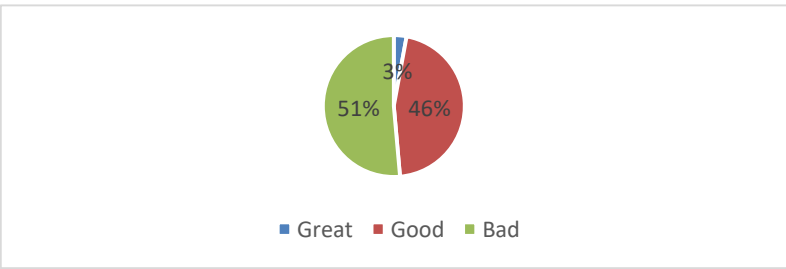


Fig. 3: Studying Translation during the Quarantine

Item 4: Is distance learning stressful for you during the covid-19 pandemic?

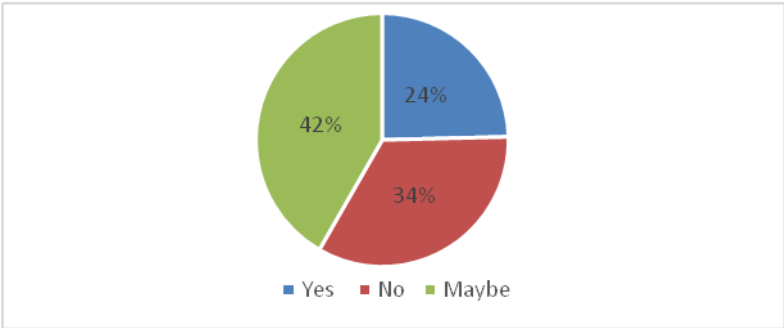


Fig.4: The Stress of Students with Distance Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic

The chart above demonstrates that 24% answered with “Yes” that distance learning was stressful, 34% of participants answered “No” , and the rest of the students said “Maybe” with the rate of 42% .

Item 5: Are you able to change your ideas with your classmates and participate with your teachers in online learning?

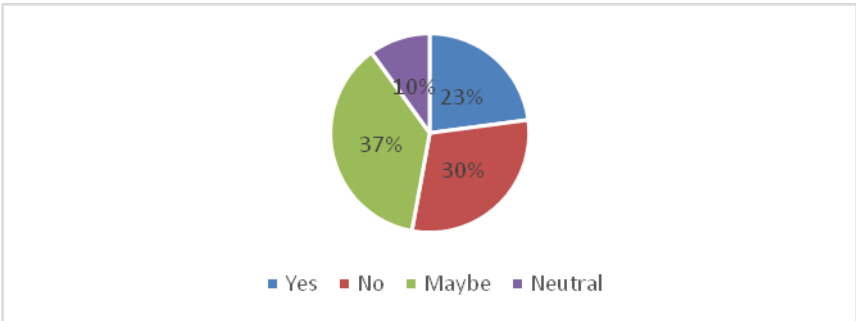


Fig.5: Student’s Ability to Change Ideas and Participate with Classmates, and with Teachers in Online Learning.

According to the results of figure n°5, 23% of students said that they could change ideas and participate with their classmates, the other 30% said “No” , and the majority of students answered with “Maybe” with the rate of 37%, while the rest of the participants10% choose the option “Neutral”.

Item 6: Are you confident in your ability to do your exercises of translation through online learning (self-efficacy)?

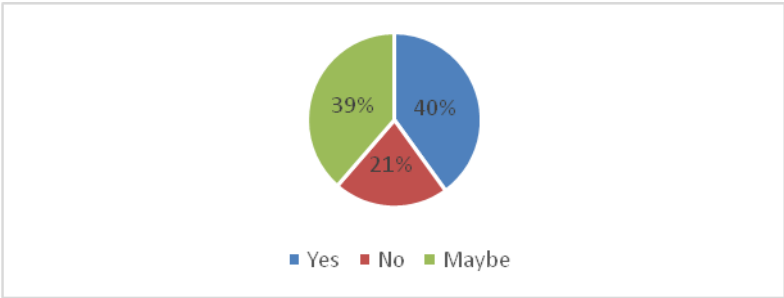


Fig.6: The Confidence of Students to be Able in Doing Tasks and Reach Goals in Online Learning.

The statistics above show that a few of the students were not confident in their self-efficacy 21%, whereas the two other options were nearly simulated between “Yes”40% and “Maybe”39%, which is chosen by the participants.

Item 7: In translation, are you familiar with online learning or Face-to-Face learning (in class)?

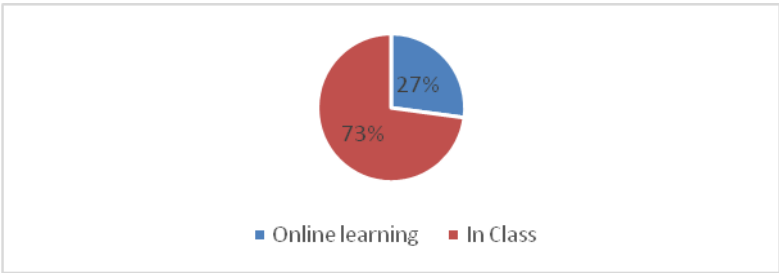


Fig.7: Student’s Opinion about Online Learning and Face-to-Face Learning in Translation.

The results show that the majority of learners prefer to learn in class (a rate of 73%), while only 27% prefer to study online.

Item 7: How is your university delivering distance learning?

In this open question, the majority of students said that their university was so bad at delivering online learning; they think that it was difficult to access the e-learning platforms, and bad organizing in delivering distance learning, and they rarely even post lessons online. Also, another

group said that their university is quite doing good in posting lessons, sites and PDFs, it depends on the teachers, and some of them are very good.

Item 8: Do you have high-speed internet at home?

As it is explained in the graph below, 36% of users had a high speed at home, while 64% did not have a High-speed internet at home.

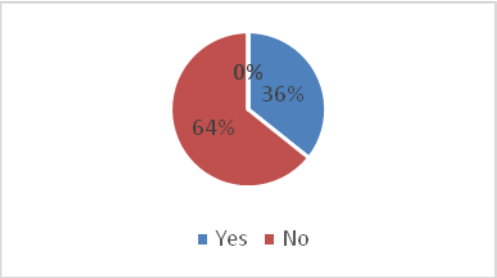


Fig.8: Student’s Internet Speed at Home

Item 9: Is online learning a good way for you to learn Translation?

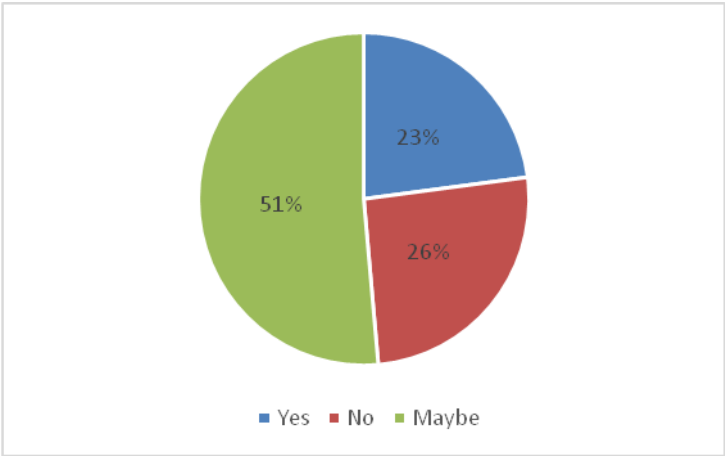


Fig.9: translation lectures Online.

Depending on the chart above, it is clear that the majority of students 51.4% said “Maybe”. Whereas 22.9% of them agree to learn their lectures online and 25.7% of students said “No”.

4.2. Analysis of the Interview

Item 1: is your university excellently equipped in terms of technology? (Internet connection, computers, projectors, interactive whiteboards).

The majority of the teachers said “No” 87.5%, while 12.5% of them did not agree that their university was excellently equipped in terms of technology as it is shown below:

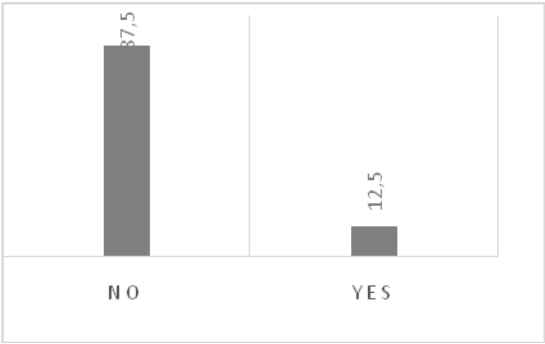


Fig.1 University equipment

Item 2: How would you rate your computer literacy?

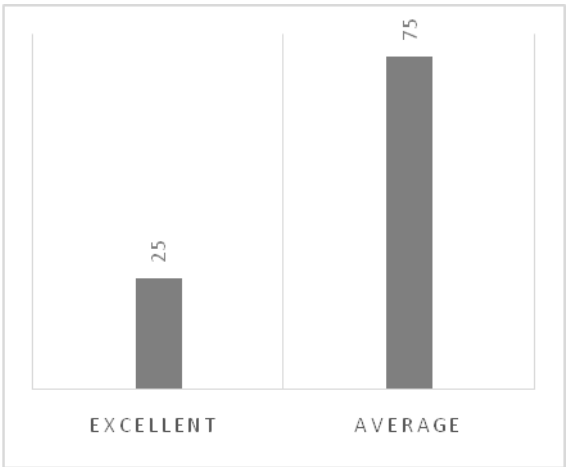


Fig.2 Computer Literacy

According to the result shown above, it is clear that the majority 75% of teachers said “average”, whereas the rate of 25% of them said excellent.

Item 3: Are you satisfied with the transition from teaching regular face-to-face classes to online teaching?

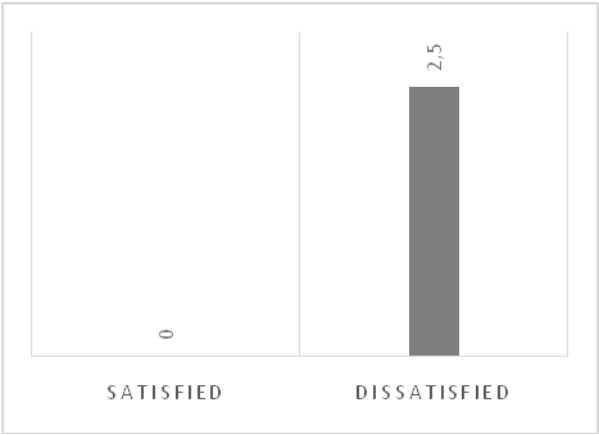


Fig.03 Teachers' Satisfaction

The figure above indicates that all the teachers 100% were dissatisfied with the transition from teaching regular face-to-face classes to online teaching.

Item 4: Is online education a good way in teaching? If yes why?

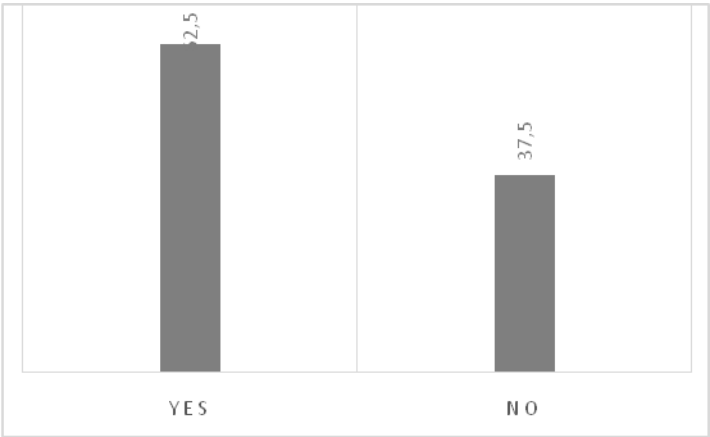


Fig.04: Teachers' Feelings Toward the Online Education

It is obvious from figure 5 that most of the instructors said that online education is a good way in teaching 62.5%, while the rest of the teachers said “No”.

Item 5: What is your opinion towards sudden virtual teaching of translation in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic?

Depending on the answers of the teachers, they said that virtual teaching is difficult and it was insufficient and other teachers said that it is a solution in such a case.



Fig.05: Teachers’ Opinion about Online Teaching Translation

Item 6: Do you think you were ready to shift to sudden online teaching in the wake of COVID-19?



Fig06: Teachers Shifting to Sudden Online Teaching during Covid19

According to Figure 7, 100% of the teachers were not ready to shift to sudden online teaching in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic

Item 7: Are you with or against online teaching?

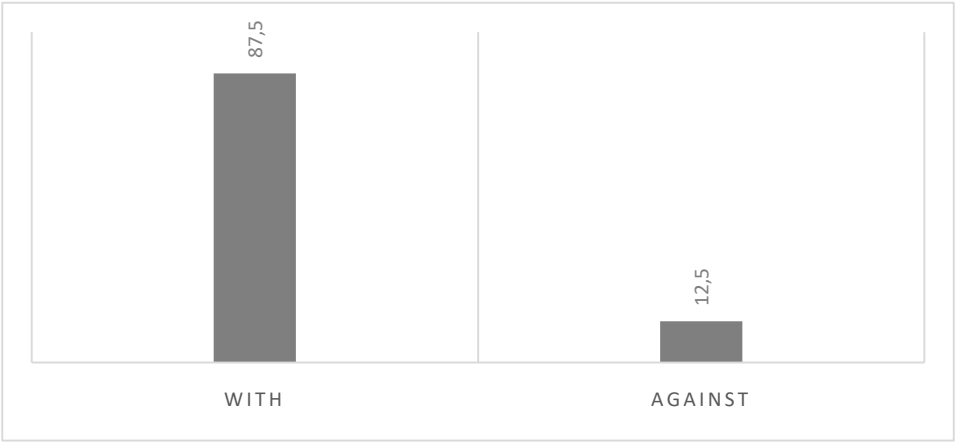


Fig07: Teacher’s Attitude towards Online Teaching

The figure shows that most of the teachers were “with” 87.5% the online teaching, while the minorities of the instructors are “against” 12.5%.

Item 8: The platform you have used for remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic was an excellent way to teach? Justify

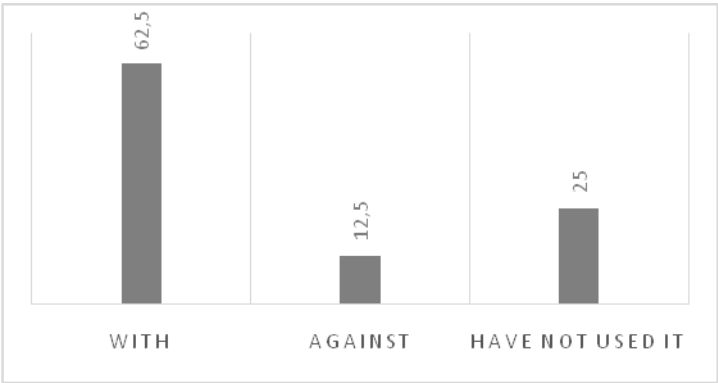


Fig08: Teachers’ Opinions about the Platforms

We can see that the majority of teachers 85.5% were “with” the use of remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, whereas 12.5% of teachers were “against”, while the rest 25% have not used it before.

Item 9: Do you think that your university succeeded in online teaching?

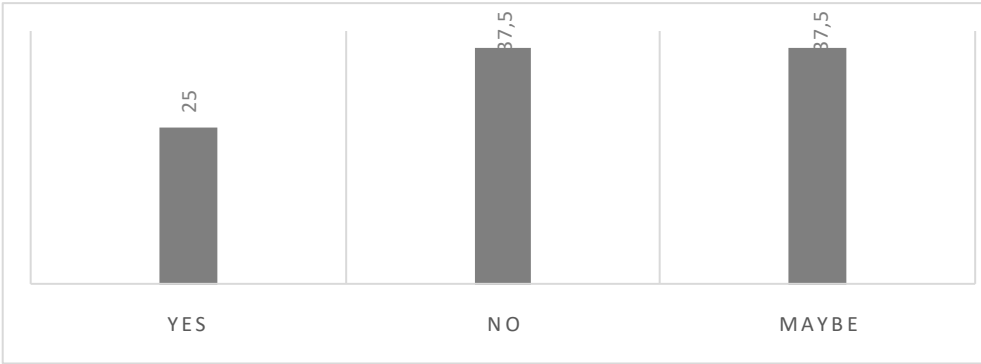


Fig.9: Teacher’s Opinions about the Success of Universityin Remote Teaching

The percentages revealed that 25% think that their university succeeded in online teaching, moreover, 37.5% said “No”, and other teachers with the rate of 37.5% were not well prepared.

Item 10: What challenges have you experienced during online teaching?

Teachers answered that teaching online could let the teachers and students be free and available for doing something else, while others said there is a lack of internet, and another teacher said that both teachers and students are obliged to learn more about teaching online.

5. Findings and Results:

5.1. Discussion of Students’ Questionnaire

According to the students’ questionnaire, the investigation of the results shows that students’ enjoyment of online learning has a low rate which means that the students found some challenges with this new way although they were not against it; i.e., the results reveal that 47.1% of participants agree with studying online. Half of the participants said their studies of translation were not extremely good because of the bad e-learning platform during the quarantine. According to their answers, students were very satisfied with online learning because they were free from the teacher’s instruction.

According to the results of the questionnaire, most of the students prefer to learn in class because their university in delivering distance learning was so bad. However, some students said that they received some lectures on translation via their facebook and it was a good solution for the bad e-learning platform that the university launched during the lockdown.

Furthermore, some participants said they could not receive the lectures of translation because they did have no internet at home and during the lockdown all the cybercafés are closed beside the low speed internet for those who have the internet at home. This means the students did not receive the lectures on translation at all, especially for the 2end semester. Because of literacy in using computers, the participants are against learning translation online they are only required to be online during the COVID19 pandemic period. Finally, the results of the survey showed that the students could not reach the goals of their lecture on translation and they did not receive their translation lectures during this serious period for many reasons like lack of internet, bad e-learning platforms, and literacy of technology, psychological problems of covid19 and the absence of teachers online.

5.2. Discussion of Teacher's Interview

The majority of the teachers admitted that their university is not excellently equipped in terms of technology, thus it is not well ready for the shift from real to virtual teaching and this is the first challenge the teachers faced in this serious period. The second challenge, the majority of interviewees rate their computer literacy average not excellent. The third challenge, teachers were not completely satisfied with the sudden transition from face to face classes in teaching translation to a virtual one, this refusal of teaching translation online can be classified as a psychological problem that impacted teachers of translation during the covid19 period. The fourth challenge, since physical presence is impossible with the existence of covid-19, the majority of the instructors are required to send lectures to their students without explanations. The fifth challenge, concerning virtual learning of translation in the wake of the covid-19 pandemic, the teachers said that virtual learning is a catastrophe and insufficient, and students still

need more information because online teaching was a bad experience in this university although it is the only solution in this case. The sixth challenge, although the teachers of translation are with remote teaching, they do not know how to use the new platform of the university, particularly the aged teachers. Therefore they need training. The seventh challenge, many negative sides of teaching translation online such as lack of internet, students' carelessness, difficulties to evaluate learners' understanding, and the problem of electricity can cut the lectures online. The last challenge is the failure of the university in remote teaching translation.

6. Conclusion:

Recently because of the pandemic (COVID-19), the demand for online learning and teaching is surprisingly increasing, thus it was so helpful for delivering the information needed for learners by the teachers of translation. However, teachers at Béchar University did not deliver suitable distance learning courses in translation because of many difficulties and challenges' facing them during the lockdown as it is explained in the discussion. As a result, no effective courses in translation were received by the learners at this university during the quarantine and the learners were examined only in the received courses before the lockdown started at Béchar University.

We can conclude that learning and teaching translation online should be viewed as a supplement and enhancement of traditional learning and teaching methods. Even the best online course can't completely replace face to face interaction with a teacher or the interpersonal connections that form in a group. As a result, online learning and teaching of translation should not be used to replace traditional lectures at Béchar University.

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