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Student engagement for developing translation skills

Effective foreign language training of future engineers should enable students to acquire translation skills along with the development of their communicative competence. The authors suggest special conditions which provide students' learning motivation increase and active participation in a system of academic tasks. The main principles and stages of student engagement are discussed.

Key words: language training; linguodidactics; student engagement; translation skills; scientific text; pedagogical conditions.

The development of engineering students' skills in translation of scientific and technical texts is an integral part of their vocationally oriented language training conditioned by the necessity to provide their academic and professional mobility. The current system of language training in Russian non-linguistic universities cannot ensure the graduates to meet all the main requirements of the modern international business and institutional environment. Taking into consideration the issues and challenges the whole humanity is facing these days, our global engineering community is united collaborating in search for solutions to these problems using English as a Lingua Franca to communicate, disseminate and put into practice their theories and know-hows. In order to provide the sufficient level of English language proficiency including translation of scientific and technical texts, it is necessary to enhance the language

training system in higher education institutions and reorganize the educational process taking into account the international standards and developing specific conditions and technologies.

Today there is a demand for professional universalism - the ability to change spheres and ways of activity, having a set of key competencies (the so-called soft skills such as self-management, interpersonal communication and collaboration, independent learning, etc.). There are special conditions for a competence to emerge and the most crucial is the engagement of a person into the practice which they organized to acquire the experience of achieving their own goals through self-motivated effective actions and efforts. The obtained results and products should be analyzed and assessed for the person to see if these are relevant to the set tasks. Consequently, the general condition for students' competence development is the provision of personal engagement in professionally-oriented activities using a foreign language.

At National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University, language training is regulated by the framework developed with regard to the requirements of the Federal State Educational Standards, the Program of Foreign Language Training in Non-Language Specialties of the RF Ministry of Education. Our state social order in the context of world economy globalization and internationalization of higher education claims that foreign language skills are an obligatory component of professional training of modern engineers. The main practical purpose is to develop professional-communicative competence including translation skills of technical scientific texts.

In order to optimize students' language training taking into account the above-mentioned provisions, we propose a professional-activity concept of foreign language training of future engineers using student engagement. This implies the integration of conventional and innovative means and approaches to create an engaging environment for all participants of the educational process to become competent in collaborative projects as well as independent personal endeavors.

Teaching translation is interrelated with linguodidactics, a branch of didactics incorporating its various features, due to the fact that the development of the ability to translate texts cannot be separated from general language teaching methodology which is aimed at students to acquire the knowledge of language system with its phonetics, vocabulary and grammar, as well as the formation of reading, listening, writing, speaking skills in certain communicative situations [1].

Translation is a transfer of meaning which is a communicative activity functioning as a social mediation allowing different nations to understand each other. When doing a translation, a person is engaged in both physical and psychological processes depending on personal characteristics and abilities of a

bilingual who makes transition from one semiotic system to another in order to find the right equivalent which will best reflect and deliver the meaning incorporated in the original message [2]. The accuracy stems from the language proficiency level and the student's engagement in a sufficient text translation practice in a particular field.

Translation involves the production of a text which is always complicated and challenging due to the limited choice of translation means and resources as well as inflexible systems (semantic, semiotic, linguistic, mental, etc.) and infinity of contexts (pragmatic, cultural, situational). But first of all, the target audience must be taken into consideration which is reflected in the functionality of the produced text.

The main objective of training students to translate scientific and technical texts is the development of the following competences: linguistic competence not only in a foreign language but also in his/her mother tongue (choosing and applying terminology and strategies relevant to the topic of the translated text); intercultural competence (cultural adaptation of the produced text); sociolinguistic competence (translator's social functions being a mediator; sociolinguistic analysis of the translated text and functional adaptation of the produced one); development of professional competence (the use of modern information and translation technologies and tools; communication with professional translators, implementation of real projects, case studies); communicative translational competence (the ability to use textual, linguistic and cultural features, choose relevant strategies in producing communicative translation [3]).

Formation and development of translation skills of scientific and technical texts includes the following main content components:

Students should know and be familiar with: available resources, instruments and translation technologies; texts of different types, topics and genres to acquire enrichment in their technical field; specific and general translation techniques which are universal in terms of application while translating texts in any language;

Students should be trained in the following skills and abilities: to consciously follow the accepted rules and norms, to identify cultural markers, to practice reflective (as opposed to mechanical) translation; to continuously develop themselves (improving language proficiency, expanding their outlook in their professional area, terminology, lexicography and general encyclopedic knowledge); to work using various information sources (printed, electronic, human), computer translation programs and a translation brief to edit, proof-read and present the material [3].

In accordance with the methodology [4], the following main characteristics were identified:

- personality meaningful goals and motives are the triggers of any activity providing engagement and achievement;

- personal career portfolio of translation and language practice products (it can also be a personal blog or an account in a social net) which is used for monitoring and assessment;

- the training program reflects individual way of learning, personal style, engagement level including goals, tasks, stages, forms and strategies of acquiring the personalized content, as well as a set of means for evaluation of its effectiveness;

- translation is a part of a project which is not only the result but also the method of developing foreign language competence, including skills of translation of technical texts;

- the application of knowledge in the course of carrying our own projects aimed at improving the abilities of goal setting, planning various language learning, translation practices and activities.

The described approach to teaching translation improves the student's independence, provides personal engagement through finding own way and style of learning that represents a flexible system as a growing tree of learning and professional development. To implement the proposed technology the following principles should be actualized:

- Personal engagement allowing students to determine their needs, tasks and objectives, i.e. to become agents planning and organizing their own learning and professional development.

- Scaffolding and collaboration in team work along with individual projects. All participants of educational process become partners who are equally responsible for the efficiency and the success of mutual and personal endeavors.

- Students should be encouraged to choose the texts, materials, tasks and resources that are relevant to their professional field, comply with their needs and interests for in-depth study, as well as forms and ways of the content acquisition and reporting.

- Professionally oriented tasks and activities using texts and cases from real-life industrial practices.

- Consideration of students' engagement styles (collaborative, passive, intense, independent) and taking into account their previous learning experience and reflection [5].

The analysis of scientific literature, best pedagogical practices related to teaching translation, as well as our experience served as a basis to ascertain specific pedagogical conditions that are favorable in order to provide the effective development of engineering students' translation skills, while applying the principles mentioned above: provision of the resource base and an online

platform with the state-of-the-art interactive means for practice, training, feedback and collaboration (with the cutting edge IT, video courses, videoconferencing, multimedia tools, etc.); sustainability in gradual preparation of students for conscious and responsible self-improvement of language skills (from goal setting to the reflection of results); provision of motivation, initiation of activity, success, effectiveness of each stage, according to the effort expended provides motivation of achievement; systematic monitoring of the quality of foreign language training and dynamics of forming translation skills using monitoring and measuring instruments.

Implementation of the proposed technology takes place stagewise. At the first stage the general theory of translation should be presented, discussed, with various genres and styles explained, while demonstrating the use of different instruments, lexicographic means, etc. It's necessary to practically train and apply theoretical knowledge (determine the genre of a text under study, find relevant information in different sources, translate metaphorical phrases, clichés and so on). Pre-translational analysis is carried out at the second stage which helps students to assimilate the theory. Possible translation problems should be identified and trying to find solutions students become engaged in cultural context, studying the means of the source text adaptation, producing a glossary of unknown terms, preparing terminology lists, etc. The translation process itself takes place at the third stage and students actively collaborate as they become part of the translators' community seeking support and feedback not only from the teacher but also from their peers, and even foreign specialists via the Internet. The students should then be engaged in the analysis of their translation products individually as well as in pairs or teams, trying to classify and advocate the chosen options, making necessary improvements and corrections. This is followed by the stage when they work on synthesis discussing the translation process and the produced text, they are required to explain and refine their translation means and procedures, etc. The translation theory met-language should be used to present the products and discuss the work results. An important final stage is the students' evaluation (or mutual evaluation) of their work, which can take the form of an annotation of the translation.

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Translation peculiarities in professional communication of non-linguistic universities

The article deals with the issues of teaching translation in the area of professional communication of students of non-linguistic specialties. The authors noted that it was necessary to consider the cultural peculiarities of the country in the context of translating. In conclusion it is emphasized that depending on the specifics of the professional orientation of the translator, the principles of one's preparation are also different.

Keywords: non-linguistic university; translator; professional communication; economics; legal affairs; culture; intercultural communication.

Currently, foreign languages translation is based on an interdisciplinary integrative approach and is aimed at the integrated development of communicative, informational, cognitive, professional and cultural competencies of students of non-linguistic specialties [5]. Professional communication for work targets is framed by different professional spheres and a role of translation varies among professional settings and «within their individual vertical structures» [4, p. 147].

The relevance of this study is in the fact that relationships between representatives of different cultures depend on the correct and accurate translation. The issues of translation peculiarities were researched by different scientists: N. Anthony, Z. M. Zayyanu [1], P. O. López, R. Agost [7], M. Ayyar [2], K. Bouziane [3], M. K. Kamran, L. A. Muresan [6], A. Negoescu [10], C.-G. Voicu [12] and others. Language is considered to be communication means. It can be used in different ways to the idea. «The problem arises when translators attempt to translate word for word» [6].