

Blending ICT with ESP in Translator Education

As clients, companies and translation agencies alike, demand translators with strong Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills, state-of-the-art translator education can stay competitive only in a blended learning environment. In Hungary, courses on the use of Computer Assisted Tools (CAT) have been successfully integrated into the curricula of translator training in tertiary education, but the use and methodological implications of ICT on translation classes seems to be a neglected field. This paper is based on the assumption that today blending ICT with English for Specific Purposes (ESP) means the only way to provide students with the proper set of translation specific skills and knowledge. To display a storehouse of activities based on this approach, the paper focuses on postgraduate translation classes at Budapest Business School, College of International Management and Business. As the students attending these classes are independent learners who, besides their foreign language and IT skills, also bring some translation experience as added value to the learning process, the activities are based on free or low cost tools already available to them. These tools include online dictionaries, terminology databases, MS Word revision tools, blogs on professional platforms, and Audacity, a sound editing and recording software. The guided work within the blended learning environment not only intends to prepare students for the course on CAT tools, but also shapes their identity as professional translators involved in various forms of digital work processes.

Keywords: Information and Communications Technology, English for Specific Purposes, translator education, blended learning”

¹ The University of Pannonia, Faculty of Modern Philology and Social Sciences; e-mail address: mudriczki.judit@mftk.uni-pannon.hu.

Introduction

In his summary on translation training written for the *Oxford Companion to Translation Studies*, Anthony Pym finds the distinction between “translator training” and “translator education” developed by Silvia Bernardini both useful and polemical (Pym 2009: 7). While training refers to the development of linguistic skills so that trainee translators could make acceptable translations, translator education also covers a number of interpersonal skills and attitudes that facilitate the translator’s work in a professional work environment. This approach also involves that trainee translators “must be taught not just how to do things; they must become members of the various overlapping professional communities engaged in the production of translations” (Pym 2009: 8).

For more than a decade, as one of the most innovative methodological approaches, blended learning has dominated academic discussions on translator education for its potential to answer the twenty-first century challenges higher education institutions face. In simple words, the term itself means “the thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences” (Garrison – Kanuka 2004: 96). Trainee translators can gain these “online learning experiences” in the translation classroom with the help of various Information and Communications Technology (ICT) tools once they are integrated into the learning process. In translation studies, this integration is highly desired not only to familiarize students with translators’ workstations but also to improve their terminology search and management skills (Kiraly 2000: 136).

This paper favours a practical approach to its subject matter and intends to show examples how ICT tools are implemented in translation classes at Budapest Business School, College of International Management and Business, and also illustrates it with some sample activities. These activities concern the use of English for specific purposes (ESP) in the field of cultural heritage protection in order to show how trainee translators could retrieve and use both the English and Hungarian terminology applied in this specific context. This field seems to be an ideal illustration for the integration of ICT tools in the translation process because, besides the electronic resources, hardly any up-to-date print material is available in the English-Hungarian language combination.

Teaching Context

The translation classes that provide the background to the present paper are part of the three-semester postgraduate course in translation and interpretation in economic and social sciences at Budapest Business School, College of International Management and Business. It focuses more particularly on the seminar called “Translation Skills and Practice”, which provides the backbone of the course syllabus as it is the only class that lasts for three semesters. As this postgraduate course is offered part-time with all the contact hours on Saturdays, interpretation classes are scheduled for the morning, whereas translation classes are usually in the afternoon. The group meets four times a semester for 4-6 hour sessions to discuss practical matters that arise while translating specialized texts from English into Hungarian as well as from Hungarian into English.

The trainee translators, aged between twenty-two and fifty, form a mixed ability class in which there are students with diverse professional backgrounds including economists, lawyers, foreign language teachers etc. Regardless of this diversity, they share at least two characteristics that bring added value to the learning process: first, they are independent learners in the sense that they bring their foreign language and IT skills to the classroom; secondly they often have some translation experience as well.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Tools

As an umbrella term, ICT covers a wide range of computer or internet based programs, applications and devices but in the field of translation studies it most often refers to the use of Computer Assisted Translation (CAT) tools. In simple terms CAT means a “form of translation wherein a human translator creates a target text with the assistance of [...] a range of specialized computer programs available to the translator, including translation-memory, terminology-management, concordance, and alignment programs” (Escarra – Navarrete 2011: 7). In tertiary education, training opportunities for the use of the most widely known specialized programs, e.g. SDL Trados, Star Transit, Déjà Vu or Wordfast are quite limited as these are proprietary applications and colleges and universities can rarely afford the high license costs (Bowker et al. 2008: 28–29). Their other drawback is that they are intended for commercial use and “offer far more functionality than is required in a training context” (Cánovas – Samson 2011: 49).

Nevertheless, today for both freelance and in-house positions translation agencies seek candidates who are familiar with the use of at least one of the most widely-known translation memory tools, a demand that higher education institutions cannot ignore if they want to stay competitive and provide state-of-the-art translator education. At Budapest Business School, the syllabus includes a CAT course in the second semester that offers an introduction to the use of memoQ to familiarize students with the benefits of this translation memory and terminology management application for the translation process. As students cannot be expected to purchase and use this translation memory tool from the beginning of their translation studies, the application of CAT tools falls beyond the scope of this paper. Therefore the ICT tools that are discussed in what follows include those open source software and applications that are available to students at low cost or for free and could easily contribute to their translation process.

As the “Translation Skills and Practice” seminars intend to create a simulated work environment for in-house translators, the classes rely on in-class translation assignments during which open source tools, applicable at every stage of the translation process, give essential contribution to the classes. At the pre-translation stage, internet search engines and terminology databases facilitate the translators’ work as terminology mining is estimated to take 75 per cent of translation time (Austermühl 2001: 102). At the translation stage, the most useful ICT tools include online dictionaries, blog entries on professional platforms or free machine translation tools. Google translate, for instance, offers instant help when questions concerning transcription and transliteration matters arise. At the post-translation stage, MS Word revision tools and Audacity, a sound editing and recording software, are the most beneficial tools that trainee translators use to revise their work and improve the quality of the target text, as it will be illustrated later. Besides these translation tools, classes also benefit from a teaching and communication tool called Coospace that provides students with a virtual learning environment at Budapest Business School. Although most teachers’ use of Coospace at the school does not move beyond administrative duties (Asztalos 2012: 21), this paper will offer some examples for its pedagogical application in translator education classes.

Methodology

The implementation of ICT tools in translator education also has its impact on methodological concerns. Ordinary, i.e. non-ICT based, translation classes are traditionally dominated by the instructor who is regarded as the ultimate source of knowledge for students, a role that Alison King in her classic essay calls a “sage on the stage” (King 1993: 30). The class content comprises source texts selected by the instructor to be translated either in class or at home to provide students with learning material for classroom discussions. The source and target texts are usually available in the classroom in print and the discussion of translation means a face-to-face, oral exchange of information between the instructor and the students during which the availability of resources e.g. dictionaries, reference materials, terminology lists is rather limited. The main learning objective of such classes is to produce high quality target texts, and assignments must be submitted for evaluation to the instructor either in print or by e-mail. What this paper calls blended classes, on the other hand, assigns the role of a facilitator or a “guide on the side” (King 1993, 30) to the instructor whose overall goal is to help students by introducing them to a wide range of translation strategies. Instead of face-to-face instructions, students receive the description of assignments on a virtual learning environment (VLE) platform, and the oral discussions between the instructor and trainee translators function as conversations during which they share their ideas and ask for advice in order to complete the assignment. This discussion could also be conducted in the form of blog entries that archive conversations for further reference. When trainee translators work on their assignments on the computers available in the classroom, the internet provides them with unlimited availability of online resources. At the end of the translation process, they submit their assignments for evaluation online by uploading the files onto a virtual submission platform where they also receive feedback from the instructor. *Table 1* summarizes the contrast between these two approaches.

Sample Assignments from Blended Classes

In order to illustrate most of the advantages of blended classes, two sample assignments are also described and displayed in details. Both assignments are based on the translation of source texts taken from the field of cultural heritage protection in order to improve trainee translators’ terminology mining skills.

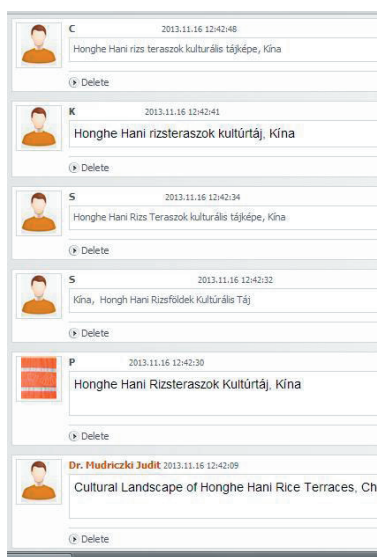
Table 1: *Contrast between ordinary and blended classes*

	Ordinary classes	Blended classes
Instructor	“sage on the stage”	“guide on the side”
Class content	oral discussion, pre-translated or in-class translated texts	oral and written discussion, pre-translated or in-class translated texts
Learning objectives	produce high-quality target texts	introduce translation-strategies
Interaction	face-to-face	face-to-face and VLE-mediated
Tasks	paper-based	internet-based
Resources	limited availability in the classroom	online resources – unlimited availability in the classroom
Submission of assignments	printed or e-mailed to the instructor	online

The first assignment is designed for the first semester classes with the intention to familiarize students with unesco.org and vilagorokseg.hu, the website of the Secretariat of the Hungarian World Heritage Commission. Besides recognizing the special terminology that these organizations use, trainee translators are also required to work on texts related to world heritage sites in order to provide them with some revision on the proper spelling of geographical terms, which otherwise may be a rather boring linguistic activity in translation classes. This assignment means the in-class translation of a 300-word excerpt from the article entitled “5 stunning new UNESCO World Heritage Sites” from English into Hungarian. Once trainee translators finish their own translations, a group discussion follows in the form of blog entries. The instructor copies the source text sentence by sentence into the discussion blog, trainee translators share their own target language versions as blog entries, and the group evaluates the available target text versions. Screenshot 1 shows that even such seemingly simple phrases as the “Cultural Landscape of Honghe Hani Rice Terraces, China” resulted in five completely different Hungarian versions. While visiting the two websites as reference materials, trainee translators are expected to discover that in this specific context the proper Hungarian counterpart of “cultural landscape” is “kultúrtáj”, which cannot be interchanged with “kulturális táj” or “kulturális tájkép” as some of them assumed. This preference can be easily explained by contrasting the terminology applied on the two organizations’ websites to show trainee translators that “kultúrtáj” is used as a legal term in this specific context. A search for

the term “cultural landscape” on UNESCO’s website reveals that since the 1992 World Heritage Convention, it has been used to denote those cultural heritage sites that represent the “combined works of nature and of man” designated in Article 1 of the Convention, and, as the 2008 Operational Guidelines defines, they are “illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal” (UNESCO 2008: 85). Although the Hungarian text of the Operational Guidelines is not available in its entirety on vilagorokseg.hu, the website of the Hungarian world heritage office, the detailed description of world heritage categories, including “kultúrtáj (történeti táj)” is very easy to find. Thus the websites of these organizations and the blog entry discussions facilitate trainee translators’ recognition of terminology specifically used in the given context as well as evaluate the web resources they retrieve. As for the instructor, seeing the blog entries ensures that trainee translators apply the proper spelling of geographical terms, which could be quite difficult to check in oral discussion.

Screenshot 1: *Written discussion in blog entries*



Screenshot 2: *VLE-mediated interaction*



The second assignment, which offers insights into a more complex use of ICT tools in translator education, assumes some familiarity with the specific terminology used in the field of cultural heritage protection. In the second semester, trainee translators are asked to prepare an English version of a one-minute Hungarian clip on Hortobágy and to submit to a virtual platform both their revised versions of a machine translated English text and an audio file with the recording of their voiceover versions. This assignment exemplifies some of the benefits of completing in-class translations in a virtual learning environment. First of all, trainee translators receive the source text in the form of an audiovisual file that they can watch as many times as they find it necessary at the pre-translation stage. Secondly, using the machine translated English version saves valuable time but makes trainee translators practise text revision in a field with which they are already familiar. Third, using Audacity to record their target text in a voiceover version helps trainee translators see whether or not the target text fits the time frame set in the audiovisual clip in the target language, and also shows them some difficulties, e.g. the length of sentences or the syntactical position of phrases, that they may not realize unless they are asked to read the target text aloud. Obviously, trainee translators are not expected to produce studio quality voiceover versions of the source audiovisual file but the assignment that benefits from Audacity provides them with what scholars call a “reflexive and critical learning experience” (Chouc 2010: 4). On the other hand, instructors also benefit from online submissions. As screenshots 3 and 4 show, the VLE submission platform offers a convenient way of setting deadlines, measuring speed of work, commenting on quality of performance or asking for revisions. The same interaction with trainee translators in an ordinary e-mail submission setting would most certainly involve inconveniently long threads of messages and lots of attached files jamming the instructor’s mailbox.

Screenshot 3: Submission platform, instructor's view

ID	Name	Submitted	Status	Result	Last modification
EMTV3C	B	febr. 01. 12:30	submitted	-	febr. 01. 12:50
ATSVIT	C	febr. 01. 12:46	submitted	-	febr. 01. 12:46
MZS1W4	D	febr. 01. 12:32	submitted	-	febr. 01. 12:52
CR39D	K	febr. 01. 12:53	submitted	-	febr. 01. 12:53
HQ249I	P	febr. 01. 12:05	submitted	-	febr. 01. 12:05
FD2Y6G	S	febr. 01. 12:51	submitted	-	febr. 01. 12:51
HY85JA	S	febr. 01. 12:56	submitted	-	febr. 01. 12:56
DKLPLV2	S	febr. 01. 12:51	submitted	-	febr. 01. 12:51
JHT5XL	V	febr. 01. 12:54	submitted	-	febr. 01. 12:54
GEY3T1	V	febr. 01. 12:56	submitted	-	febr. 01. 12:56

Screenshot 4: Online individual submission platform

S 2014.02.01 12:51:19
Type: **Task submission**
hortobágy voice
Attachments:
File name: hortobágy2.wav
Size: 12,04 MB
Share

Dr. Mudriczki Judit 2014.02.01 12:10:54
Type: **Mark as to be revised**
Could you please look at my comments before you start recording your version?
Attachments:
File name: Hortobágy szöveg_Orsi.docx
Size: 15,67 kB

S 2014.02.01 12:00:10
Type: **Task submission**
csak szöveg
Attachments:
File name: Hortobágy szöveg.docx
Size: 13,3 kB
Share

Conclusion

Blended classes in translator education seem to bring considerable benefits to the learning process. First of all, as ICT functions not only as a translation tool but also as a teaching and communication tool, the learning environment displays diversity and increases student motivation. Secondly, the early and gradual integration of ICT into the curriculum indirectly prepares students for classes on more specific CAT tools. Third, in-class translation assignments and the virtual learning environment simulate the work environment that translation as a job demands, which “brings productive work routines into the classroom and helps students internalize these in a real context that should later give them a competitive edge when they join the labor market” (Olvera-Lobo et al. 2007: 519). Within this simulated environment, trainee translators experience their own endurance while working in front

of the screen for some hours or their average translation capacity when they work with specialized texts. Forth, trainee translators quickly learn and understand the characteristics of telecommuting when they use ICT as a communication tool for submitting assignments online under the pressure of meeting deadlines or discussing translation difficulties on a virtual professional platform. It becomes essential even when they graduate since in the twenty-first century translation industry “professional relationships are established by electronic means and this strengthens teleworking skills as well as the communicative abilities that are inherently needed in the medium” (Olvera-Lobo et al. 2005: 139). Fifth, the in-class discussion of information retrieved with the help of ICT tools aims to improve research and source evaluation skills, which could be more difficult and slower to do in ordinary translation classes. Last but not least, blended classes shape trainee translators’ identity as professional translators involved in various digital work processes and members of virtual work communities that exchange ideas on a digital platform. Thus the implementation of ICT tools contributes to turning “translator training” into “translator education”, and facilitates trainee translators’ development of specific linguistic skills as well as the acquisition of ICT knowledge essential for professional translators working in a digital environment.

References

- Asztalos, R. (2012): Teachers’ Use of a Virtual Learning Environment and their Disposition towards. E-learning at Budapest Business School, Practice and Theory in Systems of Education 7, nr. 1 pp. 11–26, http://epa.oszk.hu/01400/01428/00019/pdf/EPA01428_ptse_1902AsztalosReka.pdf (5th March 2014).
- Austermühl, F. (2001): *Electronic Tools for Translators*. Manchester: St Jerome Publishing,
- Bowker, L. – McBride, Ch. – Marshman, E. (2008): Getting more than you paid for? Considerations in integrating free or low cost technologies into translator training programs, REDIT, Revista Electrónica de Didáctica de la Traducción y la Interpretación 1 pp. 26–47, http://www.redit.uma.es/Archiv/v1_2008/Bowker_et_al.pdf (5th March 2014).
- Cánovas, M. – Samson, R. (2011): Open source software in translator training. *Revista Tradumàtica: tecnologies de la traducció*, 46–56.

- CHOUC, FANNY (2010): ICT for Translation and Interpreting: the Relevance of New. Technologies for the Training of Expert Linguists, ICT for Language Learning Conference Proceedings 2010, http://conference.pixel-online.net/ICT4LL2010/common/download/Proceedings_pdf/TRAD05-Chouc.pdf (5th March 2014).
- Escarrá, A. – Navarrete, M. del C. (2011): The New Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and Translation Competence. 7TH Symposium on Translation, Terminology and Interpretation in Cuba and Canada, <http://www.cttic.org/ACTI/2011/Papers/Escarra.pdf> (5th March 2014).
- Garrison, D. R. – Kanuka, H. (2004): Blended learning: Uncovering its transformative potential in higher education. *Internet and Higher Education* 7, pp. 95–105, <http://anitacrawley.net/Articles/GarrisonKanuka2004.pdf> (5th March 2014).
- King, A. (1993): From sage on the stage to guide on the side. *College Teaching*, 41(1): 30–35.
- Kiraly, D. (2000): *A Social Constructivist Approach to Translation Education*. Manchester: St Jerome.
- Olvera-Lobo, M.-D. – Castro-Prieto, M.-R. – Quero-Gervilla, E. – Muñoz-Martín, R. – Muñoz-Raya, E. – Murillo-Melero, M. – Robinson, B. – Senso-Ruiz, J. A. – Vargas-Quesada, B. – Domínguez-López, C. (2005): Translator training and modern market demands. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, 13(2): 132–142, <http://eprints.rclis.org/15145/1/2005-Perspectives.pdf> (5th March 2014).
- Olvera-Lobo, M.-D. – Castro-Prieto, R.-M. – Quero-Gervilla, E. – Muñoz-Martín, R. – Muñoz-Raya, E. – Murillo-Melero, M. – Robinson, B. – Senso-Ruiz, J. A. – Vargas-Quesada, B. – Díez-Lerma, J. L. (2007): A professional approach to translator training (PATT). *Meta: Translators' Journal*, 52(3): 517–528, <http://www.erudit.org/revue/meta/2007/v/n3/016736ar.html> (5th March 2014).
- Pym, A. (2009): Translator training. Pre-print text written for the Oxford Companion to Translation Studies, http://www.tinet.org/~apym/on-line/training/2009_translator_training.pdf (5th March 2014).
- UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) (2008): Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. World Heritage Centre, Paris, <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/opguide08-en.pdf#annex3> (5th March 2014).