TRANSLATOR'S AND INTERPRETER'S PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE (CASE STUDY: BACHELOR AND MASTER DEGREE PROGRAMS)

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Abstract. The author focuses on the content of translator and interpreter's competence, the relevance of the content of Bachelor and Master Degree Programs, formation of translator's and interpreter's competences according to the professional demand of the modern environment. The components of translator and interpreter's competence have been analyzed, the problems related to professional training have been outlined, and possible solutions have been suggested.

Keywords: translator/ interpreter professional training, Bachelor's Program, Master's Program, translator's competence, interpreter's competence.

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional education framework in the form of knowledge, abilities and skills should be revised taking into account the importance of the competence approach, which reflects the needs of society in training not only a knowledgeable specialist, but a professional, able to apply his or her knowledge efficiently [23]. This paradigm of education is influenced by tight labor market, which is characterized by fierce competition, resulting in the need of professional training a versatile individual with a set of hard and soft skills meeting the requirements of the changing environment. The professions of translator and interpreter are in demand on our labor market, though the requirements to the applicants have greatly changed, they have experienced certain transformations in recent years. This process contributes to the development of a specific transformed concept of translator/ interpreter competence, which is the target of professional training. Taking into consideration the necessity to adjust to the changing conditions, it should be noted that we are temporary left in legal limbo due to the absence of the Branch Standards of Higher Education.

The Branch Standards are the guiding landmarks for the professional training, they contain such components as: educational qualification characteristics of graduates of higher educational institutions, which define the objectives of higher education and training, determine the place of the specialists in the structure of state industries and the requirements for their competence and other socially important qualities, abilities and skills, professional functions and typical tasks (these characteristics should be approved by authorized central executive body in education and science in coordination with the authorized central body of executive power in industry of labor and social policy); educational and

professional training programs, which define the regulatory period and the regulatory part of the content of training in a certain field or specialty, the requirements for content, scope and level of education and professional training (these training programs should be approved by the authorized central executive body in education and science); diagnostics tools, intended for quantitative and qualitative assessment of education efficiency, that is the assessment of knowledge, abilities and skills, professional and other qualities in compliance with the education standards of higher education (these tools should be approved by the authorized central executive body in education and science as well [32].

Awaiting the solution, we can't ignore our life moving forward and updating professional training should be taken for granted as it is inevitable. Though, it should be noted that the development of the Branch Standards of Higher Education heads the list of priorities for 2017, presented among the tasks of our Ministry of Education [21]. The guiding landmarks for the professional training are of utmost importance and they can be worked out on the basis of the notion of the professional translator/ interpreter competence [7]; the study of its components will help us analyze the content of translator and interpreter's training program, substantiate the assessment of approaches and teaching methods applied and specify the choice of efficient approaches and teaching methods.

2. RESULTS

Translator's and Interpreter's Competence has been in the focus of the scholarly attention paid to translator's and interpreter's activity and training; the analysis of literature on the problem (E. Alekseev [1], R. Bell [2], E. Breus [3], J. Stuart Campbell [4], V. Komissarov [15], L. Latyshev [15], M. Martínez [17], G. Miram [20], M. Orozco [23], etc.) demonstrates that Translator's and Interpreter's Competence is a complex phenomenon formed on the basis of linguistic and sociocultural knowledge and skills.

Interlingual communication defines the peculiarities of translators and interpreters activity and as a result the researchers point out a set of shared skills and abilities, they require distinct skills and techniques as well to perform their task successfully. Translators transfer the source language into the target in writing, interpreters perform it orally. Though, the first group of components is common for both groups of professionals and considering the opinion of the abovementioned scholars, it can be specified as consisting of four components: *lingual, discursive, sociolingual and sociocultural* [15; 16; 20; 23].

Lingual component of translator's/ interpreter's competence includes knowledge about the system and the structure of the source and target language and rules of their functioning in the process of communication, the ability to use formal tools to operate and the rules by which linguistic units are arranged in meaningful statements.

Some scholars suggest differentiation of two parts in the lingual component, which can be considered relevant for our research, especially for interpreter's training. For instance, a famous linguist Noam Chomsky introduced his ideas as part of the foundations for his Generative grammar, but it has since been adopted and developed by other linguists. Noam Chomsky presents a concept of *linguistic competence*, which is referred to as the system of linguistic knowledge possessed by native speakers of a language. He poses the concept of linguistic competence in contrast to the concept of *linguistic performance*, the way the language system is used in communication. In the generativist tradition competence is the only level of language that is studied, because this level gives insights into the Universal Grammar, which generativists see as underlying all human language systems [6].

It should be noted that functional translation theories tend to dismiss the sharp distinction between competence and performance, and particularly the primacy given to the study of competence. But in professional training teachers experience a certain discrepancy between knowledge acquired and skills formed. It is evident that skills formation takes time, and this process can be efficient on condition of certain abilities developed and knowledge acquired.

According to Chomsky, competence can be considered as the ideal language system that makes it possible for speakers to produce and understand an infinite number of sentences in their language, and to distinguish grammatical sentences from ungrammatical sentences. This is unaffected by "grammatically irrelevant conditions" [6]. In the process of professional training students deal with the so called "ideal language system" of the source and target languages mainly at the beginning of their training. Teachers select the material according to the level of language of their students, trying to avoid or overcome so called "grammatically irrelevant conditions", such as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying knowledge of the language in actual performance [6]. Such situation can be somewhat possible in case we deal with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows both the source and the target languages of the speech community perfectly, which is hardly ever realizable.

Another challenging issue concerning differentiation of linguistic competence and performance touches the difference between *language and speech*, discussed in the scholarly works [28]. It is evident that a sample of natural speech differs from normative language (the definition of which is quite disputable), consisting of numerous false starts and other deviations causing problems to interpreters. The concept of performance in Chomsky theory refers to the actual production and comprehension of oral or written language, but it is also affected by situational variables such as fatigue and distraction. Therefore, a fundamental distinction has to be made between the competence and performance and it should be taken into account in the process of professional training.

The core components included in the speaker's linguistic competence correspond to five of the major subfields of linguistics: *phonetics*: physical production and perception of the inventory of sounds used in producing language; *phonology*: mental organization of physical sounds and the patterns formed by the way sounds are combined in a language, and the restrictions on permissible sound combinations; *morphology*: identification, analysis and description of units of meaning in a language, inflectional and derivational morphology; *syntax*: structure and formation of sentences; *semantics*: understanding the meaning of sentences [6].

In interlingual communication lexical characteristics of the source material often cause most of the problems, translator's task is to produce an adequate translation, choosing appropriate vocabulary and presenting it taking into account translation function selecting relevant strategies. This issue demonstrates a close link of lingual component with another one, considered to be of utmost importance by the scholars – a discursive component.

Discursive component of translator's/ interpreter's competence can be defined as the ability to communicate text and speech parameters in the subject area; the ability to plan their presentment behavior, understand and convey information in coherent, logical statements, to build and to organize statement in accordance with the purpose of communication. Similar idea is represented in the notion of *communicative competence* (coined by Dell Hymes in 1966) [8] which refers to a language user's grammatical knowledge of syntax, morphology, phonology and the like, as well as social knowledge about how and when to use utterances appropriately. Communication competence was conceptualized according to two criteria: co-orientation and coordination. Co-orientation was viewed as the ability to construct some degree of mutual understanding by using such verbal strategies as acknowledging, mirroring, paraphrasing, clarifying, etc. Coordination was viewed as the ability to construct conjoint actions or the ability to adjust one's own verbal actions to the actions of others as well as to individual and group goals. Coordination strategies included apologies, disclaimers, defining the situation strategies, meta-accounts, etc. The lack of co-orientation and coordination is usually associated with frequent interruptions and talkovers. These are physical characteristics of the conversation, conceptualized as asynchronous talk and also used in assessing communication competence [8].

The ideas presented attracted our attention regarding changes of the market demand to a modern translator, who should be an individual with a set of hard and soft skills, able to multitask and react flexibly, rather than a transparent conduit of information. It should be noted that such understanding

of discursive component is close in meaning and has a lot in common with the ideas of sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence.

Sociolinguistic component of translator's/ interpreter's competence is manifested in the ability to perform various types of interlingual activity choosing linguistic means according to field of communication taking into account the peculiarities of social status of the partners in communication. *Sociocultural component* of translator's/ interpreter's competence includes the ability to apply various types of information about national and cultural peculiarities of the source or the target language country, the ability to build their behavior based on these characteristics and standards.

At present the scholars add instrumental competence to the list as both professionals require different types of *instrumental skills* (translators are to master software (computer added translation) and be able to work with electronic reference literature; interpreters, for instance, engaged in simultaneous translation are to use conference equipment). Interpreters should have some additional competence components, such as general knowledge, memory skills, public speaking and moral [11].

On giving a general outline of the concept of translator / interpreter competence, we come to the conclusion that lingual component of translator's/ interpreter's competence is the basic one and its formation should be the priority, thus we proceed with the analysis of Bachelor and Master Degree programs. The content of the programs will show their relevance to the identified components of translator/ interpreter competence.

Bachelor's Degree program takes four years and includes such courses as: first year: History of Ukraine (3 credits), Ukrainian for Professional Purposes (3 credits), Practical Course of First Foreign Language (27 credits), Practical Course of Second Foreign Language (5 credits), Latin (3 credits), Introduction to Linguistics (3 credits), Introduction to Literary studies (3 credits), Introduction to Translation Studies (3 credits), History of Foreign Literature (3 credits), Foundations of Applied Linguistics (2 credits), Physical Training (3 credits) – total – 58 credits; second year: History of Ukrainian and Foreign Culture (3 credits), Practical Course of First Foreign Language (15 credits), Practical Course of Second Foreign Language (12 credits), Introduction to Special Philology (3 credits), Comparative Lexicology (3 credits), History of Foreign Literature (4,5 credits), Psychology and Pedagogy of High School (3 credits), Cultural Studies (3 credits), Comparative Grammar (3 credits), Theory and Practice of Translation from First Foreign Language (5,5 credits), Course Paper on Philology (3 credits) – total – 58 credits; third year: Comparative literature (3 credits), Rhetoric (2 credits), Ethnology (3 credits), First Foreign Language (13,75 credits), Second Foreign Language (13,25 credits), History of Foreign Literature (2,75 credits), Comparative Grammar (2,75 credits), History of English Language (2,75 credits), History and Theory of Translation Studies (3,75 credits), Linguistics (2,75 credits), Introduction to Cross-cultural Communication (1,25 credits), Modern Ukrainian literature (2,25 credits), Practice of Translation (5,25 credits), Course Paper on Translation Studies (3credits) – total – 60 credits; fourth year: Safety and Health Protection (1.5 credits), Politology (2 credits), Comparative Stylistics (1.5 credits), First Foreign Language (12 credits), Second Foreign Language (9,5 credits), History of Foreign Literature (2,5 credits), Practice of Second Foreign Language Writing (3 credits), Practice of Translation (6,5 credits), Neology and Translation of Neologisms (1,5 credits), Law Translation (1.5 credits), Business Documents Translation (2,25 credits), Fundamentals of the Theory of Communication(3 credits), Third Foreign Language(3 credits), Practice of Interpretation (3 credits), Course Paper in Translation studies(3 credits), Practical Translation / Interpretation Training (6 credits) – total – 65,5 credits.

It should be mentioned that our graduates get a Bachelor's degree in Translation and Interpretation from English into Ukrainian, while the program of their education includes a wide range of various courses, some of which have a slight relevance to translator's/ interpreter's competence. We have analyzed the content of the academic subject's programs [33] and came to the conclusion that some of them should be replaced or greatly modified to meet the requirements of professional competence.

At the starting stage of the experiment the undergraduates were asked to distribute the subjects in accordance with the professional components and assess their relevance. They filled in questionnaires expressing their opinion concerning the efficiency of the program studied and their relevance to shared

translator's/ interpreter's competence. The undergraduates selected certain subjects, which to their mind contributed to the formation of such components of shared translator's/ interpreter's competence as lingual, discursive, sociolingual and sociocultural. The results of the opinion poll are the following concerning Bachelor's Degree Program. Students have analyzed shared Translator's/ Interpreter's Competence Components and Relevant Courses (Preparatory Stage of the Experiment).

Matching the subjects to *lingual component* of translator's/ interpreter's competence, the students selected Practical Course of First Foreign Language, Introduction to Translation Studies, Theory and Practice of Translation from First Foreign Language, Comparative Lexicology, Comparative Grammar, History and Theory of Translation Studies, Practice of Translation, Comparative Stylistics, Neology and Translation of Neologisms, Business Documents Translation, Law Translation, Practice of Interpretation, Practical Translation / Interpretation Training. Matching the subjects to *discursive component* of translator's/ interpreter's competence, the students selected such courses as Theory and Practice of Translation from First Foreign Language, Comparative Lexicology, Rhetoric, Comparative Stylistics, Law Translation, Business Documents Translation, Practical Translation / Interpretation Training. Among the courses relevant to the formation of *sociolinguistic component* of their competence, the students mentioned Theory and Practice of Translation from First Foreign Language, Comparative Stylistics, Practical Translation / Interpretation Training; *sociocultural* component is developed by such courses as Theory and Practice of Translation from First Foreign Language, Cultural Studies, Introduction to Cross-cultural Communication, Comparative Stylistics, Practical Translation / Interpretation Training; *instrumental* component is developed by the courses of Theory and Practice of Translation from First Foreign Language, Foundations of Applied Linguistics, Practical Translation / Interpretation Training.

The preparatory stage of the experiment showed that students assess only one third of the subjects as bearing direct relevance to the required professional competences. The subjects, considered of direct relevance to the competences occupy only two third of the total credits suggesting doubtful efficiency (for different reasons) of the rest in the academic program. All the students assess as the most relevant such subjects as Practical Course of First Foreign Language and Theory and Practice of Translation. 10% of the students admit their insufficient knowledge of a second foreign language, lack of lingual and discursive components of translation competence and expressed their request for focusing attention on the basic competences in the teaching programs.

Master's Degree program takes a year and a half and includes such courses as: Current Issues of Translation studies, Practical Course of First Foreign language, Practical Course of Second Foreign Language, Methods of Teaching Translation at the Higher School, Pedagogy and Psychology of Higher School, Genre Translation Theory, Communication Strategies, Translation from the First Foreign Language, Interpretation Technologies, First Foreign Language, Second Foreign language, Practical Translator's/ Interpreters' Training.

At the preparatory stage of the experiment students getting their Master's degrees were asked to distribute the subjects in accordance with the professional components and assess their relevance. They filled in questionnaires expressing their opinion concerning the efficiency of the program studied and their relevance to shared translator's/ interpreter's competence. The students selected certain subjects, which to their mind contributed to the formation of such components of shared translator's/ interpreter's competence as lingual, discursive, sociolingual and sociocultural. The results of the opinion poll concerning the analysis of Master's Degree Program shared Translator's/ Interpreter's Competence Components and relevant courses are the following.

Matching the subjects to *lingual component* of translator's/ interpreter's competence, the students getting their Master's degree selected such courses as Current Issues of Translation studies, Practical Course of First Foreign language, Practical Course of Second Foreign Language, Genre Translation Theory, Communication Strategies, Translation from the First Foreign Language, Interpretation Technologies, First Foreign Language, Second Foreign language, Practical Translator's/ Interpreters' Training. Matching the subjects to *discursive component* of translator's/ interpreter's competence, the students selected such courses as Current Issues of Translation studies, Practical Course of First Foreign

language, Practical Course of Second Foreign Language, Pedagogy and Psychology of Higher School, Genre Translation Theory, Communication Strategies, Translation from the First Foreign Language, Interpretation Technologies, First Foreign Language, Second Foreign language, Practical Translator's/ Interpreters' Training. Among the courses relevant to the formation of *sociolinguistic* component of their competence, the students mentioned Current Issues of Translation studies, Practical Course of First Foreign language, Practical Course of Second Foreign Language, Methods of Teaching Translation at the Higher School, Pedagogy and Psychology of Higher School, Genre Translation Theory, Communication Strategies, Translation from the First Foreign Language, Interpretation Technologies, First Foreign Language, Second Foreign language, Practical Translator's/ Interpreters' Training; *sociocultural* component is developed by such courses as Current Issues of Translation studies, Practical Course of First Foreign language, Practical Course of Second Foreign Language, Methods of Teaching Translation at the Higher School, Pedagogy and Psychology of Higher School, Genre Translation Theory, Communication Strategies, Translation from the First Foreign Language, Interpretation Technologies, First Foreign Language, Second Foreign language, Practical Translator's/ Interpreters' Training. According to the students' opinion *instrumental* component is developed by such courses as Current Issues of Translation studies, Genre Translation Theory, Communication Strategies, Translation from the First Foreign Language, Interpretation Technologies, Practical Translator's/ interpreter's Training.

The opinion poll shows that 99 % of subjects were considered by the students as bearing direct relevance to the formation of their professional competence. Though 60% of the students expressed their request for more practical classes and admit their insufficient competence in translation and interpretation of certain materials.

Master's Program Courses suggest translation and interpretation training on a variety of topics, practicing different types of translation [24; 25; 26; 27], e.g. Translation and Interpretation in the Sphere of Economy and Business covering the issues of Business Strategy and Tactics, Partnership, Employment, Training, Finance and Banking, New Venture, Business Online, Project Management, Business Ethics, Energy Sources, Consultancy; Law Translation and Interpretation covers the following issues: Basic Legal Concepts, Legal Resources, Court Structure, Jurisdiction, Court Process, Court Etiquette, Criminal Law, Civil Law, Administrative Law, Legal Documents (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Convention against Torture and Racial Discrimination, Convention against Discrimination of Women, Covenant on the Rights of the Child, Constitution on Human and Citizens' Rights); Technical Translation involves the issues of Terminology in Translation, Electronic and Electronic consumer Equipment, Computers and Office Equipment, Communication Equipment, Metal Production and Processing, Machine Tools, Iron and Steel Works, Iron Foundry and Rolling Mill, Hammer Forging and Drop Forging.

Students getting Master's Degree study the procedure of translation-oriented analysis [22] to understand the lingual structures and their relationships in the system of the original text and to provide a solid base for each translation decision. Students and teachers admit that the procedure of translation-oriented analysis is a type of analytical activity of the translator, which precedes the creation of the translated text, is aimed at understanding the source text, identification of the dominant translation type, choice of the invariants and strategies of translation. It involves several complicated stages to identify communicative and pragmatic features of the text, their relevance for adequate translation (deictic parameters of the text: sender, receiver, purpose (communicative intention of the message); non-verbal means of influence on the receiver, used by the sender (pictures, photos, formulas, graphics, gestures, etc.); identify structural and semantic characteristics of the text and their relevance for adequate translation (extracting the "semantic nucleus" of the text, which consists of "major sentences" of the text, defining the dominant theme-rheme structure); analysis of lingual stylistic features of the text and their relevance for adequate translation (functional style, relevant style features (vocabulary, stylistic devices, typical of certain style); the choice of translation strategies (types of translation: instrumental or documentary; domesticating and foreignizing strategies) and

transformations (translation of proper names, internationalism, terms, neologisms, slang, jargon, translation of phraseological units, techniques of lacunas filling, balancing presuppositions).

Such complexity and versatile character of Master Program training translators and interpreters account for the present-day professional environment to meet the requirements of which future specialists should get broad knowledge, skills and abilities to fulfill their responsibilities converting written or oral material of different types from one or more source languages into the target language, ensuring that the translated version conveys the meaning of the original as clearly as possible. A sort of transcreating is often a part of the job, and translation transforms into a mix of translation, localization and copywriting, where the material should be culturally and linguistically adapted to suit the target audience or reader

3. CONCLUSIONS

We have analyzed the major components of shared translator's and interpreter's competence. We have defined such essential components in the framework of shared translator's and interpreter's competence as lingual, discursive, socio-lingual, socio-cultural and instrumental; described their peculiarities and interrelations. We presented the content of Bachelor and Master Degree Programs of translator/ interpreter's training, established the relevance of the courses suggested to translator's/ interpreter's shared competence components (lingual, discursive, socio-lingual and socio-cultural and instrumental). As a result of the preparatory stage of our experiment (students getting their Bachelor's and Master's degrees expressing their opinion concerning the efficiency of the program studied and their relevance to shared translator's/ interpreter's competence components) we should accept the necessity to modernize the content of translator and interpreter's Bachelor and Master Degree programs in accordance with the professional demand in the region. Possible solutions to the problems under consideration can be seen in programs updating, introduction of special elective courses, application of content and language integrated learning methodology which enables to give more practical activities meeting the needs of present demand and orientation towards global integration. In near-term perspective we are going to examine each of the components of translator's and interpreter's competence, to clarify their content and create measuring tools taking into account impact factors of the professional environment.

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У статті висвітлено основні вимоги до базових компетенцій письмового та усного перекладача. Здійснено аналіз відповідності змісту програм освітнього рівня "бакалавр" і "магістр", наголошено на потребі формування складових компетенцій перекладача відповідно до вимог сучасного середовища. У статті визначено основні компоненти перекладацької компетенції, виявлено проблеми, пов'язані з професійною підготовкою майбутніх фахівців у відповідній сфері діяльності, та запропоновано можливі шляхи їх вирішення.

Ключові слова: професійна підготовка перекладача, програма підготовки бакалавра, програма підготовки магістра, компетенція усного перекладача, компетенція письмового перекладача.