

TRAINING FUTURE TRANSLATORS TO MEET THE MARKET REQUIREMENTS

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Rezumat: Pregătirea viitorilor traducători este o sarcină deosebită care necesită un program bine gândit, literatură contemporană, materiale didactice și echipament calitativ. Programul de studiu al traducătorilor este diferit de cel al viitorilor profesori. Aspectul comun este engleza generală. Însă, astfel de aspecte precum sunt mass media, textele economice, de contabilitate, publicitare, medicale, legale sunt o parte componentă a programului educațional destinat traducătorilor. Engleza specializată se cere a fi parte componentă a programului educațional. Acest articol abordează problemele cu care se confruntă profesorul pregătind viitori traducători.

Cuvinte-cheie: engleza specializată, program educațional, competență.

Abstract: Training of translators is a specific task, which requires a well-thought program, up-to-date literature, translation materials and equipment. Translator's educational program differs from the program, followed by the students who will become teachers. The common aspect is general English. The other aspects should cover a wide variety of fields, such as mass media, economic, accounting, advertising, medical, legal texts and the peculiarities of these types of texts. In other words, English for Specific Purposes should be an integral part of the educational program. This article focuses on the main problems the teacher encounters while preparing future translators.

Key-words: ESP, educational program, competence.

Training future translators is quite different from preparing teachers. Though the common thing in this case is that to train teachers and translators the teacher needs to lay a general foundation, to make them master the so called general English. This usually happens in the first and second years of studies, when students work hard to get basic knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. In this period of time attention should be paid to all of the four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking, all of them are equally important and interdependent. Solid linguistic and cultural competence in both source and target languages is a prerequisite for translators training. If translation is taught too early, before the learners have the required level of language and culture knowledge then translation classes are likely to be transferred into language learning.

Culture knowledge is vital for an efficient work of the translator. Not only has the translator to know facts from history and traditions of the source and target culture, he has also to be able to recognize such elements that are often hidden in the text, and most importantly, to find a way to render them in the target text. Hints and allusions which are often used to make the source text more colorful and expressive can present real problems to the translator. To cope with this task the translator has to possess extensive knowledge of the source language culture or be able to find this information, using various sources, be it media, or dictionaries.

Apart from the ability to use the language, that is to communicate, be it in written or in oral form, the translator needs to possess the meta-communicative competence, which enables him/her to understand how the two languages and cultures work, what are the differences and similarities between them, be able to 'switch codes'. It means that the learners have to be acquainted with the functions of the language, to adjust a text according to the rules and norms of the target language and find suitable equivalents. This involves knowledge of the text structure, knowledge of the functional styles and their peculiarities.

Insufficient knowledge of the trainees' native language is another problem that has to be faced by the teachers. Efficient translation classes draw learners' attention to language or grammar issues that are similar or different to their native language, which is of primary importance as quite often learners have to produce a translation in their native language. Focusing on the contrast between the source and target language may turn out to be an efficient learning technique. The contrastive analysis of authentic, real-life texts, which demonstrate that similar communicative intentions can be expressed in different ways in the two languages, is much more efficient than a theoretical class on the same topic. Learners should be able to perform a contrastive analysis of the styles, they should be aware of the norms and conventions of everyday conversations before they start translating.

Translators' training should cover such aspects as: text pragmatics, production of texts, aimed at different audiences and having different objectives, cultural and world knowledge in order to understand and produce a text, extra-linguistic norms that control text production (legal norms, marketing policies, etc.), ESP and terminology for different spheres of activity.

ESP classes play an important role in translators' training. General English provide learners with sufficient skills to communicate, but ESP has a different purpose. ESP concentrates on language in context, rather than on grammar and language structures. It covers subjects, varying from accounting or computer science to tourism and business management. The ESP focal point is that English is not taught as a subject separated from the students' real world; instead, it is integrated into a subject matter which is important to the learners. ESP familiarizes the students with vocabulary and terminology, specific for a given sphere of activity. It also offers insights into the subject matter, thus, enlarging their background. The translator has to possess at least some basic information about the subject matter of translation, otherwise translation could be inefficient. It is up to the translator to search information and familiarize himself with the basic notions of the text, which is to be translated. Thus, ESP classes contribute to the professional development of the translator. It is important to create a logical sequence of the ESP courses in the curriculum of the translators, starting from the fields, which are familiar to the learners and gradually moving to more complicated things.

To achieve the above goals it is advisable to combine theoretical and practical classes. It has been always debated what is better to start with theory or with practical classes. Practice has shown that small portions of theory at early stages of training turn out to be quite efficient. Learners are not overloaded with things they cannot understand due to their unreadiness, but at the same time it allows them to justify their choices and combined with practice, forms a foundation for a better understanding of the subject of translation.

The translators training objectives can be met applying into practice the following types of exercises:

- 1) Building up semantic fields of the words, drawing up the synonyms chart, differentiating between synonyms, defining word meaning and the range of application. This exercise enlarges the vocabulary of the learners, allowing them to see the differences and similarities of the meanings.
- 2) Paraphrasing utterances, identifying the differences in meaning and the communicative effect produced. This activity will make the learners understand the difference between various utterances with approximately the same meaning.
- 3) Summarizing long texts, which will enable the learners to compress information and restructuring sentences, transforming complex sentences into simple and vice versa.
- 4) Rewriting texts for other audiences which involves text transformation, keeping in mind the communicative intent of the original text (intra-lingual translation).
- 5) Creativity exercises (crossword puzzles, punning, playing with the meaning of the words).
- 6) Analysis and comparison of texts, produced for different audiences, for laymen or specialists, for children or adults, as well as texts transmitted by different media (oral or written, texts belonging to the so-called sublanguages), etc. Doing this exercise the learners are asked to compare one and the same information but presented in different ways, subsequently, they have to detect the peculiarities of these variants. This type of activity raises the learners' awareness of text functions, enabling them to produce texts of their own, aimed at different groups of people.
- 7) Analysis and comparison of texts, belonging to different genres, identifying the functional markers of the genre. It will enable the learners recognize the genre of the text and keep to it while translating the text.
- 8) Revision of defective translations or revision of machine-translated texts, which will allow the learners correct the faulty translation and train their proof-reading skills.
- 9) Analysis of translated texts that contain cultural information. While doing this exercise the learners will discuss the methods used by professional translators to convey the cultural background information, as well as discuss other ways of doing it.
- 10) Converting non-verbal text elements into verbal (expanding on the information that is contained in tables, diagrams, schemes, pictures, etc.). This exercise should be first made in the native language of the learners and then in English.
- 11) Produce written texts on the basis of oral information. It involves text conversion and learners will be able to put into practice their writing and listening skills.

These activities can be used to train translators, without asking them to translate. Most of these activities focus on the function of the language or text. If the skills, on which the above mentioned exercises are focused, are practiced in the mother language first and then applied in English and subsequently the two versions of the texts are compared, the students will learn about translation without doing any translation. At the same time, these exercises enable the learners to develop their text competence in both source and target languages. Contrastive text competence is the ability to analyze culture specific features of textual and other communicative conventions in two cultures. The teaching methods include: parallel text analysis, bilateral and multilateral translation criticism, and rewriting and text revision. It is important to note that contrastive text analysis is based on the comparison of language in action, where the emphasis is laid on the form, frequency and distribution of communicative acts.

References

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