Journal of Education and e-Learning Research
Vol. 7, No. 4, 353-359, 2020
ISSN(E) 2410-9991 / ISSN(P) 2518-0169
DOI: 10.20448/journal.509.2020.74.353.359

Future Translator Training Based on an Integrated Approach

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to identify the efficiency of an integrated approach for the provision of high-quality professional training for future translators. The analysis uses a model that involves a case study based on integrated activity and competence-based approaches. It was tested on the translation of scientific and technical literature, which is a subject that is included in the educational and vocational program for training students majoring in philology and translation. To analyze data obtained during the pedagogical experiment, and to consider the dynamics of changes in the levels of bilingual, extralinguistic, interpretive, and personality development sub-competences (components of translation competence of students), we used STATA software and online resources for calculating independent t-test samples. The conducted research proved the efficiency of the experimental model involving the case study based on integrated activity and competence-based approaches to form and develop the translation competence of future translators. We found that the experimental model applied in the process of professional translator training had the most significant impact on the formation and development of extralinguistic sub-competence, interpreting sub-competence (which includes knowledge of general principles of translation, knowledge of means of automated translation and electronic dictionaries, skills and abilities of their use in practice), and bilingual sub-competency. The study proved that the model contributed to students' educational motivation and learning of moral and ethical rules that apply to life and work.

Keywords: Integration problems of teaching content in pedagogical theory and practice, integrated approaches in education, translator training in higher education institutions, translation competency, interpreting competence, components of translation competence, assessment of student translation performance.

Citation | Lidiia L. Nanivska; Oksana V. Shcherba; Susanna M. Pasichnyk; Mykhaylo M. Kozyar; Iryna V. Savka (2020). Future Translator Training Based on an Integrated Approach. Journal of Education and e-Learning Research, 7(4): 353-359.
History:
Received: 15 July 2020
Revised: 19 August 2020
Accepted: 23 September 2020
Published: 6 October 2020

Publisher: Asian Online Journal Publishing Group

Acknowledgement: All authors contributed to the conception and design of the study.
Funding: This study received no specific financial support.
Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.
Transparency: The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate and transparent account of the study that was reported, that no vital features of the study have been omitted, and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained.
Ethical: This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

Contents

Contribution of this paper to the literature

This study contributes to the existing literature by solving the current problem of training future translators using an integrated approach, the implementation of which provides the opportunities for both wider coverage of the content and reduced examination time.

1. Introduction

The problem of mutual understanding has always accompanied humanity throughout history. Translation, as a means of understanding another person, also has a long history. Translators allow us to not only retranslate one's own positions and intentions. The success (and often survival) of trade, military, religious, and missionary research, and development expeditions depended on efficiency. In the second half of the 20th century, an intense public interest in foreign language learning resulted in the emergence of the idea of training people who are capable of coexisting with representatives from other languages and cultures along with the use of factual information from scientific and technical literature written in foreign languages. This idea became the leading concept in introducing a foreign language in the process of learning special academic subjects (Short, 1984). In the globalization process of the 21st century, the need to settle military conflicts (Gaunt, 2016) and problems relating to cooperation in overcoming the consequences of natural disasters (Doğan, 2016) brings to light the need for professional translator training around the globe. Foreign language knowledge is becoming an essential factor for ensuring high quality of professional training in higher education institutions (HEI), which subjectively reflects public requirements for a translator's personality and his/her professional activity (Council of Europe, 2018). The policy in relation to integration into the global educational environment, the country's EU integration policy, and NATO membership ambitions foregrounded the problem of high-quality translator training in Ukraine (Council of Europe, 2011; Smotrova, 2009).

The importance of accurately translating information from one language to another, and understanding the difficulty of the translation process itself, causes the emergence of new scientific developments in the field of translation theory (Catford, 1965; Nida, 1964). Studying the peculiarities of the translation process and a translator's personality enables one to identify and compare notions "translating" and "interpreting" (Williams, 2013). Powerful methods of improving professional translator training are cultural (Tran & Dang, 2014), intercultural (Tran & Duong, 2015), functional, pragmatic (Tarnopolsky, 2018), and competence-based (Ilyina & Isaenko, 2011) approaches. The development of intercultural competence in translators and teachers is a part of educational and vocational programs for training specialists in specific areas (Forman, 2014). On the other hand, the scientific community has interesting ideas and conducts heated debates about complex and integrated language and content learning (Goris, Denessen, & Verhoeven, 2020; Paran, 2013). The implementation of an integrated approach in the practice of professional training of future specialists provides opportunities for both wider coverage of the content, and reduced examination time (Martynova, 2017).

The scholars and teacher-practitioners focus on the problems of the formation and development of translation competence in future translators. The notion of multi-competence of translation (PACTE Group, 2003) has already become a theoretical background for the development of scientific methods to form sub-competencies in translators. Scholars are studying efficient ways to form and develop linguistic (Popova, 2017), professional (Bogush, Korolova, & Popova, 2019), and terminological (Torichny, 2012) competencies. They offer the models of professional training of future translators, verify them experimentally, and implement in practice (Lis-Lemańska, 2013). The importance, and responsibilities, of a teacher and a pedagogical team within the department, are emphasized in the process of training future translators (Cattaneo, 2017; Seatter & Ceulemans, 2017).

In our opinion, interesting and practically-oriented models of translation competence are integrating practice-based models (Billett, 2015) and models of collaborative or corporate training (Mudawi, 2020). The case study method is also one of the most developed in theoretical aspects, and the most widespread in the practice of training future specialists in different areas (Duff, 2014; Merriam, 1998). Nowadays, the opportunities of this method in terms of providing interdisciplinarity in the educational process are actively studied (Sprain & Timpson, 2012). Interdisciplinarity is regarded as a form of the integrated approach in forming and developing professional competencies of future specialists.

However, the problem of integration regarding the educational content in pedagogical theory and practice, as well as problems of implementing integrated approaches and models in the practice of professional training of translators in HEIs, is not sufficiently covered and needs further development. This issue determined the topic of our research, which is aimed at experimentally justifying and verifying the efficiency of an integrated approach to ensure the quality of professional training of students majoring in translation.

2. Research Methodology

The research was conducted over 28 weeks using general scientific, theoretical, empirical, and statistical methods of study, and the analysis of the results was produced according to the objectives of each stage.

2.1. Research Design

The pedagogical experiment includes the following stages specific to such studies: preparatory, pre-experimental, performance- and reflection-oriented, and final.

The preparatory stage (8 weeks) involved the review of scientific sources relating to the problem, the study of the most widespread practices in the organization of educational processes in HEIs that train students majoring in philology and translation, and a survey of 14 teachers and 268 bachelor students majoring in philology and translation in Hetman Petro Sahaidachnyi National Army Academy (Kyiv), Alfred Nobel University (Dnipro), and Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University (Mykolaiv).

We asked students and teachers to provide answers to four questions:

1. What difficulties do you (or your students) face during translation?
2. In your opinion, what aspects (of the academic subject) are the most important in translator training?
3. In your opinion, what should be improved in the organization of professional translator training?

4. Which approach—collective or individual—do you regard as the most efficient in terms of improving the quality of translator training?

The answers were analyzed using the Textalyser application. When answering the first question, most respondents (47%) pointed to terminological (technical and scientific) difficulties. "Cultural/historical/religious differences" ranked second (31%). The remaining responses in terms of frequency were "grammatical difficulties" (21%), "culture-specific vocabulary" (18%), "phonological peculiarities" (14%), and "the need for stylistic reproduction of speech" (7%). The most popular answers to the second question were "special/specialized vocabulary" (38%), "practical grammar" (21%), and "means of automated translation" (12%). The most popular answer to the third question, at 54%, was "the need to strengthen the practical aspects of student training". When answering the fourth question, 42% of respondents determined that an individual approach was the most efficient, though 27% preferred a collective approach. At the same time, teachers supported both approaches, but gave preference to collective learning (71%).

Having reviewed and discussed scientific sources on the problem, widespread methods for the organization of educational processes in HEIs and responses received during the survey, we were able to determine the main features of the experimental model for the formation and development of translation competence in students. They included practical orientation, the possibility of combining collective and individual forms of education and integrating knowledge and techniques from linguistic and speech training to form a comprehensive picture of the most efficient translation processes. Integrated activity and competence-based approaches to the creation of this model became the primary methods. The key pedagogical technique was the case study dealing with the preparation of individual and team reporting presentations (Duff, 2014) in the educational process. We selected the subject of the translation of scientific and technical literature for the experiment.

The experimental model of forming and developing competence in translation segregated the following components: bilingual sub-competence (knowledge of two languages) in Ukrainian and English, the ability to use them in different types of speech, semantic and stylistic knowledge and skills, extralinguistic sub-competence (culture-oriented knowledge, social-cultural rules and knowledge of notions from a certain sphere of human activity), interpreting sub-competence (knowledge of general translation principles, means of automated translation and electronic dictionaries, skills and abilities to use them in practice), and personality development sub-competence (motivation, orientation, moral and ethical rules, psychophysiological characteristics of a student's personality). We used the above sub-competences and their values to distinguish high, proficient, middle, and low levels of students' translation competence.

2.2. Instruments for Statistical Data Collection and Processing

To identify the levels of bilingual, extralinguistic, interpretative, and personality development sub-competences of students, and taking into account the phenomenon being studied, the research involved different diagnostic methodologies. The level of bilingual sub-competence was determined based on the analysis and assessment of assignments completed by students (case translations and report presentations). We recorded the mean values of students' academic performances at five reference points (reference point 1: entrance test, reference points 2, 3 and 4: presentations and defense of completed cases, reference point 5: credit). The maximum number of points a student can achieve is 100 at each reference point. Where assignments were completed by a team (a group of 2-4 students), the points earned for the case were added to each student's total. Team assignments were more difficult individual ones. All works by students scored 0–40 points were classified as a low-level academic performance, the middle level of academic performance included works that scored 41–74 points, the quantitative indicator for a proficient level of academic performance scored 75-89 points, and 90–100 points were classed as high level. The scale of student academic performances created by the ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System), with some modifications, was used as a basis for this assessment.

To determine levels of extralinguistic sub-competence we used direct observations of teachers during reporting presentations, defenses of completed cases by students (reference points 2, 3 and 4), and a survey titled "The level of students' extralinguistic sub-competence" (reference points 1 and 5). The questionnaire comprised 100 questions and included culture-oriented, religious, and socio-cultural questions. Students were required to respond by choosing one of four answers. A 100-point scale, similar to that used for bilingual competence assessment, was implemented to assess the results.

We measured the sub-competence level of interpreting at each reference point based on the diagnostics of proficiency level in computer skills and internet resources (Fedoruk, 2014). To identify formation levels of personality development sub-competence, we used two questionnaires: "Personality orientation" and "Who are you in your team?" (Fetiskin, Kozlov, & Manuilov, 2012).

To analyze quantitative data we utilized several tools namely STATA software, and GraphPad, an online resource to conduct t-tests of independent samples.

The pre-experimental stage (2 weeks) involved the formation of a valid sample of the research and pre-experimental measurements (reference point 1) of the levels of sub-competence and processing the obtained data.

2.3. Research Sample Formation

The study involved a total of 282 people. To identify the representative sample, we used an online calculator from a valid sample. From the 282 people selected, the sample contained 61 people who had a confidence level of 95%, confidence interval – 11.12). We formed the experimental group (EG) and control group (CG) based on these parameters. The experimental group included 31 people, and the control group included 30 people. The comparative analysis was conducted within existing academic groups based on typical programs. Professional training was based on traditional methodologies in the control group. In the experimental group we focused on experimental methodology where the formation and development of translation competence was based on the implementation of integrated activity and competence-based approaches.

Table 1 presents the results of pre-experimental measurements in both the experimental and control groups carried out to identify initial levels of translation competence.

Table-1. A comparative table of the levels of students' translation competence (pre-experimental measurement).

Components of translation competence	Formation levels	Pre-experimental measurement (61 people)	
		EG (%; 31 people)	CG (%; 30 people)
Bilingual sub-competence	high	12.9	13.3
	proficient	22.6	13.3
	middle	38.7	43.4
	low	25.8	30.0
Extralinguistic sub-competence	high	6.50	13.3
	proficient	19.4	26.6
	middle	41.9	23.4
	low	32.2	36.7
Interpretive sub-competence	high	---	---
	proficient	25.8	20.0
	middle	38.7	40.0
	low	35.5	40.0
Personality development sub-competence	high	9.6	3.30
	proficient	19.4	13.3
	middle	58.1	60.0
	low	12.9	23.4

In general, the data presented in Table 1 shows that characteristics of the experimental and control groups are comparable in terms of the main indicators before the pedagogical experiment. According to indicators relating to bilingual sub-competence, the majority of students demonstrated middle levels of competence (38.7% and 43.4%), and low levels (25.8% and 30.0%) came a close second in both experimental and control groups.

A sufficient level of bilingual sub-competence was exhibited by 22.6% of students in the experimental group and 13.3% in the control group. The number of students who demonstrated high levels of bilingual sub-competence in both groups is also comparative—12.9% in the experimental group and 13.3% in the control group.

Based on the criterion of extralinguistic sub-competence, students in the experimental group were divided as follows: a high level was found in 6.5%, and in 13.3% of the control group, 19.4% demonstrated a sufficient level versus 26.6% in the control group, a middle level was found in 41.9% of students in the experimental group and in 23.4% of the control group and a low level was found in 32.2% in the experimental group and in 36.7% of the control group.

Regarding the interpretation of sub-competence, the indicators of levels in the experimental and control groups are the same. Thus, a high level is not found. A proficient level based on the criterion of interpreting sub-competence was demonstrated by 25.8% of students in the experimental group and by 20.0% of the control group. A middle level of interpretive sub-competence was found in 38.7% of students in the experimental group and in 40.0% of the control group. A low level of interpretive sub-competence was found in 35.5% of students in the experimental group and in 40.0% of students in the control group.

For the personality development sub-competence, a high level was demonstrated by 9.6% of students in the experimental group and by 3.3% of students in the control group. A sufficient level of personality development sub-competence was found in 19.4% of students in the experimental group and in 13.3% of students in the control group. The majority of students in both groups demonstrated a middle level of personality development sub-competence—58.1% and 60.0%. A low level of personality development sub-competence was demonstrated by 12.9% of students in the experimental group and by 23.4% in the control group.

To draw a conclusion from the comparison of the groups involved in the pedagogical experiment, and to identify the levels of sub-competences, the results of tests at reference point 1 were also analyzed with the help of online resources to calculate independent t-test samples. Table 2 presents the obtained statistical data.

Table 2. The results of t-test independent sample calculations for experimental and control groups at reference point 1.

Components of translation competence	Group / N	Parameters of statistical measurements			
		Mean	SD	SEM	*P* value and statistical significance
Bilingual sub-competence	EG / 31	68.58	19.20	3.45	The two-tailed *P* value equals 0.5543
	CG / 30	65.60	19.94	3.64	By conventional criteria, this difference is not considered to be statistically significant
Extralinguistic sub-competence	EG / 31	61.39	19.71	3.54	The two-tailed *P* value equals 0.9200
	CG / 30	60.83	23.10	4.22	By conventional criteria, this difference is not considered to be statistically significant
Interpretive sub-competence	EG / 31	60.35	20.02	3.60	The two-tailed *P* value equals 0.3058
	CG / 30	55.00	20.47	3.74	By conventional criteria, this difference is not considered to be statistically significant
Personality development sub-competence	EG / 31	68.65	16.41	2.95	The two-tailed *P* value equals 0.1864
	CG / 30	62.77	17.92	3.27	By conventional criteria, this difference is not considered to be statistically significant

Source: Based on the results obtained by the authors.

The performance and reflection stage lasted for 14 weeks. At this stage, we conducted the pedagogical experiment by collecting and processing the data. At the final stage (4 weeks), we interpreted statistical indicators, compared the obtained results with those predicted, and developed recommendations.

3. Results

After the pedagogical experiment, using the individual and team reporting presentations in the case study and the educational processes based on integrated activity and competence-based approaches, we made repeated

measurements of the levels of students' bilingual, extralinguistic, interpretive and personality development sub-competences in both the experimental and control groups. Table 3 shows the results.

Table 3. A comparative table of the levels of students' translation competence (post-experimental measurement).

Components of translation competence	Formation levels	Pre-experimental measurement (61 people)	
		EG (% of 31 people)	CG (% of 30 people)
Bilingual sub-competence	high	25.8	23.3
	proficient	38.7	23.3
	middle	29.0	40.0
	low	6.50	13.4
Extralinguistic sub-competence	high	29.0	16.7
	proficient	35.6	26.7
	middle	32.2	33.3
	low	3.20	23.3
Interpretive sub-competence	high	19.4	6.70
	proficient	29.0	16.7
	middle	35.5	43.3
	low	16.1	33.3
Personality development sub-competence	high	16.1	6.70
	Proficient	51.6	33.3
	middle	25.8	43.3
	low	6.50	16.7

Source: Based on the authors' findings.

The comparison of pre-experimental and post-experimental measurements found positive changes in all components of students' translation competences in both the experimental and control groups (see Table 3.).

For bilingual sub-competence, the number of students with a high level almost doubled in both groups. The number of students with a sufficient level increased by 15% in the experimental group and by 10% in the control group, the number of students with a middle level decreased by 9% in the experimental group and by only 3% in the control group, and the number of students with a low level decreased by almost 19% in the experimental group and by 16% in the control group.

For extralinguistic sub-competence, the number of students with a high level almost tripled in the experimental group and increased by 3% in the control group, the number with a sufficient level increased by 15% in the experimental group and was almost unchanged in the control group, the number of students with a middle level decreased by 9% in the experimental group and increased by 10% in the control group, and the number of students with a low level decreased by 30% in the experimental group and by 13% in the control group.

For interpreting sub-competence, the number of students with a high level increased by 19% in the experimental group and by almost 7% in the control group, the number of students with proficient level increased by 3% in the experimental group and decreased by 3% in the control group, the number of students with a middle level decreased by 3% in the experimental group and increased by 3% in the control group, and the number of students with a low level decreased by 19% in the experimental group and by 3% in the control group.

For personality development competence, the number of students with a high level increased almost by 10% in the experimental group and by 3% in the control group, the number of students with a sufficient level increased by more than 30% in the experimental group and by 20% in the control group, the number with a middle level decreased by 35% in the experimental group and by 17% in the control group, and the number with a low level halved in the experimental group and decreased by 7% in the control group.

To identify levels of sub-competence, we also analyzed the results of tests at reference point 5 with the help of an online resource for the calculation of independent t-test samples. Table 4 presents the obtained statistical data.

Table 4. The results of t-test independent samples calculations for experimental and control groups at reference point 5.

Components of translation competence	Group / N	Parameters of statistical measurements					
		Mean	SD	SEM	df	t_{tabl} = 2.00104	Statistical significance
Bilingual sub-competence	EG / 31	75.35	15.81	2.84	59	$t_{exper.}$ = 2.1742	By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant
	CG / 30	65.33	20.01	3.65			
Extralinguistic sub-competence	EG / 31	78.52	12.24	2.20	59	$t_{exper.}$ = 3.2443	By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant
	CG / 30	64.40	20.79	3.80			
Interpretive sub-competence	EG / 31	71.55	17.17	3.08	59	$t_{exper.}$ = 3.0312	By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant
	CG / 30	57.53	18.93	3.46			
Personality development sub-competence	EG / 31	74.32	12.91	2.32	59	$t_{exper.}$ = 2.3841	By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant
	CG / 30	64.87	17.76	3.24			

Source: Based on the results obtained by the authors.

The data from Table 4 demonstrates that differences in the levels of students' translation competence in the experimental and control groups are statistically significant after the pedagogic experiment. As indicator t_{exper} for each sub-competence is higher than t_{tabl} = 2.00104, the experimental model of translation competence development proved to be more efficient than the traditional one.

3.1. Limitations of the Research

The primary limiting factors of the research were the short duration of the experiment (14 weeks), and the implementation of the experimental methodology of translation competence development within one academic year. Additionally, we have identified insufficient development of diagnostic procedures to study components of translation competence.

4. Discussions

To enhance the comparison of research results, we need to calculate how the mean values of the experimental and control groups have changed between measurements at reference point 1 in Table 2 and reference point 5 in Table 4 for each component of translation competence (deduction of the mean value at reference point 1 from the mean value at reference point 5). Table 5 presents the obtained figures.

Table 5. The difference in mean values in experimental and control groups before and after the pedagogical experiment.

Group	The differences between mean values at reference points 1 and 5			
	Bilingual sub-competence	Extralinguistic sub-competence	Interpretive sub-competence	Personality development sub-competence
EG	+ 6.77	+ 17.13	+ 11.2	+ 5.67
CG	− 0.27	+ 3.57	+ 2.33	+ 2.10

Although the experimental model, which involved a case study based on integrated activity and competence-based approaches, proved greater efficiency in all aspects of diagnostics (sub-competences) in comparison with the traditional practice of the organization of educational processes, the data presented in Table 5 shows that the greatest impact of the model investigated by the experiment was on the formation and development of extralinguistic and interpretive sub-competences of translation for students in the experimental group. The high indicators of growth in the mean values of these sub-competences demonstrate their potential, which is underestimated and underutilized in the process of the development of students' translation competence. In our opinion, the potential realization of these sub-competences can significantly increase the quality of professional training of students majoring in philology and translation.

In general, we predicted higher indicators in the formation and development of students' bilingual sub-competence in the experimental group. The negative indicator of mean values was the difference before and after the experiment in the control group, which was unexpected. Through discussion of the experiment results with teachers, and by interviewing students, led us to the assumption that students need to implement and master alternative methods for sharing and processing information to complete all tests successfully. The traditional model of the organization of educational processes was not conducive to the mastery of these skills and abilities. The experimental model gave students this opportunity, although the process of mastering new skills and abilities took some time. Furthermore, students from both groups who engaged in the experiment did not have the same level of Ukrainian language proficiency, and mistakes in the translation from English into Ukrainian influenced the assessment of their academic performance at each reference point. We believe that this resulted in a situation whereby indicators of the development of students' bilingual sub-competence were lower than those expected in the experimental group.

Indicators of the development and improvement of personality development sub-competence were the closest to the predicted results of the pedagogical experiment. In general, characteristics of this particular component of students' translation competence were expected. Many studies indicate a great impact of collective and individual learning (to which the proposed experimental model, which involves a case study based on integrated activity and competence-based approaches refers) of motivation development, a positive attitude to learning, and the formation of profound theoretical knowledge (Hoon, 2013; Minchekar, 2017). In the world pedagogy, students' motivation to study has been regarded as one of the most important aspects to increasing the quality of professional training. The implementation of innovative methods arouses interest among the young people. In addition, it encourages students to actively share their experiences and ideas, shifting from the object to the subject of learning, and leads to the development of competences.

The conducted research found a number of additional points. In addition to students and teacher-enthusiasts who are open to new ideas and experiments, indifferent positions, and support from the administration of HEIs are important for the implementation of the latter, innovative or modified (modernized) forms of the organization of educational processes.

5. Conclusions

The higher education of Ukraine, which is seeking to integrate into the European and global educational environments, needs to consider the global experience in solving problems relating to educational content integration into pedagogic theory and practice. It also needs to review the system and content of future translator training while developing educational programs. Additionally, it should implement actively integrated approaches and models of the educational process organization in the practice of professional training of translators in HEIs, as well as implement the latest methodologies to develop translation competences aimed at increasing the quality of professional translator training.

The conducted research proved the efficiency of the experimental model, which involved a case study based on integrated activity and competence-based approaches for the formation and development of translation competence in future translators. The most significant impact the experimental model had on the process of translator professional training was found in the development of extralinguistic sub-competence, which includes culture-oriented knowledge, social-cultural rules and ideas from around the globe, interpreting sub-competence, which includes knowledge on general principles of translation, knowledge on means of automated translation and electronic dictionaries, skills and abilities of their implementation in practice, and bilingual sub-competence, which includes knowledge of two languages – Ukrainian and English, the ability to use them in different types of speech, semantic and stylistic knowledge and skills. The important efficiency factor of the case study based on integrated

activity and competence-based approaches in the improvement of the personality development sub-competence of students' translation in the process of their professional training is the feedback, which contributes to the educational motivation of students and their learning of moral and ethical rules in life and in the workplace. In addition, it shapes the goal and influences the development of psychophysiological characteristics of each student.

The model can be adapted to teach other academic subjects during both full-time studies and distance learning to improve the professional training of students in translation.

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