

THE ROLE OF EXPERTISE AND TRANSLATION STRATEGIES WHEN SOLVING TRANSLATION PROBLEMS OF A CULTURAL NATURE

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CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

- ▶ The ability to make use of the knowledge of the source and target cultures, to relate to it, and apply it when translating is one of the key components of most translator's (inter)cultural competence models (Witte 2000; Bahumaid 2010; PICT 2012; Yarosh 2012; Olalla-Soler 2017).
- ▶ If the cultural translation problem is **salient** enough for the translator to identify it, if he/she has **accumulated enough cultural knowledge** to interpret it and to translate it, and if this knowledge is **accessible** to him/her (Collins and Loftus 1975; Shepherd 2011), he/she may turn to his/her **internalized cultural knowledge** to solve this problem. If the translator does not possess (enough) cultural knowledge or it is not accessible, he/she may turn to documentation-based strategies.
- ▶ While the cognitive load is higher during resource consultation than during translation drafting and revision (Tangsgaard Hvelplund 2017), both applying one's internalized cultural knowledge and making use of documentation resources to gain cultural knowledge are applied more efficiently with the development of expertise (PACTE 2017).
- ▶ Expertise: the property of a person who performs an operation or a set of operations in a limited domain with exceptional results when compared to others capable of performing the same operation (Ericsson and Smith 1991; cit. in Muñoz Martín 2009:25).

STUDY – TYPE OF STUDY

- ▶ Product and process-oriented, cross-sectional, quasi-experimental study
- ▶ Tasks:
 1. filling in initial questionnaire.
 2. filling in a template for the identification and categorization of cultural references.
 3. **translating a text** from German into Spanish (specific analysis of 5 segments of interest, that is cultural translation problems).
 4. filling in a questionnaire on the identification and solution of cultural translation problems.
 5. **filling in a questionnaire of declarative knowledge of German culture.**
 6. filling in the MPQ and CQS questionnaires.
 7. filling in a questionnaire on the conception of translation.
- ▶ Translation process was recorded.

STUDY – SAMPLE

Translation students of German as a second foreign language and Spanish as mother tongue at UAB + professional translators

| | N | Age (median) | German (L3) level according to CEFR | L1 | Has he/she failed any of the previous courses? | Years of experience as translator (mean) | Translation as main professional activity? |
|-------------|----|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------|--|--|--|
| 1st year | 12 | 18 | A1 | Spanish | No | No experience | No |
| 2nd year | 8 | 19.5 | A2 | Spanish | No | No experience | No |
| 3rd year | 9 | 20 | B1 | Spanish | No | No experience | No |
| 4th year | 9 | 22 | B2 | Spanish | No | No experience | No |
| Translators | 10 | 36 | C1-C2 | Spanish | - | 16.4 | Yes |

INDICATORS – INTERNALIZED SOURCE–CULTURE KNOWLEDGE INDEX

- ▶ The subjects' declarative knowledge about German culture.
- ▶ Questionnaire of declarative knowledge on German culture:
 - ▶ 30 multiple-choice items with three to four options and a single correct answer.
 - ▶ Four cultural areas: organization of the natural environment, organization of the cultural patrimony, organization of society, and models of behavior, values and ideas.
 - ▶ Validated: content validity, criterion validity, and face validity (Olalla-Soler, forthcoming).
 - ▶ Correct answer = 1; incorrect answer = 0.
Mean by cultural area + mean of the four areas. Max = 1; min = 0.

INDICATORS – SEQUENCES OF ACTIONS

- ▶ Chains of actions carried out by a subject to achieve the definitive solution in each of the cultural translation problems. It indicates the type of cultural resources applied by the subjects. (PACTE 2009) A numerical value was given to each sequence **according to the level of internalized source-culture knowledge applied**:
 - ▶ **Internal support (IS)**: the solution is based exclusively on internal support, with no consultation prior to the solution. Coded as 1.
 - ▶ **Predominantly internal support (PIS)**: the solution is based on any combination of bilingual and non-bilingual consultations which does not include adopting the solution offered by bilingual resources. Coded as 0.5.
 - ▶ **Predominantly external support (PES)**: the solution is based on any combination of bilingual and non-bilingual consultations that includes adopting the solution offered by bilingual resources. Coded as -0.5
 - ▶ **External support (ES)**: the solution is based on consultation of bilingual resources, from which the variant offered is adopted as a solution. Coded as -1.
- ▶ Screen recordings (Camtasia©, v. 8)
- ▶ Median of the 5 segments of interest. Max = 1; min = -1

INDICATORS – SOURCE-CULTURE KNOWLEDGE APPLICATION INDEX

- ▶ The subjects' ability to efficiently make use of their internalized source-culture knowledge with the aim of resolving cultural translation problems in a text depending on the subjects' level of cultural knowledge.
- ▶ It was divided into three categories with the same range:
 - ▶ **Low** level of internalized source-culture knowledge (0-0.33)
 - ▶ **Medium** level of internalized source-culture knowledge (0.34-0.66)
 - ▶ **High** level of internalized source-culture knowledge (0.67-1.0)
- ▶ The median of the type of applied resources was computed for the subjects who were found in each internalized source-culture knowledge index category.
- ▶ Examples:
 - ▶ A source-culture knowledge application index of 0.5 in the category of high level of internalized source-culture knowledge.
 - ▶ An index of -0.5 in the category of high level of internalized source-culture knowledge.

INDICATORS – ACCEPTABILITY

- ▶ A translation is acceptable when it “effectively communicates the meaning of the source text; fulfills the function of the translation (within the context of the translation brief, readers' expectations and genre conventions in the target culture); and makes appropriate use of language” PACTE (2017a:119). It was measured in the five segments of interest:
 - ▶ **Acceptable** solution (numerical value: 1): the solution activates all the relevant connotations of the source text in the target text as regards the meaning of the source text, function of the translation, and language use.
 - ▶ **Semi-acceptable** solution (numerical value: 0.5): the solution activates some of the relevant connotations of the source text in the target text and maintains the coherence of the target text with regard to the meaning of the source text, function of the translation, and language use.
 - ▶ **Non-acceptable solution** (numerical value: 0): the solution activates none of the relevant connotations of the source text in the target text or introduces connotations that are incoherent with regard to the meaning of the source text, function of the translation, and/or language use.
- ▶ Acceptability permutations were calculated for each segment of interest. The mean for the five segments was calculated for each subject. The mean for each group was then computed. Max = 1; min = 0.
- ▶ Each segment of interest of each subject and each group was divided according to the subject's level of internalized source-culture knowledge and according to the type of support used: external support (ES), predominantly external and internal support (PES and PIS), and internal support (IS). For each subset, the acceptability mean of the rich points of each group was calculated.

RESULTS – INTERNALIZED SOURCE–CULTURE KNOWLEDGE INDEX

| | Internalized source-culture knowledge index |
|----------------------|---|
| 1 st year | 0.21 (0.05) |
| 2 nd year | 0.35 (0.09) |
| 3 rd year | 0.39 (0.07) |
| 4 th year | 0.53 (0.14) |
| Translators | 0.78 (0.10) |

RESULTS – SEQUENCES OF ACTIONS

| | Internal support | Predominantly internal support | Predominantly external support | External support |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1 st year | 25.97 | 3.90 | 32.47 | 37.66 |
| 2 nd year | 23.21 | 1.79 | 32.14 | 42.86 |
| 3 rd year | 28.57 | 3.17 | 44.44 | 23.81 |
| 4 th year | 21.43 | 1.79 | 41.07 | 35.71 |
| Translators | 57.14 | 14.29 | 17.14 | 11.43 |

| | Level of internalized source-culture knowledge applied |
|----------------------|--|
| 1 st year | -0.21 (0.18) |
| 2 nd year | -0.32 (0.30) |
| 3 rd year | -0.07 (0.24) |
| 4 th year | -0.25 (0.20) |
| Translators | 0.46 (0.44) |

RESULTS – SOURCE–CULTURE KNOWLEDGE APPLICATION INDEX

| | Low level of internalised source-culture knowledge | Medium level of internalised source-culture knowledge | High level of internalised source-culture knowledge |
|----------------------|--|---|---|
| 1 st year | -0.21 (0.18) | - | - |
| 2 nd year | -0.29 (0.41) | -0.36 (0.19) | - |
| 3 rd year | -0.07 (0.15) | -0.22 (0.26) | - |
| 4 th year | - | -0.29 (0.21) | -0.21 (0.00) |
| Translators | - | 0.36 (0.00) | 0.57 (0.47) |

RESULTS – ACCEPTABILITY

| | Acceptability |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 1 st year | 0.22 (0.14) |
| 2 nd year | 0.26 (0.09) |
| 3 rd year | 0.34 (0.16) |
| 4 th year | 0.43 (0.18) |
| Translators | 0.61 (0.14) |

RESULTS – SOURCE-CULTURE KNOWLEDGE APPLICATION INDEX

| | Type of resources used | Low level of internalised source-culture knowledge (0 – 0.33) | Medium level of internalised source-culture knowledge (0.34 – 0.66) | High level of internalised source-culture knowledge (0.67 – 1) |
|----------------------|------------------------|---|---|--|
| 1 st year | External | 0.28 | - | - |
| | External and internal | 0.17 | - | - |
| | Internal | - | - | - |
| 2 nd year | External | 0.10 | 0.33 | - |
| | External and internal | 0.27 | 0.20 | - |
| | Internal | - | - | - |
| 3 rd year | External | - | 0.33 | - |
| | External and internal | 0.20 | 0.50 | - |
| | Internal | - | - | - |
| 4 th year | External | - | 0.44 | - |
| | External and internal | - | 0.47 | 0.50 |
| | Internal | - | - | - |
| Translators | External | - | - | 0.50 |
| | External and internal | - | - | 0.70 |
| | Internal | - | 0.60 | 0.80 |

CONCLUSIONS

- ▶ As training advances, students tend to use external cultural resources when solving cultural translation problems regardless of the level of internalized source-culture knowledge. We thus cannot confirm our first hypothesis.
- ▶ Only professional translators apply their internalized source-culture knowledge when solving cultural translation problems. We cannot confirm our second hypothesis for the group of students.
- ▶ The way students apply their internalized source-culture knowledge when solving cultural translation problems is opposite to that of translators. We cannot confirm our third hypothesis.
- ▶ In the case of third-year and fourth-year students and professional translators, the quality of the proposed solutions to cultural translation problems is higher when more internalized source-culture knowledge is possessed and when it is applied to solve these problems. The fourth hypothesis is confirmed only in these groups.
- ▶ A fully developed translator's cultural competence is characterized by an efficient application of internalized source-culture knowledge when solving cultural translation problems.

LIMITATIONS

- ▶ The quasi-experiment should be replicated with larger samples, more language pairs, more texts and more segments of interest, and in different pedagogical contexts.
- ▶ It should include a control group formed by bilingual subjects who are not professional translators.
- ▶ Due to time constraints in conducting this study, it was only possible to design and validate a questionnaire on knowledge of the source culture.

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Thank you for your attention!



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Lautstark gegen die Ostalgie [cultura lingüística]

Geschäftemacher posieren an der ehemaligen Mauer in Berlin in DDR-Uniformen. SED-Opfer protestieren am Jahrestag des Mauerbaus gegen diese Vermarktung der Diktatur

Die Männer sehen müde aus, sie haben trotz des Kaisergeburtstagswetters graue Gesichter und graue Haare. Sie sitzen auf einem Geländer vor dem S-Bahnhof Potsdamer Platz. Sie recken Schilder in die Höhe. "138 Tote an der Mauer", "Verbot von DDR-Symbolen jetzt" und "Alles schon vergessen" steht auf den Transparenten.

Die Alten haben nicht vergessen. Deswegen sind sie hierher gekommen, auf den Platz im Herzen der Spreemetropole [medio natural], der bis 1989 geteilt und eine Ödnis war. "Los geht's", ruft einer, und dann marschieren die Alten los. Ihre Müdigkeit ist vergessen. Sie haben eine Mission.

40 Teilnehmer laufen einige Meter zu den Mauerfragmenten, die am Rande des Platzes stehen. Sie drängen sich an asiatischen und amerikanischen Touristen vorbei, bilden vor den Mauerresten einen Halbkreis und verhindern, dass zwei junge Männer in Grenzeruniformen [patrimonio cultural] auf einem Boxer-Kardan sich weiter mit Touristen fotografieren lassen und deren Reisepässe mit einem "Original DDR-Visum" des Unrechtsstaats [cadena referencial] versehen.

Wegen der Schauspieler und der DDR-"Verherrlichung", wie sie es nennen, sind die Alten hier. Sie sind Opfer des DDR-Regimes [cadena referencial], haben in Haft gesessen, die meisten wegen Republikflucht. Sie sind empört, dass "Ostalgier" und Geschäftemacher ein fast beschauliches, skurriles Bild der SED-Diktatur [cadena referencial] zeichnen. Und sie sind wütend, dass Studenten in die Rolle von Beamten des untergegangenen Arbeiter- und Bauernstaates [cultura social] schlüpfen, um Geld zu verdienen. [...]

Aus *Lautstark gegen die Ostalgie* (bearbeitet), von Hauke Friederichs. *Die Zeit* (13.8.2009)

Quelle: <http://www.zeit.de/online/2009/34/berliner-mauer-streit?page=1>