Implementing an Online Course in Applied Translation Studies

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Introduction

The unprecedented disruption to education sectors in the 2020–2021 period due to the Covid-19 health crisis saw many tertiary institutions around the world switch to online modes of course delivery, either partially or fully, across a wide range of disciplines. Universities and colleges in Japan were no exception and, in the period April–May 2020, the first substantial spike in Covid-19 cases and the subsequent political and media frenzies that ensued sent the nation's academic calendars into unparalleled disarray. Institutional responses were swift however, and the Ministry of Education (MEXT) study outlined in Table (1) shows that, as of July 1st, all universities and colleges (*senmon gakkō*) had started Semester One classes, with approximately 83.9% conducting either *fully online* classes or *blended* classes (a hybrid combination of *in-person* and *online* classes).

Table (1). Course delivery as of July 1st, 2020 (MEXT 2020: 16)

	in-person classes	blended	fully online classes
National universities	1.2%	64.0%	34.9%
Public universities	7.8%	70.6%	21.6%
Private universities	17.6%	59.7%	22.7%
Colleges	33.3%	40.4%	26.3%
(overall)	16.2% (173 schools)	60.1% (642 schools)	23.8% (254 schools)

(data based on 1069 Japanese universities surveyed by MEXT)

Supplementary budget allocations in the order of $95 million (US dollars) were created by MEXT for universities to set up infrastructure for online classes. MEXT also established an emergency student financial support program and cash handouts were made to

adversely impacted students. A ministerial request was issued urging universities to remove existing limits on the number of course credit points that students can obtain through online courses (MEXT 2020: 15).

The data from the MEXT study outlined in Table (1) shows that this hitherto unseen predicament compelled an overwhelming majority of universities to deliver courses in a fully online or blended mode. Although no statistical evidence exists to support the assertion, it would perhaps be fair to assume that a significant number of the instructors concerned would have had limited experience in information and communications technologies (ICT), virtual learning platforms, and video conferencing software, or were otherwise venturing into largely unfamiliar territory regarding distance learning and teaching online.

The author of this paper has first-hand experience with several universities that hurriedly organized training sessions for instructors to brush up on their ICT and video conferencing skills, as well as familiarize themselves more thoroughly with their institution's virtual learning environment (VLE). Instructors with minimal or no experience in online teaching at the said institutions were naturally concerned about how video conferencing would affect their class discourse and raced to transition their curricula, coursework, and classroom pedagogy to a virtual medium.

By the August-September start of Semester Two classes in 2020, and in the aftermath of Japan's first Covid-19 national state of emergency (Kantei 2020), fully online courses had become extremely commonplace, while the proposal to move the annual start of the academic year from April to September was still being hotly debated (Times 2020). That August-September period also saw continually rising daily numbers of infections with national figures regularly spiking well over 1000 (NHK 2021), and despite there being no state-of-emergency declaration at that point, many universities, particularly those in metropolitan areas, elected to continue delivering courses in a fully online format.

Instructors in these circumstances often did not have the option of conducting blended classes (the aforementioned hybrid combination of both in-person and online classes). The author of this paper encountered this situation first-hand and consequently prepared and delivered a fully online practical course in translation studies for university students that the instructor had never met in person. The circumstances and specifics of this course will be outlined in detail later in this paper.

The 2020 and 2021 academic years presented numerous pedagogical and logistical challenges to university instructors, both online teaching novices and veterans alike, with

the abruptly changing flux of in-person, blended, and fully online classes. Now, looking back on that two-year period, the author of this paper is confident that a resounding majority of students became able to transition between each modus operandi smoothly as circumstances dictated. Naturally, the inherent nature of each discipline and its subject matter, and the coursework each instructor employs is unique, with some disciplines lending themselves to a relatively simple transition to online instruction, while other disciplines prove more labor-intensive for the instructor and require significant efforts in digitizing content and readjusting pedagogy. The sudden shift to an online mode of delivery certainly put the ingenuity, adaptability, and ICT skills of university instructors to the test, with many eye-opening results and rewarding outcomes.

Jargonistic initialisms and acronyms featured are outlined in Table (2).

Table (2). Technical initialisms and acronyms featuring in this paper

ATS	applied translation studies（応用翻訳学，翻訳研究，翻訳演習）
CAT	computer-assisted translation（翻訳支援ツール［ソフトウェア］）
ERT	emergency remote teaching（緊急遠隔授業）
FC	flipped classroom（教室で課題を話し合い，授業外で講義映像を観る「反転授業」）
ICT	information and communications technology（情報通信技術［機器］）
IS	interpreting studies（通訳学，通訳研究，通訳演習）
LMS	learning management system（Moodle や manaba などの学習管理システム）
MEXT	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology（文部科学省）
MT	machine translation（Google 翻訳や LINE 通訳などの機械による自動翻訳）
SL	source language（起点言語［原文の言語］）
ST	source text（原文）
TL	target language（目標言語［訳文の言語］）
TS	translation studies（翻訳学，翻訳研究，翻訳演習）
TT	target text（訳文，翻訳文）
VLE	virtual learning environment（Google Classroom や Office 365 などの仮想学習環境）

Defining translation studies（TS）and applied translation studies（ATS）

The concept of *translation* as featured in the context of the discussions in this paper needs to be defined. This paper deals specifically with a *written translation* course and not with *oral translation,* which is commonly known as *interpreting* or *interpretation*. In regards to written translation, translation scholar Jeremy Munday notes, “the process of translation between two different written languages involves the changing of an original written text（the source text or ST）in the original verbal language（the source language

or SL) into a written text (the target text or TT) in a different verbal language (the target language or TL) " (Munday 2012: 8).

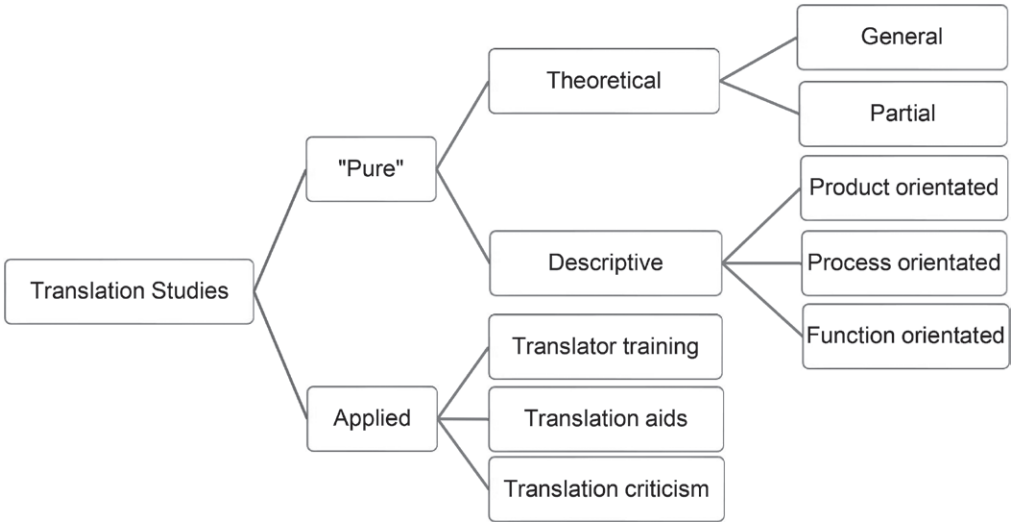
Although many forms of written translation exist, the discussions here focus on the rendering of written English passages into Japanese and written Japanese passages into English. These renderings featured as practical translation exercises in the aforementioned translation studies course taught by the author and can be categorized as *interlingual translation* or 'translation proper' using linguist Roman Jakobson's categories (Jakobson 1959).

Munday defines translation studies (TS) as, "the now established academic discipline related to the study of the theory and phenomena of translation" (2012: 1). To avoid delving into the complex topic of the history of written translation and for the purposes of this paper, it may be presumed that written translation has existed ever since groups of peoples using different oral and written languages had an incentive to culturally interact. Despite the long history of the practice of written translation itself, Munday points out that "the study of translation as an academic subject only really began in the second half of the twentieth century" (2012: 10).

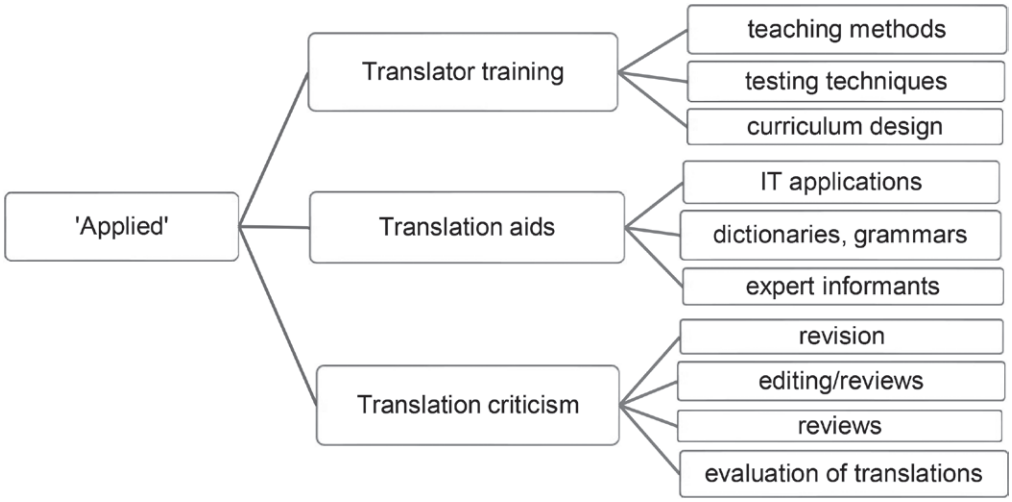
TS is now an independent academic discipline featuring both quantitative and qualitative research and empirical analysis methodology. It was described by translation scholar Mona Baker, in echoing the opinions of her colleagues and fellow researchers, as an "exciting new discipline" and "perhaps the discipline of the 1990s", and she notes the incredible rapidity with which translator and interpreter training has been academicized in the higher education sector since the 1990s (Baker 2009).

The formal development of TS as an academic discipline is relatively recent, and this process was partly instigated by prominent translation scholar James S. Holmes (1924–1986), who is attributed with coining the discipline's English-language name. Holmes laid a framework for defining TS by breaking the discipline down into various sub-disciplines of inquiry (Holmes 1972/1988). Following on from this research, translation scholar Gideon Toury constructed a diagram mapping the framework set out by Holmes as shown in Figure (1).

In the "Pure" research area of TS as seen in Figure (1), researchers may *describe* the characteristics of translation (as in the *Descriptive* sub-branch) or formulate *theories* explaining those characteristics (as in the *Theoretical* sub-branch). The *Applied* research area of TS includes the three sub-branches *Translator training, Translation aids,* and *Translation criticism, which* Munday extends with allowances for more recent informa-



Figure（1）. the first three levels of Holmes' basic map of TS（Toury 1995/2012）



Figure（2）. the sub-branches of *applied TS* further mapped by Munday
［the six sub-branches of *IT applications* are abridged］（Munday 2012: 19）

tion technology（IT）developments as shown in Figure（2）.

As mapped in Figure（2）, the *Applied* research and inquiry field of TS deals with the practicalities of the translation process rather than theoretical considerations, and inherently focuses on the vocational training of budding translators and the education of future translation researchers. The framework for defining the field of TS and its sub-fields of *pure translation studies* and *applied translation studies* in English-language academia was initially laid out by Holmes five decades ago however it is still used regularly in present-

day research and discourse on written translation.

The university translation course featured in this paper can be classified as a course in *applied translation studies* (ATS) as per the framework in Figure (2) and by taking into consideration the course's pedagogy, curriculum design, and focus on practical translation activities.

Translation studies (TS) in Japanese universities

Japan is often referred to as a *hon'yaku taikoku* (Nitta 2014), a prodigious *translation nation*, with no small part of its prosperity owing to its dedication to translating, emulating, and attempting to improve upon the scientific and technical know-how of foreign powers.

Historically this began with Japan's neighborly relationship with China based on commercial trade and scholarly exchange that influenced Japan's politics, religions, concepts of education, architecture, cuisine, apparel, mainstream culture and both the written and spoken Japanese languages. Later, Dutch sailors brought specialized knowledge of shipbuilding, cartography, marine navigation, and Western firearms and warfare, leading to the beginning of trade with the West. European medicine arrived in the 16th century with Jesuit missionaries and again in the 17th century with Dutch physicians. When Japan began to adopt Western medical practices in the 1870s, the German language came to the fore, and later the newly industrializing empire of Japan hungrily absorbed the military tactics and technologies of France (Britannica 2021).

The English language gathered import in the Meiji era (1868–1912) with the growing influence of English-language literature, scholarly works, music, and later, films. Until this point, translators in Japan had generally rendered foreign-language texts into Japanese for domestic readers. However, when Japan went on to become an economic superpower in the post-war era, the high international demand for Japanese electronics, automobiles and craftsmanship gave birth to an industry of translating Japanese texts into foreign languages. These translations may be handled in-house by linguistically skilled employees of the manufacturer itself or outsourced to translation agencies.

Translation scholar Kayoko Takeda notes that these translation agencies, as well as privately-owned firms and foreign language schools, held the monopoly in translator training and that these agencies often doubled as translator training academies until TS formalized into an academic discipline and universities and colleges in Japan began to offer

translator training as part of degree programs（Takeda 2012：21）.

Internationally, TS only achieved the status of a formal academic discipline in English-language academia in the 1990s with the dramatic rise in the number of university-level institutions which offered degrees in translation and/or interpreting（Baker 2009）. The status of TS as a formal academic discipline in Japan has made great strides in the last two decades（Takeda 2012: 21）, which indicates that Japanese universities were only a few years behind their overseas counterparts in adopting TS. Takeda suggests this can perhaps be attributed to the research of Japanese scholars domestically and the international contacts and postgraduate studies of Japanese scholars outside Japan（2012: 21）. In attesting to the formal academic nature of TS in Japan, Takeda also explains that a significant academic association has been established, graduate programs in professional translation training and research have been launched, doctoral dissertations have been produced, and major publications have appeared that generated discourse on TS in the Japanese context（2012: 16–17）.

Common renderings of the name of the discipline in Japanese are *hon'yaku-gaku*（translation studies）or *hon'yaku kenkyū*（translation research）, and stand-alone university courses often feature titles such as *hon'yaku nyūmon*（introduction to translation）, *hon'yaku-ron*（translation theory）, *hon'yaku-hōu*（translation methods）, or *hon'yaku enshū*（practical translation exercises）.

Japanese universities were relatively quick to recognize the vocational relevance and marketability of translator training with many institutions incorporating practical translation courses into the curriculums of their arts, literature, and foreign language departments. However, translation scholar Judy Wakabayashi points out that, often, "translation is still taught in individual courses（not degree programs）, mainly as an undergraduate elective and primarily aiming at language education or intercultural communication training, rather than professional translator training"（2012: 41）, and she adds that, "translator training in Japan remains heavily influenced by commercial schools"（2012: 42）. These commercial schools are the aforementioned privately-owned translation agencies, translator training academies, and foreign language schools.

Several pioneering tertiary institutions in Japan have created departments and hired expert faculty to allow students to study and major in translation and interpreting studies at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. TS in Japan will naturally garner further recognition as more students produce master's and doctoral theses, and more scholars publish papers and make presentations at academic conferences.

Applied translation studies (ATS) and online teaching

In contrast with *interpreting studies* (IS) with its focus on oral communication, the field of *applied translation studies* (ATS) is largely text-based. It is concerned mainly with analysis of a source text (ST), the creation of a target text (TT) to suit a specific audience, and reviewing the theories and techniques involved in this process, with the intention of teaching practical translation as a linguistic, academic, or vocational skill.

For university instructors of ATS courses, switching to a fully online mode of delivery can initially be a daunting proposition, however, course preparation does not necessarily require a large investment of time if the instructor's existing teaching materials and resources and are mostly in digital form to begin with. Naturally, in-person discourse, coursework, assessment, and feedback methodology will require some calibration, however, in the author's experience, this was realistically achievable with sufficient notice of the decision to move to a fully online modality and enough general information about the enrolling students and the VLE (virtual learning environment) software to be used.

Here, it is necessary to define *online teaching* as it relates to the context of the discussions in this paper. In general, there are three types of online teaching scenarios. The first is the *fully online mode* (as utilized in distance education), in which the instructor is able to design the course with the full knowledge that all aspects of the course will be conducted using web-based solutions. The second is a *blended mode* when the instructor delivers a hybrid combination of in-person and online classes. The third is *emergency remote teaching* (*ERT*) when the switch to a fully online mode is made at short notice due to an unforeseen disruption, such as a natural disaster or health crisis, and in-person classes are unadvisable or physically impossible. It is also necessary to further define ERT for comparison and contrast purposes. ERT is a "temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances. It involves the use of fully remote teaching solutions for instruction or education that would otherwise be delivered face-to-face or as blended or hybrid courses and that will return to that format once the crisis or emergency has abated" (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, and Bond 2020). The next section of this paper discusses an actual online university course in ATS taught by the author of this paper during the Covid-19 health crisis. In this scenario, the instructor was given sufficient notice of the decision to move to a fully online modality and enough general information about the enrolling students and the VLE (virtual learning environment) software

to be used, to prepare appropriate materials in advance. Considering the preceding classifications of online teaching, and despite the crisis-centric definition of ERT, this particular scenario is not an example of ERT, but rather it falls into the category of standard *online teaching* despite the circumstances being prompted by a health crisis.

Case study of an actual ATS online course — *course outline and details*

The author of this paper taught a one-semester introductory course in applied translation studies（ATS）at a four-year private university in Japan during the Covid-19 health crisis, with this experience serving as a rudimentary case study facilitating the discussions of translation studies（TS）in this paper. The two translation directions of the course were English → Japanese and Japanese → English, with both directions receiving equal attention. As the course focused specifically on practical written translation skills, it featured no interpreting（oral translation）activities. All fifteen 90-minute sessions of the one-semester course were delivered in a fully online modality without the option of blended classes, due to the large enrolment of 39 students and physical distancing requirements during the Covid-19 health crisis.

Online classes were made possible with dedicated learning management system（LMS）software, and the *Office 365* platform developed by Microsoft allowed instructors to make use of virtual learning environments（VLE）and facilitate discourse with ease. Licensed *Office 365* components were accessible through any web browser and included *Outlook* for emailing, collaboration platform *Microsoft Teams* for live lectures and webcam sessions, *Microsoft Forms* for survey and quiz functionality, *Microsoft Stream* for video sharing, and *Microsoft Word* for multi-user editing and sharing of documents.

Instructors at the said institution had the option of holding live *synchronous* webcam sessions to engage with students during scheduled class times, or alternatively, uploading videos and materials in advance to provide on-demand *asynchronous* lectures and coursework that students can complete at a time of their choosing. Many instructors with large student enrolments, including the author of this paper, opted to film themselves speaking on the content of each session and share those videos with students using *Microsoft Stream*. This asynchronous on-demand format permits reviews of lecture videos and results in less pressure on students experiencing difficulties meeting the time constraints of numerous scheduled live lectures and assignment submissions.

The ATS online course enrolment consisted of 39 students including 2nd, 3rd and 4th

year students, with a large proportion majoring or minoring in English or intercultural communication studies. English proficiency test scores indicated an approximate TOEIC score range of 400 to 710, and Eiken (*Jitsuyō Eigo Ginō Kentei*) grades obtained included 3rd-*kyū*, pre-2nd-*kyū* and 2nd-*kyū*. For all enrolled students, English was either their L2 or L3 and there were also a small number of students for whom Japanese was not their L1. Of the 39 students, 14 had experienced travel or study in an English-speaking country, and 18 had prior English → Japanese or Japanese → English written translation experience, including 3 who had taken a TS course or lessons previously in either university or high school. The vast majority expressed an interest in translation, however reported that improving their English language skills was their main motivation for enrolling in this ATS online course.

This one-semester ATS online course served as a straightforward yet comprehensive introduction to the field, with video lectures and associated readings dealing with *hon'yaku riron* (translation theories), *hon'yaku no kihon* (translation basics), *hon'yaku-sha no sekinin* (translator responsibilities), *hon'yaku rinri* (translation ethics), *chokuyaku to iyaku no tsukaiwake* (literal and figurative translations), and *hon'yaku no kotsu* (practical translation advice). Coursework featured numerous *hon'yaku enshū* (practical translation activities).

Students, after viewing the weekly video lectures uploaded by the instructor, answered online quizzes on the lecture content, completed simple translation activity quizzes, consulted uploaded course documents and assigned readings, referred to designated websites and online videos, and then worked on the weekly *hon'yaku kadai* (practical translation assignment) and submitted their work to the instructor electronically via the VLE. Students posted queries to the collaboration platform message board, directly emailed the instructor, or requested a video-chat consultation when necessary.

Conducting a time-based practical examination on campus in an official *teiki shiken* timeslot at the end of the semester posed potential health risks, so the instructor opted instead to issue a *rinji shiken* which students could complete individually on a computer in the 15th and final week of the course. This *rinji shiken* was a multicomponent translation project which served as an assignment-style final exam and earned students the largest part of their cumulative performance grades (*heijōten ni yoru seiseki hyōka*).

Taking the various academic backgrounds, year levels, and personal interests of the enrolled students into consideration, the instructor endeavoured to choose materials and themes from current trends and popular culture for young adults whenever possible.

The following is a list of the weekly *hon'yaku kadai*（practical translation assignment）resources and media featured in the ATS online course:

- excerpts from a popular novel for teenagers
- review of a hit television drama series
- exercises on *gairai-go*（foreign loanwords）in the Japanese language
- exercises on *wasei eigo*（'English' terms used only in Japan）
- exercises on usage differences in British and US English
- translators' perspectives on learning foreign languages
- practical translation strategies from manuals on translation
- online articles and blog entries
- tweets of celebrities and public figures on Twitter
- Covid-19 health information
- slang expressions featured in movies and dramas
- manga-style comics
- activities from translation studies textbooks
- pop music song lyrics

The assignment-style *rinji shiken*（final test）components consisted of:

- a four-frame comic skit（E → J）
- a short government website passage on foreign relations（E → J）
- a short business email（J → E）
- subtitle creation for a television commercial about smartphones（J → E）

Several students commented in an anonymous class survey at the end of the semester that they enjoyed the wide range of source text（ST）types dealt with in this course. In particular, they mentioned the translation of an English-language song into Japanese, the translation of a Japanese-language song into English, and the bidirectional translation of slang expressions featured in English and Japanese-language movies.

Case study of an actual ATS online course — *design and implementation*

Means, Bakia and Murphy（2014）outline eight *design features* to consider when creating an online course: (1) Modality, (2) Pacing, (3) Pedagogy, (4) Online communication synchrony, (5) Intended instructor role online, (6) Intended student role online, (7) Role

of online assessments, and (8) Source of feedback. The actual ATS online course serving as a rudimentary case study in this paper was designed with these criteria and associated recommendations in mind.

The following is a summary of course design and implementation factors drawing on this framework, with *italicised* terms representing the keywords that Means, Bakia and Murphy use to further classify characteristics of online teaching:

(1) *Modality*: The course was delivered in a *fully online* format as opposed to being *blended* or *web-enabled*. The *blended* (hybrid) option was not available in this circumstance, and the instructor opted to not utilize *web-enabled* groupwork or peer collaboration as it seemed inappropriate considering the variety of year levels, linguistic proficiency levels, and differing weekly schedules of the enrolled students.

(2) *Pacing*: The course was *class-paced*, as opposed to being *independent mastery-paced* or a *mixture of both*. It was conducted with the same weekly progression as a course taught in-person, with students having 7 days to complete the weekly coursework and translation assignment before the next session's content is uploaded on the assigned 'class day'. If the course was *independent mastery-paced*, then advanced or motivated students or those with more lenient schedules would be able to progress ahead of their peers by completing future coursework and assignments. This pacing can prove complicated for instructors who are delivering weekly lectures, grading assignments, and providing feedback to large numbers of students and, in the case of full-time faculty at universities in Japan, an instructor may potentially oversee up to eight courses each week and be responsible for dealing with hundreds of students.

(3) *Pedagogy*: The instructor employed both *expository* and *exploratory* approaches by *explaining* concepts to students in the weekly video lectures and having them *investigate* those concepts in the practical translation exercises. The VLE therefore provided a *practice environment* for students and the instructor opted to not utilize *collaborative* peer discourse with this particular group of students as outlined previously in (1) Modality.

(4) *Online communication synchrony*: The course was operated in an *asynchronous* manner as opposed to *synchronous*, or a *mixture of both* protocols. *Asynchronous* commu-

nication eliminated the need for simultaneous VLE access and allowed students to work through course materials when their schedule permitted, affording more leeway in meeting the weekly deadlines for assignment completion. As previously explained in the *course outline and details* section of the case study, pre-recorded videos of the instructor's lectures were uploaded weekly instead of holding live lectures via webcam. Discourse and communications between instructor and students largely took place in the VLE forum and by direct email.

(5) *Intended instructor role online*: The *asynchronous* communication style meant that the instructor seemingly had a *smaller presence* as a guide and facilitator in the VLE when compared with *active instruction,* however, regardless of the *online communication synchrony,* the traditional instructor roles of lecturer, assessor, and feedback provider still very much applied.

(6) *Intended student role online*: Students in the course would *listen* to pre-recorded lecture videos and *read* assigned materials in the VLE. One advantage of pre-recorded lecture videos over live webcam lectures is that students can review the lecture at their leisure and rewind or pause the video when necessary. Students had numerous opportunities for output through the practical translation exercises and would actively *complete problems, answer questions, and explore simulation and resource.*

(7) *Role of online assessments*: The online activities and coursework assignments were designed to *provide the instructor with information about the students' learning state* and to contribute to students' cumulative performance grades (*heijōten ni yoru seiseki hyōka*). As such, the online assessments were not used to *determine if a student is ready for new content*, or to *tell the system how to support the student*, or to *calculate the student's risk of failure.*

(8) *Source of feedback*: The VLE itself was not set up to provide feedback to students in an automated fashion and, as live discourse via webcam was not employed in this particular instance, the instructor provided feedback directly to students via email and in the message forum of the VLE.

Case study of an actual ATS online course — *fully online delivery*

An enrolment of 39 students that the instructor had never met was an unexpected yet pleasant surprise. Despite the large student number, the text-based nature of practical translation coursework coupled with the ease of using the VLE posed no major course preparation difficulties for the instructor.

The following is a list of the main observed *advantages* of the fully online delivery used in this ATS course that became apparent to the instructor during implementation:

- Avoided significant amounts of paper, printing, and photocopying.
- Time saved on logistics and physical preparations allowed the instructor to spend more time on course design and lesson planning.
- Course information and other important notices were easily and instantly shared with all enrolled students.
- Issuing, receiving, and collating data from assignments, quizzes, surveys, and 'reaction papers' was extremely simple and efficient.
- The *asynchronous* communication style relieved the pressure on students to log into the VLE on specific days and times and allowed less able students to review video lectures and materials or take more time in completing coursework when necessary.
- Directly uploading multimedia content such as videos or sharing online content by posting URLs was extremely simple.
- Identifying students who were falling behind (i.e. not completing assignments or logging in to the VLE) and sending them an enquiry message was very easy.
- Typing feedback was more efficient than writing by hand and students received the comments immediately.
- The *asynchronous* communication style meant that the instructor was not inundated with messages from students about their webcams, microphone problems, ISP bandwidths, or VLE access issues, and students had time to seek help from IT Support when they were genuinely experiencing a technical issue.

The following is a list of the main observed *disadvantages* of the fully online delivery used in this ATS course that became apparent to the instructor during implementation:

- In reading the coursework, assignments and email communications of such a large enrolment of students with no faces to visually attach to names, every so often the instructor lost track of who a student is and needed to verify their performance and progress in written records.
- Less tech-savvy students took longer to settle into the patterns of the coursework than their peers.
- Occasionally a student's translation assignment was of an unsatisfactory standard when they had apparently only used their smartphone or touchscreen tablet, as opposed to a desktop or laptop computer with a proper keyboard and pointing device.
- Occasionally there were instances of *copy-paste* plagiarism from the internet and translation outputs copied directly from *Google Hon'yaku* (Google Translate). The allure of internet plagiarism is perhaps more tempting when a course is conducted fully online.
- Providing feedback via the VLE or email was very simple and efficient, however, making performance criticisms (e.g. plagiarism warnings) left the instructor wondering how the student in question would react to negative feedback in a virtual classroom. The lack of face-to-face connection made giving 'keyboard criticism' somewhat awkward.
- Although not utilised in this particular course for the reasons outlined previously in (1) Modality, web-enabled groupwork and peer collaboration offers several potential benefits. The instructor intends to employ student-to-student translation assignment collaboration when teaching ATS online courses in the future.

Issues concerning translation technology in ATS courses

Translation scholar Sin-wai Chan notes that translation technology, such as computer-aided translation (CAT) and machine translation (MT), "has become a norm in translation practice, an important part of translation studies, a new paradigm of translation pedagogy, and a major trend in the industry" and it has "totally globalized translation and drastically changed the way we process, teach and study translation" (Chan 2015). Although ATS instructors naturally warn their students of the inherent risks in careless use of translation technologies, perhaps more time in ATS courses could be focused on the

benefits of these technologies and embracing trends rather than shunning them.

Nevertheless, the use of a MT website or application in an ATS university course is a subjective and debatable issue. For example, if a student uses Google Translate as a dictionary to check an equivalent word in another language, then that should not pose a problem. However, if a student copies an entire passage that they are supposed to translate for themselves and submits the MT-rendered target text output as their own work, then this naturally raises an issue of academic dishonesty. Any guilty parties who have taken the same 'shortcut' here have attached their names and student numbers to machine-rendered translations containing identical grammar, punctuation, and logic errors, all of which a careful ATS instructor with sufficient translation experience can identify immediately and verify using MT websites or applications. Despite explanations about the inaccuracies and unreliability of MT and warnings about academic dishonesty, the guilty students in this hypothetical scenario have not linguistically benefited from the translation process or the assignment and have effectively wasted their own time and the time of their instructor.

The discussions in this paper did not feature technical details of translation technology, software, and web-based translation resources, as these represent a very diverse field of inquiry and warrant a separate paper that the author intends to publish in the future. Advances in translation technologies continue to be a mixed blessing for ATS, linguistics, and other language-learning disciplines.

Conclusion

This paper has cited research and literature on the topics of translation studies (TS) and online teaching while providing observations and discussions of a practical nature regarding teaching an online university course in applied translation studies (ATS) drawn from the first-hand experiences of the author.

A university course in ATS lends itself to a relatively easy shift from a physical classroom to asynchronous online delivery by being based in printed and digital texts and because practical translation activities generally involve students working individually at their own pace. The ready availability of online content and the ease with which multimedia resources can be shared through a VLE means that an ATS instructor can set tasks from a wide range of text genres and themes and cater to varying proficiency levels. Through teaching a fully online ATS course, an instructor can accumulate a stockpile of

translation source texts in digital form that can be utilized in future ATS courses whether in-person, blended, emergency remote teaching（ERT）, or even flipped classroom（FC）scenarios.

The ICT skills practiced in online courses of this nature will stand students in good stead after graduation if they are required to telecommute or work remotely when on a business trip for example. Even if a student does not desire to become a professional translator, the linguistic skills will benefit those who, in a future occupation, deal with foreign clients or personnel communicating from overseas.

In regard to TS in Japanese universities, it is the author's hope that papers of this nature and ATS courses of the kind featured here will contribute to the emergence of more translation departments offering full degree programs in universities and colleges in Japan, as well as more master's and doctoral courses in postgraduate schools.

The 2021–2022 period was an unprecedented time for education sectors in general, with numerous switches in medium, pedagogy, and modality, amid ongoing health concerns and uncertainty. In hindsight, university instructors are certainly more capable educators because of this experience, and both instructors and students have invaluably expanded their ICT repertoire, allowing a myriad of new applications of web-enabled communications technology. Nevertheless, let us hope that the COVID-19 health crisis ends soon with no further cases from newly emerging variants threatening lives and forcing education sectors back permanently behind computer screens.

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