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TRANSLATION IN THE ESP TEACHING

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Abstract. *The paper seeks to discuss integration of ESP and translation in the teaching context, and suggest innovative methods. It is an exploration of finding better ways of integrity of both fields (specific content knowledge and teaching) in order to achieve better, more efficient results in teaching language used in a specific domain. On the one hand ESP teaching refers to specific knowledge and on the other hand to specific language skills (use of specific vocabulary, grammar structures etc.), implementing translation in the teaching process supports interdisciplinary character of ESP teaching and optimize the teaching process linking both aspects of ESP. Previous research on the subject is presented and confronted in the article. In the final part of the article, the author discusses the possible solutions to the established challenges.*

Key words: *ESP, teaching, translation, didactics, integrity*

1. INTRODUCTION

Dramatic economic changes, globalization and staff mobility, are only a few visible signs of development mankind is facing in the current world. These changes reflect in different areas of modern life, from business meetings to casual small talks in a group of friends; from scientists working on a new patent to engineers implementing new solutions into practice. One of the most conspicuous symptoms of changes is the fact that knowledge of foreign languages (especially English) has become an obvious necessity in the modern world. English seems to be the language of science and entertainment, language of international communication and product instructions. The role of English language has become as versatile as it had never been before. With this proliferation, the context of language usage goes hand in hand also with an increasing specialization of scientific and professional fields (Roelcke 2010, p.7). That, in turn, triggers the growing interest in the language for specific purposes. Both scientists and professionals representing different branches and disciplines use language as a tool of communication and in these conditions there is a place for a new role of teaching. The new conditions create a need for research that focuses on the efficient ESP teaching to improve the communication between specialists representing non-English speaking countries and to understand the needs and expectations of current ESP learners better. Therefore, a challenge for educators in ESP teaching is to optimize the teaching conditions. To achieve it they have to reach for methods concerning specific knowledge linked to the ESP teaching and didactic experience. The following article analyses the place and meaning of implementing translation as an integral part of ESP teaching. Considering the complexities and challenges of the discussed subject, the present paper attempts to

provide information and practical proposals of the integrity of translation and ESP teaching. This paper has been divided into three parts. Part one decompresses the introduction to the topic together with objectives of the research and first assumptions of the researcher. Part two provides an insight into the most important studies related to the topic. The third part of the paper includes practical solutions of ESP-translation integrity in real situations.

2. TRANSLATION AND TEACHING

Nowadays translation is often believed to have nothing in common with teaching, especially since many drawbacks of the grammar-translation method in the foreign language didactics have been criticized and the new methods have been strongly introduced. Due to that, translation stays undervalued in the field of foreign language teaching and the only group expecting translation exercises are senior learners, who remember the method from their experience with teaching. However, the current specialization trend forces through a new place of translation in the didactic field. The mutual connection of ESP teaching and specialized translation seems to be the key to optimize the teaching process and offer learners more complex perspective on the presented issue.

- Is there a place for coexistence and mutual infiltration between didactics and translation in ESP?
- How the two separately existing disciplines can be integrated?

The main objective of the author's research is to answer the above questions by providing common points of specialized translation and ESP teaching, which can be the mainstay of further considerations and eventually also for implementation of elements of specialized translation into ESP teaching process.

3. MODERN TRANSLATION – DEFINITION AND ITS CONSTITUENTS

In spite of the fact that much has already been written about translation, its nature remains undiscovered: "...translation can safely be called a 'phenomenon', something that manifests itself naturally in the world and which everybody has more or less experienced; to specify what *else* this phenomenon is is also possible, and it has been done - as seen - by many in the course of history; to explain its true nature *univocally* and *universally* appears a still unsolved and much harder task" (Grego 2010, p. 24).

The fact that translation, as a science uniting theory and practice undergoes continuous changes makes it more complicated to constitute a certain and stable definition of its interests. Claramonte (2009, p. 41) emphasizes that the complexity of translation's definitions follows the fact that: "the task of translating has always run parallel to the epistemology of an era, to cultures, to societies and to every philosophic and scientific change which has influenced the mankind." Solely during the 20th century the attitude to the translation changed. "It was during this period that translation studies emerged as a new academic field at once international and interdisciplinary" (Venuti 2000, p. 1).

Hence, the first step to understand the translation nowadays is to characterize the changes occurring in the modern society.

The processes constituting the attitude to the translation nowadays are:

- fast growing mobility – people travelling and changing work or place of living make contribution to the widening of their mother tongue usage scope,
- social changes – globalization, immigration, unification,
- linguistic changes - growing influence of English on other languages,
- technology changes – computer, the Internet, Facebook,
- existence and strengthening of impact of international organizations (UNO, NATO, EU),
- intensification of business contacts between representatives of different branches,
- intensification of international scientific cooperation.

All mentioned phenomena have direct or indirect impact on the state of the modern translation. They constitute the creation and development of new areas of interests of the translation studies.

The definition and field of interests of translational studies have broadened as a result of the mentioned changes. In this context Grego (2010, p. 30) gives a hint to analyze the structure of translation in order to define its nature: “if to define translation it is necessary to elevate one’s standpoint to include a wider horizon, made of various aspects of knowledge it encompasses, to learn about translation it is indispensable to look more closely at its constituents”. At that point a question about the constituents of translation could be posed. Considering the subject of the conducted analysis, the ESP aspect is worth adding. Thus, the complete question is: what the constituents of translation are and what their relation to the ESP teaching methodology is. Kremer (1997) rates the following aspects among the translation constituents:

- interpretation,
- knowledge, skills, strategies,
- equivalence,
- reference.

Grego (2010, p. 30) completes the list with “language in general” and “linguistic communication in particular”, “culture” and “tradition”.

In the next part of the article some of the mentioned constituents will be analysed together with their impact or utility in the ESP teaching.

4. MODERN TEACHING – DEFINITION AND SCOPE

It is not only translation that is responsive to dynamic changes in the current world, teaching also undergoes persistent modifications. The already mentioned changes in the modern society make contribution to the vertical and horizontal divisions in the structure of language learners, which influenced the teaching process as well.

The vertical changes refer to the age diversification in the structure of modern language learners (new age-diversified groups, such as senior learners, adults, toddlers, etc. have appeared), whereas horizontal changes constitute the complex and very detailed specification of different fields of language teaching (including rapidly developing ESP teaching).

The scientific opinions concerning these changes in the foreign language teaching are split. Weimer (2013) points out that the main change in the modern teaching is introducing the learner-centeredness approach, with the strong focus on the superiority of learners’ needs in facing the curriculum. Whereas, Thomlison (2008, p. ix) suggests the differentiation of schools, which means transformation of traditional schools: ”to teach

with the needs of each individual student in mind". Illich (1972, p. 56) underlines that "it [learning] is (...) the result of unhampered participation in a meaningful setting", which certainly means that learning "will take care of itself" (Harmer 2001, p. 70) regardless of what happens and it is the virtue by itself.

Teaching and learning should be perceived as new experiences in the world of new media, integrity and interculturality, in which the foreign language (especially English) is vivid and present at every step wherever one lives. These new conditions naturally create new opportunities for learning. They are also incentives for the development of well-known strategies and methods in a completely new direction. One of the perspectives in the language teaching and learning is the integrity of disciplines. Language teaching does not only benefit from the research conducted on the ground of psychology or pedagogy, it is now also the discipline integrating with others. The integration of two or more ingredients giving in summary better effects than each of the ingredients separately (known as synergy effect) is a common phenomenon implemented in the field of economy. Now it is time to discover its usage in the teaching theory.

5. PURPOSE

The first common point to be mentioned at the border between teaching and translation is the purpose of both disciplines. The question of translation's purpose has been raised by different scientists dealing with the theory and practice of translation, some of those approaches are quoted below.

"As long as one does not feel the foreignness yet does feel the foreign, a translation has reached its highest goal" (Humboldt [1816] 1992, p.58). The quotation reflects the intercultural aspect of translation, facilitating communication among people belonging to different cultures.

Also Pym (1996, p. 337) takes note of the intercultural communication: "I tend to see the purpose of translation as a privileged index of wider intercultural phenomena and translation theory as a source of interesting models for such relations". Venuti (1995) considers the illusory effects of translation reflected in the ensuring "easy readability by adhering to current usage, maintaining continuous syntax, fixing a precise meaning". To conclude, translation is in duty of humanity and its purpose is to endorse understanding, reacting to the foreign culture and possibly also experiencing the intentions of an author hidden in the original text. Among all mentioned features of translation there is also a place for communication as such. Steiner (1998, p. xii) expressed the communicational aspect in translation with following words: "translation is formally and pragmatically implicit in every act of communication, in the emission and reception of each and every mode of meaning."

Purpose received the new meaning in context of specialized texts. Grego (2010, p. 47) implies that purpose is a "keyword" in specialized translation. The popularity and place of literature in every culture is unquestionable, whereas the texts used in different areas of everyday life, including the professional sphere, were for a very long time not deemed the subject of translation at all. The concepts of multilingualism, global understanding, and world without borders contributed to the fact that just next to the esthetical values of translation also its utility has been approved. "People access reality through translations, versions of realities which are temporary, circumstantial, interesting and self-interested" (Claramonte 2009, p.43).

The current purpose of teaching is defined by Sercu (2005, p. 2) in the following way: “Foreign language education is by definition, intercultural. Bringing foreign language to the classroom means connecting learners to a world that is culturally different from their own. (...) The objective of language learning is no longer defined in terms of acquisition of communicative competence in a foreign language. The teachers are now required to teach intercultural communicative competence.” The quoted statement depicts explicitly that interaction with foreigners (in terms of communication) and understanding of foreign culture (possible through knowledge of language) are premises of current foreign language didactics and methodology. No matter if by translating the content of foreign literature or document, or by explaining the complexities of foreign languages, the general aim presented in both cases connects and enables communication with foreigners, or foreign culture. All in all, utility and communicational purpose are parts of translational and teaching studies which should be understood more as overlapping than dividing both disciplines. In both cases the reference unit is a specialised text. (see Grego 2010, p. 50).

6. TEXT

People use languages in different contexts. It may be everyday conversation as well as a very specialized document regulating a particular problem. A product of a particular communication act (written or oral) is a text. The purpose of the text depends on the context in which the text has been created. Hoffmann (1985, p. 233) states that the specific text is both an instrument and a result that comes into being by the specific productive activity. On one hand, a text is an instrument giving an insight into the characteristics of the language as well as representing discourse typical for the specific domain. On the other hand, it is a result of the complex mental process. Grego (2010, p. 50) emphasizes connection between the text and translation on the specialized field “understanding the nature of the text is a key for the understanding of the idea of specialized translation.” On the ground of teaching it is the specialized text which provides correct patterns of using language in the specialized context. Without in-depth analysis of original documents an ESP teacher or learner will not have an idea, how the particular specialized language functions, what structures or collocations are typical for the specific domain. Gavioli (2005, p. 50) states that “corpora of specialized text seem a very useful instrument in isolating and providing indications about the key lexical and grammatical or textual issues to deal with in ESP class”. Also Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998, p. 17) underline the meaning of research of written and spoken text in order to understand their usage within the particular specialized discipline. Simultaneously, the content of the specialized texts helps to understand how the people dealing with the area work.

There is one more argument in favor of deeper analysis of specialized texts in the center of ESP teaching (not forgetting the fact that the analysis of parallel text is an obvious preparation to the translation of all kind of texts). The language of certain specialized fields keeps changing very quickly as a natural consequence of social, cultural and economic alterations. Often the original texts are the most reliable source as well as representative of the natural, vivid language and its most accurate usage.

7. KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, STRATEGIES

The role of knowledge both in translation and ESP teaching is hard to overestimate. In both cases the element of knowledge constitutes the quality of the result. Dudley-Evans and St. Johns (1998, p. 4-5) discuss the characteristics of ESP in respect to the knowledge content. First of all ESP is “to meet specific needs of the learner”. The mentioned needs are linked to the specific context in which the communication takes place. Secondly, it “makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves”. It all makes ESP an eclectic discipline combining linguistic and domain-specific methodology, which makes the knowledge aspect relevant for the success of specialized teaching (see Fortanet-Gomez, Räisänen, 2008, p. 61). Hutchinson (2006, p. 161) raises the issue of knowledge in the ESP teaching context asking the following question:

What kind of knowledge is required of the ESP teacher?

The question seems to hit home of the considerations about the knowledge content in the ESP teaching. Concerning the question Hutchinson (2006, p.162) suggests the holistic approach to the teaching and knowledge deemed as acquaintance with some terms and understanding of the message conveyed in the specific text. It does not mean that an ESP teacher has to be an expert in a particular field and know the subject inside out, very often it is enough when the teacher understands the general idea of the topic and at least knows where to look for explanation to subject related inquiries or for new specialized terms. Of course, complex subject-content knowledge at the beginning of teaching process helps and facilitates the preparation of the teaching materials and the orientation in the topic. Nevertheless, the ESP teaching requires persistent willingness and readiness to search for new information and widening of own knowledge.

The same applies to translation which amounts to dealing with different subjects often very specialized. Wilss (1996, p. 67) points out that human knowledge is limited: “we access only a limited portion of our knowledge (...) but we can widen the access routes”, “people, who translate LSPs texts predominantly fall within the groups of laypersons, semi-experts, beginners and intermediate learners, and authors of specialized translation dictionaries should take it into account.”

Both teacher and translator are exposed to the permanent contact with new terms and information as well as new usage of well known structures in the specific text.

The knowledge question is tightly linked to the skills and strategies used in both cases. It is mainly translation that developed a series of strategies applicable while dealing with unknown or barely translatable vocabulary. These strategies can be perfectly adapted in the teaching process. The usage of strategies and developing certain skills supports the work with specialized texts and boosts the efficiency of ESP teaching.

8. TRANSLATION AS A FIFTH SKILL IN THE ESP CLASS

In this part of the article practical solutions of integrity of translation and teaching are presented. All examples are based on original texts. First of all, it is necessary to bear in mind that: “It is not essential to be an expert in translation and translation theory to use translation in class” (Witte 2009, p. 176).

8.1. Pre-translation exercises

Translations exercises need introduction, which can be made in form of pre-translation exercises, whose main aim is to provide learners with techniques of dealing with unknown texts or to demonstrate what should attract learners' attention in the text. These exercises include:

- Reflection about the sender and receiver of the message,
- Reflection about the style and register of the written text – focus on the characteristic features of the text and usage of the specific vocabulary and structures,
- Scanning of a given text (finding synonyms, antonyms etc.),
- Preparing lists of vocabulary connected with a particular subject,
- Re-expressing the content of the given text (also in the mother tongue),
- Filling in the gaps with new (specific) words,
- Observing and discussing the characteristic features of the specific discourse,
- Guessing the meaning of unknown words from the context.

The last proposed exercise is particularly demanding for students dealing with the ESP for the first time. Comprehension of a specialized text causes difficulties also in mother tongue¹, that is why it is worth including of the elements of message understanding in specialized texts also in mother tongue (for instance by preparing information connected with economy, technology or finances, which are not the discipline the students feel familiar with).

The mentioned problem appears also in the division made by Alvstad et al (2011, p. 321), who generally distinguishes different categories of problems appearing while translating the text: lexical, textual, extralinguistic, problems of intentionality, problems relating to the brief and/or the target-text reader. Some of the categories (textual, extralinguistic or intentionality) refer directly to the subject-content knowledge. Presenting and discussing possible problematic fields in the ESP teaching with students can make them more sensible and attentive.

8.2. Translation exercises in the ESP class

Translation exercises can enrich ESP class and broaden students' horizons given they are properly prepared for the task, which can be achieved by implementing of pre-translation exercises and supplemented by necessary comments on equivalence, differences and similarities between languages.

It is recommended to start with translation of sentences referring to the certain context, repeating well-known ESP-phrases and terms. This kind of exercise helps students assimilate new vocabulary and use it in the proper context.

The next kind of exercises is translating definitions of certain specific terms into mother tongue, which on one hand helps memorize new terms and on the other hand understand their meaning. The continuation of the exercise may be retranslation of the already translated text (the student's translation will be the source text) into the foreign language after a few weeks. This exercise depicts the lack of equivalence between languages and necessity of translation the messages and not words.

¹ Personal reflexion of the author based on own experience from teaching practice.

The translation of longer texts can also be implemented as a part of ESP class and should serve acquiring new knowledge connected with the specific domain “however, I feel that simplified texts should only be used if the students really have a lot of difficulty with authentic material” (Witte 2009, p. 176). The requirement of authenticity mentioned by Witte seems to be necessary, especially in reference to the focusing on the features of the special discourse.

It is reasonable to work on parallel texts, which provides a more complex insight into the variety of lexical structures in both languages.

Translation exercises in the ESP class can also concern work with photographs and pictures as stimulating material, an interesting option is translating metaphors or advertisements slogans. Work with stimulating material (pictures, advertisement slogans, subtitles of documentary films presenting events connected with specialized field) is motivating and inspires students to think outside the box. The subject-content knowledge can be very helpful in that field.

On top of what was mentioned, the most important part of translation exercises, which should not be forgotten in the ESP lesson, is discussion concerning students’ solutions and techniques or strategies used in translation. This part of learning is very valuable because it enables students to analyze more translational solutions of one sentence, and even if the range of possibilities in specialized translation is not as wide as in case of general translation, the utility of the exercise cannot be underestimated.

9. CONCLUSION

The integration of translation and ESP class offers both students and teachers many opportunities. Versatile development of language skills (translations as the fifth skill of ESP) through use of specialized vocabulary in the certain context to begin with, to the widening of the subject-content knowledge on the basis of authentic texts.

Hartmann (1980, p. 61) points out that: “Translation as interlingual textual approximation requires the co-ordinate use of several skills and may therefore not be the ideal exercise in the early stages of a language course. At the more advanced stages, however, and particularly in any training scheme for future translators and interpreters, it may be a useful vehicle for bringing genuine discourse in the form of complete texts into the classroom.”

The raised issue is very complex and certainly needs further research connected with practical solutions.

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