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Experience of developing professional competences of would-be translators

The article is to characterize the most important components of would-be translator's competence which is considered as a comprehensive and integrated notion, which is described in accordance with the requirements of the modern state educational standards. The objective of the article is to analyze the possibility of development of the basic, specific and special components of the professional competence in higher educational institutions. The realization of the competence-based approach allows to achieve the main educational goal — the ability and readiness of translators to be to perform efficiently and productively in different professional situations.

Key words: competence-based approach, professional competence, professional training of translators.

The demanding professional translation market expects would-be professionals to have a broad knowledge of the subject matter of the text, to use a large number of computer tools proficiently, and to be versatile in the sense that they can master all elements in the translation process. As international communication has grown, translation by electronic and other means has become of vital importance to companies in industry, commerce, and so on. The volume of documents to be translated in order to reach target groups beyond national borders has multiplied manifold.

At the present time the government and society realize the growing demand for highly-skilled specialists and try to find the ways to improve the quality of professional training. In the current context the quality of professional education of a future specialist is dealt with within the scope of the competence-based approach, which is considered to be one of the landmarks of the education development strategy of the Russian Federation. This approach is interpreted not only as mere teacher-student transfer of knowledge but as development of professional competence of a specialist to be.

The training objectives, expressed in terms of competences to be acquired, appear to us to be priorities before defining a programme in which the content also depends on the resources (human, financial, institutional and technical) available in a given context. This reference framework should be understood within the overall context of university education for translators, which goes beyond the specifically professional com-

petences listed below. It sets out what is to be achieved, acquired and mastered at the end of training or for the requirements of a given activity, regardless where, when and how.

Nowadays according to V.I. Baydenko this approach is interpreted within the framework of the Bologna process and is considered to be «a tool intensifying the social dialogue of a university with the world of labour and a means of tightening their cooperation and reestablishing their mutual trust in the new social situation» [1; 10].

It is the Federal State Education Standards (FSES) of higher vocational education that determine the requirements to a specialist following the competence-based approach. The implementation of this approach in accordance with FSES has to provide extensive use of active and interactive forms of lessons (professional simulation, role play, case study, mindset training, etc.) combined with independent work of students in order to form and develop their professional skills.

Increasing demand for professionals for the languages services industry and other areas of intercultural communication and the concomitant proliferation of training programs has given rise to widespread concern for and reflection on how translator and interpreter education and training can best be conceived and the necessary skills and knowledge to be acquired.

Translator's competence is seen as a complex and multifaceted notion including those qualification characteristics which allow an interpreter to perform interlingual and intercultural acts of communication. The competence comprises a specific «translational» command of two languages (receptive command of the original language and productive command of the target language as a minimum) because translators are responsible for converting oral and written materials from one language to another, it is imperative that they be fluent in at least two languages; «translational» ability to interpret a reference text; knowledge of translation techniques; knowledge of functional styles and types of texts; knowledge of translation norms which determine the choice of a translational strategy; certain amount of background knowledge essential for correct interpretation of the reference text, namely the knowledge of the subject to perform a successful translation within a translator's speciality [2; 150].

Researchers and specialists in the field of professional training of translators distinguish different components of translator's competence; however the comprehensive concept of the considered competence was developed by the native translation theorist V.N. Komissarov. He states that «a specific linguistic identity in some way different from an average identity is formed in the process of professional formation of the translator's competence. These differences become evident in every aspect of speech communication: linguistic, textual, communicative, personal, professional and technical» [3; 326].

Translator's competence is usually described not as a uniform phenomenon but as composed of several integrated competences which are associated with four main aspects of translator's activity in the sphere of professional communication (intercultural communication in a specific professional field, professional activity of a translator, professional translator's environment and professional identity).

Accordingly the following components of translator's competence are distinguished: *intercultural communicative competence* — readiness and ability to understand reference texts and produce oral and written texts in the native language and special discourses following the social and cultural standards of communication in scientific and practical spheres (*linguistic competence; pragmatic competence; sociolinguistic competence*); *special competence* — readiness and ability to perform translations of professionally-oriented texts in a professional manner (*basic competence; subject competence; discourse competence; sociocultural competence; technological competence; informational competence*); *social competence* — cooperative professional activity of a translator with employers, ordering customers, meeting participants, company staff; command of professional communication methods generally accepted in a certain professional sphere, and social responsibility for the results of translator's professional activity; *personal competence* — possessing relevant professionally important qualities to perform professional activity.

A. Neubert sums up that the complexity of demands that are made on the cognitive faculties and skills of a translator, the heterogeneity, and the approximate nature of the translators' knowledge must be taken into consideration before defining translators' competence. Therefore, A. Neubert offers the following five parameters for the definition of translation competence:

1) Language competence — this sub-competence encompasses the grammatical knowledge. Besides, knowledge of repertoires of the languages for special purposes, for instance, terminologies, syntactic and morphological conventions.

2) Textual competence — this sub-competence is overlapped in one way or another with the linguistic competence, and characterized by specialized proficiencies in various domains, for instance, technical, legal or literary fields, and so forth.

3) Subject competence — it is related to textual competence; it represents the familiarity with what constitutes the over all body of the translation area. This concept covers specialist knowledge; therefore, if the specialist knowledge is of high dimensions, the subject competence will not be at stake.

4) Cultural competence — this sub-competence emphasizes the significance for translators to be fully acquainted with cultural shackles of both the source language and translation language, as they have to mediate between various cultural backgrounds.

5) Transfer competence — this includes the tactics used that convert a message from L1 to L2; it is the ability to perform translation as such quickly and efficiently. It dominates all other sub-competences; for instance, it incorporates language, subject, and cultural knowledge with the aim of fulfilling transfer demands [4; 9–15].

In the process of teaching it is important to take into account the fact that it is impossible to prepare a translator for a certain working environment under the conditions of college training. Therefore in the process of vocational training it is necessary to develop a required and essential set of competences. These competences being a result of practical and theoretical preparation are supposed to be further developed in a certain professional sphere and working environment.

Furthermore these professionally important translator's competences provide the basis for professional thinking allowing the accomplishment of the main goal of professional training — to develop a professional competence.

Understanding a translating process as professional activity, its complicated functional structure, distinguishing professionally important competences, professional language proficiency, allows to choose a strategy of upgrading the training process by improving the basic linguistic competence.

The basic component of would-be translator's competence comprises relevant knowledge, skills and abilities which are necessary for the translator to perform any kind of translation, whether it is written or oral translation, and regardless of the genre of the source text, which may be scientific, business or newspaper and journalistic style.

In our opinion, it is possible to develop this basic component of would-be translator's competence within such disciplines which are included into the unified course of studies as 'Translation Technique' and 'Translation Theory'.

Our experience at the Department of English Philology and Translation of the Chuvash State Pedagogical University shows that it is advisable to start teaching would-be translators with the specially developed course called 'Translation Technique'. At this stage of teaching we set the following goals:

- to introduce students to the basic principles of translation, to the requirements of the interpreter and the results of his labor;
- to give students an idea of the basic techniques of translation, about the kinds of translational transformations and the conditions in which they can or should be applied;
- to form students' ability to apply the basic techniques of translation.

Teaching basic techniques of translation can be considered as the initial stage of educating would-be translators and as a transition from translation theory to its practice. In this section, the theoretical foundation of translation is deepened; students achieve a better 'operational' understanding of translation which is further developed in the process of solving different types of translation problems independently, and in the process of applying the theoretical postulates to solving specific problems. At the same time, this stage of transition from theory into practice gives future translators knowledge of typical translation difficulties and typical ways of overcoming them.

Such assignments generally include problematic translation tasks, the ultimate aim of which is to develop skills to overcome some typical translation difficulties, solve typical translation problems encountered by the interpreter in the process of translation, i.e. tasks that are primarily focused on the development of operational skills.

Tasks can be executed in writing or orally with visual support. The choice of a particular type of task, ultimately, is up to the teacher. Examples of such tasks are presented in the educational-methodical manual by L.K. Latyshev and V.I. Provotorov [5; 36]. For example, students are encouraged to identify what caused the transformation of semantic and structural appearance of the originals: the differences of language systems, language norms or language usage. Students are taught on the material of short sentences in the original

language and their adequate translation into Russian. These sentences structurally and semantically differ considerably from the original. The purpose of this task is to specify and visualize the impact of the specificity of translation factors such as the ratio of the two language systems, two linguistic norms and two language usages.

The following task is based on sentences in the original language with specially marked phraseological units. This type of task requires translation of statements in such a way that best illustrates the Russian language usage. Students are supposed to identify the translations which are closest to the original and most distant from it in terms of semantic and structural peculiarities.

The purpose of the third type of task is to develop the ability to distinguish between functional styles, see the specifics of their linguistic expression. This can be done on the material of short texts in the native language; such texts are given in pairs, the content of them is almost identical to each other. Their difference lies in the different functional styles; for instance the first text in the pair may be written in the conversational style, the other one may be of newspaper and journalism style; or the first one may be taken from fiction, and the other may be in the style of formal business communication. Students should determine to which functional style these specific texts belong, the relations of the sender and the addressee of the text (official, neutral, close, etc.), indicate the specific language signs on how to make this kind of findings (e.g. slang vocabulary, simple syntax, repetitions, elliptical constructions, unfinished phrases — all these are signs of informal style, etc.) [5; 36].

Specialists in the field of training of translators in the Nizhny Novgorod Linguistic University note that when working with the exercises you must have the following in mind. From the methodological point of view when performing each exercise students may discuss precisely the phenomenon that is the essence of this exercise. Whatever the problems solved in class, as a result the translation of each given sentence must meet all standards of the translation language. Constant attention to the importance of each word, each form is an indispensable condition for the success of education [6; 35].

Nevertheless, the attention to the importance of each word and each form must not develop into an idea that translation as a whole is the process of rendering only forms themselves or even the meaning of individual words. The idea of the theory of translation that the unit of translation is the text should be not only continuously reinforced, but also developed, supplemented by explanations that we should translate not the form as such but the meaning.

It is important that this idea be pronounced at the very first lesson, and thus, become one of the most important professional requirements.

The specific components of translation competence are knowledge, skills and abilities required in any one or a few related kinds of translation (written, visual and oral, consecutive and simultaneous) [4; 5].

In fact, translation is carried out in a form of written translation or interpretation. Each of these forms of translation has certain peculiarities that require appropriate skills.

L.K. Latyshev and V.I. Provorotov say that specific written translation skills include: 1) the ability to use dictionaries and reference books, 2) the ability to analyze the source text at the preliminary stage, and 3) the ability to edit your translation [5; 98].

The ability to use dictionaries and reference books is reflected in the list of professional competences. Practice shows that students often pay insufficient attention to working with dictionaries and reference books. The ability to use a dictionary is a fundamental skill and it is not so easy to master it. Students make many translation mistakes working with a bilingual dictionary.

When working with a bilingual dictionary a translator should always remember about the dangers of choosing an inadequate equivalent out of several options offered in the dictionary entry, as well as about the fact that the necessary equivalent may not be found there at all. The acquisition of this skill takes time and special training, namely, special substitution exercises, as well as thorough work with the dictionary. According to V.V.Sdobnikov, students need to cultivate a taste for working with dictionaries. In this regard, we formulate organizational requirements — there must be various types of dictionaries in the classroom. At the initial stage these should include an English-Russian dictionary and English dictionary of language and culture [6; 34].

The ability to analyze the source text at the initial stage and its importance deserve mentioning as a professional translator starts the actual translation at the stage of analysis of the source text.

I.S.Alekseyeva in her work describes in detail the components of preliminary text analysis. This analysis begins with the collection of external information about the text, in the course of which we determine the author of the text (the editors, journalists, scientists, etc.), the recipient (children, adults, seniors, profession-

als, etc.), the structure of information (cognitive, emotional, aesthetic) and its density; the communicative task of the text (to report important information, to convince in one's correctness, to establish a contact, etc.); the speech genre (an interview, a scientific report, etc.) [7; 149].

The formation of skills should be paid attention to, and work on any text in class and at home should begin with this analysis. At the initial stage of training translation students should perform special tasks aimed at practicing the skill. Such tasks are aimed at developing skills to translate the original text, not as a conglomeration of individual language elements, but as a unit, i.e. at developing skills to solve some language difficulties using the language of a specific text [3; 3].

Let us consider the specific *skill of editing a translation* which is of paramount importance in the work of a translator, especially at the stage of proofreading. While editing a translated text, the translator corrects some mistakes in it caused by the special character of written translation.

The importance of this stage can be explained by the fact that while working on the translation, the translator is able to keep only relatively short fragments of both the original and the translated texts in his mind. It can cause a variety of minor mistakes or drawbacks, which require proofreading and editing as well as a review of some translation decisions. During the editing stage the translated text is perceived as a whole. It allows the translator to eliminate repetitions, tautologies, to analyze the theme and the rheme of the sentence and express them correctly, to add proper means of text cohesion, etc.

As V.S.Slepovich puts it, the process of editing a translated text does not only require knowledge of Grammar, lexical meanings of words and language norms on the whole, but a feeling for the language as well [8; 259].

The necessary editing and proofreading skills are developed in the classroom when students check and discuss their home assignments in written translation. At the next stage, the students are usually asked to re-write a corrected text with any further amendments they might find necessary. It is also recommended to ask students to check, assess and correct peer translations and to discuss these corrections during the next class.

The special components of the translation competence include skills required to translate texts of different styles and genres — scientific and technical texts, business documents, belles-lettres, etc. [5; 8]. Consequently, the special components of the translation competence imply knowledge and understanding of the subject matter of the text and knowledge of special terminology, i.e. lexical units designating phenomena of different spheres of life.

According to expert opinion, a would-be translator should master and develop a command of special terminology in two languages simultaneously.

L.K.Latyshev and B.I.Povorotov single out several methods of gaining knowledge of an area of life and mastering terminology. They recommend that students should begin studying an area of knowledge with reading a text about it. This text (with the approx. volume of 4500–5000 characters) should be followed by a glossary of foreign terms and their Russian equivalents. Some terms can be accompanied by an elaborate commentary. The text is then translated into Russian either in class or at home. What follows is a series of drills which enable students to memorize the new terms.

At the final stage, students may be offered to write a terminological dictation, during which the teacher will dictate either Russian or foreign terms (it can be a combination of both, though), and the students will write down their translation.

Every higher-educational institution or translation school has a right to choose the thematic areas to be mastered by their students depending on the realities of the country or the region. Nowadays there is a big demand for technical translators. For that matter in our work we will try to dwell upon the development of the special component of the translation competency as part of professional development of would-be technical translators.

At the translation department of I.Y.Yakovlev Chuvash State Pedagogical University technical translation (from the first foreign language and back) is taught to fifth year students in accordance with the syllabus. The syllabus in technical translation follows the logical principle and offers a gradual increase in the difficulty of technical issues covered [9; 80].

We try to follow the example of N.A.Dobrolyubov Nizhny Novgorod Linguistic University in teaching technical translation and start classes with the students' questions about the texts for home assignment. The teacher must envision such questions and be able to provide the students with any explanations of the terminological material. When the translation made at home is checked in class, the teacher must encourage the students to offer multiple variants of translation for both whole sentences and phrases.

Written translation in class does not appear to be a useful exercise. When the teacher is sure the students understand the material well, he can ask the students to translate texts from their native language into a foreign one. When they cover a topic, it is worthwhile to write a test translation. However, it can be even more useful to organize a conference on the topic at the final stage.

The professional approach to translator training also encourages immediate evaluation of the student's progress in practical translation work, since teachers can assess the final product as well as all other stages in the process — a method that is essentially communicative, holistic, and interdisciplinary. Teaching methods can be improved when more importance is attached to the processes involved in translation and teaching deals specifically with those processes. Our approach not only takes these principles into account, but also makes students aware of the relationships between the courses that are part of the programme. The amount of time required may seem overwhelming, but the fact is that interpreter education takes time. To become a competent professional requires commitment; a commitment to the time and energy required for language acquisition, as well as the commitment to a culture and a community of people. The ultimate objective of a teaching programme is to improve students' translation abilities and skills in order to make them succeed on the labour market. The analysis of market characteristics and present-day training conditions makes it easier to see the shortcomings, as we try to prepare students for the rapidly changing market.

In conclusion we would like to say that it is important to pay attention to and spend enough time on the development of the translation competencies during translation classes. If students develop an algorithm of translator's work at a text, it will make them more confident. Drilling exercises which help to master the special terminology and gain technical knowledge give the teacher an opportunity to bring variety into the classroom and promote interest in the further perfection of translation skills in the students [10].

It should be borne in mind that the central idea of the competence-based approach is that the main goal of education does not imply gaining isolated knowledge and skills, but developing the ability of a would-be specialist to work productively and effectively in situations of professional relevance. This approach implies the development of a need for life-long learning, renewal of one's professional knowledge and perfection of the skills which turn into competencies during the learning process.

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Болашақ аудармашының кәсіптік құзыреттілігін қалыптастыру тәжірибесі

Мақалада болашақ аудармашының жалпы кәсіптік құзыреттілігінің компоненттері біртұтас біріктірілген түсініктеме сияқты аударма құзыреттілігінің құрылымының базалық, төл және арнайы сипаттамасының мазмұны қазіргі мемлекеттік білім беру стандарттын талдау талаптар негізінде анықталды. Тиімді және мардымды қызметке адамның даярлығы мен зейіні әр түрлі кәсіптік-мәнді жағдайларда құзыреттілік тіл табудың жүзеге асырылуы білім берудің негізгі мақсатына жетуіне байланысты.

Е.Н.Васильева, Е.Н.Громова, Н.С.Курникова

Опыт формирования профессиональных компетенций у будущих переводчиков

В статье дается характеристика базовой, специфической и специальной составляющих переводческой компетенции как компонентов общей профессиональной компетентности будущего переводчика, которая рассматривается как целостное интегрированное понятие, содержание которого определяется на основе анализа требований современных государственных образовательных стандартов. Реализация компетентного подхода позволяет достичь главной цели образования — способности и готовности человека к эффективной и продуктивной деятельности в различных профессионально значимых ситуациях.

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