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TRANSLATION CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AT A MODERN LANGUAGE FACULTY IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: A CASE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TUZLA

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Abstract

This article addresses the issue of translation curriculum development at the University of Tuzla, as it provides an overview of the situation in the English Department where translation has been present in various forms but never lost momentum of its development. The article looks at the way in which translation curricula have been structured, and it examines the underlying principles, including the choice of specific components, stages of progression and development of specific competences. As a modern language faculty, the English Department has seemed to diverge from the traditional paradigm of teaching translation as a means, and not as an end. With a reference to the countries where translation education institutions are lacking (such as Bosnia and Herzegovina), it is precisely modern language faculties that are expected to fill in the niche market. Having recognized that need, the Department reworked the curricula at both the undergraduate and Master's levels. This resulted in an up-to-date MA programme in translation which not only offers both theoretical and practical knowledge, but also serves as a networking platform through our international partners.

Key words: translation curriculum development, modern language faculty, translation education, MA programme, language industry

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1. INTRODUCTION

Ulrych (2005, p. 3) states that traditionally the main criticism directed towards modern language faculties is that they envisage translation as a language exercise, thus failing to prepare students for real-life translation in vocational contexts (see Klein-Braley 1996). Klein-Braley (1996, p. 24) states that the aim of modern language faculties must be to enable “all-round language professionals to tackle translation themselves for in-house and informational purposes and to supervise the translation of texts for public and formal purposes.” She admits that modern language faculties can only offer the basic techniques and that those who want to work as professional translators need further training at postgraduate level.

As a modern language faculty, as opposed to Translator and Interpreter (T&I) tertiary institution, the Department of English functioning within the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Tuzla, has seemed to diverge from the traditional paradigm of teaching translation as a means, and not as an end. In a relatively brief history of the Department (established in 1998), translation has been present in the curriculum in various forms and to varying degrees but never lost momentum in terms of its development. This article provides an overview of the way in which translation curricula and courses have been structured, and it examines the underlying principles,

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including the choice of specific components, stages of progression and development of specific competences.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Ulrych (2005, p. 23), attitudes towards translation and translators are undergoing deep transformations both in the professional world and that of scholarly research. The studies into translation education at modern language faculties are scarce and do not frequently address the issue of curriculum development.

Dollerup's study in the German context showed that the clear-cut distinction between translator and interpreter (T&I) institutions and modern language faculties is gradually disappearing, especially when university teachers are aware of the future prospects of their students as “editors, authors, scholars and professional translators (1994, p. 121-122). This resulted in the development of special courses (at undergraduate or more often at postgraduate level) in which translation is a skill in its own right and the main learning goal.

As it happens, in order to keep up with the market needs and the rapidly changing profile of translators in the professional world who are now required to expand their knowledge beyond mere interlingual and intercultural communication, language faculties must acknowledge the actual requirements of their prospective graduates. They

Jurida, S. H. & Pavlović, T. (2016). Translation Curriculum Development at a Modern Language Faculty in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Case of the University of Tuzla. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E*, 3, 69–86.

now need the skills in localisation, technical writing, editing and multimedia translation (Mossop 2001).

The English Department of the University of Tuzla has so far been aware of the changing attitudes in translation education. It strives at envisaging a “blend of educational and vocational ingredients to better meet real-life criteria” (Ulrych 2005, p. 5). As Pavlović (forthcoming, 2016) emphasizes, what needs to be constantly assessed is the degree to which educational and professional goals at tertiary level institutions are equipped to meet the challenges that prospective translators have to face in the environments which are evolving. Bernardini (2004, p. 20) warns that the educational priority of translation pedagogy is to “prepare aware, resourceful and reflective professionals.”

3. A CASE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (BiH)

3.1 General Facts about Translation Education

Due to its position and size, BiH has always been at the intersection of cultures and languages. Over the past 20 years in particular, the situation in the translation and interpreting market in BiH has faced a rapid growth in demand for translation in both directions. Several factors have led to such a situation, as follows: political independence of BiH (declared and internationally

Jurida, S. H. & Pavlović, T. (2016). Translation Curriculum Development at a Modern Language Faculty in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Case of the University of Tuzla. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E*, 3, 69–86.

recognized in 1992); the country's transition to a free-market economy; a large presence of the international community in BiH since mid 90s, and, in particular, the country's aspiration to join the European Union.

Pavlović (2012, p. 89) claims that, at present, in BiH there are no undergraduate programs in translation and most future translators are educated at departments/ faculties of modern languages. For now, students who wish to become full-time or part-time translators need to take a four-year B.A. degree program in English language and literature (during which they take a wide range of linguistic courses) and then they are obliged to pass the exam for court interpreters organized by the Federal Ministry of Justice.

There are no translator training institutions as such in BiH. Most people who engage in translation/interpreting hold a degree in modern languages and many do translation/interpreting part time. Companies which offer translation or interpreting services are very rarely found in BiH. The only professional association of translators/interpreters in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the Association of Translators of BiH (*Udruženje prevodilaca Bosne i Hercegovine*). It has an active role in the field of professional translation and it offers the services provided by their members. This association also organizes annual meetings and seminars for education in the field of translation, and provides various types of translation and interpreting services. Some of their members are also court interpreters appointed by the Federal Ministry of Justice.

Jurida, S. H. & Pavlović, T. (2016). Translation Curriculum Development at a Modern Language Faculty in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Case of the University of Tuzla. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E*, 3, 69–86.

English language students, much like other foreign language students, are expected to have a relatively high level of competence in that language even at the time of enrolment (candidates are selected on the basis of an entrance exam). By the time they get to their fourth year of studies, the students have generally been learning English for at least twelve years. For them to pass their final-year exams, their L2 competence at the end of their fourth year is expected to have reached the equivalent of level C (C2 being the highest, native or near-native level of competence) of the Council of Europe's (2010) *Common European Framework of Reference, CEFR*.

3.2 English Language Department at the University of Tuzla

Translation at the modern language faculty is commonly viewed as a means of improving the students' knowledge of English as a second language. However, this was never the case with the University of Tuzla. Due to the market and society related tendencies, we must understand that translation practice classes must see a change and be transformed into a translation-learning instrument. Students need to acquire the foundations of translation competence and the skills needed to produce acceptable target texts.

3.3 Translation Curriculum Development

Jurida, S. H. & Pavlović, T. (2016). Translation Curriculum Development at a Modern Language Faculty in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Case of the University of Tuzla. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E*, 3, 69–86.

As stated already, translation education has been an integral part of the undergraduate curriculum at the English Language Department at the University of Tuzla. The classes focusing on translation have been either a component of a Contemporary English Language course or a separate course titled Translation Practice 1-4 (in the third and fourth years of studies).

During the current four-year programme, the students now have two contact hours (90 minutes) per week of lectures and the same amount of practical classes in translation from English to B/C/S and from B/C/S to English in their third and fourth year of studying (Pavlović 2012, p. 90).

The structure of the current curriculum under which translation is taught within the courses titled Contemporary English Language is strictly defined by the University statutory documents, which are, in turn, harmonised with the Bologna scheme. This certainly poses significant limitations when it comes to the total number of courses per semester, depending on the course ECTS value (for more details, see <http://www.untz.ba/uploads/file/bolonjski%20proces/ECTS%20bodovanje-knjiga.pdf>).

Tables 1 and 2 below provide an overview of the courses taught over the 2 semesters of the third year and 2 semesters of the fourth year of undergraduate studies.

Jurida, S. H. & Pavlović, T. (2016). Translation Curriculum Development at a Modern Language Faculty in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Case of the University of Tuzla. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E*, 3, 69–86.

Table 1. The Current BA Programme (Year 3); Source: the Curriculum of the English Department, academic year 2015/2016

THIRD YEAR		
	course	ECTS
1	Phrasal Verbs and Verb and Adjective Complementation	12
2	Contemporary English Language V and VI	14
3	English Literature III and IV	10
4	Contrastive Linguistics I and II	8
5	British Cultural Studies I and II	10
6	Elective course	
	Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics and Introduction to Phraseology	6
	Utopia in Victorian Literature and Cultural Production of Modernism	6
	ELT Methodology in Elementary Schools and ELT and Methodology in Secondary Schools	6
Total mandatory ECTS		54
Total elective ECTS		6
Total		60

Table 2. The Current BA Programme (Year 4); Source: the Curriculum of the English Department, academic year 2015/2016

Jurida, S. H. & Pavlović, T. (2016). Translation Curriculum Development at a Modern Language Faculty in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Case of the University of Tuzla. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E*, 3, 69–86.

FOURTH YEAR		
	course	ECTS
1	Syntax of the Complex Sentence in English I and II	14
2	Contemporary English Language VII and VIII	11
3	English Literature V and VI	10
4	Semantics I and II	8
5	English Language Teaching Methodology I and II	11
6	Research and Writing Methodology in English	2
7	Elective course	
	Discourse Analysis	4
	Critical Theories: Culture, Language and Gender	4
	Introduction to Literary Translation	4
	Total mandatory ECTS	56
	Total elective ECTS	4
	Total	60

The need for solid training in theoretical and practical matters of translation education is evident worldwide in the light of the ever-growing internationalisation of economies and cultures. Our Department follows these tendencies in translation methodology by recognising this need and providing them a solid pedagogical ground to

Jurida, S. H. & Pavlović, T. (2016). Translation Curriculum Development at a Modern Language Faculty in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Case of the University of Tuzla. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E*, 3, 69–86.

meet the future challenges in this field. In view of this recognised need, and in order to provide prospective students with adequate tools to meet the challenges that the profession faces today, the Department devised and implemented the curriculum offering an M.A. degree in translation (initiated in the academic year 2012/2013), which was the first institutionalized form of teaching translation for the professional purposes.

This Master's programme (English Language Translation and Interpreting) is a post-graduate course of 1 year (30 weeks, 60 ECTS). Prospective candidates will have completed a four-year undergraduate degree in English Language and Literature (240 ECTS).

Upon completion of the Master's programme, candidates receive the following professional qualification: Master of English Language and Literature, major: Translation and Interpreting. The programme introduces the students to contemporary trends in the theory of translation, provides the students with the theoretical fundamentals required for translation and interpreting as a transcultural interlinguistic conventional act of communication for which the translator/interpreter assumes responsibility.

In addition, the programme enables the students to further enhance their knowledge required for the use of the English language both in writing and verbally, featuring grammatical correctness, accuracy, fluency, proficiency in a number of situations and contexts. The students learn how to differentiate between adequate linguistic styles and

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registers, and how to apply this correctly in the practice of translation and interpreting.

The programme enables the students to practically apply adequate methods and strategies of consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, including the ethics of translation and interpreting. In addition, within the programme the students are trained how to translate scientific, professional and literary texts, as well as the language of media.

Nord (2005, p. 220) states that the interplay of theory and practice may be more important in the area of translation than anywhere else. This is why an attempt was made for the curriculum development to be assigned to the teaching staff members that are practically involved in translation on a regular basis, either as part-time translators or certified court interpreters.

In that way, the Department invested efforts into the creation of a more practical-oriented curriculum (see Table 3 below). As far as the languages taught are concerned, the Master's program includes English and Bosnian/ Croatian/ Serbian being the native/official languages in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Table 3. The Current MA Programme); Source: the Curriculum of the English Department, academic year 2012/2013

Jurida, S. H. & Pavlović, T. (2016). Translation Curriculum Development at a Modern Language Faculty in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Case of the University of Tuzla. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E*, 3, 69–86.

COURSE TITLE	Semester I				Semester II			
	L	AP	LP	ECTS	L	AP	LP	ECTS
Translation Theory	3	1	0	8				
Literary Translation	3	0	1	8				
Fundamentals of Consecutive and Simultaneous Interpreting	3	0	1	8				
Language Practice 9	3	0	1	6				
Electives in the 2 nd semester (students opt for <u>one</u> of the two courses)								
Media Language Translation and Interpreting					3	0	1	8
Professional and Scientific Texts Translation					3	0	1	8
Master's Thesis								22
TOTAL (per week)	12	1	3	30	3	0	1	30

L-weekly hours of lectures

AP-weekly hours of audio practice

LP-weekly hours of lab practice

The rationale behind such structure of the curriculum is closely linked to the views of translation theorists and practitioners who emphasise that expertise must come as the result of the combination of experience and the theoretical principles of the discipline (see Séguinot,

Jurida, S. H. & Pavlović, T. (2016). Translation Curriculum Development at a Modern Language Faculty in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Case of the University of Tuzla. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E*, 3, 69–86.

Ulrych). Bartrina (2005, p. 177) claims that the curriculum of a university degree in T&I or any programme that trains translators – should include a course devoted to Translation Theory in order to provide a study of the main theoretical concepts underlying the practice of translation and interpreting. Nord (2005, p. 214) shares this view, claiming that professional translators need to combine practical and theoretical knowledge. In Nord's view (2005, p. 211), translator trainers believe that university training programmes must be general enough to enable their graduates to take up a broad range of activities, and specific enough to lay the foundations for a fast acquisition of any kind of special skills after graduation. We must admit that this is by no means an easy task.

This is precisely one of the chief objectives of our Department's Master's programme – equipping our prospective translation graduates with the fundamentals of theoretical postulates, on the one hand, and, on the other, providing them with a broad range of skills that are specific to this profession. In that way, they will be better prepared for the demanding world arena that is language industry.

With a view to facilitating this interplay, the English Department invested efforts into networking with other key actors in the field of language industry, whether they are tertiary education institutions or professional translation associations and service providers. In this ongoing process, the University of Tuzla became a member of the ELIA Exchange programme which aims to

Jurida, S. H. & Pavlović, T. (2016). Translation Curriculum Development at a Modern Language Faculty in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Case of the University of Tuzla. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E*, 3, 69–86.

enhance contact and communication between the academic and business worlds. It is a cooperation initiative involving European universities, translation students and ELIA member language services providers (LSPs). Our membership is best reflected in some of the ELIA Exchange interlinked mechanisms, such as internship program, forums, access to online databases etc. As a consequence, our MA students are given added value skills that would make them more competitive in the language industry market.

4. CONCLUSIONS

As many translation theorists stress, the number of emerging translator training institutions is fast-growing. With a particular reference to the countries where translation education institutions are traditionally absent (such as Bosnia and Herzegovina), it is precisely modern language faculties that are expected to fill in the niche market. Having recognized that need, the English Department followed the tendencies and reworked the curricula at both the undergraduate and Master's levels. This resulted in an up-to-date MA programme in translation which not only offers both theoretical and practical knowledge, but also serves as a networking platform through our international partners.

Jurida, S. H. & Pavlović, T. (2016). Translation Curriculum Development at a Modern Language Faculty in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Case of the University of Tuzla. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E*, 3, 69–86.

Even though translation education which involves theoretical and practical components poses a significant pedagogical challenge, it is definitely a direction that any serious modern language faculty should follow. The future translators must be prepared to tackle the inevitable far-reaching transformations of the profession. Upon completion of the studies, our prospective graduates should have the knowledge and skills required for further pursuing their studies in the third cycle of studies (doctoral studies) in various fields of humanities and social studies in-country and abroad. They are expected to develop strong translation/interpreting and communication skills and techniques required for work in the language industry.

However, what should be particularly highlighted is the fact that this will only be possible if and when the future curricula developers fully acknowledge the inseparable bond between the theory and the practice. Hence, they need to create such guidelines that would enable a correlation between the educational process and the actual market needs in the language industry, both locally and internationally.

Jurida, S. H. & Pavlović, T. (2016). Translation Curriculum Development at a Modern Language Faculty in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Case of the University of Tuzla. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E*, 3, 69–86.

Jurida, S. H. & Pavlović, T. (2016). Translation Curriculum Development at a Modern Language Faculty in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Case of the University of Tuzla. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E*, 3, 69–86.

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Jurida, S. H. & Pavlović, T. (2016). Translation Curriculum Development at a Modern Language Faculty in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Case of the University of Tuzla. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E*, 3, 69–86.

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Jurida, S. H. & Pavlović, T. (2016). Translation Curriculum Development at a Modern Language Faculty in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Case of the University of Tuzla. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E*, 3, 69–86.

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