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INCREASING EMPLOYEES COMPETITIVE POTENTIAL THROUGH ACQUIRING BASIC TRANSLATION SKILLS

The article studies topical problems of acquiring translation competencies as the most important element of socialization and further employment for potential employees from developing countries entering English language environment.

Key words: language competencies; correlation; English skills; economic performance; potential employees.

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ПОВЫШЕНИЕ КОНКУРЕНТНОГО ПОТЕНЦИАЛА РАБОТНИКОВ ПУТЁМ ПРИОБРЕТЕНИЯ БАЗОВЫХ НАВЫКОВ В ПЕРЕВОДЕ

В статье рассматриваются актуальные проблемы приобретения компетенции в переводе как необходимый элемент социализации и получения рабочего места для претендентов на рабочие вакансии из развивающихся стран, которые переезжают в страну с англоязычной средой.

Ключевые слова: языковые компетенции; корреляция; навыки английского языка; экономические показатели; потенциальные работники.

Ability to translate and socialize oneself in foreign language environment is always on the agenda in both aspects: academic and personal. Those who are enrolled in some kind of academic process may enjoy supervised language training programmes at colleges or institutes but potential employees usually belong to unorganized or socially excluded groups which in some cases may undertake language training programmes sponsored by British Council or employers or have to be involved into continuous self-learning process.

The modern agenda of European linguistics encompasses complex issues regarding the international communication. While there have never been any inconveniences in the communication between, for instance, English and German native speakers, the arrival of thousands of African potential employees brought this issue to the entirely new level. While the ability to overcome a language barrier becomes a necessary element of their socialization, the study of the translation competence (hereinafter TC) turns out to be the key point of modern linguistics.

To begin with, the definition of the TC varies between the different studies. The discussions of translation competence in translation studies that strive towards the Chomskyan understanding tends to include aspects of, or be akin to, the Human resources and Social Competence definitions. For example, Pacle claims to have borrowed the notion of translation competence «from the idea of linguistic competence», but they define translation competence as including an array of knowledges, skills and abilities which vary between individuals and which would never find their way into the notion of linguistic competence.

The above mentioned definition includes six sub-elements:

1. Communicative Competence in two languages, including linguistic, discourse and sociolinguistic competence.

2. Extra-Linguistic Competence composed of general world knowledge and specialist knowledge.

3. Instrumental-Professional Competence composed of knowledge and skills related to the tools of the trade and the profession.

4. Psycho-Physiological Competence, «defined as the ability to use all kinds of psychomotor, cognitive and attitudinal resources» including «psychomotor skills for reading and writing; cognitive skills (e. g. memory, attention span, creativity and logical reasoning); psychological attitudes (e.g. intellectual curiosity, perseverance, rigour, a critical spirit, and self-confidence)».

5. Transfer Competence, which is «the ability to complete the transfer process from the ST (source text) to the TT (target text), i.e. to understand the ST and re-express it in the TL (target language), taking into account the translation's function and the characteristics of the receptor».

6. Strategic Competence, which includes «all the individual procedures, conscious and unconscious, verbal and non-verbal, used to solve the problems found during the translation process».

Adam Derwonski applies less complicated approach, which includes as at least 1) a mode of bilingualism, open to linguistic analysis, 2) a question of market demands, given to extreme historical and social change, 3) a multicomponent competence, involving sets of skills that are linguistic, cultural, technological and professional, and 4) a «supercompetence» that would somehow stand above the rest.

According to the early studies of G. Tourey (1984), transfer competence requires particular modes of socialisation. So however closely it may turn out to be possible to align the notion of transfer competence with a Chomsky-style account, it is unlikely that we shall achieve the Chomskyan elevation above the social. But if we can align other aspects of transfer competence to linguistic competence, the prospect of transfer competence as a category that encompasses aspects similar to those that characterise linguistic competence along with aspects similar to performance features presents itself invitingly. Perhaps the phenomenon of translation illustrates more clearly than any other the connections between competence and performance.

The development of linguistic competence is commonly described in terms of a set of stages that the language acquiring infant and child goes through from the onset of the development in early childhood until its completion by very early adulthood. A similar account was given of the development of translation competence by Harris and Sherwood, who explicitly model themselves on Chomsky and who consider translation to be an innate skill, as their title suggests.

The common feature of the mentioned studies is the understanding of the term within the broader scope of the linguistic competence. The necessary element of the last is the sufficient level of education and highly desirable knowledge of several different languages, which presupposes the understanding of the sentences' structure. As we can see, the translation competence outside the native language family cannot be gained by insight and should become a result of the continuous target-oriented mental efforts. Therefore, the language (especially translation) competence of potential employees should be achieved as an outcome of their education in the long-time perspective.

Billions of people around the globe are doing their best to learn English – not simply for self-improvement, but as an economic necessity. For people in emerging economies such as China, Russia, and Brazil, where English is not the official language, good English is a key advantage, which people rightly believe will help them tap into new opportunities at home and abroad.

Why should global business leaders have to pay attention to people learning Business English in other parts of the world?

Research provides a direct correlation between the English skills of a population and the economic performance of the country. Indicators like gross national income (GNI) and GDP increase. In the latest edition of the EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), the largest ranking of English skills by country, it was shown that in almost every one of the 60 countries and territories surveyed, a rise in English proficiency was correlated with a rise in per capital income. And on an individual level, recruiters and HR managers around the world in-

form that job seekers with perfect Business English compared to their country's level earned 30-50% percent higher salaries.

Early economically driven attempts to identify the impact of Business English on development – and, specifically, on employability appeared to be largely unsuccessful. In recent years, research has managed to show that in specific circumstances Business English influences on individuals, in particular industrial sectors and at the national level. It should be noted, though, that some of the studies mentioned here have been done only in advanced economies; further investigation is needed to establish whether similar patterns can be seen in poorer economies as well.

One major implication of these studies is that a broad-brush approach to the Business English-development relationship is evidently not very successful. Instead, a more fine grained approach is inquired, looking at particular types of economy and particular sectors of activity. For example, it has been proved that service economies are most likely to have a widespread need for English language skills, whilst in manufacturing economies it may be that only a relatively small number of staff concerned with international trade will require Business English. Nevertheless, in rural economies the need to acquire English language skills may be limited to a very small proportion of the population.

Any discussion of development of Business English in the world must take into account the phenomenon of globalisation and, in particular, that of international mobility. We will study three aspects of international mobility here: international tourism, international student mobility and international employees working.

International tourism is already a huge international commercial business. In 2008 there were 922 million international tourist trips. In the same year US\$944 billion (30% of the world's export of services) was earned through international tourism. Despite occasional fluctuations in line with world economic trends, tourism is predicted to go on to grow rapidly and by 2020 it is forecasted that there will be 1.6 billion international tourist arrivals.

The importance of English in international tourism is well assessed. There is a dynamic commercially driven reaction to the need in the form of English language training provided as part of tourism training programmes and in the publication of Business English course books designed particularly for those engaged in the tourism industry.

Tourism is very important to developing countries. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation reports this importance through its ST-EP (Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty) Programme which ensures assistance for the development of tourism in poor, rural and marginalised communities. Examples of current projects include Business English training for the staff of tourist lodges in Mozambique and for the staff of a complex of 200 caves in

Laos.

The mobility of students from the country of origin to universities elsewhere is also a well recognised phenomenon. In 2008 there were practically three million international students worldwide, an increase from two million in just seven years.

Approximately 45% of the world total of international students are getting education in just three countries the: USA, Australia and Canada. These three destinations are proved to be attractive not only because of the perceived quality of their higher education institutions but also because they use English. Many international students believe that by studying in one or other of these nations they can get not only the qualification for which they have enrolled but also an improved degree of competence in Business English.

A further 27% of international students are getting their qualification in France, Germany, China and Japan. It is likely that many – if not the majority – of these students are also studying by means of English.

The significance of Business English in international student mobility has been well proved for many years, as manifested in the international English language competency test – IELTS and TOEFL – which most receiving institutions and many visa issuing authorities require students to pass. But further investigation is still required to measure the influence on developing countries – both economically and in human development terms – of their young people and early career professionals studying abroad. Are the capital outflows which are envisaged to be compensated when graduates come back to their country of origin? What percentage of students from developing countries never return to their native country?

The third aspect of international mobility – that of international employees working – is much less well considered compared to international tourism and international student mobility. There were 900 million people working away from their home countries in 2009. (As it was mentioned above, the total number of international tourist visits per year at 922 million remains almost exactly the same as this figures, whilst the number of international students – approximately 2.6 million – is less than 0.3% of the people worldwide who work away from home).

But in fact the majority of potential employees are internal ones who are looking for jobs within their own countries, in search of work, to avoid conflict or to escape from natural disasters. Only about 70 million people (7.8% of all potential employees) come from developing countries and work in developed countries. According to the United Nations Development Programme:

... development and migration go head to head: the medium emigration rate in a country with low living standard is less than 4 per cent, compared to more than 8 per cent from countries with high levels of human development.

In other words, mobility is an advantage which is enjoyed to a much greater degree by the populations of highly developed countries. The populations of less developed nations suffer from much higher barriers to international movement.

The benefit to the economies of their home countries of the remittances sent home by the 70 million migrant workers from developing countries is extremely important. The total was evaluated to be in the order of \$ 192 billion in 2007, equivalent to four times the total amount of official assistance received by developing countries.

But what is the use of English in all of these aspects? A study using extensive census data for male potential employees in Australia (and supplementary data from the USA, Canada and Israel) investigated correlation between potential employees' language skills and their earnings. It was found that:

- The more a migrant has used the foreign language (English in Australia and USA, English or French in Canada, Hebrew in Israel) in their native country before departure the greater their fluency tends to be in their destination language country.
- The higher the qualification reached by a migrant in their home country the greater their fluency in the destination language tends to be in their destination country.
- The younger migrants are when they leave their home country the higher their proficiency in the destination language tends to be in their destination country.
- Fluency in the destination language is accompanied with higher wages (9% higher in Australia, 11% in Israel, 12% in Canada, 17% in USA).

On the basis of these outcomes it is possible to assess the rate of return to an investment in developing the language skills of potential or recently arrived potential employees: 9%-18% for Australia, 11 %-22% for Israel, 12%-24% for Canada and 17%-34% for USA. The younger the migrant is at the time of arrival, the higher the degree of return will be.

Now let us consider the findings regarding potential employees' remittances with the conclusions from the study of potential employees' target language competence and level of earnings. We can see that by providing target language improvement opportunities to potential employees before they leave home or soon after arriving in their country of destinations it is likely that they will be able to make a greater contribution to the target country economy, their wages will be higher, the remittances they send home will be greater and the economy of the developing country from which they originate will be of use to a larger extent.

In all three aspects of international mobility (tourism, students studying abroad and people moving abroad to find employment) Business English is

playing a crucial role.

Thus, translation competences being one of the transferrable skill for potential employees remain one of the most important tool for better employment and improving living standards in the host country.