ПРЕПОДАВАНИЕ
АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА
И ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ:
ПРОБЛЕМЫ ТЕКСТА И КОНТЕКСТА
Interpreting is not an easy task on the whole, and the same can be claimed about the sequential translation in particular. But an interpreter using special notes, symbols, abbreviation forms and so on can make the process of interpreting much easier. He uses these tricks just for himself, it is clear that hardly anyone will be able to understand what he has written down on his piece of paper. It is similar to the synopsis students make during lectures. Other students are not able to make out anything of it. And you all also use shortenings and abbreviations in your everyday life when writing SMS messages. We hope our hints on interpreter’s note-taking will be very useful for you and maybe you will apply the symbols and principles of note-taking which have been just presented.

INTEGRATED COMPETENCES DEVELOPMENT: A PLACE FOR LITERATURE

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Standard requirements for graduates in international relations envisage the advanced to proficiency level (C1 / C2 – the EU descriptors) in the English language skills acquisition. But the communicative competences are only part of the targeted overall language proficiency, including that in the professional sphere. Professional language skills involve interaction in multilingual multicultural environment where the necessary information has to come from various sources (written, oral) through various channels (visual: text and pictures, audio – usually combined with viewing) in at least two languages, processed and then produced in the necessary mode. The standard requirements under discussion also include specific speaking, writing and reading skills that are not covered by the descriptors of the Council of Europe Framework [1] for communicative competence, but have to be culled from the cognitive domain, which is part of the general competences [1, p. 11], and described as the Reading skills rooted in Bloom’s Taxonomy [2] and further developed in Munby’s Communicative Syllabus Design [3, p. 212]. They involve such (micro) skills as “deducing the meanings and use of unfamiliar items, understanding information not explicitly stated, understanding conceptual meanings, understanding the main point or key information, extracting relevant points selectively”. Obviously, some of these (micro) skills can and must be transferred from the native language reading (and listening for information) skills but quite a lot of them have to be specially taught with a view of further integrating them with productive writing and speaking skills.

The so-called “fifth skill” or “mediation” which is based both on the acquired ability to put into practice the four skills learned more or less separately and translation/interpreting skills are essential and enable the professional international relations specialists not only to perform their professional duties in the multilingual environment (organizations, companies, projects) but also “to act as an intermediary in an interaction between two interlocutors who do not share the same language or code” [3, p. 87].

Cultural (sociocultural) competence, too, is an integral part of the targeted standards and has to be developed to a great extent through the sociolinguistic competence, which goes to prove that language skills naturally integrate with professional skills and foreign language competences with general and professional as language acquisition level rises and the tasks set increasingly combine professional content and objectives with the linguistic ones.

There is another (macro) skill/competence which is hardly ever identified in tertiary programmes, esp. of general language studies. And it is definitely an integrated one, defined usually as information analysis work (diploma qualification – analyst). This, too, involves integrated skills all across the board – all kinds of reading skills (in several languages), listening skills, writing skills (with an emphasis on certain formats, like a position paper, for example) and speaking skills, esp. debate and expect discussion format, as well as presentations.

As it is seen, the targeted competences of graduates are so varied, on the one hand, and so integrated on the other, that the methodological approach has by necessity cater both for teaching all the skills to a high level focusing on some of them at a time and provide opportunities for a more or less natural "performance" in the Chomskian meaning of the term. The latter task would bring/synthesize the skills together to form competences.

One way of doing it is dual-focussed teaching like it is done at the BSU International Relations Faculty where English is taught in two correlated and complementing programmes: General English and ESP. General English is skill and product oriented and is based on authentic course sets. (Such as Headway, Upstream, Language Leader, Levels Upper-Intermediate-Advanced), with some topic modules included which use in-house materials. The ESP programme is topic oriented and modular in design and relies almost completely on in-house manuals and materials. Both aspects include tasks and projects which make an attempt to simulate real-life professional activities. For some of them teachers of English have enough expertise to organize the format, set the tasks, provide the necessary linguistic input and guide the students to research on their own, e. g., experts discussion in an international organization or on an international project. But the range of our graduates’ real-life activities is so wide: writing analytical surveys and personal profiles, arranging and guiding international events and visits, making presentations and dealing with emergencies, helping people in distress and mediating in conflicts. That is why one of the main objectives at the finishing stage is preparing students for international crosscultural communication, recognizing the sociocultural values and sociolinguistic practices, perceiving the actual, meanings of words in precedent texts, which have become symbolic. And this is where literary texts come into their own and relate...
not only personally but professionally as well. They deal with values people still
identify themselves with, as the debates on the referendum in Scotland or the
ongoing debate on Britain’s leaving the EU demonstrate.

The task (project) described below has been part of the 9th term curriculum
as the so-called “home reading” (independent guided reading) for over five
years and got favourable reviews of both students and teachers.

Basically, it involves translation and interpretation/explaining poems, but,
organized as a team effort, it becomes a major learning experience.

The poet chosen for the project is Rudyard Kipling. The reasons for the
choice are explained and briefly outlined to the students: much quoted-
precedent texts relevant in their professional realm, the Nobel Prize for
Literature winner, involved in international affairs, a much travelled man, etc.,
so that they could add to this pool of knowledge (general, sociocultural) as they
study individual poems.

Students work in pairs. Poems are chosen or assigned. Two students
(volunteers) do introduction and moderate the presentation (in consultation with
the teacher). They also present one poem. Their task is above all to show
R. Kipling’s deep involvement in the life of the British Empire, his identification
with many of its values and rejection of others, his versatility, the significance of
his poems against the background of geopolitical events of his time, his creative
achievements and the enduring relevance of much of his work and ideas.

The order of presentations follows mainly thematic division: geopolitical,
philosophy, military, historical, etc. For every poem the students are to do the
following:

• research the background to fully understand what the poem is about,
go beyond the actual words in the lexical and syntactical context to the implied
meanings in the historical and cultural context, reveal the attitude of the author
to what he is writing about;
• look up the words in an Explanatory Dictionary for Advanced Learners,
consult other dictionaries, such as, for example, the Oxford Advanced Learner’s
Encyclopaedia, Area Studies Dictionaries, etc. to get the contextual meanings
right;
• do the word-by-word, line-by-line translation so as to render as faithfully as
they can the message of the poem and its mood. The emphasis is on the
meaning, not the form. But getting the rhythm across is a bonus;
• prepare a Powerpoint presentation of two parallel texts: the original and their
own translation. Prepare to give an expressive reading of the original (logical
stresses and pauses, correct pronunciation and intonation) and their original
translation. After both are read, the students comment on the background
in English and on translation in Russian. Finally, a published translation (if any)
is read and phrases which have become famous quotations are indicated.
Students who present the poem should be ready to answer questions and
to explain their choices of translation. For example in the poem The Disciple the
choice of the word ученик for the translation explained within the semantic
frame ‘teacher–teaching–pupil’. Though it is explicitly presented in the text
through Christian teaching but the reference to two more world religions
(teachings) makes for generalization, which further allows to translate gospel as
откровение (revelation), etc.

All in all, there will be about 10 poems presented, an introduction and
a conclusion/evaluation discussion. It requires either a joint class (4hrs) or a
class which will run into an extracurricular activity (interpreters’ club). But as a
rule students are motivated enough to stay and listen, discuss and learn. A lot of
them try to rhyme their translations. A very important point is that they really try
to do their own versions (as required) before they look up the published ones.

Robert Frost (another possible choice of the author for the project) said once
“Poetry is what gets lost in translation”. This is true no doubt. But there is
something gained in translation as an activity: the integrated skills, integrated
competences of the highest level and the feeling that one has read great poems,
enjoyed them, understood their message and tried to get it across to other
people. These creative skills contribute to personal development of students and
make them more understanding human beings and more effective professionals.

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IRELAND – THE CELTIC TIGER OF THE 21st CENTURY

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Until relatively recently the study of Ireland as an independent state was
not much in the focus of scholars both in our country as well as beyond.
Traditionally the Irish topic was mostly interpreted as part of British history and
of Britain in general. To a certain degree this was because Ireland achieved
independence only in 1922 and remained linked with Britain until 1949 as a
member of the Commonwealth. This biased and unfair attitude has changed
because of the remarkable achievements of the country both at home and
abroad. The Republic of Ireland has come to play a significant international role
in the European Union and United Nations. The astonishing economic
achievements of Ireland – the Celtic Tiger boom in the early years of the twenty-
first century put Ireland among the leading nations of Europe and the world
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