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The Standard Profile of the 21st Century Translator: Implications for Translator Training

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the profile of the translator in Cameroon and posits that the translating activity is increasingly becoming part of the translation service, reflecting the market expectation to train translation service providers rather than translators. The paper demonstrates that the translation profession as it is performed in the field and portrayed in job adverts reveals that a wide range of employers are looking for translators and their services. A survey of the Cameroonian translation market was carried out to raise awareness of the language skills translators need in order to work successfully as language services providers. The data for this study was obtained from 36 professional translators drawn from the public service, the freelance and in-house corporate translation market in Cameroon. The study argues that today's new translator's profile and his activities are basically variants of interlingual communication in which the traditional concept of translation constitutes only one option and that these 'add-ons,' which contribute to a better professionalization of the translator, pose new challenges to translation pedagogy in terms of both content and methodology. In this vein the study proposes a translational language teaching model aimed at making training more responsive to market exigencies in this era of modernization.

Keywords: Translator Training, Translation competence, Market Research, Translator Profile, Translational language competence

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1. Introduction

According to *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2007), a translator is “one who translates or renders from one language into another.” However, in real life, people involved in translation work may not have the job title of translator. They may be called communication officers, editors or sometimes secretaries, personal assistants, etc. Conversely, translators may be asked to work on transcription, editing, terminology management, rewriting, and desktop publishing. Because translators have to play so many roles in a language service market, it is perhaps not surprising to find that the translation market is heterogeneous and highly fragmented.

The translator’s profile is not to be confused with how well anyone translates. It concerns the perception of a translator’s value – what employers think a particular translator can do, and how well or badly the translator is assumed to do it. A ‘profile’ can be regarded as a summary of the competences, which are considered necessary in order to function in a given professional context. This definition of the translator’s profile aptly situates the 21st century professional as a “performative translator”, to use Uwajeh’s terminology, (Uwajeh, 2001, p. 229). Performative or transformative translators refer here to translators who have changed from what they used to be, this time not completely from what is traditionally called translators but to what one might style ‘translators plus’. That is, translators who can provide suitable translation services in the 21st century by virtue of the kind of competences they possess – language service providers.

The questions that will naturally come to mind are: Is the profession changing as a result of the changes in society, and how? What do employers expect from translators? What do they expect from universities and

training institutions? Which skills are essential for translators to adapt to the new scenarios? What are the pedagogical implications of the language-specific challenges in professional translating today in Cameroon imposed by changing market trends? More specifically: can the varieties of specific linguistic skills performed by professional translators pose as a challenge for teaching? Is it possible to describe the standard profile of would-be “Language Service Providers” (translators), and design the architecture of a teaching programme and methodology geared to that profile?

The aim of this study is to assess the need for language teaching in translator training in ASTI that takes a long-term genuine reflection of the type of language-specific skills imposed by changing market trends on the translating profession in Cameroon today. The main objective of the study is to validate the rationale for including language teaching in an MA course in translation, particularly at ASTI. Working from the premise that trainee translators need to be trained for the much wider variety of linguistic roles imposed by current changing market trends for ‘language service providers,’ the results of this study raise awareness of the actual linguistic challenges facing the 21st century translator in Cameroon and in the world at large.

The motivation for this study included: the need for empirical data in this domain, trainees’ felt needs for language boosting, variation in trainees’ academic and linguistic backgrounds and the need to address gaps in competences, trainees working languages which are not their mother tongues but exogenous or exoglossic languages thereby making near-native perfection difficult to attain without further language teaching. Lastly, professionals in the field who are increasingly involved in carrying out many language-specific activities (add-ons) requiring both written and oral expertise in



language skills. Even though language training has erroneously continued to be seen as a discrete component unrelated to translator training skills, this study demonstrates that the main justification for teaching translational language competence lies in its authenticity. In other words, it provides an opportunity for translation students to experience realistic professional working methods, that is, to develop genuinely useful translation skills, which are in demand in the professional world. Moreover, the maturing of Translation Studies as an academic discipline should offer new opportunities to often hard-pressed modern languages departments.

2. Literature Review

The standard profile of the translators in Cameroon is discussed using insights from the literature on market research and the competency-based approaches to translator training. Within this theoretical framework, the concept of translational language skills is deconstructed into ‘separate language skills’ and ‘enhanced language skills.’

Drawing from a survey of the Cameroonian translation market context, the study demonstrates that an explicit inclusion of workplace realities in Training would represent the progression of competency-based training required for successful participation in the workplace. The study posits that multi-competence is an added value of translation studies and that training programmes concentrating on core translation competence with parallel emphasis on market awareness and transferable skills would present significant advantages.

The study draws from the Flexible Professional in the Knowledge Society (REFLEX) analytical model by Seamus McGuinness and Peter J. Sloane (2009) which examines the labour market status of

graduates after graduation and distinguishes their current job, their vertical and horizontal mismatches and under-skilling as well as a range of questions on the nature of work organisation and individual competences. A framework, informed by Second Language Teaching (SLT) is proposed with the aim of ameliorating the teaching of finely tuned language structures and skills to trainee translators.

2.1. The Translation Market Challenges

For over thirty years now, a number of new skills and sub-competences have emerged. In his manual for new translators, Daniel Gouadec (2007) mentions some of them: The new translator must in fact be ready

[...to become] an information management expert, technician, terminologist, phraseologist, translator, adapter, proof-reader, reviser, quality control expert, post-editor, editor, graphic design expert and Web page designer, technical writer, Web site designer, Web page integrator, file manager, macro-command writer and in some cases IT specialist, all rolled into one. (p. 120)

In this vein, Ulrych (2005) writes:

(...) evidence from the working world indicates that professional translating entails multiple forms of communication once considered as lying on the periphery of what was considered “translation proper”: activities such as technical writing, editing, language consultancy and screen translation, for instance, are becoming core components of a translator’s day-to-day practice. (p. 21)

The implications of this process have been addressed by several authors (e.g. Bowker 2002; Fulford and Granell-Zafra 2005; Pym 2003). They all seem to agree that there has been a shift towards large language service providers, full document production and automation. Similar trends are reported by Boucau (2005), who observes that the

translation market remains very fragmented. In 2009, the Editorial of the *Applied Language Solutions*, a Translation Services Company, published a long list of tasks performed by ‘language service providers. These include interpretation, project management, terminology, language teaching, linguistics, cross-cultural training, diplomatic work, intelligence work, technical writing, DTP/page layout, web work, international work, stand-up comedian, bilingual editors, multimedia designers, research and information specialists, cultural assessors, multicultural software designers, software localizers, and terminologist.

All of the above-mentioned tasks involve collecting, processing, manipulating and validating language information. These requirements and the conditions of modern translation professional life, as well as the impact of globalization are challenges for teaching, as learners need to learn these new skills in order to be able to confront them. Edmund Berger (1999) points out: “I believe that the most valued possession of a translator is his/her intellectual honesty (...) keep abreast of new developments affecting your business.”(p. 6)

Ulrych (2005) notes that these profound transformations in the profile of the translator are bringing the translation activity closer to that of monolingual text production. Some authors would even say that translation activities can no longer be called translation but rather “reader-oriented writing” or “multilingual technical communication” (Kingscott 1996 in Ulrych, 2005, p. 21), because the term “translation” cannot transmit the range of skills that are necessary.

Andreu, M., and Berenguer, L. (2003), scholars of the GRELT research group working on Language for Translators, have underscored that the new translator’s profile, as defined by market forces and social pressures makes it incumbent on training

institutions to factor in the new profile into their training. The translator is not only, or not any more, a multilingual de-coder, but he/she is required to do, or to be prepared to do, rather more than just translate. Pym (1995) discusses the roles translators should be encouraged to take:

If they are in a position to carry out other mediatory tasks, they should do so. This could involve things like actively preselecting information, advising on how a particular text should be translated, and suggesting how best to act in order to attain cooperation. A final consequence is of course that translators should be trained to carry out this wider range of mediatory tasks. More pointedly, they should be trained to know when not to translate. (p. 600)

Alina Secară (2005) opines that this new trend is now being standardized with the appearance of new job titles, such as ‘translator-editor’. These have pushed the job specifications - and thus the skills required for what was initially a translation position - one step further. Mossop (2001), taking a market-oriented perspective, points to a growing tendency for employers to seek multi-skilled employees who are not only willing to learn and develop those skills, but who have already acquired them. In the translation market, this refers to translators who are ready to carry out more than just mechanical translation tasks and who have actually received training in that sense.

Mossop (2001) provides an example of a new job description, that of translator- editor, a job particularly interesting because of the wide variety of competencies it envisages:

Translate, revise, standardize and re-write public and internal documents such as reports, announcements, decisions, ministerial orders, brochures, press releases, memos, etc. for employees and managers of the agency. Coordinate the preparation of briefing notes for the



Minister and, when the responsible person is absent, of ministerial and executive correspondence. Research, write, edit, French copy related to scientific technological exhibits and programs for visiting or virtual public. Produce small publications, write for websites, copyedit, translate English material with extensive scientific content into clear, interesting, understandable French copy and meet deadlines. (p. iv)

Consequently, if trainees are willing to enter the translation job market nowadays, they should expect to perform tasks varying from actual translating to writing summaries of a translated document, preparing material for publication or internal use, acting as an editor on source or translated texts and adapting the content of a text for a new audience. The students should be more specialized, more technical, but also be able to work within a wide range of subject areas. Teachers in translation teaching institutions are now faced with a new challenge, which Guadec (2001) terms an “unstable equilibrium”, something complex but necessary for the molding of multipurpose translators with skills in many fields and the capacity to adapt to the new expectations of the society.

2.2 Impact of Competency-Based Approaches

As Winterton (2005) rightly points out, there has been a discernible move towards a more outcome-based approach, reflected in the Berlin Communiqué of September 2003, which encouraged Member States to elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems. This framework seeks to describe qualifications in terms of learning outcomes, competences and profiles (Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks, 2004). This trend has

influenced a keen interest internationally in identifying the competences that are required by career guidance (CG) practitioners.

In Cameroon, the BMP system, which is a stepchild of the outcome or competency-based approaches, was introduced into higher education in 2006. The intention is to express outcomes in the form of clear and precise ‘competencies’, so that (a) the needs of employment can be better communicated; (b) the goals of educational programmes can be re-defined and communicated with greater precision; and (c) straightforward judgments can be made about the extent to which any particular competency has been attained:

Rather than designing curricula to meet assumed needs, representative occupational bodies identify ‘occupational standards’ which are clear and precise statements which describe what effective performance means in distinct occupational areas. The standards are then used to develop ‘new’ vocational qualifications and the assessment, which underpins them; plus learning programmes which deliver the achievements identified in the standards. (Mansfield, 1989, p. 26)

In this vein, a professional translator needs to have sound knowledge about best practices in different situations and a variety of skills that will enable him/her to assess the job at hand and apply the best possible management and translation strategies to a particular situation. Much of the research effort in translation studies has been inspired by the need to describe and explain the phenomenon of translation itself and to establish what may be considered best professional practice. The competences required by a profession are usually determined by studying the behaviour and actions of the field’s successful professionals. The competences described in these models are in turn used in translator and interpreter training. After all, educating new

professionals is always linked to the everyday practice of the field and students are taught how to function in the professional arena.

In the specific domain of translation, Schäffner and Adab, (1996: ix) and Neubert (2000) share the same views on competency issues.

A first priority [...] is the need to define more clearly the different sub-competences involved in the translation process, in order to try and identify a set of principles which could form the basis for a solid foundation for training in translation. Only then will it be possible to work on the interrelationship of these principles and finally to incorporate these into a programme designed to enable translators to achieve an overall (desired) level of translation competence (Schäffner & Adab, 1996, p. ix)

Translation practice requires a unique competence, perhaps a set of competences that comprise, of course, competence in the source and target languages. (Neubert, 2000, p. 3)

Identifying the subset of fundamental competences related to translation competence helps to determine those to be prioritized in the language skills development class for translators, with the aim of bringing the student closer to the translation market exigencies with a body of knowledge acquired in advance.

The translation profession has known a remarkable evolution that Shreve (2000) has this to say:

The profession of translation (can be seen as) a special kind of ecosystem moving through time, modifying itself under the pressure of influences emanating from its socio-cultural environment, and evolving successfully from one form into another. (Shreve 2000, p. 217 as cited in Kelly (2005)

Seen in this new light as a Language Services provider, the translator should

consistently excel in a number of specialties, and is generally regarded as one of the arbiters of very high-level language consultancy. A weakness in any of these abilities will affect his performance adversely and have a negative impact on his employability.

As with all academic studies that have a vocational dimension, Translation Studies must balance the need to achieve full coverage of the discipline with the need to prepare graduates for the real professional world.

2.3 Translator Training Response to Current Trends

In view of these changes, society today requires Higher Education to provide not only training, but also clear careers advice and a real possibility of preparing graduates for the transition to joining the labour force with relative ease and confidence, and in the best possible conditions. These wide-ranging, fast-paced changes in the translation job market clearly imply that a higher level of initial training is necessary for trainees to prepare them to function as active members of the profession when they gain employment. These changes therefore pose new challenges to translation pedagogy in terms of both content and methodology.

Over the past decade, new dynamics have emerged in each of the key domains of higher education, particularly in research and innovation. This paradigm shift has ushered in a more profession- and practice-oriented translator training and necessitated the inclusion of a wide variety of activities professional translators perform (Nord, 1997, p. 117). In this vein, translator training has undergone considerable changes since the beginning of the nineties, attempting to bridge the gap between the academic and professional worlds of translating. Translator trainers, often professional translators themselves, have started to look at real



translation situations, investigating what makes certain translations (and translators for that matter), more successful than others and incorporating their findings into their translation teaching approaches and methodologies. Translator education now recognizes the need for students to acquire a wide range of interpersonal skills and attitudes in addition to the purely technical skills ('translator competence').

As Schroeter (2009) points out, it has become evident that successful economies are driven by innovation and knowledge (p. 4). The skills required of workers have changed dramatically and rapidly over the last decades. Belinda Maia (2002) writes in her introduction of the Proceedings of the conference on 'Training the Language Services Provider for the New Millennium' in Porto, "Nowadays students need to be trained for the much wider variety of roles summed up in the phrase, 'language services provider.' She explains that in order to avoid the 'translation and interpreting' label:

we opted for the expression 'Language services provider', in the hope that this would focus the need for training students for other functions, like those of revision, re-writing and even writing the original texts, technical writing, terminology work, special language studies, dubbing, subtitling, localization and the new technologies that have revolutionized the world of the more traditional translator and interpreter.

(Maia, 2002, p. 9)

As early as 1992, Mary Snell-Hornsby (1992) recognized the importance of a broader, more multi-dimensional approach to training the translator not only as an intellectual polymath, but also as a multicultural expert (p. 22). In fact, whether they are working as freelance translators, in-house translators or part-time, translators have now moved from what Gouadec (2002)

calls the 'pure translator' to what he calls the translator with many 'add-ons,' which he describes as the basic profile of what the market wants. (p. 39)

In developing countries, substantial reforms are taking place in tertiary education systems mainly aimed at encouraging institutions to be more responsive to the needs of society and the market economy. For example, the implementation of BMP in Cameroon since 2006 implies a change for higher education institutions, which have now to ensure that the learning outcomes of graduates fulfill the competency needs of the labour market. As a result, Higher Education must take into account teaching methodologies, which bring training closer to the professional world, that is, *Bringing Professional Practices into Translation Classrooms*, (Way, 2008). In translation, this implies providing students with the skills and competences required by practising translators in the workplace

In this vein, translation teachers and researchers must show increasing interest in seeking alternatives to effete teaching methods – alternatives that will be better suited to the needs of students and employers against the backdrop of the radically changed market conditions over the past half century. In Barabé's (2007) *Towards a New World Order in Translation*, he refers to the development of these competencies and skills as the process of translating the core abilities involved in effective practice into educationally useful elements. The translation market would benefit, as translators would be readier to adapt to emerging roles and more capable of sustaining quality and the argument for quality in the business.

Pym (2005) opines that the demanding professional translation market expects

would-be professionals to have a broad knowledge of the profession:

Since translation is multidisciplinary, translator training programmes must instill not only proficient language command in both source- and target languages, but also, equally important, must bring together knowledge and skills that belong to different disciplines, such as documentation, terminology, desktop publishing, as well as some knowledge of specialized texts. Students must learn this so that they can ultimately thrive collectively as members of a profession. (p. 132)

Taking into consideration the growing importance of competency-based approaches, professional bodies, such as the ITI (Institute of Translation and Interpreting, UK), initiated programmes that facilitate such incorporation. The ITI brochure – *Translation: getting it right (2003)* - is a guide whose purpose is to educate all those taking part in the translation process. The brochure follows the example Mossop (2001) and Sager (1997) have set in describing the new roles that translators are expected to assume today. Consequently, it identifies the changing responsibilities and roles of translators, such as contributing actively to decisions made about the translatable content of the source text (ST), as well as the most appropriate translation approach and technique that should be employed.

3. Methodology

This study adopts the empirical case study survey model in translation research. An outline of a model of the language skills translators need in order to work successfully as language services providers is developed through a case study opinion survey of 36-experienced service, freelance and corporate professional translators working in Cameroon. . Suggestions are made in the light of the model about curriculum design

and teaching. The data collecting instrument used in this study is a questionnaire.

The informants for this part of the study are service translators working in the Cameroonian civil service and some freelance and corporate translators. The population was sampled using stratified and systematic sampling methods. Stratified sampling used variables such as gender and experience. Professionals who work both as freelance and in-house corporate translators from different cities were part of the sample.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis have been used in this study. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher in face-to-face situations with the informants and others were sent and returned by mail. Various sources were used to know where and how to meet translators in the field such as directories, and visiting various offices to administer questionnaires to translators.

The professional translators' questionnaire elicits among other things, the various language-specific challenges in their career today brought about by changing market trends and how these could be factored in the language teaching course for translators. It is divided into five main components of professional experiences: professional translator's profile, former training, translation competence, materials and professional add-ons, experience, theoretical beliefs and recommendations. These instruments are used to validate the hypothesis on the pedagogical implication of the wider variety of linguistic roles imposed by changing market trends.

4. Analyses and Discussion

This section presents survey results on the pertinent issue of the profiles of translators in Cameroon and the major pedagogical implications evoked: Is the profession evolving because of the changes in society,



and how? Which skills are essential for translators to adapt to the new scenarios?

4.1. Professional Translators' Profile Instrument

The first part of the profile instrument covers essentially demographic information of sampled professionals.

Table 1: Professionals' Institutions of Service

No	Place of service	Frequency	Percentage
1	The National Assembly	07	19.4%
2.	Presidency of the Republic	04	11.1%
3.	Ministry of Finance	03	08.3%
4	Ministry of Higher Education	03	08.3%
5.	Corporate translators	04	11.1%
6.	Freelance translators	02	5.6%
7.	Ministry of Trade	01	03%
8.	The Supreme Court	02	5.6%
9.	Ministry of Forestry and W.L.	01	03%
10.	Ministry of Territorial Ad/Dec.	01	03%
11.	Ministry of Secondary Education.	01	03%
12.	Ministry of Public Works	01	03%
13.	The Ministry of Public Health	01	03%
14.	Ministry of Communication	01	03%
15.	MINEPATI	01	03%
16.	MINIMIDT	01	03%
17.	Ministry of SME, Social Econ.	01	03%
18.	Ministry of Public Service	01	03%
	Sampled population	36 Respondents	

The results computed on table 1 reveal that the selection is representative because it covers all the major ministries including the Presidency of the Republic and the National Assembly. Furthermore, most of these translators also work for corporate bodies on a part time basis, and they do some freelancing.

Further survey results from the demographic profile prove that 70% of professional translators in Cameroon are often asked to translate into their B languages.

4.2 The Professional Translator's Competence Notions Assessment

This section provides a retrospective benchmark of professional standards against which development activities can be planned and prioritized. The section among other things seeks answers to questions relating to: Professionals' Assessment of language-specific communicative skills in professional translation; types of CAT tools used/mastered by professionals; list of texts translated by professionals in the field, and Language-specific activities that professionals perform as add-ons.

Table 2: Professionals' Assessment of language-specific communicative Skills in professional translation

Skills	Very important	Important	Not particularly important	Not important	Total
Linguistic accuracy	29	05	-	-	34
Appropriate style	23	15	01	-	39
Terminological correctness	30	04	02	-	36
Consideration of textual conventions	14	19	01	-	34
Sense for sense translation	15	05	01	-	21
Creativity in cases of non equivalence	13	12	-	-	25
Cultural knowledge	16	18	01	-	35
Communicative appropriateness	16	08	-	-	24
Lexical and syntactic equivalence	10	06	07	05	28
Textual competence	16	15	01	-	32
Fluency	03	05	03	-	11
It skills	20	15	01	-	36
Average Total	205	127	18	05	355
Percentage total	58%	36%	5%	01%	100%
Sampled population	36 Respondents				

Important components of communicative competence in translation include; cultural knowledge (44.4%), communicative appropriateness (44.4%) and textual competence (44.4%). On the other hand, those skills, which are not particularly prioritized, are lexical and syntactic equivalences and oral fluency.

Table 3: Types of CAT tools used/mastered by professionals

CAT Tools	Frequency	Percentages
Trados	13	36%
Wordfast	10	28%
SDLX	02	06%
Déjà vu	01	03%
Transpro	01	03%
Transit	00	00%
Passolo	-	00%
Across	-	00%
RC WinTrain	-	00%
Taught in school	-	00%
None	34	94%
Sampled population	36 Respondents	

According to the results, the majority of professionals (95%) are not familiar with CAT tools and translation software. Wordfast (38%) and Trados (36%) are the only CAT tools that most of them are acquainted with. Furthermore, none of these CAT tools were taught them in school.

A similar question was asked about terminological tools mastered by professionals. Three popular terminology tools (Multi Term, Term Star, and Termium) were used to validate professionals' acquaintance with terminological software germane to the translation profession. The results of the survey show that like with CAT tools, 94% of the professionals studied are not familiar with terminological tools. Very few, that is, 3% know about Multi Term and Termium.

4.3 Translated Material, Text-Types and Professional add-ons

This section of the study examines the materials, text-types and professional add-ons that professionals encounter in their workplace. This study analyses both perspectives and focuses on translational add-ons as a factor that is crucial for the design of a training programme that conforms to the current profile of professional translators.

Table 4: List of Texts translated by professionals in the field

Type of text	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Correspondence	12	11	07	08	-	38
writing Reports	07	13	12	03	-	35
Contracts and agreements	04	09	09	08	04	34
Scientific reports	06	08	10	07	06	37
Budgets	01	05	03	07	-	16
Press releases	-	10	04	02	-	16
Bid notices	06	08	10	07	03	34
Programmes	02	09	04	01	-	16
Précis writing	06	10	06	01	-	23
Speeches	13	05	06	01	-	25
Presentations	03	10	07	-	-	20
Tenders	07	11	03	-	-	21
Conventions treaties and judgments	10	-	-	-	-	10
Diplomatic notes	02	01	08	-	-	11
Laws and decrees	09	09	02	01	-	21
Interviews	03	02	01	-	-	06
Press agency reports	05		05	-	-	10
Exposes	04	03	01	-	-	08
Average Total	100	126	98	46	13	383
Percentage total	26%	33%	25%	12%	3%	100%
Sampled population	36 Respondents					

The statistics reveal that a majority of these text-types are often carried out in the field (33%) while 26% of them come up very often. Secondly, regular texts activate both language and specialized domain competences requiring both written and oral expertise in language skills.

The study also specifically wanted to know what language-specific activities professionals perform as add-ons to translation per se. 21 activities were computed and are presented on table 5 below.

Table 5: Language-specific activities that professionals perform as add-ons



No	Language specific activities (Translation Add-ons)	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
1.	Re-writing of texts	07	13	08	04	03	35
1.	Writing of Reports	08	12	05	09	01	35
3.	Writing of adm., Correspondences, and business letters	10	11	06	04	-	31
4	Writing of Scientific reports/minutes	09	10	05	06	-	30
5.	Localization	03	03	04	03	10	23
6.	DTP page layout	04	05	05	-	14	28
7.	Terminology work	11	15	-	05	01	32
8.	Special language studies	06	14	05	04	05	34
9.	Writing original texts	07	11	05	06	03	32
10.	Technical writing	06	09	08	03	05	31
11.	sub-titling	06	06	01	02	14	29
12.	Revision/Editing	10	12	08	04	02	36
13.	Interpretation	07	13	09	04	03	36
14.	Managing new language technologies	07	09	06	02	07	31
15.	Public relation work	10	11	05	05	05	36
16.	language teaching	09	09	06	06	03	30
17.	Giving lectures and talks	06	10	07	04	05	32
18.	Teaching translation	03	02	-	-	-	05
19.	Reading of letters and memos of the ministry	07	06	06	03	-	22
20.	Drafting of mails	06	03	06	-	-	15
21.	Supervision of trainees	10	06	03	04	-	23
Average Total		152	190	108	78	81	609
Percentage total		24.9%	31.1%	17.7%	12.8%	13.3%	100%
Sampled population			36 Respondents				

As the results of table 5 shows, professionals are increasingly involved in carrying out many language-specific activities (add-ons) in the field. Out of a total number of 21 language-specific activities computed, 14 (66.6%) of these activities have become a frequent practice.

4.5 Summary of Findings

- Holders of Bilingual degrees in English and French make up only 50% of the sampled population of professionals. The other 50% obtained degrees in various

fields: history, Spanish, law, political sciences, sociology etc. This is an indication that, translation training has for long been opened to candidates from other professions other than language studies thereby confirming its interdisciplinary nature and the need to cater for candidates without a language background.

- The sampled population is mostly made up professionals with long standing experience who can provide studied information. However, the majority of respondents (88.90%) have never published in the field of translation. This means that a creative writing and research tradition has not been imbibed in most of the professionals. This explains why there is little information flow between professionals in the field and training institutions. Hence, Trainee translators are cut off from professional life experience. The introduction of academic and technical writing is very imperative for budding translators.
- Results also reveal that close to 70% of professional translators in Cameroon are often asked to translate into their B languages. These results point to the importance attached to bidirectional translating in many contexts and which can only be aided by further language training in the second language in translator training programmes, particularly in Cameroon
- Professionals consider the language courses more important for various reasons: more efficient use of language; the need to master the language before engaging in translation proper; helping those of them who did not do language studies to master the language; providing them with skills in writing etc..These results demonstrate that language

problems in translator training are real for trainees, professionals and trainers.

- A majority of sampled professionals (64%) reveal that as students in their former schools, they applied a systematic study of grammar, stylistics and dictation to boost their language competence. Some 22 (61%) respondents consulted grammar reference books, while some 20 others (56%) read newspapers and journals. These results reveal that guided learners' autonomy can be an effective approach to language teaching in translator training.
- The results also show that professionals are increasingly involved in carrying out many language-specific activities (add-ons) in the field. This explains why translators are now referred to as language service providers. These new activities are fast affecting the definition of new profiles for modern translation practice and should have implications for translator training. These results indicate that the translator's work goes beyond mere translating and the teaching of these new skills should ideally be factored into a language for translator training course within the framework of competency-based approaches.
- Activities like writing of correspondences, scientific reports/minutes, terminology work, revision and editing, public relation work, language teaching, and supervision of trainees have become a permanent occurrence. Most of these text-types are regularly carried on in the field (33%) while 26% of them come up always. These regular texts activate both language and specialized domain competences requiring both written and oral expertise in language skills.
- Furthermore, the majority of professionals (95%) are not familiar with

CAT tools and translation software like with CAT tools, and another 94% of the professionals are not familiar with terminological tools. Very few, that is, 3% know about Multi Term and Termium. Conversely, a majority of the respondents (97%) are not familiar with any project management tool. This indicates that new language technologies should constitute an integral part of language learning skills.

4.6 Discussions of Findings

The need to cater for most translation students without a language background and the poor information flow, and poor reflection of real work experiences in translator training institutions is patent in the results. Furthermore, the increasing need for bidirectional translation that necessitates further language training in the second language is compounded by the increasing language problems faced by trainees, professionals and trainers in their different contexts. The current reforms in higher education for increased professionalization within the framework of competency-based approaches, as well as the increasing workplace demand on translation professionals for both language and specialized domain competences requiring both written and oral expertise in language skills have been elicited. Lastly, there is also the poor mastery by a majority of professionals of the new language technologies in the profession. All of these problems are causes of concern that should be addressed.

All of these findings reveal the benefits of deploying translational language skills, which are reflected in current translation competence models (cf. Hurtado, 1996; Hatim and Mason, 1997; Neubert, 2000; Schaffner, 2000; Olivia, 2000; Kelly, 2007; Šeböková, 2010 and PACTE, 2011). These results are in line with the translator training



outcomes proposed in best practice guidelines like the reference framework of competences for the European Master's in Translation (EMT expert group 2009) and the BMP system in Cameroon. In effect, the role and impact of language competence on translation performance have been emphasized in previous works (see Li, 2001; Mansouri, 2005; Sakwe, 2012, 2013, 2014).

In fact, Translation Studies today are essentially concerned with building a web of relationships with satellite disciplines (linguistics being one of them). The importance of individual disciplines and competences are determined by their relevance within the larger context of translation competence. A translator is a qualified language services provider with extensive linguistic skills. Translation students' language competences have been assumed for too long and as Li (2001) points out, it is wrong to continue to hold this unfounded assumption, which prevents translation programmes from producing quality translators with transformative skills for the new translation market. (p. 343)

The increasing demand in the field for language and specialized domain competences requiring both written and oral expertise in language skills should be a concern to translator training institutions. The idea that language learning should be included in a general framework of translation training has been made patent in many publications. As Gonzalez (2004) aptly puts it, perhaps the time has come to adapt to the new work exigencies by including texts and activities in translation classes not only in the written form, but also in the oral and non-verbal. He adds "in those that integrate both, in consonance with the culture the students have grown up with and in which they will be working: TV and radio talk shows, e-mail and cell phone messages and

so on" (p. 3). Belinda Maia (2002) writes in the introduction to the Proceedings of the conference on 'Training the Language Services Provider for the New Millennium' in Porto, "Nowadays students need to be trained for the much wider variety of roles summed up in the phrase, 'language services provider.'" (p. 9)

Gabr (2001: 1) cites Pym (1998) who argues that market demands should shape the way in which translators are trained. There is no doubt that Stressing on hardcore subject matter knowledge, (translation skills, strategies and translation problem-solving and decision-making abilities), is important, but it should not be at the sacrifice of the quality of translation graduates' proficiency, adaptability and employability. The major solution to this debate should be to determine how translation can be studied and taught without falling into the trap of reductionism. It is important to know if trainees in various contexts have been effectively trained for the tasks they are expected to carry out in the field. Very often, these tasks go beyond just translating.

Recent work in various language-specific areas of translation research has been pioneered by many research groups including: GRELT (Teaching Language for Translators), TRADUMATICA (Translation and New Technologies), MARPATERM (Translation, Terminology and Cultural Transfer), and PACTE (Acquisition of Translation Competence and Assessment). Other language-related areas of research include work carried out by AUTOTRAD (Translation Theory and Self-Translation), Etienne Dolet (Inter-disciplinary Studies and Translation), INTER-ASIA (Interculturality in East-Asia), T-1611 (Translation and Hispanic Cultures History), TRANSIEDIA (Media Translation), and TRELAT (Translation Studies and Catalan Language).

This study comes to add empirically validated and bibliographical data that has been lacking in this domain.

4.7 Recommendations

In the light of the views expressed above, this study outlines pedagogical implications for translator training. These include recommendations that address the perennial problems of translator training and education in line with the standard profile of today's translation professional.

4.7.1. In Support of Professionally-oriented Translational Language Teaching

The relevance of the findings in this study stems from the fact that they are drawn from the opinion survey of professionals in the field about the kind of language-based problems they encounter and the practices that engender them and how these can inspire the design of language courses, tailored to translator training. Through this approach the study probes “into the inner workings of the professional world [and] not only views it from inside the academic cocoon” (Díaz Cintas, 2004, p. 201).

This approach adopts a better needs-oriented analysis than product-oriented evaluations can, since many of the considerations in reaching translation solutions should be directly observed rather than assumed. It is believed that since the focus of interest involves the translation family, and the work they do, and since the aim is to try to understand why they do what they do in a specific way, researching their tasks would feed into empirically tested theoretical knowledge and simultaneously bring about a change in pedagogical approaches.

In today's high velocity economy, the idea of a permanent skill-base is a quaint concept from the 20th century. This calls for a re-examination of course contents, teaching objectives and methods in Translator Training. Snell-Hornby (1988) affirmed at

the end of the Eighties that TS must embrace “[...] the whole spectrum of language, whether literary, ‘ordinary’ or ‘general language’, or language for special purposes” (p. 3). There is a need to present some form of ‘holistic’ approach to translator training and to find the right balance to this challenging task. This view is shared by Zaixi Tan (2008) who emphasizes the need for translator training programmes to take into full consideration the holistic development of the students in their education as translators and translation specialists. Furthermore, concentrating the training of translators on the development of the language sub-competence may lead to a higher degree of efficiency and accuracy skills in translation tasks (Li, 2001, Cao, 2006, Mansouri 2005), provided a pre-study of the problem areas is made and taught systematically.

Discussions of the particular competencies and sub-competencies translators should possess have led to attention being focused on identifying the most appropriate aims and objectives for training in translator working languages, and this in turn has been matched by an examination of the goals of translation studies courses and research training programmes. This has also facilitated a more profession- and practice-oriented translator training and allowed the inclusion of a wide variety of activities professional translators are asked to perform (Nord 1997, p. 117). Such realistic assignments are also beneficial from a motivational point of view and prepare learners for real-life translation situations (Nord 1994a, p. 66).

Because of its importance for any translation performance, language mastery should be further developed and refined in the course of the curriculum by means of specific activities. The question that will naturally come to mind is: what aspects of

language are translators to learn? In fact, this is another way to ask what they are supposed to be taught. This no doubt, will lead to the notion of translational language competence 'curriculum.' The present study exposes the weaknesses of a reductionist approach to translator training and education, which is in vogue in many teaching circles. As it seems, much more remains to be unraveled with regard to an integrated discussion of the whys, whats, hows and whens in the teaching of translation, namely why, what, when and how to teach to make a translation programme successful? That is, an approach that should be able to provide students with a deeper understanding and a fuller command of the language skills that have become increasingly indispensable to transformative translators of the 21st century.

4.7.2. Towards a Model of Translational Language Teaching

The model of separate and enhanced translational language skills is proposed in this study. It derives from an interdisciplinary approach where curriculum, theory and practice serve as filters for understanding how different translator competences, particularly language-based skills or schemes can best respond to training contexts and market needs.

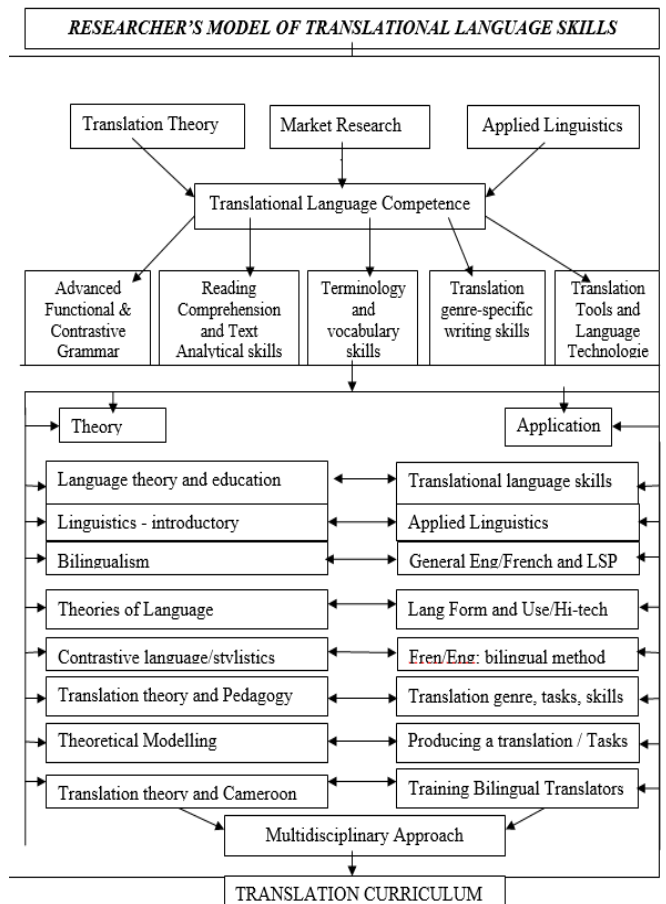


Table 6: A model of translational language competence

It is modelled on Applied Linguistics, which focuses on providing solutions to enhance trainees' declarative language knowledge base for translation training, as well as to separate language-based-skills problems that translators encounter in the real world. As can be seen in table 6 above, Translation Pedagogy entails the balanced appropriation of theory and practice, and a total assimilation of interdisciplinary approaches, which are recommended for a translation Studies Curriculum.

The organization structure of the envisaged syllabi is based on five broad modules: functional and contrastive grammar, comprehension and text analytical skills, terminology and intercultural

semantics, translator-specific writing skills, and language technological tools for translators. These modules adopt four major approaches to language teaching: focus on forms, meaning, function and skills.

The proposed model of translational language syllabus is a skills-based one integrated with other types of personal, group and mass communication, and interrelating with the types of speaking and writing activities that are germane to the translation profession. The different units of separate and enhanced language skills can then be presented in a sequence determined by various notions of frequency, learnability, communicative importance, and difficulty. This model aims at making translator training and long-term employability to become compatible goals of translator training in ASTI.

Functional and contrastive grammar

Grammatical interest is on performative or functional aspects of language use. These include collocation (the importance of word order), constructivity (the building of grammar complexity from simpler forms to produce ‘discourse-level chains’), contextuality (the focus on written and spoken discourse in presenting grammar points), and contrastivity (using the source language to point out differences and similarities with the target language). The module covers syntactic strategies such as shifting the word-class, changing the clause or sentence structure, adding or changing cohesion; and pragmatic strategies such as naturalizing or foreignizing, altering the level of explicitness, adding or omitting information (Chesterman, 1996, p. 68). Other problematic areas like those of the use of language mechanics (e.g., punctuations), major language structures (e.g., phrasal verbs, synonymy, collocations etc.), have not been left out. A functional grammar is essentially a ‘natural’ grammar in the sense

that everything in it can be explained, ultimately, by reference to how language is used. (Halliday, 1985a, p. xiii)

Comprehension and text analytical tasks

The second module is made up of exercises on comprehension and text analytical skills, which include text-sensitive issues like reading comprehension, précis writing, context-sensitive vocabulary use, key structures and special text difficulties, text-based tasks like thematic-expansion and creative writing. Each text has a communicative function and distinctive linguistic characteristics as well as its own generic structure. This task therefore is to test trainees’ ability to give a detailed and comprehensive account of the way grammar operates as sets of options for making meaning, for as Halliday (ibid.) points out, language structure and language function are systematically related.

Terminology and intercultural semantics

The module is made up of a series of unit tasks relating to Terminology and intercultural semantics. Exercises in lexical analysis enable translation students to discern the patterns of underlying meanings. The value of these tasks lies in the fact that trainees are evaluated on skills of extracting conceptual meaning from a source text, and to base their translation on a reformulation of that meaning, not on the words or structures that codify it. Some tasks on semantics in this section include: substitution, reasoning on contextual meaning, and matching. Similar tasks on terminology and intercultural semantics cover specialized domains. The aim is to test students’ graphic representation of how English and French divide up the same semantic space, and see distinctions made in one language that are not made in another. This could be gained through language and cultural awareness tasks. The process of learning how to translate could be considerably enhanced by making students



conscious of the degree to which languages coincide and differ.

Translator-specific writing tasks

This module tests students' knowledge on samples of technical writing, such as correcting and editing, formal reports, abstracting and popularizing. This section tests the students' knowledge on specialized concepts and writing conventions of different fields of knowledge that students are likely to meet in the field. By testing them on samples of technical writing, administrative documentation such as formal reports, technical descriptions, or operating manuals, etc., their familiarity with such style, formats and subject material of the texts, is evaluated. The objective is to enable them develop a methodology of situated analysis, useful for the evaluation of terminology resources meant for translation. This section thus clearly distinguishes between what constitutes knowing a language (knowledge) and using a language (skill).

Language technology Tools for Translation

This last part is intended as a generic introduction to the specialized software packages that have been developed for making translation more efficient. Essential parts of these are translation memories, which store and retrieve old translations, and terminology management systems. The theoretical part will concentrate on the general principles underlying such packages and elaborate on the way they interact with the workflow of professional translators.

This study posits that in teaching these modules, collaborative training should be complemented by more traditional, result-oriented correction devoted to communication and quality. That is why the distinction between macro- and micro-level aims in language communication is prioritized. As Robinson (1998) puts it: "These syllabuses assume the learner will be

able to put together, or synthesize in real world performance, the parts of the language system they have been exposed to separately" (p. 8). The teaching method that can suitably be adopted in this scenario is the *blended interactive socio-constructivist student-centered collaborative teaching* method based on the cognitive theory that suggests that learners learn when they actively think about what they are learning. It heavily relies on teacher's "manipulation" – of learner teams to promote interdependence, accountability, interaction, collaborative skills and the conscious processing of group performance. This structuring includes the conscious formation of mixed ability teams and the changing of teams to ensure homogeneity of performance.

5. Conclusion

In this study, data analyses identified diverse types of separate and enhanced language add-ons current in professional practice, which provided a guideline on how translations should be analyzed theoretically, practically, academically and professionally.

The findings of this research confirm that Translator trainers should take a big picture approach to the changes in the profession. This study argues that many of these changes stem from an underlying paradigm shift. By examining this shift and looking for connections between various changes in the translation profession, the translator's profile can better be understood and the need to introduce 'Rich' courses made more patent.

It is clear that learning outcomes now play a key role in ensuring transparency of qualifications, of qualification frameworks, and employability. They are also central in the implementation of the various action lines of the BMP in most countries in Africa, particularly in Cameroon. This is the roadmap that this study has for ASTI and by extension, for all other translator-training

institutions, which share in ASTI's translational language competency-centered consciousness.

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