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Integrative tasks in the process of developing translation competence in the training of translators and interpreters

Las tareas integradoras en el proceso de desarrollo de la competencia traductora en la formación de traductores e intérpretes

Tarefas integrativas no processo de desenvolvimento de competência em tradução na formação de tradutores e intérpretes

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Abstract

The development of professional competences is taking place worldwide in different areas of knowledge. The teaching of foreign languages is not exempt from it, and the specific case of the training of translators and interpreters is influenced by the contemporary tendencies in carrying out empirical studies that demonstrate the validity of the diverse models that have been proposed for the development of translation competence. In this paper, reference is made to a didactic conception that is innovative in the translation studies field, since it takes into account contemporary trends on general didactics, the particular didactics of foreign languages and the specific didactics of translation. Based on the researchers' professional performance, the task-based approach is assumed as a didactic foundation, with a developmental and interdisciplinary perspective, which contributes to the development of this competence in translators and interpreters to be.

Keywords: translation competence; tasks-based approach; integrative translation tasks

Resumen

El desarrollo de competencias profesionales en el mundo toma vigencia en diferentes áreas del saber. La enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras no escapa a ello, y el caso específico de la formación de traductores e intérpretes se ve influenciado por las tendencias contemporáneas de llevar a cabo estudios empíricos que demuestren la validez de los diversos modelos que se han propuesto para el desarrollo de la competencia traductora. En este trabajo se hace referencia a una concepción didáctica novedosa en los estudios sobre Traductología, pues toma en cuenta tendencias contemporáneas de la didáctica general, la didáctica particular de las lenguas extranjeras y la didáctica específica de la traducción. A partir del desempeño profesional de los investigadores, se asume como basamento didáctico el enfoque por tareas de traducción, con perspectiva desarrolladora e interdisciplinaria, que contribuye a desarrollar esta competencia en los futuros traductores e intérpretes.

Palabras clave: competencia traductora; enfoque por tareas; tareas integradoras de traducción

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Resumo

O desenvolvimento de competências profissionais no mundo se dá em diferentes áreas do conhecimento. O ensino de línguas estrangeiras não escapa a isso, e o caso específico da formação de tradutores e intérpretes é influenciado pelas tendências contemporâneas de realização de estudos empíricos que demonstrem a validade dos vários modelos que foram propostos para o desenvolvimento da tradução. Neste trabalho, é feita referência a uma nova concepção didática nos estudos da tradução, uma vez que leva em conta as tendências contemporâneas da didática geral, a didática particular das línguas estrangeiras e a didática específica da tradução. A partir da atuação profissional dos pesquisadores, a abordagem das tarefas de tradução assume-se como uma base didática, com perspectiva de desenvolvimento e interdisciplinaridade, o que contribui para o desenvolvimento dessa competência nos futuros tradutores e intérpretes.

Palavras-chave: competência de tradução, abordagem de tarefas, tarefas de tradução integrativa

Introduction

Translators and interpreters have played a significant role throughout history. The spread of religions and political philosophies, the development of languages and the world of literature, trade and economic exchange, wars and peace treaties, would all be impossible without the work of these professionals.

However, despite translation and interpretation are very old activities, studies on their teaching date back just to the mid-20th century. The first world conferences on the teaching of translation as part of a translator training program were held in 1986. Therefore, research and theorization in this field are relatively recent.

Researchers such as Delisle (1980- 1992), Gile (1995- 2009), Hurtado (1996- 2017), PACTE (2000- 2019), Kelly (2002- 2007), among others, make important contributions to the study of the development of translation competence, the ultimate goal in the training of translators and interpreters. Their contributions are valuable in the field of the didactics of translation, since they gradually moved away from translation as a linguistic procedure only and incorporated other elements such as textual meaning, the importance of the receiver, the role of mental processes and the need for empirical evidence for the validation of proposals. However, they lack finished theoretical and methodological conceptions to support the teaching of translation, in addition to remaining incomplete by not contemplating categories such as objectives, methods and evaluation interrelated for the conception of translation courses.

On the other hand, the study indicates that, although the methodological approaches used in the teaching-learning process of translation and interpretation have been enriched and improved over the years, there are still traditionalist teaching methods that focus the translation process on the linguistic

or terminological component of the text. Nor are the necessary resources provided for students to develop their own strategies for approaching the translation process that will allow them to perform better, which leads to consider that there are inconsistencies in the didactic conception of the translation competence.

The analysis of the teaching of translation requires an approach centered on the process, which takes into account the contributions from the general and particular didactics of foreign language teaching and translation in particular, with the use of integrative translation tasks for the development of translation competence, taking into account an integrative teaching approach that includes the communicative, the developmental and the interdisciplinary methods.

Materials and Methods

The investigation is aided by scientific methods at all three levels: theoretical, empirical and statistical. The analysis-synthesis allows processing the information on the theoretical constructs around the development of the translation competence and the main trends used for translation teaching, and the induction-deduction is used for establishing generalizations and reaching conclusions.

With the help of empirical methods such as interviews, surveys, observation, document analysis, and pedagogical tests, the research object is further characterized in a factual way so that it moves from the phenomenon to its essence and consequently makes the necessary contributions to solve the given problem. Statistical techniques are used, such as the percentage calculation of data collected through empirical instruments.

In order to corroborate the relevance of the proposal of integrative translation tasks, in addition to the criteria of specialists, socialization workshops are developed and a pre-experiment is carried out. These methods make it possible to ratify the usefulness and feasibility of the proposal for both, students and teachers.

Results and discussion

The proposal of integrative translation tasks is based on an epistemic analysis of the different approaches that have been taken into account for the teaching of translation and the development of the translation competence in itself.

Dorothy Kelly offers in *A Handbook for Translators Trainers* (2005), an overview of the basic educational considerations for the design of a translator training program. She emphasizes the importance of regional, national, cultural and institutional differences in developing each curriculum,

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and any program should be based on local conditions. However, despite its validity, her proposal is summarized as "expected results", which does not necessarily imply a student-centered education since the results are imposed by the teacher, assuming that all students in a course will learn in the same way and at the same pace.

In another work, the author exposes the main existing approaches to translation teaching as well as their main contributors (Kelly, 2009, pp.8-14):

- Approach by learning objectives (Delisle, 1980, 1993)

- Functionalist approach (Nord, 1988, 1991; Vienne, 2000; Gouadec, 2003; Kiraly, 2000)

- Translation process-centered approach (Gile, 1995)

- Cognitive and psycholinguistic approach (Kiraly, 1995; Jääskeläinen, 1998, 2004; Hansen, 1999, 2002)

- Situational approach (Vienne, 1994; Gouadec, 1994, 2003)

- Task-based approach (Hurtado, 1999, 2006; González Davies, 2004)

- Approach based on the balance between conscious analysis and subliminal discovery and assimilation (Robinson, 1997, 2003).

- Socio-constructivist approach (Kiraly, 2000)

The proposal to organize the teaching-learning process based on learning objectives is an important step in the teaching of translation, since it seeks to systematically establish the contents and progression of teaching, beyond impressionistic considerations of a lexical, grammatical, thematic or theoretical nature.

In line with Kelly (2009), we consider that translation didactics has undergone an important evolution as a result of the professionalization of the figure of the teacher (the professional professor), as well as the advances that have been achieved in university education from teacher –centered (transmissionist paradigm) to student-centered. Although, as Kelly states in 2009, this change of paradigm "does not mean that even today there are teaching practices that are variations of the traditional model" (Kelly, 2009, pp. 7-8).

Regarding the teaching-learning process we share Robinson´s (2003) idea in which she states that:

> Translation is an intelligent activity that involves complex processes of conscious and unconscious learning; we all learn differently, and institutional learning must therefore be as

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flexible, complex and rich as possible, so as to activate the channels through which the student learns best" (Robinson, 2003, p. 49)

With the change of paradigm, the initial interest of teaching has shifted towards learning. It is not enough to provide the students with the material he or she has to study or the text he or she has to translate or interpret, the teacher is obliged to indicate how to approach the learning process, and train the students to develop their own learning strategies and methods of learning. All approaches require foresight, anticipation and planning, which are invariably associated with any teaching task. Education requires knowing in advance what objectives are intended to be achieved in students. Only on the basis of clear objectives it is possible to plan the activities that demand learning strategies and the way to evaluate them. However, this idea of planning is in contradiction with the flexibility needed to assess the necessary profiles of the students that make up the classroom before designing the programs of the different subjects, in this case that are part of the Translation-Interpretation discipline.

Each student learns in a different and individual way and the teacher´s teaching style does not have to work with everyone, since each one of them has personal characteristics, culture, previous knowledge, in short, a lived experience that influences the way they learn.

According to Hurtado (2003, p.23), when designing a translation didactics, it is important not to lose sight of the following issues:

- Incorporate an integrative concept of translation (text, act of communication and mental process), as well as the description of the functioning of the different varieties of translation.

- Incorporate a concept of translation competence as a set of sub competencies in which the strategic component is of great importance.

- Do not reduce teaching to the mastery of results-oriented objectives and incorporate the exercise of the translation process.

- Consider the acquisition of translation competence as a process of evolution and integration of the sub-competencies that make it up and where learning strategies playa n important role.

- Incorporate a student- centered methodology that makes the student discover the principles to be observed in order to correctly develop the translation process, use his/her own strategies and be responsible for his/her own learning.

- Incorporate changes in the role of the teacher and in the merely sanctioning function of evaluation, giving a more active role to students and introducing formative evaluation criteria (for the student and the teacher).

- To determine the teaching aims according to the needs and characteristics of the students and the needs of the labor market.

From this perspective, it is worth reflecting on the approaches and methods that are used today to enrich the communicative approach used in the teaching of foreign languages, but which should also be applied to the didactics of translation, since students are involved "…in a developing, reflexive and interdisciplinary didactics that conceives teaching and learning as an interactive social process of communication, training, holistic and integrative, with a strong cognitive base and essentially humanistic, with the solution of tasks that meet their needs, in a framework of socialization and cooperation that allows self-realization and experience lasting changes in their attitude, performance and thoughts, transferable to new situations and produced by the practical and intellectual activity in a process of development of competencies created, facilitated and directed by the teacher …".[1]

Taking into account the ideas of Zanón (1990, p.22), Hurtado (1999, p.56) defines a translation task as a unit of work that is representative of translation practice, intentionally aimed at learning to translate, and designed with a specific objective, a structure and a work sequence.

In her proposal, Hurtado (2015, p.276) refers to the characteristics of teaching units composed by different tasks that prepare students for one or more final tasks. Her idea of these translation tasks integrates learning objectives, content, methodology and assessment. According to this author, the task-based approach has the following most relevant aspects:

- It makes generating situations related to professional activity and carrying out authentic tasks possible;

- It provides an active methodology centered on students, in which they learn to translate by performing tasks;

- It leads to a form of teaching that revolves around working through processes. Preparatory tasks enable students to assimilate the processes they must activate to successfully complete the final task ahead of them. They grasp principles, learn to solve problems and acquire strategies to that end;

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[1] Acosta Padrón. R (2005) Didáctica desarrolladora para lenguas extranjeras. IPLAC. La Habana.

- It provides a flexible curriculum design framework that is open to modifications and student participation;

- It allows for elements of training methodologies such as problem-based learning, case studies, cooperative learning and situated learning to be integrated into task design.

The ideas presented so far have been the foundations of the proposal presented in this paper. However, the conception of integrative translation tasks that is presented is based on a fundamental premise, the overlapping of the communicative, developmental and interdisciplinary approaches as a methodological concept for the development of translation competence.

The assumption of these approaches together allows for a qualitatively superior jump in the approach to the translation process. Based on the materialist dialectic, with emphasis on the contradictions as generators of development and the active and leading role of the students, it is conceived the development of an integrating process of the most current tendencies of the Cuban pedagogy. On the other hand, the subject-object and subject-subject relationships are promoted, as well as the link between theory and practice.

Emphasis is placed on the communicative, because it overcomes the structural approach that still has its influences that favor the teaching of the foreign language at the level of the sentence and with a marked emphasis on the linguistic competence. The communicative approach sees the process as a whole, where the linguistic, the cultural, the pragmatic, the discursive and the strategic work in an integrated way. At the same time, it is developmental because it encourages a problem-solving approach, the confrontation of versions; it stimulates cognitive independence; it attends to individual and group diversity, and it encourages reflexive activity. It is interdisciplinary, because the integration of the other disciplines of the academic year and the major in general is conceived. Disciplines like Mother Tongue and National Culture; English Language; Linguistic Studies; History of English-Speaking Countries and English Literature play a relevant role here.

The Translation and Interpretation classes become a space for joint reflection, debate and exchange. The student becomes the protagonist, appropriating the content through joint elaboration and problem-solving. Self-evaluation and co-evaluation are encouraged. In this way, students manage to meet the objectives by putting into practice what they have achieved for themselves and what they can achieve with the help of their classmates and their teacher.

Integrative translation tasks are activities that encourage interdisciplinary relationships, the development of translation skills and the comprehensive development of students' personalities. They

encourage subject to subject interaction, either between the students and the teacher or between students themselves, as well as any other agent involved in the communication acts mediated by the translator and the interpreter. Through the integrative translation tasks, students solve translation problems found in oral or written texts, in a process that allows them to identify translation problems, from the simplest to the most complex, through strategies applied before, during and after the translation process.

Integrative translation tasks are defined as communicative, developmental and interdisciplinary activities that conceive the translation exercise from the problematization and application of solution-conscious strategies. They have a specific objective, content, procedures and evaluation. The tasks must clearly evidence the specific objective, which must be integrative, since it includes associated knowledge, skill and value.

Through the implementation of the integrative translation tasks, the non-personal components of the teaching-learning process are combined with the integrative objective as a guiding category, in the search for the integral formation of the student. Both the specific objectives of each task as well as its content and forms of evaluation evolve and become more concrete in each discipline, subject and class system, so that the process of developing competence is evolutionary and gradual in order to achieve higher levels of performance.

The tasks must be approached in such a way that the student is involved in real mediated communication situations: active, conscious, creative, independent and reflexive. They must promote the formation of feelings, motivations, qualities, values, convictions and ideals.

In this way, the student is offered a comprehensive preparation that promotes the active and creative appropriation of culture, makes them involve in their own learning and become protagonists of the process, as well as leads to the development of attitudes, motivations and tools necessary to learn to learn and learn to grow permanently.

On the other hand, the tasks allow the cooperative work of the year group so that the students appropriate a set of habits, skills, knowledge and values that the subject has and that correspond to some of the components of the teaching-learning process of different subjects or academic disciplines.

The tasks should be developed in productive, creative, metacognitive and cooperative learning environments, where students have the need to actively participate in the construction of knowledge, to know themselves and their peers. It also advocates the development of intrinsic motivations for learning and the formation of a positive self-esteem.

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Similarly, the tasks promote interaction, socialization and cooperation among the students and with the teacher; they integrate cognitive, metacognitive, affective and educational aspects and consider the relationship between form, function, meaning and context.

Conclusions

At the university level where this research is applied, the problem and task-based approach is adopted, because the student has enough support to work autonomously with more Independence and capacity. It favors approaches that Foster student´s ability to self-direct their learning process and focus on task development at the initial levels and on the gradual insertion of projects and problem-solving at higher developmental levels.

In other words, the didactics assumed advocates interaction, objectivity, student´s protagonism, organization, the development of mental processes, the process and its result, the development of autonomy, activating the heuristic dialogue and social relevance.

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