Chapter 10
Teaching Translation to Moroccan University Students: Challenges and Perspectives

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Abstract This chapter addresses some of the key challenges that teaching translation in Moroccan universities faces and that impede the achievement of the course objectives. The current state of affairs reveals that, in the English departments in Morocco, the fact that translation is not a majoring subject overshadows its importance in the eyes of undergraduates from the linguistics, cultural studies, and literature streams alike. Overall, students' attitude toward translation is negative with evident underestimation of its value, misconception of its nature, and indifference toward its benefits. Moreover, weaknesses in students' linguistic competence, which underpins translation competence, represents a serious stumbling block to their learning process. Another obstacle is the interference of students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Moroccan Arabic, Tamazight, Classical Arabic, and French), which often results in erroneous renditions of texts. Furthermore, reliance on electronic devices seriously diminishes the efficiency of in-class activities, for students disregard the role of print dictionaries, which are unavoidable, multi-purpose tools. Finally, students' failure in the translation module is also due to their time mismanagement during exams. The observational study provides some recommendations likely to enhance students' performance and help them cope with the identified challenges in order to recognize the fair value of translation at the university.

Keywords Teaching translation · Student disengagement · Linguistic incompetence · Translation competence · Student ICT dependency

10.1 Introduction

The departments of English in Moroccan universities attract large numbers of students, who complete high school and want to obtain a Bachelor of Arts in English studies. Many of those entrants accomplish their undergraduate studies with significant results, but for the large majority it turns out that they make the wrong choice, and as they do not show sufficient academic commitment. The ultimate outcome

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is either utter failure or graduation without mastery of the key skills targeted by the syllabi. Students' flawed initial decisions are generally the result of a lack of effective prior orientation and well-thought post-graduation objectives, often with many misconceptions regarding higher education in general and English studies in particular.

The Moroccan departments of English offer a wide range of courses that aim to endow undergraduates with knowledge and skills and expose them to more advanced and more autonomous learning opportunities. Among these courses, translation stands out as an interdisciplinary subject whereby learners' performance is largely contingent upon their proficiency in other branches of knowledge dealt with in the curricula, involving a variety of linguistic, analytic, and expressive skills, along with cross-cultural awareness and general knowledge. Consequently, students' level of linguistic competence in particular affects the translation course's expected learning outcomes, which, broadly speaking, consist in endowing students with techniques, procedures, and strategies that enable them to achieve equivalence in terms of meaning between source and target texts. It is worth noting here that the language combination dealt with is mainly English/Arabic/English, while French is often introduced for comparison purposes, or in case there are foreign students who do not speak Arabic. In addition, undergraduates' translation competence is impaired by linguistic and cultural interference, which springs from the Moroccan social and educational background, as well as by ubiquitous wireless technology, which has become associated with not only academic dishonesty but also inhibition of learners' overall performance.

This chapter aims to pinpoint a number of challenges that hinder the achievement of the translation course objectives and thwart aspirations of teachers and departments alike. The argument that it wants to emphasize is that, while the translation course represents an invaluable opportunity to achieve goals of paramount importance at both the academic and the vocational levels, undergraduates insist, both consciously and unconsciously, on making of it more a failure than a success. Therefore, the significance of the study lies in the fact that by providing a student-oriented informative and analytical assessment of the current state of affairs, it endeavors to change attitudes and raise awareness among learners as well as instructors in order to make translation a more beneficial course. It equally derives its importance from its reliance on concrete illustrations showing errors committed by students from the third through the sixth semesters, based on several years of teaching experience and close observation of students' performance during in-class activities or examinations. Drawing on all these elements of inquiry, this chapter finally attempts to elaborate some suggestions and practical solutions in the hope that they would contribute to giving translation its due importance among Moroccan undergraduates, which in turn would contribute to enhancing the quality and efficiency of Moroccan higher education.

10.2 Students' Attitudes Toward Translation: A Big Challenge to Cope with in the Classroom

A strenuous and demanding task though it is, translation remains an enjoyable problem-solving exercise that aims to achieve equivalence of texts of varying complexity. Thus, it allows the translator, by grappling with the subtleties and intricacies of different languages, to get immersed in different worlds of similarities and differences at the levels of linguistic constructions and cultural representations. Likewise, teaching translation involves much of such enjoyment especially because it allows sharing knowledge and skills with young learners who are at a crucial period of their academic process. Thus, as Catford (1965) puts it, "translation is in itself a valuable skill to be imparted to students" (p. viii). For all these reasons, learning translation ought to interest students and trigger their curiosity to take up worthwhile challenges and explore diverse linguistic and cultural features. It should also incite many among them to choose this vital activity as the area of their future study and research projects or even their professional careers.

Nevertheless, teaching translation in the Moroccan university often meets with adverse conditions that engender disappointment and frustration caused by learners themselves, mainly due to their abstention from getting involved in the learning process. Generalizing this judgment to all undergraduates would undoubtedly be unfair, for there are outstanding students who display promising potential each semester and accomplish significant results every year. Moreover, translation is in itself a challenging task even for professional translators, and it is understood that even the best undergraduates are not expected to carry out flawless renditions. However, considering their overall progress, feedback, attitudes, and behavior in the classroom, it is no exaggeration saying that the great majority of them come under that category which is at the origin of worrisome conclusions.

In fact, undergraduates' aversion to translation does not mean that it is an uninspiring activity. Such attitude can first be explained by the fact that lack of student motivation and engagement in-class activities, and therefore poor results, have become common issues about which most teachers in all subjects—and even all departments—usually complain. Second, students' reaction is further reinforced by the fact that translation in the Moroccan university is not a professional but an academic subject; that is, merely a module (previously a unit within a module) that is part of the curriculum, and whose class credit is no more than three (previously two) hours per week. Furthermore, students' reaction is motivated by their misconception of the nature and implications of translation, which they deem a quite easy task that simply consists in finding a one-to-one correspondence between the words of two languages within two texts. This reductionist view also shows a lack of awareness of translation's close connection with, and even dependency on, other disciplines that they study across the semesters. The upshot is that the translation course is overshadowed in the eyes of undergraduates since they know beforehand that they will major in the "English Studies" track, specializing in one of the three streams: Literature, Linguistics, or Cultural Studies.

The nature of the translation course requires positive interaction between the teacher and students on the one hand, and among students themselves on the other. That is why students are encouraged to work in pairs or groups of three to four to read, discuss, and analyze the texts to be translated. This is meant to create a more propitious learning environment where students are given opportunity to gain self-confidence, think and talk freely, exchange ideas with their peers and come up with a final version of the text to be suggested for collective discussion in the second stage of the class. According to Kiraly (2014), "learning must be an essentially active and interactive, inter-psychological process" (p. 34), and House (2000) believes that "collaborative translation work" should be given precedence over individual performance. Indeed, group work offers students a less stressful environment and, given the disparity of their levels of proficiency and their inability to spot their own errors, it represents an occasion not only for self-testing but also for correcting each other's mistakes. However, the efficiency of this method depends on two fundamental conditions that are currently nonexistent in translation classes at the Moroccan university. On the one hand, it necessitates students' interest in translation and active contribution to such learning process. On the other hand, it requires dealing with small-size classes, for learners of translation need special attention and instructors can only address their errors by customizing the course input and feedback, and by checking understanding during task-based activities before sharing their renditions with the rest of the class. Conversely, crowdedness is a serious handicap to such method because, in addition to the impossibility to interact efficiently with individuals, it is synonymous with noise and anarchy, which creates an inappropriate teaching/learning atmosphere.

By and large, all the aforementioned factors combined make students shun translation and care more about completing the module with the least effort than acquiring knowledge and expertise for the exam and the future. Thus, instead of full involvement, at such young age, they display a kind of disengagement with a tendency to fall into sheer lethargy. Apart from a handful of assiduous members of the group who are eager to learn and improve through active participation, the rest are either passive or preoccupied by other concerns than learning. As a result, even the minority that is motivated and interested in learning is negatively affected by the majority's attitude and behavior.

10.3   Low Linguistic Competence as a Major Handicap to Adequate Translation

The second impediment that deters students' progress in translation is their poor linguistic competence, which is prerequisite to source-text comprehension on the one hand, and target-text composition on the other. Translation is by definition associated with languages, and languages are governed by sets of rules that regulate users' constructions that communicate their ideas. As an inter-lingual communicative act,

translation can only take place if the rules and conventions of the source language are understood and those of the receptor language are implemented. Nord's (2005) remark concerning trainee translators applies fairly well here: "a solid linguistic and cultural competence in both source and target cultures is not the object of, but a prerequisite for, translator training." In other words, such courses as reading comprehension, composition, grammar/syntax, semantics, stylistics, discourse analysis, morphology, and even phonetics and phonology are directly linked to translation competence because they enable students to cope with the two essential stages of the translation process, namely, decoding and re-encoding texts.

Nevertheless, there is the rub, for undergraduates' (in)competence in the foregoing subjects is rather a handicap than a booster of their translation competence. To begin with, one of the fundamental principles that the translation teacher strives to impart to learners is that the translator's foremost attribute consists in being a good reader, and that reading entails analysis and thorough understanding of the text as a sine qua non of its reconstruction in the target language. However, a common—and puzzling— habit among most students is that they do not take time to read and comprehend the text, which unavoidably results in inadequate meaning transfer. Instead of putting into practice the techniques they learn in the reading courses they are assigned in different semesters, they just vaguely and superficially examine the text and then hastily attempt to find equivalents to words as separate lexical items rather than as interrelated components of sentences. Consequently, they are often misled by the first impression their first contact with the text creates or by certain words and phrases they consider in isolation. This misconception of the translation process prevents students from developing their analytic skills and reflective abilities requisite for meaning extrapolation.

As revealed by class activities and exam copies, concrete illustrations from students' errors show their lack of awareness of the semantic relationships between words and the connection between sentences, which cannot be dissociated from the syntactic structure of the text and the logic of its overall texture. For example, in a text that comprised the phrase "Since prehistoric times," the word "since" was understood as a subordinating conjunction and not as an adverb of time. Therefore, some students opted for the Arabic phrase "بما أن"(*bimā anna*) instead of "منذ"(*mundhu*) as its equivalent, which evidently did not express the original meaning. Meaning disambiguation is much dependent on understanding the nature and grammatical function of sentence components, which is in turn crucial for accurate constructions of the target text. It is true that a "text is a meaning unit, not a form unit, but meaning is realized through form and without understanding the meanings of individual forms one cannot interpret the meaning of the text as a whole" (Baker, 1992, p. 6). Another example of mistranslation resulting from students' inability to differentiate between word classes is the case of terms that are similar in form as verbs, nouns, or adjectives. For instance, the phrase "market products" was inaccurately rendered as "منتوجات السوق"(*mantūjāt al-sūq*) instead of "تسويق المنتوجات"(*taswīq al-mantūjāt*) because the word "market" was understood as a noun and not as a verb. Similar pitfalls are the phrase "global media concerns," where some students mistook the word "concerns" for a verb, while it actually is a plural noun, and "Empathy

matters," where the verb "matters" was considered as a plural noun. Hasty reading and lack of comprehension proficiency result in misunderstanding Arabic texts, too. As a relevant instance, many fifth-semester students failed to grasp the fact that, in the sentence: "تستهدفُ الحربُ الاستمراريةَ في العلاقات الاجتماعية" (*tastahdifu 'l-ḥarbu al-istimrāriyyata fil 'alāqāti al-ijtimā'iyyati*), the word "*al-istimrāriyyah*" is a direct object, which means that it is a noun, and not an adjective that modifies the word "*alḥarbu*." Therefore, they used the phrase "continuous war" instead of "continuity of social relations," which led to an erroneous rendition.

The case of adjectives that modify more than one noun is another illustration of errors that are detrimental to the quality of translation. Among the many cases identified are the following: many students rendered the phrase "different tribes, nations, and cultures" as "قبائل مختلفة وأمم وثقافات" (*qabā'ilu mukhtalifatun wa umamun wa thaqāfāt*) instead of "قبائل وأمم وثقافات مختلفة" (*qabā'ilu wa umamun wa thaqāfātun mukhtalifah*) since the adjective "*mukhtalifah*" refers to the three nouns concerned. A similar instance in this context is the phrase "local communities or environments," which was translated as "المجتمعات المحلية أو البيئة" (*al-mujtama'ātu 'l-maḥalliyyatu awi 'l-bī'ah*), while the correct rendition should be "المجتمعات أو البيئة المحلية" (*al-mujtama'ātu awi 'l-bī'atu 'l-maḥalliyyah*). Consequently, such problems affect seriously the translation course by diverting its objectives as it thus requires extra time and attention to address students' errors, especially due to their number, types, and frequency.

Another problem stems from confusion of words due to hasty and careless reading, which happens even with fifth- and sixth-semester students. Among the instances identified are the words "integrity," which was mistaken for "integration," "غربية" (*gharbiyyah*; western) understood as "غريبة" (*gharībah*; strange) or "عربية" (*'arabiyyah*; Arab), and "استثارة" (*istithārah*; stimulation) read as "استشارة" (*istishārah*; consultation). But there are graver cases like understanding the abbreviation "IT" as the third-person pronoun "It" although the whole text revolves around the evolution of information technology, and mistaking the pronoun "us" for "US," and so rendering it as "الولايات المتحدة" (*al-wilāyātu 'l-muttaḥidah*). Besides, confusion can result from lack of knowledge at the level of word formation, as was the case of the word "ecosystem," which some students translated as "النظام الاقتصادي" (*al-niẓām al-iqtiṣādī*), which means "the economic system," obviously entrapped by the prefix "eco." Strangely enough, many fifth-semester students failed to grasp the meaning of "Tunis-based" in "the Tunis-based Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization," thus translating it as "القاعدة التونسية للعصبة العربية للتربية الثقافية والتنظيم العلمي" (*al-qāʿidatu al-tūnusiyyatu lil-ʿosbati 'l-ʿarabiyyati lil-tarbiyyati al-thaqāfiyyati wal-tanẓīm al-ʿilmī*). This corresponds in no way to what the original means as it becomes "the Tunisian base of the Arab League for cultural education and scientific organization." It is noteworthy that different groups are often given the same texts and that the same errors are committed by many students, which is quite intriguing.

Baker (1992) states that "errors and problems in translation mostly result from the non-equivalence between the source and target languages," but all the above-mentioned examples result rather from a lack of knowledge of basic linguistic skills

or absence of concentration and even sloppiness than from real translational difficulties that are caused by complex syntactic or stylistic formulations. Students hastily opt for terms and constructions without taking pains to check their grammaticality and semantic appropriateness by matching the source and target texts. Absentmindedness is sometimes so flagrant that it concerns obvious details that radically alter the information presented by the source text, which goes against the essence of translation itself whereby the role of the translator is that of a mediator that transmits the same messages of the original author. For instance, inaccuracy often concerns dates and figures; thus, the nineteenth century becomes the ninth century, "46,5%" becomes "45,6%," "a hundred million people" is turned to "a hundred people," the "United Nations" is changed to the "United States," to mention only a few. In one of the texts speaking of the 2016 Literature Nobel Prize (fifth-semester final examination), among the renditions of "الأكاديمية السويدية"(*al-akādīmiyyatu al-suwaydiyyah*), that is, "the Swedish Academy," were "the Swiss Academy" and even "the Sudanese Academy." In other texts, "the 21 Arab countries" was turned to "القرن الواحد والعشرين"(*al-qarni 'l-wāḥidi wal 'ishrīn*,*" which means "the 21st century," and the term "cultural norms" became "النورمانديين"(*al-nūrmandiyyīn*), meaning "the Normans." While translation requires presence of mind to ensure maximum accuracy of meaning, students do not take time to think critically and carefully enough to minimize such flagrant mismatching of the source and target texts.

At the lexical level, insufficiency of adequate vocabulary in students' lexical repository reduces their scope of word choice and sentence building, which results again in irrelevant renditions. For example, instead of using the word "عقد"(*'aqd*) as the equivalent of "decade," the words "قرن"(*qarn*), which means "century," and "ألفية"(*alfiyyah*), which means "millennium," were used. Moreover, the way students deal with synonymy, homonymy, and polysemy shows how learners reap the bitter fruits of their complacency and disengagement during the semester. As a case in point, even if they are constantly reminded that some words, though synonymous in principle, are not necessarily interchangeable no matter what the context is, many students just pick up "equivalents" randomly. Among the numerous cases noticed in this respect, the word "زيت"(*zayt*) was opted for instead of "نفط"(*naft*) although the text was concerned with the economic crisis and the rise of oil prices. Likewise, the English verb "to halve" (the rate of illiteracy) was rendered as (الأمية) "تفريق"("*tafrīq*" (*al-ummiyyah*)) by many fifth-semester students instead of "تخفيض (نسبة الأمية) الى النصف"(*takhfīḍ nisbati 'l-ummiyyati ila 'l-niṣf*). It is true that among the meanings of the word "*tafrīq*," which is the verbal noun from "*farraqa*," is "division," as in "فرِّق تَسُد"(*farriq tasud*; divide and rule), but it does not refer to "reducing by half," and it also has other meanings, namely, "dispersion," "distribution," "separation," and "differentiation," which are irrelevant in the context concerned.

Besides insufficient understanding of the source text, there is the problem of faulty use of the target language rules, which can be of different types, namely, at the syntactic and lexical levels. As Larson (1984) expresses it, "to do effective translation one must discover the *meaning* of the source language and use receptor language *forms* which express this meaning in a natural way" (p. 6). In fact, many linguistic weaknesses can be primitive errors that learners could easily avoid, yet they

often become a major hindrance to quality translation. Some of the errors might be harmless at the level of meaning transfer; however, overall text structure, including appropriate punctuation, is crucial to efficient rendition of the intended meaning. Neglect of the third-person "s" in the present simple tense, for instance, occurs not because of occasional moments of distraction, but rather systematically despite the fact that students have been dealing with it since their earliest contact with English grammar. Sometimes, it even occurs where it is not needed, that is, even in cases of verbs with plural subjects. Similarly, the problem of capitalization, which they started learning about much earlier in French classes, still represents a recurrent error even in the fifth and sixth semesters.

The upshot of this is that, instead of addressing serious translational difficulties and working on how to improve students' advanced translation skills and enhance their linguistic manipulations and stylistic formulations for a better reproduction of the target text, teachers are obliged to deal with basic linguistic errors. As Nord (2005) puts it, "if translation is taught too early, i.e., before the students have reached a sufficient command of language and culture, translation classes will degenerate into language acquisition classes without the students (or the teachers) even realising" (p. 30). This does not mean that translation should not be taught at the university level, but students should take translation (and other courses) more seriously to take optimum advantage of it. Teaching translation should help consolidate and upgrade undergraduates' competences; it is not supposed to serve as a method for second language acquisition, as used to be the case of the Grammar-Translation Method. Students' ability to recognize grammatical and ungrammatical sentences, in addition to their ability to ensure coherence and cohesion for a natural flow of ideas, should be acquired in other courses than translation, and they represent the basis for an effective comprehension of the source text and a proper use of the target language rules and conventions. These abilities in turn contribute to building up translation competence.

10.4 Impact of Students' Linguistic and Cultural Backgrounds on Their Renditions

In the Moroccan educational system, students start learning Standard Arabic and French in the primary school, whereas Moroccan Arabic and/or Tamazight are their mother tongues depending on regions. In other words, Morocco is a multilingual country, so the majority of students who reach higher education are multilingual (Ennaji, 2005). Consequently, undergraduates' linguistic performance displays various local and foreign influences; different languages and cultures impinge on one another, taking the form of transfer, borrowing, code-switching, or interference (Ennaji, 2005). As far as translation is concerned, there are multiple cases where such sources of influence interfere in students' writing habits and affect negatively the quality of their renditions.

From a linguistic perspective, students often imitate (Moroccan or Standard) Arabic or French formulations to express ideas in English. One type of difficulties is their imitation of structure and word order of Standard Arabic while writing in English. It takes time before learners understand (and many of them never do) that every language—despite some similarities—has its own way of arranging words in sentences and expressing ideas. As a matter of fact, cross-linguistic influences persist regardless of the semesters and levels of proficiency concerned not only as a normal consequence of multilingualism but also as a result of linguistic weaknesses. Among the cases showing the impact of French on students' use of English is their emulation of certain structures and expressions like the use of "to have" and "to be" as the equivalents of "avoir" and "être" without consideration of the English typical grammar rules and stylistic norms. It is common among many undergraduates to say, for instance, "I am/I am not agree" instead of "I/do not agree" because they are used to the French expression "je suis/je ne suis pas d'accord." In the same vein, some third-year students, while dealing with sentence-level translation, often use the sentence "I have twenty years," which is literally taken from the French sentence "J'ai vingt ans." Another illustration of language transfer emanates from French false friends like using "actually" for "currently," "notes" for "grades/marks," "sensible" for "sensitive," and "assist" for "attend." Prepositions also create confusion in students' writing, as is the case of "interested by," which students use instead of "interested in" or "pass by" instead of "go through" (e.g., a stressful experience) because they have in mind the French phrases "intéressé(e) par" and "passer par (e.g., des moments difficiles)."

A common error that shows Arabic influence on English even among fifth- and sixth-semester students is their imitation of the definite article "ال"(*al*), which is used in Arabic even for abstract, countable and uncountable nouns that are not defined. Thus, they use such terms as "the globalization" for "العولمة"(*al-ʿawlamah*), "the culture" for "الثقافة"(*al-thaqāfah*), "the illegal immigration" for "الهجرةُ السِّريَّة"(*al-hijratu 'l-sirriyyah*), and "the birds (of a feather…)" for "الطيور (على أشكالها تقع"(*al-ṭoyūru ʿalā ashkālihā taqaʾ*). The influence also comes from French, where the articles "la" (e.g., "la culture") "le" (e.g., "le développement"), and "les" (e.g., les droits de l'homme) are used.

The impact of Arabic linguistic background on Moroccan undergraduates' English is also manifest in their use of prepositions. In spite of similarity in the use of some prepositions in English and Arabic like "to rely on" (على يعتمد ; *yaʿtamidu ʿalā*) and "to lie/consist in" (في يكمن ; *yakmunu fī*), many other cases represent pitfalls for many students who imitate Arabic while writing in English. Among the recurrent mistakes in this context are the use of "to contribute in" instead of "to contribute to" because the corresponding Arabic phrase is "يساهم في"(*yusāhimu fī*), and "in the same time" instead of "at the same time" because students have in mind the Arabic phrase "في نفس الوقت"(*fī nafsi 'l-waqt*). Another common error is the expression "From one side… from another side" to render the Arabic expression " "من جهة... و من جهة أخرى"" (*min jihah … wa min jihatin ukhrā*) while there is a ready-made formula that is used on a regular basis, which is "On the one hand… On the other hand.…"

Due to their inability or reluctance to analyze texts syntactically and semantically, students resort to literal translation. As Baker (1992) remarks, "translating words and phrases out of context is certainty a futile exercise" (p. 6), and it is more so when dealing with Arabic and English, which belong to two completely different language families. One of the big challenges with regard to Arabic is the fact that the meaning of a word changes in accordance with the diacritical modifications and case endings inserted, which depend on to the grammatical function or word class in a sentence. Another common feature of students' English target texts is their imitation of the Arabic sentence length; thus, they end up producing faulty constructions with repetition of similar connectors or subordinators and inappropriate punctuation. What is more, Arabic and English do not have the same number of tenses; while Arabic has only three tenses, in English they can be extended to a dozen if we consider all verb forms in accordance with the modals that accompany them. Therefore, translating from or into Arabic requires first a clear understanding of those tenses in order to grasp the type of action that is described, and then manage to find the corresponding formulation in the target text.

Another serious problem with regard to Arabic is that students do not check what the antecedent of an action is or what a pronoun modifies in a given sentence. This is all the more important because in Arabic, unlike in English, agreement rules should be observed in terms of not only number but also gender, considering at the same time whether human or non-human (non-rational) nouns are concerned. Another difficulty faced by students results from the fact that the Arabic suffix (attached pronoun) "ها"(*hā*) replaces both singular and plural non-human referents; consequently, they automatically render it by opting for the pronouns "it" or "its" even when "them," "they," or "their" is needed. Thus, they rendered the phrase "في جداول أعمالها"(*fī jadāwili a'mālihā*)—speaking of governments' agendas—as "in its agendas" instead of "in their agendas." Likewise, in another text where the noun phrase "Multinational corporations" is the subject, many students translated the sentence thus: "Multinational corporations are the first to blame as **it** controls…" because they automatically understood the Arabic phrase "لأنها تتحكم في..."(*li-annahā tataḥakkamu fī*) as though it referred to a singular subject. Regarding adjectives, for example, students often use masculine ones to describe feminine nouns as in "some 46.5% of women in the region are illiterate," where they used the masculine adjective "أَمِّيُون"(*ummiyyūn*) instead of the feminine "أَمِّيَات"(*ummiyyāt*). In the same vein, many students fail to respect subject-verb agreement in Arabic; thus, they deal with non-human plural subjects as if they concerned humans, as in "الاحْصَاءاتُ يُبَيِّنُون..."(*al-iḥṣā'ātu yubayyinūna*) instead of "الاحْصَاءاتُ تُبَيِّن..."(*al-iḥṣā'ātu tubayyinu*), which means "statistics show…."

From a cultural perspective, such tendency to use the masculine in lieu of the feminine is also due to assumptions resulting from local cultural influences. As a result, the sentence the "UN human rights inspector" is translated as "مفتش الامم المتحدة لحقوق الانسان"although later in the text the pronoun "she" indicated that it was a woman. Another example of cultural influence is the use of the phrase "منذ عصر الجاهلية"(*mundhu 'aṣri 'l-jāhiliyah*" or "منذ ما قبل الاسلام"(*mundhu mā qabla 'l-islām*), both of which mean "since pre-Islamic times," but mistaken as the equivalents of the English phrase "since prehistoric times." In one of the texts, the phrase

"local infrastructure," which means "البنية التحتية المحلية"(*al-binyatu al-taḥtiyyatu al-maḥalliyyah*) was rendered as "محل البنية التحتية"(*maḥallu al-binyati al-taḥtiyyah*), presumably because in French, the word "local" also refers to a shop or a business office, which represents at the same time a case of language interference in Moroccan Arabic. As for the phrase "Arab states," which occurs in different texts, many students in different semesters unthinkingly render it as "الولايات العربية"(*al-wilāyātu 'l-'arabiyyah*). Because they are familiar with the appellations "الولايات المتحدة"in Arabic and "the United States" in English, they fail to realize that the word "state" also means "country" and therefore do not think of the right equivalent "الدول العربية"(*al-duwalu 'l-'arabiyyah*).

In brief, what students need to know is that the translator translates "the *function*, not the wording" of a text, to use Nord's (1997) terms, because the purpose of translation is faithful meaning transfer, which languages can express using their specific and respective grammar and idiom. Therefore, translation requires awareness of the intricate relationship between language and culture. "Since language is in large part a cultural practice, very good knowledge of the two languages in question implies also a high degree of general knowledge, or acquaintance with the two cultures" (Armstrong, 2005, p. 1). However, translation also necessitates preventing one's own culture from distorting the original author's ideas. As already explained, Moroccan students' linguistic weaknesses in English, which is their field of specialty, are disappointing and frustrating, while their command of Arabic is even lower in many cases, and they do not make any serious effort to improve it. What is more, they do not take seriously the Arabic courses they are assigned as part of the curriculum during the first two semesters to enhance their abilities and knowledge in this regard. Consequently, students' background knowledge, whether it is linguistic or cultural, remains one of the hindrances that prevent the improvement of students' translation skills.

10.5 Prevalence of ICT: A Threat Rather Than an Opportunity in Translation Classes

The two last centuries have witnessed a tidal wave of technological innovations that have increased learning opportunities and made instant access to information through mobility amazingly widespread. Among the fields that have benefited from such progress are education and the translation industry. Learners and translators can avail themselves of software, online dictionaries, translation websites, electronic databases, and a wide range of information sources to seek specific data or expand their general knowledge. However, technology is at the same time a double-edged weapon that has affected negatively academic performance as it has not only appallingly reduced independent thinking because of dependence on artificial memories but also engendered a fraudulent trend among students. Translation classes represent a concrete illustration of both of these drawbacks.

The English Studies Departments in Morocco prohibit the use of ICT because the translation software and other computer-based tools hinder rather than boost the learning process according to the designed curricula, and they are not concerned with the skills in which learners are examined. It is true that our students need to open up to opportunities offered by technology in order to endow themselves with up-to-date knowledge, but there are other contexts where they can acquire it. In institutions that prepare future translators, trainees need to be acquainted with such tools and enhance their performance in accordance with their course objectives; the translation industry, whose aim is to make maximum profit in this speedy, digitized world, needs appropriate skills, and expertise. Nonetheless, at the university level, excessive use of new technological devices leads to missing crucial learning opportunities; thus, to the translation teacher in particular, students' use of mobile devices represents a serious challenge, for they are incompatible with the planned classroom activities, teaching methodology, and expected learning outcomes of the course. After all, those devices are not resorted to by students based on their advantageous learning benefits, but rather because they match pretty well their trendy habits, offering them the most effortless, fastest, and shortest way to carry out tasks or answer exams questions. The translation examination is one of the rare cases where students are allowed to use print dictionaries to help them address translational difficulties, yet many among them will give up taking advantage of such precious opportunity and use instead whatever means fraudulently, heedless of the risks. Forbidden fruit is sweet, indeed. The other part of the challenge is that some web-based translators such as BabelFish, Google Translate, and Bing, translate not only single words and expressions but also whole texts, which is at the same time a violation of the regulations and the principle of equal opportunity, let alone the inaccuracy of the translations they provide.

Although instructors can use some task-based translation activities without dictionary as part of the teaching method to test students' linguistic and translational abilities, the use of dictionaries remains an unavoidable sub-skill that students need for academic (as well as for potential future professional) purposes. House (2000) maintains that combination of the use and non-use of dictionaries is a pedagogical method that helps make language learners and translation students "reach a heightened awareness of their own strategic potential in translating as well as force them to recognize the real limits of their linguistic-cultural knowledge and translational competence" (p. 159). She adds that "students should be made aware of the rich and rewarding possibilities of using dictionaries for testing hypotheses of various kinds that go far beyond using these aids as mere crutches for quick and superficial checking" (House, 2000, p. 159). The dictionary is a multi-purpose tool; it is a source of information that helps analyze the source text and compose the target text, providing different types of support, including the meaning or translation of single words and expressions, the significance of abbreviations and acronyms, or even idioms and proverbs, among others. It also helps students to double-check the correct spelling of words and verb forms, namely, simple past and past participle forms of irregular verbs, which represent major weaknesses in their linguistic performance. Nonetheless, students' attitude toward dictionary using is quite perplexing. While the teacher keeps warning them that it is part of the weaponry without which translation battles

cannot be won, especially because of their linguistic and lexical deficit, they prefer to do without it, and some of them even come to translation exams without it.

Of course, it should be understood that the use of the dictionary for translation purposes is not the same as its use for language learning per se. In other words, while ESL/EFL students resort to translation to understand the meaning of L2 words or as part of the vocabulary acquisition process, using the dictionary with a translation intention corresponds to a different context, with different methods and goals. Translation requires specific dictionary-using skills as part of a special kind of problem-solving activity. Efficient translation requires the ability to use the dictionary as a sub-skill that aims to find terms to be used as contextualized equivalents in the re-composition of the target text. This exercise can enhance the user's ability to discern successfully the appropriate equivalent among several suggestions offered by the dictionary. Ultimately, acquisition of new words comes as a by-product of the act of translating.

10.6   The Time Management Constraint

If the notions of time and timeliness are key requisites of professional translation, undergraduates' success in the translation course is also much dependent on their time management abilities. Nevertheless, this problem is one of the major causes of students' failure to carry out translation tasks within the amount of time allotted to them. Although instructors keep stressing the importance of good organization and time-saving procedures as decisive factors concerning students' performance not only during examinations but also as part of skill-building for their future careers, the question of time management remains a big challenge to cope with.

Testing time is the yardstick that reveals how time management represents a serious constraint concerning students' performance in translation examinations, which stems from several factors. As mentioned above, misconception of what translation is and lack of interest in the translation classes make students miss the opportunity to train themselves and improve their skills, including time management, through practical activities. Another cause is their reliance on electronic devices instead of print dictionaries although they are warned that it is a punishable behavior during exams. As a result, the use of smartphones, for example, often becomes rather disadvantageous as it is done stealthily, hastily and therefore unsuccessfully. Moreover, online dictionaries might fail to recognize the words looked up due to misspelling or they give suggestions from which students are unable to choose due to wrong contextualization of the terms concerned. Students might even be invited to click other links to access-related information, which leads to more search options, thus entrapping them into unnecessary labyrinthine hypertext meanders. The result is not only failure in finding the appropriate meaning of terms but also a seriously detrimental waste of time.

Time mismanagement also stems from students' misuse of paper dictionaries in the exam as a result of lack of prior practice. Dictionary using requires such sub-skills as jotting down lists of difficult terms, setting priorities and deciding on which ones need looking up, singling out the right equivalents according to context, and so forth, but all these steps necessitate prior careful reading of the text, to which many students do not devote sufficient time. Disorganization begins with their inability to find quickly enough the right order of the alphabet and the target entry corresponding to the words looked up. Worse still, students do not resort to the dictionary as a means of problem-solving; they rather make of it a permanently open book to look up almost every single word in the source text, which is time-consuming. In many cases, they already know some words with which they could write better texts, but their excessive reliance on the dictionary results in inappropriate equivalents and faulty constructions. A striking example in this respect is that sixth-semester students, in the final examination, failed to think of the word "Internet"—a term they undoubtedly use on a daily basis in English, French, and Moroccan Arabic—as the equivalent of the Standard Arabic phrase "شبكة المعلومات الدولية"(*shabakatu 'l-maʿlūmāti 'l-duwaliyyah*). Instead, they chose to translate it literally as "the international information net/network" or "the international world web," without realizing that the latter phrase comprises two equivalents for the same source word. Another instance is their translation of "الجامعة العربية"(*al-jāmiʿatu 'l-ʿarabiyyah*), which is "the Arab League," rendered by some students as "الرابطة العربية"(*al-rābiṭatu 'l-ʿarabiyyah*), and as "العصبة العربية"(*al-ʿoṣbatu 'l-ʿarabiyyah*) by others, simply because the dictionary meaning suggests the words "رابطة"(*rābiṭah*) and "عصبة"(*ʿoṣbah*) as equivalents of the word "league." Similarly, for the word "الحضارات"(*al-ḥaḍārāt*), one student chose, among all the possibilities provided by the dictionary, the word "refinements" instead of "civilizations," which they could certainly have used without resorting to the dictionary.

Consequently, time elapses and examinees fail to produce adequate translated texts. More often than not, while the invigilator is asking them to submit their answer sheets, they are still grappling with the dictionary pages to find what they think are the searched equivalents. Of course, at such moments of extreme pressure it is very unlikely to have the necessary concentration to use the dictionary efficiently. In such stressful conditions, the result is unavoidably an unfinished or a bad quality product, as the text has not been proofread, and therefore left full of uncorrected errors. In many cases, even those who manage to provide an acceptable translation leave a bad, often hardly decipherable handwriting, sometimes with unfinished words, which again results in a negative reaction of the corrector.

10.7   Recommendations and Suggested Solutions

Translation is associated with globalization in the sense that it facilitates global communication, information sharing, and bridging the gap between peoples, cultures, and civilizations. According to Snell-Hornby (2006),

> Translation Studies opens up new perspectives from which other disciplines—or more especially the world around—might well benefit. It is concerned, not with languages, objects, or cultures as such, but with communication across cultures, which does not merely consist of the sum of all factors involved. (pp. 150–51)

This ought to be a sufficient reason to persuade undergraduates to take translation more seriously. Learners of translation need to be sensitized to the fact that this multidisciplinary area of study and research is not limited to the classroom and exam texts, with the aim of merely achieving short-term goals that consist in completing the module concerned and then graduating. Translation can concern documents relating to all aspects of life and satisfy the needs of different parties in this globalized world of ours, ranging from books about any discipline, reports, advertisements, to the smallest documents like brochures, posters, and even business cards. Therefore, students should understand that they are acquiring knowledge and skills to arm themselves with efficient and practical tools enabling them to cope with medium- and long-term objectives and situations pertaining to higher studies and even professional life.

As already explained above, collaborative work encourages students to take part in task-based translation activities. Although it only involves a limited number of students for the time being, it represents a promising model that can, over time, lead to positive results. Many specialists suggest interactive pedagogy in the classroom as a solution for a more effective teaching of translation. Nida (2001) believes that "students usually pay much more attention to the judgments of school mates than to teachers, and different judgments can form the basis for realistic evaluation of principles" (p. 105). Interaction in translation classes galvanizes students into action and entices even shy and reluctant ones into becoming active members in the learning process. Thus, it increases learners' interest, develops their interpersonal skills, and promotes what Kiraly (2014) calls "learner empowerment." Kiraly (2014) argues that task-based activities reinforce student-centered rather than teacher-centered methodology, suggesting that "teachers should serve as guides, consultants and assistants" who accompany learners in their quasi-independent learning process (p. 18). It is true that the current Moroccan university context is not appropriate to its implementation due to large group size, but this essential tenet of the constructivist approach to translation teaching remains a positive factor likely to contribute to changing attitudes. It is also true that, in the current state of affairs, even the fifth- and sixth-semester students (who are just about to graduate) are not reliable as independent learners, but by raising their awareness and focusing on students with good potential, efforts will be rewarding in the long run.

Moreover, interest in translation can encourage students to give more importance to language learning and relevant disciplines. In line with this strategy, teachers of all subjects should encourage reading to help students broaden their knowledge and enrich their vocabulary, which increases efficiency of their translation work. At the same time, this can help curb addiction to ICTs among undergraduates, which represent one of the main factors that impoverish their knowledge and abilities. At the same time, translation instructors should vary the text types dealt with in the classroom (economic, legal, journalistic, business, and tourism themes, among others).

Although they do not primarily train would-be translators, they should provide students with the necessary translation techniques and strategies they might need for their future studies and research, professional life, or any other relevant purposes. It is equally important to keep reminding students of the usefulness of other courses where they learn grammar rules, writing skills, syntactic, and morphological features of language, as well as world cultures and literature, which can boost their translation competence. The role of the English departments can be more efficient in this regard by attaching more importance to Standard Arabic and encouraging students to learn its rules, style, and culture, a measure that would help them gain more proficiency in terms of translation.

Collaboration should also be more often adopted as a strategy among translation teachers, sharing perspectives, and findings about translation, which Kiraly (2014) refers to as "a participatory form of action research" (p. 101). This includes compiling translation textbooks that would help learners have a clearer perception of what translation is and what materials the syllabus comprises. In the absence of textbooks, instructors make enormous personal efforts in order to afford teaching materials for translation classes, which they have to adapt to different levels, from initiation of third-semester students to translation to the rather advanced course designed for the sixth semester. Likewise, language Departments (Departments of English, Arabic, French, and even other languages) are called upon to encourage students to have an interest in translation. The decision taken recently by the Faculty of Letters in Rabat to launch in the forthcoming years a new track in view of specializing in applied foreign languages and focusing on translation is undoubtedly a praiseworthy initiative, which should encourage more collaboration among the different Departments concerned. Departments should work on a project that enhances students' motivation and fosters the sense of competition among them, namely, by organizing translation contests to sensitize students to the importance of learning languages and translation.

10.8   Conclusion

This paper has attempted to highlight some hindrances that lead to failure in achieving objectives of the translation course designed for students at the Moroccan departments of English. From the data provided above, it appears that teaching translation faces a multifarious problem; however, the difficulties pointed out are most of the time surmountable, for the common cause is misconception regarding the course concerned, higher education and learning in general. Therefore, students need first to be aware of the value of translation and conceive of it not as a course whose only objective is a pass grade, but rather as a context for building up skills and increasing chances to succeed both academically and professionally. Secondly, learners need to change their attitude toward other courses than translation and become more aware of their interrelatedness. The third point is that undergraduates need to become more autonomous and more mature with respect to their future responsibilities. Only then

could instructors address thornier problems than rudimentary issues and focus on greater expectations in terms of translation competence.

Translation is gaining considerable importance in the current world as it contributes to global communication, information sharing and knowledge transfer, and exchanges between peoples of different tongues and cultures, but unfortunately, this does not prompt proportional awareness among Moroccan students. Rehabilitation of translation at the Moroccan university can benefit both academic and pragmatic purposes. Although the English departments' mission does not consist in preparing future professional translators per see, they are expected to play a decisive role in endowing students with effective knowledge and know-how that can contribute to enhancing graduates' employability. Finally, learning about translation and practicing it develop students' competences at more than one level. They boost their abilities in terms of in-depth reading and analysis, composing, critical thinking, and cross-cultural awareness, and it serves as a promising field for advanced study and research.

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