

TRAINING VERSUS PROFESSION: FROM TRANSLATION TO WEB LOCALIZATION

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Abstract

One of the hottest topics of debate in the context of higher education is the existing divide in different regions of the world between university training and the job market. Although no consensus exists on possible ways to solve this, it is probably necessary to seek a balance between passive submission to the fluctuations in market demands, and settling in to educational stagnation.

The Translation and Interpreting Degree offered in Spanish universities teaches students specific linguistic, cultural and instrumental knowledge that enables them to solve problems specific to the essential modalities and spheres of translation and interpreting.

The job market those graduating in this degree enter is complex, for various reasons [1]. 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 [2].

It can be affirmed that, given that translation has evolved in the same manner as its environment, teaching methods must also adapt to the new era and to the reality of the market. We have proposed a teaching-learning environment based on our PATT (Professional Approach to Translator Training) Model [3-4] which, under a social constructivist focus, offers the opportunity to integrate the fundamental subjects of the degree in a way that the training of future translators is guaranteed the necessary coherence provided by this broad vision of the profession. In this context, ICTs are essential tools.

Despite the fact that, traditionally, student assessment has focused on the product, that is, the translated text, we argue that the assessment of the translation process, although entailing an enormous challenge, better reflects the acquisition of skills. Furthermore, the ideal situation would be for students, within the framework of continuous training, to be able to manage their own learning experience. We have designed self-assessment and peer review tools that take in a wide range of skills.

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 specialised translators and localizers who will be working in the field of web localization.

Keywords: website localization, translator training, Professional Approach to Translation Training Model, training innovation.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Degree in Interpreting and Translation offered in Spanish universities prepares students in the specific linguistic, cultural and instrumental knowledge that allows them to solve problems relating to the essential modalities and spheres of translation and interpreting.

The job market into which translation graduates incorporate supposes a constant challenge for these inter linguistic communication professionals, and contains specific singularities [1-2]. It is a dynamically changing market into which new software tools, communications channels and “market niches” are constantly added, which demand new professional profiles. It is a multimedia market that contains an automated and decentralised workplace, with ICT and virtual environments playing a major part. It is orientated towards speed, with demanding deadlines and high workloads. Furthermore, it demands high quality, measured in customer satisfaction and the level of suitability of the translation project to the conditions of the job.

The tasks undertaken by translation professionals are based on teamwork both from a collaborative point of view (where each team member individually carries out certain tasks to reach a common

objective) and cooperative one (in the sense that each participant interacts and actively communicates with the others to achieve this common objective). Teleworking stands out in this context, with ICTs constituting essential tools.

In addition, and above all in recent years, it is a market dominated by so-called localization processes. Indeed, constant changes in the economic environment, where globalisation and the development of the knowledge economy act as drivers, are systematically pushing companies towards the challenge of accessing external markets. Web localization constitutes a new field of study and professional intervention. 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 sites. 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 translation have certain particularities which must be studied and borne in mind so as to achieve the desired communication goals. The training of students in the field of web localization from a translation perspective supposes new challenges that it is necessary to face.

2 A PROFESSIONAL APPROACH TO TRANSLATOR TRAINING (PATT)

Translation is a highly digitised process that, from a generic point of view, can be summarised as follows [6]. The process is initiated with the analysis of the text by the translator, consisting of its assessment in order to obtain information on its language register or difficulty of subject and terminology, amongst other aspects. The documentation stage looks for solutions to problems detected in the previous one, mainly relating to terminology and understanding of the text.

Next, the translation itself will be carried out, that is, the translation of the original text into the destination language, taking into account the solutions and proposals obtained during the documentation stage. Then the revision stage comes, focused on the elimination of possible errors and the optimisation of the text at a linguistic level. Lastly, the process is closed by text editing and layout, which focus on the more formal aspects.

Our *Professional Approach to Translator Training Model (PATT)*, constitutes a teaching model that has been exploited, revised and adapted over time [3-4]. PATT opens a new channel, approaching the professional translation world via a simulation of teamwork as if it were the development of a real assignment in a translation agency. Our teaching model supposes an approach to the reality translation professionals in the 21st century, in which not just linguistic difficulties concur, but also, for example, problems of layout or stress, and the often mentioned interdisciplinarity.

One of the advantages of PATT is that students participating in the project incorporate skills and knowledge acquired through the different subjects spread throughout the study plan. This allows them to take on the perspective specific to each of the tasks of the different links in the chain of production in relation to the whole during their time at university. The students are organised into working teams in such a way that they can adopt the corresponding role (documentalist, terminologist, etc.. This also boosts self-learning as, although the students have the assistance of the tutors, they themselves must respond to the demands of the next link, adapting their conceptions. Added to this, the fact that professional relationships are established electronically contributes to the strengthening of the development of teleworking skills, along with the communication skills inherent to this field.

Translator training therefore implies a wide range of activities based on teamwork, and the undertaking of project-based learning tasks [4]. The “translation project - or job” is essential in the terminology of translator training. Within the project-based learning design, cooperative learning is encouraged characterised by positive independence, group tasks, individual responsibility, face-to-face interaction (which can be substituted, as in our case, by synchronous or asynchronous online interaction using virtual or semi-in situ teaching platforms, or social networks, amongst other communication tools), and the use of interpersonal and group interaction techniques [7]. The working groups organised to complete the translation jobs or projects are comprised of five students that carry out the roles of documentalist, terminologist, translator, reviser and project manager, assuming a different type of role for each assigned project. The incorporation of the perspective of gamification as a simulation of professional roles in the undertaking of translation tasks involves the application of a novel methodology and an incentive for students.

As shown in Fig. 1, in each team the sequence of tasks undertaken by each component for the completion of the different translation projects follow an ascending order and can be summarised as follows: 1) The student responsible for documentary search carries out the localization of parallel texts and texts relating to the text that is the object of study; 2) The student responsible for the terminology search carries out a systematic compilation of relevant terms referring to the studied text from the documentation found by the preceding link in the translation chain and from the terminological sources that he or she considers opportune to use. The conceptual system carried out allows students to structure the knowledge of the text in order to facilitate its acquisition; 3) The participant responsible for the translation carries out the translation of the text itself, supported by the results obtained in the previous tasks; 4) The students responsible for revision and layout carry out the textual revision of the translation and, then, afford the corresponding form to the text for its presentation as a final product in accordance with the guidelines provided with the job; and 5) The project manager assigns the tasks, coordinates the work with the team members and manages the correct progress of the process.

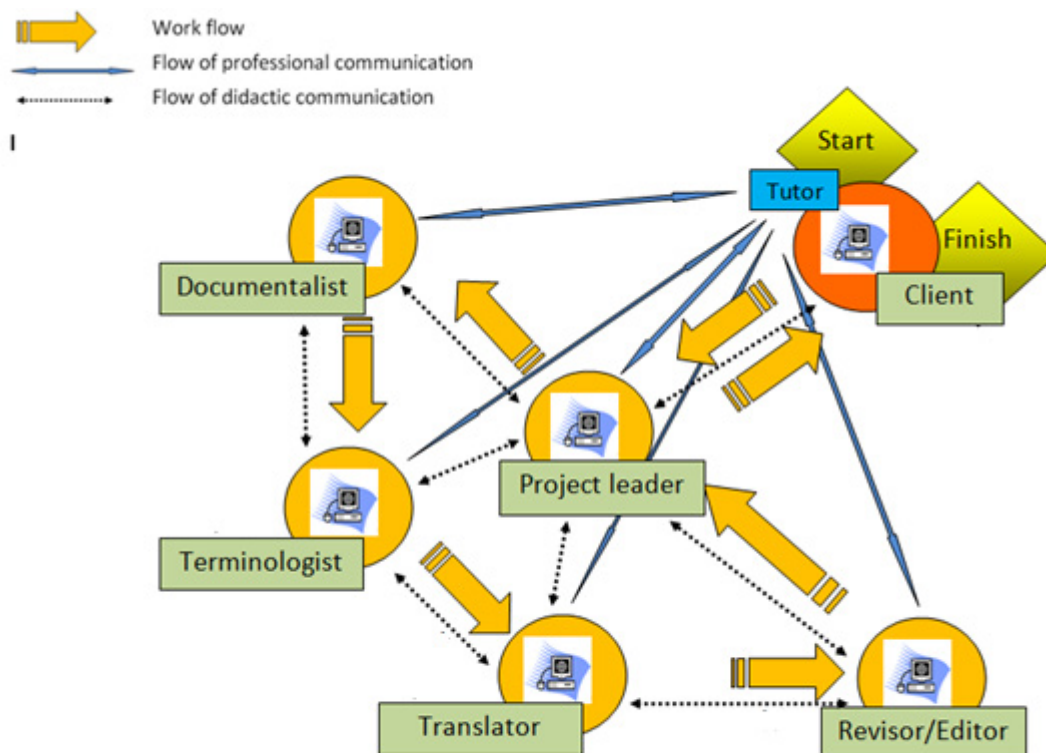


Fig.1. PATT Model.

In short, the main objectives of the teaching model we propose are channelled towards promoting coordination between subjects in university translation teaching, familiarising translation students with translation agency working methods - recreating the chain of production of the professional market -, or boosting teleworking, teamwork, cooperative work, self-learning and interdisciplinarity.

3 INNOVATION ASSESSMENT

In the sphere of teaching innovation it is essential to analyse the effect of proposed teaching methods and the application of new technologies in teaching-learning processes. To this end, different tools and procedures have been designed, developed and applied for the assessment of the experience, amongst which the following can be found:

3.1 Product versus process assessment: skills assessment tools

The assessment of the translation student has been traditionally focused on the product, with the translated text the sole evidence of fruitful learning. It is supposed that the complex nature of the process that leads to the production of a final translation should be assessed through the translation itself. The post-Bologna Translation and Interpreting Degree study plan is constructed around a detailed inventory of general and specific skills, and assessment should take in the whole range of

transversal competencies that comprise the instrumental, personal and systematic competencies associated with, for example, the completion of training projects, or teamwork.

It is not now enough to assess the product itself, despite the challenge of assessing the process being much more demanding, given that our attention as assessors must focus on something much less tangible [4]. In essence, the assessment of the product is a lesser challenge, as we are dealing with a document that can be measured depending on predefined and agreed descriptors or protocols; assessing a product gives rise to an objective comparison that can be replicated. Assessing a process involves a lower level of accuracy in terms of the objectivity of our judgement and our capacity to replicate the object. As such, in order to have value, all instruments or procedures must be founded on solid, shared and verifiable criteria. The nature of the professional development of the translator and the essential content of the compulsory study plan cover theoretical-practical knowledge that reflects the nucleus of the discipline and, at the same time, the main roles that each translator, individually or as a member of a team, must undertake on a daily basis in the exercise of his or her profession.

The ideal situation is for students, within the framework of ongoing learning, to be able to manage their own learning experience, which should include both the quality of the experience and their performance. Our contribution in this context has been orientated towards the design of transparent self-assessment and peer assessment in the form of descriptor criteria which, in our opinion, guide the learning process and offer students excellent possibilities of progressing in the achievement of their goals [4, 8].

Table 1. Descriptors for self-assessment and peer assessment of collaborative teamwork.

Team	Score
0	Reluctant towards the concept of team.
1	Shows sensitivity towards the team but remains reluctant.
2	Participates in team activities.
3	Encourages teamwork.
4	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 strengthens the team.

3.2 Transactional analysis: file log

The file logs are automatically created by registering the transactions and interactions of the users in a system. This analysis method has been used in two contexts: a) to establish interactions of students with our website –aulaint.es, which compiles useful resources for translation teachers, students and professionals - and social networks personalised in the academic context - such as Ning–[9], and b) to find out the activity generated on the collaborative working platforms on the part of our students [10].

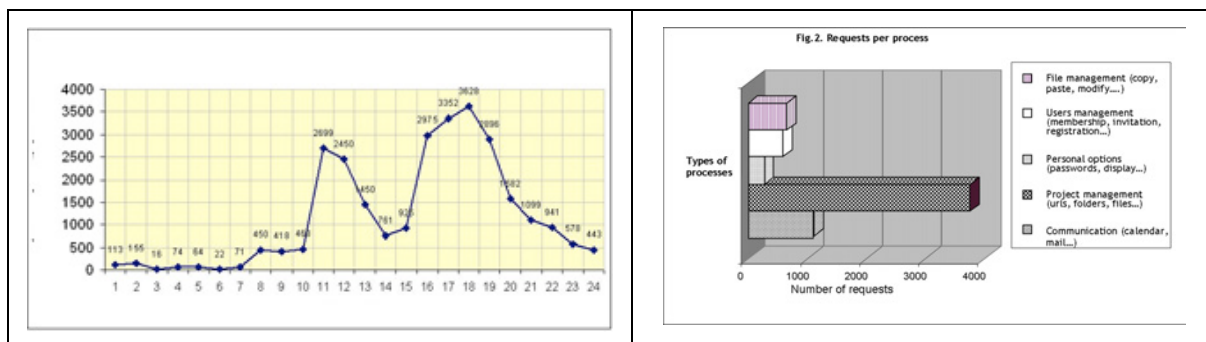
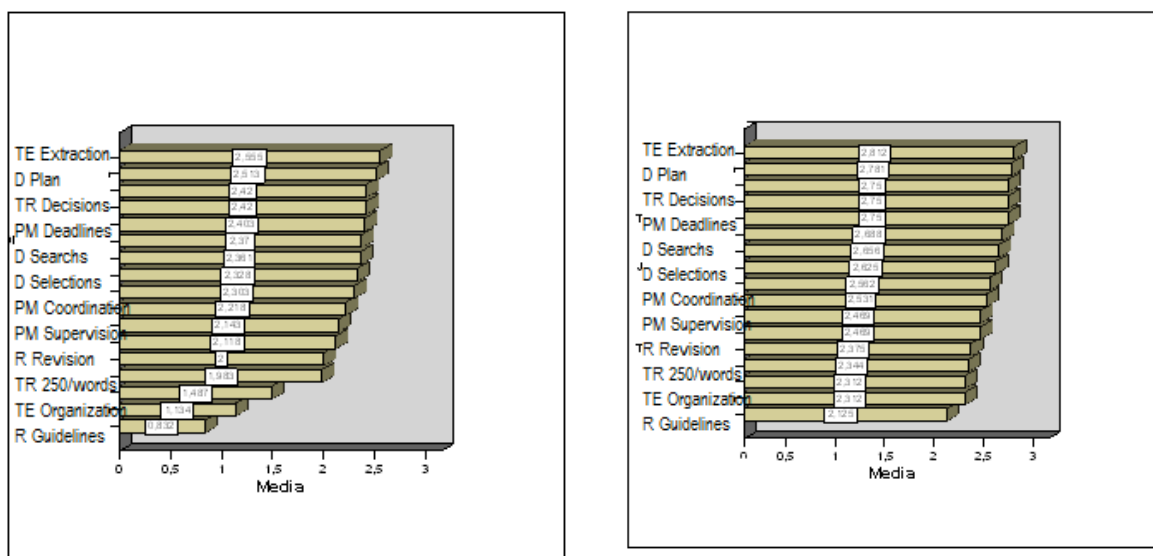


Fig. 2. Transactions on a collaborative working platform.

3.3 Analysis of Questionnaires: User satisfaction

We have designed and applied, to students and teachers, different prior and subsequent questionnaires, that is, before and after they interact with our teaching proposals. This has enabled us to register at first hand the opinions, impressions and self-perception of teachers and students as regards our *Professional Approach to Translator Training* teaching model, and as regards the application of the different tools adopted in the teaching-learning processes [9, 11-13].



D-Documentalist, TE-Terminologist, TR-Translator, R-Revisor, PM-Project Manager

Fig. 3. Self-perception of students regarding their translation skills before and after training with the PATT model.

4 WEB LOCALIZATION: PEDAGOGICAL ISSUES

Web localization constitutes a new field of study and professional intervention. Although the localization of software, videogames and apps, amongst others, have taken a huge role, in the last few years we have witnessed the unprecedented growth of web localization, a communicative, technological, textual and cognitive process by which interactive digital texts (or websites) are modified for use by an international public which is not the use initially foreseen [14].

Localization forms part of the group of interdependent process known by the acronym GILT: Globalization, Internationalization, Localization, Translation [15]. Internationalization consists in identifying all local information that appears on a website, that is, that information that is dictated by the language and culture of the country where it was originally designed, for example, dates, numbers, currency, contact information, etc. These elements must be isolated and saved independently so they can be adapted to the specifications of any language. 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 [16]. For its part, globalization combines the processes of internationalization and localization. It consists of the design of websites that can be used in different countries with a minimum of changes. It is a concept that belongs more to the marketing than technical issues.

The internationalization and localization of websites are 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 [17].

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].

The increasing success of the Internet industry is reflected in the high demand for localizers, who until now mainly had to learn web localization skills on the job in an ad hoc manner, due to the lack of formal training available. The economic importance of this phenomenon is increasing, and its significance is borne out by the growing body of research dedicated to localization, specialised conferences and the number of institutions offering training courses for professionals in this area. At Spanish Universities, it is usually the audiovisual or *tradumatic* (translation technology) translation materials that include skills particular to localization in the different Translation and Interpreting Masters' degrees. Notwithstanding, an industry growing at such a dramatic rate, such as the one related to the Web and Web 2.0, demands the existence of curricular and specific training programmes for each type of localizer (web localizer, videogame localizer, software localizer, amongst others).

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 [22]. The boom in the videogame industry as a form of entertainment over the last two decades, and the constant appearance of new platforms, genres and technologies, has contributed to the increase of demand for a series of professionals with a dynamic, multidisciplinary and, at the same time, specialised profile, to which a number of authors [22-26] have developed specific classifications of the competencies specific to videogame localizers.

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, internationalisation, globalisation 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].

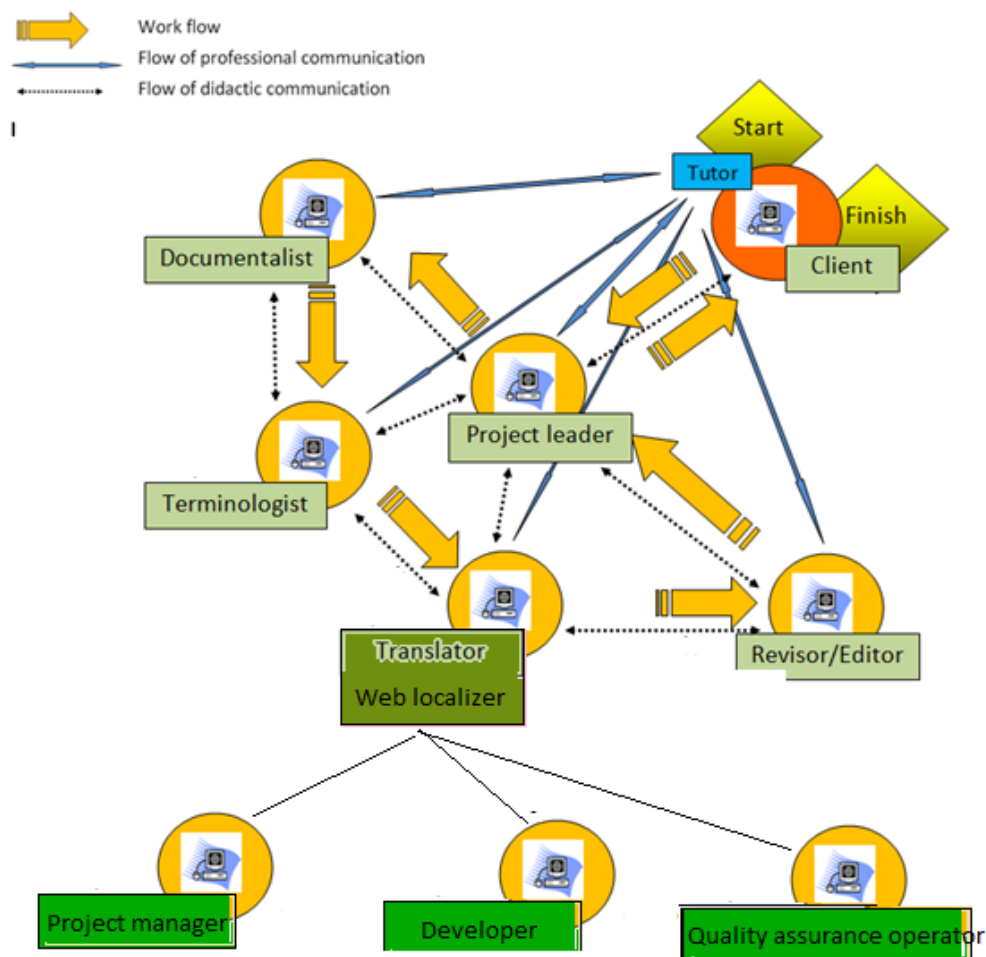


Fig.4. PATT model adapted to the profile of web localizer.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The PATT model has evolved towards different proposals. The tests and gradual improvement of transparent assessment tools has allowed us to create a teaching-learning environment based on the most productive aspects of social constructivism, to offer students an atmosphere of semi-virtual innovating learning, clearly in tune with the reality of the digital native generation. We consider that these teaching proposals are extremely promising as a means to assure considerable improvements in the quality of the teaching-learning experience of digital natives and immigrants alike.

One step further within the development of the PATT model is the incorporation of new professional profiles that are currently on rise in the job market, as is the case with web localizers. Although this professional profile has been in existence throughout the last decade, no specific training or studies yet exist that focus on the pedagogic particularities of the field. In this study we have identified the main skills necessary for the socio-constructivist training of these professionals via the creation of specific courses that apply the teaching method in question. Furthermore, it indicates the relevance

that transdisciplinarity acquires in the context of the localization industry, being a factor that will inevitably have to be taken into account in the teaching-learning process of translators-web localizers.

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