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Professional Culture of the Specialist of the Future

FORMATION OF LINGUIST-TRANSLATOR'S PROFESSIONAL CULTURE WHILE STUDYING AMERICAN NATION LINGUOCULTURAL SPECIFICS

Nadezhda N. Efimova (a), Elena M. Semenova (b)*, Elena Sereda (c), Anastasia S.
Gerasimova (d)

*Corresponding author

- (a) Irkutsk Scientific Center, Lermontov Str., 134, 664033, Irkutsk, Russia, caprico2009@yandex.ru, +7 (908) 661-54-54
(b) Saint-Petersburg University of Management Technologies and Economics, Lermontovsky Prospect St., 44, Lit A, 190103, Saint-Petersburg, Russia, inyaz@spbume.ru, +7 (812) 575-11-19
(c) Saint-Petersburg University of Management Technologies and Economics, Lermontovsky Prospect St., 44, Lit A, 190103, Saint-Petersburg, Russia, inyaz@spbume.ru, +7 (812) 575-11-19
(d) Saint-Petersburg University of Management Technologies and Economics, Lermontovsky Prospect St., 44, Lit A, 190103, Saint-Petersburg, Russia, inyaz@spbume.ru, +7 (812) 575-11-19

Abstract

The present paper addresses a number of issues of linguist-translator training in constantly changing multicultural environment. The authors believe that training of future specialists should take into account linguistic, culturological and sociological specificity of the target-language country. The article considers linguoculturological peculiarities of American nation, which has traditionally combined diverse national cultures, races and languages. Therefore, this phenomenon has been selected as the object of the study, since it represents the most salient example of an entity affecting formation of linguist-translator's professional competences. The American nation is a multinational and multicultural community, which presumes, on the one hand, presence of multiple co-existing cultures, and inevitable "bulging" of individual race peculiarities and specific national values. The authors come up with a number of approaches to definition and consideration of specificity of the American nation phenomenon, also emphasizing linguistic peculiarities of American English, which are to be considered by the developers of training methods and didactic solutions for future translators. At the same time, professional translator is regarded not as an auxiliary link in communication, but as a key player in organization and implementation of international communication. Therefore, the authors strongly argue that training of practicing translators should be based on multidisciplinary approach, which contributes to formation of both general and specific professional competences of future linguist-translators.

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Keywords: American nation, competency-based approach, multiculturalism, multicultural environment, strategies of metaphorical representation, undergraduate translation students.



1. Introduction

Contemporary approach to training of the future specialist in translation presumes formation of a number of competencies, which, among other skills, incorporate readiness to overcome the impact of stereotypes and ensure cross-cultural dialogue in general and professional communication domains; mastery of pre-translation analysis methodology, which provides accurate perception of the source language message; mastery of efficient translation methods and major strategies of achieving translation equivalence (Federal State Education Standards of Higher Education, 2014). “In a globalizing world and the growth of national consciousness the cultural ties between the people are getting new forms and new content. Differences in religious, ideologies, values in a democratic society actualize the problems of intercultural dialogue” (Amineva, Gainullina, & Shemshurenko, 2016, p. 8). Thus, present-day translator training is to be configured in keeping with the changing conditions of the world globalization (Almazova, Khalyapina, & Popova, 2017; Chernyavskaya, 2016).

2. Problem Statement

Various domains of knowledge and practical activities can form the platform for the development of such competencies and skills. However, in our view, the most promising approach is the immersion of students into national cultural environment of the target-language country. Therefore, the **goal of the present research** may be formulated as follows: to identify and justify strategies, which ensure formation of professional culture and enhancement of the future professional competencies in the realm of practical translation and translation studies, on the basis of the study of dynamics of multi-cultural community development.

3. Research Questions

The phenomenon of American nation metaphorically presented in linguoculturological and political discourses is proposed as an additional object of investigation. The approach described will be instrumental in addressing the following **research questions**:

- 1) teaching students to identify dynamics of development of foreign social structure;
- 2) formation of the skills of linguocognitive analysis of language phenomena (metaphor) with the view to provide adequacy of their translation;
- 3) formation of components of professional translator competencies taking into account linguocultural peculiarities of the target-language country;
- 4) development of systemic thinking skills, identification of cross-disciplinary links while studying linguocultural phenomena;
- 5) teaching application of linguoculturological methods and formation of personal judgement concerning the object of research;
- 6) application of cyclic teaching model in the course of enhancement of the future professional translator competencies.

4. Purpose of the Study

Addressing these issues will facilitate achievement of the **purpose of the study**: to develop methods of enhancing the professional competency level of future linguist translators taking into account linguoculturological peculiarities of the target-language country.

5. Research Methods

The following methods were applied to address the problem stated:

1) cluster analysis method – “multidimensional analysis instrumental in classifying the object simultaneously in the plenitude of its interrelated properties” (Komarova, 2012, p. 305). It was used in respect of the main object of study – students considered in the present article simultaneously as an object of the teacher’s targeted efforts to train a highly-qualified professional, on the one hand, and as participants of joint creative partnership aiming at identification of specific peculiarities of foreign linguoculturological community, on the other hand.

2) ranging method, which presupposes the kind of “analysis of phenomena and processes in complex systems focusing on primary factors (features) and excluding secondary factors, which produce no significant influence on the objects under study” (Komarova, 2012, p. 309). It was used in respect of the auxiliary object of research – the phenomenon of American nation. The study of the latter particularly emphasized one of the key distinguishing features of this people – aspiration for unity and integrity, while other characteristic features of the nation were intentionally left outside the scope of the study.

3) nomothetic (from Greek “nomothetichē” – art of law-making) method introduces “cognitive intention to acquire, construct, formulate and justify any common knowledge, to consider any concrete things, objects, processes not in their individual being, but as elements representing a certain class” (Komarova, 2012, p. 309). It was used in respect of the purpose of research – formation of personal culture of professional translator as a key player of cross-cultural communication, without characterizing individual cultural parameters or individual features of the future specialist.

4) introspection (from Latin “introspectare” – look inside) method is the “study of psychic processes (cognition, thinking) by the individual him/herself undergoing these processes” (Psychologos, 2018). It was used in the course of creation of the analytical model for strategies of metaphorical representation of the American nation phenomenon. The analysis was focused on the authors’ peculiarities of cognitive perception of the images created by the discourse authors in the course of interpreting of the object under consideration – the unified community of American people.

The research material was based on the results acquired by Laubeova (2000) through her studies of the problem of multiculturalism and national minorities in the University of Prague (the Czech Republic) and the authors’ conclusions drawn from the analysis of American political (rhetorical) discourse. The results obtained in the course of research in the above stated domain are used in training curricula of linguistics students with the view to form professional competences required for professional translator.

Considering the origin of the American nation, Laubeova (2000) states the following:

“In the case of the melting pot the aim is that all cultures become reflected in one common culture...In the case of the salad bowl, cultural groups should exist separately and maintain their practices and institutions” (para. 8).

For a long time the formation of the American nation was associated with the image of the “melting pot”, where various metals (peoples resettling to the American continent on the search of new life) subjected to high temperatures (trials, which fell to the pioneers’ lot) melted down (forfeited the former integrity) and formed a new compound (the unified community called “American people”).

Such metaphorical interpretation of the origin of American nation emphasizes the newcomers’ preparedness to reject their commitment to the original home country in order to pursue new life opportunities and realize the American dream. This conceptualization conformed to the cultural assimilation theory and held true until 1908 (the wave of immigration from Western Europe), but with the change of social and political situation prompted by the introduction of restrictions on the access to the country and Europeans’ lack of desire to assimilate with other nations, it became the subject of discussion.

The doubts regarding relevance of the metaphorical image described are summed up in the passage above through the proposition “I thought this was mixed vegetable soup but I can only taste tomato” (Laubeova, 2000), where the word combination “mixed vegetable soup” represent an ideal state model, where all the peoples (vegetables) enjoy equal opportunities of self-expression being an integral whole (soup), and the phrase “but I can only taste tomato” frames disappointment caused by the real situation in the country, where one race (European) – tomato – solely predominates.

The importance of conservation of cultural identity and the eagerness to avoid the loss of “roots” resulted in the emergence of another metaphorical image – “the salad bowl” (Laubeova, 2000), which visualizes the American nation as a dish, in which the mixture of multiple ingredients (cultural interaction of different peoples) presumes retention of individual flavor and taste of each individual component (cultural specificity, traditions and values of the resettled peoples).

“Such type of metaphorical conceptualization highlights the idea of cultural distinctiveness, outshading the conceptual foundation of the integration phenomenon which is the peculiar feature of American Nation. Speaking metaphorically, it’s unclear what the salad is covered by” (Semenova, 2018, p. 44).

Attempting to overcome this discrepancy the author comes up with a new metaphorical interpretation, in which American nation is termed “ethnic stew” (Laubeova, 2000) – stewed meat with vegetables cooked according to the national cuisine recipe.

This metaphorical image mainly differs from the earlier proposed by accentuating different conceptualization of the American nation phenomenon. It means that in the course of stewing (interaction) the ingredients of the dish (nations and races) undergo metamorphosis retaining their specific unique taste characteristics (national peculiarities), at the same time seasoning the dish (“new people’ community”).

Thus, from the linguoculturological viewpoint, metaphor acts as a tool, which does not only provide verbal explanation to dynamic changes occurring in the society in the course of time, by also to ensure their adequate perception and understanding by the addressee.

Within this framework, the success of communication strongly depends on the translator's professional skills and general culture; his or her competency level to a large extent predetermines the final result of communicative interaction between representatives of different national communities. And whether this result will emerge as "communicative success" or "communicative failure" is reliant on the translator's qualification level acquired throughout his/her professional education.

It should be noted that formation of the specialist's general culture is tightly bound to the necessity of developing systemic thinking skills, which underlie the success of human interaction.

Any society is a dynamically developing and self-organizing system. Many interrelations within systems, society being one of them, are realized via flows of information, which unites the system into an integral whole and to a large extent predetermines its behavior. Information is supplied by various sources, the most popular and accessible among them being mass media. Therefore, future translators need to be trained in the domain of processing mass media information. This prompted the choice of material for the further study of the American nation phenomenon – political discourse, and, in particular, the constituent of a professional politician's lexis, since it is the image that "enters new associative relations indispensable for linguistic modelling of any given phenomenon of national culture" (Alefirenko, 2010, p. 38).

The analysis of rhetorical political discourse, in particular, President B. Clinton's farewell address to the American people on January 18, 2001 reveals the following conceptualization of American nation phenomenon.

"Third, we must remember that America cannot lead in the world unless here at home we weave the threads of our coat of many colors into the fabric of one America" (Clinton, 2001).

"Weaving the threads of our coat of many colors into the fabric" (Clinton, 2001) metaphorically conceptualizes the idea of unifying people of different nationalities, gender, religion and sexual identity into one community – American nation. The linguocognitive analysis of the passage above identifies the following metaphorical model: THE NATION IS A FABRIC, with one of the frames within this model being PEOPLE ARE THREADS.

The unity of the American people, integration inspired by and focusing on the national values is *conditio sine qua non* for attaining the primary aim of the state – to be a leading power playing the key role on the global scene. The directive connotation of the message is encoded in parallel constructions ("we must remember...", "we must work harder...", "we must treat all people...") (Clinton, 2001) stressing implicit necessity to implement this particular political approach to the solution of the state's primary task – to create an even more perfect society – "the more perfect union" – empowered to give law to the other countries – "lead in the world" (Clinton, 2001).

Comparing metaphorical images in linguoculturological (Laubeova, 2000) and political (Clinton, 2001) discourses we found the following.

Laubeova (2000) in her research of American nation phenomenon analyzes six metaphorical images, which form this phenomenon. They are “the melting pot”, “the vegetable soup”, “the salad bowl”, “the main” vegetable (tomato), “the dressing” and the stewed vegetables with meat cooked by the national recipe (“ethnic stew”). Such “food” metaphors imply the idea of human essential need for food, which needs to be satisfied to sustain vital strength and life itself. The researcher draws the reader’s attention to all the details associated with cooking of the dishes and their quality, thus attempting to present an objective and well-grounded idea of the existence of associative links between the source sphere (names of the dishes) and the target sphere (culturological peculiarities of American nation phenomenon).

The pursuit of unity with simultaneous safe-guarding of specific national peculiarities of a concrete people is subconsciously perceived in the passage presented as a prerequisite of survival (through association with food, without which one could not survive).

The American president Clinton (2001) calling upon all citizens to unite resorts to the so-called textile metaphor. His argumentation strategy is of pragmatic nature, as unity is indispensable for enhancement of the US world leadership and implies the concept of security for *each and every* citizen (“threads”) (para. 12), should they be *tightly drawn together* (“woven into one fabric”) (para. 12).

Thus, students’ attention is drawn to the following logical chain: conceptualization of the American nation phenomenon is verbalized in discourses acting as research objects of different disciplines (linguocultural studies and political linguistics); the wider the world outlook of the specialist the more authentic his/her interpretation of the subject under study: profound insight into the nature of phenomenon considered is instrumental in providing the most accurate translation from a foreign language into the native language; high quality of work will build the outstanding professional image; professional success will provide career progress and bring about the opportunity for personal growth.

6. Findings

Multicultural constituent of the American nation makes it possible to use this phenomenon as an object of research, which may significantly affect the formation of professional competencies of linguist translators. The metaphorical images described above, obviously highlight, on the one hand, cultural diversity and pluralism, and on the other hand, emphasis on racial peculiarities and individual national values juxtaposed to common American integrative values. Training of professional translator in today’s changing world presupposes establishment of the central, not auxiliary, figure of international mutual understanding and communication (Haleeva, 1999). Translator’s professional activity requires both advanced level of language command characterized by the depth of knowledge of language peculiarities (metaphorical constituent in particular), and mastery of translation strategies and skills including communication skills, resistance and detailed knowledge of culturological specificity of the target language country. Thus, the educational process is aimed at the formation of translator prepared to work in a polycultural society, the salient example of which is American nation in its cultural and linguocultural diversity. This thesis correlates with Visson’s (2007) point stating that use

of a foreign language without taking into account underlying culture-specific elements may be compared to feeding addressees on tasteless chewing gum of literal translation, thus inviting endless mistakes. The study of image constituent of the American nation model through the analysis of metaphorical interpretation of the referent may be used as a material for defining national specificity of the American people's concept sphere (Semenova, 2008). Therefore, the problem of developing a new model of translator training, which takes into consideration linguistic, culturological and social peculiarities of the target language country, may be solved through the perspective of cross-disciplinary approach, taking into account scientific findings in the domains of modern linguistics, psychology, culture studies, psycholinguistics, linguocultural studies, cognitive linguistics and cognitive psychology and a number of other sciences.

This is necessitated by strict requirements to future specialists in terms of professional ethical training. Along with professional competencies, which impose the need for translation in keeping with ethical norms and presuppose the ability to properly and adequately behave in standard and non-standard situations of cross-language communication, the readiness to provide translation and interpretation in compliance with the accepted international norms and rules of translator's conduct, future professional translators are to possess general professional competencies, which presume that practicing translators have to be able to work in a team while demonstrating social activity and observing legal and moral norms, to be guided by the principles of dialogue and cooperation, as well as to be ready to involve social interaction. The present article considers the necessity to form such an important professional competency as the ability to adapt to changing conditions arising in communication with representatives of other cultures. These ideas agree with Zakharova's (2011, p. 33) statement: "competency-based professional training aims at the mastery of activity providing readiness to solve problems and tasks on the basis of knowledge, professional and personal experience, values and other internal and external resources".

"In the globalization era of modern educational paradigm the issues of intercultural communication are in the focus of modern science" (Safina & Amurskaya, 2017, p. 728). Thus, present day education undergoes constant changes. The distinguishing feature of contemporary educational strategies is predominance of polylogue based on the idea of absence of "the only true" opinion and viewpoint (Galishnikova, Baklashova, & Khafizova, 2017, p. 209). Bearing in mind time restrictions imposed on the educational process, we find that the students' attention should be primarily drawn to the study of methods of linguocultural analysis, which will be instrumental in understanding various theories, approaches and viewpoints concerning the research object and in forming their own personal view of the object under study.

We suggest that the primary method of investigating changes occurring in cultural and political landscape of the US should be cognitive-discourse-oriented method, which provides insight into linguistic consciousness, and the possibility to reach value-oriented space of the linguistic world picture as one of the objects of linguocultural studies. This method considers the text on the basis of historical and idio-stylistic prerequisites of its creation. The translator, thus, faces the task to delineate and interpret cognitive structures, to identify semantic variances (phraseological word combinations,

metaphors, which are incorporated in different metaphorical conglomerates). The translator also needs to interpret the author's linguistic choices, which realize text strategies and tactics.

Another method to be taken into account is that of scientific observation, which, in our view, is slightly subjective and falls under the category of empirical methods. Nevertheless, it is this method that helps to identify tasks, reveal observation objects and elaborate behavior patterns with further results registration and systemizing the data acquired. Another efficient method to be used is the method of **synchronous analysis**, which comprises distinction (registration or construction) of the structure of the object under study at a certain moment of time (or certain gap of real historical time) via vertical time section of the object evolution (Komarova, 2012). It may combine several approaches in the language study, presuming, though, historical synchrony of the material under study. It is contrasted to **diachronic method** based on "comparative analysis of various linguocultural units throughout time" (Komarova, 2012, p. 540) (in our case, peculiarities of American nation conceptualization in different time periods). Application of **structural-functional method** built upon "delineating structure within complex systems, the structure being defined as a complexity of stable relations and interrelations between their elements and their roles (functions) in respect to each other" (Komarova, 2012, p. 311) focuses on the study of structural and functional peculiarities of the target language, as well as objective conditions of the US political landscape and establishment of cultural and social relations of various objects. **Communicative-pragmatic method** focuses on "active communicative (discourse) processes in their synchronous association with ethnic mentality active in the given cultural epoch and highlighting ethno-culturological aspects of communication" (Komarova, 2012, p. 541).

One of the ways to form the competences consists in using "the educational potential of the methods and means of instruction that constitute the procedural component of the didactic system" (Ilidzhev & Ibragimova, 2018, p. 595). The goal stated, that is improvement of competency-based translator model, might be attained through the use of cyclic teaching model. It presumes that discussion and application of the above stated culturological research methods focusing on cultural and political constituents of American nation, results in modelling real-life translation situations. Such modelling is based on various cultural and social topics, thus allowing the students not only to accumulate practical translation experience, but also to subject it to profound analysis with the view to further use it in practical professional activity.

Therefore, study and use of methods of linguocultural analyses results in higher level of professional translation, and the acquired result is further analyzed for the development of reflexive competencies to ensure successful formation of translator's strategic competency.

7. Conclusion

Presently proposed approach to formation of general and professional culture of the highly-qualified translator is based on the principle of creative interaction between teacher and student in the course of educational process.

Teachers' goal is not reduced to providing students with new information but is to "immerse" them in linguocultural environment of the target language culture, thus contributing to building the ability to successfully overcome the impact of stereotypes related to another people and ensure cross-cultural dialogue within dynamical changing foreign language community.

Metaphor-based research of the American nation phenomenon in linguoculturological and political discourses demonstrated the ways of transformation of foreign community image in the course of time. The indispensable condition of strengthening future translators' professional competencies is their ability to take into account these transformations and deeply understand them in the context of cross-disciplinary relations.

Acquisition of linguocultural analytical methods and their systemic application in the course of independent training foster the formation of reflexive skills and understanding of the "vastness of the boundaries" of the research landscape, where different viewpoints may co-exist thus encouraging students to develop their own independent vision of the research object. Stimulation of individual judgement appears to be an important psychological tool facilitating realization of aims and objectives of educational process.

The suggested cyclic teaching model (linguocultural analysis of the information – practical translation – analysis of translation based on linguocultural peculiarities of the target-language country) is presented as the most advanced systemic approach, which can ensure formation of thinking, competent and highly professional specialist within the realm of language in general and translation in particular.

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