The transdisciplinary focus departing from Consecutive Interpretation.

Edduar Gómez Blanco¹, Lic. Marla Vega Romero²

¹University of Holguín, Cuba edduar-gomez@fh.uho.edu.cu, ²Universidad de Holguín, mvega@fh.uho.edu.cu

Abstract:

In the English Language Major of the University of Holguín, the Translation-Interpretation discipline constitutes one of the main disciplines of the curriculum, if we take into account the possibilities the professional profile provides to the future professional. They should be trained to extract knowledge from scientific practices and procedures, and integrate that knowledge with their disciplinary-specific knowledge to solve real-world complex issues. The training should consist of important mental activities such as analyzing the data to understand inter- and intraconnections; abstracting methods and techniques through analysis and synthesis and mentally organizing such procedures and techniques. Due to the fact that the process of interpreting demands a great range of linguistic, extra linguistic and cultural background and it has always been hard for students to fulfill their tasks adequately, this paper pretends to solve the following scientific problem: How to favor transdisciplinary focus departing from Consecutive Interpretation during the 3rd year of the English Language Major at the University of Holguín? The objective is to design a set of didactic tasks that contribute to favor the treatment of Transdisciplinary focus in the subject of Consecutive Interpretation in the 3rd year of the English Language Major at the University of Holguín. It is our believe that this proposal will contribute to the development of the required skills students need to improve their proficiency as interpreters to be.

El trabajo transdisciplinario a través de la Interpretación Consecutiva

Resumen:

En la carrera de Lengua Inglesa con segunda lengua(francés) de la Universidad de Holguín, la disciplina de Traducción-Interpretación constituye una de las disciplinas más importantes de currículo, si tenemos en cuenta las posibilidades que le brinda el perfil profesional al futuro egresado. Los estudiantes deben entrenarse para extraer el conocimiento de las prácticas y los procedimientos científicos e integrarlo con el conocimiento específico de su disciplina para resolver problemas complejos de la realidad. Su entrenamiento debe consistir de importantes actividades mentales tales como el análisis de datos para entender las conexiones tanto internas como externas, diferencias los métodos y las técnicas a través del análisis y síntesis y la organización mental de tales procedimientos y técnicas. Debido al hecho de que el proceso de interpretación demanda un alto grado de bagaje lingüístico, extralingüístico y cultural y para los estudiantes siempre ha resultado difícil cumplir con sus tareas de la manera más adecuada, este trabajo pretende resolver el problema científico siguiente: ¿Cómo favorecer el trabajo transdisciplinario desde la Interpretación Consecutiva durante el 3er año de la carrera Lengua Inglesa con segunda lengua de la Universidad de Holguín? El objetivo es diseñar un grupo de tareas didácticas que contribuyan a favorecer el tratamiento de trabajo transdisciplinario en la asignatura de Interpretación Consecutiva en el 3er año de la carrera Lengua Inglesa con segunda lengua de la Universidad de Holguín. Es nuestra intención que esta propuesta contribuya al desarrollo de las habilidades necesarias que los estudiantes requieren para mejorar su competencia como futuros intérpretes.
Introduction

The university is one of the privilege places for an education guided towards the exigencies of our time. Instilling complex and transdisciplinary thoughts into the structure and programs of the university will permit its evolution towards its somewhat forgotten mission today- the study of the universal.-

In addition to preparing students in disciplinary areas, universities must train them to become independent thinkers and to be capable of taking part in complex and collective activities outside their disciplines. Furthermore, students should be trained to extract knowledge from scientific practices and procedures, and integrate that knowledge with their disciplinary-specific knowledge to solve real-world complex issues. The training should consist of important mental activities such as analyzing the data to understand inter- and intraconnections; abstracting methods and techniques through analysis and synthesis; mentally organizing such procedures and techniques.

Development

In the English Language Major of the University of Holguín, the Translation-Interpretation discipline constitutes one of the main disciplines if we take into account the possibilities the professional profile provides to the future graduated student. It is directed to help students to master particular contents and develop necessary skills which are basic to the work's object of the profession.

Translation is the written interpretation of the meaning of a text and the subsequent production of an equivalent text, likewise called a “translation,” that communicates the same message in another language. The text to be translated is called the source text, and the language that it is to be translated into is called the target language; the final product is sometimes called the target text.

On the other hand, language interpretation is the facilitating of oral or sign-language communication, either simultaneously or consecutively, between users of different languages. The process is described by both the words interpreting and interpretation.

To accomplish a satisfactory interpretation means to be able to use the appropriate words in the appropriate order, so as to describe a given object, process or phenomenon. It means to overcome the established patterns and standards that one has set up to oneself, and to enlarge the vocabulary to the greatest extent both in the foreign and in the mother tongue, as well as the knowledge in all possible topics.

The interpreter must have the sense of order, logic and opportunity. He must possess a strong command of the target language and have the capacity to handle it with a mixture of intuition, sensitivity and imagination. The whole confrontation with this immense world of terms, phrases and ideas presupposes an enormous challenge when the student of the English major first meets Interpretation. The subject as such brings about different subjective and objective difficulties and goes beyond any theoretical content previously studied. The complex activity of affectively transferring ideas and concepts implies to put test the language command, the level of linguistic sensitivity, the ability to express fluently, and the capacity to transform thoughts from one language to another with accuracy and imagination.

Despite being used interchangeably, interpretation and translation are not synonymous, but refer, respectively, to the spoken and written transference of meaning between two languages. Translation is the transference of meaning from text to text (written, recorded, sign), with the translator having time and access to resources (dictionaries, glossaries, etc.) to produce a faithful, true, and accurate document or verbal artifact. Interpreting occurs in real time, in the presence — physical, televised, or telephonic — of the parties for whom the interpreter renders an interpretation.
Interpretation is also held to a different standard of accuracy than translation. Translators have time to consider and revise each word and sentence before delivering their product to the client. While interpreters try to achieve total accuracy at all times, details of the original (source) speech can be omitted from the interpretation into the target language, without a pause.

**Phases in the interpretation process:**

**Understanding**

In the first stage: **understanding**, the interpreter is supposed to understand the communicative intention of the author. In this sense, we may take into account two important aspects:

- **Linguistic knowledge:** perfect comprehension of the source language (passive vocabulary).
- **Extra-linguistic knowledge:** cultural background, knowledge on the topic, the communicative situation, the country culture and idiosyncrasy, and on the speaker point of view.

During the second stage: **reformulating**, the interpreter reconstructs the speech into the target language. This phase comprises three aspects:

- **Linguistic knowledge:** command of the oral expression in the target language (active vocabulary).
- **Extra-linguistic knowledge:** cultural background, knowledge on the topic, the communicative situation, the country culture and idiosyncrasy, and on the speaker point of view, as well as capacity of analysis and synthesis.

During the third and last stage: **expressing**, the interpreter must produce the target language speech with a correct elocution, an adequate voice tone, a steady rhythm, an expressive intonation, without diction mistakes.

**The interpreter. Essential qualities and required skills**

An interpreter is a specially trained professional who converts a thought or expression in a source language (SL) into an expression with a comparable meaning in a target language (TL) in “real time”. So, he will take in a complex concept from one language, and choose the most appropriate vocabulary in the target language to faithfully render the message in a linguistically, emotionally, tonally, and culturally equivalent message.

Besides being bilingual, the interpreter must:

- Be able to communicate across the wide variety of linguistic variations
- Be able to work across cultures
- Be proficient in listening techniques
- Be proficient in note-taking techniques
- Understand and abide by the ethics involved in all interpretation situations
- Understand the terminology required for a wide variety of situations

On the other hand, the International Association of Interpreters determines that qualified interpreter requires:

- capacity of analysis and synthesis
- speed of reaction and faculty of immediate adaptation to the speakers, situations and to the themes
- faculty of concentration
- physical and nervous resistance
- excellent memory
- adequate elocution
- great intellectual curiosity
- intellectual absolute probity
- tact and diplomacy

Besides, the interpreter undergoes demanding efforts while interpreting. Daniel Gile (1992,1995) emphasizes the difficulties and main efforts involved in interpreting tasks. He then proposes his **Effort Model:**

- Listening and analysis effort
- Memory effort
- Production effort

The **listening and analysis effort** include all the mental operations between perception of a discourse by auditory mechanisms and the moment at which the interpreter either assigns,
or decides not to assign, a meaning (or several potential meanings) to the segment which he has heard.

The memory effort comprises all the mental operations related to storage in memory of heard segments of discourse until either their restitution in the TL, their loss if they vanish from memory, or a decision by the interpreter not to interpret them.

The production effort includes all the mental operations between the moment at which the interpreter decides to convey an idea and the moment at which he produces the form he has prepared to articulate it.

In order to train students to be prepared to enhance any situation when it comes to translating and interpreting, other disciplines should support the teaching-learning process. The Translation-Interpretation Discipline within the English Language Major points out among its objectives the constant searching of information about the topics related to the texts, students are going to deal with in class, which include not only the linguistic aspects but also the extra linguistic ones: historical, social and cultural issues.

Many authors have gone deep in the transdisciplinary focus; for instance, PhD. Maricela Oliva Calvo and PhD. Berta Fernández de Alaiza who make emphasis on the importance of applying transdisciplinary focus to form more efficient and well-trained professionals.

According to recent studies and some interviews applied to the students of the major about the subjects of Consecutive Interpretation and Sociocultural Translation, it has been demonstrated that there should be links between them and some other areas of knowledge beyond the boundaries of the English Language Major.

There are so many terms floating around the education world that deal with approaches to teach the constantly changing curriculum. Sometimes it is hard to keep current on all the new “ways” to best meet the needs of students. The terms multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity are three terms the author has just become familiar with this year. We can tell that what they all share is going beyond a single discipline but how the disciplines are fused together is what makes them different. To better understand what is being advanced here, we shall analyze the continuum that goes from discipline to transdiscipline.

Disciplinarity
The early Universities such as Salerno, Bologna, Oxford and Cambridge, started with Faculties of Medicine, Philosophy, Theology and Law. It was around these four areas that the totality of knowledge was contained. In fact, academics were versatile and omniscient, legitimate forerunners of the Renaissance thinkers and creators (Schulz, no date). With the passing of time, Faculties became more and more specialized. Thus arose and multiplied disciplines and sub-disciplines. As long ago as around the 1950s, as mentioned by Schultz, the University of Illinois published a book that listed over 1,100 known scientific disciplines, without including the humanities.

The association between disciplines, departments and institutes is a relatively modern phenomenon that begins to consolidate itself at the end of the XIX Century. Such departmentalization has been significant for the maintenance of disciplinary autonomies, for the competition of research funds, and for the consolidation of academic prestige. Professors and disciples develop and enhance disciplinary loyalties up to the point of frequently feeling that theirs is the most important of the entire University.

Disciplinarity is about mono-discipline, which represents specialization in isolation. One person may, in fact, study biology and handle it well without the need for knowledge about physics or psychology. In fact, if we write a list of sciences, from left to right: Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology … we perceive them logically connected in a horizontal, not vertical, manner.

Multidisciplinarity
A person may have studied, simultaneously or in sequence, more than one area of knowledge, without making any connections between them. One may, for example, become competent in Chemistry, Sociology and Linguistics, without generating any cooperation between the disciplines. Multidisciplinary teams of researchers or technicians are common and frequent nowadays. In them, the members carry out their analyses separately, as seen from the perspective of their individual disciplines, the final result being a series of reports pasted together, without any integrating synthesis.

**Pluridisciplinarity**

Pluridisciplinarity implies cooperation between disciplines, without coordination. It normally happens between compatible areas of knowledge, on a common hierarchical level. Examples could be the combination of physics, chemistry and geology, or history, sociology and language. The study of each one of them reinforces the understanding of the others.

**Interdisciplinarity**

The focus of Interdisciplinarity is placed on the need to transcend disciplines, viewing excessive specialization as problematic both epistemologically and politically. Others consider Interdisciplinarity as: the unity among relations, actions, and interpretations of different scientific disciplines; the transfer of methods from one discipline to another one; the analysis of problems from different scientific conceptions based on the potential of each discipline towards Interdisciplinarity in order to contribute with the social development.

**Transdisciplinarity**

Transdisciplinarity is used to signify a unity of knowledge beyond disciplines. It connotes a research strategy that crosses many disciplinary boundaries to create a holistic approach. It applies to research efforts focused on problems that cross the boundaries of two or more disciplines, and can refer to concepts or methods that were originally developed by one discipline, but are now used by several others. It includes specific methods for relating knowledge in problem-solving. Transdisciplinarity can help determine the most relevant problems and research questions involved.

The idea of transdisciplinary literally means beyond all the disciplines but connected to all the disciplines by a unifying issue or topic of inquiry. Transdisciplinary learning is supported by curriculum frameworks popularly adopted to promote depth of understanding as well as adaptability to skills needed to succeed in our changing world.

Transdisciplinary teaching and learning operates from the belief that there is knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and actions that transcend subject area boundaries and forge the curriculum into a coherent transdisciplinary whole that is engaging, relevant, challenging and significant.

It is also recognized that educating students in a set of isolated subject areas, while necessary, is not sufficient. Of equal importance is the need to acquire skills in context, and to explore content that is relevant to students and that transcends the boundaries of the traditional subjects.

On the other hand, in spite of the vast differences in the skills of translators and interpreters, there is one thing that they must share, besides deep knowledge of both languages: they must understand the subject matter of the text or speech they are translating. One of the main reasons why the Automatic Translation projects that were popular since 1950's failed is precisely that reason. Translation is not a matter of substituting words in one language for words in another. It is a matter of understanding the thought expressed in one language and then explaining it using the resources of another language.

In other words, what an interpreter does is change words into meaning, and then change meaning back into words -- of a different language. So interpreting is basically paraphrasing. And just like you can't explain to someone a thought if you didn't fully understand
that thought, nor can you translate or interpret something without mastery of the subject matter being relayed. This is why, making sure that the interpreter is knowledgeable in the subject matter of the conference or the workshop they are interpreting at, is just as important as making sure that s/he is an experienced interpreter.

The English Language Major in Holguin

We should take into account that the English Language Major in the Cuban universities has as the main objective the training of capable professionals who can work either as translators, interpreters or as university teachers, with the goal of promoting our social project; in other words, this major must shape specialists with high cognitive, scientific, linguistic and technical levels allowing them to develop their task in society.

Our country demands a highly qualified, active professional willing to solve the social needs and to guarantee the communication among nations in reference to political, economical and social spheres. Along with all these, the increase of enterprises, corporations and international agreements also requires skillful graduates.

In the case of Holguin, the increase of touristic services in hotels, airports and other important facilities demanded the urgent training of specialists of the English language to work as translators, interpreters, tour guides, public relations workers and other needed employees in such places; that is why The English Language Major emerged in Holguin in September 1990.

The beginning was not an easy task given the fact that teaching the English language at the current University of Holguín represented a challenge for every teacher involved in the newly born major, which firstly belonged to the Faculty of Economics and later, in 1998, a Faculty of Foreign Languages was founded with the English Language Major as its core. In spite of this tough starting, all the conditions to study English language were established, for example the required bibliography for the teachers and the books for the students.

In the case of the professors who would teach at the former “Oscar Lucero Moya” University, they came from the Pedagogical Institute” Jose de la Luz y Caballero”, some of these professors are BA. Erle Thomas Ibarra, PhD. Vilma Páez Pérez and PhD Noel Fernández González. Besides, PhD Dolores Corona, who was an experienced professor at the University of Havana, came to help in the teaching of the English Language Major at the University of Holguín.

The English Language Major at the University of Holguin encompasses a wide curriculum that benefits the thorough formation of graduates. Similarly, the different study plans have gradually enhanced the teaching performance in every discipline and subject. They are intended to achieve new and superior syllabuses that support the demands of the students’ professional profiles in terms of the very faculties and abilities in English and French being the two languages mastered in this major.

Transdisciplinarity and its implementation in interpretation lessons

Taking into account the observation method and some interviews applied, it is demonstrated that teachers have used the transdisciplinary focus in their lesson because they have gone deep into important topics of our present world. They have searched for information by using different means - internet, books, magazines, etc., and they have made students be prepared to speak about any of these topics. However, they do it unconsciously since they are not in touch with the real meaning of a transdisciplinary approach.

Due to the lack of updated bibliography, the bad conditions of our internet connections, among other reasons, it turns out to be very difficult to have good material to use at class.

Despite there is a general background on different topics, English language teachers are specialist neither in history, nor in anthropology, nor in psychology. That is why, the author considers of a paramount importance to encourage the use of transdisciplinary teaching, since there are other departments at the
Transdisciplinarity has become one of the most relevant approaches when it comes to teaching and learning in universities worldwide, due to the necessity of assuring well-prepared professionals. On the other hand, Interpreting represents the bridge of communication among people from different regions with different accents and dialects. This process requires interpreters able to manage any situation with an accurate use of all the linguistic and extra-linguistic Knowledge required. That is why; the authors hope this paper helps to develop the transdisciplinary focus departing from Consecutive Interpretation.

Bibliography

1. Hidalgo Cuba, Yoendris et. al. *A proposal of tasks to favor the interdisciplinary work with the thematic units of English Language III in the third year of the English Language Major at the University of Holguín*, 2014.

INFORMACIÓN DE LOS AUTORES

Edduar Gómez Blanco, estudiante de la Carrera de Lengua Inglesa con Segunda Lengua Francés.

Lic. Marla Vega Romero, profesora auxiliar, Jefa del Departamento de la Carrera de Lengua Inglesa con Segunda Lengua Francés.