

Impact case study (REF3b)

<p>Institution: Aston University</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 28 Modern Languages and Linguistics</p>
<p>Title of case study: Transforming EU policy and practice in translator training by defining translation competence</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Since 1993, Professor Schäffner's work on translation competence development at Aston University has contributed to policy development within the European Commission and has led to an increased professionalisation of translator training across Europe. Specifically, it has helped generate a translator competence profile, adopted by the Directorate General for Translation as a benchmark for admitting postgraduate translation programmes to the European Master's in Translation (EMT) network. The DGT's overall aim is to improve the competence of translators and thus the quality of translation. Of about 500 programmes which exist across Europe, 54 have so far been admitted to the EMT network.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Market research firms such as Common Sense Advisory have regularly reported growth rates in the language industry, including translation, driven by globalisation and technological changes. An increasing translation volume poses challenges to specifying quality criteria for translation services, in particular because the translation profession is not regulated. The translation industry, and also the EU institutions, have experienced difficulties in recruiting qualified translators which has highlighted the need to establish criteria for defining and assessing translation competence and thus raise the standard of translator training.</p> <p>The research conducted by Christina Schäffner, Professor of Translation Studies, and employed at Aston University since 1992, has been devoted to translation competence and its development. Her initial work was concerned with investigating the nature of translation competence (S3.1). Based predominantly on critical engagement with literature on this topic, translation competence was defined as complex and consisting of sub-competences, viz</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>translation service provision competence</i> – the ability to produce and offer a translation appropriate to client specification; • <i>linguistic competence</i> - knowledge of the languages concerned, comprising communicative competence and metalinguistic competence; • <i>intercultural competence</i> - general knowledge of historical, political, economic and cultural contexts and other aspects of the respective countries and communities; • <i>textual competence</i> - knowledge of regularities and conventions of texts, genres, text types; • <i>thematic competence</i> - knowledge of the relevant subject, the area of expertise; • <i>(re)search competence</i> - a general strategic competence whose aim is the ability to resolve problems as prerequisite for decision-making, including the ability to use tools and search engines effectively <p>As a result of ongoing research (esp. Research outputs S3.5, S3.6), translation competence was further specified as a combination of knowledge (knowing what), skills (knowing how) and ability to reflect (knowing why). It also includes interpersonal aspects (awareness of the social role of translators, knowing the standards applicable to the service provision, complying with professional ethics), as well as entrepreneurial aspects (the organization of client relationships, work and budget planning, time management).</p> <p>In view of this complexity, translation competence cannot be developed through standard language programmes. Translator training is not merely a skill-producing activity: it requires customized</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

translator training programmes which cater for the complexity of translation competence, coherently linking programme content, learning and teaching methods, and assessment to the development of each sub-competence. Given this context, Professor Schäffner's research at Aston University evaluated which learning, teaching, and assessment methods are most effective in the development of translation competence. Her focus was on the links between teaching methods and the development of the specific sub-competences, such as textual competence (S3.2), thematic competence (S3.3), service provision competence (S3.6). This research was informed by engaging with existing literature and based on empirical studies, especially observation of classroom activities and analysis of student performance as a result of changes in teaching and assessment methods. The results of these empirical studies served as basis for the design and modification of translator training programmes (S3.4, S3.5).

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. SCHÄFFNER, C and ADAB, B (eds) 2000. *Developing Translation Competence*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, Benjamins. 244 pp. ISBN 90 272 1643 6
2. SCHÄFFNER, C 2002. Entwicklung von übersetzungsorientierter Textkompetenz. In Feyrer, C and Holzer, P. (eds) *Translation: Didaktik im Kontext*. Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M, pp. 41-58. ISSN 1437-9007, ISBN 3-631-37088-1
3. SCHÄFFNER, C. 2004. Developing Competence in LSP-Translation. In: Fleischmann, E, Schmitt, P.A. and Wotjak, G. (eds) *Translationskompetenz*. Stauffenburg. Tübingen, pp. 679-689. ISBN 3-86057-253-9.
4. SCHÄFFNER, C 2004. Developing professional translation competence without a notion of translation. In: Malmkjaer, K. (ed.) *Translation in Undergraduate Degree Programmes*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, Benjamins (Benjamins Translation Library 59), 113-125. ISBN 90 272 1665 7
5. SCHÄFFNER, C. 2005. Preparing students of translation for the real world: Needs, methods, constraints. In: Peeters, J. (ed): *On the Relationships between Translation Theory and Translation Practice*. Frankfurt, Peter Lang (Studien zur romanischen Sprachwissenschaft und interkulturellen Kommunikation, Band 19), 237-248. ISBN 3-631-53442-6.
6. SCHÄFFNER, C. 2012 Translation Competence: Training for the Real World. In: Séverine Hubscher-Davidson and Michał Borodo (eds) *Global Trends in Translator and Interpreter Training. Mediation and Culture*. London: Continuum. 2012. Pp.30-44. ISBN 978-1-4411-9340-7

These papers were all peer-reviewed before acceptance, with some of them published by internationally leading publishing houses in the discipline of Translation Studies (esp. John Benjamins). More than 600 copies of output 1 have been sold worldwide, which has also been quoted frequently as a reference for related research. Copies of all papers available on request.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Professor Schäffner's research on translation competence development has had an impact above all on policy makers and institutions in the European Union by providing expert advice and thereby influencing policy and practice.

Transforming policy

As a result of the underpinning research cited above, Professor Schäffner was invited in 2007 by the European Commission's Directorate General for Translation (DGT) to be a member of an Expert Group for the European Master's in Translation (EMT) project. This Expert Group consisted

of eight members from several European countries. Its main task was to make specific proposals to the DGT with a view to implementing a common and transparent European reference framework for an EMT. This initiative was motivated by the difficulty the DGT experienced in hiring qualified translators. The Expert Group worked intensively between 2008 and 2009 on producing documentation for the DGT, the most important one outlining the Translator Competence Profile (see S5.1) This profile document specifies competences translators need to have in order to work successfully in the field of multilingual and multimedia communication. The underpinning research cited above (especially S3.1, S3.5) contributed to the development of this competence profile, which was adopted by the DGT in 2009.

Since its adoption, the Translator Competence Profile has served as a benchmark for postgraduate programmes applying to be admitted to the EMT network. With more than 90 applications from across Europe in the first round in 2009, 34 programmes were admitted to the network. There were a further 64 applications in the second round in 2010/11, of which 20 programmes were admitted (bringing the current total to 54 programmes from 20 countries). The profile document also serves as a guideline for universities across Europe that wish to develop translator training programmes. The DGT invited Professor Schäffner to be a member of the evaluation committee for applications to join the EMT Network for both rounds (2009, 2011).

In 2010 Professor Schäffner was invited to become a member of the OPTIMALE Steering Committee (Optimising professional translator training in a multilingual Europe, see S5.2), an Erasmus academic network funded by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture (total grant of €249,904.00). She is in charge of an OPTIMALE sub-workpackage on 'Training for professional practice: professionally-oriented practices in the academic context'. The activities within this project build on and expand the research on translation competence (especially S3.6).

Transforming practice

The findings of Professor Schäffner's research have also been presented to a wide range of language professionals nationally and internationally. In November 2010, she gave a plenary talk at the 6th Asian Translators Forum of FIT (Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs), held at the University of Macao on the topic 'Translation Competence - Training for the Real World' (S5.3). The audience included researchers, trainers of translators, professional translators, and representatives of education ministries from China and other Asian countries. This presentation led to an invitation to write an article on translation competence development for the Chinese Translators' Journal (published in No. 6/2012). Following a presentation at the DGT's Language Industry LIND-WEB FORUM, held on 24 May 2012 in Brussels, and attended by approximately 120 stakeholders from academia, translation companies, public administration, and freelancers (S5.4), she was invited by the President of the School of Translation and Interpreting Studies, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, to conduct workshops related to translator competence development and training the trainers. Chinese universities have recently started to introduce Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI) programmes which are closely modelled on the EMT competence profile. Professor Schäffner was specifically asked to use the training workshops to provide information and advice to support curriculum design and delivery. These workshops were held in November 2012, attended by approximately 40 lecturers on China's MTI programmes from universities of different parts of China, and video-taped to be made available by the largest digital library in China in order to produce a series for the libraries of major universities in China (S5.5). Immediate feedback from workshop participants indicated that they intended to amend their own programmes and adopt criteria and methods presented by Professor Schäffner.

Impact case study (REF3b)

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Informing and influencing policy debate and practice

1. Document outlining translator competence profile of the European Master's in Translation (EMT)
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/programmes/emt/key_documents/emt_competences_translators_en.pdf

Only recent information on the EMT is available at the website which is regularly updated. Copies of Professor Schäffner's presentations at EMT conferences are available on request.

Confirmation letter and information documents of the first meeting of the EMT Expert Group, including a list with names of the Expert Group members, selection criteria, and outlining the tasks of this group.

Contact person: Angeliki Petrits, DG Translation Field Office, European Commission Representation UK
Europe House, 32 Smith Square, London SW1P 3EU

Membership of the evaluation committee was not made public.

2. Information on the management team of the OPTIMALE network
<http://www.translator-training.eu/about-optimale/project-management>
3. 6th Asian Translators Forum of FIT, University of Macao, November 2010: Conference report and photos at
http://www.tac-online.org.cn/en/tran/2010-11/15/content_3837202.htm

Call for papers, listing the names of the plenary speakers.

A copy of Professor Schäffner's presentation is available on request.

4. Programme of the LIND-WEB Forum in Brussels on 24 May 2012 with link to presentations
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/programmes/languageindustry/platform/documents/lindweb_forum_programme_en.pdf
5. Workshops held at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies in November 2012. Invitation letter and Emails from some participants can be provided on request.

Campus news report(in Chinese): <http://news.gdufs.edu.cn/article-78744.html>

Lecture announcement (Chinese and English):

<http://www.gdufs.edu.cn/info/1005/40669.htm>

Film of lecture on pedagogy: http://video.mti100.com/serie_400051685.shtml