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Translator and Interpreter (T&I) Educators: Steps of Professional Skills Development

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This paper is devoted to the insufficiently studied problem of the program design for training of T & I educators. The problem is investigated from the position of the social relevance of the T & I educators' profession, and its specificity. The structure of the professional competences necessary for T & I educators is being determined as well as the requirements, which stand in front of these specialists. We propose a Master's program, which includes a number of original innovative courses, disciplines, providing profoundness, comprehensiveness, practical and research orientation of future T & I educators' training.

Keywords: T & I educators/trainer/professor, professional competencies of T & I educators, Master's Course «Translation and Interpreting Pedagogy».

Introduction

A new educational paradigm – the competency based approach – provides the modernization of the professional training in the global educational space. A restructuring of all components of the educational process focuses now on the formation of personality of BS/MS and there qualities that facilitate for them a prompt inclusion in the environment of the professional relationships, good execution of functional duties, application of knowledge gained in the real context of business and professional contacts. These are up-to-date requirements of employers and, most importantly, of the state being the main “customer” of vocational education. Similar needs are demonstrated by students, whose professional motivation is focused not so much on “fundamentalization”

of their preparation but on common sense of practicability and pragmatism.

These trends are responsible for the change in priorities specific for the theory and practice of vocational education. The phenomena of “competency” and “competence” are intensively studied within this area. The researchers conduct the analysis of their contents, structural features, seek the ways of their formation / development.

Didactics of teaching languages, whose object is to simulate the process of development of identity capable of a full-fledged cross-cultural communication with a representative of another language community (“second language identity” by I.I. Khaleeva) takes an active part in this process. Today, this science studies the objectives and learning outcomes set out in the competency parameters, researches new approaches for the

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formation of foreign language communicative and / or intercultural competencies of linguistic / nonlinguistic university graduates.

T & I Educators: Problems of Skills Development

One of the important areas of research within Didactics of teaching languages is aimed at investigation of the process of preparing translators and interpreters, whose role is to be mediators providing intermediary functions in intercultural communication and to promote effective interaction between communicants with different languages and different cultures. The greatest interest of scientists is devoted to building and simulation of translation competencies. These competencies are being formed within the Course of translation theory and practice that are taught at universities, at language departments, as well as within the framework of further education program "Translator in the sphere of professional communication". Basic approaches to the selection of the set of competencies needed by an interpreter, the range of these competencies have been outlined by N.N. Gavrilenko, V.N. Komissarov, L.K. Latyshev, E.R. Porshneva, M. J. Zwilling, etc.

High requirements to graduate expect the development and implementation of appropriate educational technologies that include innovative methods, techniques, tools, and forms of education. The development and implementation of these technologies is the responsibility of T & I educators. The qualifications and skills of these teachers will affect the quality of graduates: a competent teacher will prepare a competent translator and/or interpreter. Hence, it is necessary to form a corps of highly qualified T & I professors, capable and willing to use adequate pedagogical and methodological strategies for the training of professional translator and/or interpreter.

This apparently common truth is, however, deals with a lot of problems. The main problem stems from the fact that today in Russia **there is no system of focused training of T & I educators**. Observations and analysis of educational standards and training programs show that T & I educators appear in Russia quite spontaneously.

In one case, they "grow" out of teachers whose training qualification is related to teaching foreign languages as a means of (professional) communication without translation expertise. With such training, students study methods of teaching foreign languages without learning characteristics of the translation and interpretation. Thereby, it is not taken into account the change of the translation competency as an object of learning, which is characterized by particular facets. As a result of such a non-specialized training the instructor, who is entrusted to teach the theory and practice of translation, transfers methods, techniques, training aids that are ineffective for the special educational conditions. In addition, it is not a secret that professional competency of a certified teacher of foreign language has no special translation component. The teacher does not have any experience in translation or interpreting practices, without which the teaching of translation is impossible. His professional expertise is purely pedagogical.

In the other case, T & I professors are graduates of the faculties of translation, they have got the experience in translation, but their program does not provide special psychological, educational, and methodological preparation, focused on the introduction to the theory and technology of educational process organization. Consequently, the professional competency of graduates is in translation only. Translator, becoming a teacher, can use only those models of teaching translation, which were used in the period of his own professional development, he is

not capable of innovative educational activities, to design and develop teaching strategies in accordance with the constantly changing educational process.

It can be concluded that at present time, there exists and has become extremely urgent the problem of developing a specialized training program for T & I trainers.

T & I Educators: Purposes and Objectives of Skills Development

The first step of professional skills development of T & I educators is to clarify their competency parameters. It can be assumed that professional competence is composed of two components: the translation and teaching (T.V. Kryukova, A.P. Ponomatko). However, the studies note an obvious bias towards purely translational component of the competence of a professional. This is indicated by the analysis of the sites, which describe the requirements for a teacher of translation, as well as components of his (re)training (<http://www.lingvo-plus.ru/prepodavanie/>; http://www.rsute.ru/structure/chairs/Kaf_80/Pages/povkv.aspx; <http://buroperevodov.sumy.ua/?p=187>; <http://www.misti-moscow.ru/glavnay.htm>; <http://translationjournal.net/journal/10trning.htm>; http://www.ausit.org/page/ausit_audio.html; <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos175.htm> etc.). On these sites, among the requirements for the preparation of T & I educators namely didactic (psychological, pedagogical) component accounts for 9% – 16%. This suggests that in preparing the T & I professors the priority is given to the aspect which has been well studied and fairly presented in full-blown theory of translation at the expense of proper didactic component.

It is required to change the angle of view on the nature of T & I educators' competence structure, balancing two components within that: the proper translational and pedagogical-

methodological: they both must be equal, perhaps with some superiority of the latter. That gives the right to teach students and transfer to them the experience of translation efficiently, with knowledge of educational strategies. According to L. Chernyakhovskaya, a university graduate, who has the ability to teach translation, must know a foreign language professionally, and be able to quickly switch from one language to another. At the same time he should possess methodological basics of teaching this challenging profession, be good at subtleties of stylistic and terminological peculiarities of the most various genres of literature in the native and foreign languages. In addition, he should have the basics of psychology, and methods of teaching such a complicated profession – not a discipline, but namely the profession – as translation (Chernyakhovskaya 2002).

In other words, you cannot accept with Emerson's phrase, "Those who cannot do, teach." Teaching is a very difficult task. Imparting knowledge and experience to another person requires not only mastery of the subject matter, but also mastery of the communication of knowledge. Therefore, a T & I professor has to have both the knowledge and experience in T & I and the ability to teach.

In connection with all mentioned above we should clarify the notion of professional competence of T & I trainers.

1. This must be a person who has his own translation experience, possessing relevant professional (translation) competencies, familiar with the nature of translation activities, opportunities, challenges and conditions of this work.

2. T & I professor must know the foreign language and possess the translation strategies much better than his students. T & I trainer has to have more than just superb understanding of language but also must be aware of socio-cultural,

terminological, and business issues in the course of practicing in the T & I profession.

3. T & I educator should draw students' attention to the nuances of semantics, conceptual, terminological, and connotative aspects of language units, socio-cultural infrastructure of the language, explain the peculiarities of the system organization and functioning of the language, explain the principles of the approach to translation as an act of intercultural communication.

4. T & I trainer must be a professional who is able to explain, to remind the meaning of the terms used. This means that he must be a qualified linguist. Teaching of translation always involves a broad general erudition in the field of country studies, history, literature, linguistics of both native and foreign languages. Translation and interpretation represent a highly rarefied linguistic skills which encompasses not only language ability but also cultural sensitivity, area expertise, and the capacity for research.

6. T & I educator must have a high level of knowledge in the field of the Russian (native) language.

7. T & I professor must be a gifted teacher and skillful trainer: the main difference between him and a practicing interpreter is that the former should be able to explain the general principles, methods and techniques of translation. This means that the T & I educator must be knowledgeable in the field of effective educational strategies, teaching approaches, to keep abreast of the latest trends in the field of educational activities.

8. T & I educator must develop all the components of his competence in research of theory and practice of translation, linguistics, pedagogy, and psychology.

All this said, the profession of T & I trainer is extremely versatile. In this context, the question of T & I educators' training who are able to pass on their knowledge and experience to future

translators, is extremely important. It is necessary to develop a program of specialized and focused training of such professionals.

T & I Educators: Program of Skills Development

According to scientists, T & I professor can be trained in two ways: in the Specialization "Translation and Theory of Translation" within the Course "Linguistics and Intercultural Communication"; pedagogical aspects will be the additional part to a major program (T.V. Kryukova 2002). Also there is an opposing point of view that the T & I educators "can and should be prepared from those who already have the higher education, and practical experience. These can be teachers of foreign languages, who will be trained in translation, and methods of its teaching, or experienced translators, who must be taught the basics of translation theory, theory of the text, theory and methods of teaching different types of translation" (Chernyakhovskaya, 2002, p. 46).

The last of these opinions seems to be more affluent, as it focuses on preparing graduates to a complex professional activity both as an interpreter and a T & I educator. In connection with the introduction of two-level system of university education it is reasonable to foresee such a specialized educational program at Master's level as it is more than a Bachelor's program focused on a deep, extensive specialization of the students, their use of practical experience. In addition, the Master's level of education prepares future professionals to research work, to acquisition of methodological foundations of the profession, to life-long learning approach.

In this paper I propose a model for the organization of innovative master's program "Translation and Interpreting Pedagogy". The Master of Translation & Interpreting Pedagogy is a program which can be designed to meet the needs

of T & I educators who have some experience of teaching translation and/or interpreting in any languages either in professional development workshops or formal T & I programs. The aim of the program is considered to enable T & I practitioners to acquire teaching expertise in T & I education and to introduce pedagogical principles to the teaching of translation and interpreting. The goal of the program is for students to be reflective T & I professors, with an advanced understanding of T & I and pedagogical theories as a foundation for teaching practice. All students are required to relate their learning back to their teaching experience, and critically evaluate their work.

I suggest the following units within this program:

1. Contemporary Translation and Interpreting Theory. This course can introduce students to recent developments in translation and interpreting theory. These contemporary theories will be set against the background of the disciplinary origins and evolution of theories in the field of translation studies and more recently interpreting studies. Contemporary theories encompass linguistic, sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic models of human communication.

2. Bilingualism. The unit is considered to discuss bilingualism from a cognitive point of view. Topics addressed include childhood bilingualism and its relationship to cognitive development, bilingual education, language attrition, bilingualism in the ageing population, and in special circumstances.

3. Pedagogical Approaches to Teaching T & I. This course can introduce students to the most recent pedagogical approaches that are considered to be the benchmark in teaching translation and interpreting. The course is underpinned by research findings into pedagogy more generally and pedagogy in the context of

translation and interpreting. Students can be encouraged to reflect on the application of the approaches to practice and in particular to their own teaching.

4. Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. This unit offers an introduction to theory and research in student learning, university teaching and course design. Seminars will focus on the relationship between learning and teaching; fostering active learning; the facilitation of learning in different contexts; the role of course design and assessment in enhancing learning; and the development of e-learning environments.

5. Curriculum Design and Assessment in Higher Education. This unit aims to give participants an understanding of curriculum and what influences it, alternative approaches to course design, and the importance of aligning learning goals/objectives, teaching/learning activities and assessment tasks. Seminars will deal with the impact of context upon course design and the crucial role of assessment in determining the quality of student learning.

6. Teaching Translation. This unit is considered to introduce students to pedagogical approaches that are considered to be the benchmark in teaching translation. The course is underpinned by research findings in translation studies on the cognitive process, skills and techniques used by translators. The course will also focus on aspects of quality in translation and methods of evaluation of quality in translation.

7. Teaching Consecutive Interpreting. This unit can introduce students to pedagogical approaches that are considered to be the benchmark in teaching consecutive interpreting. Students will be encouraged to reflect on the application of the relevant pedagogical approaches and research findings to practice and in particular to their own teaching.

8. Teaching Simultaneous Interpreting. This unit can introduce students to pedagogical

approaches that are considered to be the benchmark in teaching simultaneous interpreting. The unit will focus on aspects of quality in interpreting and methods of evaluation of quality in interpreting. Students will be encouraged to reflect on the application of the relevant pedagogical approaches and research findings to practice and in particular to their own teaching.

9. Dictionaries in Translating and Interpreting. Students will concentrate on ways in which dictionaries can best respond to a professional translator's and interpreter's needs. Aspects of semantic analysis and basic principles and methodology of dictionary-making are at the core of this unit. The creation and use of terminological databases is discussed within the context of the special requirements of translation and interpretation.

10. Language Planning and Language Policy. This unit is considered to examine language choice and language standardisation, political, social and economic contexts of language policy and planning. Effects of language planning decisions on language attitude, intergroup relations and cross-cultural communication with particular reference to Russia will also be considered.

11. Language Testing and Evaluation. The unit aims to introduce participants to key concepts and issues in language testing and assessment and to provide them with principles and techniques for designing and evaluating language tests and assessment tools.

12. Evaluation of Educational Programs. This unit is considered to explore contemporary research and practice in the evaluation of educational programs. Students will design an evaluation study appropriate for their current workplace context.

13. Designing ICT-based Courses and Learning Resources. This unit examines e-learning from the perspective of those

responsible for developing the curriculum, teaching and facilitating student learning. Through an exploration of theory and practice, participants will have the opportunity to explore the effective utilisation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the design of courses and learning resources.

14. Research Methods in Language Study. This unit focuses on general research principles, questions of validity and reliability; research styles, experimental and interpretive; the research process, defining research questions, data gathering, choice of subjects, control of variables, instrumentation, presentation, analysis and interpretation of data; and disseminating research, organising reports, presenting results, effects on practice.

15. Critical Reflective Practice in Education. Throughout this unit participants can explore the concept and role of critically reflective practice in education. This exploration is applied through a project which enables a focus on the investigation of a specific issue(s) related to students' educational practice and context. Successful completion of the project will lead to an increased understanding of the educational environment and the role of critically reflective practice in bringing about change(s) aimed at improving quality: of student learning; of teaching practice and of educational contexts.

Introducing this program, it is important to understand that translation and interpretation are both arts and skills, and the teachers must decide from which angle to approach them. If they choose art, then they might have the students perform an endless series of exercises, attempts to mimic the masters as it were, in the hope of finding the truly gifted ones and then cultivating their abilities through endless practice. If they choose skill, then they must identify the areas of study (such as terminology, syntax, idiom, accent, and dialect for linguistic study; writing skills and

word processing skills for translation; note-taking or listening skills, and sight translation skills for interpretation) and then develop rigorous and efficient exercises to refine these skills in the students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it must be pointed out that T & I educator is one of the most important professions. It is necessary to conduct more profound research of how to train specialists in this area. In this sphere there are more questions than answers. This article provides answers to some of them: what it is – a profession of T

& I educator, the difficulties it entails, what features are necessary for a professional in this field, what requirements must he meet, under which conditions a teacher preparation will be most effective, and what course can be realized within Master's program, what special disciplines must be included into that program.

Of course, study of the problems and prospects for the introduction of the specialized training of T & I professors should be continued. Such research will answer the question how to prepare qualified T & I educators able to prepare good translators and interpreters.

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Профессиональная подготовка преподавателей устного и письменного перевода: проблемы и решения

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Статья посвящена малоизученной проблеме разработки программы подготовки преподавателей перевода. Проблема исследована с позиций социальной востребованности профессии преподавателя перевода, её специфики. Исследована структура компетенции профессионала в области преподавания перевода, выявлены предъявляемые ему требования. Предложена обучающая магистерская программа, включающая ряд оригинальных инновационных курсов-дисциплин, обеспечивающих фундаментализацию, всесторонность, практическую и исследовательскую направленность подготовки будущих преподавателей перевода.

Ключевые слова: преподаватель устного и письменного перевода, профессиональная компетентность преподавателя перевода, магистерская программа «Обучение письменному и устному переводу».
