

# WEB 2.0 TECHNOLOGIES IN THE TRANSLATOR TRAINING: AULAI NT

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## Abstract

The dynamic nature of translator training, set as it is against a background of exponential growth in Information and Communication Technology, has channelled the ongoing research of a large number of University teachers for the last two decades. Innovative teaching initiatives have been developed to review the key component of the research and teaching conducted in this context.

Our main objectives have been to implement the current changes under way in the Spanish university system; introduce a new didactic model, PATT (Professional Approach to Translation Training), designed to coordinate the learning taking place in a series of core and elective course modules that ran across four years of the undergraduate Translation and Interpreting degree program; and adapt PATT model to the Web 2.0 technologies with the development of new resources (Digital library, Open Software library, Social Networks, Wikis, Blogs, etc.).

This didactic model has grown ever more sophisticated over the years and the gradual testing and refinement of transparent assessment tools has enabled us to create a learning/teaching environment that draws on the most productive aspects of social constructivism to offer learners a modern, blended e-learning course environment closely attuned to the reality of the Digital Native generation through the rigorous integration of Web 2.0 interactive social networks.

Keywords: Translation training, ECTS experience, new technologies, translation market.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The widespread application of Web 2.0 in traditional learning contexts can be justified only if it offers results that are better than those previously achieved. Research into these technologies has focused on a range of fields including learner motivation and sense of community. The pedagogical value of these tools is being analyzed and evaluated for the purpose of improving the new didactic methods used in the classroom through incorporating communication means that are more familiar to students.

Today's translators can define themselves as multilingual communicators and stress their command of this assortment of tools available since the beginning of the last two decades. This does not mean that language competence has become less important but, on the contrary, it is only one facet of the large competences they need to acquire [1].

Translators' working methods have been modified thanks to the development of new communication tools. The new technological advances are undoubtedly influencing the training provided to translators and to other language mediators. Teachers themselves are expected to adopt a change of mind and to design their classes for optimum use of current information technologies and, in consequence, to top-quality professional performance [2].

The ideal translation process should be divided into different stages (as already occurs in major translation agencies), each task being assigned to a different team member with a different role: terminologist, documentalist, translator, reviser, and project manager. The division of the translation process into different stages is just a form of teamwork, often completed in an assembly-line style, which may be facilitated by teleworking — that is, long-distance work on computers — thanks to the implementation of new technologies.

Given the technological revolution that has transformed both the teaching and the practise of translation; we also have to take into account the application and knowledge of these tolls and their application to translation training. The Professional Approach to Translator Training (PATT) [1, 3-13] constitutes the didactic model initially created by our group and exploited, revised and adapted over the last ten years.

This contribution presents the results of an experiment performed at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting of the University of Granada. Our review encompasses three major topics: (1) the pedagogical philosophy underlying PATT; (2) the description of the process of change introduced into the European higher education system by the Bologna process, outlining some of its consequences in Translation and Interpreting studies; (3) the present a range of transparent self- and peer-assessment tools we have designed and explain their use.

## **2 UNIVERSITY CHANGE**

Change, such as that currently being experienced in the Spanish university system, should be a process of informed decision-making and the Bologna process has led to the implementation of modifications derived from consultations at national and international levels involving major stakeholders in higher education, represented by teachers, students, employers, subject-matter experts and professional bodies: supposedly the best informed and most directly interested parties. The single most important novelty of this change lies in the radical change from a traditional, teacher-centred, content-based focus to a largely social-constructivist, learner-centred, competence-based approach [14].

Adapting to Bologna has meant rewriting university curricula to meet the general guidelines established by the TUNING project and this study examines examples taken from new undergraduate programmes in Translation and Interpreting at the University of Granada, Spain, that have drawn on a range of competences students/learners are supposed to acquire through their studies [15-17]. Competences are classified in two broad groups—general (or transversal or generic) and specific—and subdivided into personal, systemic and instrumental, and academic/discipline-based and professional, respectively. In many programmes, specific competences reflect the original content-based programmes they replace, giving teachers the opportunity to reformulate knowledge/contents. However, the broadening of scope represented by introducing competences constitutes the major challenge in implementing these changes. Personal, systemic and instrumental competences are wide-reaching and go beyond anything the former programmes contemplated, involving areas of our learners' individual development that were not previously given explicit consideration [14].

Learners in this context should ideally be able to manage their own learning experience and that should include both the quality of the experience as well as their performance. Learners need to develop a holistic view of their learning that will help inform the overall assessment process. Learners educated in self- and peer-assessment are far better able to assimilate and negotiate external assessment criteria. Further down the road, they become independent managers of their own performance capable of objectively assessing their own processes and products.

## **3 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES**

The last half of the twentieth century was characterized by revolutions in ICT that have influenced numerous professions, including translation. The new technology has made translators' work easier, but, in order to meet market needs, ICT must occupy their rightful place in student training [18-19]. The demanding professional translation market expects would be professionals to have a broad knowledge of the subject matter of the text, to use a large number of computer tools proficiently, and to be versatile in the sense that they can master all elements in the translation process.

Since translation is multidisciplinary, translator training programs must instill not only proficient language command in both source- and target languages, but also, equally important, must bring together knowledge and skills that belong to different disciplines, such as documentation, terminology, desktop publishing, as well as some knowledge of specialized texts. Students must learn this so that they can ultimately thrive collectively as members of a profession. So, instructors also need to build skills that will help translators adopt new roles [20].

The technological tools and utilities that are now available to translators, on the one hand, have made some work easier, but these resources have also added new problems. The translation market sets increasingly unrealistic and short deadlines and delivery dates, and the daily volume of translation is growing at an incredible rate. Except for a privileged few who can afford to reject translation briefs, most professional translators have to accept these conditions or they will suffer: clients have become more strict about the 'quality' of translations or, rather, about their own 'criteria for quality', which restricts the 'freedom' of translators. Nowadays, computer tools applied to translation and text processing allow clients to develop their own glossaries, terminology databases, and Translation

Memories. Although access to these bases for specific (or a series of) assignments for the same client enables translators to achieve a higher degree of terminological and phraseological precision and consistency and, therefore, a higher level of quality and productivity, bases from specific firms may cause 'errors' that persist over time, either because the terminology databases are not revised often enough or out of negligence regarding updating. Ultimately, translators must respect the strict rules set by clients concerning style and quality guarantees, because if they are not observed, this may lead to rejection of the translation by agency revisers or by the clients themselves.

#### **4 THE PROFESSIONAL APPROACH TO TRANSLATOR TRAINING (PATT)**

All translation processes require the execution of a series of closely-related and recursive tasks that lead to an end product - a quality translation. If, from the cognitive point of view, these tasks are repeated and superimposed, it is also true that in many cases, stages are discovered in which one of the aspects of the overall task is revealed.

This becomes patent on the analysis of the organization of work in translations carried out by more than one subject, where tasks are divided and shared out, nearly always sequentially. This is so because many sectors in the market that generate a large turnover have extremely tight deadlines that involve the need to join the efforts of a group of professionals. As a result, these professionals must know how to undertake tasks specific to their role in one or more stages of the process but also deal exclusively with the tasks inherent in an assigned role, when carried out in a team. Roughly speaking, as considered by our PATT model, at least four stages can be distinguished, characterized by a series of specific tasks, which are based on the use of different tools, resources and basic and necessary sources of information. In each stage the use of information resources is obligatory, which is why we have defined and applied a model for structuring the use of these resources in the processes of translation teaching.

Initially, the PATT model was designed to coordinate the learning taking place in a series of core and elective course modules that ran across three of the four years of the undergraduate degree programme in Translation and Interpreting. Training translators involves a wide range of activities based on team work and the performance of project-based learning tasks. The "translation project" is essential to the terminology of translator training. However, student assessment has traditionally been product-oriented with the translated text being considered the only evidence of successful learning. The complex nature of the process that leads up to the production of a final translation is assumed to be assessed via the translation itself. Our post-Bologna curriculum is constructed around a detailed inventory of general and specific competences and assessment should cover the full range of transversal competences including the instrumental, personal and systemic competences associated with, for example, the fulfilment of learning projects or team work. It is no longer sufficient to assess the product alone even though the challenge of assessing the process is much more demanding since our attention as assessors needs to focus on far less tangible factors. Essentially, assessing the product is a lesser challenge as we are dealing with a document that can be measured against predefined and agreed descriptors or protocols; to assess a product gives rise to objective comparison that can be replicated. To assess a process involves a lower level of certainty as to the objectivity of our judgement and of our ability to replicate the object, hence the value of the criteria used will depend on how solid, shared and verifiable they are. The nature of the professional development of the translator and the essential content of the core curriculum encompass theoretical-practical knowledge that reflects the core of the discipline and, at the same time, the principle roles that each translator, individually or as a member of a team, needs to perform in daily professional life.

The modules involved in the development of this model were the 1<sup>st</sup> year core course in "Applied Documentation for Translation Studies"; the 3<sup>rd</sup> year core course in "Terminology"; the 3<sup>rd</sup> year core course in "Applied Informatics for Translation Studies"; and the 4<sup>th</sup> year electives in "Specialized Translation". Teachers of all these implicated materials have sent a series of optional tasks to the students on a single topic, in a way that the work carried out during the subject will have been useful for developing subsequent translations.

Given that professional translation work is highly influenced by new communication opportunities, teleworking must occupy its rightful place in translator training at the University. In PATT model, Translation and Interpreting students form teams and manage several translation projects by using a collaborative work platform. The main objective is to determine the effects of the collaborative work on the following aspects of translation training: computing and translation skills, teleworking, the use of new Web 2.0 technologies, and students' satisfaction with these new didactic methods.

The chronological order of the discrete elements that constitute each translation project (Fig. 1) involved coordination between lecturers and students in at least four of these modules and is conducted using a different collaborative work platforms. The platform facilitates asynchronous collaboration across courses and even semesters.

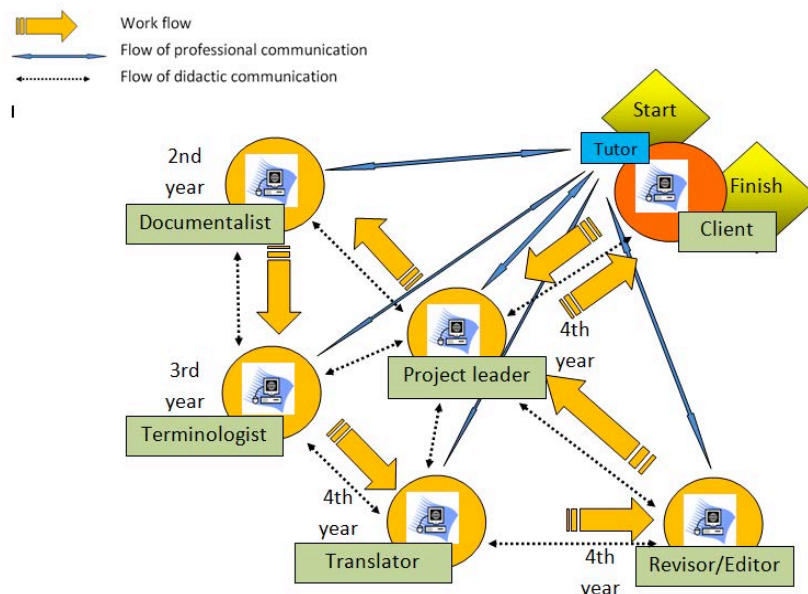


Figure 1. The original PATT design (Olvera-Lobo et al. 2007).

Once the student has understood the relationship between the different subjects involved in the degree and has taken in the concepts, day-to-day work in the classroom will still be done by following this model. In order to orientate the students in the application of MPTD, and in the use of the information resources, an explanatory *Work guide* was developed that sets out what the useful sources of information are in each stage of translation and offers guidance on how to organise and store the work done in each of these stages.

## 5 TOOLS USED FOR TRANSLATION TRAINING

The use of virtual methods as teaching tools allows you not only to cover translators' training needs with greater precision in terms of the labor market, but it also reduces the loss of enthusiasm that many students experience in traditional face-to-face classes [11, 21]. In this respect, the optimum combination consists in complementing traditional classes with multimedia activities. In short, the teaching model, the new associated technologies and the application of information resources to translation projects allow the putting into practice of that which has already been covered in face-to-face classes (Robinson, 2013). During our trajectory we have created, used, analyzed and evaluated tools and resources that we have applied to the field of translation. Some of the most relevant are outlined below.

### 5.1 Collaborative Work Platforms

As has already been pointed out, the nature of training in translation favors teamwork, collaborative work and teleworking. The collaborative work platforms consist of an extremely valuable tool for encouraging these competencies. Such platforms are able to create an environment for teaching translation that includes submitting translations online and receiving marked work in the same way, exchange of opinions and data via a discussion board, and comments from tutors (delayed or in real time). The benefits for students are clear to see: there is no need for physical attendance.

Over the last few years our teaching team has used the following platforms for this end:

- a) *BSCW (Basic Support for Cooperative Work)*: This platform allows the creation of different shared work spaces for exchanging objects (documents, websites, calendar and discussion forum entries) between registered users. In *BSCW* the work is organized into "zones", that is, virtual spaces where you can find all of the people who form part of the workgroup.

- b) *Claroline*: open source software that allows the easy implementation of a platform dedicated to on-line learning and collaboration. Amongst other options it allows you to publish documents in any format; create and administer both public and private discussion forums; create exercises and questionnaires; manage documents sent by students and create student groups.
- c) *SWAD (Sistema Web de Apoyo a la Docencia or Teaching Support Web System)*: free software teletraining and teaching management platform developed and used in the University of Granada since 1999. *SWAD* integrates diverse functions into a web tool that support learning, teaching and management of student and teacher details.
- d) *Moodle*: Open Source Course Management System, also known as a virtual learning environment. The aim of this platform is to provide teachers with the best tools to manage and encourage learning. The University of Granada uses Moodle as the institutional platform for online training. This tool allows teachers to interact through activity modules (such as forums, databases and wikis) to build collaborative learning communities around a subject, or via SCORM (*Sharable Content Object Reference Model*) packets, which allow them to offer content to their students and carry out assessments using tasks or questionnaires.

## 5.2 Web 2.0 tools

Web 2.0 is the name that has been given to a group of tools available on the modern, interactive and collaborative Internet. These tools are characterized by the possibilities they offer users of carrying out a dual role: being protagonists and users of the information that circulates on the Internet. In this sense, we seek to respond to two issues: the overarching context of introducing the modernizing, learning-centred consequences of the Bologna agreement into the highly traditional, teaching-oriented Spanish university framework; and, more specifically, the manner in which Web 2.0 tools are used in the new classroom context. We have tried to provide answers that indicate how we can successfully integrate Web 2.0 tools in such a way as to ensure that they constitute relevant components of a new learner-centred university model. These tools are popular with students, and commit them to the learning process in an entertaining and practical way.

Below we mention some of the most used in our proposals for teaching innovation.

### 5.2.1 Social networks

The social networks were created within the university [22] and today, as many lecturers will avouch, they are omnipresent. One of the characteristics of the networks that have received the attention of researchers is how users construct their on-line identity. In an earlier study of student use of social networks and their attitude towards using them for academic purposes [23], we found students were uncomfortable about their tutors having access to the same networks that they themselves participated in—a degree of reticence that their peers in other parts of the world appeared to have overcome or not experienced [24-26].

We have analyzed and applied, from an academic perspective, the general social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Tuenti [21, 23]. We have created subject profiles on Facebook and Twitter. Furthermore, we have also created our own social networks using online platforms, such as Ning, for users, which allow the creation of social networks that are tailored to a particular necessity or subject, directed towards specific audiences [27]. Ning allows administrators to have a certain level of control at source code level for their social networks, furnishing them with the possibility of changing characteristics and low-level logic. In this case, it was employed in the development of tasks for specialized translation subjects.

### 5.2.2 Wikis

Wikis are websites whose pages can be edited by multiple volunteers via a web navigator. Users can create, modify or delete a text that they share. The most important application and that which has made them famous up to now has been the creation of collective encyclopedias, the type to which *Wikipedia* belongs.

Many other applications exist that are closer to the coordination of information and actions, or the sharing of knowledge or texts within groups. In fact, we have found wiki tools to be especially useful for setting up common spaces where students have used teamwork to carry out various classroom tasks, collaborative translation and the creation of specific glossaries, amongst others.

### 5.2.3 Blogs

Blogs are periodically updated websites that chronologically compile texts or articles from one or more authors, with the most recent appearing first, where the author always has the freedom to leave what he or she believes to be relevant.

Blogs have turned out to be an extraordinary complimentary mechanism for face-to-face teaching, undoubtedly encouraging interactivity and the active participation of students in teaching-learning processes. In this manner, students do not just receive content; they also incorporate news and comments related to the matters addressed in the teaching programs of the subjects.

Taking into account the extremely positive results that have been obtained, we understand that the use of this type of tool should be generalized in the educational context.

## 5.3 Free software

At present, there is a wide range of tools to aid translation such as the computer-assisted translation programs or terminology management and extraction tools, amongst many others. Nevertheless, in the majority of cases, they are commercial products that are not always accessible to all budgets, and do not have the possibility of being adapted to particular needs.

Free software (FS), or open-source software (OSS), refers to software whose code is publically accessible. Furthermore, normally, these programs are free of charge, although the defense of free or open-source software comes from the idea of intellectual freedom.

The use of free software is strengthened in four large areas of translation tasks: *a)* linguistic tools (automatic extraction of terminology, corpus creation and analysis, terminology management), *b)* editing and layout tools (office software suite, image editing), *c)* translation tools (document alignment, translation memory management, assisted translation, website localization) and *d)* management tools (wordcount, project management, billing, and financial management).

## 5.4 Information for translation

Amongst the most fundamental aspects of Web 2.0 are information resources. To encourage the systematic use of these resources for the teaching of translation processes, we have designed, developed and applied a series of additional support tools for teaching-learning processes. These tools have allowed the student to identify which is the information necessary in the translation processes, establish a typology and organization of appropriate information resources; and, incorporate some of the most stand-out information sources, selected for their interest and usefulness.

To do this, a Digital Library has been developed that, although it does not attempt to offer a completely exhaustive list of available information resources that are useful for translation (an impossible task due to its vastness), it collects hundreds of resources useful to translators, both from the point of view of their training and their professional development.

Moreover, attempting to facilitate comprehension of the different tools developed, some interactive tutorials and explanatory videos have been created for students, which attempt to expand on concepts already learned in the classroom via the diversification of new resources and teaching methods. These tools have been received really well by the students, as adjusting to their codes of communication and production could help them greatly in their learning.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

We have described the long-term process of evolution and adaptation that has moulded the Professional Approach to Translator Training (PATT) applied. During the preceding years, the PATT model has grown ever more sophisticated and the gradual testing and refinement of transparent assessment tools has enabled us to create a learning/teaching environment that draws on the most productive aspects to offer learners a modern, blended e-learning course environment closely attuned to the reality of the Digital Native generation through the rigorous integration of Web 2.0 interactive social networks.

That online learning tools have an especially important role to play in translator training has been demonstrated and the minimum criterion for gauging their success has to be that student outcomes should be the same or better than those attained using earlier methodological approaches. Change for

the sake of change cannot be justified and proof that this criterion is being met is essential. Furthermore, as we have said earlier, the attitudes of participants and their input to the context to be changed is important if we want to avoid change being rejected.

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