Fetching for a Merited Locus of Translation Technology in a Technophobic Pedagogy of Foreign Languages: Penetrating Teachers' of English Beliefs

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Résumé

The advent of technology had metamorphosed the very understanding of people's practices and life routines as it permeated divergent fields, including education. Under this spirit, schools, colleges and universities in Algeria have opted for, say, an inflicted metamorphosis, to enhance the academic achievements of both teachers and learners. Nevertheless, this bright side had been contrasted by a gloomy side that stems from certain pedagogical practices. Rigorously put, teachers of the subject translation and computing are enclosed in their technophobic beliefs that are strengthened by fear from exploring technology translation in their classrooms and their mistrust for learners' utter reliance on the machine to do the translation instead of them.

1. Introduction

The advent of technology had been a leading agent in the metamorphosis the world had witnessed over the past years. The boon of the devices and the machines produced by the technological boom had left no domain without an alternation. Distances had been shortened, means of communication had been pushed to an expected digitalized level, and hence human life had been redefined in relation to novel norms and standards. Logically, the change had reached the shores of teaching foreign languages in different walks of life, bringing technological means that, if used appropriately, would foment the pedagogical process. However, this bright side had been

blackened by some barriers that came in the way of a successful integration of technological tools, namely translation technologies in the instruction of subjects such as translation, a subject taught along Master degrees of English in Algeria.

2. Technologies at the Core of EFL[1] Milieus

The pedagogical use of technology refers to "*a diverse set of technological tools used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store, manage information and assist classroom teaching and learning*" (Blurton, 1999, cited in Tinio). These devices, in case used appropriately and effectively, would enhance the teaching/ learning process. Technology affords for both teachers and learners tools qua Internet that, to a great extent, subsidize the interactive process between the instructor and the learners and among the learners themselves (Cetto, 2010,p.121). Under this connection, the boom had redefined the very understanding of learning, in the sense that the geographical and time boundaries have been substituted for an unbridled learning independent of the previously mentioned hurdles. To cut it short, the process of learning had been gelled to the ensuing motto "*learning anytime and anywhere*" (Peerapat, 2010, p.50).

Indeed, the witnessed technological boom echoed a radical pedagogical metamorphosis. The bygone pedagogical scenario that characterized the past years, where teachers had been the only monitors of classrooms had been substituted for a more objective panorama in which teachers have become facilitators and guiders of learning. The novel protocol had given much credit to learners' abilities to learn by themselves. Undoubtedly, the emergence of technology and its introduction to the classroom had, by large, subsidized the whole concept of

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[1]. EFL stands for English as a foreign language.

learner-centered learning. Means and Olson (1997) argue that the new pedagogical practices had been outlined in the use of technological devices to "*promote student learning through collaborative involvement in authentic, challenging, multidisciplinary tasks by providing realistic complex environments for student inquiry, furnishing information and tools to support investigation, and linking classrooms for joint investigations*"(p.9).

3. Methodology

To rigorously investigate the match that brings both teachers' beliefs and classroom practices together, a carefully designed questionnaire had been administered to teachers of English who have been teaching the subject

of translation for several years. The questionnaire assesses teachers' understandings of translation technologies, their views about learners' use of them, and most importantly, their instructions about these technologies that facilitate translation. This phase is grounded on some theoretical platforms that account for the most common understandings in relation to the interplay of both beliefs and practices.

4. Teachers' Beliefs about Translation Technologies

This section, as it name communicates, explores teachers' beliefs about the relevancy or the irrelevancy of the use of translation technologies in relation to their pedagogical practices, in particular teaching translation along English language. To begin with, a brief understanding about the concept of beliefs and the way they shape and dictate teachers' practices is be debated. The next theoretical landscape ventures into the interplay of both constructivist thoughts and teachers' beliefs. Under this panorama, it is paramount to note that all the discussions are mediated by the notion of translation technologies as the target of the study. The practical part puts

the outlined theories under scrutiny and assesses their credibility via the analysis of a purposeful questionnaire's data[1].

Undoubtedly, the integration of technology in classrooms has never been an easy task. The complexity is believed to spring from various sources, including teachers' beliefs. Rokeach, M (1972) argues that teacher' practices in the classroom, especially in relation to the use of technology stem from their beliefs. The latter reflects teachers' thoughts, perceptions, behaviours, and attitudes. In relation to that, teachers naturally develop certain beliefs about learners, subject taught, and their duties, as well. This filter is believed to be a leading factor in relation to the judgments teachers hold about teaching and technology use, in particular. Paradoxically, most of the teachers (in Algeria) display some abilities to use it; however, they prefer using traditional ways of teaching that exclude any mention of technology. This suggests that teachers' beliefs influence the way they value technology. Under this line of thought, teachers are more likely to integrate the technologies that go along their beliefs (Veen, 1993; Zhao and Frank, 2003). Consequently, identifying those beliefs that obstruct successful technology practices would necessarily foment teachers' pedagogical practices and development.

Admittedly, Internet is the most common achievement that teachers and learners use the most, to prepare the lectures and to do the assignments respectively. In connection with this, teachers' belief systems either broaden or compress the level of technology use in their classrooms. Truly, in relation to teachers' use of technology, one may identify two main tasks: low level tasks and high level tasks. Teachers seem to use word

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[1]. Teachers' questionnaire is mentioned in the appendix.

processing and Internet research, and as such would perform the first outlined task. The second level that encompasses "spreadsheets, presentation software, or digital imaging[1]" is left unexplored (Niederhauser, D. S.and Stoddart, 2001). Under the same line of thought, Becker, H. J. 1994; H. J. Becker and M. M. Riel (1999) believe that the stratification outlined in relation to high level tasks and low level tasks points to different pedagogical panoramas. That is, teachers who rely only on low level task are inclined to favour teacher-centered learning; however, the ones who refer to high level tasks are more likely to believe in constructivism and learner-centered pedagogy.

4.1 Misalignments between Beliefs and Practices

The fact that teachers are the ones who integrate translation technology in the classroom via their practices implies that their duty as integrators of technology is mandatory. Nevertheless, this shiny and promising side may be obstructed by several shortcomings that may come in the way of teachers' technological and pedagogical duties. Ertmer (1999) demarcates between two kinds of blockades that obstruct teachers' uses of technology in the classroom. To begin with, the first order barriers are those hurdles that are part of the external world (outside the classroom), including mainly "*training and support*". The second-order barriers stem from teachers' beliefs and confidence in relation both learners' practices and the significance of technological devices within the instructive milieu. According to O'Mahony (2003); Pelgrum (2001), the first kind of barriers may run serious risks in relation particular parts of the pedagogical process. Dexter and Anderson (2002) argue that disregarding the second-type

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[1]. The software requires certain computing skills

barriers would harm the whole process, and hence is stratified as being more perilous. The year 2007 echoed formulation of a

rigorous analysis of both kinds of obstacles by Hew and Brush[1]. Their studies about the barriers had resulted in a set of categories that comprise: resources, institution, subject culture, and assessment) teacher's attitudes and beliefs, knowledge and skills).

4. 1.1 Teachers' Understandings of Translation Technologies

Undoubtedly, defining translation technologies in precise and concise terms would partly denote teachers' beliefs about them and consequently frame their instructive practices. That is, such understandings would allow teachers penetrate the utility of such tools in relation to translation. To delve into teachers' perceptions of translation technologies, the following question had been administered to them "*what is translation technology[2]*". The analysis of the gathered data revealed that most of the surveyed teachers have superficial understandings as far as the targeted tools are concerned. The understandings provided by the teachers are outlined as "use *of technology softwares, machine translation and corpus linguistics, using ICT's/Internet Google, a means of translating easily, Google translate"*. The cursory understandings teachers develop in relation to translation technologies had also been identified in relation to the analysis of the question that targeted the software teachers advise their learners to use[3]. Most of the

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[1]. In 2007, Hew and Brush provided a detailed analysis of the integration of technology barriers that had been documented in the literature over the previous ten years (1995–2006°)

[2] The first question within teachers' questionnaire aimed at exploring their understandings about translation technologies

[3] The question given to the teachers was « What is the translation software that you advise learners to use?"

teachers use and advise their learners to use "*Google translate, www; liguee.com, Babylon translation*". However, some teachers advise their learners not to use website like Google translate. This is lucid in the following comment:

"*Google translate as non-useful software to show them the inaccuracy and uselessness of such tool*".

"*Do teachers develop phobic attitudes towards the use of translation technologies*"?

This enquiry had been explored in relation to two main questions within teachers' questionnaire. The fist is structured as follows "*do you think that translation technology is important for learners' translation practices*? The second question goes as follows: "*Do you think that translation technology enhances or harms learners' translation competency?* The analysis of the data retrieved from the first question showed that some of the teachers confirm the utility of translation technologies. One comment that supports the advantageous nature of targeted tools goes as follows: "*It may be indeed because ICT's in general positively influences the learners*". However, the majority of the teachers claimed that these tools hold more bans than boons. This clear in the ensuing comment: "*I don't think so because technology translation focuses to deliver sense to sense translation*". These technophobic attitudes are lucid in the following teacher's comment: "*It is actually compulsory to help them distinguish between this kind / tool of translation and that made by human beings who are more coherent and accurate.*" The data analyzed from the second question comes to reinforce teachers' technophobic beliefs about translation technologies. Most of the teachers believe that these tools harm learners' translation competencies. While some teachers claimed that the effects of these tools depend of the way they are used, other indicated their harmful nature. A teacher adds: "*Of course, I can say that*

the students 'own translation is more correct Avoid it! It creates more problems than it solves".

Suggestions for Embracing Translation Technologies in EFL Classrooms

The discussion about the nature of teachers' beliefs undoubtedly enlightens many gloomy sides, however, adapting and changing them to befit effective classroom practices would be more luminous. Any change that targets pedagogical innovation would necessitate revisions for materials and materials, namely an appropriate integration of technology, the implementation of new effective approaches, and most importantly, adapting teachers' beliefs (Garet, M. S. Porter, A. C. Desimone, L. Birman, B. F and Yoon, K.S., 2001). Another factor that would lead to a change in teachers' beliefs stems, at least partially, from the complexity and the richness of the pedagogical context. Enyedy, N and Goldberg, J (2004) believe that classrooms that comprise divergent kinds of activities and pedagogical objectives would dictate certain contextual adaptations. Under this light, teachers come across different perceptions of learning and different needs. In such case, they are likely to develop certain strategies to cope with the different contexts, even if this

means to flout their own beliefs .

Teaching transition is a demanding task. However, teaching translation via technology is more challenging since it calls upon various variables that stem from teachers, students, and external factors. Thus, a carefully designed pedagogy of machine translation is necessary for a successful instructive process. In connection with this, a desired pedagogy of the targeted process may include the following traits: using technology repeatedly, teaching it in suitable milieus, and sharing its practice along collaborative work. Pym (2006)

argues: "*TM/MT should ideally be used in as much as possible of the student's translation work, not only in a special course on translation technologies*" (p.123). A significant agent that determines the effective instruction of machine translation is outlined along the suitability of the pedagogical place. It is preferable for teachers to gather their students around the large table so as to be able to check students' works. (ibid.).

Conclusion

Lucidly, the discussion in this paper pours in the stream of the pedagogical marginalization of translation technologies. To begin with, teachers' beliefs are shelled in their technophobic attitudes towards the implementation of any kind of the proposed tools that, if used properly, would enhance the process of translation. These beliefs dictate teachers' pedagogical practices that turn the blind eye on the boons that can be generated from such use. Translation technologies are substituted for "an utter reliance on human translation that echoes the traditional panorama of teaching and brings the shadows of "teacher-centered learning" to dominate the pedagogical scene.

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Appendix: Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire targets teachers' attitudes about the use of translation technology in their instructive practices of the subjects translation and computing. You are kindly asked to fill in the questionnaire with the appropriate answers.

1-Do you think that the students of English are competent in translation?
Yes　　　No

2- What are the shortcomings that you can identify in students' translation performances?

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3- How do you define translation technology?

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4-Do you think that translation technology is important for learners' translation practices? Why?

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5-Do you think that students know how to use it? What is problematic with their use?

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4-What are the translation softwares that you advise learners to use?

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5-Have you taught them to use translation technology?

Yes　　　No

6- Can you make the distinction between the students' own translation and the one made via technology? How?

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7-Do you think that translation technology enhances or harms their translation competency? Yes　　　No

8- Any suggestion for the effective use of translation technology by the students!

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