

Methods of teaching translation and peculiarities of professional text translation

T. L. Poliakova¹, V. V. Samarina²

Kharkiv Petro Vasylenko National Technical University of Agriculture
Kharkiv National Technical University "Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute"
Corresponding author. E-mail: tatyana_kharkov@outlook.com

Paper received 24.04.21; Accepted for publication 12.05.21.

<https://doi.org/10.31174/SEND-PP2021-252IX99-09>

Abstract. This article deals with the analysis of various methods used when translating specialised texts as well as specific didactics applied in university translation classes. First of all, special prerequisites and requirements for learners and teachers are discussed. The utmost importance is placed on both linguistic competences and theoretical preparation for teaching. In addition to the classic teaching tools, various types and forms of exercises are also dealt with. The issue of course participants and process orientation in translation teaching, as well as the need for new teaching materials adapted to this is focused on.

Keywords: *specialized texts, foreign language competence, teaching translation, theoretical preparation, different types / forms of exercise, new teaching materials.*

Introduction. When translating texts from one language into another, the translator searches for similarities between languages and cultures. But the translation cannot and should not be aimed at eliminating the differences; it should retain the differences, a certain alienation from the original, and remind the reader of the gains and losses of the translation process and the distance between cultures [3, p. 202].

Scholars emphasize a leading role of working with information when translating. Taking into account these ideas, we find the point of view offered by O. Medvid and I. Izmailov quite relevant. They suppose that to make a translation, professionals need to possess the knowledge about: speech properties based on the source language and the language of translation; local and contextual situations; text implications; global conventions, communication rules, and information beyond words and communication; strategies (purpose and means of interpretation); intentionality (intentions that regulate the course of interpretation) [1, p. 175].

Theoretical background. Before studying the characteristics of professional classes and training translation abilities and skills, it is advisable to more accurately define the concepts of "professional (or specialized) language" and "professional translation".

Professional language refers to the language that prevails in a particular professional field. It is also the language that is characterized by wide use of terms. Professional language is based on everyday language and they are in constant interaction. Professional language includes, first of all, terms and foreign words, i.e. professional lexical minimum.

There is such a notion as *a technical term*. All terms of a professional field form its terminology. A lot of terms and professional languages are subject to rapid change.

Word usage in various fields is also constantly changing due to the fact that more and more new words, especially foreign words (particularly words borrowed from English) appear. Terms can be systematically represented in a specialized dictionary, glossary, or thesaurus.

Professional translation means the process of transferring a scientific or technical text from one language (source language) to another (target language) one, when the translator should have professional knowledge in a relevant field in addition to his own linguistic compe-

tence. Professional translation courses are conducted only by experienced professionals with higher education [2].

Having a profound theoretical knowledge of the native language, the acquisition of general knowledge of a foreign language as well as the motivation of students to be engaged in translator's work are the basis for mastering the professional language and related tasks. In addition, professional language training is of crucial importance for organizing a successful lesson [9, p.176]. A professional language teacher must study a vast amount of specialized literature in both native and foreign languages to get acquainted with specific professional terminology and professional issues because students will treat him as a professional only if he possesses thorough basic knowledge in this sphere [6].

This learning process is complex, requires a lot of determination and takes plenty of time. But all these efforts are rewarded if the teacher wants to reach the desired level as a specialist in professional language. Basic knowledge in the relevant field is extremely important both when preparing materials for classes and when working directly in class. It is the teacher's best support for successful teaching practice [8].

Teachers of the professional discipline "Translation and interpretation studies" are not usually professional experts. In most cases they are experienced philologists. Therefore, it is inevitable that they often consult experts as it is often the only way for them to understand the content of what they have read in the literature and pass it on to the students [10].

If their level in these fields is not sufficient, later students can face difficulties in professional language learning and problems with translation which will cause the feeling that they will not be able to overcome these barriers. Professional language is known to be a wide field and mastering it requires a lot of effort, a lot of perseverance in learning the material. For this reason, the teacher must carefully consider his/her training strategies and methods, choose them focusing on the target group and constantly adapt them to new circumstances [4, p. 47].

In technical language and translation studies classes teachers should always set action-oriented tasks. This involves the methods that motivate students and lead them towards linguistic independence.

There are various means that can be used for this purpose.

In the “classical method” the sentence is constituted as a translation unit, the integral strategies of text messages are not taken into account. The focus of discussion is often on target-language formulation issues rather than natural translation problems, and the teacher dominates the lesson [7, p. 320]. This method has significant disadvantages and is considered outdated. There are many more relevant methods that can be used in translation studies.

Results and discussion. The exercises used range from standard exercises (e.g. ticking exercises, matching exercises, reformulating tasks, etc.) which mainly contribute to developing individual skills and are only weakly contextualized, to integrative exercises that combine individual aspects with translation simulation as fully contextualized training.

These exercises include:

- exercises to form the translator’s consciousness of the text under consideration (e.g. descriptive or interpretive word formation, function constancy or function change, addressee orientation, types and kinds of texts, translation tasks);
- exercises aimed at reading comprehension and text analysis (e.g. exercises for reverbaling or paraphrasing);
- exercises aimed at contrastive aspects (e.g. parallel text comparison with regard to text type, vocabulary, syntax or tense system, exercises on “false friends”, etc.);
- exercises on error analysis or text revision (e.g. analysis of incorrect translations, preferably in the mother tongue or comparison of your own translation with a professional translation);
- exercises on the use of aids and search techniques (including terminology comprehension and maintenance);
- exercises on text composition;
- translation simulations based on different types of texts;
- vocabulary exercises (e.g. exercises on translating professional terminology, expression templates, idiomatic expressions, allusions);
- exercises on content;
- exercises on learning, consolidating, and expanding mother tongue and foreign language vocabulary);
- grammar exercises (depending on the learner's level the orientation is either on traditional and/or pragmatic transfer-based grammar);
- exercises on writing in foreign and mother tongues.

Types of exercises. Before making your own translation, you need to learn to reasonably evaluate the methods to be used when translating.

Let’s consider some types of exercises:

- propaedeutic exercises; the core of translation propaedeutics is the exercises for writing texts both in the mother tongue and the foreign language, i.e. the exercises used to form text production competence;

- exercises that can be usefully employed are translation criticism and translation comparison. Possible tasks include comparison of two texts to determine which is the source text and which is the target text; comparison of two or more translations without reference to the original; revision of a translation without the original; comparison of the original text prepared according to certain specifications with a translation. In addition, we can compare translations of the same original text, produced by performing different tasks.

Students are also recommended to use correction strategies in the form of reports or tables. These exercises take a lot of effort and time but they turn out to be very help-

ful. Therefore, their use in translation classes is highly recommended, but unfortunately they are still rare [8].

Specific exercises for translating. The following exercises serve to further sharpen and expand translation problem awareness of the course participants:

- exercises to raise awareness of language registers and levels;
- stylistic tricks, e.g. translation of tonal particles;
- semantic differentiation of past tenses;
- direct/indirect speech;
- quick translation for a rough grasp of the meaning; in this case, the focus is not on stylistic work;
- exercises to translate collocations, technical terms, sentences underlined in the text, etc.;
- choice-answer translation; students can be offered a form of multiple-choice translation in which for each item there are four to five structurally and lexically close solutions at the paragraph level. One or more of them will be adequate to the task (or meaning-oriented) and linguistically appropriate; adequate to the task but linguistically inappropriate or incorrect; linguistically appropriate, but not adequate for the task, or deficient in both respects.

Further forms of practice are the use of parallel texts; practicing interpreting skills; training in computer-assisted translation; use of aids (encyclopedias, grammar books, translator false friend collections, dictionaries of idioms, proverbs and quotations, specialized dictionaries and specialized texts), use of professionals’ experience, etc.

The use of parallel texts in the classroom is not common in Ukraine yet, although their use is a minimum requirement for any meaningful translation teaching.

The practice of oral translation of written texts without preparation (impromptu translation) has so far only been carried out by a few teachers. It is a practical form of exercises that prepares students for interpreting. Around two thirds of all professional translators interpret at least occasionally.

The preliminary preparation of texts for machine translation as well as subsequent correction of machine automatic translation are also little used when teaching translation. Such exercises are still rare in specialized translation teaching, and the use of aids in translation classes is also insufficient. The dictionary is still the most widely used aid but the emphasis is on monolingual rather than bilingual dictionaries.

Other aids are hardly used. Few of the translation teachers offer and practice the documentation technique. The forms of exercises that are very common in foreign language teaching and require linguistic restructuring are practically not used in translation teaching. Paraphrasing exercises, that are particularly helpful, haven’t been appreciated in the right way either. This is where the lack of didactic awareness of translation becomes especially evident. Systematic training of reverbaling skills, which, according to psycholinguistic studies, is one of the most important strategies, can be achieved primarily with the help of such exercises.

The structured paraphrase is particularly suitable for consolidating translation skills. This form of work is applicable to many other translation procedures. Reverbaling, of course, can also be interlingual (involving two or more languages). In this way, you can acquire translation regularity.

Translation techniques, like grammar and vocabulary exercises, are the basis of methodologically reflective translation teaching. They form the foundation of translation training to some extent, but they should not dominate. If the foreign language skills of course participants are still insufficient, then it is necessary to first conduct grammar training, which must be brought into accordance with the translation exercises [4, p.185].

Recommendations for using different types of exercises. In the interests of overall progress, the ultimate goal of which is to acquire the skills of meaningful translation and the development of translational self-awareness and problem-awareness, we should consider the following key guidelines:

- exercises aimed at a general understanding of translation as a means of communication should take precedence over exercises dealing with detailed problems;
- the more varied the exercises, the deeper the awareness of the problems associated with translation will be: exercises aimed at specific problem areas (e.g. use of aids) and / or use of strategies (e.g. reverbalization) should precede the exercises that integrate several strategies or problems (e.g. reverbalization supported by the use of aids) [5, p.159];
- all exercises should be content-oriented as far as possible;
- exercises should present authentic language material;
- large-scale exercises should have realistic translation tasks;
- the purpose of each exercise is to help the student understand specific technical terms and specific collocations;
- exercises should always be a subject of discussion or should be accompanied by written solutions.

Student orientation in translation teaching. When training translation skills, you can use the knowledge that is central to modern teaching of foreign languages. Methodological-didactic concepts such as student and process orientation, activity orientation, interdisciplinary teaching, and creativity could be a guideline here [9, p.113].

Student orientation. This concerns, for example, the selection of thematic fields from which the texts for translation are taken. The thematic fields should be determined together with the course participants. The teacher can narrow down a range of topics and offer them to the students.

Restricting translation classes to a specific topic allows students to focus their attention on specific vocabulary areas such as anaphoric and cataphoric reference means, text-forming means, temporal and quantitative expressions after mastering the relevant technical vocabulary.

In this regard, it would be useful to create an organic connection between the topics in the written assignments and in the translation course. If the homework is written in a foreign language, the student can also be given an additional translation assignment in the area in question. This allows students to realize the close relationship between the ability to write in a foreign language and translation skills.

Process orientation. "Process orientation" has at least two sides in the context of translation teaching. First, it can mean a process-oriented self-perception of the student. Through self-observation course participants can identify their own translation strategies and compare them with those used by other students as well as with the strategies tried and tested by teachers. They can also log their

mental process and problems when preparing assignments.

This process-oriented phase can take place within the class through "thinking aloud" of one or more course participants. The instructor can also demonstrate certain processes by thinking aloud.

To discuss the problems identified in the homework, it is very useful to work with a partner or in a group which is followed by a plenary phase.

Thus, process-oriented translation training focuses not only on the final translation product, but also on the processes that lead to that product.

The second meaning of "process orientation" implies long-term learning process.

Previous psycholinguistic studies have shown that it is difficult for novice translators to move from sign-oriented to meaning-oriented translation, and that they need a lot of time and directive teaching to develop awareness of translation problems.

It is therefore clear that translation is not best learned by translating at least at the initial stage. So what can an appropriate translation course look like?

A certain sequencing of the educational process into various subcomponents is required. It is obvious that learning process can take place in many ways, but they should all have two things in common. Firstly, they should be based on the experience of the students in writing in their own language, and secondly, they should use translation correction exercises.

In translation correction exercises, the texts should be chosen so that they contain general violations of the semantic translation orientation and not just one or two stylistic inaccuracies. Operation manuals, which are written in the students' native language, can serve very well here [10, p.256].

This can be followed by shorter texts and exercises that can be used as examples for discussing, organizing and practicing certain strategic areas (e.g. reverbalisation, use of aids). At this stage it is advisable to encourage self-initiated creation of introspection protocols or diaries. The results could be compared with the strategies that are described in scientific studies as focused on achieving specific goals.

First of all, it makes sense to expand the competence of course participants in writing texts in their mother tongue. In this context, the difference between descriptive and interpretative language use could be clarified once again. In descriptive language use, only descriptions / paraphrases are provided. They do not have any recommendations for action or norms. In interpretative language use, on the other hand, interpretations or explanations are made.

Only after this introductory phase has been completed, the learner will have to deal with translation. The actual translation should be preceded by a translator-relevant text analysis, which must be complemented by appropriate parallel text analysis. Both types of the analysis offer the opportunity to facilitate learning through appropriate analysis. Feedback mechanisms should also be integrated into the text at several points to avoid purely linear processing.

There is also a place here for exercises on mother-tongue reverbalisation strategies and the expansion of

mother-tongue competence (e.g. monolingual structural exercises).

Translation from the source language is another step on the difficult path of translation / interpretation and it is very demanding. Translation from the mother tongue into the foreign language requires a lot of prior knowledge, many exercises to acquire specific techniques, skills and abilities as well as a lot of experience through training.

When selecting texts for translation, it is essential to ensure that the type of text and the subject matter are precisely coordinated. This is the only way to ensure that students are not overburdened because they are already familiar with the specifics of the text type and the vocabulary.

Lack in the existing range of teaching materials for conducting translation classes.

Currently, in addition to textbooks on translation, there is a lack of bilingual or multilingual dictionaries, which must be compiled in the form of translation dictionaries, and which we need to urgently systematize the educational process.

A dictionary for teaching translation should be based on computer-aided language analysis. Only authentic linguistic material should be included in the dictionary. The selection of headwords and design of the educational text should meet didactic criteria. If the dictionary is combined with a translation textbook, it can be expanded to a wider vocabulary area, e.g. tourism, business administration or economics, according to the texts selected in the textbook.

In addition, transfer grammars should be developed to demonstrate recursive translation procedures [9, p.56].

Conclusion. The academic and social justification of translation-related courses and modules depends to a large extent on the quality of the training they provide. Translation learners need to master key procedural and methodological skills in a didactically well-designed and varied teaching process particularly in view of a more diversified labor market in which “pure” translation skills are becoming less important.

REFERENCES

1. Максимов С. С. Практичний курс перекладу (англійська та українська). Теорія та практика перекладацького аналізу текстів для студентів факультету та перекладачів факультету заочного та вечірнього відділення: [навчальний посібник]. К. : Ленвіт, 2010. 175 с.
2. Ольховська Н. С. Специфіки тексту та стратегії перекладу [Е. ресурс]. Режим доступу: <http://nimfilmdpu.mozello.com/vseukranska-nternet-konferencja/perekladoznavstvo/params/post/1338438/>
3. Паршин А. Теория и практика перевода. М. : Наука, 2002. 202 с.
4. Gnutzmann, C. Fachbezogener Fremdsprachenunterricht, Tübingen: Narr, 1988. 234 S.
5. Hönig, H. G. Konstruktives Übersetzen. Tübingen, Stauffenburg, 1995. 195 S.
6. Meyer, H. Leitfaden Unterrichtsvorbereitung, Berlin: Verlag Cornelsen, 2007. 256 S.
7. Nord, C. Fertigkeit Übersetzen. Ein Kurs zum Übersetzenlernen und -lernen., 2. Auflage, Berlin: BDÜ Service Verlag, 2010. 245 S.
8. Schubert, Klaus [Hrsg.] Übersetzen und Dolmetschen. Modelle, Methoden, Technologie, in: Jahrbuch 4/I Übersetzen und Dolmetschen, Tübingen: Narr, 2003. 263 S.
9. Siepmann, D. Übersetzungslehrbücher: Perspektiven für ihre Entwicklung, Bochum: Verlag Brockmeyer, 1996.
10. Stolze, R. Fachübersetzen – ein Lehrbuch für Theorie und Praxis, Berlin: Frank Timme Verlag, 2009. 416 S.

REFERENCES

1. Maksimov, S. Ye. Practical course on translation (English and Ukrainian). The theory and practice of the translation analysis of texts for students and teachers of the faculty of correspondence department and the department of evening studies. Kyiv : Lenvit, 2010.175 p.
2. Ol'khov's'ka N. S. Specifics of the text and translation strategies [E. resource]. Available at : <http://nimfilmdpu.mozello.com/vseukranska-nternet-konferencja/perekladoznavstvo/params/post/1338438/>
3. Parshin A. Theory and practice of translation. Moscow : Nauka, 2002. 202 p.