

Necessity of using educational translation in the fulfillment of comprehensive goals during the lessons of Russian as a foreign language

Necesidad de utilizar la traducción educativa en el cumplimiento de objetivos comprensivos durante las lecciones de ruso como lengua extranjera

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ABSTRACT:

Within studying the process of learning Russian as a foreign language (hereafter - RFL), it is necessary to point out that it is a language of both interpersonal and professional communication, and studying it should orient foreign students at obtaining appropriate level of professional training, which gives them an opportunity not only to learn the language of a specialty, but to establish professional contacts with Russian and international partners in the future. Considering the facts described above, the aim of present article is the necessity of using educational translation in the fulfillment of comprehensive goals during the RFL lessons. As the research methods of evaluating the efficiency of work on the educational translation we developed criterial complex of quality control and

RESUMEN:

Dentro del estudio del proceso de aprendizaje del Ruso como Lengua Extranjera (RLE), es necesario señalar que es un lenguaje de comunicación tanto interpersonal como profesional y estudiarlo debe orientar a los estudiantes extranjeros en el nivel adecuado de formación profesional, Lo que les da una oportunidad no sólo para aprender el idioma de una especialidad, sino para establecer contactos profesionales con socios rusos e internacionales en el futuro. Teniendo en cuenta los hechos descritos anteriormente, el objetivo del presente artículo es la necesidad de utilizar la traducción educativa en el cumplimiento de metas comprensivas durante las lecciones de RLE. Como métodos de investigación para evaluar la eficiencia del trabajo en la traducción educativa desarrollamos un complejo criterial

translation evaluation, which combines analytical and systemic approaches to evaluation of translation, while the survey method was used for defining the role of educational translation in learning RFL. The result of the study contains the conclusions about the efficiency of the work on the educational translation by solving communicative, educational and mentoring goals at the RFL lessons and the need in a more thorough approach to the choice of texts for educational translations.

Keywords: translation, educational translation, didactical capacities of translation, educational text, texts catalogue, professionally-oriented text.

de control de calidad y evaluación de la traducción, que combina enfoques analíticos y sistémicos para la evaluación de la traducción, mientras que el método de encuesta se utilizó para definir el papel de la traducción educativa. Aprendizaje del RLE. El resultado del estudio contiene las conclusiones sobre la eficiencia del trabajo sobre la traducción educativa mediante la resolución de objetivos comunicativos, educativos y de tutoría en las lecciones de RLE y la necesidad de un enfoque más exhaustivo de la elección de textos para traducciones educativas.

Palabras clave: traducción, traducción educativa, capacidades didácticas de traducción, texto educativo, catálogo de textos, texto orientado profesionalmente.

1. Introduction

The role of educational translation as one of the components of the process of learning and teaching RFL is, without doubts, very important. Along with reading, listening, speaking and writing, translation also has an important place in the educational process. However, modern method of teaching foreign languages “pushes” translation aside by making communicative approach a priority. But should we reject translation? We do not mean that it has to be the core, but that it is preferable to use it along with other didactic methods.

According to the theory of translation research, translation is comprehended both as a process and as a result of complex conscious verbal activity aimed at transforming the message in one language into a message that is equal in content, expressive and stylistic tone, in the other language in order to perform informative, aesthetic, educational and other functions (Barkhudarov 1975).

It is necessary to separate educational and professional translations. The latter is translational activity aimed at reconstructing an original text in another language; it requires specific training, skills and abilities, proficient command of the foreign and native languages and knowledge of not only one’s own, but also of the foreign culture (Dergacheva 1984).

Methodologists define educational translation as “a system of various exercises and tasks aimed at revealing language equivalents in order to fulfill various didactic goals: for understanding the studied language, expanding the vocabulary and enriching the speech in the second language, conscious practical comparison of the systems of the two languages and their acquisition for the development and perfection of orthoepic, lexical, grammatical and orthographic abilities and skills of using both languages involved in translation” (Azimov and Schukin 1999).

According to translation-research dictionary, educational translation is typically used only with educational and methodic goals (as a means of deciphering and semantically describing foreign-language material, or as various translational exercises) (Explanatory dictionary of translation research, n. d.)

Canadian researcher J. Delisle addresses educational translation as a tool for teaching foreign languages, which is primarily a tool of evaluating students’ understanding of the specific qualities of the studied language (Delisle 1981).

Unlike professional translation, educational translation always has clearly stated tasks, which have to correspond with the goal and conditions of education; the choice of the means of translation is defined, and moreover, this translation is a basis of mastering professional translation, and therefore, it is a certain step toward developing professional abilities and skills in prospective specialists.

Modern methodologists define three main comprehensive goals of RFL learning: communicative, educational and mentoring goals (Glukhov and Schukin 1973; Vishnyakova 1979; Kostomarov and Mitrofanov 1988).

Communicative goal means mastering the Russian language as a means of communication. To

this end, educational translation becomes an addition to unilingual communication, because, in some cases, communication with the use of a foreign language requires translating verbal statements. Public presentations, official and business types of communication usually require high-quality professional translation, but in routine communication with personal goals, it is usually enough to have a simplified translation on the basis of abilities that have been developed by educational translation.

The goal of general education is to develop students' understanding of various ways of transferring information that exist in different languages, which leads to higher flexibility of speech- and thinking process, development of students' speaking skills and enrichment of their speech. During the fulfillment of the general-education goal, practical command of both studied and native language improves. In this context, educational translation plays a specific part by being aimed at the bilingual nature of the practice of mastering the system of languages' integration.

Mentoring goal consists in developing student's personality. From this perspective, educational translation, by developing automatization of the language transfer, is a means of raising the sense of respect towards native speakers of the studied language and comprehension that any thought can be efficiently expressed in any language. As the same time, gradual rejection of internal translation provides an opportunity to overcome "the sense of helplessness during the use of the studied language and to feel capable of communicating in it like its native speakers" (Annenkova 2010)

Therefore, using educational translation, to some extent, corresponds to all global educational goals.

According to the researchers, in order to use efficiently the didactic capacities of translation and prevent turning it into another boring exercise, it is necessary to develop a goal-directed system of tasks, which is built upon the principle of going from simple to complex, and to follow methodical recommendations about using the translation as an educational task, in particular:

- Select lexical units, collocations, sentences and texts that correspond to students' specialty;
- Admit variative (problematic) nature of translation, its saturation with linguistic phenomena that were addressed during the previous practical lessons;
- Perform preparatory work by focusing students' attention on the complexity of the text;
- Set a comprehensive task for the translation of a text, which would imply not only expressing the text in another language, but also analytical work on searching the specifics of one language in comparison with the other, primarily on the example of the professional vocabulary;
- Discuss and analyze the translated work, give tasks that are aimed at preventing and overcoming the difficulties occurred during the translation;
- Use educational translation systematically (Kolker, et. al. 2011).

O.S. Issers notes that a positive quality of educational translation is the fact that this "exercise is not localized, it is not limited to a certain rule, but it does require analysis, differentiation and comprehensive use of all language tools without exception", (Issers 2008) thus facilitating conscious automatization of students' abilities.

Researchers note that "translation made by a student during the process of studying a foreign language is primarily a means, which is used to actualize certain didactic goals, in particular, understanding of foreign language, mastering the vocabulary, comprehending the grammar system, being able to express a thought, etc." (Popovich, et. al.2014). They conclude their opinion in the following way: "Translation is merely one of the didactic means that are used in modern technique of teaching foreign languages" (Popovich, et. al.2014).

Longstanding practice of teaching RFL proved that only translation of texts "both ways" provides positive results (Rozhkova 1983).

2. Methods

We used a number of methodical approaches in order to fulfill the main comprehensive goals of

learning RFL – communicative, educational and mentoring.

So, for the communicative goal, educational translation was conducted both in written and oral forms with the use of guiding questions. In order to consolidate the communicative skills, we proposed oral translation of 2-3 short statements with the following translation in turns.

Another exercise for developing communicative abilities and skills to grasp the essence of the read material is translating a text by paragraphs: a student reads a paragraph in English, and then translates it without looking in the text. During the work, we noticed that students often get carried away by the details during the translation, which can lead to the loss of the main meaning of the message. Therefore, they were required to not only widely retell what they read but also to state the main thought in 2-3 sentences.

In order to fulfill the educational task, we conducted the work with scientific texts, which was organized in the lessons on educational translation in the perspective of succession of science in different countries, which manifests at the level of language primarily in terminological adoption. Moreover, we focused on tight cooperation between the scientists from different countries. However, the work with complicated scientific texts was “diluted” by certain scientific “sparks”, aimed at developing students’ erudition, considering that sometimes a prospective specialist is a “conductor” of general knowledge that brings people of different nationalities closer.

In the work with scientific texts, it was important that a student not only translated the concepts (which, in fact, can be unusual and unclear to him), but also that he did it consciously by linking the form with the content, and was able to explain a concept.

One of the exercises for developing the skills of working with words, and translating skills in particular, was organizing a model of scientific conferences, where the students were proposed to choose a scientific field (ecology, biology, etc.) and make presentations and their translations within this field. We would like to point out that students expressed great interest in working with scientific texts, including the texts that were not on the studied specialty throughout the semester.

Educational translation for class- and homework has to perform the mentoring function: it has to be useful from the perspective of obtaining new knowledge about the world and people’s life and also facilitate learning of “eternal and good”. For example, foreign students loved, read very expressively and translated A.P. Chekhov’s stories, and then analyzed the professional translation. It has been noticed that even 2nd-3rd-year students of non-philological specialties felt and analyzed fiction texts and their translations really well.

On the other hand, a foreign student has to work with various texts and communicate on various topics, including the ones that are not close to him. In this case, the ability to accept and respect any belief system, any culture and topic should help, along with moral qualities that characterize any professional – patience, diligence, focus, etc. Translating so-called “boring” texts should help developing the latter.

During the lessons on the translation practice, most of the work focuses on lexical exercises, and it is really interesting, but it is equally important to focus on syntax. Lack of understanding of the connections between the parts of a sentence leads to the lack of understanding of a text. Unfortunately, such understanding is prevented by the lack of grammatical knowledge. In order to improve students’ comprehension of syntax, we used grammatical comparative analysis of the original text and the text of translation, or translation of sentences with certain grammatical elements with the use of the appropriate transformations, which had been discussed before that.

In order to evaluate the efficiency of the work on the educational translation during learning RFL, we developed criterial complex of quality control and translation evaluation, which combines both analytical and systemic approaches to the evaluation of translation.

This complex includes two criteria, one of which is systemic (“Accuracy of representing the content of an original text”), and the second is analytical (“Number of errors”). Characteristics

of each of the criteria correspond with each other and describe five levels of development (see table 1).

Table 1. Criterial complex of quality control and translation evaluation

Level	Criteria of translation's quality control		Evaluation of conducted translation	Score
	Accuracy of representing the original text	Number of errors		
High	Complete representation of the original text's content	Rare and insignificant errors	Excellent	9-10
Above average	Representation of original text's content with insignificant (1-2) inaccuracies	Insignificant number of errors	Very good	7-8
Average	Representation of the main meaning of the text with significant number of incongruences	Significant number of errors	Good	5-6
Below average	Representation of the text's content is distorted because of significant inaccuracies	Constant errors	Satisfactory	3-4
Low	Completely inaccurate representation of the original text's content	Large number of errors	Bad	1-2

The highest score of translation evaluation in points is 10. Each level can be evaluated by two grades, represented in points, which gives a teacher an opportunity to give a higher grade to a student, who completely corresponds with the requirements of a certain level, and a lower grade to a student, who is placed between levels but closer to the low one.

In order to clarify the role of educational translation in RFL learning, we also conducted a survey among the foreign students, who were asked two questions:

1. To what extent does the translation allow learning a language?
2. Translation of which texts helps learning a language better and faster?

3. Results

Evaluation of educational translation quality was performed before and after teaching foreign students to translate with the aim of fulfilling the main comprehensive goals of RFL learning. It showed both increased accuracy of original text's representation (temp = 4.026; $p < 0.01$) and decreased number of errors in translation (temp = 4.679; $p < 0.01$).

Some of the most frequent responses of foreign students to the questions about the role of educational translation are presented in table 2.

Table 2. The most frequent responses of foreign students to the questions about the role of educational translation

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To what extent does the translation allow learning a language?	Translation of which texts helps learning a language better and faster?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With the help of translation, it is possible to learn many words, as well as to remember the ones that were present before. Translation helps writing better and learning to speak Russian faster; - Translation helps enriching the vocabulary of each language, understanding the specifics of a certain language, and develops our creativity; - The process of translation develops skills of using prepositions. Translation allows creating correct syntax structures; - Because of translation, we learn various constructions and memorize the spelling of the words; - During the translation, our vocabulary enriches, there is always a possibility to compare language structure, structure of sentences; during the translation, visual memory works automatically, and this also enriches the vocabulary; - Translation allows working with dictionary more, as well as seeing different variations of translating the same sentence (synonymous constructions). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Popular-scientific texts are the best for translation; - We are interested in economic and legal texts, as well as essays; - It is important that the texts, which we translate during the lessons, are not too difficult. They have to concern all fields of life. Specialized texts can be translated, but only from time to time; - We should translate various texts – journalistic, scientific, fictional, as well as texts that contain elements of colloquial style and words that Russian society uses on a daily basis. In this case, it is possible to translate “live word” immediately; - Texts from the Internet are the best for translation. Scientific texts are difficult to translate; - The texts that are interesting to students and that students will translate with pleasure often belong to journalistic style; - Fictional texts (significant speaking foundation, synonymous arrays, multiple syntax structures) help learning a foreign (Russian) language. They develop reader’s thinking; - In order to learn a language, it is necessary to translate texts from the field of politics. Texts that contain elements of humor, as well as historical texts, are the most difficult to translate; - Translating specialized texts is useful and interesting.

Analysis of the responses showed that all students (without exceptions) think that the role of translation is significant. Without it, it is impossible to master a foreign language. Moreover, the majority of respondents answered that the best texts for learning a language are journalistic texts (their translation), including the ones from the Internet.

In accordance with students’ responses, we decided to use journalistic texts (primarily from Internet-issues) more often in our work. Their advantages are relevance, periodic and universal nature and authenticity, as well as their rather small volume, which is also important in RFL teaching. Translating journalistic texts is an excellent exercise for consolidating practical knowledge of the language, which allows evaluating grammatical, stylistic and orthographical competence of a student, his lexical potential and culture of speech, along with the ability to write, i.e. to present the text to a reader or a listener. (Drozdova, et. al. 2015).

However, we should not reject translation of fictional texts completely. Both fiction of different genres and journalistic texts (newspapers, magazines, Internet-issues, etc.) are “suitable” for fulfilling the goals of RFL teaching in the best possible way, because:

- Journalistic and fictional texts contain original, authentic linguistic material, which is a necessary means of teaching and learning a language;
- They are characterized by containing relevant information about culture and reality of a country;
- Both journalistic and fictional texts contain not only new vocabulary, but also new structures. It is known that new words are memorized better in a context, and therefore, it is better to project language learning on a text, including the situation of translating it.

4. Discussion

During the discussion of the results, we would like to focus more thoroughly on the problem of selecting and creating educational texts for translation activity, developing a certain texts catalogue for RFL teaching.

We use text while learning RFL, as well as any other foreign language. It exists as educational material in all types of verbal activity, including translation. Not a single RFL lesson goes without text foundation, not a single textbook or workbook on the Russian language for foreign students presents lessons or lexical-grammatical topics without text and methodical apparatus related to it.

S.K. Folomkina defines educational texts for foreign audience, with regard to psychological aspect, the following way: "It is an integral complex of linguistic, verbal and intellectual interconnected factors that interact through external and internal forms; it is verbal and sign-established product of speaking and thinking activity, which is characterized by completed content, informational self-sufficiency, thematical, structural and communicative unity based on language content, and which is reflected through the core and the periphery of mental vocabulary"(Drozdova, et. al. 2015). In her opinion, the main trait of educational texts for foreign students has to be the presence of the "mental vocabulary core" in them, i.e., an active part of person's vocabulary that is constantly engaged in speaking and thinking processes. (Folomkina 1987).

Classification of texts is highly branched: by form, by functional and genre parameters, by content, function, etc. A separate classification concerns educational texts. General-European recommendations provide a rather diverse list of oral and written texts for learning a language as a foreign one. The foundation of this classification are primarily genre specifics of the texts (Novak 1997)

Criteria of selecting educational texts for foreign students are highly important. Integration of text-selection requirements are: volume, level of informative value, difficulty of linguistic material, logical and compositional structure. First of all, it is necessary to follow the criteria that correspond to the type of speaking activity. Researchers separate the following factors that are significant during the selection of texts for translation: factors of texts' difficulties by volume, linguistic/logical-compositional specifics and specifics of the way of presentation, factors of texts' content value/level of interest, including informative value, aesthetical/emotional value, content value (typical and individual interest) (Filatov, et. al. 2008).

RFL teaching in colleges, at the modern stage, requires creating professionally-oriented texts for developing the abilities of educational translation. The main characteristics of such texts are: authenticity, presence of communicative and professional orientation, level of difficulty that corresponds to the level of students' preparation. Texts that have professional orientation are the object of studies also at the department of preliminary preparation of foreign citizens.

Texts catalogue in educational-professional field depends on the profile of education and includes the simplest functional and meaning-related types of scientific texts. For non-philology students, such blocks of texts can be, for example, texts about subjects (objects); texts about processes; texts about qualities; texts about connections and relations, etc. Moreover, the proportion of texts from other fields (social-cultural and social-political) does not have to decrease. Foreign students of any college department demand that the first year of studies should constantly involve professionally-oriented texts in RFL learning. This happens because reading and translating of such texts becomes not only their goal, but also an important means of studying and mastering a profession. (Martynova and Nikolaenko 2014)

To summarize, despite the presence of various texts in many textbooks and workbooks on RFL, there is primarily a lack of professionally-oriented texts that are collected and processed accordingly in a separate textbook (Sadıkođlu and Bice 2014).

5. Conclusion

Obviously, RFL learning cannot be based solely on translating texts, because it is multi-vector and interconnected process: listening to a text and understanding it is a guarantee of good translation (oral); ability to express correctly one's own opinion in oral speech and in writing (grammatical, stylistic, lexical and orthographical norms) is also important in language command.

When academic groups contain foreign students with different levels of language proficiency, during their education it is necessary to vary forms of work in accordance with the level of students' intellectual development. RFL teaching requires specific pedagogic delicacy, knowledge of psychological and linguistic aspects of learning a foreign language, skills in using highly various teaching methods and techniques. Therefore, a RFL teacher is faced with a number of goals:

- To constantly evoke and stimulate foreign students' motivation to learn the language;
 - Due to the fact that the course is practical, a teacher has to work in close cooperation with the teachers of specialty disciplines in order to achieve educational process' efficiency;
 - During the selection of the material, a teacher has to follow the general-pedagogic principle of the connection between education and life and to consider the specialty that a foreign student has selected.
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