

**DCCD 2020****Dialogue of Cultures - Culture of Dialogue: from Conflicting to Understanding****INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS' EXTRA-LINGUISTIC  
COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT**

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***Abstract***

The article focuses on interpreters and translators' extra-linguistic competence development. Translation Model of competences that is studied by many researchers and organizations, interpreters and translators' extra-linguistic competence comprehension are in the focus. Interpreters and translators' extra-linguistic competence is regarded as knowledge of the factors that influence language development and functioning: general encyclopedic, thematic and cultural knowledge about historical, political, economic, social, geographical, physiological and ethical background; precedent phenomena, realia, values, opinions, institutions, common behavior, housekeeping and life conditions in the respective countries; the rules for interaction including non-verbal elements, stylistic relating to a specific community, a register appropriate to a given situation, for a particular document or speech; knowledge about communication context (location, time, audience, parties' intention and etc.). The experiment that was run at the Linguistics and Translation Studies Department of Institute of Foreign Languages of Moscow City University is described. The aim of it was to determine the development of extra-linguistic competence of the students and to trace further ways of the competence development. The experiment included sentences for translation from English into Russian for prospective translators and interpreters. All the sentences were from *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *The Intercept*, *The National Interest*, *The Conversation*, *The Atlantic city* and contained extra-linguistic information. The results of the analysis of the translated sentences are provided. Translators and interpreters' extra-linguistic competence development is viewed as a process arranged on three levels simultaneously: education at university (training, up-bringing, development), self-education and extra courses training.

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## **1. Introduction**

Translation and interpretation are quite difficult processes. To translate as a professional one should not only know vocabulary and grammar, but also have enough background knowledge to interpret cross-cultural communication correctly. Language is a reflection of many spheres: customs, traditions, history, religion... According to PACET's model of building a translation competence (PACET, 2003) extra-linguistic competence is interpreted as predominantly declarative knowledge that comprises general world knowledge, domain-specific knowledge, bicultural and encyclopedic knowledge.

Despite the fact that many countries have been training translators and interpreters for centuries and have their own traditions and approaches, nowadays they are all influenced by the Bologna process. The understanding of translation competence has been extremely discussed by Russian and foreign researchers. Nevertheless, there are no strict rules that regulate translators' training and international requirements for translation competence all over the world.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Relevant studies are offered by some authors (Komissarov, 1990; Porshneva, 2004; and others) who research into competence in general, and translators' competence in particular. Alikina and Shvetsova (2012), Alikina (2017), Fox (2000), Schäffner (2000), Beeby (2000) and others investigate Translation Model of competences and extra-linguistic competence. Researchers (Alikina, 2017; Göpferich, 2009; Lenartovich, 2015; Gavrilenko & Dmitrichenkova, 2017; Shevchenko, & Zagajnov, 2019 and others) also pay attention to translators' training. But interpreters and translators' extra-linguistic competence development has not been given a comprehensive study yet. It determines the novelty of the article.

## **3. Research Questions**

The aim of the research is to find out more about translators and interpreters' extra-linguistic competence comprehension; to analyze its development during interpreters and translators' training at the Linguistics and Translation Studies Department of Institute of Foreign Languages of Moscow City University. The consideration of translators and interpreters' extra-linguistic competence successful and effective development is also in the focus.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to determine translators and interpreters' extra-linguistic competence comprehension and the ways of its successful development through the example of interpreters and translators' training at the Linguistics and Translation Studies Department of Institute of Foreign Languages of Moscow City University.

## **5. Research Methods**

The first stage of the research is the analysis of theoretical information on the topic: articles, dissertations, researches, documents and etc. It helps to generalize and systematize the comprehension of

translators and interpreters' extra-linguistic competence in Russia and other countries, students' professional training and competence development. The aim and the structure of the coming experiment are also distinguished.

The second stage is devoted to the experiment preparation. The target audience is distinguished and formed. The experiment involves 60 students: fifteen first-year students, fifteen second-year students, fifteen third-year students and fifteen fourth-year students. A test with sentences for translation from English into Russian from *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *The Intercept*, *The National Interest*, *The Conversation*, *The Atlantic city* that contain extra-linguistic information is formed.

The third stage involves the experiment conducting. The respondents are asked to translate the test – the sentences with extra-linguistic information – personally without using dictionaries or the Internet. All the students have an equal time limit for translation. The time when the student finishes the translation is marked on the test paper.

The fourth step gives an account of the experiment results analysis that is devoted to students' translations evaluation. The extra-linguistic information translation is paid special attention to. The consideration of translators and interpreters' extra-linguistic competence successful and effective development at university is also in the focus.

## 6. Findings

The analysis of the articles, dissertations, researches and documents helps to find out that extra-linguistic competence is mostly regarded as a part of translation competence. In PACTE Translation Competence Model (PACET, 2003) it is made up of encyclopedic, thematic and bicultural knowledge.

Schäffner's (2000) Translation Model mostly regards cultural competence as general knowledge about historical, political, economic, cultural, etc. aspects in the respective countries (p. 146).

Fox's (2000) Translation Model dwells on the translation competence that includes socio-cultural competence. It is treated as awareness of the socio-cultural text context (p.117).

EMT expert group (2009) regards intercultural competence (that has dual perspective – sociolinguistic and textual) as a part of professional translators' competence. Sociolinguistic detention means knowing how to:

- recognize function and meaning in language variations (social, geographical, historical, stylistic);
- identify the rules for interaction relating to a specific community, including non-verbal elements (useful knowledge of negotiation);
- produce a register appropriate to a given situation, for a particular document (written) or speech (oral).

Beeby's (2000) Translation Model embraces a translation competence model that comprises extra-linguistic competence. This competence includes knowledge of pragmatic and semiotic differences between the cultures, documentation skills (pp.186-187).

Vereshchagin and Kostomarov (1980) consider extra-linguistic knowledge to include basic (facts, events, traditions, holidays), regional (the same as basic but region oriented) and cross-cultural knowledge.

Alikina and Shvetsova (2012) believe that translators' extra-linguistic competence might feature:

- common extra-linguistic knowledge (sociocultural and historical background, precedent phenomena, realia);

- expert knowledge for the specific situation of the translation (substantive thematic knowledge);
- current events knowledge (awareness of current events and the events of the last fifteen years);
- knowledge of communication context (location, time, audience, parties' intention and etc.).

Komissarov (1990) comprehends culture wider. He includes history, sociology and psychology of the nation, its traditions, values, opinions, institutions, common behavior, housekeeping and life conditions. In other words, all aspects of being and consciousness.

Vilceanu (2018) insists that encyclopedic and cultural knowledge represents an essential dimension of the translator's competence packaging.

Analyzing, generalizing and interpreting the information above we come to the conclusion that interpreters and translators' extra-linguistic competence should be regarded as knowledge of the factors that influence language development and functioning:

- general encyclopedic, thematic and cultural knowledge about historical, political, economic, social, geographical, physiological and ethical background;
- precedent phenomena, realia, values, opinions, institutions, common behavior, housekeeping and life conditions in the respective countries;
- the rules for interaction including non-verbal elements, stylistic relating to a specific community, a register appropriate to a given situation, for a particular document or speech;
- knowledge of communication context (location, time, audience, parties' intention and etc.).

Taking into consideration the understanding of the interpreters and translators' extra-linguistic competence it was decided to analyze its development during interpreters and translators' training at the Linguistics and Translation Studies Department of Institute of Foreign Languages of Moscow City University.

The experiment was run in 2019 and involved 60 students: fifteen first-year students, fifteen second-year students, fifteen third-year students and fifteen fourth-year students. The respondents were asked to translate the test personally without using dictionaries or the Internet during the classes. All the students had an equal time limit for their translation. The time when the student finished the translation was marked on their test papers. The first-year students needed more time for translation as they are less skillful than other students. The fourth-year students needed less time and finished the translation even earlier.

The test with the sentences for translation from English into Russian (from *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *The Intercept*, *The National Interest*, *The Conversation*, *The Atlantic city*) contained extra-linguistic information. Some examples of the sentences or their parts that contain extra-linguistic information and the results of the translations analyses (statistic methods) are further provided:

1. *Its not only means that Barack Obama allowed an attack of the magnitude of Pearl Harbor and 9/11 to happen on his watch...*

The sentence contains an acronym 9/11 that stands for the September 11, 2001 when a series of terrorist attacks committed by al-Qaeda (the Islamic terrorist group) against the United States took place.

67% of the first-year students left the acronym in their translations as it was without any reference to the event, 33 % used the word *tragediya* (*tragedy*) to enlarge the translation.

40% of the second-year students used the acronym in their translations as it was, 60% – interpreted the acronym as *sobytiya 11 sentyabrya 2001 goda v SSHA* (the events of the September 11, 2001 in the USA).

33% of the third-year students used the acronym in their translations as it was, 67% – broadened the acronym as *tragediya 11 sentyabrya 2001 goda v SSHA / terakt 11 sentyabrya 2001 goda / krusheniye bashen-bliznecov 11 sentyabrya 2001 goda iz-za terakta* (the tragedy of the September 11, 2001 in the USA / terrorist attacks in the September 11, 2001 / Twin Towers collapse on the September 11, 2001 due to the terrorist attacks).

27% of the fourth-year students used the acronym in their translations as it was, 73% – extended the translation as *terakt 11 sentyabrya 2001 goda, sobytiya, svyazannye s krusheniem bashen-bliznecov* (terrorist attacks in the September 11, 2001 / Twin Towers collapse on the September 11, 2001 due to the terrorist attacks).

2. Well, the nearest we get to a car chase comes in London, where Nate, driving a van, decides to take an exit ramp on his way to Heathrow.

The sentence comprises the name of the major international airport in London, the United Kingdom – Heathrow.

20 % of the first-year students didn't translate or interpret this extra-linguistic information in the sentence. 67% – decided to leave it as it was – *Hitrou (Heathrow)*; 13 % of the respondents widened the translation as *aeroport Hitrou (Heathrow airport)*.

27% of the second-year students didn't translate or interpret this extra-linguistic information in the sentence. 40% – decided to leave it as it was – *Hitrou (Heathrow)*; 33 % of the respondents expanded the translation as *aeroport Hitrou (Heathrow airport)*.

60% of the third-year students left this extra-linguistic information in the sentence as it was – *Hitrou (Heathrow)*; 40 % of the respondents extended the translation as *aeroport Hitrou (Heathrow airport)*.

7% of the fourth-year students didn't translate or interpret this extra-linguistic information in the sentence. 40% left this extra-linguistic information in the sentence as it was – *Hitrou (Heathrow)*; 53% of the respondents enlarged the translation as *aeroport Hitrou (Heathrow airport)*.

3. However, the main action in *Game of Thrones* is inspired, according to Martin, by the Wars of the Roses...

The sentence contains extra-linguistic information that refers to the Wars of the Roses that stands for a series of English civil wars for control of the throne of England between supporters of the two rival branches: the House of Lancaster (represented by a red rose) and the House of York (represented by a white rose).

60% of the first-year students left the extra-linguistic information in their translations as it was without any reference to the events *Vojna roz (The Wars of the Roses)*, 40% of the respondents used the extended variant for their translation but without details *Vojna Aloj I Beloj roz (The Wars of the Red and White Roses)*.

53% of the second-year students also left the extra-linguistic information in their translations as it was without any reference to the events *Vojna roz (The Wars of the Roses)*, 47% of the respondents used

the widened variant for their translation but without details *Vojna Aloj I Beloj roz (The Wars of the Red and White Roses)*.

47% of the third-year students left the extra-linguistic information in their translations as it was without any reference to the events *Vojna roz (The Wars of the Roses)*, 53% of the respondents broadened their translation but without details *Vojna Aloj I Beloj roz (The Wars of the Red and White Roses)*.

33% of the fourth-year students also left the extra-linguistic information in their translations as it was without any reference to the events *Vojna roz (The Wars of the Roses)*, 27% of the respondents broadened their translation but without details *Vojna Aloj I Beloj roz (The Wars of the Red and White Roses)*. 40% – dwelled on the extra-linguistic information in their translations by adding details: *protivostoyanie dvuh anglijskih dinastij v bor'be za tron, izvestnoj kak vojna Aloj I Beloj roz (the fight for the throne between two rival English branches, known as The Wars of the Red and White Roses)*.

The other extra-linguistic samples from the sentences that were successfully translated by the students refer to Shakespeare's words (*much ado about nothing, nothing will come of nothing, we have seen better days*) and Bible words (*daily bread, dust and ashes, eat one's words*), some slang words on the contrary caused difficulties (*Blighty*). Also, the students faced political, economic, social, geographical facts the translation of which helped to distinguish that high level of translators' and interpreters' extra-linguistic competence is achieved gradually, step by step.

The competence should be developed throughout their life: both private and professional, as life itself is changing every day and by changing itself it changes the language. The competence will progress successfully if it is developed by students consciously throughout their lives. Some universities do offer special Lifelong Learning Programmes (Kordić, 2016). But it is almost impossible to cultivate the competence only at university: professors cannot teach everything a translator or interpreter should know to succeed in cross-cultural communication in four or two years. It is also problematic to know everything about the world around so a translator or interpreter should have motivation to continue to work on the competence development personally after university graduation.

The results fit with other available evidence (Akbari et al., 2018; Alikina, 2017; Gavrilenko, & Dmitrichenkova, 2017; Göpferich, 2009; Guliyants, & Guliyants, 2017; Lara, 2016; Lenartovich, 2015; Waterlot, 2016; Oțăt, 2017; Percec, & Pungă, 2017; Vermes, 2017; Shevchenko, & Zagajnov, 2019), that after systematizing these ideas on translators' and interpreters' extra-linguistic competence development, it seems logical to arrange the process on three levels simultaneously:

- education at university (training, up-bringing and development);
- self-education;
- extra courses training.

The research findings are valuable and their analysis enables to find profitable solutions. The gained experience may be applicable for translators and interpreters training. So, to help students develop their translators' and interpreters' extra-linguistic competence the amount of extra-linguistic information should be increased. Culture, history, geography, economy, politics should be thoroughly scrutinized while getting the degree at university. Integrated approach combining task-based approaches with approaches that are based on critical discourse analyses, problem-solving and decision making formats help to foster extra-linguistic competence (Huertas Barros & Buendía Castro, 2017).

To develop translators' and interpreters' extra-linguistic competence of the students of the Linguistics and Translation Studies Department of Institute of Foreign Languages professors:

- offer for their interpretation at sight and consecutive interpretation articles from authentic newspapers and news programs, presenting both current and historical information to broaden their horizons;
- devote special attention to extra-linguistic information discussions during role-play, brainstorming and team-work sessions;
- organize reading, translating and interpreting of the newspaper articles;
- provide watching, translating and debating about news, films, TV programs that can help to pay more attention to traditions, values, opinions, institutions, common behavior, housekeeping, life conditions, famous people and places, events – all the aspects of being and consciousness.

The professors, lecturers, tutors and students take part in the work of Oxford Russia Fund that enables them to read and work on authentic literary works (“Contemporary British Stories” and “Morality Play” by B. Unsworth, “Portobello” by R. Rendell, “Atonement” by I. McEwan, “A Week in December” by S. Faulks, “Capital” by J. Lanchester and etc.) and commentaries with annotations to them. Working on the book special attention is paid to extra-linguistic information and cross-cultural communication aspects, to the points that help to get the idea of the author of the book. Even tiny details are discussed: the choice of the characters' names due to their social status; political and social situation and its influence on the characters' behavior and words; the description of the architecture, buildings, furniture, clothes; colors meaning in the culture and etc.

Much attention is also given to employing multicultural information from the books that explore the differences and similarities of countries, for instance, “Understanding Britain Today” by K. Hewitt, “Where Russians Go Wrong in Spoken English: Words and Expressions in the Context of Two Cultures” by L. Visson, “Watching the English: The Hidden Rules of English Behaviour” by K. Fox and etc. That enables the students to research cross-cultural communication deeper.

The department members help the students to understand that translators' and interpreters' extra-linguistic competence is an integral part of their professional competence. The students are explained that to succeed as professionals in their future they should be ready for self-education and lifelong learning. The Linguistics and Translation Studies Department of Institute of Foreign Languages experience:

- shared visiting of the galleries, cinema, theaters and etc. and its further discussions to help the students to be in touch with art;
- analyses of photos, archives, footage to inspire students to know more about history of their own country and to get more information about the world around;
- collaboration with practicing translators and interpreters, successful university alumni to inspire to have their goals and to be persistent, logical and consistent in their achieving;
- participating in the probations abroad, conferences, lectures and seminars to develop professional skills and competences;
- on-line trainings by means of FutureLearn, Coursera and other educational platforms to motivate to widen horizons, develop professional skills and competences, as well as translators' and interpreters' extra-linguistic competence.

## 7. Conclusion

To recapitulate what is said earlier, we need to take into account that language is the reflection of many spheres: customs, traditions, history, religion and etc.

To become a successful professional translator or interpreter one should not only know vocabulary and grammar, but form interpreters and translators' extra-linguistic competence, which includes knowledge of the factors that influence language development and functioning: general encyclopedic, thematic and cultural knowledge about historical, political, economic, social, geographical, physiological and ethical background; precedent phenomena, realia, values, opinions, institutions, common behavior, housekeeping and life conditions in the respective countries; the rules for interaction including non-verbal elements, stylistic relating to a specific community, a register appropriate to a given situation, for a particular document or speech; knowledge of communication context (location, time, audience, parties' intention and etc.).

The experiment, ran at the Linguistics and Translation Studies Department of Institute of Foreign Languages of Moscow City University, helps to distinguish that high level of translators and interpreters' extra-linguistic competence is achieved gradually, step by step. And the competence will progress if it is developed throughout their lives: both private and professional, as life itself is changing every day and by changing itself it changes the language.

To arrange the process of extra-linguistic competence development with advantage, translators and interpreters' professional training should be organized simultaneously at three levels: education at university (training, up-bringing and development), self-education and extra courses training.

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