

## The Effectiveness of Integrating Translation in Teaching English for Specific Purposes at the Workplace. The case of Technicians in L'Algerie Telecom Company in Saida, Algeria

أهمية الترجمة في تدريس اللغة الانجليزية لأهداف خاصة في تكوين العمال. دراسة  
حالة تقنيي الشركة الجزائرية للاتصالات بسعيدة الجزائر

\*Mokhtaria Kherraz<sup>1</sup>, Mohamed Yamin Boulenouar<sup>2</sup>

مختارية خراز<sup>1</sup>، محمد يمين بولنوار<sup>2</sup>

University of Saida – Dr. Moulay Tahar (Algeria),

Phd at Djilali Liabes University – SBA (Algeria)<sup>1</sup>

Djilali Liabes University - SBA (Algeria),<sup>2</sup>

kherezmokhtaria@yahoo.fr

medya.blm22@gmail.com<sup>7</sup>

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### Abstract:

This paper explores the need to integrate translation in teaching English for Specific Purposes within the training that technicians of L'Algerie Telecom Company in Saida undergo. Indeed, the present study aims at shedding light on the effectiveness of implementing translation in teaching technicians who represent the sampling of the study in hand. As for data collection instruments a questionnaire was addressed to the technicians and An interview was conducted with the responsible in charge of the training to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The results revealed that translation is misused by trainers; it is rather used without any appropriate technique or strategy. Hence, the purpose of the paper is to suggest effective and suitable English training program in which translations takes the lion share as means of teaching English for Specific Purposes at the workplace.

**Keywords:** English for Specific Purposes, technicians, translation, English training

ملخص البحث

\*Mokhtaria Kherraz. kherezmokhtaria@yahoo.fr

يهدف هذا المقال إلى تسليط الضوء على ضرورة إدماج الترجمة في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية، لأهداف خاصة في عملية تكوين التقنيين بالشركة الجزائرية للاتصالات في مدينة سعيدة على وجه الخصوص. بالنسبة لوسائل جمع البيانات فقد تم اختيار استبيان موجه إلى تقنيي شركة الجزائر للاتصالات الذين يعملون في الجناح التقني للمؤسسة من جهة، بالإضافة إلى مقابلة مع المسؤولة عن عملية تكوين عمال المؤسسة. أفضت النتائج إلى أن التقنيين في شركة الجزائر للاتصالات بالرغم من أنهم يستفيدون من التكوين الذي تندرج فيه الترجمة كوسيلة للتدريس، إلا أن غياب إستراتيجية مناسبة يلقى عائقا أمام متطلبات هؤلاء التقنيين وحاجتهم لتعلم هذه اللغة، مما يؤدي إلى عدم قدرتهم على تحسين كفاءتهم اللغوية. لذلك تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى اقتراح برنامج تكوين في اللغة الإنجليزية ، يعتمد على الترجمة كوسيلة فعالة للتدريس لفائدة هذه العينة من العمال والتي تمكنهم من تطوير مهاراتهم اللغوية.



#### □. Introduction

After the dominance that English has achieved as a language of communication over all fields, a new approach within this language started to spread in different domains; it is English for Specific Purposes henceforth (ESP). In Algeria, for instance, ESP began to invade the higher educational field where it is now taught academically in most of the specialties. Then, due to the wide spread of computerization and because it has unified people everywhere to learn English as a global language, ESP has quickly shifted to the occupational setting in most of the companies in Algeria. It is worth noticeable that today many managers seek to up-date their employees' English competencies in order to catch up the path with foreign organizations and be competitive as well. As a result, English training for human resources is now crucial. Hence, integrating ESP within workplace training has become a MUST.

As for the present study, technicians who are working in the technical body of L'Algerie Telecom Company (AT) in Saida undergo a workplace training in which English for Specific Purposes is integrated as a subject matter, yet they still face

difficulties to improve their competencies in both spoken communication and written communication. For that reason, the study in hand intends to identify the main reason (s) of that weakness and to suggest fruitful solution so that the respondents may improve their English performance. The research paper has the following research questions:

- What type of English program suit the technicians' needs, wants and interests?
- What measures ought to be taken so that the English training be beneficial for both the technicians and their company?
- Can translation serve technicians in their workplace training?

In accordance with the research questions the following hypotheses are suggested:

- Since the respondents are working in the technical service, they would need English for their software needs.
- AT technicians work is mainly related to technology then they are aware of their English needs. Among the fruitful measures to be taken is to involve the trainees in selecting their English program through conducting needs analysis.
- Translation has improved successful results in teaching non-native learners and this may be the case of technicians as non-native trainees.

#### □. ESP and its implications

##### □.1.ESP interpretations

English for Specific Purposes or in short ESP has come into birth since the early 1960's. Indeed, this approach has emerged due to the specific needs that learners have demonstrated in learning English as (Mackay and Mountford, 1978, p. 4) state that ESP is "generally used to refer to the teaching of English for clearly utilitarian purpose". This approach was first meant with teaching/learning field, in this vein Harmer (1983, p. 1) defines ESP as "...situations where the student has some specific reasons to learn a language". Hence, ESP has developed its own methodology, material and syllabus as Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 6) argue "Both ESP learning situation and the target

situation will influence the nature of syllabus, materials, methodologies and the procedures of evaluation".

From another perspective, ESP is seen as an approach of learning the language particularly by adult learners who are workers, in this sense Mackay and Mountford (1978) claim that ESP is a form of teaching English for utilitarian purpose that is defined with reference to some occupational demands such as telephone operators, civil airline pilots, in vocational training such as technical trades and some academic or professional studies such as engineering and medicine.

In short, though scholars have not agreed on a common definition of ESP, what is clearly understood that this approach is deeply related to the teaching/learning of specific elements in the language that are grounded on the needs of learners.

#### □.2.Historical Review of ESP

Actually, there are three common reasons to the emergence of ESP (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), the demand of a new world, revolution in linguistics and focus on the learner. These factors paved the way to the emergence of teaching ESP in the early sixties. The demand of "a brave new world" was due to the expansion of science, technology and economics in addition to the economic power of the United States in the post world war have resulted in the dominance of English on the international scale.

Moreover, English teaching moved out of the educational establishment to a demand to fulfill the needs of the new generation of learners who knew why they needed to study English and the major reason was business.

-A revolution in Linguistics occurred because of the radical change that appeared in the linguists researches; while their previous researches were based on describing the features of the language, instead they began to focus on the way in which language is used in real communication for instance, in the late 1960s and the beginning of 1970s, there were many attempts to describe English for Science and terminology(EST). (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987) state that one of the discoveries was that spoken and written English vary that is to mean given the particular context in which English is used, the variant of English

will change which resulted in the variation of the language according to the different situations then it was the language instructions which meet the needs of the learner in specific context that shaped the language in use.

-A focus on the learner's learning was given because the learners were seen to use different learning strategies, employ different skills and be motivated by different needs and interests so; more importance was given to the ways in which learners acquired language.

### □.3.Characteristics of ESP

Being influenced by Strevens (1983), Dudley-Evans (1997) has divided English for Specific Purposes into absolute and variable characteristics.

**Table 01: Absolute and Variable Characteristics of ESP**

Absolute	Variable
ESP ●meets specific needs of learners. ●uses many methodologies ●centered on appropriate language in grammar, lexis, register, study skills and discourse	ESP ●designed for specific disciplines ●uses different methodology from General English ●designed for adult learners ●assumes basic knowledge from ELT

### □. Training at the Workplace

In any occupational context, employees represent Human Resources. Nevertheless, the latter is more practical and formal. Indeed, the success or failure of any company or organization is depending on the quality of its Human Resources. In other words, the essential element for developing any company is the role of the people in the organization. Therefore, to ensure good outcomes and increase productivity for the company training human resources to up-date their professional and language knowledge at the workplace is crucially required in order to be creative and competitive with other companies either national or international ones.

In this vein, Price (2007) states:

*« All the decisions, strategies, factors, principles, operations,*

*practices, functions activities and methods related to the management of people as employees in any type of organization ; all the dimensions related to people in their employment relationships : and all the dynamics that flow from it : all aimed at adding value to the delivery of goods and services ; as well as the quality of work life for employees and hence helping to ensure continuous organizational success in transformative environment » ( p 30-31)*

Price has stated the most important criteria related to the management of employees at any work place and that ensure employees satisfaction on one hand and organizational success on the other hand. Besides, training employees at the workplace is an important factor that influences employees' skills, abilities and attitudes. It also helps up-date their professional performance with the advance of technology and enables them to manage the functions of the newly technical equipment.

In this vein, Armstrong (2006) states that Performance means what and how people achieve it. Hence, Performance refers to all what is affective in matter of knowledge, skills and competencies. In other words, having high potential employees does not mean that they will succeed. Yet, they must know what they have to do and how to do it. That is why training experts often use the phrase "workplace learning and performance".

#### □.1.Training benefits

Training in the workplace has a central meaning in the discussion of the role of Human Resources in any organization. Training is the key reason for success because there is a continuous change in the strategies of the management of any company and L'Algerie Telecom must go hand in hand with these changes. Technicians in L'Algerie Telecom have a direct connection to the company's quality of service and to the Company's technological investment. For that reason, managers should have adapted training programs for the benefits of their employees as well as for the organization because training:

- √ Increases confidence and motivation.
- √ Decreases risks because well trained employees can use the equipment without waste.

√Brings a sense of security and therefore reduce labor turnover and absenteeism.

√Involves the employees in the change process and provide them with the skills needed.

√Enhances their responsibility and therefore increase pay and promotion

√ Improves the availability and quality of the staff

#### □.1. a. Language skills at the workplace

During the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, training employees focused on the writing side only. Then focus shifted to “spoken interaction” including spoken interaction and oral presentation and this gave the four skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) full attention. Later on training has covered “business communication skills” including socializing, telephoning, meetings, oral presentations and negotiation. Hence, work place training evolution kept up with advanced communication technologies such as “telecommunication, computer network and video conferencing” (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998, p. 13) which is the case of technicians in L’Algerie Telecom Company.

#### □.2. Training Program Design

In any organizational setting, success depends on whether the company trains its employees or not for workplace training gives employees the skills they need to perform well in their jobs. Training may involve a multi-week period that is why designing the suitable program must carefully be planned. Therefore, the best design might be as follow:

√ Plan a detailed training outline.

√Include (in the program) the training factors that motivate employees to both learn and apply what they learn in the workplace.

√ Choose the right and suitable content (books, exercises and activities).

√ Provide the needed material (Ipad, workbooks, power point slides, course activities and web and computer-based activities).

√Decide about the schedule so as not to disinterest employees (full day training is not as effective as half a day or

three-fourth a day).

√ Appraise and reward employees for using the new skills they acquired during their training.

√ Involve the trainees in designing the program through conducting a needs analysis. Yet, What does needs analysis mean ?

Needs Analysis is one of the important criteria which were adopted and validated in ESP. Target Needs and Learner Needs analysis is considered as the corner stone of English for Specific Purposes that leads to a very focused course, Dudley-Evan and St. John (1998). On his side, Jordon (1997) proposes that Needs Analysis should be the first step to divide syllabuses, courses, materials and even the type of teaching and learning that takes place, thus the learner's purposes are placed in the central position within the framework of needs analysis. Furthermore, clear distinctions are made by (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987) to distinguish between Target Situation Needs (what the learner needs to do in the target situation) and Learning Needs (what the learner needs to do in order to learn). They break Target Needs down into three categories: Necessities, Lacks and Wants. Necessities are " what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in" the target situation" (Robinson, 1991). Lacks are the "necessities the learner needs". Wants are "what the learner wants or feels he needs"

#### □. Translation in Teaching ESP at the Workplace

Previously, translation had its own status in teaching foreign languages to non-native speakers through the *Grammar Translation Method*. It has, for a long time, served the teaching/learning field so much that good outcomes could be achieved by learners. Later on, it was ignored and disfavored for years as Widdowson states "Translation has long been in exile" (2003, p.160). Yet, after the rapid spread of English for Specific Purposes which is mainly devoted to both academic and occupational settings translation has come back to the surface for the important role it plays in improving learners' language skills namely; listening, speaking , reading and writing. At last, Translation has established itself as "a fifth skill" in the



classroom.

Several researchers tried to highlight the importance of using translation in teaching EOP. Yakhlef (2012), for instance, could demonstrate the significance of using translation in teaching vocabulary and collocations for words frequently have more than one meaning as they may be used in different contexts. Besides, Leonardi (2010) work focused more on the need to teach the characteristics of business and financial texts in matter of their cultural terms so as the learners can boost the comprehension of such texts. Among earlier studies, Widdowson (2003) claimed that translation activities are mainly recommended for advanced level learners which is the case of the respondents of the study in hand.

Like teacher/learner context, trainer/trainee at the workplace also requires using translation as a technique in teaching communicative activities and tasks. Within the scope of the study in hand, translation would certainly serve and facilitate leaning English for Specific Purposes for the technicians who have shown a great interest in learning ESP. Accordingly, translation can be taught through a variety of tasks such as role playing, drilling, games, etc.

#### □. Data Collection Instruments

For data collection instruments, a questionnaire and an interview were applied for the present research. The questionnaire was addressed to the target respondents; technicians in AT company whereas the interview was conducted with the manager in charge of the in-service training of the employees. Hence, the collected data for the present study was both quantitative and qualitative. Indeed, both questionnaire and interview have completed each other in a way to have an insight view of employees' English training context. What comes next is an analysis of the collected data.

##### □.1. Analysis of Questionnaire A

As far as AT technicians are concerned, among 100 technical employees there were a total of 35 technicians. Yet, only 30 respondents have filled the questionnaire and returned back with a percentage of 85.71%.The results of the planned questionnaire

which comprised two rubrics (personal information and impacts of integrating translation in the training on employees' opinions) revealed the following results:

**Table 02: Respondents' Personal Information**

From the table above, it can be noticed that there are more men than women who are working as technicians and this due to the difficult tasks related to them. Besides, most of the respondents are aged between 30 and 40 which mean that they are young and ready to undergo training and learn more. Whereas, the majority

Item	Measure	Number	Percentage
Gender	Female	12	40%
	Male	18	60%
Age	30	07	23.33%
	30-40	15	50%
	40-50	08	26.66%
	More than50	00	00%
Job experience	10	08	26.66%
	10-20	18	60%
	20-30	04	13.33%
	More than 30	00	00%

have more than 10 years of experience with a percentage of 80% which is advantageous for them; that is to mean they are expert in their field so as to undergo an English training which will help them investigate their knowledge through the use of another language. In other words, they will be able to improve their professional skills; the aim that AT Company seeks to achieve. All the characteristics of the sampling in the present study demonstrate that the respondents may improve successful results in the case the English training is well organized in matter of selecting suitable program, implementing a good strategy to use translation as a means to teach that program, providing the needed materials and designing effective courses followed by planned

oral and written tests.

The next table is about the technicians' opinions about the training they undergo.

**Table 03: The Need of Translation in the Training**

The table above clarifies that though technicians have demonstrated a remarkable acceptance to learn English in their training using translation. More than 65% have explained that they could not achieve their goals through the training courses they have done. Yet, according to the respondents among the obstacles they face is the lack of suitable practice when learning through translation, more than 60% said that the translation tasks

	SD	D	DL	AL	A	SA
Individual goals achievement	00	4.16	62.50	20.83	8.33	4.16
Help acquire good understanding	00	12.5	8.33	16.66	54.16	8.33
Be skillful	00	00	16.66	25	29.16	29.16
Translation use rises performance	00	00	8.33	16.66	50	25
Translation teaching rises motivation	00	00	00	16.66	41.66	41.66
Suitable translation input	50	16.66	33.33	00	00	00
Trainer's English competency	00	00	00	00	58.33	41.66
The good way of teaching translation	00	00	58.33	41.66	00	00
Trainees' interest in using translation	00	00	00	00	00	100
The match of translation tasks to trainees' needs	16.6	25	25	25	8.33	00

do not match their needs nor their wants or interests. For that reason, it seems important to take the respondents' demands into

consideration.

#### □.2. Analysis of the interview

As it was mentioned earlier, the interview was conducted with the responsible in charge of training employees in AT Company in Saida. It is important to mention that the interviewee was helpful and the interview lasted for one hour. A preplanned list of questions was useful as a guide though some questions were added and some others were modified as the interview was semi-structured. In order not to forget the details, with the note-taking a record was used in order to save the responses and re-listen to them several times.

The first point that was tackled was about the timing of the training, the interviewee replied that the timing was suitable for the trainees as they undergo an in-service training that is to mean that training is part of their work. Indeed, their workplace training begins from 9 p.m to 2 p.m and lasts for five days each semester. Another question was about the availability of the materials, she replied that all the needed materials were available such as computers, data shows, videos, etc.

The third question concerned the trainer's qualifications; the interviewee assured that among the required criteria to be a trainer in the company is to be well qualified in English. Moreover, the trainer herself undergoes English trainings. Yet, she often faces difficulties with the trainees for they are not able to express themselves in English and this was her response for the fourth question. According to the responsible in charge of the training of employees in AT Company, technicians show a high level of motivation when it comes to a matter of English workplace training because they are aware of the importance English plays in improving their tasks as they also know that English is more and more required in the field of telecommunication that is why having a good level in English would certainly have positive effects on the outcomes of technicians in their jobs. Yet, the lack of a suitable English program lies as an obstacle for both the trainer and the trainees. In fact, the trainer makes remarkable efforts in designing English courses for the benefits of the trainees but this is still not enough to fulfill their needs, wants and

interests. About using translation in teaching English to trainees, as she made several class observations, the respondent explained that the trainer's role is limited to training and not to design a whole training program in which a variety of activities and tasks may be taught through translation. Hence, translation use is very limited because according to her designing a suitable practice goes beyond the trainer's ability for it requires the participation of different parties such as experts in the field of telecommunication, stakeholders of the company and experienced teachers of language. This may be noticed through the tests results technicians get in spoken and written tests by the end of each training period. Indeed, the respondents do three types of assessment: oral tests, written tests and both but because of their low competency, their results are weak which affects their psychological readiness to learn English, their interest and their motivation negatively.

The respondent showed us a chart and said that The results technicians get at the end of each training reflect their real level in improving their English competency in mastering spoken tasks and written ones. Indeed, 25% of competency in oral English means that the respondents are unable to represent their company in an international conference. Besides, 30% of competency in written English refers to the need for a rich and suitable program that may help the respondents to be able to confront the new demands of the telecommunication expertise among which English competencies are crucial. Actually, there is a clear call to integrate translation in training the respondents in order to help them ameliorate their language skills and improve their feedback.

#### □. Conclusion

To conclude, the present study main purpose is to pave the way for further researches because training employees whose work requires English at the work place is still neglected by researchers and needs too much importance in order to ameliorate the status of English language particularly in the economic sector.

Indeed, after having tested the hypotheses through submitting a questionnaire that was addressed to the technicians in L'Algerie Telecom Company as a case company in addition to an interview

that was conducted with the manager in charge of the training, the results revealed that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is integrated in training AT employees particularly the technicians who are the case of the present study. Yet, there is a mismatch between the trainer and the trainees. In other words, the trainer prepares a program which is, according to her point of view, suitable for the demands of the telecommunication field. Besides, technicians require for an English program that can be specific to their technical work like software applications and hardware (equipments) in addition to the terminology that they need to know in order to solve any problem that may occur while installing any material and this cannot be achieved unless translation tasks are implemented within the English program which is devoted to the technicians at their workplace.

Therefore, to overcome this problem, here are some fruitful suggestions of different kinds of tasks that may help the respondents to learn and practise at the same time such as gap filling, match in pairs, translating short passages that are related to computer software and hardware, searching for the synonyms and opposites of some terminology, etc. Indeed, AT technicians need to improve their reading and writing skills more than speaking and listening. Thus, firstly, practice should imply the translation of the needed vocabulary (words in isolation). Secondly, proposing short technical texts such as computer and its components, input, output and storage peripherals to be translated may help respondents refine their knowledge because they are supposed to translate according to the context. As far as English vocabulary is concerned, learning English collocations and compound words will help them acquire more vocabulary where as the writing skill; trainees may practice it through gap filling as a start and move on to more difficult tasks like ordering statements and writing short passages using translation.

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#### □. Appendices

##### 1. The questionnaire:

I would be thankful if you respond to the following questionnaire, this is for your benefits in conducting the English training you undergo in your company (you can respond in English, French or Arabic)

A. Rubric one: ( Tick the right answer)

-Gender: Female / Male

-Age: 10 / 10 -20 / 20-30 / 30

-Job experience: 10 / 10-20 / 20-30 / 30

B. Rubric three: (Tick the right column)

- This training course has achieved my individual goals.
- It helped me acquire a deeper understanding for my job.
- My attendance helped me rise my English performance level.
- My readiness helped me perform well in the training course.
- The creation of an appropriate training environment rose my motivation.
- The organization of the training courses in its specific timing helped me.
- The trainer is an expert in his area of competence.
- He responds in respect of the trainees' needs.
- The number of the trainees is appropriate.
- The program matches my needs, wants and interests.

The symbols which are abbreviated in the table are:

SD (Strongly disagree) / D (Disagree) / DL (Disagree little)

AL (Agree little) / A (Agree) / SA (Strongly agree)

2. The interview:

I would be grateful if you accept to conduct an interview and respond to some questions about the workplace English training your software employees undergo.

A. Rubric one:

- Is the timing of the English training your employees undergo suitable for them?
- How about the materials? Are they available?
- Is the trainer well qualified in English?
- Is the English program available?
- Does the trainer face any difficulty in her teaching?
- What kind of difficulties she faces?
- Are trainees motivated when learning English?
- Does the trainer integrate translation in her teaching?

B. Rubric two: Statistics about their tests results

- Do the trainees have English tests?
- What skills are they assessed in?
- How are the results they get from their English assessment?