

# ПРОФЕСІЙНА ПІДГОТОВКА МАЙБУТНІХ ФАХІВЦІВ

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*Комунальний заклад вищої освіти*

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## РОЗВИТОК СОЦІОКУЛЬТУРНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ МАЙБУТНІХ ПЕРЕКЛАДАЧІВ

**Анотація.** У статті описано результати дослідження перекладу як соціально та культурно зумовленої практики, що виходить за межі суто лінгвістичного підходу. Здійснено ретроспективний аналіз становлення соціокультурного компоненту в перекладознавстві у 70-х роках ХХ століття в контексті переходу від еквівалентності до функціональних, дескриптивних і міжкультурних підходів. Сучасні соціополітичні трансформації мовних систем актуалізують семантичну неоднозначність та соціальні конотації лексичних одиниць, що створює нові виклики для перекладачів. У статті підкреслено роль соціокультурної компетентності як ключової складової професійної підготовки перекладачів. З опорою на матеріали Празької конференції (2003) переклад розглядається як форма міжкультурного посередництва, у центрі якого перебуває особистість перекладача. Обґрунтовано необхідність інтеграції культурного навчання у філологічні освітні програми з метою формування міжкультурної комунікативної компетентності, критичного мислення та професійної чутливості майбутніх перекладачів.

**Ключові слова:** соціокультурна компетентність; міжкультурна комунікація; перекладач як медіатор; проектування навчальних програм.

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## DEVELOPING SOCIO-CULTURAL COMPETENCE OF FUTURE TRANSLATORS

**Abstract. Introduction.** The article examines translation and interpreting as socially and culturally embedded practices that extend beyond purely linguistic transfer. A retrospective analysis is provided

of the evolution of the socio-cultural component in translation studies and its establishment in the 1970s following the shift from text-centered equivalence to functional, descriptive, and intercultural approaches. Contemporary sociopolitical changes have reshaped language systems, reactivated archaic forms, and generated semantic ambiguity, creating new challenges for translators and interpreters.

**Purpose.** The purpose of the article is to analyze the role of socio-cultural competence in translation and interpreting and to identify effective ways of developing this competence among philology students specializing in translation. **Methods.** The study employs retrospective and theoretical analysis of key approaches in translation studies, as well as a critical review of conference proceedings and scholarly works addressing translation as intercultural and intersocial mediation, including materials from the Prague Conference (2003). **Results.** The findings demonstrate that many contemporary lexical units carry binary meanings and strong social connotations, which increases the importance of translators' cultural awareness. Translation is shown to function as intercultural mediation, where the translator's personality, background, and cultural knowledge play a central role. Language varieties, realia, humor, and pragmatic features illustrate the dependence of meaning on cultural context and the relevance of domestication and foreignization strategies. **Conclusion.** From a pedagogical perspective, the study concludes that cultural instruction must be systematically integrated into philology curricula. Teaching culture alongside language fosters intercultural communicative competence, critical thinking, and professional sensitivity, ensuring accurate, pragmatic, and ethically responsible translation in a globalized world.

**Key words:** socio-cultural competence; intercultural communication; translator as mediator; curriculum design.

**Introduction.** Translation and interpreting have always been in the centre of scientific research, since they deal with conveying important information in social interaction and communication on the whole. Although translation has been practiced by many writers, poets and linguists, it shaped itself as the separate branch in the science of linguistics much later. The modern reality faces a great global change, where the events influence the language corpus, largely due to language interactions and transferring the new realia emerging as a result of the fast pace changes in the society. For instance, the Ukrainian language has acquired a number of new words as a result of the Russian invasion and military actions. Many of the neologisms re-emerged from archaisms acquiring new meanings, or from acronyms by means of adaptation. These words became part of the Ukrainian social reality and thus modern culture and present certain challenges for translators.

**Topicality of the research.** Culture directly correlates with linguistics, since it influences lexical changes and the language denotes new cultural realia. These two factors are a paramount for understanding the mechanisms of translation. According to M. Wend (2002), there exist "two fundamentally different conceptions of culture at the heart of the debate in philosophy, sociology and cultural studies, which is currently being joined by foreign language methodology. On the one hand, culture is seen as a distinguishable, homogeneous and objectively describable or 'essentialist' system. On the other hand, it is understood as dynamically developing events which are consequently only seized as momentary perceptions [17, p. 94]. The processes mentioned above have set some challenges for the translators due to binary meanings of many words, one usually bearing some colourful social connotation. Thus, combining language learning and associated culture in the modern curriculum to ensure the development of translators' appropriate intercultural competence is essential for enabling them to accurately interpret meaning, mediate between cultures, and produce translations that are both contextually and pragmatically appropriate. Therefore, **the aim** of our research is to consider the ways of developing socio-cultural competence of philology students majoring in translation.

**Literature review.** For a long period, socio-cultural literacy in translation was of a secondary concern in language education as well as in translation theory and practice, since scholars primarily focused on linguistic transfer while overlooking translation as a socio-cultural process. Translation as the process of looking for the most appropriate

equivalents was first proposed by Catford (1965), who viewed translation as transferring meaning between languages [3]. Although, Nida (1964) and Newmark (1988) expanded this meaning with context and cultural factors, it was not until 1989, when M. Byram (1989) made a shift to recognizing inherent cultural knowledge in any language and suggested, that without it, language cannot be fully understood and interpreted [2]. M. Byram also proposed the concept of intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching distinguishing between 4 areas: 'the value of cultural studies', 'pedagogy and didactics', 'methodology' and 'assessment and evaluation'. He also introduced the term "intercultural communicative competence" as the ability to understand the differences and relationships between the own culture and foreign cultures, the ability to observe and analyze the way other people perceive the world [2]. C. Kramsch studies the importance of learning a foreign language through it associated culture and prioritizes the role of context for understanding the ways the culture functions [9].

**Results.** Looking back at the development of the translation theory or studies, some authors come to the conclusion that as science translation established itself in the 1960s-1970s. This rise was explained by the growing international interaction, global changes after the World War II, the end of the British Commonwealth, by "the cold war" and other significant international policies. At the same time, the outcomes of translation could be dramatic. Interpreters and translators became part of global politics. A lot of domestic and foreign policies depended on faithful or adequate translation of various documents and negotiations.

Therefore, it was the governmental task to provide training in this profession by establishing educational institutions, finding specialist to teach students. Prior to this, there were numerous personalities who gave rise to this profession by their activity and written textbooks. To them refer the most famous Hungarian Kato Lomb (1909–2003), who mastered 16 languages and wrote methodological guidelines on language studies.

It was not until mid-90s, when translation was recognized as separate science, mainly thanks to James S. Holmes. He introduced the term "Translation Studies" in his seminal paper "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies" in 1972 and defined the translation as an independent field of academic studies having own theories, methods, and areas of research. This moment is widely regarded as the official starting point of translation studies as a study discipline [7]. To remarkable contributors in this sphere, we can refer such scholars as Gideon Toury, Eugene Nida, and Peter Newmark.

Let us consider the meaning of the word "translation". According to J. Holmes (1972), translation should have a theoretical basis and can't be tackled as only a practical issue. He emphasized the necessity of singling out translation as a separate branch of linguistics that could deal with methods of translation [7].

In many sources translation is understood as the process of transferring meaning from a source language to a target language [3]. According to E. Nida (1964), translation is reproducing the closest natural equivalent of a message, focusing on meaning and style [12]. R. Jakobson (1959), regards translation as the process rather than a result [8]. P. Newmark (2001) considers translation as a linguistic science with accuracy as the main aim, but advocates a communicative approach to translation of vocative texts [11].

Still the word "translation" derives from Latin and means "carry across" and can be also applied as that carrying across a message, content and cultures. Translation can also occur within one language between its dialects. In this respect, translation inevitably carries across cultures. Suffice it to mention, that translation has experienced a certain evolution from the equivalence and "sameness" to accuracy and faithfulness as the main features [5]. Later on, specialists in this sphere noticed meaning instability of words and this had to be

reflected in all branches of linguistics. However, there was a certain discrepancy concerning understanding translation. Some scientists stick to the idea that translation studies should be broadened, while others armed with machine translation technologies, tend to limit it to equivalence-based interlingual practice [5].

Still, both ideas do not deny the socio-cultural aspect of translation since it determines the completeness of the pragmatic of the translated text. At the Prague conference “Sociocultural Aspects of Translating and Interpreting” of 2003 the socio-cultural aspect of translation was distinctly highlighted, putting in the centre the target culture, target text, and target audience. It means that a translated text should not be deprived of its original pragmatics because of the lack of knowledge, untranslatable realia etc. The scientists emphasized aspects such as function, intended purpose, audience reception, and the cultural contextualization of translated texts [13]. Issues of the influence of the ideology, policy and historical events on translation results were considered. Mentioning Descriptive Translation Studies and functional methods of translation, the conference framed translation as a form of intercultural and intersocial interaction, where the translator not the translated text was in the focus of attention [15].

Before proceeding to the methodological aspects of translation learning, suffice it to consider the concept of culture and its significance in the whole contents of philological education. We find the first mentioning of the term “culture” by Tylor (1971) as integrity of awareness, religious beliefs, customs and traditions that served as a certain law and ruled the members of society [14, p. 69]. Some scientists generalize culture as that which is learned across generations and is transmitted through language [6, p. 24]. There are even very limited definitions of culture. We stick to the opinion of Brown (2007), who describes culture as a way of life that unites people into one social group and distinguishes this group from others. Under this umbrella term he integrates customs, religion, traditions, morale and some societal laws of behavior [1, p. 188].

Therefore, for a translator or an interpreter to mediate communication of any kind is a paramount to understand the source and the target cultures to transfer the meaning and achieve the pragmatics of communication. It also concerns translation from a source dialect language to a target dialect, which is especially difficult because of the vast gap in the meanings and difficulty to find or sometimes invent necessary equivalents. According to Basset, when a text in a foreign or alien language is translated into a local language, we are required to impart a local flavor to it to suit the needs of the local readers. This is called domestication. When a text is translated from a local language into an international or foreign one for a global readership, the cultural context of the target audience must be considered to ensure acceptance of the translation. This approach is known as foreignization [13, p. 24; 4].

The fact that culture is inseparable part of any language, since it is reflected in symbols and transmitted verbally is now new. Byram (1989) mentions that “language pre-eminently embodies the values of meaning of a culture, refers to cultural artifacts, and signals people cultural identity. Because of its symbolic and transparent nature; language can stand alone and represents the rest of cultures phenomena” [2, p. 41].

In this respect teaching a foreign language can be through the associated culture and teaching culture can be carried out by means of a foreign language. Going back to the Prague conference (2003), suffice it to mention its significant contribution to the attitude towards translation studies. Translation started to be regarded as a practice of intercultural and intersocial exchange [13]. With this regard, the focus shifted from the translated text on the translator’s personality. A. Pym and others state, that translation theory has never tackled the issue of a translator as personality and how his socio-cultural educational

background can influence the translation outcomes in general [13]. A. Pym refers to S. Linn's multifactorial, sociocultural approach to studying translation, under which she implies interaction of various social, politic and cultural factors [13].

This all mentioned above sets certain requirements to the methodological aspects of translation theory and practice as well as the contents of the translation education. Thus, the modern translator's profession has to broaden its scope of competencies, since all these requirements, such as function, intended purpose, audience reception, and the cultural contextualization of the text need to be met. This scope of tasks also sets the requirements to translator's personality, which recently was of minor importance, although the outcomes of their work went above their professional influence. Therefore, their general educational and socio-cultural background play an important role in the quality and pragmatics of translation [13].

As mentioned above, the issue of translator's personality has never been given any consideration in the previous research, according to A. Pym. So, what strategies and steps need to be implemented to refer to this issue? How can successful contextual or socio-cultural translation techniques be attained?

Language teachers frequently acknowledge the importance of culture in language learning, yet they often treat it as an additional or secondary element rather than an integral part of communication. In some cases, modern university curricula do not offer the such courses as foreign language area studies, general history or the regional history. The context of the curricula is focused on linguistic rather than extralinguistic courses, which makes it difficult to bring about the set study goals in Translation methodology. As a result, students they may overlook the ways the meanings are shaped by a specific cultural context, which can create difficulties in understanding and adequate translating the original text.

Thus, it brings us to thinking that language instruction should be carried out alongside with learning associated culture. Should cultural science be embedded into the language instruction or taught as a separate discipline, we would say both, because while learning a foreign language, students inevitably face some realia or specific linguistic units that have additional connotation in the colloquial speech, which may not always be reflected in the dictionary. So, we may say, that a socio-cultural competence is something that is acquired through a personal research as well.

Moreover, grammatical rules and language functions also have cultural origins backgrounds and have to be understood properly prior to their use to avoid awkward situations or misunderstandings. Thus, neglecting cultural issues while learning a language leads to professional limitations in the future. According to C. Kramsch (1993), teaching and learning culture involves an interpretive process rather than the simple transmission of factual knowledge. Presenting cultural information alone does not help learners grasp the attitudes, values, and ways of thinking of people from other cultures [9]. "The goal of cultural instruction is therefore to enable students to understand how and why speakers of different languages behave and respond as they do – both in literary contexts and in real-life interactions—and to reflect on what such understanding means for their own learning and perspective" [10, p.32] In such a way students try to interpret and make sense of the other cultures and languages.

Another very important aspect of culture teaching, which should not be neglected is that it is important to teach associated culture(s) while teaching a foreign language. It primarily concerns such languages as English, German, French or Spanish, while they are spoken in different cultural communities (countries) and therefore, contain some culture specific peculiarities that should be considered. These peculiarities established as a result of colonization of other cultures which lead to their diffusion and gave birth to local realia.

Cultural teaching needs to focus on “exploration and description” which is different from teaching grammar because the rules of creating meanings are dynamic [10]. This accords with the nature of higher educations which incorporates scientific research as the way of learning. Exploring other cultures while learning languages which they encode promotes the integrity of philological knowledge and professional competence.

Let’s compare the differences between American, Canadian and Australian varieties of English. They emerged as a result of the influence of indigenous languages and cultures, on the one hand, and the local geography determined peculiarities: flora, fauna, and environmental features.

For instance, such words as kangaroo, koala, boomerang in Australian English, moose, raccoon, canoe, tomahawk in North American English and kayak, igloo in its Canadian variant were borrowings from the aboriginal language, and denote region specific realia. These words were borrowed into English through calquing, transliteration or transcription or adaptation and served the needs of colonizers to adjust to the new living conditions. At the same time, very few words denoting some spiritual or social concepts were adopted.

In Austrian German, we also find some words typical only of Austria or Bavaria, or sometimes only of some certain regions of this country. For instance, the word „Kletzenbrot“ derives from the verbs „kloezen“ for „to split“ pears for drying.

Another example is the name of a dessert “Salzburger Nockerl”, where “Nockerl” denotes a mountain rock sticking out of moss or grass. Another example is a famous Austrian fluffy, shredded pancake “Kaiserschmarrn” (German for “Emperor’s Mess”), the dessert that according to the legend, the young cook messed but improved the situation adding some sugar powder and prune jam. We know how important this socio-cultural knowledge is, especially when translating pun, which is based on the binary connotations and is typical of the British humour and satire. Especially nowadays, Ukraine is experiencing the emergence of new words denoting new notions as a result of the Russian invasion: “зджавелініти”, “зашойгувати”, “тривожний чемоданчик”, “мобік”, “бусифікувати”, “бандер-омобіль”, that bear certain emotional connotation and require descriptive translation. At the same time, words with one denotative meaning acquired and additional connotative one: “бавовна” (explosion), “зеленка” (forest for laying an ambush), “пташка” (a drone or a woman-soldier), “бандероль” (dead enemy) require various translation techniques to render their pragmatics [18]. Knowing these peculiarities, one can understand the ways the language functions and not get into some difficulty while translating these realia.

From a pedagogical perspective, embedding cultural knowledge within the curriculum enhances learners’ ability to interpret meaning beyond literal linguistic forms. Cultural competence enables students to understand context-dependent language use, including pragmatics, politeness strategies, discourse conventions, and culturally specific references. This approach aligns with communicative and intercultural language teaching models, which emphasize the development of intercultural communicative competence as a core educational objective. Such competence involves not only knowledge of the target culture but also the ability to compare, mediate, and critically reflect upon one’s own cultural assumptions in relation to others.

Curriculum design in foreign language faculties should therefore adopt a systematic and interdisciplinary approach to cultural integration. Cultural content may be embedded through literary texts, authentic media, historical narratives, social practices, and contemporary cultural phenomena. These materials should be carefully selected to represent diverse perspectives within the target culture, avoiding reductive or stereotypical portrayals. Moreover, cultural instruction should not be confined to isolated modules

but woven progressively across language skills courses, translation practice, and applied linguistics components.

Globalization processes and growing intercultural communications increase the role of foreign languages and the role of translators as intercultural mediators. Thus, the requirements to the profession of a translator extend beyond the linguistic proficiency for intercultural communication in academic, professional, and social environments. Socio-cultural knowledge as shaped before fosters critical thinking, empathy, and cultural sensitivity, which are essential for multicultural communication in multicultural environments. It is a paramount for foreign language students who will carry out intercultural mediation rather than merely transfer linguistic units. Without cultural knowledge it is impossible to bring up cultural sensitivity and various extratextual implications.

Therefore, embedding cultural knowledge also implies evaluating students' performance and understanding, as well as their appropriate response in various intercultural contexts. Task-based activities, reflective journals, case studies, and project-based learning can serve as effective tools for assessing cultural competence alongside linguistic skills. Suffice it to mention, embedding cultural knowledge into the curricula must be compulsory for philology faculties especially those training translators. This will ensure the holistic approach to foreign language education, broaden the scope of intercultural communicative competence and provide better opportunities to professional growth in the sphere of translation and interpreting.

### **Конфлікт інтересів**

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Штучний інтелект у дослідженні не застосовано.

## **ЛІТЕРАТУРА**

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