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Teaching Translation with a Moodle Database Activity: A Case-Study for Uzbek Undergraduate Students

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Abstract

   A Case-Study for Uzbek Undergraduate Students. The paper presents the results of the research on building and an effective use of the database as an activity in teaching Translation Studies as well as how to organize translation courses online in Moodle Learning Management System, which is widely used in distance education around the world. The research tries to understand what requirements Atechniques that can be applied while translating is highlighted in the paper. The hypothesis of the research has been tested in the control and experimental groups who are studying Translation Theory and Practice at Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages, Uzbekistan. This particular study concludes that the database activity in Moodle allows a teacher to apply an active learning, assessment and prompt feedback, and collaboration features to the online course. **(Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages)**

Keywords: translation strategies and techniques, effective organization of a Moodle course, database, fields and templates.

1.   Introduction

During the pandemic the education system of Uzbekistan also had access to a full-time distance learning. And frequently face-to-face as well as occasionally blended-learning courses had to be carried out entirely online. In addition, it required a deeper reflection on how to effectively design those online courses. At the same time, it is logical to set up online classes based on the learning outcomes of each syllabus.

One of those expected learning outcomes and competencies to be acquired in the translation course for undergraduate level named "5120200 - Translation Theory and Practice (English-Uzbek and Uzbek-English)" prescribed in the model syllabus [Kurbanova G., et. al. 2018] developed by Uzbekistan State University of World Languages and approved by the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan is *to master translation strategies and techniques* that can be applied while translating. The topic of translation strategies and techniques is the key one in popular textbooks that are widely used in translator training programs such as J. Munday's Introducing Translation Studies: theories and applications (4th edition, 2016) and M.Baker's In Other Words (3rd edition, 2018).

In the modern translation teaching all students are involved in the process of Online or distance learning. Many researchers argue that in the post pandemic period new translation technology needs new approaches to translator education and the Online Computer-assisted Translation classrooms has been designed to address this gap [Bilik, 2020; Bordet, 2021; Lapevska, 2021]. Essentially, many others look at different aspects of an online translation course, including the technical requirements, pedagogical strategies and constraints, issues of classroom interaction, and the advantages and disadvantages of online teaching [Ko, 2012; Tuyen 2021; Iglesias-Pradas, 2021]. The papers carried out to research teaching translation online conclude Moodle being one of highly effective learning management systems [Wei J., 2015; Fictumova, 2004; Shi, 2016; Kiraly, 2016; Motta, 2008; Gorozhanov A., et al., 2018].

However, they don't mention productive Moodle elements and how to set up better online courses. This research is intended to look through designing Moodle course to teach translation strategies and techniques. And the objective of the research is database being an activity which allows a teacher or a

student to build, display and search a bank of added entries about any possible topic. The paper highlights adding database to Moodle course, setting up its fields and templates in order to develop students' specified competences and validity of using database activities in translation courses.

2. Research questions

Accordingly, we put forward the following research questions:

How to organize an online translation course? What requirements to meet to organize an effective online course? How to teach translation (*to master translation strategies and techniques*) online?

Is the usage of database in Moodle effective for online translation courses? Does a database as an activity enhance students' translation competences?

What fields to create in a database to teach *translation strategies and techniques (frames, models)?*

3. Literature review

It is not easy to answer the question how we can organize high-quality university translation courses. Fortunately, the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) has come up with some recommendations with this. The AAHE has published 12 recommendations in 3 categories [J.Singh, 2014:25]:

e:	lum:	tion:
High expectations	Coherence in learning	Active learning
Respect for diverse and learning styles	Synthesizing ence	Assessment and t feedback
Emphasis on early raduate years	Ongoing practice of d skills	Collaboration
	Integration of ion with experience	Adequate time on task
		Out-of-class contact culty

Of course, we can not apply all 12 of these principles in every class. According to Jaswinder Singh a course that integrates as many of these principles as possible will likely be of higher quality than one that doesn't. Luckily, Moodle is very helpful in realizing above mentioned quality principles.

Jaswinder Singh names four basic course types in higher education: introductory survey course, skills development course, theory/discussion course, capstone course [J.Singh, 2014: 25-26]. The Translation Course under our research can be included in skills development courses in which it is recommended to use the following Moodle tools: resources, forums, quizzes, lessons and databases. Here database is in our research interest.

Jianhua Wei undertakes research into the effect of an application of the Moodle-based Teaching Model (MBTM) to teach Translation Theory and Practice, which were supposed to improve the learners translating ability. According to the one semester's experiment in the research, the experimental group was found more significantly progressive in translating ability with higher post-test scores than the pre-test scores, and the experimental group participants demonstrated their affirmative attitude towards MBTM for learning Translation, which as well need to be further developed and improved [Wei J., 2015: 1022].

A.Gorozhanov states that "teaching translation remains mostly a face-to-face activity as it suggests direct knowledge transfer from the expert to the student" [Gorozhanov A., et al. 2018: 1], however, E-learning center at Moscow State Linguistic University (MSLU) has been teaching online courses on Translation Studies for a few years. The authors affirm that "any kind of computer teaching program is essential for training professional interpreters" [Gorozhanov A., et al. 2018: 2].

It is mentioned in the article that MSLU organizes online translation courses using LMS Moodle platform and the system "has proved to be a proper tool both teaching and learning online" [Gorozhanov A., et al.

2018: 2]. There are some advantages in the Moodle used by MSLU having additional plugins (adaptable theme, online audio recording and etc.). And an important programming block in their moodle is an *interactive vocabulary trainer* based on the glossary of the course. Unfortunately, the Moodle 3.9 used in SamSIFL lacks this valuable tool which means we have to create one extremely quickly.

Theoretical model proposed by A.Gorozhanov is that the online course of translation contains theoretical, vocabulary, open task, manual and file structural modules which are grouped within the block and ordered through the dependences subsystem. It means that the next topic of the course will be available if a student accomplishes tasks and assignments of the initial topic. This proposed model may be difficult to set up and manage for a new teacher or an instructor who started to use Moodle recently. In this case we recommend that trainers use "hide topic "or "hide" functions which can be enabled when "turn editing on" button is clicked in Moodle if teachers do not want their students to see upcoming topics and assignments.

The research conducted by A.Gorozhanov suggests mostly using assignment activity in Moodle. Here a teacher gives a text to students to translate as an assignment activity in Moodle. The deadline to accomplish the task and the limit of words in translation are set up. Then students submit their work to get their teacher's feedback. The authors show 2 stages on feedback and comments on translation done by students. The first is comments embedded into students' texts using background colors which shows wrong and inaccurate translation and stylistic inaccuracy. The second stage is a video conference for further discussion on translation quality which we do not agree with. Although we highly recognize the importance of teachers' comments on translation done by students to increase the quality of translation and to make students learn from their mistakes, the research we are discussing does not take the time and number of students to give a feedback into account.

4.   Materials and Methodology

In our research, we have chosen the topic of translation methods and techniques to teach the students as this topic is the main one in Translation Studies. Besides, capability of using these methods and techniques in the translation process is considered as one of the central competencies and skills of a translator.

We know that there are different approaches as well as various terms for translation methods and techniques. And we have singled out Vinay and Darbelnet's model as a teaching material for the research. Here the reference being a teaching resource is Introducing Translation Studies: theories and applications by Jeremy Munday.

We designed Moodle course for the students in the following way:

1.   Discussion forum;
2.   Glossary;
3.   Presentation;
4.   Video explanation with presentation;
5.   Reading material;
6.   Links for further reading;
7.   Assignment (for the control group);
8.   Database activity (for the experimental group);
9.   Quiz;

From this list of elements in the Moodle course, we look through Database activity. The Database activity allows the teacher and/or students to build, display and search a bank of record entries about any conceivable topic. The format and structure of these entries can be almost unlimited, including images, files, URLs, numbers, and text amongst other things. [https://docs.moodle.org/310/en/Database_activity]

To set up the database activity we take the following steps:

1.   In a course, with the editing turned on, choose 'Database' from the activity chooser.

2.   Give it a name and, if needed, a description.

3.   Expand the other sections to define the settings you want, in particular the Entries section.

4.   Click Save and Display

5.   Create a new field from the dropdown, repeating as necessary, or click the link choose a defined set to import an existing preset.

6.   Click the Templates tab to edit and save templates.

After setting up the database activity in the course it works in the following way:

Student view. Students click on the Database icon in the course to access it and add an entry. They can usually see entries individually (View single) and in a list (List view) and are able to search entries.

Teacher view. Teachers additionally see the set up tabs and can edit, delete, approve/unapprove entries as required [19].

The most important points for a teacher in building database activities are being creative, identifying objectives correctly, and setting up appropriate fields to work with. A field is a named unit of information. Each entry in a database activity module can have multiple fields of multiple types e.g. a text field called 'favourite color' which allows you to type in your favourite shade [20], or a menu called 'language' that lets you choose one from a list of given languages of the world. Templates for the Database activity module allow you to control the visual layout of information when listing, viewing or editing database entries [21]. Since there is enough information on setting up and customize fields and templates of database in moodle.docs, we don't explain this in detail.

The database is added to the Moodle translation course for the experimental group as a task which will be assessed. According to the task students are supposed to add 10 examples for each translation techniques used in the translation of "Andisha va G'urur" (translator: Muhabbat Ismoilova, 2017) comparing its source text "Pride and Prejudice" by Jane Austin. The same task is given to the control group, but in the form of assignment element in Moodle. Based on the given task for the students we have created the following fields for the database which is illustrated in Figure 1 below.
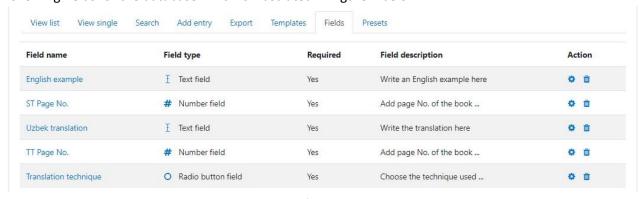

Field name	Field type	Required	Field description	Action
English example	I Text field	Yes	Write an English example here	⚙ 🗑
ST Page No.	# Number field	Yes	Add page No. of the book ...	⚙ 🗑
Uzbek translation	I Text field	Yes	Write the translation here	⚙ 🗑
TT Page No.	# Number field	Yes	Add page No. of the book ...	⚙ 🗑
Translation technique	O Radio button field	Yes	Choose the technique used ...	⚙ 🗑

Figure 1. Fields view when building the database for Translation Course in Moodle.

4.1. The research design being experimental there are two groups: control group and experimental one.

4.2. Participants in the research are the 1st year undergraduate students of two groups who are studying Translation Theory and Practice at Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages. Being 22 students in each group, the total number of participants is 44.

4.3. Instrumentation. The online class begins with QA forum, which plays the roles of pre-test survey and brainstorming activity for each group. The forum includes the following questions on translation methods and techniques:

1.   What is your idea about translation methods?

2. What is a translation technique? Are there any differences between translation methods and techniques?

3. In what situations do we use translation techniques?

4. Which translation techniques do you know?

5. Provide English-Uzbek or Uzbek-English examples for translation techniques you know.

After completing the given assignment and database activity, both groups take the post test to determine the results of the study. The post test is prepared based on examples from Jane Austin's Pride and Prejudice and its Uzbek translation by Muhabbat Ismoilova [The post test can be viewed in this link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bdvrjbMTEKDTbofWsJQCxuxT5ZWFyfTW/view?usp=sharing]. The test consists of multiple choice questions, in which students are supposed to choose the appropriate translation technique for the given English examples and its corresponding Uzbek translation.

5. Findings and Discussions

The forum questions given as a pre test have been answered as expected, with common, often erroneous answers, since the students of each group are in their first year and do not have enough experience in the field of translation. But this task played the role of brainstorming for the students. We think that it helped the students concentrate on the topic that would be studied online. In addition, the forum fulfilled the function of discussion on questions and issues arose from the topic during the teaching and learning process.

We think that forums are very helpful and additional activity to assignments in Moodle in getting feedbacks if they are organized correctly. To motivate students to participate actively in the forum the teacher should set up the system which provides points for given feedbacks by students. It would be good if the role of a moderator from active students for the forum is assigned to check the quality of feedbacks given by students.

The assignment task was given to the control group in order to develop students' competences and achieve the intended results within the topic of the online class, as well as to compare it with the database of the research interest and to draw conclusions. The element of assignment is one of the most used activities in Moodle. It is usually in a written form. In online translation courses, we often use Moodle assignments to do practical activities and work on with translation exercises. The task assigned to the control group was considered as one of the usual tasks. Of the 22 students in the control group, 10 submitted the assignment on time, 7 submitted the assignment later than the due date, and the remaining 5 did not submit the assignment at all. Those who submitted the assignment later said it took much more time to search and organize examples.

Of the experimental group, 12 submitted the task on time, 9 did it later than the due date, and 1 did not do it at all. While working with the database we enabled the function of approving the entries added to the database. We also allowed comments on entries. When students were asked about their impressions of a given task, those who completed it on time said that the task was very interesting and easy to complete. Those who did it later said that the task was more difficult, but the opportunity of looking through entries added by others made the task easier to do. Figure 2 below illustrates the view of adding a new entry to the database.

New entry

English example:

ST Page No.:

Uzbek translation:

TT Page No.:

Translation technique:
- ○ Borrowing
- ○ Calque
- ○ Literal
- ○ Modulation
- ○ Equivalence
- ○ Adaptation
- ○ Amplification
- ○ Compensation
- ○ Expilicitation
- ○ Servitude

[Save and view] [Save and add another]

Figure 2. View of adding a new entry to the database.

As a result of the database exercise, the students created a database of about 2,000 entries in the Moodle course for each translation technique. And, of course, these entries can be used for a variety of purposes in the teaching and learning process.

The results of the post-test at the end of the research is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. The results of the post test.

s	ption of the	l group	mental group
	one		
	ctory		
l average[1]			

The table above shows that the experimental group had a higher number of students who showed excellent and good results, while the control group had a higher number of students who mastered the topic satisfactorily at least or failed.

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[1] Grade 5 * the total number of students = X Number

X Number = 100%

Total score according to each grade = X %

Total score *100% / X Number = Overall average

According to us, the database task assigned to the Experimental group showed that the students were active, had a better understanding of the topic, and their mastery rate was much higher (18%) than that of the control group.

To identify what requirements to meet to organize an effective online course is put forward as a research question. Accordingly, it is very important to follow as much as possible the recommendations included in the categories of culture, curriculum, and instruction developed by AAHE in order to effectively organize an online translation course. Using the database activity in Moodle allowed us to apply the following features to the online course:

- active learning;
- assessment and prompt feedback;
- collaboration.

In fact, we used only one model in the database to understand the translation techniques, but the database can be used in different ways and for different purposes. "You could use the database module to:

- allow collaboration on building a collection of web links/books/journal references related to a particular subject;
- display student created photos/posters/websites/poems for peer comment and review;
- gather comments and votes on a shortlist of potential logos/mascot names/project ideas;
- provide a student file storage area;
- maintain a log of what was done in a face-to-face class each day, so that absent students can get caught up themselves." [J.Singh, 2014: 258]

The only thing here is that building database fields requires creativity. And the creation of complex and attractive templates requires training, awareness of basic html as well.

The next research questions to answer here is what fields to create in a database to teach translation strategies and techniques. Based on the given database task and to make it easier to determine which translation technique used in translation, we added a translation technique field to the database and selected this field as a radio button. As you can see in Figure 2 above, the field of translation technique includes the following buttons: Borrowing; Calque; Literal; Modulation; Equivalence; Adaptation; Amplification; Compensation; Expilicitation; Servitude. The student selects one of them when adding an entry to the database. We believe this allowed the students to look at all the available translation techniques developed by Vinay and Darbelnet at a glance and to think about which technique used in the example they found. This is a database model developed by us. Models can be varied depending on the purpose. There are so many areas of research in translation, such as source text analysis, source text and target text comparison etc. The data of materials for these research areas can be collected collaboratively through the Moodle database. For instance, it is possible to analyze the source literary text units such as names of people, names of geographical places, phraseological units, stylistic devices, and compare their variants in the translated text, and most importantly, to create a good database for analysis of the listed areas.

6. Conclusion

In this particular paper we thought to find the reasons why and how to apply database in LMS Moodle as an important activity to teach translation strategies and techniques online.

Although the literatures we reviewed indicates that a high-quality university course can be organized based on culture, curriculum, and instruction categories, it does not explore how to effectively design a Moodle course for a specific topic of translation. Based on the topic of our choice and the fact that the

course is a skill development course, we used elements of Moodle such as forum, glossary, quiz, database, assignment, file resources, and URL. We conducted an experiment to determine the importance of Database in the course. Based on this particular research method we were able to identify the followings: the database task assigned to the experimental group showed that the students were active, had a better understanding of the topic, and their mastery rate was much higher (18%) than that of the control group. Using the database activity in Moodle allowed us to apply active learning, assessment and prompt feedback, and collaboration features to the online course.

Database built in fields which consist of English example, its translation, and radio buttons to choose a translation technique helped the students to better understand translation techniques. Additionally, the database on the specific topic came to the existence (became available). These database fields we have developed is a model, which as well needs to be further developed and improved, especially its templates. But depending on the purpose and being creative databases can be designed in a variety of ways.

Database activities have many uses, such as

- A collaborative collection of ST and TT segments as ready materials for text analysis in translation research;

- For displaying student-translated texts for peer comment and review, etc.

We hope that the recommendations listed above will encourage further research.

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