

Technology Infused Learning: Developing Information Literacy in Translator Training

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Abstract

Translation technology is increasingly acclaimed in the translation market as it improves the efficiency and accuracy of human translation. In recent decades, universities in China have started to offer courses on translation technology as part of translator training. However, integration of translation technology in translator training remains problematic. What impact will greater information literacy (IL) regarding translation technology produce on students' translation quality? What are students' perceptions of IL and translation technology in the process of translation? Can IL be introduced to translation trainees at an earlier stage? The current study pursues answers to these questions. This project aims to investigate the relationship between students' IL and the quality of their translations. In a translation course, first-year student participants ($N = 32$) were given lectures on translation technologies with examples to demonstrate how they help solve translation problems. Students' translations before and after the lectures were compared to assess translation quality, and a survey was given to students to measure their perceptions of using technology in the process of translation. Results indicated that students' translation quality improved in the second translation drafts, with higher scores given by three scorers and fewer errors identified. Students also expressed greater confidence when doing translation and perceived the usefulness of the technological tools and resources. It is hoped that this research could provide some insight into the role of IL in translator training.

Keywords: information literacy, translation technology, translator training, student's perceptions

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Introduction

Translation technology has been acclaimed in recent years in the translation industry. The *2019 China Language Service Industry Development Report* (Translators Association of China [TAC], 2019) reveals that 80% of the surveyed strongly believed that translation technology could be used to reduce translation costs and 67% strongly agreed that it could be adopted to improve translation quality. Translation companies also wish to recruit university graduates who are familiar with translation technology. According to a survey conducted by Hao and Pym (2021) among graduates of a master's programme in the University of Melbourne, graduates who were employed as translators place technology-associated skills as the most needed skill in their employment.

As stated by Kenny (2020), translation technologies include machine translation (MT) and computer-aided translation (CAT), as well as localization tools used in the translation of software, websites, videogames and other digital products, and it can be “an umbrella term for a variety of tools and processes” (p. 499). Competency in making use of translation technologies to facilitate the translation process is defined as information literacy (IL).

Translation technology has become an indispensable component in the curriculum of translator training. More and more universities offer specialized courses on translation technology as part of the training of their students (Moorkens, 2018; Rico, 2017). More than half (55.9%) of the Chinese universities surveyed in the *2019 China Language Service Industry Development Report* had offered translation technology-related courses to students (TAC, 2019).

Translation technology is relatively young, however, its integration into translator training is even younger (Kenny, 2020, pp. 499–500). There has been little systemic and in-depth research conducted on essential problems that need to be addressed, such as when translation technology should be introduced. Translation technology courses are often offered towards the end of an undergraduate programme or at the postgraduate level (Chan, 2010; Rothwell & Svoboda, 2019) because trainers believe that technology is difficult to learn and master. As Pym (2006) points out, technologies are believed as more complicated tools which are difficult to learn for undergraduates. If translation technology is introduced too early to students, it might have a negative impact on their translation learning.