Editorial

Holmes and New Profiles in Translation

> La traduction est en train de vivre
> sa révolution industrielle.
> Il serait vain de s'acharner à le nier et
> sans doute même peut-on s'en réjouir
>
> Durieux. (1988: 148).

1. Introduction

Holmes (1972) proposed a scheme of translation studies which served as the predicting basis of the discipline, and that, with some modifications, is still valid. In Holme's map, the discipline was divided classically into "pure" and "applied" branches, each one broken down into several subfields, which may reflect the state-of-the-art of the whole range of publications in translation. This wide array of fields and subfields would not have been possible if the profession would not have diversified in accordance with the evolution of society's needs, which can be observed in the many profiles of the translation activity at present.

As discussed by Scarpa (2001), today the classical professional profile (in-house and freelance translator) is well established in society. New professional profiles (technical writing and localization, among others) are arising out of the integration of the language industries as well as out of the use of translation tools needed to achieve the high levels of productivity and quality demanded by society. The use and benefits of tools are widely accepted now because tools account for the rough of the work, leaving the specialized translator the time necessary to solve true translation problems and less repetitive and mechanical aspects of a translation project (Quiroz, 2005: 338). The difference relies on having three skills (or subcompetences): specialized knowledge and the knowledge and use of modern technologies and knowledge of the market.

The manifold professional profiles of specialized translators needed in the language industries can be summarized as follows: specialized translators, interpreters, dubbers, subtitlers, terminologists, technical editors, DTP specialists, project managers, localizers, software testers, etc. These profiles can be inserted into Holmes' scheme, not only in the pure branch (medium restricted, area restricted, rank restricted, text-type restricted, time restricted, and problem restricted) but also in the applied branch (translation training, translation aids, and translation criticism).

It is clear that all the possible profiles need at least the following competences aptitudes:

— detailed knowledge of each working language and culture
— understanding of language general properties as a human activity
— knowledge of the real language properties (with its agrammaticalities)
— knowledge and use of computer techniques for the processing of natural language
— great capacity of observation and translation analysis
— flexibility to face constant technological changes
— versatility to take part in different translation scenarios
— ability to predict market trends and to take advantage of them.

2. Translation Competence

According to Bell (1991: 43), translation competence can be defined as the knowledge and abilities that the translator must have to carry out a translation. Hurtado (2001: 383) goes a step forward and defines translation competence as the underlying knowledge system, aptitudes, and abilities necessary to translate, basically her competences are contained in the list above.

There are many approaches and models proposed for translation competence,[1] but we will explain our teaching project based on the proposal of the Pacte

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1 For further reference about translation competence, see Hurtado (2001: 375-408), Nord (1992), Scarpa (2001: 188-202 and 203, 205, 210-211), Vienne (1998), among others.

Group (2003: 43-68) and Hurtado (2001: 395) who define six types of competence or subcompetence:

2.1 Translation subcompetences for training

Scientific and technical knowledge about tools for linguistics and translation, advanced skills in their use as well as knowledge of the market and information sources are decisive and differentiating factors today in the success of a professional translator. In 1992, the proceedings of *La station de travail du traducteur de l'an 2001* announced these competencies and they were confirmed later by the results of the *European Union Letrac project* (Badia et al., 1999), and by complete proceedings such as those of *Translation & Technology* (Vanderweghe 1998) and *Traducción y nuevas tecnologías* (Valero and de la Cruz, 2001), *Entornos informáticos de la traducción profesional: las memorias de traducción* (Corpas and Varela, 2003) and the proceedings of the three versions of the *International Conference on Specialized Translation* (1999, 2001, 2003), among others.

a. Extralinguistic competence

From the perspective of the extralinguistic competence, cognitive and meta-cognitive abilities are planned to be developed in relation to those fields of knowledge most translated in the market, technology, economics and, to a lesser extent, law being the most important according to Zielinski and Ramírez (2005). Other fields of importance, according to that study, are medicine and pharmacology.

Likewise, the most translated text types in the market, following Zielinski y Ramírez (2005), are manuals, operating instructions, web pages, business correspondence, software documentation, commercial reports, and training material. The text types – from manuals to commercial reports – are the ones with the highest demand for translation and all come from the specialized fields of technology and economics, whereas the text types with the lowest demand on translation come from the specialized field of law.

b. Instrumental and professional competence

With regard to the instrumental and professional competence, we will include in this competence the knowledge and abilities related to the professional translation work. According to Hurtado (2001: 395) this competence consists of several types of knowledge: 1) knowledge and use of any documentary source; 2) knowledge and use of new technologies; 3) knowledge of the professional market and of the behavior of a professional translator.

Badia and Colominas state that:

> […] the specialization, as well as a minimum knowledge on the operation of a computer and the different computer tools for translation, have become essential conditions to translators for their incorporation to the translation market (2001: 126).[2]

As it has been demonstrated in the Letrac project (1999), universities may have little information on the real use of new technologies for translation, or they may even consider that such technologies will replace the translator or in many cases are unnecessary. Nevertheless, the language industries agents consider that translators must be efficient users of computers, must have experience in the use of tools for computer-assisted translation, linguistic processing, and terminology management and should have experience in the use of information technologies at an advanced level (Badia and Corominas, 2001: 126-127). Therefore, their training would have to include reinforcement of the abilities required by the market. In this way, translation agencies would not have to invest more than what they are doing nowadays in the training of new translators to complement what is not taught in academia. Thus the fulfillment of needs required not only by an agency but also by a freelance translator will improve considerably with respect to the traditional methods of translating.

In addition, the empirical studies carried out by the Pacte Group (2003) demonstrate that when facing a translation problem, translators tend to activate the instrumental, strategic and transfer competences.

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2 My translation.

The recommendations on the competencies for the required translator profile derived from the Letrac project[3] can be summarized as follows (Badia et al., 1999: 5):

— advanced skills in word-processing as a minimum requirement.
— knowledge in DTP
— ability to use translation specific tools such as translation memories, terminology management tools and terminology databases, TM systems, dictionaries on CD-ROM and on the web
— ability to use the Internet in general for all kind of services
— ability to work in a practical environment (translation workstation)
— knowledge of current hardware and software equipment and components in an environment beyond a single PC.

3. Conclusion

As can be seen from the above notes, Holmes' scheme envisioned changes in society and the profession that became a reality and that were brought about by the changes in the needs of society and the profession today. This all points to the growing need of making translators computer an translation technology savy and to the need to foreground this topic in the literature of the field. This short reflection aims at calling the attention of *Ikala* readers and authors on the possible topics to be investigated and the proposals to be sent to the journal.

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3   The Letrac project gathered information of more than 30 European universities and some universities members of CIUTI (e.g., Canada).

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