

Chapter 20

Adapting Translator and Interpreter Training to the Job Market

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ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses the issue of Translation and Interpreting (T&I) education in the global age. Its focus pivots on why, what, and how to train T&I students for the job market. In order to facilitate global trade and communication, the majority of T&I students ought to be trained as T&I practitioners or other language professionals instead of researchers of translation studies. Accordingly, the designing and structuring of the T&I curricula should be closely linked to the practice of translating and interpreting in the real world so that T&I students will enjoy their study at school, as well as the pathways paved for their future career. The methodology advanced by Kiraly (1995, 2003) based on the principles of cognitive apprenticeship is recommended, as it is closely related to translating and interpreting practice and helps T&I students effectively acquire the translating and interpreting skills employed in the T&I profession.

INTRODUCTION

In his book *Globalization and Translation: towards a Paradigm Shift in Translation* (2008), Ho analyses the great impact of globalization on the world economy and the social life of people with different backgrounds in languages and cultures. Ho also elaborates on the interaction between globalization and translation and the impact of globalization upon the profession and industry

of translation, as well as the serious problem of the detachment of translation theory from translation practice and emphasizes the necessity of combining translator and interpreter training with the demand of the job market for translators and interpreters (Ho, 2008; cf. also Ho, 2007).

This chapter will further address the issue of T&I education in the global age. The focus will be pivoted on three wh-questions: why, what and how to train T&I students to meet the demand for

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-6615-3.ch020

language professionals from global businesses, government organizations and public services in an era of globalization.

T&I educators are obliged to ask themselves first why it is necessary to train the majority of T&I students as translating and interpreting practitioners or other language professionals (such as business negotiators, liaison officers, administrative assistants specializing in foreign trade, international conference organizers, flight attendants, and airport ground staff, just to name a few) instead of merely researchers of translation studies. If this question fails to find a right answer, all the efforts to train them as translators and interpreters or other language specialists will be in vain. Only with a clear vision for translator and interpreter training, will the training programmes for translators and interpreters be cost-efficient and accountable.

The second question is what T&I students can be offered when they receive professional training at tertiary institutions. Some issues related to curriculum designing for T&I education at both the graduate and the undergraduate levels will be discussed in that section. When a close tie is established between T&I education and practice, as well as effective internship in the real world of translating and interpreting, T&I programmes will not only offer students a user-friendly environment for learning but a promising prospect as well for their future career in the job market.

Thirdly, it is important to seek right teaching methodologies to train T&I students as language professionals so that they are able to start their career soon after graduation. The methodology for translator and interpreter training proposed by Kiraly (1995, 2003) offers a pathway that helps students get access to the practical T&I skills employed in the profession. Trained in this way, T&I students will feel at home when they start

to work in the job market of foreign language communication and enjoy a sense of achievement when they move towards a career that makes direct contributions to the development of local and global economy and social services.

It is expected that this chapter will encourage more T&I researchers and teachers, especially the young generation in the community, to think seriously about the improvement of T&I research and teaching so that they are able to offer students a more promising future and enhance their employability.

BACKGROUND

Although the history of Translation Studies (TS) is very short in comparison with that of other academic disciplines, there have been fervent debates about the application of T&I theory to practice since the early days when TS became an independent academic discipline, particularly those concerning the “market” value of Translation and Interpreting Studies (T&I Studies) (Shreve, 1995; Heltai, 1997; Osers, 1998; Viaggio, 1999; Nida, 2000; Neubert, 2000; Chesterman & Wagner, 2002; Ho, 2008; Pöchhacker, 2010; Gile, 2010).

Some translation scholars regard professional translation, particularly commercial translation, as irrelevant to translation research (Toury, 1995, pp. 17-18; Hermans, 1999, p. 135; Newmark, 2000, p. 61). They tend to despise the practice of professional translation as inferior, vulgar and mercenary. To these scholars, “market”, “money” and “business” sound like dirty words. What they regard highly is the pure and eternal value of the translation of literary works (Benjamin, 1970). These scholars may not realize that translation is no longer a luxurious pursuit at pastime today; rather, it has become a part of productive force

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