ESP for Interpreters and Translators: Foreign Language Provision or Integrated Education?

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Abstract

The paper is a complex study of advanced training of state employees, including servicemen on the positions of interpreters and translators. The research is aimed at efficient organization of English for Specific Purposes course taking into account specific needs of the main stakeholders. The purpose of the training is the efficient use of English by course participants, who are Philology specialty graduates, in professional settings. The learners are expected to gain knowledge and experience in the positions of interpreters or translators of the Division of International Cooperation, the Division of Military and Technical Cooperation, the Division of Informational and Analytical Support of state bodies of Ukraine. On the basis of the insights gained from designing an ESP course for state employees on such positions, analyzing their job responsibilities and all the stakeholders' needs, reviewing literature on ESP and integrated education, this paper is intended to provide theoretical background and practical assistance for ESP specialists involved in research and design processes of the courses as well as for those who prepare learning materials for interpreters and translators seeking problem-based training to develop their professional competence.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, interpreters, advanced training, professional competence, integrated education, critical thinking

1. Introduction

Since 1991 Ukraine has undergone serious changes in social and economic ties, foreign policy agenda and faced with unprecedented challenges to its national security. All these transformations and changes resulted in the need for relevant and problem-oriented ESP courses. Therefore, nowadays, there is a wide variety of courses being designed by language practitioners to meet the existing need for specialized courses, for instance: English for Doctors, English for Engineers, and English course for Veterans etc. The planning and design process of a proper course which suits target ESP groups is quite challenging even for experienced practitioners since they have to take into account various factors such as specific learner's needs, specialized vocabulary and activities that the course requires, professional and job-related situations, course participant's level of English etc. Additionally, researchers in the area of pedagogy and foreign language providers point out that it is vital to include stakeholder's needs analysis in the ESP course

design process as it provides particular context that can inform ESP practitioners about current trends and requirements for specialists in the area which in its turn can determine the course content that is directly linked up with the job responsibilities and learner's professional competence.

Professional competence of interpreters and translators can be defined as the ability to handle challenges and tasks in a professional environment, including oral and written services, where it is required. Career of expert in the field of translation requires awareness and expert knowledge in many areas such as political, economic, military, technical, scientific and ecological domains. It is also important to have profound knowledge of the official language and at least one foreign language as well as know how to apply new tools and applications in the area of information technologies which can only be effectively mastered through advanced training.

The Aim

The logical chain adopted from numerous works on ESP training seems to lack awareness of the balance of all the parameters which are linked to institutional and learners' expectations, including learners' and employers' needs. Thus, the purpose of the study is to provide theoretical overview of existing approaches to course design and language training of the future interpreters and translators as well as give insight on how to choose relevant education approach, which enables foreign language providers to train course participants more effectively and successfully prepare them for future employment.

Tasks

To reach the purpose of the study, we have identified a number of objectives:

1) Taking into account the job responsibilities of the future interpreters and translators working for government agencies and on the basis of needs analysis of the main stakeholders design an ESP course for their advanced training;

2) Considering the pros and cons of different integrated approaches choose a suitable training method for advanced preparation of interpreters and translators;

3) Presenting a model for interpreters and translators seeking advanced training.

Background

At one point as a group of foreign language providers we were asked to design a two-month ESP course for a selected group of interpreters and translators working for government agencies of Ukraine. To develop a content-based curriculum we carried out a needs analysis by interviewing their supervisors and finding out what kinds of English skills the course participants needed. As a result of the needs analysis we discovered that most of the learners needed listening skills for professional activities since all the materials they would translate (orally and in writing) were delivered in English orally. Therefore, we built a strong listening component into the course we were designing.

From the very beginning the advanced training consisted of two distinct phases: academic training and practical training. Although the practical training phase, which is an independently developed and delivered by potential supervisors training, was an integral component of the course, we focused on the academic training phase. Shortly after the course began, we found that the employers' assessment of the course participants' actual needs was far from being correct and complete.

After the launch of the course, we realized that some learners had no fluent command of Ukrainian as they came from Russian speaking environments and regions, did not learn Ukrainian at school and university levels. That fact posed great difficulties in the process of interpreting as learners had to translate English materials into Ukrainian. Other learners returned from their maternity leaves (over 2 years) and were not well-informed in current political, economic, military events they had to interpret. They also did not feel confident with new software they had to work with while translating.

Thus, we drew our first conclusion: needs analysis is necessary, but it should never be unilateral. Simply asking supervisors what kind of language skills their employees need probably won't result in a very accurate picture of course participants' actual needs. After all, supervisors in the corporate world are not always trained linguists or they are not in our learners' shoes, for instance have not been out of professional duties for a long time or know well an official style of Ukrainian, etc.

As researchers, we considered what kind of ESP we had to provide for our learners: English for Science and Technology, English for Business and Economics or English for Social Studies, English for Academic Purposes or

English for Occupational Purposes and identified that there was no clear-cut distinction among them. It became apparent that our learners were to be able to interpret and translate materials using English from various fields. Despite the fact that we designed an English course with emphasis on specific topics (e.g. "Social and Political Life", "Financial and Economic Activities"), this was not a separate type of ESP. Rather it was focused on situational language in the fields of politics, economy, security and defense, sciences, information technologies, legal science, ecology etc. This situational language grounded on the needs analysis results interpretation of authentic language used in target workplace settings. However, it should be pointed out that the focus ought to be on the purpose for which course participants learn rather than on the specific jargon or registers they learn (Lahodynskyi & Semeniako, 2018). Psychological issues of the ESP of the students at international relations faculties are revealed by (Lysenko et al., (2020). Analysis of the terminological units of the border–related sphere was presented by (Bloshchynskyi, 2021).

Additionally, from the very beginning we faced another difficulty – textbooks for the course. It is a frequent question which English practitioners ask whether ESP textbooks really exist as far as they found themselves in a situation where they are expected to produce a course that exactly matches the needs of a group of learners (Jones 1990, Gatehouse 2001, Smoak 2003). A comprehensive linguistic-cognitive analysis with focus on conceptual metaphors on the textual level was made in the research of (Yesypenko et al., 2022). A qualitative analysis and comparing the number of critical elements in the written text has been presented in the paper of (Hromova et al., 2022). Students can understand non-physical concepts based on their own actions and characteristics while reading texts (Soloviova et al., 2021).

As ESP professionals, we were ready to develop courses that teach authentic language from many different fields, based on accurate needs analysis and appropriate materials and methodologies. However, that time we acknowledged the fact that much of the language that our learners needed could not be found in any course books, pre-packaged materials or a resource bank of pooled materials. Although it is challenging, time consuming and different for every group of learners, we had to prepare our own.

Taking into consideration the main stakeholders' needs, the ESP teacher can be better prepared, which in its turn allows to balance out all the parameters which are linked to institutional and learner expectations (Dudley-Evans and St. John 1998). At the same time an ESP practitioner is not an expert in the field, but in teaching a foreign language. It is known that subject-specific work is often best approached through collaboration with subject specialist where a subject expert and a language teacher team-teach classes (Bojović 2006). Devising ESP course for interpreters and translators we observed that there was such an overlap between content knowledge, information technologies, an official language and a foreign language for the target group of learners that it was better for us to develop and prepare a course as a team.

Considering the needs analysis and a review of publications on ESP (Nitenko & Lahodynskyi et al, 2020, Hutchinson & Waters 1987, Joan, Kennedy, Lomperis, Martin, Westerfield 2003, Jones 1990, Katsara 2008, Markovina, Krasilnikova, Kravtsova, Litvinova 2020, Orr 2002, Westerfield 2010) we began to develop a common understanding about the most effective approach to advanced training for the group of interpreters and translators.

2. Theoretical Analysis of the Problem

General statements

There is a long-standing debate in education between discipline-based and integrated approaches to teaching (Bozhko 2018, Dobrovytska 2010, Gibbs 2020, Lahodynskyi et al 2019, Batrynchuk, 2022, Venville & Rennie 2009, Zhbanova, Rule, Montgomery, Nielsen 2010). Each of them has their distinct advantages. On the one hand, a single-discipline teaching approach is more conventional, since each subject is delivered in isolation and designed to train certain skills. In case of English, discipline-based training presupposes training foreign language skills. Such method is efficient as students learn the material in a coherent sequence building skills on skills. Teachers using clear objectives get students involved in learning process, which allows them acquiring knowledge of the content, and training a certain skill until they achieve mastery. Such involvement can result in greater enthusiasm and further engagement as students move forward and learn more within the area of interest.

On the other hand, an integrated approach allows teachers create educational experience that combines several subjects, which includes multidisciplinary tasks and training projects.

The idea of the approach comes from the meaning of the term integrated which is defined as combined in order to become more effective. Integrated approach includes more than one subject and pretends to be more effective than learning each subject separately. The efficiency of integrated education is justified with the connection of learning to

life, meaning that students learn life skills such as interpersonal communication, cooperation and problem-solving which in its turn results in a more rapid, easier and sensible way of receiving and exchanging information.

According to Petere (2003, 2014) and Kaulina (2013), in integrated approach to teaching the most important is the principle of entirety. It means that learning process creates a complete picture, which students can see according to their levels and abilities and this further motivates them to learn. Consequently, a teacher's action is important, as a result of which, the conditions are created where a learner himself/herself sees the integrity of learning content comparing with discipline-based approach where the teacher indicates the connections. Understanding the motive performs the function of inner driving force to learning, a subjective component, individual and different to everyone.

In the same way, Anspoka (2003) analyzes the link between the perceptive integrity and the term "integration" which she believes is crucial and should be studied separately from the concepts which feature outer links of the phenomena.

Drake & Burns (2004) offer the following ways of integration: multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary. These approaches are different kinds of integrated education that are aimed at connecting subject areas with various methods and objectives. Analyzing the description of common and distinctive features of the three above mentioned approaches found in the works by (Helmane, Brǐska 2017), we can draw the conclusion that multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches include more than one subject which makes the learning process more effective than learning each subject separately, they build a holistic system and students are active learners. However, the basis for integration in these approaches is different. Within the multidisciplinary approach the focus is on the topic, whereas interdisciplinary one is grounded on skills and notions which are similar for both subjects that students learn. Transdisciplinary approach in its turn is based on problems from actual life that encompass social, cultural, economic, ecological and other real-life problems. This means that within the multidisciplinary approach all the subjects have a particular sense in life contexts while in the multidisciplinary approach topic is the connection between each subject and in the interdisciplinary processes and concepts of one subject develop an understanding about the other one. As a result of this, the interdisciplinary approach is student-oriented as it is focused on students' skills, the multidisciplinary approach is subject-oriented because it aims at specific subject knowledge and skills and the transdisciplinary approach is problem-oriented. It aims at complex critical thinking in order to meet the actual needs. Such orientations define the aim of each approach: 1) to gain new knowledge easier in multidisciplinary one; 2) to indicate, use and develop particular general skills in interdisciplinary; 3) to solve problems using content knowledge and skills in transdisciplinary. Consequently, as a result of learning using multidisciplinary approach students build an understanding of the topic from the perspective of other subjects, but disciplines do not influence each other. In the interdisciplinary approach students build their understanding of the topic in one subject on the basis of the skills they have gained in the other, meaning that concepts and skills of one discipline change the methods of the second discipline. In the transdisciplinary approach students build their understanding of the topic by finding innovative solutions of the real-life problems using the content and tools from other disciplines. Thus, the outcomes of learning using transdisciplinary approach will be real-life skills necessary in the everyday life and professional settings. Using interdisciplinary approach will result in deeper level of conceptual coherence, while using multidisciplinary approach students will have different discipline knowledge and skills.

Hence, the transdisciplinary approach is the only approach which is problem-oriented and is focused on finding original solutions to real-life problems by applying the content and tools from other subjects. It builds awareness of the purpose and meaning of training, the reasons for playing a role in academic process; it reflects the present-day occupational standards, which students will face in real life.   It helps to meet the challenges that can occur on the workplace and enables teachers prepare students for further employment and gaining professional experience. That is why, it seems apparent that amid the three kinds of integrated training the *transdisciplinary approach* is the most suitable for advanced training course participants.

Methodology and procedure

According to Collins English Dictionary the prefix "trans-" is used to form words which indicate that someone or something moves from one group or thing to another. This definition presupposes different interconnections between disciplines. Taking this into account, the transdisciplinary approach is defined as the analysis of a proper problem that incorporates the tools and knowledge of several subjects with the purpose of linking new information and knowledge to actual situations (Kaufman, Moss and Osborn, 2003).

It is important to involve students in asking authentic questions in transdisciplinary teaching, have them participate and connect learning material to their lives as well as to give the opportunity for learners to discover answers.

Therefore, the tasks should be inquiry based and allow time for discovery. This requires practitioners design and plan a course grounded on working situations and student questions. Such course structure enables students develop professional skills since they use interdisciplinary and disciplinary skills in a real-life context.

Analysis of shared characteristics, basis for integration, links, aim, focus, results and educational outcomes of transdisciplinary approach, job responsibilities of interpreters and translators, analysis of our learners' needs allowed us to interpret and group subjects for the course the following way: ESP, Official Language, Information Technologies in Translation, Social and Political Life and Financial and Economic Activities.

ESP practitioner is an expert in foreign language teaching. Therefore, it seems fairly obvious that issue-specific work is best reached in a team with content area professionals.

When it comes to transdisciplinary approach, not only can a language training provider working together with the subject professional teach the students ESP, he/she can also deliver training in using information and skills from the aforementioned subjects with the purpose of leading the course participants to greater understanding of professional background handling job tasks and overcoming real professional problems as shown in Figure 1.

Carver in his propositions about ESP (Carver, 1983) suggests that such an approach turns learners into users. And we must agree that advanced training allows course participants become both fluent language users and creative professionals.

Advanced training has always been an essential component of any career. In the course of the state employee instruction, our team uses extensively multiple types of practice, which enable learners become more successful in the position of a translator or interpreter of the Division of Military and Technical Cooperation, the Division of International Cooperation, the Division of Informational and Analytical Support of state bodies of Ukraine.
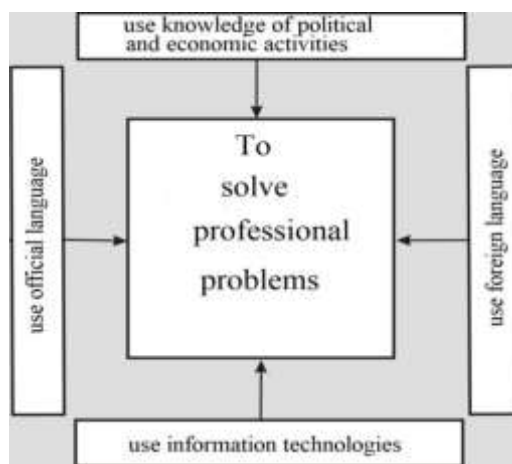

Figure 1. Transdisciplinary scheme of Teaching for Interpreters and Translators seeking Advanced Training

There are several goals of this advanced training:

1) To improve practical knowledge in performing the responsibilities of a translator or interpreter of such divisions;

2) To improve listening comprehension skills (while overcoming psychological barrier for processing audio materials and finding out the most capable course participants for such activities);

3) To improve translation skills gained while studying in higher education institutions and at work.

Taking into account the goal, the advanced training requires carrying out the following tasks:

- Improvement of practical knowledge in the position of a translator or interpreter of the divisions;

- development of the ability to rapidly respond to changes in the state of affairs, issues related to the implementation of control over the accuracy of translation, which is performed by an interpreter of a foreign country during representatives visits and international partnerships events;

- development of translation memory, phonemic hearing and memory, ability to forecast what can be heard from your interlocutor, ability to use audiovisual supports (pictures, screen images, printed version of text, background conversation, etc.), speech reactivity, mental stability and the ability to "switch" quickly between languages;

- Continuous improvement of professional level, improvement of knowledge of English, mainly in the spheres of

social and political life, financial and economic activities, demanded by the position;

- Extension and consolidation of the content area knowledge ("Activities of priority country leaders and current problems of the world", "Current energy production and transportation issues", "Global financial crisis. Current global and regional financial and economic challenges", "Terrorism and piracy issues") required to perform written and oral translation;

- Constant improvement of the proficiency level in Ukrainian, which allows to implement accurate translations of the content of the documents;

- Acquisition of practical skills in the application of new information technologies in the area of translation;

- Development of the ability to handle professional duties and overcome problems within the limits of the job responsibilities.

The teaching team designs a curriculum of advanced training, educational and methodological materials, bearing in mind the necessities of the divisions. The representatives of the professional community (content area experts and employees of the divisions), in cooperation with teaching team, come up with the strategy of the advanced training realization, which is approved by the supervisors of the course graduates. The strategy reflects the activities of the design phase, the progress of the advanced training and summing up procedures of the training results.

Throughout their advanced training the course participants polish their practical skills up and try it in professional work situations. This knowledge includes:

- English language special vocabulary linked up with up-to-date social, political, financial and economic realities, as well as the most frequently used abbreviations that occur in documents and are most often used during international partnerships activities;

- requirements for the translation of telegrams, letters, facsimile messages, telephone sessions, and other documents which state bodies receive from the partners or documents and materials from official sites of government agencies (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Internal Affairs) of foreign countries, and the procedure for translating their content;

- Translation methods, principles, transformations and peculiarities of their usage in the performance of oral and written translations;

- Lexical, semantic, functional-stylistic characteristics of the materials used by the interpreter or translator of the divisions;

- Methods and ways of professional consecutive interpretation (paraphrasing, generalizing, extracting, etc.).

Despite the fact that knowledge is a necessary result of training, only skills can operate knowledge in overcoming problems. Therefore, advance training envisages development of numerous skills, including:

- translating the whole documents or the most informative fragments from English to Ukrainian;

- translating proper names, place names, names of organizations, well-known and widely used abbreviations and international words;

- performing oral and written translation, annotating texts and messages from English to Ukrainian;

- applying various translation methods and techniques;

- recognizing special terms in the original text and choosing their terminological equivalents;

- evaluating translation results from informational, normative-linguistic and stylistic adequacy standpoints;

- editing translated materials including discovered errors;

- using reference books, special dictionaries and data basis;

- using software processing potential in translation to the maximum;

- processing of document in line with the procedure adopted in the division.

The professional competence consists in the ability of tackling specialized tasks and solving practical problems in the field of philology (linguistics, translation) in the course of professional activities. Thus, the compliance of the professional competence of state employee-philologist with the requirements of the position of an interpreter or translator of the divisions means that the chosen integrated education approach for professional preparation conforms to their job responsibilities. Additionally, the analysis of advanced training can help spot gaps in the knowledge and

skills that course participants receive at universities.

The condition of the advanced training completion is met when learners achieve the following Course outcomes:

- Easily communicate on professional topics with foreign partners and interpret the information from English to Ukrainian and vice versa;

- Effectively use the information: choose the information needed from various sources, analyze and interpret it;

- use logical know-how in the area of translation;

- know the principles and techniques of composing oral and written texts of various genres and styles in Ukrainian and English and use them in document processing;

- know professional terminology;

- apply translation skills when tackling professional tasks and solving problems.

3. Discussion and Conclusion

The result of the professional growth of the state employees (including servicemen) and the development of their professional skills is the professional competence that course participants improve during advanced training. This encompasses their ability and readiness to respond to challenges in their professional life and solve problems as interpreters or translators of the Division of International Cooperation, the Division of Military and Technical Cooperation, the Division of Informational and Analytical Support and others.

It is important to carry out balanced demands analysis by interviewing supervisors, content area experts and learners about the kind of course they need when designing an ESP course that will to the fullest extent benefit all the stakeholders and make an accurate picture of course participants' actual needs. The focus of the word "specific" in the ESP course is on the purpose for which course participants learn: to enhance practical knowledge in performing the duties of an interpreter or translator as well as to improve listening comprehension and translation skills.

Advanced training especially tailored to the needs of interpreters and translators requires course books, pre-packaged materials or a resource bank of pooled materials developed by the course providers. Considering an overlap between content knowledge, information technologies, an official language and a foreign language for the target group of learners we devise and provide the course on team-teach basis.

Assessment of advanced training takes into consideration the performance results of final tests and employment practice, the ability to listening comprehension, the ability to make high-quality translations from English to Ukrainian in the time available, the ability to use software processing potential in translation to the maximum, the ability to apply content area knowledge to overcome specific issues in professional environment, preparedness for high-performance activities in the translation area within the limits of the job responsibilities.

Analyzing various notions of one discipline and integrated education we can draw a conclusion that they have characteristics in common and significant differences that are crucial in professional training. The importance of integrated education is set out from the perspective that it develops learner's personality. Integrated education is the necessary basis for the advanced training organization as it shows how to incorporate training in work professional situations helping a course participant build a holistic picture of his professional activities.

Integrated education content can be designed in multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary ways. They are distinctive kinds of integrated education that implement the link between content area subjects at various levels and different aims and methods. Integrated education approaches to syllabus pretend to show greater efficiency in our learners' training than traditional ones, which are grounded on one-discipline approach.

Considering main stakeholders' needs – ability and preparedness to handle professional functions and overcome issues – the transdisciplinary approach (grounded on authentic troubleshooting) can be seen as the most beneficial kind of integration. Transdisciplinary approach to an ESP course, in particular for interpreters and translators', seeking advanced training allows using information and knowledge from several subject areas, overcoming real professional issues and helps shape deeper professional experience.

4. Suggestions for Further Research

As a result of the research, from a methodological standpoint developing professional competence through the integrated education approach may help language practitioners to improve theoretical as well practical training of state employees. At the same time the research may provide theoretical background for future theoretical and practical researches in the area. Our further research will concern the issue to which extent the set goal was attained

and what has to be done to match the professional competence with the requirements of the position of an interpreter or translator. Another interest will comprise advantages of team-teaching in an ESP course to meet the needs of its stakeholders.

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