Generic Competences, the Great Forgotten: Teamwork in the Undergraduate Degree in Translation and Interpretation

M. D. Olvera-Lobo, B. J. Robinson, J. Gutiérrez-Artacho

***Abstract*—**Graduates are equipped with a wide range of generic competencies which complement solid curricular competencies and facilitate their access to the labour market in diverse fields and careers. However, some generic competencies such as instrumental, personal and systemic competencies related to teamwork and interpersonal communication skills, decision-making and organization skills are seldom taught explicitly and even less often assessed.

In this context, translator training has embraced a broad range of competencies specified in the undergraduate program currently taught at Universities, and opens up the learning experience to cover areas often ignored due to the difficulties inherent in both teaching and assessment. In practice, translator training combines two well-established approaches to teaching/learning: project-based learning and genuinely cooperative – or merely collaborative – learning. Our Professional Approach to Translator Training is a model focused on and adapted to the teleworking context of professional translation and presented through the medium of blended e-learning.

Teamwork-related competencies are extremely relevant and they require explicit and implicit teaching so that graduates can be confident about their capacity to make their way in professional contexts. In order to highlight the importance of teamwork and intra-team relationships beyond the classroom, we aim to raise awareness of teamwork processes so as to empower Translation students in managing their interaction and ensure that they gain valuable pre-professional experience.

The job market those graduating in this degree enter is complex, for various reasons. It is a dynamic, multimedia market, focused on speed, which demands high quality, based on teamwork and, above all in recent times, one dominated by localization as an emerging activity.

Within the sphere of translation, localization is the linguistic, cultural and technical translation, and adaptation, of an electronic product into another product aimed at a local market. In the final part of our study we focus on pedagogical issues related to the training of specialized translators and localizers who will be working in the field of web localization. With these objectives, at the University of Granada (Spain) we have developed a range of classroom activities and assessment tools. The results of their application are summarized in this study.

***Keywords*—**Blended Learning, Collaborative teamwork, Cross-curricular competences, Higher Education, Intra-team relationships, Students' perceptions, localization, Translator training.

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I. Introduction

THIS implementation of the new teaching methods, under the framework established by the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), implies a change in the organization of the way of teaching and learning, focussed on competency-based training. The Tuning Project, developed by the European Commission has been an important base in the transformations of the university curricular reform in the European convergence for higher education. This project classifies the competences into generic (transversal) and specific (professionalizing). This implies, in addition to the achievement of the established objectives in each subject of the curricula, and their specific competences, the acquisition of more general and transversal skills to the teaching-learning processes. In effect, the activities developed in the globalized area of the current labour market are dynamic and require, in addition to skills and specialized knowledge, certain attitudes, skills and personality traits, many of which can be enhanced through the acquisition of the so-called transversal competences.

Although these competences can be acquired by students during the course of their studies -and they are evaluated-, it is no less true that training with respect to transversal competences remains a major challenge for universities and university professors, in accordance with what was stated by business organizations [1]. To reverse this situation, it is essential that teachers recognize the importance of transversal competences in university education, how and where to use transversal skills to improve the teaching of their subjects, how to establish the level of competence and how to evaluate it, as well as how to be able to create useful training activities for their subjects.

In the Spanish university system, the training of translators at the undergraduate level generally combines two constructivist social approaches of teaching and learning. The first and most widely used approach is project-based learning (PBL) [2] exemplified in the literature of Translation Studies through the works of [3-10]. The second one is cooperative learning (CL) [11] that is perhaps less applied and that is closely related to collaborative learning (ColL) [12].

Project-based learning is generally defined as a dynamic approach to learning that allows students to focus in a structured way and for an extended period of time on a real-world task. It has been widely exploited from the primary level to the tertiary level and was for some time a leading trend in the learning of foreign languages [2]. More importantly, PBL stimulates a shift from teacher-centered

learning to the student and moves the teacher to the background to fill the role of facilitator.

For its part, cooperative learning is defined as a work in small groups based approach that involves five key elements previously structured by the teacher: positive interdependence, individual responsibility, personal interaction, interpersonal and in small group social skills, and group processing [13]. In its original form, in primary and secondary education, the composition in small groups was considered a main concern of the teacher, whose main objective was to ensure that the groups comprised a heterogeneous mixture in terms of academic level with high, medium and low performances in order to facilitate interaction, and therefore, cooperative learning. Collaboration, as Panitz maintains [14] is "a philosophy of interaction and personal lifestyle in which individuals are responsible for their actions, including learning and respecting the abilities and contributions of their partners." However, Barkley, Cross and Mayor [12] consider that, when the real CL fails, the ColL emerges as a "second best option".

Our training model for translators PATT (Professional Approach to Translator Training) [4, 8] combines these two well-established approaches to classroom learning: project-based learning and cooperative/collaborative learning. In this context, we propose the integration of online interactive resources and the development of transparent self-evaluation and peer review tools that improve the formative evaluation. To highlight the importance of teamwork and intra-team relations beyond the classroom, in a small study population of university students of translation studies, we have tried to raise awareness of teamwork processes in order to train students in the management of their interaction and ensure they gain valuable pre-professional experience. Below, some of our proposals are described.

II. Project-based learning and cooperative learning in the didactic of Translation

Across Europe, the post-Bologna renovation of tertiary education has attempted to consolidate an informed change process. Ideally, this involves a radical transformation from teacher-centered and content-oriented programs to student-centered and competency-driven courses. In the training of the translator, changing the teacher's emphasis to the student is a more natural and logical process than in other disciplines, since many teachers tend to embrace the social constructivist philosophy of learning.

Our proposals are structured around four main aspects of psychopedagogical character [8]. On the one hand, the theoretical foundations of our approach are based on social constructivism [9, 15-17] and Vygotsky's "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD) [18]. On the other hand, the practical aspects of course design are guided by our interpretation of the ordered scale of cognitive abilities originally defined by Bloom [19] and its most recent revision aimed at satisfying the realities of the digital era and taking advantage of its strengths [20-22].

The didactic model PATT (Professional Approach to Translator Training) [4], which we have developed as a new methodological channel supported by project-based learning and cooperative learning, aims to approach the business world of translation through a stimulation of teamwork as if it was a real assignment, thus linking to the case studies carried out by numerous companies for the training of their employees. All of our teaching proposals focus on enhancing the transversal relationship between different subjects involved in translation training. PATT has been revised and subsequently extended [8] to incorporate the changes required by the Bologna process and interactive Web 2.0 technology [23]. The extended PATT model [24] aligns e-learning with systemic, instrumental and personal competences, producing learning activities that develop higher order cognitive skills [19] -especially creativity and evaluation- and integrate the tools of the Web 2.0 in teaching, learning and evaluation. To this end, transparent self-assessment and peer evaluation tools were designed to evaluate a wide range of competencies [8, 25].

Transversal competences inherent in cooperative-collaborative learning-such as teamwork and interpersonal communication skills-and project-based learning-such as decision-making and organizational skills-are rarely taught explicitly and less often they are evaluated despite attempts to meet the requirements of the Bologna process. Often, a project-based in tertiary education learning approach takes these competencies for granted rather than incorporating them into the wider learning experience. However, ongoing research on the different facets of the learning process has begun to encompass these competencies, in our attempt to promote the self-assessment of work competencies in small groups by using criteria descriptors derived from students [23].

If we look at the PATT model, represented in Figure 1, we can see that, when going through the stages from its beginning to its end, for the learning process to be cooperative, the exchanges represented by the two-way continuous lines must take priority. These arrows indicate one of the key elements of cooperative / collaborative learning: interaction, that is, a reciprocal flow of didactic communication between peers. They represent the mutual exchange of information that all interaction entails and constitute the contexts in which students need to use interpersonal and small group social skills. In this exchange of information, ideas and opinions, team members accept the responsibility of the group for their work and learn from each other.

Once the work routines and a satisfactory level of positive interdependence have been established within the small group, the interaction tends to follow the pattern of the work flow. In Figure 1, the wide arrows of a single yellow head indicate the direction of the workflow in a translation project and represent the established routine of the structured work process. In this context, assuming that one or more of the students adopt each of the roles - the project leader, the documentalist, the terminologist, the translator and the reviewer / editor - cooperation tends to develop in only one direction. Now, each participant cooperates with the others, but works in isolation, completing the assigned part of the task alone and transmitting their specific product - be it documentation, a glossary, the first translation draft or a revised draft - to the individual which constitutes the next link in the sequence. If this happens as a result of a successful previous cooperative phase, everything is fine: it

demonstrates the internalization of the work routine and, probably, the fact that the participants have advanced in their learning. Students are demonstrating a higher level of mastery of the skills demanded by the task of translation and a level of automation of these processes. The proof that this is a natural consequence of the success of cooperative / collaborative learning can be seen in the degree to which small groups are able to handle unexpected difficulties and return to a more interactive approach to do so. However, when a less structured collaborative approach is adopted, this equates to a "divide and conquer" strategy that minimizes the need for interaction among team members and eliminates the essence of individual accountability. People only accept responsibility for their specific contributions. They can - and often do - "pass the ball", insofar as the reviewer / editor, who is the last link in the chain, finds that they assume most of the responsibility for the final product. In addition, the interaction becomes purely transactional and any prior teaching of effective interpersonal and group practices goes unnoticed because the group, as such, becomes largely irrelevant. This development should be avoided to ensure that learning is successful. Bringing competencies related to teamwork to the forefront in order to raise awareness of the processes involved should empower students to manage their interaction and ensure that they acquire valuable pre-professional experience.

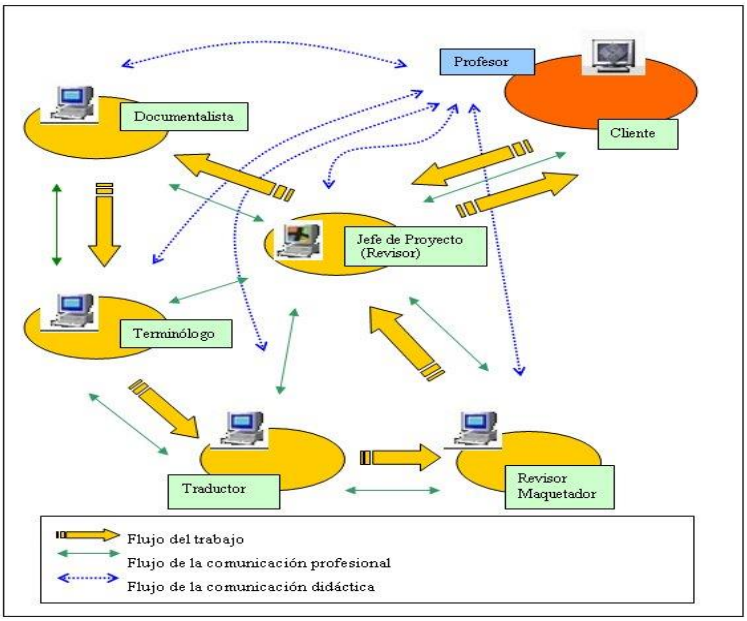

Fig. 1 Professional Approach to Translator Training (PATT) [4,8]

III. Competences Evaluation Procedures: Self-Evaluation and Peer Review

The social constructivist approach in education implies the collaborative construction of learning by the participants. This model forces the tutor to interact with the students and the students to adopt active learning habits, as well as to accept greater responsibility when it comes to acquiring knowledge and skills. No change is easy to apply, but, despite the limitations, we believe that this perspective has many elements whose relevance is immediately evident for the study of Translation and can, if properly managed, greatly improve the quality of the experience. The fact that translation can be considered a continuous decision-making process provides the basis for multiple appropriate learning activities, and the use of this learning approach, based on real-life situations, is clearly in their favour.

One of our contributions in this context has been the design of transparent instruments of self-evaluation and peer-review in the form of descriptive criteria (rubrics) [26], which, in our opinion, guide the learning process and offer the students excellent possibilities to advance in the attainment of their achievements. Students participate in several translation projects whose organizational development follows the same pattern throughout the course. In each translation project, five aspects are evaluated: i) translation as a product; ii) the quality evaluation of the translation as a product -this scale measures the level of agreement between the quality analysis of the translation of the team / individual and that of the moderator / tutor-; iii) the public presentation of the translation made by the team as a product and as a process; iv) the individual written report as a product; and v) collaborative teamwork as a product (Table 1). For the evaluation of each of these aspects a set of descriptive criteria is used.

TABLE I
Descriptors for Self-Evaluation and Peer Evaluation of Team Collaborative Work [26]

Team	Score
0	Reluctant towards the concept of team.
1 2	Shows sensitivity towards the team but remains reluctant.
3	Participates in team activities.
4	Encourages teamwork.
	Facilitates teamwork and accepts the commitment of encouraging a constructive atmosphere.

Process	Score
0	Lack of response to the ideas/opinions of others.
1	Passively accepts the ideas/opinions of others.
2	Uses dialogue and debate to reach team objectives; makes and receives constructive criticism with equanimity.
3	Uses dialogue and debate to reach team objectives; makes and receives constructive criticism with equanimity; draws attention to results that improve productivity and/or quality.
4	Uses dialogue and debate to reach team objectives; makes and receives constructive criticism with equanimity; draws attention to results that improve productivity and/or quality; encourages colleagues to participate in a way that

The descriptive criteria used in each case are exposed to the students in the Study Guide of the subject, and training activities are carried out with the descriptors of the evaluation of the translation and evaluation of the presentation. At the beginning, both self-evaluations and peer evaluations are carried out by teams; afterwards, they are carried out individually. The evaluation procedure for each of the aspects considered is shown in Table 2.

TABLE II
EVALUATION PROCEDURES FOR TRANSLATION PROJECTS

Translation Project: aspects evaluated	Evaluation procedure
Translation as a product	-Self assessment -Peer review
Quality assessment of translation as a product	-Moderate evaluation by the tutor
Public presentation of the translation as a product and as a process	-Peer review and evaluation by the tutor
Individual written report as a product	-Evaluation by the tutor
Collaborative team work as a product	-Self appraisal -Peer review

IV. TEAMWORK AND INTRA-TEAM INTERACTIONS: STUDENT PERCEPTIONS

In addition to the rubrics with the descriptive criteria used in the evaluation processes of skills acquisition- self assessment and peer review-, different questionnaires have been designed for the collection of opinion data, which has allowed us to analyse the interactions of the members of the teams and their perception regarding the interpersonal relationships that take place during the interaction [27-29]. On the other hand, it was interesting to determine the nature and level of impact of the student's awareness of intra-team interaction processes in the context of semi-annual subjects focused on the fulfilment of intensive tasks of translation through teamwork - each one of these teams being constituted by five students-.

Thus, during the development of the translation subjects, data was collected from the 6 student teams assigned to the different translation assignments during the course. In this way, it has been possible to contrast the strength of interpersonal ties - taken as an indication of prestige / authority within the group - with the awareness of the quality of performance of team colleagues in the five designated roles - project leader, documentalist, terminologist, translator, reviewer / layout editor – by the didactic model of translation training PATT that we have applied. In this way, students have acquired ideas about group cohesion that will allow us to continue reviewing our Professional Approach to Translator Training.

In general, participants have expressed views that indicate that their teamwork experience in the study was an improvement over previous experiences. In particular, it seems that the motivation received from teammates and a positive effect has been had in the perception of the commitment of others with the team. These are elements that we would seek to encourage and, ideally, to make more explicit from now on.

One of the cornerstones of our approach has been the randomisation of the participants to the teams [30]. The data collected from the survey items on interpersonal relationships indicate that the randomization process itself has been successful. In this sense, at the beginning of the course, 68% of the participants affirmed that they did not know the teammates "at all" while this figure fell to 10% at the end of the course - when 76% considered that their teammates were "acquaintances" or "casual friends" -. In total, 48% of the relationships increased one level compared to our scale of 5 levels. Since working with friends is (a) what many students prefer to do but (b) widely considered professionally inadequate, we conclude that these students have established successful working relationships with "new" colleagues, as much as they will have to do when they join the labour market. Once again, we hope to increase students' awareness of this aspect in future courses and, in particular, to focus on helping those who have encountered difficulties in these interactions.

On the other hand, our analysis of the issue of prestige / authority reveals that, in most teams, the changes that took place in the way in which individuals were considered during the period of teamwork experience were similar. In addition, there seem to be certain patterns in these changes. Comparing the data on interpersonal relationships with the data on the perceptions of role performance, we found that the functions of team leader and, to a lesser extent, editor / reviewer, were those in which participants usually agreed. The participants have expressed a certain reluctance to assume the role of leader, while recognizing that they fulfil the role well. Through the six teams we have seen that some demonstrate a greater "cohesion" in that there is a higher level of mutual agreement on the performance of these and other roles. Others show little or no agreement, although these data are affected by an incomplete set of responses.

Our comparison of the nature of interpersonal relationships and team cohesion with academic performance has suggested that the most cohesive teams can achieve better performance standards, but this is not necessarily always the case. While the most cohesive of the six teams analysed achieved the highest final grade, the second highest average was reached by the least cohesive team -although it must be taken into account that in this last team not all the students involved answered the questionnaire- . This is

clearly an issue that will require further study.

V. Localization and Training

Localization constitutes a new field of study and professional intervention. Localization forms part of the group of interdependent process known by the acronym GILT: Globalization, Internationalization, Localization, Translation [31]. From the translation perspective, localization equates to the website being adjusted to the typological, discursive and genre conventions of the target culture, adapting that website to a different language and culture. This entails much more than simply translating the content of the pages. The content of a webpage is made up of text, images and other multimedia elements, all of which have to be translated and subjected to cultural adaptation. The user must never notice that the site was originally created in another language. In addition, commercial and business translations have certain particularities which must be studied and borne in mind so as to achieve the desired communication goals [32].

Localization of websites is complex and costly processes, to which many businesses are reluctant to implement them. The long-term benefits, however, far outweigh initial costs as they suppose the creation of new markets, an increase in sales, and a simplification of the process of updating information, amongst other advantages [32].

Translation professionals make up one of the basic axes of inter-linguistic mediation [1]. Professional translation environments might currently be ruled by conflict, opacity and mistrust between translators and direct clients or managers, due to the computer-mediated nature of communication and of translation production networks [18, 19]. Web localization is often the last stage before content is published [20] and, depending on the process, it may happen that localizers do not have the freedom or the possibility to make the changes necessary to adequately adapt the content to their markets [21].

On the basis of contemporary educational ideals as envisaged by the Bologna Process and those of a social-constructivist perspective prevailing in translator training scholarship, it is necessary the relevance of learner-centred approaches to the training of web translators and localizers. To this end, it is necessary to create a list of skills and competencies specific to web localizers, in such a way that they can be developed during a course or subject. Within the different types of current localizer profiles on the market, much progress has been made in the development of the pedagogic profile in videogame localizers [34].

Coming from the socio-constructivist perspective, our PATT model, and the proposed classifications focused on the training of videogame localizers, have identified the main characteristics, competencies and skills specific to the pedagogic profile of the web localizer. They can be summarised in ten core skills related to the knowledge and understanding of web localizers:

1. Computer skill
2. Organization skill
3. Subject matter expertise
4. Virtual teamwork
5. Ability to produce high quality results under tight deadlines
6. Knowledge of e-Commerce industry trends
7. Knowledge of Search Engine Optimization
8. Familiarity with software terminology and web platform terminology
9. Familiarity with audiovisual translation
10. Cultural awareness

These skills should be developed in a specific course in which the study of the particularities of web information, Web 2.0, internationalization, globalization and e-commerce have a weighting as relevant as those skills particular to a localizer-translator. Following the PATT teaching model, the interaction and collaboration of the translator-localizer team with other professionals should be sought, constituting an extensive group of different professionals. Every step in the localization process is taken and decisions are made in accordance with the coordination of an extensive team work. The team members change from a project manager, desktop publisher, localization engineer, graphic designer, and technical expert to translator in action, linguists and other senior translators to revise the localization project [27].

VI. Conclusions

Transversal competences, and their evaluation, must have the prominence they deserve in the university context. Project-based learning and collaborative learning enhance some of the most appreciated general skills in the professional performance of university graduates. In this sense, teamwork and intra-team relationships are a valuable exercise for students, and prepare them for a better adaptation to the market. Our results indicate that teamwork substantially improves privacy, the quality of experience, and creates awareness of the benefits of the team itself. The introduction of training activities aimed at encouraging participants to actively reflect on the issues raised here will undoubtedly be beneficial for our students. In this sense, regular team activities can be introduced in which participants have to keep a record of the team's processes and reflect on their success. Secondly, our contribution to team building processes could be extended through the use of activities oriented to game theory to foster intra-team relationships and through the creation of regular sessions that focus on intra-team relationships.

Ultimately, we hope to transmit to our students the confidence that establishing a cordial relationship between co-workers is the first step to generate a good working environment and lay the foundations for professional success.

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