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THE ORGANIZATION OF FUTURE TRANSLATORS' SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING AT US UNIVERSITIES

ABSTRACT

The article deals with studying the peculiarities in the organization of future translators' self-directed learning at US universities. It has been stated that various researches on the problem prove the underestimation of self-directed learning that leads to insufficient professional competency of future translators. It has been found out that to create an environment favourable for self-directed learning educators should consider four factors, namely, autonomy and responsibility, complexity, duration, "voice and choice". It has been indicated that the system of independent learning and teaching consists of three components – teacher, learner and communication method. The traits of autonomous learners have been listed. The functions of self-directed learning in US higher education institution have been presented. Six ways of supporting autonomy, namely, classroom-based, curriculum-based, teacher-based, learner-based, resource-based, technology-based, have been singled out and analyzed. The experience of the Kent State University in training future Masters of Arts in Translation has been analyzed. Based on the research performed, the positive aspects of the experience have been justified and relevant recommendations to improve the organization of future translators' self-directed learning in Ukrainian higher education institutions have been outlined.

***Key words*:** *translation studies, future translator, self-directed learning, professional training, university, US experience.*

INTRODUCTION

Socio-economic changes that have been taking place in Ukraine over the last decade require all branches of the education system to be reformed. This relates, first and foremost, to higher professional education as it is aimed at providing the society with highly qualified specialists who will implement the state policy directed at the development of science, technics and culture at the level of global achievements. Now, the processes of European integration are affecting all spheres of public life, are widening and deepening political, economic and cultural links of Ukraine with other countries. In education, these trends are manifested in Ukraine's entering the European education space, based on the principles of education's responsibility before the society, broad and open access to educational services, personal orientation of education and lifelong learning.

The priority direction in further development of higher education in Ukraine consists in its complying with the requirements of the Bologna Declaration at national, regional and university levels as it provides for transition to the common structure of comparable degrees, introduction of two-cycle higher education system (Bachelor, Master) and credit-modular system, promotion of students' self-directed learning, expansion of students' mobility within the European educational space, organization of European

cooperation in the field of education quality, employment of graduates within the European labour market.

Of particular importance in the context of the Bologna Process is the organization of student self-directed learning system as it plays a major role in future translators' training, enhancing their abilities and readiness for professional self-development. This problem may be effectively solved due to the results of comparative pedagogical researches on the experience of specialists' professional training in different countries to outline its positive aspects and implement them in higher education system in Ukraine.

THE AIM OF THE STUDY

Thus, the aim of the paper is to study the peculiarities in the organization of future translators' self-directed learning at US universities, outline positive aspects of such experience and provide recommendations for their successful implementation in higher education system in Ukraine.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

Various researches and teaching practice prove that underestimation of the importance of student self-directed learning leads to serious consequences associated with the decrease in intellectual potential, cognitive activity, professional competency of future translators, which negatively affects the socio-economic development of society. So, higher education institutions in developed countries give a high priority to self-directed learning in professional training of specialists. Of considerable interest in this regard is the system of professional translation studies in the United States, which traditionally attaches great importance to the organization of student self-directed learning. Studying the US experience may help identify effective ways of reforming the education process in higher education institutions of Ukraine in terms of integration into the European and global educational space.

Many educators and psychologists have studied the problem of organization of student self-directed learning in higher education institutions. Psycho-pedagogical principles of student self-directed learning have been revealed in the works of such American scholars as P. Benson, J. Bruner, S. Edelman, R. Hudgins, Ch. Klausmeyer, E. Liebtag, M. Moore, R. Sand, T. Vander Ark, C. Wedemeyer et al. The problem of student self-directed learning management has been studied by B. Clark, A. Jones, D. Seling et al. The methodology of organization of student self-directed learning at American universities has been analyzed by J. Golding, C. Hoover, D. Hunt, B. Joyce, F. Perls, M. Weil et al. Theoretical aspects of curriculum development and the target approach to determine the content of learning have been considered in the works of B. Bloom, W. Herrick, D. Kratwohl, H. Taba, R. Tyler et al.

The study of relevant literary sources shows the growing interest of domestic scholars in the peculiarities of the education process in higher education institutions in the United States. Various aspects of student self-directed learning at American universities have been studied by T. Chuvakova, V. Dykan, M. Fedorenko, T. Georgiieva, Ya. Huletska, Ya. Kolybabiuk, T. Koshmanova, M. Leshchenko, Z. Malkova, I. Pasynkova, I. Pentina, R. Roman, O. Romanovskyi, L. Smalko, T. Tykhonova, T. Vasylevska et al.

Foreign and domestic scientists consider student self-directed learning in broad and narrow senses. In broad sense it is educational philosophy of professional training, theoretical and methodological approach. In narrow sense self-directed learning is an educational activity of students under the supervision of instructor or without it during extracurricular time aimed at forming professional competences, improving training for professional activity based on self-motivation, goal-setting, personal responsibility, self-cognition, independent selection of tools, methods and forms of learning. However, it can

be stated that the problem of organization of future translators' self-directed learning in the United States has not been the subject of special studies yet.

While researching we have used the methods of synthesis and analysis, generalization and systematization.

RESULTS

Many adults play those professional roles that require them to be more independent and effectively manage their own time, in particular, through a range of tasks and projects. Employers need such specialists able to define a driving question, build a team to answer that question, to efficiently work with that team, carry out and manage tasks and projects through multiple repetition with relevant feedback and, finally, reflect and assess their performance. Thus, students should be given an opportunity to develop self-direction by means of learning in the same way.

T. Vander Ark and E. Liebtag of University of Virginia state that the learner experience plays a crucial role while creating an environment favourable for self-directed learning. They have outlined four factors that educators should take into account: 1) *autonomy and responsibility*; 2) *complexity*; 3) *duration*; 4) *"voice and choice"* (Vander Ark, Liebtag, 2016).

Speaking about autonomy and responsibility, students should comprehend the importance of work they are doing, project the expected learning outcomes and direct their learning towards meeting them. Complexity should not be overwhelming for students, so instructors are to distribute the time for self-directed learning taking into account students' different educational needs and interests at the same time motivating them towards widening their research horizons. As for duration, teachers should combine short, supported as well as more long-term and independent experiences so that they may increase the efficiency of students self-directed learning. In addition, students should understand they have "voice and choice" when it comes to their self-directed learning activities. This means interest-based learning and many opportunities to shape assignments and deliverables and choose how they demonstrate what they have mastered. Students are encouraged to be interest-based and present important learning targets when they and instructors co-construct projects.

Of great interest is V. Kremen's thought that self-education starts after specific program has been developed as it dictates the goals and specific tasks and provides for a range of relations with education and learning; the process of personality spiritual development and self-directed learning should gradually become a research activity, motivate toward continuous need for self-education, which proves the achievement of an optimal level of self-development (Кремень, 2003).

P. Benson of the College of Charleston (Minnesota) indicates that autonomous learner can be viewed as someone who accumulates knowledge, abilities and skills while obtaining experience and not just subjects to instruction (Benson, 2001).

M. Moore, an assistant professor of adult education at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, indicates that the system of independent learning and teaching consists of three components, namely, teacher, learner and communication method. These components have critical characteristics distinguishing them from learning, teaching and communication in other forms of education. To understand the learning system, it is necessary to develop the concept of the "autonomous learner". To understand the communication system it is necessary to consider "distance teaching" and to understand the teaching system one should modify traditional concepts of teaching according to both the restraints and opportunities that are consequences of distance and autonomy (Moore, 1973).

C. Wedemeyer, an American pioneer in the field of independent and distance learning, has outlined the traits of autonomous learners and they are: 1. They like to plan ahead (a day, a week, a month and even longer). 2. They adhere to their plan, occasionally modify it, but never abandon it without improving. 3. Their lives are organized so that they may effectively manage time. 4. They know how to start a new learning activity and not to give up something else. 5. They are fond of listening and reading, discussing and writing. 6. They are always motivated to learn something new. 7. They question, test and analyze. 8. They appreciate individuality. 9. They generalize and justify principles as well as search for basic ideas of any subject. 10. They are good at note taking, remembering and relating. 11. They collaborate with other learners and at the same time stick to their own learning paradigm (Wedemeyer, 1969).

So, based on the mentioned above, we can conclude that self-directed learning is primarily grounded on students' autonomy and comprehending responsibility for their own academic achievements. Translation studies being an academic interdiscipline that deals with the systematic study of the theory, description and application of translation, interpreting and localization require future translators to be persistent, independent, goal-seeking and, most importantly, motivated toward self-directed learning. Thus, throughout history, written and spoken translations have played a crucial role in interhuman communication, not least in providing access to important texts for scholarship and religious purposes. As world trade has grown, so has the importance of translation. Just as the demand for translation has soared, so has there been a vast expansion in specialized translating and interpreting programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. These programmes, which attract thousands of students, are mainly oriented towards training future professional commercial translators and interpreters and serve as highly valued entry-level qualifications for the professions. As for American degree programs in translation studies, they are worldwide recognized, well-planned and are characterized by much time allotted for self-directed learning.

It must be noted that student self-directed learning in US higher education institutions is a form of organization of future specialists' training, which performs a range of functions, namely: the training function as the content of tasks includes new information on professional activity; the developmental function, which includes the development of thinking in close connection with the forming of certain concepts and communication skills; the guiding function as individual tasks are focused and correspond to the content of educational material. In addition, the US system of practical tasks for self-directed learning is reproductively and creatively applied.

Thus, P. Benson singles out six ways of supporting autonomy, namely, 1) *classroom-based* – learner control over the planning and evaluation of classroom learning (power to make decisions); 2) *curriculum-based* – learner control over the curriculum as a whole; 3) *teacher-based* – the role of teacher and teacher education in fostering learner autonomy is emphasized; 4) *learner-based* – development of autonomous learning skills; 5) *resource-based* – independent use of learning materials; 6) *technology-based* – independent interaction with educational technologies. At the same time, these approaches are divided into relevant pointers (see Table 1) (Benson, 2001).

American educators have surely accumulated powerful experience in training professional translators and interpreters. For instance, the Kent State University offers various degree programs in Translation, namely, the Bachelor of Science degree with concentrations in French, Spanish German and Russian; Master of Arts in Translation (French, German,

Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Japanese); dual degree (MA / MBA in Translation); PhD in Translation. Within our study we have decided to analyze the peculiarities of Master of Arts in Translation, as the program is oriented toward student self-directed learning and helps graduates to reveal their potential of modern translators able to adjust to dimensional changes in various fields.

Table 1

Classroom-based: 1) learners are asked to set their own goals and plan activities within the classroom; 2) self-assessment	*Curriculum-based:* 1) process syllabus; 2) inquiry-based learning; 3) project-based learning 4) task-based learning
Teacher-based: 1) teacher role; 2) teacher autonomy	*Learner-based:* learner development activities
Resource-based: self-assess areas (technology, learner literature), use of authentic texts, self-instruction and distance learning	*Technology-based:* Internet, software, computer-mediated communication

So, the MA in Translation with a concentration in French, German, Japanese, Russian or Spanish is designed for those wishing to obtain professional careers in the industries related to language, namely, translation, localization, language industry project management as well as international business, social services, library and information science, etc.

We can definitely state that the program is classroom- and curriculum-based as it has certain core requirements, namely, such ten courses as *Documents in Multilingual Contexts*; *Theory of Translation*; *Practice of Translation*; *Terminology and Computer Applications for Translators*; *Literary and Cultural Translation*; *Commercial, Legal and Diplomatic Translation*; *Scientific, Technical and Medical Translation*; *Software Localization*; *Project Management*; *Case Study in Translation* (Kent State University, 2017). At the same time, students are allowed to choose nine elective hours in any graduate level translation-related courses in MCLS or other department. Some of these courses include Applied Translation Research and Variable Topic Seminars. In addition, as it was mentioned before, curriculum-based learning implies project- and task-based learning. For example, project management in the language industry is based on the introduction to the project management body of knowledge as it applies to language industry projects (translation and localization). Topics include nature of the language industry, work breakdown structures in the language industry including language industry tasks and activities, scheduling, costing, quality assurance and use of project management software. Applied translation research means work experience in translation or interpreting in a corporate, translation bureau or freelance setting, supervised by a faculty member (Kent State University, 2017).

Special attention deserves case study in translation as students are to be responsible for a major translation, a terminology, a critical evaluation of the problems encountered during the translation and a discussion of the strategies used to resolve the problems. Project advisors are usually professors who specialize in translation studies and work in your primary language or languages. The assignment of a case study advisor

usually depends on a combination of factors, such as the student's preferred topic, the specialty of a given advisor, and/or the availability of a given advisor during the semester in question. In consultation with the project advisor, the student will select a text for translation. The text selected should be equivalent to a minimum of 4,000 words. Alternatively, a group of related texts equaling 4,000 words may be selected. The advisor and the student agree on a work schedule, which will require consultations, no more than three drafts, and revisions. Upon completing revisions, the student must submit the project to the committee for the final oral defense. The format of the defense itself typically has the following pattern: a) short introduction to the project, where the candidates present the main facets of their projects, their motivation for the choice of text, etc.; b) questions and discussion period, where the members of the committee bring up items for discussion; c) students who wish to use PowerPoint during their introductions are invited to do so, bearing in mind that visual materials – like all other aspects of presentation and writing – are only as strong as the content they represent. The case study journal is a record of the translation process and forms the foundation upon which students will build their analysis. They should maintain the record faithfully while preparing the translation to draw upon it later when they write their analysis. The journal is not a report or an analysis in itself. It is a simple running commentary in which the translator records decisions made, problems encountered, strategies tried, and solutions discovered during the act of translation. The comments made by the advisor and by other readers will also provide important material for the journal. The more complete the journal is, the easier it will be to write the analysis. It is not, however, handed in with the Translation Case Study Document (Kent State University, 2017).

According to the mentioned above, we can conclude that the degree program is learner-based, as students may develop their own learning activities, so-called educational trajectories they are willing to use to achieve the expected learning outcomes and nurture skills of independent study, thus to become fully developed autonomous learners.

Anyhow, it is teacher-based as well, as teachers' role as facilitators and coordinators of the education process is still essential. Without teachers' wise supervision, support and encouragement students may not comply with the requirements needed.

In addition, the program is resource- and technology-based as one cannot deny the influence of information and communication technologies on the modern education process and, in particular, in training modern translators and interpreters as their professional activity needs to be based on the latest technological achievements. On the web site of Institute for Applied Linguistics at the Kent State University are presented relevant resources that may be useful for students-translators. For instance, in the rubric "Resources" students may get acquainted with the information on the upcoming courses, namely, course description, textbooks and supplemental materials, examinations, papers and reports, curriculum sequence, class participation, word-processing activities, multilingual web document design, etc. So, students may use this information to design self-assess areas (technology, learner literature), may use of authentic texts, plan self-instruction. In Corpus Resources students may use a Corpus Linguistic Glossary, various links to different learning materials (corpora of general English, corpora in other languages, multilingual and parallel corpora, projects and research sites related to text/corpus linguistics), corpus tools (WebCONC, Multiconcord, ParaConc, TextSTAT-Simple Text Analysis Tool), forms library (case study requirements, case study prospectus, applied translation research (practicum) application form), translation resources (French diplomatic

translation: treaties, French medical translation, Spanish commercial, legal translation, etc.) and KentLingua. In must be noted that KentLingua's objectives include helping IAL graduate students make the most of the programs in which they are enrolled and acting as a liaison between students and the IAL. KentLingua seeks to meet these objectives through mentoring of first-year graduate students by second-year students; helping students obtain internships in language industry companies; establishing and maintaining a network of current students and alumni; ensuring ongoing communication between students and the IAL (Kent State University, 2017).

CONCLUSIONS

So, we can conclude that the organization of future translators' self-directed learning at US universities is based on the principles of autonomy and responsibility, complexity, duration and "voice and choice". Students are encouraged to comprehend the importance of work they are doing, project the expected learning outcomes and direct their learning to towards meeting them. Instructors distribute the time for self-directed learning taking into account students' different educational needs and interests at the same time motivating them towards widening their research horizons. In addition, they combine long-term and independent tasks to increase students' ability to sustain self-directed learning. Students are provided with an excellent opportunity of interest-based learning, so that they may form assignments and deliverables and choice in how they showcase what they have learned. So, students and instructors construct projects together.

Based on the example of the degree program in Translation offered by the Kent State University, we have found out that it is grounded on the principles of supporting learner autonomy. Thus, it is classroom-based, curriculum-based, teacher-based, learner-based, resource-based and technology-based. All these components adjust the degree program to the requirements of the global education space and contribute to student self-directed study as it makes use of the latest information and communication technologies. As a result, it educates those specialists able to navigate in the informative dimension of resources, generate fresh ideas, plan their own educational trajectory and achieve the set learning outcomes.

Taking into account the positive aspects of US experience in training future translators and interpreters, we have outlined relevant recommendations that may be used by native educators to improve the organization of translators' self-directed learning in Ukraine. So, it is necessary:

1) to clearly project the paradigm of translators' self-directed learning, so that it may contain all the components needed for their professional activity in future, namely, theoretical, practical, creative, acmeological, axiological, etc.;

2) to ensure future specialists' readiness for independent projects by means of carrying out such activities as case studies in translation, applied translation researches, etc.;

3) to encourage them to seek internships at different companies, enterprises and organizations according to their specialization;

4) to urge them to use the latest information and communication technologies as they considerably modernize the process of translation;

5) to create such pedagogical conditions that contribute to students' striving for research excellence.

Rather perspective for further researches we consider the study of American universities in training future translators for carrying out case studies in translation and applied translation researches as they are the essential components of self-directed learning in the field of translation.

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