Future Translators' Concerns Regarding Professional Competences: A Corpus Study

Preocupaciones de los futuros traductores sobre sus competencias profesionales: Un estudio de corpus

Préoccupations des futurs traducteurs en matière de compétences professionnelles : une étude de corpus

Preocupações de futuros tradutores com relação às competências profissionais: um estudo de corpus

Cristina Plaza-Lara
Associate Professor, Universidad de Málaga, Andalucía, Spain.
cplaza@uma.es
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0409-1646

Abstract

When entering the job market, prospective translators face certain difficulties concerning professional know-how that they have to overcome in order to succeed in their career. For this reason, the aim of this article is to provide insights into the main concerns of future translators regarding professional competences. To understand these concerns, a corpus was created using the questions posted by future translators in a forum located on a very well-known translation site: Proz.com. A total of 125 posts were processed and thematically coded using the corpus manager Sketch Engine. The thematic codes were based on two multi-componential models of translator competence: PACTE's and EMT Board's models. Once the content was coded, qualitative content analysis was carried out in order to analyse the main concerns of translators-to-be in relation to professional competences. Results show that marketing, industry, and business knowledge are among the main causes of worry of prospective translators. Although the results are not generalisable, the conclusions drawn from this study provide translator trainers with a comprehensive view of what professional competences should be reinforced in the classroom.

Keywords: professional competences, translator training, prospective translators, translators' concerns

Resumen

Cuando los futuros traductores entran al mercado laboral, se enfrentan a varias dificultades, relacionadas con su conocimiento profesional, que deben superar para tener éxito en su carrera. El objetivo de este artículo es conocer las principales preocupaciones de los futuros traductores en relación con sus competencias profesionales. Para entender dichas preocupaciones, se creó un corpus a partir de las preguntas publicadas por futuros traductores en un foro alojado en un sitio de
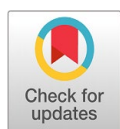
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traducción muy conocido: Proz.com. Se procesaron 125 mensajes y se codificaron temáticamente utilizando el gestor de corpus Sketch Engine. Los códigos temáticos se basaron en dos modelos multicomponenciales de competencia traductora: los modelos de PACTE y de EMT. Una vez codificado el contenido, se llevó a cabo un análisis de contenido cualitativo para analizar las principales preocupaciones de los futuros traductores en relación con las competencias profesionales. Los resultados muestran que el marketing, la industria y los conocimientos empresariales se encuentran entre las principales causas de preocupación de los futuros traductores. Aunque los resultados no son generalizables, las conclusiones extraídas de este estudio ofrecen a los formadores de traductores una visión global de las competencias profesionales que deberían reforzarse en el aula.

Palabras clave: competencias profesionales, formación de traductores, futuros traductores, preocupaciones de los traductores

Résumé

Lorsqu'ils entrent sur le marché du travail, les futurs traducteurs sont confrontés à certaines difficultés en matière de savoir-faire professionnel qu'ils doivent surmonter pour réussir leur carrière. Cette recherche vise à donner un aperçu des principales préoccupations des futurs traducteurs en matière de compétences professionnelles. Pour ce faire, un corpus a été créé à partir des questions posées par les futurs traducteurs dans un forum publié sur un site de traduction très connu : Proz.com. Au total, 125 messages ont été traités et codés thématiquement à l'aide du logiciel pour la gestion de corpus Sketch Engine. Les codes thématiques ont été basés sur deux modèles multicomponentiels de compétence des traducteurs : PACTE et EMT. Une fois le contenu codé, une analyse qualitative du contenu a été réalisée afin d'analyser les principales préoccupations des futurs traducteurs en matière de compétences professionnelles. Les résultats montrent que les connaissances en matière de marketing, d'industrie et d'affaires figurent parmi les principales causes d'inquiétude des futurs traducteurs. Bien que les résultats ne soient pas généralisables, les conclusions tirées de cette étude permettent aux formateurs de traducteurs d'avoir une vue d'ensemble des compétences professionnelles qui devraient être renforcées en classe.

Mots-clef : compétences professionnelles, formation des traducteurs, futurs traducteurs, préoccupations des traducteurs

Resumo

Ao entrar no mercado de trabalho, os tradutores em potencial enfrentam certas dificuldades relacionadas ao conhecimento profissional que precisam superar para ter sucesso em sua carreira. Esta pesquisa tem o objetivo de fornecer informações sobre as principais preocupações dos futuros tradutores com relação às competências profissionais. Para isso, foi criado um corpus usando as perguntas dos futuros tradutores em um fórum publicado em um site de tradução muito conhecido: Proz.com. Um total de 125 postagens foram processados e codificados tematicamente usando o gerenciador de corpus Sketch Engine. Os códigos temáticos foram baseados em dois modelos multicomponenciais de competência do tradutor: Os modelos do PACTE e do EMT Board. Depois que o conteúdo foi codificado, foi realizada uma análise qualitativa do conteúdo para analisar as principais preocupações dos futuros tradutores em relação às competências profissionais. Os resultados mostram que o conhecimento sobre marketing, setor e negócios está

entre as principais causas de preocupação dos futuros tradutores. Embora os resultados não sejam generalizáveis, as conclusões tiradas deste estudo oferecem aos instrutores de tradutores uma visão abrangente das competências profissionais que devem ser reforçadas em sala de aula.

Palavras-chave: competências profissionais, treinamento de tradutores, futuros tradutores, preocupações dos tradutores

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Introduction

In recent decades, extensive research on translation competence has led to the convergence of different multi-componential models that highlight the complex nature of this concept. A debate has also arisen about the name translation competence should receive. In this regard, authors such as Kiraly (2000) distinguish between *translation competence* and *translator competence*. While in some publications these two terms are used synonymously, according to this author, the term *translation competence* should be restricted to the knowledge and skills required for performing exclusively language-related tasks (Kiraly, 2006). In this sense, Neubert (2000), as cited in Koby & Melby (2013), for example, posits five central components of the translation task, i.e., language, textual, subject area, cultural, and transfer competence (p. 96). However, the term *translator competence* seeks to tackle with the complex nature of a translator's tasks in today's market, which demands of future graduates additional non-linguistic competences in the delivery of professional translation services.

As explained in the theoretical framework below, multi-componential models offer an account of the different components that should define translator competence, placing "professionally related competences at the same level as translation competence [therefore understanding] translation as a cross-lingual as well as a vocational activity" (Wu et al., 2019, p. 236). Since this paper focuses on professional components of translator competence, multi-componential models will constitute a cornerstone, and the term "translator competence" will be used to encompass linguistic and non-linguistic competences needed in the translation profession.

The notion of professional competences has gained an important place in Translation Studies. This concept was introduced by McClelland's (1973) in Work Psychology. His behaviourist approach has been represented in translation studies such as those of Gouadec (2007), Rothe-Neves (2005), and Kuznik (2010). Although from this perspective special attention is paid to the pre-requisites of a good translator (Gouadec, 2007, p. 150), to the best of the author's knowledge, there is still no consensus on what the translator's professional competences should include. According to Hurtado Albir (2007) "the notion of 'professional competence' is used to refer to the combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that guarantee job efficiency in any given professional field" (p. 164). Thus, in this paper, professional competences are overall understood as the specific knowledge and skills related to the translation profession and business. In the next section, literature on translator competence will be reviewed, paying special attention to professional competences. Furthermore, the operationalisation proposal underpinning this research will be presented to better understand the different components that support it.

In line with the above, researchers such as Kearns (2008) and Kiraly (2016), among others, encourage the need for both vocational and academic training, taking into account that "applying the academic rigour taught in the translation classroom can also be compatible with addressing professional skills, such as business and marketplace skills" (Rodríguez de Céspedes, 2017, p. 109). The objective of this paper is thus to shed light on the main concerns future translators have about professional competences. For that purpose, a corpus was created using the questions posted by prospective translators in the *Getting Established* forum on Proz.com. In this vein, a qualitative analysis applying content analysis techniques was carried out to examine the above-mentioned concerns. The data were coded using thematic categories, which were established after reviewing the operationalisation of professional competences of two of the most well-known multi-componential models of translator competence, i.e., PACTE's (Hurtado Albir, 2017; PACTE, 2018) and the EMT Board (2022) models respectively. This qualitative analysis reveals the importance of addressing these during training in order to align linguistic and professional competences.

Theoretical Framework

Research on translator competence has a long tradition in Translation Studies. The first approaches to this concept date back to the 1980s. Most of these early studies focused on transfer competences and only a few presented the first proposals consisting of different components (for a detailed list of authors, see Hurtado Albir, 2015, pp. 258–259; Hurtado Albir, 2017, pp. 5–7). However, researchers in this area have witnessed a flourishing development since the beginning of the new millennium: research on translator competence has gained momentum. As Hurtado Albir mentions (2015), since then, a more interdisciplinary perspective has accounted for the complex nature of this concept (p. 258). Most of the models on translator competence published in the last thirty years understand this construct as a summation of competences, that is, a complex construct consisting of different sub-competences (Robert et al., 2017, p. 1). For this reason, these proposals are known as multi-componential models of translator competence.

The Spanish research group PACTE (Proceso de Adquisición de la Competencia Traductora y Evaluación), led by Hurtado Albir, has become one of the main references in translator competence research with its empirically validated multi-componential model. Although an increasing number of empirical-experimental studies have been conducted in the last decade (see Alves and Gonçalves, 2007; Gonçalves, 2005; Göpferich, 2009), PACTE's research dates back to 1998, when they developed their first holistic model of translation competence (PACTE, 2000). Their initial model implied a total of six sub-competences, but after being empirically validated, it was finally reduced to five sub-competences (the bilingual, the extralinguistic, the knowledge of translation, the instrumental the strategic sub-competences) and several psycho-physiological components (Hurtado Albir, 2017, pp. 39).

Yet, multi-componential models have also received some criticism. Some authors, for instance, Pym (2003), argue that competences are complex and dynamic in nature and, as such, they cannot be reduced to lists of sub-competences. In this sense, Pym (2003) proposes a minimalist approach to the definition of this concept. According to this author, the training of translators involves the creation of the following two-fold functional competence: on the one hand, the ability to generate a series of more than one viable target text (TT1, TT2 ... TTn) for a pertinent source text (ST); and on the other, the ability to select only one viable TT from this series, quickly and with justified confidence (Pym, 2003, p. 489).

As can be seen, this two-fold functional competence is limited to transfer skills. Multi-componential models, in turn, adopt a more concise perspective specifying a set of knowledge, skills, or competences that require declarative (know what) and procedural (know-how) knowledge and that are especially useful for training and research purposes (Way, 2008; Wu et al., 2019). For this reason and bearing in mind that the focal point of this research are professional competences in translation, a multi-componential perspective was taken as a reference.

In this paper, the multi-componential model underpinning the content analysis is the one proposed by the PACTE group (Hurtado Albir, 2017; PACTE, 2018). One of the main reasons for choosing this model is that, although professional competences are mentioned in different multi-componential proposals under different names (see, for example, the professional competences of Hewson, 1995; the knowledge of the translator's professional practice described by Kautz, 2000; the professional knowledge mentioned by Nord, 2005; the professional know-how of González Davies, 2004; and the professional and instrumental competence of Kelly, 2005, and Katan, 2008), PACTE's model provides an operationalisation of its components. This was found very useful for the purpose of the present research, as discussed below. Furthermore, their proposal is

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relatively recent, which guarantees the relevance of the competences in today's market.

Concerning professional competences, pacte's model (Hurtado Albir, 2017) includes the knowledge of translation sub-competence. This is defined as the "knowledge related to professional translation practice: the work market, types of translation briefs, target audiences, etc." (Hurtado Albir, 2017, p. 40). Such a sub-competence also entails other aspects like tariffs, taxes, professional associations, etc. In Hurtado Albir (2017), the group does not offer any operationalisation of the different components of the knowledge of translation sub-competence. However, in a subsequent paper (pacte, 2018), aimed at developing

a common framework that defines competence levels in translation, level descriptors for competences are proposed. After an exhaustive review of the professional competences posited by the uk's National Occupational Standards in Translation, Australia's National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters, the American Translators Association, the European Master's in Translation (emt), and the Vertaalacademie Maastricht and pstevin in the Netherlands, the name used to refer to these competences is changed to that of "translation service provision competence". In doing so, consistency with most of the literature review is maintained. Hence, descriptors of that competence posed by pact are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 Translation Service Provision Competence Descriptors According to pacte

Translation Level B2
1. Can effectively meet the quality standards the labour market requires in each context for texts translated by a generalist translator in at least one area of professional practice.
2. Can meet the profession's ethical requirements (confidentiality, impartiality, turning down work beyond one's capabilities, etc.) when carrying out a translation task and when interacting with the actors involved in a translation project.
3. Can revise and post-edit translations of texts corresponding to a generalist translator, meeting the quality standards the labour market requires in each context.
4. Can use marketing strategies to capture and retain customers and obtain professional assignments. [If required in the relevant job]
5. Can negotiate with the actors involved in a translation project (customers, other professionals) to determine deadlines, rates, invoicing methods, working conditions, the nature of the contract involved, rights and responsibilities, the project's specifications, etc., and can fulfil the conditions established. [If required in the relevant job]
6. Can work in coordination with the actors involved in a translation project (customers, project managers, other translators, correctors, etc.) and maintain an efficient workflow. [If required in the relevant job]
7. Can determine a translation project's profitability on the basis of the workload, rate, and deadline it involves. [If required in the relevant job]
8. Can produce quotes and invoices in accordance with established standards in different translation scenarios. [If required in the relevant job]
9. Can manage basic tax requirements (e.g. registration of professional activity, registration as an intra-Community operator, quarterly or annual tax returns, withholding statements, statements of transactions with third parties), translation contracts and possible conflicts arising from non-payment (e.g. notifications, formal requests, 'order for payment' procedures, legal proceedings). [If required in the relevant job]
10. Can manage workflow-related administrative tasks (e.g. recording and checking customers' details, rates applied, projects carried out, payment status). [If required in the relevant job]
11. Can manage the physical working environment (e.g. workplace location, lighting conditions) and virtual working environment (e.g. screen organization, folder management, tool maintenance).

Source: pacte (2018, p. 122).

This list of descriptors provides the basis for the corpus analysis tackled in the following sections. Nonetheless, after an initial analysis of the corpus, it was noticed that some posts did not fit into any of the established categories. Those posts encompassed general questions regarding market requirements (job opportunities, specialisation fields, academic training, among others). For this reason, the European Master's in Translation model (EMT Board, 2022) was reviewed. It proposes a total of 36 skills and under skill number 27 within the service provision competence, the EMT Board (2022) assert that "students should know how to monitor and take account of new societal and language industry demands, new market requirements and emerging job profiles" (p. 11). This skill was thus deemed another descriptor to cover those posts asking for more general information about translation market requirements. Therefore, the competence operationalisation of PACTE (2018) along with skill 27 proposed by the EMT Board (2022) underpin the categorisation of themes for content analysis purposes presented in the following section.

Before proceeding with the description of the methods and data, it should be pointed out that, although PACTE and the EMT Board use the name "service provision competence", in this paper, the more general designation "professional competences" is used, following the preferred terminology in the studies mentioned above (González Davies, 2004; Hewson, 1995; Katan, 2008; Kautz, 2000; Kelly, 2005; Nord, 2005).

Method

The evolution of social media has increased the possibilities open to the translation community for building professional networks. With tools such as blogs, forums, or social networking sites, "we are never further than a few clicks away or a swipe away from retrieving much of the information we wish to obtain" (Desjardins, 2017, p. 36).

In a context in which the focus is on translators rather than on translations (Chesterman, 2009), these tools become an important source of information for the researcher in Translation Studies. In this regard, it is possible to find previous research based on the content published in blogs, especially in the field of sociology of translation (Dam, 2013; Flanagan, 2016; McDonough Dolmaya, 2011a; Nunes Vieira, 2018), forums (McDonough Dolmaya, 2007, 2011b; Nunes Vieira, 2018), mailing lists (Plassard, 2007), and posts on social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter (Läubli & Orrego-Carmona, 2017).

For this study, an analysis of translators' forum posts was carried out using content analysis techniques. This research method applies mostly to corpora analysis and draws on the meticulous analysis of texts followed by the coding and classification of content according to predetermined thematic categories (Creswell, 2013; Stemler, 2000). Due to the large volume of data dealing with highly varied topics in the corpus, this methodology was considered suitable for the manual analysis of the content of posts and the addition of previously defined thematic categories (Stemler, 2000).

The categorisation of themes for coding and classification purposes was based on the operationalisation of competences presented by the PACTE group (2018) along with skill 27 of the EMT Board (2022). The initial descriptors proposed by PACTE could have been used for categorisation purposes. Nevertheless, for ease of reading, the descriptors were simplified and reduced to six themes that could comprise several descriptors. In Table 2, the thematic categories have been matched with the descriptor number that the reader can find in PACTE's quote in the previous section (see Table 1). In some cases, due to the complex nature of descriptors, these can be assigned to several thematic categories. During the content analysis, these were placed in the most suitable thematic category.

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Table 2 Correlation Between Thematic Categories Established for the Content Analysis and the Operationalisation of Professional Competences

Descriptor in PACTE's Proposal (2018)	Thematic Category
Descriptors 1, 2, and 3 + skill 27 in EMT (EMT Board, 2022)	Knowledge of market requirements
Descriptor 4	Marketing knowledge
Descriptors 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10	Business knowledge
Descriptors 1, 3, 5, and 7	Definition of project requirements
Descriptor 11	Management of the working environment
Descriptors 2, 5, and 6	Interaction with the actors involved in the industry or a project.

Once these categories were created, the corpus was compiled using the corpus manager Sketch Engine. The Proz.com forum *Getting Established* was selected for different reasons. First, Proz.com appears to be one of the most popular sites among translators. Second, the main topics included in this forum refer to users' concerns regarding the translation profession and business (users can find other forums for linguistic or technical issues, for example). Lastly, this forum specifically targets translators who are just starting their careers and are seeking advice on how to get established.

As far as sampling is concerned a convenience sample was used, as in other previous studies using data published on social media (McDonough Dolmaya, 2011a; Nunes Vieira, 2018). In doing so, understanding the main concerns of future translators about professional competences was possible. As stated by Nunes Vieira (2018), "the use of blog and forum content in this context inevitably restricts results to the population of translators who publish their views online" (p. 9), and consequently, research results are not generalisable (McDonough Dolmaya, 2011a). However, the qualitative insights that resulted from the analysis helped identify certain trends that allow translator trainers to make sense of future graduates' concerns.

The first threads in this forum date back to 2001, but only the posts published between January 1, 2015 and February 29, 2020 were compiled. This date range was defined because, after having analysed this five-year period, saturation of data was reached. As stated by Cohen et al. (2011 based on Glaser & Strauss, 1967), "saturation is reached when no new insights, codes or categories are produced even when new data are added" (p. 494). In this study, by the time almost 60 per cent of the corpus was analysed, a great number of questions had been repeated. Still, to be cautious and avoid premature cessation of data collection (Cohen et al., 2011), the analysis continued until no new insights were found.

During the period of data collection, a total of 502 forum threads were published in the *Getting Established* forum. Notwithstanding, only 125 were included in the analysis. Non-English posts and threads containing irrelevant information (conference announcements; scam notices; surveys, etc.) were filtered out. Apart from these two exclusion criteria, as forums are tools in which the user only needs to register to participate, the user's profile and/or the information provided in their posts about their educational or professional background were taken into account to filter the forum posts. The following inclusion criteria were established:

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- Posts published by users with an educational background in translation or, at least, in foreign languages. Most of them mentioned higher education studies; yet, in some posts, reference was also made to renowned certification programmes, such as the American Translators Association Certification.

- Posts published by users with professional experience in translation of less than one year. When the user's educational background was not clear, professional experience in translation of less than one year was deemed a valid eligibility criterion. The latter criterion was defined after observing that, for forum users, a period between six months and one year was necessary to get established as a professional translator. Similarly, those posts in which the user stated that they had more than a one-year experience, but only with occasional jobs, were also included in the sample, as it was considered that the experience acquired was not enough to work full time.

Therefore, the following exclusion criteria were also set:

- Posts published by users with more than a one-year experience.

- Posts published by users with amateur experience in translation, i.e., users that practice translation but not as a professional activity; users without educational training in languages or translation who simply wanted to obtain information about the translation industry.

- Posts without information about educational background or professional experience.

After removing posts that did not meet the data eligibility criteria, answers (only questions were analysed), duplicated information, and internal tags, the corpus included a total of 32,297 tokens belonging to 125 posts. Using Skema, the tool provided by Sketch Engine to code, annotate, and categorise corpora, the topics addressed in the forum questions were filtered, annotated, and

organised according to the thematic categories defined in Table 2. After a first manual annotation of the corpus content, a second review was carried out two months later as a self-validation strategy to confirm previous data interpretation. This allowed for reducing biases during the annotation procedure as much as possible. During that second review, certain categorisations were slightly modified because, sometimes, one thread tackled different topics and it was not easy to identify the key point of the message.

Content Analysis

The aim of the content analysis of the forum posts was to shed light on the main concerns of future translators with regard to professional competences. This methodology yielded interesting data for qualitative analysis. Notwithstanding, quantitative data, including the number of occurrences of a theme in the corpus (see Figure 1), was compiled in order to gain an overview of the most representative themes and provide a first image of the main concerns of translators-to-be.

To interpret this quantitative data, it must be noted that most of the posts opening the forum threads encompassed several questions that could refer to different themes. Furthermore, in some cases, one question might have regarded several themes, as they were interrelated and the boundaries between them occasionally overlapped. Figure 1 summarises the most often referred themes in the questions.

Figure 1 Occurrence of Themes in the Corpus
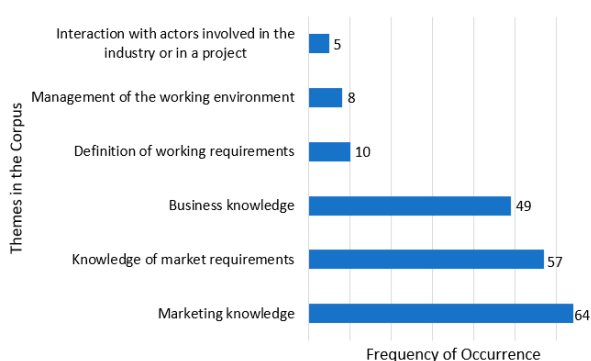
Taking the quantitative information above as a starting point, the qualitative content analysis of the data will be presented. According to Figure 1, marketing knowledge is one of the major causes of concern in the corpus. As can be inferred from the forum *Getting Established*, most of the participants sought advice on how to enter the translation labour market. In this regard, the 64 questions included in this category can be divided into two groups: on the one hand, those asking for advice on how to find jobs and clients; on the other, those that endeavoured to get information about marketing practices. It must be pointed out that, in both groups, very general questions were detected, for example, the one in post 55: "I'm looking to acquire work in order to further my knowledge, skills and experience and was wondering if anyone could give me some advice" (March 15, 2018). As can be seen, some users wanted to know how to access the industry, without offering further details about their educational or professional background, their future perspectives, or their work plan to achieve their aim of entering the market. These questions were quite difficult to answer because, as one of the forum participants stated in post 24 "there is no translator starter-pack" (August 23, 2018). When reading the answers to these global questions, it was observed that they normally received general tips leading to more specific questions that should be answered before starting a translation career. Therefore, translators-to-be ought to be able to set their long-term objectives and define short-term goals to achieve their professional aims (Cuadrado-Rey & Navarro-Brotons, 2020; Galán-Mañas & Olalla-Soler, 2020; Rodríguez de Céspedes, 2017).

In contrast to these posts asking for general advice, most of the participants raised specific questions and explained the strategies they were putting into practice. However, due to the lack of job offers or the poor conditions offered, they sought further advice on how to deal with the situation for checking if there were any aspects to improve.

Although in many of these posts there were other questions related to other themes, most of them asked how to get more clients because the number of jobs they were receiving was not sufficient to earn a living. The main difference between this group of questions and those analysed in the previous paragraph, in which the users did not offer previous information on their background or future perspectives, is that, in this case, they had an initial roadmap that they were implementing. For this reason, the kind of answers they received were normally targeted to a more specific objective. For example, in post 10 (January 24, 2015), the user asked for advice on the creation of a website. She was advised to create one if she wanted to reach direct clients; still, to work with agencies, users recommended boosting her Proz profile (January 28, 2015).

Concerning marketing practices, it is worth noting that only nine posts made a clear distinction between agencies and direct clients. The participants looked for specific advice on how to approach both of them and how they should manage the projects for these types of clients. Marketing strategies vary depending on whether services are being offered to an agency or a direct client, and translators-to-be need to be aware of this (McKay, 2006; Stelmaszak, 2011; Wright Jr., 2012). In some cases, the discussion was about whether it was preferable to start working as a freelancer with agencies or with direct clients. Again, this kind of questions was quite difficult to answer. This is because working with one or the other can have advantages and disadvantages and, according to the data, translators-to-be encounter some difficulties when weighing up the benefits and the drawbacks.

One of the most recurrent topics related to marketing strategies is the drafting of the curriculum vitae. In 21 out of the 64 questions related to marketing knowledge, participants wanted to know how to organise the information or how to obtain references when they had almost no experience.

One user asked about the language that should be used when sending a cv to a company that does not share their mother tongue. In three questions, forum participants asked colleagues for feedback on their curriculum vitae, their professional profile on Proz.com, their website, and even the name of their company, all from a marketing perspective. The users opening these threads aimed to obtain improvement tips from more experienced colleagues.

In short, with regard to marketing knowledge, one of the main concerns of future translators is how and to whom they can sell their services. Taking this information as a starting point, trainers should guide them in drafting a marketing roadmap according to their goals in their professional career. To achieve this aim, students should work on different marketing tasks (approaching and negotiating with clients, attendance at events, presence in professional associations or distribution lists, to mention just a few) that encourage reflection and the application of the knowledge acquired (Cuadrado-Rey & Navarro-Brotons, 2020; Muñoz-Miquel, 2020; Olalla-Soler, 2019).

Knowledge of market requirements is the second theme analysed in this section with 57 related questions. One of the most recurrent topics in this theme referred to the market potential of a specialisation field. Participants wanted to know about the areas offering more job opportunities or the potential of the specialisation they had chosen. In two cases, both closely related to marketing knowledge, the forum users asked about the sort of companies that would require the translation services they offer in their specialisation fields.

In 28 out of the 57 questions related to the knowledge of market requirements, participants wanted to find out the different ways of acquiring specialised knowledge. Some of the participants sought to know if it was worth pursuing a master's degree, whereas others wondered whether they should get some experience in the industry before specialising. In this regard, two participants asked about

the possibility of getting an in-house job to specialise in a field and gain industry knowledge. Some participants also asked about the possibility of including their experience in other non-translation fields as a specialisation area and how to show this information in the curriculum vitae.

Apart from those asking for advice on specialisation, in seven posts on this theme, the question was about when to start their career as freelance translators. In some cases, the participants wanted to know if a bachelor's or a master's degree were enough to start freelancing. In some other cases, the forum users declared, in the explanation provided to their questions, that they would look for a non-translation position while trying to build a client portfolio solid enough to work as freelancers. In one case, the participant wondered if in-house experience was needed. It must be pointed out that hardly any reference was made to in-house experience in the forum threads. Most of the participants agreed on the difficulty of finding an in-house position, and only one participant asked for advice on how to be successful in recruitment processes for in-house jobs.

To sum up, in relation to the knowledge of market requirements, it can be stated that future translators are aware of the importance of having a specialisation. The main concerns in the corpus are how to get that specialised knowledge and what previous experience is required. In this regard, the forum was used to get some advice and the answers users received may be subjective, simply including the personal experience of the person that answered. Trainers should, therefore, show students how to research a specific market, make them aware of the many possibilities for entering it, and stimulate analytical thinking.

The next most recurrent theme in the corpus spin around questions concerning business knowledge, with a total of 49 questions. In this category, 25 questions dealt with legal and administrative issues. Users wanted advice on topics such as invoicing, taxes, and the legal implications

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of working as a freelancer. In four cases, the posts referred to signing contracts with translation agencies and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) implications. Regarding GDPR, two users also raised questions about the use of certain texts as samples in their portfolios. These legal issues were connected with three questions about scams and possible non-payment situations. In this vein, in fear of facing a situation like that, one user sought advice on the reliability of a job proposal.

Setting rates was another recurrent topic in this theme. Although some users stated they had checked the calculator feature and the average rates offered by Proz.com, they wondered if, as beginners, they should charge lower fees in order to get established. In other posts, users wanted to obtain information about how to define rates according to the services provided, the units (lines, pages, minimum rates, etc.), and the specialisation field. In one case, the question referred to CAT (Computer-Assisted Translation) grid systems applied for discounts by agencies.

In this third theme, the main concerns of translators-to-be in relation to business and legal knowledge could be put down to the fact that they are not common subjects in a language degree (Álvarez-Álvarez & Arnáiz-Uzquiza, 2017). As Pym and Torres-Simón (2016) point out in this respect, "the kind of knowledge that the students seek is often local" (p. 196) and it is difficult for all these questions to be answered during the degree. However, trainers should introduce students to basic concepts and provide them with the necessary competences to continue learning autonomously. The same applies to rates: it is not a question of defining an amount without prior reasoning; many factors should be taken into account when defining rates (residence country, taxes, type of client, investments, or even the desired remuneration, to mention just a few), and students should be made aware of these during training.

The three themes analysed so far have the highest representation in the corpus. However, three other themes that are less representative were identified. Under the theme concerning the management of the working environment, ten posts revolved around the tools that translators should obtain to start their professional careers. All of them referred to CAT tools, but in two cases, advice was also requested on non-specific software (such as word processors, desktop publishing tools, among others). Only in one post did the forum user want to know if it is worth investing in CAT tools, which is closely related to business knowledge and profitability management.

Interacting with actors involved in the industry or a project was another minor concern. With a total of eight posts, this theme encompassed questions aiming to obtain advice on how to deal with a situation that affects the relationship with a client, for example, dealing with controversial topics (such as rates), fear of litigation, or losing clients. These questions "reflect the intertwined nature of the components of translator competence" (Wu et al., 2019, p. 236), since they are closely connected with the strategic competence and the psycho-physiological components mentioned by Hurtado Albir (2017, p. 41). This author includes problem identification and solving, as well as cognitive and attitudinal components (e.g., attention, emotion, critical experience, logical reasoning, or confidence in one's own ability), in the definition of the strategic competence and the psycho-physiological components, and contends that they are pillars in the interaction with other actors in the industry.

The final group of five questions related to project requirements. The main topics in this category were the establishment of deadlines and quality concerns in translation tests and the first translation projects with a client. It must be pointed out that Proz.com provides users with other forums for linguistic questions.

These minor themes evidence the complex nature of translator competence and the need to integrate all its components in the classroom. Furthermore, they support the conclusion

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reached in previous categories that there is no single answer to future translators' concerns.

Conclusions

The content analysis of the forum posts presented in this study reveals that the major concerns of future translators with regard to professional competences revolve around marketing, industry, and business knowledge. This conclusion highlights the complexity of translator competences beyond transfer skills and the need to balance academic education and professional requirements (Schnell & Rodríguez, 2017). Entrepreneurial skills should no longer be limited to courses in business degrees. They should also be considered part of other higher education programmes, such as Translation and Interpreting degrees (Álvarez-Álvarez & Arnáiz-Uzquiza, 2017; Cuadrado-Rey & Navarro-Brotons, 2020; Rodríguez de Céspedes, 2017).

However, this focus on professional competences does not necessarily require answering every question that future translators may have when facing their professional insecurities (Pym & Torres-Simón, 2016). In the same way as there is more than one possible version of a translation, translators-to-be will not find a universal response to many of the questions raised. Even translators with years of experience could have many of these questions too.

Translator competence entails declarative and procedural knowledge (Hurtado Albir, 2017). The professional competences examined in this paper require a combination of both. For example, with regard to the questions about finding jobs and clients or the market potential of a specialisation field, trainers could present market studies with very specific information in the classroom. Nevertheless, this declarative knowledge may not be of much help if students do not *know how to* (procedural knowledge) approach clients or how to carry out a market study to look into the possibilities they will have in the future. Therefore, it is on this combination of

declarative and procedural knowledge that trainers must place the greatest emphasis.

Furthermore, a gradation of professional competences should be put into practice. At the first levels, students should deal with simpler problems such as setting deadlines or drafting a curriculum, for which they would need some declarative knowledge that they can afterwards transform into procedural knowledge. In other words, learning how to set a deadline would be useless if students do not understand how to measure their work pace or know that when offering a service to a direct client, a CV is not always the best tool (McKay, 2006; Stelmaszak, 2011). Here, analytical thinking and troubleshooting are basic competences. In subsequent levels in which trainees face more complex projects, other themes related to marketing, business, or industry knowledge ought to be covered, without overlooking the importance of combining declarative and procedural knowledge. In fact, these can be integrated with other competences in order to provide students with the necessary tools to address their questions autonomously. This complex nature of competences should be the starting point for trainers. Finally, it must be remarked that professional competences do not need to be siloed in specific subjects. Marketing, industry, and business knowledge can be considered cross-curricular competences present in translation subjects (Muñoz-Miquel, 2020). In courses of specialised translation, students can learn about, for instance, how to create quotes or invoices, play the role of a project manager, and develop marketing strategies to sell their services.

In conclusion, even though this study presents some limitations (limited corpus size, convenience sample, non-inclusion of other sites) and results are not generalisable to a larger population, it has brought to light some weaknesses that future translators experience when they try to establish themselves in their profession. In order to promote the development of these competences in the classroom, trainers should understand translator competence as a whole, the professional

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components should be fully integrated with those linguistic in nature, and, in that sense, the application of declarative and procedural knowledge encouraged across the curriculum.

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