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**Thème :**

**L'ENSEIGNEMENT ET LA RECHERCHE DANS LE CONTEXTE DE LA COVID-19 :  
NÉCESSITÉ D'UNE REDÉFINITION DE STRATÉGIES**

**ACTES DU COLLOQUE**

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**ACTES**  
des  
**Premières Journées d'Etudes Scientifiques**  
**(en visioconférence)**

**26 – 27 mai 2021**

**Thème** : L'enseignement et la Recherche dans le contexte de la  
COVID-19 : Nécessité d'une redéfinition de stratégies

*SOUS LE PARRAINAGE DE*

*PROFESSEUR PLACIDE CLEDJO, DIRECTEUR DE L'ECOLE DOCTORALE  
PLURIDISCIPLINAIRE « ESPACES, CULTURES ET DEVELOPPEMENT » DE  
L'UNIVERSITE D'ABOMEY-CALAVI*

*et de*

*PROFESSEUR OKRI PASCAL TOSSOU, DOYEN DE LA FACULTE DES  
LETTRES, LANGUES, ARTS ET COMMUNICATION (FLLAC) DE  
L'UNIVERSITE D'ABOMEY-CALAVI*

## **1. Contexte et justification**

La pandémie de la COVID-19 a indubitablement induit des changements radicaux et profonds dans nos habitudes de vie et dans nos relations interpersonnelles. Pour contenir cette pandémie, la plupart des pays ont adopté des stratégies de confinement total ou partiel, de couvre-feu ou de restrictions dans les déplacements de personnes. Les regards sont désormais tournés vers les écoles et universités en raison de leur forte implication dans la recherche et l'éducation, la formation et la socialisation de la personne humaine. Plusieurs écoles et centres de formation ont été fermés, des congés et vacances scolaires/universitaires ont été anticipés et la reprise n'a eu lieu que timidement.

En raison de cette pandémie, le monde de l'éducation en général et celui de l'enseignement supérieur en particulier connaissent actuellement de grands bouleversements en termes de comment trouver les meilleures méthodologies et stratégies d'enseignement-apprentissage qui conviennent aux directives d'endigement du virus qui a déjà, faut-il le rappeler, contaminé ou tué de

millions de personnes dans le monde. La massification des effectifs dans les formations universitaires classiques telles que les lettres, les langues, les sciences juridiques, les sciences économiques et de gestion, les sciences physiques, les sciences mathématiques et biologiques font craindre une contamination accrue si le virus venait à s'introduire dans nos amphithéâtres.

Heureusement, la vie continue malgré tout et l'enseignement et la recherche dans nos universités et centres de formation le doivent aussi pour assumer la postérité et la prospérité intellectuelles et économique aussi bien que le développement de nos pays. Il s'établit alors une crainte objective par rapport au respect des gestes barrières établis dans nos universités et centres de formations au regard des grands rassemblements en raison du manque d'infrastructures dans certains de nos lieux de formation. Un changement de paradigme dans la formation et la recherche s'avère donc nécessaire.

Plusieurs méthodes de recherche et stratégies pédagogiques aux moyens des Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (TIC) ont été innovées. Il s'agit désormais de l'introduction et de la formation au E- teaching/learning, des cours à distance, de la redynamisation des Massive Online Open Courses (MOOC), de l'utilisation des réseaux sociaux comme canal de transmission du savoir, etc. En matière de recherche, les rencontres scientifiques, autrefois organisées en présentiel sont de plus en plus virtuelles avec l'utilisation des outils tels que Zoom, Google meet, Microsoft team, etc. comme moyens d'interaction.

Les difficultés rencontrées dans la mise en œuvre des stratégies et méthodes d'enseignement en période de la COVID-19 amènent les enseignants- chercheurs et chercheurs à repenser la recherche et la pédagogie universitaires pour ne pas briser la chaîne de la transmission du savoir dans l'espoir que la vie redevienne normale dans les jours à venir. Les *Journées d'Etudes Scientifiques* sont donc l'occasion d'explorer les synergies actuelles en termes de pratiques d'enseignement et de recherche pour une meilleure adaptabilité.

## **2. Objectifs**

### ***2.1. Objectif général***

Ces Journées d'Etudes visent à susciter des réflexions et partage d'expériences chez les enseignants-chercheurs et chercheurs sur les meilleures approches et stratégies à adopter ou à expérimenter pour un enseignement supérieur inclusif

et respectueux du droit des étudiants à un enseignement de qualité d'une part, aussi bien que la réorientation de la recherche en cette période critique de la pandémie de la COVID-19, d'autre part.

## ***2.2.Objectifs spécifiques***

Il s'agit pour les participants de :

- mener des réflexions dans le sens des conduites à tenir pour des cours en ligne réussis dans leurs matières respectives ;
- partager les expériences et expertises de l'utilisation des Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication comme support de transmission du savoir ;
- analyser de façon critique la problématique de recherche et de l'enseignement/apprentissage des langues dans un système de cours à distance.
- Conduire des activités de recherche en ligne, seul(e) ou en équipe.

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## Références Bibliographiques

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Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1985). *Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-semiotic Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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## USING ICTs TO TEACH TRANSLATION STUDIES AND CARRY OUT RESEARCH AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Servais M. AKPACA

[akpacasm@yahoo.fr](mailto:akpacasm@yahoo.fr)

*Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Benin*

### ABSTRACT

This paper lists various ICTs used in the translation industry and examines the possibility of delivering translation courses online against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic. The methodology is descriptive, conceptual and critical. Indeed, the paper describes the ICTs such as Computer Assisted Translation (CAT) tools and Learning Management Systems (LMS) used in both the translation industry and virtual classes and then it discusses the need to make them affordable and user-friendly in a typical African context. An example of conceptual research approach is also given. Some of the findings of this paper are that although the introduction of LMS in academic institutions in Africa has the potential to enhance students' computer literacy and provide traditional, virtual, and blended modes of delivery, students' engagement remains a challenge. To address this problem, the instructional design of online classes is key in encouraging peer interactions, and substantial management and organisation efforts are required to improve the social aspect of online learning.

**Keywords:** Learning Management Systems, CAT Tools, research, COVID-19, students' engagement

### RESUME

Le présent article présente une liste de TIC utilisées dans le domaine de la traduction et examine la possibilité d'offrir des cours de traduction en ligne dans le contexte de la pandémie de la COVID-19. L'approche méthodologique utilisée est descriptive, conceptuelle et critique. En effet, l'article décrit les TIC telles que les outils de TAO et les systèmes de gestion de l'apprentissage (LMS) utilisés à la fois dans le domaine de la traduction et dans les classes virtuelles, et discute de la nécessité de les rendre abordables et conviviaux dans un contexte typiquement africain. Il ressort de ce qui précède que bien que l'introduction des LMS dans les institutions universitaires en Afrique puisse améliorer les compétences des étudiants en informatique et fournir des modes de prestation pédagogiques traditionnels, virtuels et mixtes, la mobilisation des étudiants reste un défi. Pour résoudre ce problème, la manière de concevoir les cours en ligne est essentielle pour encourager les interactions entre pairs. Des efforts considérables de gestion et d'organisation sont nécessaires pour améliorer l'aspect social de l'apprentissage en ligne.

**Mots-clés :** Systèmes de gestion de l'apprentissage, TAO, recherche, COVID-19, mobilisation des étudiants

## INTRODUCTION

Several issues are raised in this paper, namely the (in)effective use of CAT Tools in a translation classroom in Africa against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenges related to Learning Management Systems (LMS) that are provided to restrict physical contacts between the stakeholders of the educational sector and some research methodologies used in the field of Translation Studies.

The question that this paper attempts to address by raising these issues is the adaptability of translation technology in the classroom in a continent that is still experiencing the digital divide during this period of COVID-19 pandemic. It is obvious that the introduction of LMS and other digital infrastructures in the educational system has brought about some problems that most African educational institutions are not yet in a position to address. While most schools and tertiary education institutions in the developed countries have adopted virtual platforms to deliver courses, most African schools and universities are struggling with matters relating to the Internet connection, poor electricity distribution, the lack of computers and smartphones among others.

Despite the availability of the Learning Management Systems (LMS), their adoption by the students poses problem. Though these platforms make it possible to deliver online courses and to avoid physical contacts between students and lecturers/students, students' engagement remains a challenge. That notwithstanding, unlike drama classes, translation courses can be delivered online if the necessary conditions (e.g. connectivity and hardware) are met.

As indicated above, the paper discusses the possibility of carrying out research online in the field of Translation Studies during this period of COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, it is very possible to do research online in this field. For example, one of the methods used in carrying out research in Translation Studies is the conceptual method which requires the researcher to explore the scope of key terms in a corpus. Actually, this terminological exploration can only be carried out by means of a computer. Indeed, terminologists and linguists explore scientific and technical terms in specialised texts in order to generate micro-definitions of these terms. In other words, when a term is used many times in a text, a careful analysis of each of its occurrences in various contexts enables the researcher to generate a working definition of the same.

To tackle the issues raised in this paper, it is important to indicate the educational objectives to be achieved with LMS and CAT Tools and to discuss the problems

encountered in using these tools in a classroom setting in an African context. In this regard, the taxonomy of educational objectives developed by Bloom (1956) can serve as a guide. Indeed, Bloom and his colleagues explain that:

Educational objectives provide the basis for building curricula and tests and represent the starting point for much of our educational research. (p. 4) ... Educational objectives are related to the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. "Cognitive" is used to include activities such as remembering and recalling knowledge, thinking, problem solving, creating. (p. 2)

Furthermore, Bloom stresses that this taxonomy is designed to be a classification of the student behaviours which represent the intended outcomes of the educational process. It should be noted that the author is neither trying to classify the instructional methods used by teachers nor the ways in which teachers relate themselves to students. What Bloom is classifying is the intended behaviour of students, i.e. the ways in which they are to act, think, or feel as the result of participating in some unit of instruction.

After discussing the issues raised so far, the paper makes a few recommendations to encourage students, especially in Africa, not to shy away from technology because it is the hallmark of the future. In the current information society, some people argue that an illiterate is a person who does not know how to use a computer, does not speak English and is not familiar with statistics. The traditional modes of delivery of education are changing and the new concept of multimodality is the order of the day. Indeed, the multimodal approach makes it possible to produce educational materials either in the form of a video or audio, or a text or pictures, etc... This is a welcome development because these modes are portable, mobile and accessible anytime and anywhere. A student can listen to their lecture while driving or walking to school. If they do not want to read their lecture, they can just watch the video wherever they are. Since LMS provides an opportunity to produce educational content in multiple modes, teachers and lecturers are expected to convey knowledge through all these channels. Unlike traditional lectures which were made up of text and a few pictures, nowadays a lecture can include not only text but also videos, audio messages and pictures. Furthermore, students can access these on a platform whenever they want. Therefore, to ensure student ownership of the digital technology, it is important to include in educational objectives the need for students to become familiar with LMS and other digital technology because the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century call for new modes of delivery of educational content. It is in this perspective that this paper intends to conduct this discussion.

## **1. Methodology**

Three approaches are used in this research work, namely:

### **1.1. A descriptive approach**

This paper describes various CAT Tools and provides useful information on the components of a CAT Tool. More specifically, it explains the functions of Trados, a popular CAT Tool used in many international organisations. The descriptive approach is also used in describing the multimodal nature of LMSs and their user-friendliness. An effort is made to describe several things you can do with a LMS as an educational content producer.

In this section, the publications by Bowker (2002), Ghislandi (2007), Sekret (2017) and (Sanka, 2018) will help to explain the components and the usefulness of CAT Tools, especially Trados.

The concept and the adoption of LMS around the world have been accounted for thanks to authors such as Oluwatoyin (2021) and Mpungose (2020) as well as Schwier and Balbar (2002), Lowenthal et al. (2017), Mahoney and Hall (2020), Dale (2020), Kung-Ming and Khoon-Seng (2009), and Thurman (2019).

### **1.2. A conceptual approach**

The conceptual approach is used in this work to demonstrate how research is carried out on the content of a concept in a corpus. The term is the starting point of the research. The researcher gathers enough information on the term from the corpus in order to shed light on the meaning and scope of the concept that the term refers to.

The theoretical and practical background to the discussion of this section is provided by Gabriela Saldanga & Sharon O'Brien (2014), Williams and Chesterman (2002:58), (O'Leary 2010) and Johnson (2019).

### **1.3. A critical approach**

A critical approach to students' reluctance to adopt the LMS is taken in a bid to encourage them to make use of the ICTs for educational purposes. The same approach is taken towards academic authorities who need to put in place the right infrastructure and to adopt the right pedagogical approach to facilitate the transition to virtual classrooms. Teachers/lecturers are requested to include in educational objectives the behaviour that is expected from students following the

introduction of digital platforms. On this score, the educational objectives devised by Bloom (1956) are called to mind. Indeed, the cognitive educational approach focuses on students' behaviour at the end of an educational experience.

## 2. Results

- The LMSs have inaugurated new approaches to education, namely the blended approach, the synchronous approach and the asynchronous approach. They have provided an opportunity to produce learning materials in multiple modes (i.e. text, audio, video, pictures, etc.). These modes prove to be user-friendly, easily accessible and portable.
- Given that most if not all CAT Tools and LMSs operate using a computer or a smartphone, it becomes obvious that translation can sustainably be done and taught online.
- Students' reluctance to adopt the LMS denotes a lack of understanding of the new opportunities provided by these platforms. There is a need to explain to them that ICTs are the way-forward and that "*the world is going digital.*" The instructional design of online classes is key in encouraging peer interactions, and substantial management and organisation efforts are required to improve the social aspect of online learning. Furthermore, students need to be informed about the educational objectives of online courses.
- Nowadays research is best done online because the worldwide web contains much more information than any physical library. Most scientific journals are published online and hundreds of millions of books and dictionaries are available on the worldwide web.

## 3. Discussion

### 3.1. Moodle, the Learning Management System (LMS) Currently Used in Public Universities in Benin

According to Oluwatoyin (2021, p. 74), Moodle is a LMS administered in Australia.

Moodle is one of the prominent LMS in higher education institutions and is an open-source for many educational institutions. Moodle is a project that is administered in Australia as the Moodle Project, by Moodle HQ. Its global acceptance in most higher education institutions is based on its functionality as an effective platform for teaching and learning without borders.

Several scholars including Mpungose (2020 & 2017) as well as Oluwatoyin (2021) and Schwier and Balbar (2002) have discussed the widespread use of LMS in academic institutions, especially in developed countries. In the following quotation, Mpungose (2020) quoted in Oluwatoyin (2021, p. 74) explains the function of a LMS.

A Learning Management System (LMS) is a platform that enables teachers or facilitators of learning to design, manage, organize and present learning materials for online access of students or learners. LMS is used for the delivery of learning materials, curriculum contents, assessments and interactive activities between the facilitator and the students/learners.

As indicated above, the system is interactive and can be used for learning and assessment purposes. It is a system that is used globally in schools and universities. According to Ouwatoyin (Ibid):

LMS software is globally used in basic schools, higher education institutions, school management districts, etc. A learning management system is simply the platform for the storage and delivery of learning materials/activities. LMS comprises over one hundred platforms such as Google Classroom, Moodle, Schoology Learning, Blackboard Learn and many others.

Indeed, Moodle is just one of many LMSs because over one hundred LMSs are being used in the whole world. Unlike African countries, in North America, Europe and Australia, the LMS technology has been there for a few decades:

In North America, Europe and Australia, one of the bigger trends of the last few decades is arguably the development of virtual teaching methods, i.e. learning "carried out, assessed, or stored by means of a computer, especially over a network" (Lexico 2020), in a synchronous or asynchronous form, or a combination of both (Schwier and Balbar 2002).

In quoting Lowenthal et al. (2017), Ouwatoyin (2021) indicates that synchronous online learning, on one hand, allows real-time participation in online classes in spite of the differences in the physical locations of course participants. For instance, this includes videoconferencing and tools such as Adobe Connect, Microsoft Teams, Google Hangout and Zoom, all of which provide real time chats during live classes (Lowenthal et al. 2017; Mahoney and Hall 2020; Dale 2020). Synchronous classes often mirror their face-to-face counterparts in terms of structure and content. On the other hand, asynchronous online learning allows the storage of learning materials in electronic forms, on a computer or online on a portal/platform. These are then made accessible for students' use at different times, rather than in real-time (Kung-Ming and Khoon-Seng 2009: 122).

The introduction of Moodle in tertiary education institutions in Benin in the second quarter of 2020 was strongly opposed by students who went on strike for several weeks. They argued that they were not prepared to use this new

technology though the government took time to train both students and lecturers to use it. The government even introduced a scheme called *zero rating* which enabled students to get connected to the students' portal free of charge for the duration of their university training. Students came up with the following complaints: lack of computers and smartphones, failure to get an Internet connection in their various communities, lack of trust in the new technology, etc. Many education stakeholders could not understand the students' resistance to Moodle during the lockdown imposed by COVID-19. However, after careful reflection, it seems that their fears were legitimate because, in the course of the technical Moodle training, the focus was mostly on the synchronous classes. Students were not sure they could get connected whenever they had classes. In an African context characterised by erratic Internet connection and power cuts in major cities and villages, it would have been more appropriate to emphasize the asynchronous online learning. This approach is very flexible because it enables students to download learning materials on the students' portal whenever they want. The portal would simply serve as a means of storage of learning materials.

In fact, students would have a lot to gain if they eventually accepted to use the Moodle technology. As indicated earlier, this technology makes a room for videos, audio messages, texts, pictures and many more features. Multimodality is a new concept that educators need to inform students about. LMS makes it possible to break with the traditional method of knowledge delivery which focuses mostly on texts and face-to-face contacts with lecturers. Knowledge is best acquired by means of multiple modes of delivery. The students who do not like reading can listen to audio materials containing the lectures. They can also watch videos produced and uploaded to the students' portal by their lecturers.

Regarding the user-friendliness of LMS, it should be noted that an LMS is just like a Content Management System (CMS) that webmasters operate to upload videos, audios, pictures and texts to websites.

Taking into account the problems raised so far, it becomes obvious that a clear definition of online learning is needed to improve students' motivation and engagement.

Thurman (2019: 302) concludes that:

A clear definition of online learning should include the following elements: (1) clear domain delineation of the concept to avoid overlapping and confusing terms, (2) explication of use of technology, (3) clear articulation of whether the teaching is in a synchronous environment or an asynchronous environment, (4) interactivity / learning examples, and (5) an acknowledgement of the role of physical distance, if any.

It is common knowledge that in the current information society, a person who cannot use a computer is an illiterate. This echoes Point Number (2) which is related to the explication of the use of technology. Students should learn to use the technology and adopt it as a working tool. Equally important is Point Number (3) relating to a synchronous or an asynchronous environment. An asynchronous environment would provide students with considerable leeway in how and when they access learning materials on a digital platform. The issues discussed so far call for a new *digital pedagogy* which will cater for the technical, academic and social aspects of LMS.

In addition to LMS, other ICTs are specifically used by translators.

### ***3.2. CAT Tools and Translation Technologies***

A CAT tool, or a translator's workstation/workbench, can, in Lynne Bowker's words, "be understood to include any type of computerized tool that translators use to help them do their job." (Bowker, 2002, p. 6) However, Bowker understands the problem of such a broad definition: "This could encompass tools such as word processors, grammar checkers, e-mail, and the World Wide Web (WWW)." (*Ibid*)

According to Ghislandi ([sdltrados.com/cat-tool](http://sdltrados.com/cat-tool)), a CAT Tool – Computer Assisted Translation Tool – is a software used by translators and linguists. It does different things: it supports the translation process, edits, manages and stores translations.

#### ***3.2.1. The components of a CAT Tool***

The core components of a CAT Tool are: (a) translation memory (e.g. Trados, MemoQ, Multitrans); (b) termbase; (c) dictionaries; (d) machine translation engines and (d) desktop publishing (including Powerpoint, Word, HTML), etc.

Furthermore, Ghislandi (*Ibid*) explains that a Translation Memory (TM) stores translated sentences and phrases. Whenever the translator is translating a text containing the sentences and phrases stored in the memory, it shows how these have already been translated and saves the translator the trouble of translating the same sentences and phrases again. Therefore, a TM helps to save time and money because sometimes up to 80 per cent of the sentences in a document might have been stored in the memory. It makes translation less monotonous because nobody wants to translate the same words and phrases most of the time.

A termbase is, according to Ghislandi, similar to a dictionary. It stores single words and expressions. It is very useful for organisations, customers and specific products which make use of the same terms in most of their publications. Translators find it useful because it avails to them the right words and terms that are used by organisations and companies.

Dictionaries are very useful in checking the meaning of words and sentences. They improve poorly written sentences and draw translators' attention to various contexts in which some words and terms have already been used. They also check the spelling of words and make auto-suggestions. An example of an online dictionary is Linguee. When you come across a new word or phrase, you can look it up in Linguee which almost instantly shows a great number of contexts in which the word or phrase has been used and translated by numerous institutions and translators.

Another example of CAT Tool is a machine translation. This includes many translation softwares such as Systran, Microsofttranslator, Reverso, etc., which actually do the first draft of the translation. Thereafter, the translator proofreads and revises the translated text. Even though some sentences translated by machines can be nonsensical, it is important to stress that machine translation does all the typing and is successful in translating simple sentences which at times are many in some documents. Depending on the nature of the document, machine translation can do 40 to 60 per cent of the work. However, the human mind is absolutely necessary to correct nonsensical sentences, make nuances in word uses in various contexts, choose more appropriate words and solve critical scientific and technical terminology issues.

Adaptive Machine Translation is a brand new self-learning MT engine which learns from post-edits as you translate, creating a unique MT for you. Machine translation can be trained to become more accurate.

Regarding the benefits of CAT Tools, Ghislandi has mentioned four of them, namely enhanced capacity, improved productivity, scalability and connectivity. Scalability refers to the amount of words, phrases and sentences that a CAT Tool makes it possible to store over a period of time. It is a very useful tool for corpus linguistics.

On this same issue, Sekret (2017, p.52) says that:

The two main elements of every CAT tool are the TM (Translation Memory) and the TB (Term Bank). In short, a TM is a "database that stores previously translated sentences that can be retrieved in future translation projects in an attempt to prevent repetitive, time-consuming work. Pre-translated sentences in the text are retrieved

via fuzzy matching, leaving only parts of sentence that do not have matches to the translator.”

A TB, on the other hand, is a “program that catalogues words and phrases along with pertinent related information in a database in a manner conducive for use in linguistic applications”. (Ibid)

In Lynne Bowker’s words, a TB is “essentially a type of automatic dictionary look-up. As the translator moves through the text, the terminology recognition component compares items in the source text against the contents of the termbase, and if a match is found, the term record in question is displayed for the user to consult.” (Bowker, 2002, p. 81)

A CAT tool, however, is not limited to TM and TB technologies. Other technologies that are part of today’s CAT tools can include dedicated translation word processing software, quality assurance (QA) tools, electronic dictionaries, voice recognition tools, built-in MT, software localization tools, optical-character recognition (OCR) scanning tools, etc. With the rise of cloud technologies, collaborative project management platforms are also being included into the CAT interface, thus creating platforms incorporating not only the translator’s workbench itself, but also a place for project managers to manage the whole translation workflow from a client request to final product delivery. (Sanka, 2018)

The following features are going to be considered a part of a CAT tool platform: TM, TB, MT, QA, editor (a word processor with the tagging function and segmenting function), a document search engine, a TM alignment tool, in-context preview, file storage and management, project management, project analytics, and APIs that allow users to connect their own or third-party tools. It should be noted, however, that this list does not have the intention to be perceived as an exhaustive list of all features that could in some sense and in some situations be considered a part of a CAT tool. (Sanka, 2018)

Another issue raised at the beginning of this discussion is research in the field of translation studies.

### ***3.3. Doing Scientific Research in the Field of Translation Studies***

#### ***3.3.1. Types of research***

In *Research Methodologies in Translation Studies*, Gabriela Saldanga & Sharon O’Brien (2014) note that there are many questions to be answered before conducting research, such as what is the research question, which method or methods are most appropriate, what kind of data will be collected, how will the

data be analysed and so on. It is worthwhile thinking about one's epistemological framework before diving into such details. Likewise, it is important to consider what type of research we are engaging in. An initial question pertaining to the type of research is what logical system it subscribes to, i.e. whether it is being conducted from an inductive or a deductive positioning.

Induction involves the development of theories and hypotheses from the data collected (it moves from particular instances to general statements), whereas deduction involves the testing of existing theories or hypotheses through data (it moves from general statements to specific instances). A third position, abduction, is also possible. This position was first mentioned by C.S. Pierce in 1878; it proposes to isolate the most convincing reasons (hypotheses) from a research result and to research these hypotheses further.

Williams and Chesterman (2002:58) explain that empirical research "seeks new data, new information derived from the observation of data and experimental work; it seeks evidence which supports or disconfirms hypotheses, or generates new ones".

This type of research is generally seen in opposition to conceptual research, which "aims to define and clarify concepts, to interpret or reinterpret new ideas, to relate concepts into larger

systems, to introduce new concepts or metaphors or frameworks that allow a better understanding of the object of research" (*ibid.*). Empirical researchers can engage in either basic or applied research. Although the distinction between these two types is not clearcut either, basic research is generally understood to mean fundamental research, the primary aim of which is to acquire new knowledge. Applied research is generally understood to mean research on practical problems, research that has an application in life. Research may also be characterized as experimental, in which case the researcher seeks to establish cause and effect relations (if X happens, then what is the effect on Y?). Such research might be carried out in a controlled environment, although this is not always practical in humanities and social science research).

Research can also be evaluative, attempting to establish the value of a particular initiative once it has been implemented (summative evaluation) and the intended or unintended effects of the initiative, or it might evaluate the delivery of an initiative (formative or process evaluation). The goal of research can extend beyond that of evaluation or looking for relationships between X and Y; it can also lead to change, and this is where the term action research is applied. Action

research tackles “real-world problems in participatory and collaborative ways in order to produce action and knowledge in an integrated fashion through a cyclical process” (O’Leary 2010:146). Action research is collaborative: it seeks to empower the stakeholders and moves away from the concepts of the ‘researcher’ and the ‘researched’.

### 3.3.2. An example of conceptual research carried out through terminological exploration

In specialised translation, students carry out research on terms and concepts of various scientific and technical disciplines. One way of doing conceptual research is searching for the various occurrences of a term in a corpus in order to determine the meaning and scope of the concept it refers to. Most of the time, the various sentences in which a term appears in a corpus shed light on the meaning of the concept. The term contracts syntagmatic relations in various sentences, which extend its senses. Below is a method adopted to research a concept.

*Soil* is a term extracted from a MA Thesis defended at the University of Abomey-Calavi by Regis Johnson in 2019. The term has been used 47 times in the corpus in which the terminological exploration has been carried out. According to Johnson, out of 47 occurrences of the term *soil*, 10 occurrences provide new information on the meaning of the term.

#### *Soil*

**Table 1.** Exploring the term *soil*

| <b>Various contexts in which the term soil has been used in the publication/Contextes d’usage du terme soil dans la publication</b>   | <b>Various senses of the term in the various contexts/Sens du terme selon le contexte</b>                |
|---|--|
| <i>Soil is a complex mix of mineral and organic components, produced when rock is weathered and acted on by living organisms (p. 59).</i>   | <i>Soil is a mix of mineral and organic components</i>   |
| <i>Many British soils are quite acidic, and a large proportion of British farm land needs repeated applications of alkalines (traditionally <u>lime</u>) to remain fertile. Page 60</i>   | <i>Soil can be acidic</i>  |
| <i>This relatively high soil acidity is one of the factors that lead to liming. Lime tends to counteract soil acidity, and with fine particulate soils such as clays, also encourages the formation of a better soil crumb structure that will aerate and help with drainage. Page 60</i> | <i>Soil quality can be improved by chemicals.<br/>There are different types of soils including clays</i> |
| <i>Dark soils tend to absorb more heat, and are therefore preferred. Page 62</i>  | <i>Soils have different colours</i>  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>As crops grow, they absorb nutrients from the soil, so land fertility degrades over time. However, if organic matter poor in nitrogen but rich in carbohydrate is added to the soil, nitrogen is assimilated and <u>fixed</u>. Page 62</i>   | <i>Soil provides nutrients to crops</i>   |
| <i>Fertility increases while land is under grass, which helps to accumulate organic matter in the soil. These factors mean that soil is traditionally improved by means of liming, draining, and allowing to lie <u>fallow</u>. It is traditionally fertilised with <u>manure</u>, <u>nitrogen</u>, <u>phosphates</u>, and <u>potash</u>. Page 62</i> | <i>Soil quality can be improved not only with chemicals but also with organic and natural elements.</i> |
| <i>Nitrogen from soil gets into the water, and can be hazardous to human health. Page 64</i>  | <i>Soil can be a source of good health and diseases as well</i>   |
| <i>Crop growth is affected by light, soil, nutrients, water, air, and climate. Page 66</i>  | <i>Soil affects crops' life</i>   |
| <i>Factors that influence crop sequences include the soil type, weather, the price and availability of labour and power, market outlets, and technical considerations about maintaining soil fertility and crop health. Page 70</i>   | <i>There are different types of soil</i>  |
| <i>Most diseases of crop plants result from fungus spores that may live in the soil and enter through roots, be airborne and enter the plant through damaged areas or landing on leaf surfaces, or are spread by pests. Page 71</i>   | <i>Soil can be a source of disease</i>  |

Taking into account the above-mentioned sentences in which the term *soil* has been used, Regis has come up with the following micro-definition of the concept: “*Soil is a mix of mineral and organic components. There are different types of soil. Soils have different colours. Soil affects crops’ life because it provides nutrients to them, however it can also be a source of disease to humans, animals and crops. Soil quality can be improved by natural, organic and chemical elements.*”

Then, Johnson (2019) has compared this definition to another definition by FAO which defines the term *soil* (i.e. *sol* in French) as follows: « *Le sol est un complexe mélange d’organismes vivants, de matières organiques, de matières minérales, d’eau et d’air* ».

There are similarities between both definitions. At this stage, it is important to indicate that the meaning of a term can be found in the text or corpus in which it is used. Translators should not always resort to a dictionary to check the definition of terms. Specialised texts contain the meanings of the scientific terms used in them.

It is important to indicate that terminological exploration is normally done by means of a computer. This confirms the idea that research in the field of translation studies and terminology can be done with CAT Tools.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the possibility of teaching translation and carrying out research online. It has come to the conclusion that in the midst of the current COVID-19 pandemic during which schools and universities are resorting to LMS to deliver lectures and classes online, it is possible to teach translation studies and carry out research using digital tools.

Indeed, Google Classroom, Moodle, Schoology Learning, Blackboard Learn and others are examples of Learning Management Systems that are currently used by schools and universities around the world to impart knowledge to learners.

More specifically in the field of translation studies, CAT Tools, including computers, translation softwares, translation memories, online dictionaries, etc., are used.

The paper has also given an example of conceptual research that has been carried out in a corpus by means of a computer.

This is enough evidence that unlike drama lessons, translation studies can be done online. However, given that students' engagement in the virtual learning environment is still a challenge, a lot of efforts need to be made by administrators and the teaching staff to convince students that e-learning provides a lot of opportunities and holds good prospects. In connection with this, the educational objective of e-learning needs to be stated clearly so that students can understand that in the current information society, familiarity with digital technology is absolutely necessary at all levels.

This paper is a contribution to the reflection on the use of the information and communication technologies in the classrooms, especially in Africa. However, this is a topic that needs to be explored further in order to make e-learning a reality in the near future in most African countries.

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