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The Role of Motivation in Technical Translation Teaching to Master Degree Students

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Abstract

The article considers issues of designing the course of technical translation for engineering students from the angle of its motivational constituent. Pedagogical and psychological aspects of engineering students have been viewed on the basis of their age and certain level of experience. Types of exercises developed for the course in technical translation have been analyzed with motivational exercises to be stated as basic ones.

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1. Introduction

The need for training of highly qualified specialists who are able to understand and analyze the professional information in the foreign language has led to the need for training of specialists with high linguistic and professional competence.

Translation ability stands for an essential component of linguistic and professional competence and allows a future expert to comprehend professionally important information in a foreign language, and to produce a translation

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in the target language.

Thus, the future specialist possessing translation ability can obtain professionally valuable information, analyze the data, identify the necessary and unnecessary, to know where to seek the missing, etc.

However, in the process of language mastering students tend to be less motivated as the time goes. This factor is very challenging both in terms of teaching methods design and psychology as the students of senior courses (master degree students) have certain differences from undergraduates since they are more experienced and goal-oriented. Consequently the main aim of the following study is to design the course of technical translation teaching which considers motivational aspect as one of the basic components underlying linguistic and professional competence of future specialists.

2. Definition of motivation

Motivation significantly effects formation of linguistic and professional competence, including translation ability. It is important to emphasize that the basic methodological principle, that determines investigations of motivational aspect in Russian psychology, is the position about the unity of dynamic (energy) and semantic sides of motivation. Active development of this principle is connected with investigation of such issues as a system of human relations, the ratio of sense and meaning, integration intentions and their semantic context, personal orientation and dynamics of behavior (Bozhovich, 1997). Generally motivation is defined as a set of internal and external motive forces that determines people to carry out activities, settle limits and forms of activity and give orientation to this activity, focused on the achievement of certain goals. However, in our study we need to define the concept of learning motivation and methods of its formation among students in order to achieve the best results during experimental training.

In psychological and educational literature there is no one common definition of the term "learning motivation". Apparently, this comes due to the terminological ambiguity that exists in general psychology. Circumstantially, we found out that terms "learning motivation", "motivation of learning", "motivation of learning activity", "motivational sphere of a student" are used interchangeably both in a wide and narrow sense. In the first case, these terms refer to the entire set of motivating factors that induce subject activity and determine its orientation. In the second case, these terms refer to a rather complex system of motives (Moiseenko, 2005). All this, on the one hand, allows to define motivation as a complex, multi-level heterogeneous system of stimuli, including needs, motivations, interests, ideals, aspirations, attitudes, emotions, norms, values, etc., and on the other - to talk about poly-motivation activities of human behavior and the dominant motive in their structure. The hierarchical structure of the motivational sphere determines the orientation of the human personality which has a different character depending on the driving motives by their content and structure have become dominant (Dridze, 1980).

The most broad meaning stands for motivational sphere that includes affective and volitional aspects of personality (Vygotsky, 1997), the experience of meeting needs. In the context of the general psychology motivation is a complex association, "alloy" of the motive behavior forces, which reveals for the subject in the form of needs, interests, inclinations, purposes, ideals that directly determine human behavior and activity. From this point of view, motivational sphere or motivation in the broadest sense is understood as the core of the personality, which "concentrate" such its properties as orientation, values, attitudes, social expectations, aspirations, emotions, endurance and stamina, and other socio-psychological characteristics. Thus, it can be argued that, despite the diversity of approaches, motivation is defined by most authors as a set, system of psychologically heterogeneous factors that determine human behavior and activity.

3. Translation teaching course design

The motivational component is required for the development of any training course, especially if we are talking about the course of technical translation for senior students (Masters). Peculiarities of psychological functions of students aged between 20 and 30 years intend systematic usage of teaching methods based on visual presentations, the desire of these students to be aware in the educational material and organize it, the ability to work independently (Shishkovskaya & Sokolova, 2015). At this stage, students have already had enough amount of knowledge not only in the sphere of their field of study, but also in the field of language skills, which, in its turn, at the same time facilitates and complicates the work of a teacher. On the one hand, the teacher works with adults who understand the

need for language skills to make a successful career. On the other hand, the teacher has to imply a translation of technical documentation as a way of gaining linguistic and professional competence and to keep on interest to learning this course.

Talking about the motivational component of learning a foreign language, for future engineers the motive can be implemented through the opportunity to communicate with foreign colleagues and exchange professionally valuable information. Also in the process of learning a foreign language by future specialists, motivation can be implemented via information regarding future professional activity and the prospective of cooperation with foreign experts. However, it often happens when a student has no cognitive motivation. In this respect, the teacher plays a crucial role and should explain the importance of learning by creating positive motivation. To organize more efficient work with such students the teacher needs information regarding their purposes, interests, as well as their own vision of professional activity after graduation (Tarasova, 2015b). Such information can be obtained through the questioning at the beginning of the academic year. In this study, we conducted a survey among students (1st year Masters) to identify the motives of learning a foreign language, which are known to affect the attitude to the activity. The questionnaire for students included a question whether they consider a foreign language essential for their profession or not. 62% of students said that they are going to use a foreign language in their professional activity, 8% of the students did not see in any practical value, 30% of students could hardly imagine how they would use a foreign language in their profession (Fig.1).

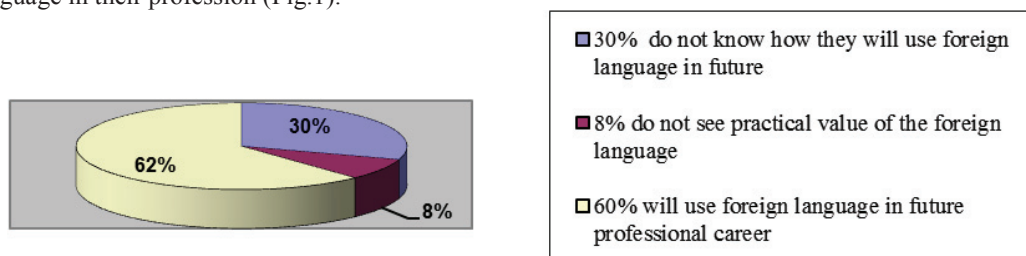


Fig. 1. The necessity of foreign language speaking for the future professional career of students.

As in any other case, the motive for the translation study is formed gradually: from the appearance of an abstract motive to the formation of determined intention to obtain and master the necessary information.

Moreover, when working directly with technical documents such as patent specifications and manuals, which contain the latest information in one or another (sometimes quite specific and narrow) sphere, students do not act as students themselves but as experts, so the teacher can create some kind of "situation of success" where students can fully demonstrate their knowledge (Tarasova, 2015a).

The proposed course of technical translation can be divided into three general types of exercises: information, operation and motivation exercises. Talking about general types of exercises, we need to give a detailed description of the whole set with the special focus on motivational exercises.

Informational exercises provide understanding and assimilation of the material, i.e. redundancy of the necessary information. These exercises are focused on awareness and strengthening of linguistic phenomenon knowledge, assimilation of which is impossible and impractical to start with the second type of exercise. When learning vocabulary, syntagmatic and paradigmatic connections are formed; these connections are necessary for the preservation, identification and updating of lexical units. When learning grammar several aspects are fixed: word order in a sentence and their links with each other as well as binding of parts and whole sentences; recognition of grammatical phenomena according to their formal characteristics at first reading of the document in the source language. Informational exercises are developed due to the experience of similar operations and are based on existing knowledge.

Operational exercises. This type of exercises continues the previous stage, brings the ability to use language material to a certain degree of automation, prepare students to translate any professional and important information. However, it is important not only to provide the development of automatic performance at this stage, but also to teach students to integrate lexical and grammatical skills when translating. Being a continuation and further development of informational exercises, operational ones prepare students to take translation activities. The

interrelationship of these exercises allows the interpenetration of the knowledge learning stages and development of translation abilities and skills.

Finally, motivational exercises. This type of exercises requires a significant attention as they are connected with development and improving of ability to manage any translation activity under conditions close to real professional occupation. The degree of "proximity" in this case may differ from the translation of the elementary e-mails between future foreign counterparts, advertising pages of major corporations, scientific discoveries in the field of power engineering to the designing of industrial cases based on practice skills that require translation skills.

Thus, student masters the presented material through a complex of specially selected educational tasks on translation simulating the main types of professional tasks of a specialist. In this respect, the assimilation of knowledge from the very beginning will be carried out in the context of these activity, where knowledge will determine a function of a rough activity basis and means of its regulation whereas forms of organization students educational work (practical exercises in the classroom, self-study at home or in the computer lab) determine a function of recreation of assimilated content.

When selecting motivational exercises, it is of crucial importance to remember that the future specialist has to improve the ability to understand and interpret the content of the texts with different degree of understanding and accuracy of contained information, in order to meet their professional communication needs.

Provided that, motivational exercises should include various kinds of translation tasks:

- extraction of the main information;
- extraction of complete information;
- extraction of necessary or information of interest.

Meeting these challenges is based on working with text, and they correspond to three types of translation: translation with extraction of the main content of the text; translation with extraction of complete information; translation with extraction of necessary or information of interest.

4. Conclusion

As it was previously mentioned, increase of students' motivation to master translation ability should be formed via various teaching methods and techniques. The 'situation of success' plays here a particular role as it should be provided for all the students even not well advanced. The teacher has to plan, coordinate and control the amount and direction of self-study work. This determines the shift of accent from teacher training activities of the teacher on cognitive activity of the student. The teacher has to support learning process and create the situation of success, without which it is impossible to talk about the efficiency of any training. In order to achieve a situation of success, it is of great importance to manage proper dosing of the educational material that allows the student to cope with it successfully and feel the joy of success when studying.

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