PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES OF TRANSLATORS WHO DO NOT "TRANSLATE": TRANSLATORS IN PROFESSIONAL FIELDS OF BUSINESS INTERNATIONALISATION[1]

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Abstract

This paper deals with employability, training and curricular issues as objects of empirical research with respect to the Bachelor of Arts in Translation and Interpreting (T&I) degree programme. More specifically, it focuses on the observation of the professional profile of T&I graduates currently working in the field of business internationalisation (at companies that wish to export goods and services or invest abroad). Paying special attention to both the positions that they currently occupy, as posted on the professional social networking site LinkedIn, and their identity self-perception, the aim is, on the one hand, to gain deeper insights into translation-related professional profiles (Morón Martín 2010, Calvo Encinas 2010) and, on the other, to become familiarised with the respondents' self-perception of their professional profiles given their specific T&I training. Through this study, we intend to reflect on the translator competence (TC) concept from a pedagogical point of view, with the purpose of better responding to market needs.

Keywords: employability, translation competence, translation and foreign trade, business translation, company internationalisation

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1. Introduction

International commerce is one of the corporate activities that generate the largest amount of work for translation agencies or service providers. No wonder, then, that these agencies frequently resort to slogans, such as "corporate translation", "integrated solutions for export companies", or "translation of commercial documents and export documents", as a fundamental part of their service offerings.[2] Covering the language transfer demands of companies keen to introduce their products in other countries or markets with a different language is not, therefore, an invention of the 21st century. Another of the indicators of the business translation tradition in Spain is the frequent – or even obligatory – inclusion of texts related to this sector in the didactics of translation. These texts have featured in the training of translators since the advent of Translation and Interpreting BA courses in Spain, and, as is to be expected, old and current programmes alike include texts associated with business correspondence, international purchase-sales contracts, bills of lading, insurance and payment of goods documents, etc. All form part of the basic training of future translators, and, although rather thin on the ground, the literature on business translation published in Spain to date has also probed deeply into the issue (Socorro Trujillo 2002, 2008, 2012, Mayoral Asensio 2006, Suau Jiménez 2010, Medina Reguera 2007, Román Mínguez 2008, 2012, Aguayo Arrabal and Morón Martín 2013, among others).

More specific programmes, putting the accent on economic, financial or institutional translation as specialised fields for translators, have also appeared at post-graduate levels.[3] And a number of dual degree programmes

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2. Extracts quoted from the home pages of the companies *molmola.com*, *idisc.com* and *planetlingua.com*, respectively [accessed 25 February 2015].
3. Without aspiring to systematicity, we have only included a few examples in this regard, such as the Master's Programme in Institutional Translation of the University of Alicante, or the Official Master's Programme in International Communication, Translation and Interpreting of University Pablo de Olavide.

in International Relations and Translation and Interpreting have also been introduced by several private Spanish universities.[4]

Even though the field of international business translation is not a new development, we should stress that it is a phenomenon that has grown in response to the gradual internationalisation of Spanish companies. Unlike other countries with a long tradition of exporting, such as Germany and France, during the 20th century Spain's balance of trade had a structural deficit (Navarro Arancegui 2007: 323), with an underdeveloped industrial fabric mainly comprising local, family businesses (García Ruíz & Manera 2006). Nowadays, SMEs (small- and medium-sized enterprises with a workforce of between 0-249 employees), of which 95.5% are microenterprises (with between 0-9 employees), account for 99.88% of the country's business fabric.[5] To redress this situation, over the last few years there has been a proliferation of support programmes and subsidies that, combined with the ravages of the economic crisis, have encouraged firms to reach out to international clients to whom to export their products and services for which there is currently no demand in the domestic market.[6] Thus, this increase in internationalisation has led, as could not be otherwise, to a greater demand for the *translation of documents pertaining to international commerce*, a phenomenon that we have endeavoured to analyse from a variety of perspectives in previous works (Aguayo Arrabal & Ramírez Delgado 2011, Morón Martín 2012, 2015, Morón Martín & Aguayo Arrabal 2013, Medina Reguera & Álvarez García 2014, Medina Reguera & Ramírez Delgado 2015a, 2015b, Medina Reguera 2015, Álvarez García 2015, COMINTRAD project).[7]

In this general context we intend to analyse the results of our regular and controlled observations of how the work environments of T&I graduates have evolved during their progressive integration in the business sector, and

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4. See, for instance, the programmes offered at Comillas Pontifical University at: <http://www.upcomillas.es/chs/es/grados/grado-en-relaciones-internacionales-bilingue-y-grado-en-traduccion-e-interpretacion-doble-titulacion> [accessed 25 February 2015], or the Official Master's Degree in Legal-Financial Translation offered at the same university.
5. *Retrato de las PYME 2014*. Available at: <http://www.ipyme.org/Publicaciones/Retrato_PYME_2014.pdf> [accessed 25 February 2015]
6. One of the most well-known was the PIPE plan, which was implemented in 1997, before being substituted by the ICEX Next plan in 2012.
7. R&D&i project of the Ministry of Economy and Finance within the framework of the 2013-2016 call of the Spanish National Plan for Scientific and Technical Research and Innovation keyed to Societal Challenges: "International Commerce and Translation: localisation of corporate websites and multilingual e-marketing for enhancing the internationalisation of Spanish SMEs" (COMINTRAD project, Ref. FFI2013-44550-R), led by Ana Medina Reguera of University Pablo de Olavide, Seville.

not precisely under the job title of "translator", but using other descriptions apparently reserved for graduates with different degrees.[8]

As has been revealed in the recent work of Álvarez García (2015), the T&I respondents occupying these positions in international firms claimed to translate, albeit in dribs and drabs (e-mails, brochures and catalogues, and, less frequently, contracts or market studies), which matches the results of our previous research (*op. cit.*). As a matter of fact, if a more in-depth analysis is conducted on those language tasks associated with business internationalisation environments, it can be seen that, instead of "pure" or "classic" translation or interpreting, they carry out language mediation or multilingual communication tasks, in many cases combined with translation. As has been argued by Mayoral Asensio (2006) and Socorro Trujillo (2012), in these corporate or business environments translation is more akin to composition or language production than to the performance of translation and interpreting. In the case of oral communication, though some activities can be in practice virtually identical to what we understand by liaison interpreting (for instance, at an international negotiating table), the respondents do not seem to be aware of interpreting, probably because they feel that tasks of this type are part and parcel of their work or a compulsory facet of international negotiations; thus, they do not see the role of interpreter or intermediary reflected in the interpreter/client dichotomy, which they have practiced during their time at university.

Furthermore, these graduates usually not only work with texts of a varied nature, but also have to carry out very different activities with them: reading, sight translation, translation, adapted translation, localisation, etc. – and, as is frequently the case, not only in a pair of languages, but in several. It is clear, then, that translators in these related environments do not use their skills in the same way as in "classic" translation environments (such as a translation agency, for example). Consequently, it would appear that their command of new technological translation or terminology management tools takes a back seat, whereas their intercultural, interpersonal, thematic or strategic competences tend to assume a more important role.

With a more qualitative and person-centric approach, this work aims to shed some light on the orientation that these professional openings or paths represent for the specific training of T&I undergraduates, and to contribute to achieving a clearer definition of the translation profession, along the lines

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8. It should be stressed that we are referring, at all times, to graduates joining companies unrelated to the language industry, viz., translation or language management agencies, publishing houses, private educational institutions, etc.

of other previous works by authors such as Kuznik (2010), Torres-Hostench (2012) and Pym *et al.* (2013).

2. Translation supply and demand as regards export companies

The changes brought about by the Web in human communication patterns are indisputable. The possibility of communicating virtually, remotely access-ing hypertext files or the ubiquity of information has radically changed the way of interacting and relating the world over. For companies, the Internet means that they can shift from being local to being global, adding another dimension to economic globalisation and placing them in what has become to be known as the new economy or the Information and Knowledge Society, both concepts directly linked to the virtual company or *dot.com* boom.[9] SMEs can now present themselves to the world via websites or *blogs*, promote their products and services online, profit from online advertising and e-commerce and engage potential clients on a massive scale. However, language barriers still persist in this technological revolution (ELAN 2006, Rico Pérez n.d.); in spite of the advances in automatic translation systems, these cannot yet offer sufficiently valid results to replace human translation. Spanish SMEs face challenges in terms of new technologies, business development and also multilingual communication. It is with good reason that some reports have pointed to the difficulties involved in internationalisation in Spain with respect to other European countries, owing to both the disadvantage posed by the lack of language skills and the ponderous evolution of the digital society (European Commission 2005, CIS 2014, Digital Agenda for Spain (MINETUR 2013), Digital Agenda for Europe (European Commission 2013)).

For its part, the T&I market has evolved towards new realities that make it difficult to establish interdisciplinary limits. The Internet has led to sub-stantial advances in T&I techniques and studies, insofar as new realities and demands have emerged for these professionals. The need to have an online presence has plunged companies into a world where language transfer has a value-added dimension. If before it was already assumed that firms interested in gaining access to the international market would require a certain degree of language exchange, with access to the virtual market where English is still the lingua franca of international commerce and the language most widely used

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9. Coined by the economist Brian Arthur to describe the economic boom grounded on knowledge and information and communication technologies, the term "new economy" is directly related to the economic globalisation phenomenon (Friedman 2006, Laffey 2006).

in the digital world, this is now even more the case. In the reports of *Common Sense Advisory* (CSA) these new realities are reflected in the changes occurring in the translation market, where business internationalisation is one of the pillars of current translation practices, whose core requirements include software and mobile app localisation, website localisation (Jiménez-Crespo 2013, Alonso & De la Cova 2013), and a multilingual social network presence. In turn, it would seem that translators who "do not translate" have, paradoxically, become commonplace. The post-edition boom (Romaine & Richardson 2009) of inter-semiotic and multi-modal intra-linguistic translation, and of multilingual production and management, along with the growing visibility of advertising or creative translation (or "transcreation" as it has become to be known by agencies and companies belonging to the sector) are precisely examples of how market globalisation and internationalisation lead to new realities which translators, as experts in international communication, have to cope.[10] In this context, as professionals translators are displaying their employability in other sectors linked to international business activities such as international commerce, protocol, institutional or diplomatic relations, intercultural mediation, advertising, computer science and *e-marketing*. In all these activities, multilingual communication, cultural diversity awareness, new technologies and knowledge of the dynamics of international relations are essential, notwithstanding sectoral differences.

Therefore, the job market is looking for increasingly more versatile and flexible multilingual professionals who are capable of holding their own in volatile markets and coping with the rapid pace of change in work methods brought about by new technologies. There is a tendency to place great value on cross-sector or professional competences that favour this flexibility: communication skills (a command of languages, communicating in an effective and strategic way), cultural competence (knowing how to cope in different settings), and technological skills (a command of new technologies), among others (ANECA 2004: 31). With time, companies are beginning to understand that these attributes are present in the occupational skills profiles of translators

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10. Sales (2004) analyses the concept from the perspective of literary translation, on the basis of the contributions of Lal (1996), De Campos (1981), and Gopinathan (2000), and classifies transcreation as creative, non-conforming, aesthetic and artistic translation. Closer to the approach of our study (focusing on the translation of corporate websites, rather than on literary translation), Rike (2013: 73) recuperates the concepts of recreation, adaptation and transfer of Nord (1991/2005) and Göpferich (2007), and highlights the close similarities of this activity to localisation (more focused on the translation of software and instruction or user manuals), although transcreation involves a different, more creative approach.

(Álvarez García 2015), and, similarly, universities also seem to be reacting to this growing demand for interdisciplinary training, perhaps driven by market dynamics or influenced by the European Space of Higher Education (EEES) – with its commitment to mobility and flexibility – or by a combination of both.

Moreover, the scant data available as regards the employability of T&I graduates have already revealed that international commerce is one of the chief job niches. In the study of the ANECA (2004) for the preparation of the *Libro Blanco del Grado en Traducción e Interpretación* [*White Paper on the BA in Translation and Interpreting*], international commerce was the third sector employing the largest number of T&I graduates (11%), results similar to those obtained in partial studies conducted by other universities (Calvo Encinas 2006). The findings of Torres-Hostench (2012:789), for her part, indicate that "administrative jobs in companies" represented up to 46% of the job placements of T&I students graduating from the Autonomous University of Barcelona between 1999 and 2003. Likewise, in a study conducted by Morón Martín (2010) international commerce was the most popular choice among T&I graduates, with nearly 19% of the respondents (of a total of 85 graduates) working in this sector, whether in combination with the practice of translation or not (versus 14% whose work involved only translation). Similarly, philology or T&I graduates occupied fifth place with regard to business internationalisation internships in the framework of the 2008 ICEX programme, and accounted for 42% of computer science internships, thus placing these degree holders in first position as to the number of internships obtained, even in front of computer engineering graduates (Morón Martín 2012).

On the basis of the aforementioned findings, the aim of this work is to reflect on those components of translation competence (TC) that could be reinforced in order to meet the criteria of these job profiles related to international communication, business interculturality and new technologies, thus satisfying, more adequately, the current demands of Spanish companies that form (or want to form) part of the global marketplace. Hence, in our research we have tapped into the messages and feedback from the market itself: we have trained graduates who, thanks to their employability, demonstrate that they are *competent* to satisfy the needs of international companies and, in turn, the observed profiles help us to verify, enrich and redefine TC as a key element in the training of these future professionals. Lastly, if we as lectures take the time to become acquainted with the success stories of our ex-students, this will provide us with real examples with which to encourage future cadres with a business management vocation to continue requesting these jobs. We are therefore faced with the anomaly of specialised training on which our degree

programmes and the majority of Spain's educational offerings apparently rest, versus the diversity or versatility of the graduate profile in the job market (Mayoral Asensio 2004, ANECA 2004, and Morón Martín 2012).

3. Current translation competence: an overview

The TC concept has sparked an interesting and prolific debate in traductology, especially of late, encouraged by the evolution of the educational model in which *competence* has become the cornerstone on which training programmes are edified. Initial competence models appear to emerge as a differentiating factor between "knowing how to translate" and "having a command of languages" (Wills 1976, Toury 1995, Kiraly 1995). Research revolving around the TC concept has been both fruitful and controversial (Mayoral Asensio 2001, Pym 2003), and through its approaches it has echoed the epistemological and ideological debates of the discipline. It seems only natural that different TC models should correspond to different definitions of *to translate* and *translation*. Studies such as those of House (1981), Wills (1976), Delisle (1980), Hönig (1988), Nord (1991) and Gile (1995) have helped to construct a more robust pedagogy of translation with which to develop current competency models, without forgetting the influence exerted by the evolution of the *text* concept which, due to new technologies, has been profound (Jiménez Crespo 2013: 43-49).

Several TC models and approaches hinge on the notion of translation as expert knowledge, which can be cognitively studied, objectified and analysed (Gile 1995, PACTE 2005, 2009, 2014, among others) and focus on the professional translation process. Authors like Kiraly (1995) introduce a psycholinguistic approach and also deal with the (intuitive and controlled) mental processes that occur during the act of translating. Since the end of the 1990s, the prolific research of the PACTE group, whose work basically revolves around the empirical-experimental study of the cognitive processes behind the acquisition, development and assessment of TC, has gradually addressed its sub-competences.[11] Furthermore, other approaches such as that of Kelly (2002, 2005) use their TC model as a guide in the teaching-learning process from a critical and non-positivist paradigm.

As a result, there are multiple approaches from which to conduct research into TC, as reflected by the work of Kiraly (2013), and, by the same token, the

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11. The PACTE research group's different studies focusing on TC can be consulted on its website (*Procés d'Adquisició de la Competència Traductora i Avaluació*) at: <http://grups-derecerca.uab.cat/pacte/content/publicacions>.

literature embraces many models (simpler or more complex as to their number of components or sub-competences) and their diverse contextualisation. From a didactic perspective, Morón Martín (2010) covers some of the recurrent debates in this regard, which she resumes as follows:

1) The vagueness of the construct or of certain components or sub-competences of TC.
2) The metonymic definition and contrasting of minimalist and multi-component models.
3) The professional approach and inclusion of transversal skills in TC models.
4) The value of TC as a model for designing specific didactic proposals.

Notwithstanding this diversity, which reflects the wealth of research in our field, the nature of existing proposals has tended to be rather homogeneous (Calvo Encinas 2010), while the resulting models have demonstrated the specificity of the task of translation, underscoring the role of communication, cultural and professional skills (instrumental, strategic, interpersonal, psychological) (PACTE 2014). It is perhaps in this last block where the greatest advances have been made. The most recent models tend to reflect, to a greater extent, instrumental and professional competences, the result of the importance of new technologies in the practice of translation. Here, the weight of transversal competences and the importance of their gradual acquisition (Robinson 1997, 2003, Mayoral Asensio 2001, Kiraly 2013) mean that generic skills like problem solving, decision-making, the capacity to adapt, teamwork and time management, among others, acquire value added in the light of the advances made by the profession and new work methods (networking crowd-sourcing, offshoring, market volatility, etc.). To such an extent that PACTE (2014: 86) has been led to consider that the most specific sub-competences of professional translators (in contrast with any bilingual speaker) are strategic competence (with a central role in its model), instrumental skills and knowledge of translation.

In this work, we will adopt a didactic approach to the TC concept (Kelly 2002, 2005), proposing an adaptation of the TC model that better responds to the needs of graduates who intend to work in business environments. This emphasis on employability has been one of the most noteworthy aspects in the development of new curricula in the EEES, according to the Bologna Process guidelines, and over the last few years several authors have defended employability and training for the job market (Gouadec 2007, Schäffner 2012, among others). This does not mean that curricular content and objectives should be

subject to the vagaries of the market (in this respect, see the critiques of Pym (2003), Kearns (2008, 2012) and Ulrych (2005)); conversely, in our proposal we appreciate and wish to enhance those transversal skills established in curricula and curricular guidelines that are paying off for Spanish graduates in business environments. This is how Chouc and Calvo Encinas (2011: 72) paint the picture:

> Employability is not only about responding to short-term market needs (a quantitative perspective based on the specialised profiles most in demand at a given time), but rather about generating competent, active social agents that are able to react to any given context (qualitative view).

4. Method of investigation

To conduct this study we employed a research method focusing on the subjects and, more specifically, on their written comments. In other words, we adopted an eminently qualitative research and analysis method (Cook & Reichardt 1979, Cohen & Manion 1980) of a descriptive and exploratory nature (Hernández Sampieri *et al*. 2003). According to the latter, these studies seek to "specify properties, characteristics and profiles of individuals, groups, communities, processes, objects or any other phenomenon that is subject of analysis (Danhke 1989), as well as measuring, evaluating or collecting data on different aspects, dimensions or components of the object of research (Hernández Sampieri *et al*. 2003: 102). Colás (1998: 177) adds that qualitative studies help to provide data and facts, pinpoint problems and relevant phenomena, establish guidelines for building theories, put forward hypotheses and identify study areas that cannot be addressed experimentally, as well as to make comparisons and perform assessments, and plan future changes and decision-making, all of which are elements clearly in line with the objectives of our research. In the case in hand, we employed the content analysis technique (quantitative) in order to deduce (qualitative approach) the motivations behind the respondents' comments (López Noguero 2002). This technique (already adopted, with different nuances and approaches, in research into T&I: V. Vigier Moreno (2010) and Álvarez García (2015), based on the adaptation of the method by Pérez Juste (2006) to the assessment of training programmes) consists in the systematic and objective study of communications or discourses, according to the variables or elements that may arise in the research process, which in each case have to be operationalised by the researcher. López Noguero (*ibid*.: 168) suggests that this method "cannot be indistinctly applied to education in general." The author goes on to justify its relevance to education:

> This technique constitutes a tool for responding to that natural curiosity of man to discover the internal structure of information, in its composition, in its organisational form or structure or in its dynamics (*ibid.*: 173).

Thus, the aim was to analyse how specific traits of the subjects (for example, their motivation) or a specific topic (for instance, thanks to the analysis of frequencies) was expressed in their comments. In our case, as suggested by López Noguero (*idem.*), we used the content analysis technique to examine the perceptions of the subjects vis-à-vis their own training and professional performance on the strength of the comments that they had posted in their profiles in the professional social networking site LinkedIn, and through personal interviews that we conducted with them addressing the sector in which they were currently employed and their job functions.

LinkedIn (available at: <www.linkedin.com>) is a highly popular professional social networking site founded in the USA in 2003. It currently has over 364 million users in more than 200 countries and is available in 24 languages.[12]

Therefore, what follows is an intensive study (focusing on a limited number of documents) (López Noguero *ibid.*:172), based on deduction or inference (Bardin 1986:7, in López Noguero *ibid.*: 173), in which the characteristics and content of the comments were analysed on the basis of the following quantitative data:

— Item 1. Mention or otherwise of translation and interpreting in the descriptions of the aforementioned profiles: tasks, positions, companies, post-graduate training.
— Item 2. The corporate sector in which the respondents work and the area or country where their companies are located.
— Item 3. Post-graduate specialisation in international commerce or foreign trade, if applicable.

So, we conducted an analysis of the frequency of appearance of translation or interpreting in the said profiles (Item 1), noting and categorising the responses to Items 2 and 3 in order to conduct an exploratory assessment of the respondents' profiles.

Notwithstanding the above, far-removed from strictly quantitative approaches to the phenomenon of labour market integration in T&I-related sectors, which would call for another type of analysis, this work is based on

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12. According to information about the company obtained at: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/linkedin>

a significant qualitative sample of 20 subjects who fit the professional profile under study, with a dual objective in mind: to learn more about the idiosyncrasies of their professional profiles (frequent tasks or assignments, type of job function, sector of employment); to gain insights into their self-perception as professionals in this new work environment. Therefore, we have focused purely on those subjects, all T&I graduates from University Pablo de Olavide, Seville, who were actively employed at the time of the study at non-T&I companies with an international scope. Bearing in mind that LinkedIn profiles are organized along the lines of a professional curriculum vitae (with different fields for personal, professional, academic, etc., information), we must point out that not all of the 20 graduates had filled in their profiles with the same degree of detail (the profile is a form with sections similar to those of a CV), so we were unable to gather information on the study items from the profiles of each and every one of the respondents.

In order to meet the aforementioned specific objectives, the analysis was conducted on the basis of the following criteria:

1) Title: this is a text field in which the respondents include their position at the company where they are currently working.
2) Type of company or corporation at which they are currently employed: this information is useful for identifying those sectors that have a demand for the services of our graduates.
3) Job description of the position that the respondents have included in their profiles: as before, it is a text field edited by the graduates where they describe the competences, tasks, activities, roles, etc., which define their current job. In this regard, the analysis could help us to learn more about the real professional activity of these graduates, as well as discerning whether they do indeed include translation and interpreting as activities specific to their jobs.
4) Post-graduate training included in the education section of the profile: since it is assumed that the business internationalisation sector is a translation-related field, in order to gain a deeper knowledge of the graduates' profiles we deemed it necessary to check whether they had received any specialised training after finishing their graduate studies that might have favoured or conditioned their entry to this sector.

As to the selection of the 20 profiles that met the requirements of our research, we must stress that the respondents' anonymity was respected at all times. Although they gladly provide access to their profiles, they only do so for

members of the same network, thus it is understood that the privacy and confidentiality of the information displayed must be upheld. Personal information provided by the respondents, who were contacted by us, was also included. In these personal interviews, we pursued the second objective of our study, namely, to analyse their self-perception. In this regard, although not in keeping with the objectives of this study, inasmuch as the intention was to invite them to participate in career counselling seminars for future graduates, their visions and attitudes with regard to the link between their graduate and professional profiles could be plainly observed (according to the classification of Yañiz & Villardón (2006)). We are well aware of the constraints of our study, insofar as it focuses solely on a limited number of subjects (all users of a professional social networking site in particular and graduates from the same university), but we believe that this initial stage of our qualitative study with a deductive approach could be extremely useful for designing studies with a greater number of subjects who represent more generically the reality in question, which could shed some light on the research's ultimate objective: to gain insights into, assess and respond to the professional profiles of translators working in business internationalisation environments. In any case, the difficultly in gathering reliable data as regards graduation figures in our degree programmes is a factor that should be taken into account when planning future research proposals in this respect (Morón Martín 2010).

5. Results of the analysis

5.1. Objective 1: Idiosyncrasies of the professional profiles of T&I graduates in international business environments

The study results are presented below. As has already been mentioned in the previous section, our intention is to provide a number of real examples of the career paths of T&I students graduating from University Pablo de Olavide, Seville, between 2009 and 2011. With this information, we can clearly see their rapid integration in the labour market, on the one hand, and in a specialised T&I-related sector, on the other, all of which leads us to reflect on the importance of the (linguistic, technological, translation, intercultural) training received in this related sector.

Concerning the first analysis criterion (title), LinkedIn allowed us to access the current job titles of the graduates. What follows is a list of the positions held by them, reproduced exactly as they appear in their profiles; although the

fact that some these are in English does not necessarily mean that the person in question is working abroad. It was impossible for us to verify if the position they claimed to hold was the same as that figuring in their work contracts, or whether it was a more "glamorous" rendition, but what we can indeed affirm is that it is the job title that they themselves have included in their profile, rather than a dropdown menu option or an automatic translation:

Administrativo Comercio Internacional [International Commerce Assistant]
Area Manager
Area Sales Manager
Asistente de Dirección de Operaciones [Assistant Operations Manager]
Brand Ambassador
Business Development Manager
Consultant
Export Verkaufsinnendienst [Export Sales Management]
International Project Manager
Key Account Manager
Marketing Content Manager
Product content manager
Responsable de ventas [Sales manager]
Sales and Marketing Manager
Técnico de exportación [Export technician]
Técnico en comercio exterior [Foreign trade technician]
Técnico en Departamento Comercial [Technician in Sales Department]

Table 1: Job titles of the positions held by graduates exactly as they appear in their profiles on the professional networking site LinkedIn

None of the subjects include translation or interpreting in the job titles of their positions (Item 1).

Moving on to the second criterion, viz., the type of company at which they were working at the time of the study, since all the economic sectors (agri-food, consumer goods, services and manufacturing industries) are represented in the sample, it has been difficult to reach any conclusions about its representativeness with respect to Item 2 (business sector). In brief, the respondents' employability profiles are highly diversified.

- Wine and spirits merchants
- Pharmaceutical and cosmetics firm
- Textile company
- Leading company in the Spanish wine industry
- Renewable energy and environmental company
- Blind manufacturing company
- Construction, installation and maintenance company
- Information and communication technology company
- Bicycle and cycling supplies distribution company
- Company making technological products in the area of healthcare
- Agri-food company in the cheese and milk product sector
- Raw material distribution company for bakeries, confectioner's shops and the hospitality industry
- Leading camper and motor-home rental company
- International tender service company geared to the corporate world
- Renewable energy and environmental multinational

Table 2: Types of companies at which the T&I graduates were employed at the time of the study.

In 12 of the 20 cases what is involved are Spanish or international companies exporting the products and services that they develop or distribute. Only one case involves a Spanish company dedicated to importing products for their nation-wide distribution. The remaining eight are companies based in other European countries. Being employed by a Spanish company does not necessarily mean that the graduate in question is working in Spain (four graduates work in Asia, and another four in France, Germany, Switzerland and Colombia). Out of the remaining 12 graduates, seven are working in Andalusia and the rest in different regions of Spain.

Concerning their job functions at these companies (third criterion), we obtained the information from the "Summary" field (in the "Current and previous experience and education" field in the profile section of LinkedIn), or the "Description" field in the "Add position" section. Here, professionals can include, according to their own criteria, the main functions of the professional positions that they have held. Sometimes, the translation of texts features as one of the main functions of the post (Graduates A and B); other times, translation is not mentioned at all (Graduates C and D):

Graduate A: Captación de clientes nacionales e internacionales, gestión de cartera de clientes, organización de transporte de mercancías, traducción de documentos técnicos ING>ESP – ESP> ING y FR>ESP – ESP> FR, emisión y gestión de facturas. [National and international customer acquisition, client portfolio management, organising freight transport, translating technical

documents ENG>SPA-SPA>ENG and FR>SPA-SPA>FR, issuing and managing invoices.]

Graduate B: Support on managing demand, obtaining indicators, analyzing processes, seeking for improvement methodologies; - Support on preparing specialised guiding documentation and making translations (EN-ES-EN); - Support on the Business Relationship Management.; - Support on the preparation of IT Strategy documentation.

Graduate C: Encargada de operaciones de importación: negociación y gestión logística, bancaria (medios de pago, seguros de cambio, financiaciones, etc.). Asistente en operaciones de exportación: encargada de procesos de registro de nuevos productos en países de Europa del Este y Oriente medio, cumplimentando y obteniendo la documentación requerida por los ministerios locales, además de realizar búsquedas de nuevas oportunidades de negocio y contactos con empresas en Suramérica. [Responsible for import operations: negotiation and logistics management, banking (payment methods, exchange rate insurance, financing, etc.). Import operations assistant: responsible for registering new products in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, filling out and obtaining the documents required by local ministries, in addition to searching for new business opportunities and contacts with South American firms.]

Graduate D: With the opportunity of personally opening the export department and reporting directly to the manager of the company, my main functions are: - Target market research for internationalising the company, collaborating in decision-making as to which countries should be tackled and the entry method; - Searching for new business opportunities in each one of the markets, analysing local purchase behaviour and that of direct competitors on a national and international scale; - Preparing business and international tradeshow calendars; - Preparing public (tenders) and private offerings: technical and administrative documents, sample preparation and shipment, clarifying doubts and price/margin supervision; - Ensuring the adequate comprehensive development of international operations: dealing directly with costumers and intermediaries, national/international supplier management, production orders, stock control, receipt/payment monitoring and claims, problem solving; - Managing international logistic operations: carrier and consolidator management, requests for quotations and rate contracts, collection orders and controlling shipments.

On occasion, tasks correspond to foreign trade procedures in the most restrictive – or classic – sense of the word (Graduate E), while in other cases intersections can be observed between the sales functions of the company's business unit and those of its departments of communication and marketing (Graduate F):

Graduate E: Current responsibilities: Representing XXX XXXX and supporting our partners and customers in SE (mainly in Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka) in order to increase brand awareness, create a solid

and prestigious image, generate sales opportunities and build customer preference towards the brands of our group's portfolio.

Graduate F: - Comprehensive update of company's website.; - Leading role in creation of company web content and industry related expert's opinion document (white paper); - Proofreading and editing of company documents and products presentations and creation of presentations based on a specific field researches; - Creation of matrix of marketing tools\documents needed for smooth operation within the commercial departments; - Coordinator in the creative process of sister company's logo and complex rebranding; - Research and analysis on competitors; - Head of marketing assistant in the process of creation of annual activity marketing plan; - Proofreading and updating of the marketing plan; - In-depth research tasks on specific fields; - Cultural liason [sic] with Spanish speaking clients; - Facilitation and execution of meetings on various marketing and sales subjects with different representatives of product development, services and financial department; Unification of client related documentation, e.g. Letters (customer testimonials) presentations, user manuals, etc; - Research on upcoming telecom events and selection of suitable ones for company's go-to-market strategy.

A content analysis yields the following data with respect to the identification of tasks and the professional identity of the subjects:

1) Four respondents expressly mention translation as a task or responsibility in the post that they occupy. Two of their number claim to be (or to have been) responsible for translating the corporate website of their company. One respondent mentions translating the company's internal documents.
2) None of the respondents allude to interpreting as a task in their current post.
3) Eight of the respondents mention translation among their skills (a specific section in LinkedIn profiles). Not only is translation (in general) mentioned, but also technical translation (in two profiles) and the Trados tool (in one case, and as a skill of the respondent in question). One of the respondents also includes translation and interpreting as professional skills in her profile.
4) Four respondents refer to translation as a task undertaken in similar posts (international companies) during their career, although not in their current position.

Lastly, we have thought it appropriate to include the training variable of these graduates after completing their T&I studies. In the "Education" section, all of the graduates (except for two) indicate that they have taken a post-graduate

course related to business internationalisation (Item 3) after obtaining their T&I degree. There is a certain amount of repetition as to the courses and Master's degrees, and in the case of the School for Industrial Organisation (EOI) the courses have to do with the internship programme of the Andalusian Agency for Overseas Promotion (EXTENDA). Several respondents (three out of 20) had previously held an internationalisation internship of EXTENDA or the Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade, ICEX (now called ICEX Spain Export and Investment), although we will not linger here on this mode of entry (since that is water under the bridge for the respondents), but will refer instead to the work of Morón Martín (2012) on the influence of these internships on the T&I BA degree programme.

Special mention should go to the following programmes, which are listed below exactly as they appear in LinkedIn (it should be noted that, in several cases, the same educational institutions appear with a different name or in English):

- Cámara de Comercio de Sevilla [Seville Chamber of Commerce]: *Expert Degree in International Trade*
- Cámara de Comercio de Sevilla: Experto en Dirección de Operaciones Internacionales [Expert in International Business Operations]
- Cámara de Comercio de Tenerife [Tenerife Chamber of Commerce]: Curso en transporte y logística internacional [Course in International Transport and Logistics] (40 horas) [40 hours]
- Cámara de Comercio, Industria y Navegación de Sevilla [Seville Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Navigation]: *Postgraduate, International Business*
- EOI - Escuela de Negocios [Business School]: *Postgraduate in International Trade & Business*
- EOI - Escuela de Organización Industrial [School for Industrial Organisation]: Máster Gestión en comercio internacional [Master in International Trade Management] (414 horas) [414 hours]
- EOI (*School of Industrial Organisation): Professional Certificate for Foreign Trade Consultants (Graduate course work)*
- IL3- Universidad de Barcelona [Barcelona University]: *Master in International Business and Foreign Trade*
- Online Business School, EAE and University of Barcelona: *Marketing and Commercial Management, Marketing Management*
- UNED [National Distance Education University]: *Masters* [sic] *Degree in International Trade, International Business/Trade/Commerce*
- Universidad de Valladolid [Valladolid University]: Master's degree Comercio Exterior [Foreign Trade]
- Universidad Pablo de Olavide [University Pablo de Olavide]: Dirección de negocios internacionales [International business management]

Table 3: Accredited post-graduate studies of the T&I graduates under study

We have not collected further information on the aforementioned post-gradu-ate studies. For instance, it would have been interesting to know if the courses involved face-to-face or online distance learning, their exact duration or the place where they were taken. Nor have we checked whether these courses were taken before, during or after the graduates' first job experience at an export company.

Overall, we believe that the combination of a BA in Translation and Interpreting with a Master of Business Administration or International Business lasting one or even two years will become, over the next few years, one of the most frequent paths followed by T&I graduates in Spain, a trend that we have observed since the graduation of the first cadre of students from our university in 2008. However, as we will argue below, having taken a specific course in international business does seem to be a determining factor for the self-image of the T&I graduates who, as will be seen in the following section, do not see themselves in a natural working environment in the previously described positions.

5.2. Objective 2: Self-perception of the T&I graduates as professionals in this field

The following examples reflect the self-awareness, or self-image, of some of the T&I graduates from University Pablo de Olavide working at Spanish compa-nies (or companies based in Spain) exporting goods and services. In the cases

Image 1: First example

presented here, we had written to ex-students asking them to collaborate in a career counselling course, and what follows are some of the replies we received. Strangely enough, the graduates working at companies did not think that they were a good role model for future translators. As can be observed, the communication tool employed was the professional social networking site LinkedIn.

In the first example, the graduate in question does not believe that she could be of use in a career counselling course, because she works in a sales and invoicing department.

In the second example, the graduate in question works at an international company dedicated to managing client portfolios and exports. She does not see any relationship between translation and foreign trade.

In the third example, the graduate, for her part, mentions that she is working in the communication industry and that her job is related to one of the foreign languages that she studied; albeit the tone of her discourse reveals a certain amount of respect for the position she occupies, as if it were not a natural work environment for her.

As can be gleaned from her comments, and very much in spite of the literature on, figures about and allusions to T&I's links with international relations and international commerce (also included, as a matter of fact, in the verification documents of Bachelor's degrees, although not in the specific degree profiles or in the data on academic advice given to our graduates), the general feeling of these graduates is that they are not pursuing the career for
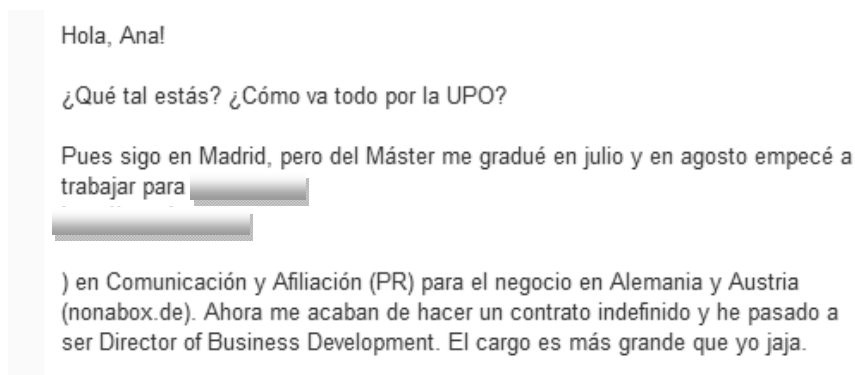

Image 2: Second example

Image 3: Third example

which they studied.[13] They see themselves as intruders, as people who have wandered into a professional field to which they do not belong.

6. Reflecting on the translation competence model with the aim of including the studied profile

After reviewing some TC principles and approaches central to the study of T&I (Kelly, PACTE, Schäffner, Kiraly, etc., *op. cit.*), and on having observed the positions held and the functions performed by our ex-students, we will now take a new approach to TC in order to reflect on which of its sub-competences have played a key role in their successful employment in the business internationalisation sector, and which of these could be reinforced to improve the employability of graduates who want to pursue a corporate career.

Thus, and given the scant interdisciplinarity of Spanish educational offerings (Calvo Encinas 2010: 151), our approach is that of a TC model which, in line with the proposal of Kelly (2002, 2005), serves as a guide for lecturers when establishing learning goals or results for students in different contexts of application; hence, the orientation of our study. Bearing in mind the heterogeneity of the student body and its graduate profile (Anderman & Rogers

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13. For examples, see pp.15 and 31 of the *Libro Blanco del Grado en Traducción e Interpretación* of the ANECA (2004) which shows that international commerce is a job opening for the respondents (in its study and in previous works), though this has not been included afterwards as a specific profile. Katan (2009: 127 and ff.) also considers the appointment of translators to administrative posts and their identification with other professional profiles, a fact that could influence their professional self-concept and identity.

2000: 67), and the very diversity of training and qualification models on a European level (Pym *et al.* 2013), one of these contexts would be TC as a transversal competence in other university study programmes (for instance, TC for economics and business studies undergraduates, Calvo Encinas *op. cit.*). Therefore, though the TC models known to date focus precisely on the specificity of TC professionals, we should invert this process so that its takes into account not only the singularity of TC, but also the transversal character of this competence when applied to a professional sector that is a priori unrelated to translation (not set out, at least, in the White Paper on T&I in Spain, which is supposed to establish guidelines for undergraduate training programmes), such as international commerce. Admittedly, undergraduate degree programmes have already shown, as reflected by employment figures (see the review of occupational integration and employability data outlined by Calvo Encinas (2006), or the more recent figures published in Morón Martín (2010) and in Torres-Hostench (2012)), that international commerce is a recurrent job prospect in the employability studies conducted hitherto at different universities. Nonetheless, the paradox that this field does not get a mention in our White Paper begs the question whether we have the curricular or teaching scope to address this particular job opening; namely, to what extent the structuring of undergraduate degree programmes and the T&I curriculum itself at this level allows for training keyed to this profile in the studies of T&I undergraduates. In this context, and in view of the above, for defining our *adapted* model for this environment or job opening, we first have to redefine, specify and reinforce the following competences:

1) Linguistic competence: Despite the fact that a number of studies have defended their own foreign language didactics models for translators and interpreters (with special emphasis on reading or listening comprehension, for example, Burbat & Möller Runge (2003)), to our mind linguistic competence should be reinforced, since these professionals must communicate verbally and in writing, and produce diverse texts in different languages, encompassing a large number of communication situations arising in the business setting. There are basic activities in a multilingual business environment that can be covered in a foreign language curriculum, if included, such as telephone communication, sales/purchase negotiation skills, communication within corporate hierarchies, etc. On a separate issue, and although we have found customer managers for a sole country or linguistic region (for instance, a client portfolio manager for France and Belgium or a customer relationship

manager for Germany and Austria) among our graduates, the use of English as the current lingua franca of international business seems to predominate in this professional profile.

2) Thematic competence: According to Aguayo Arrabal (2010), the greatest reservations expressed by the international commerce managers participating in her study had to do with thematic knowledge of this specific field. They believed that translators who wanted to work at international companies should strengthen their knowledge in this regard. Likewise, in the work of Álvarez García (2015) T&I graduates employed by international companies revealed the importance of thematic competence (specific knowledge of international commerce), above any other in their professional profile. The thematic competence of translators has always been one of the thorniest issues, inasmuch as they have to feel at ease in specialised environments for which specific training is necessary. In the curricula vitae of these graduates, it is very common to find specialist courses organized by chambers of commerce and other private institutions. It follows that, since international commerce is now a work environment for T&I graduates, the curriculum should be reinforced in this respect.

3) Intercultural competence: Since a specific conduct is expected of communication specialists in these environments in contact with diverse business cultures, it would necessary to reinforce the profile and the intercultural awareness of these subjects who have to feel comfortable in this international environment heavily conditioned by culturally marked communication and behavioural patterns. The very perception and status of the profession turns out to be a specific culturally marked element (Pym *et al*. 2013), and the training of students could be, in this sense, very thought-provoking bearing in mind their proven mobility after leaving university, not only of our own graduates, but of young Spaniards in general.

4) Textual competence: Graduates work with texts that are not necessarily destined for translation, but are written directly in English or are multilingual. In addition to the translation assignments that students usually encounter in legal-economic translation lectures, examples of written correspondence are very frequent, as are informational texts about company products or services, persuasive texts about their promotion, and commercial and financial documents. As claimed by Aguayo Arrabal and Morón Martín (2013), this competence has been the main target of the majority of works addressing the inclusion of

texts pertaining to international commerce in T&I lectures (already mentioned in the introduction).

5) Psychophysiological competence: This is of special interest given that T&I graduates pursuing careers in these environments tend to suffer from a certain degree of "identity loss" (Morón Martín 2010) and even a certain "sense of fraud", as we have already noted in this paper. Perplexingly, this state of affairs occurs in parallel with the emergence of new job profiles for T&I graduates, influenced by new forms of technological and global communication, such as transcreation in the advertising industry, community management or e-marketing. Simultaneously, their psychophysiological profile makes them highly aware of the need for and positive effects of good communication management at their companies. Thus, translators working at international companies can appreciate the importance of procuring professional translation services, take it upon themselves to revise these translations and, what is perhaps in their employers' greatest interest, determine the communication needs that, once covered, will best contribute to building a positive corporate image and to strengthening business development. In short, entrepreneurs can thus rely on professionals who know how to get across to them the benefits of investing in communication.

7. Conclusions

To recap, we have analysed the professional activities of a group of translators who do not translate in the traditional sense, but are nevertheless fully developing the competences that they have acquired at university, and it is precisely these that allow them in a short time to build business management skills, such as negotiating, knowledge and competences related to advertising or marketing, or, for that matter, managing an important client portfolio. In other words, if TC is redefined, supplementing it with the tasks *currently* undertaken by translators, it would necessarily embrace the development of peripheral activities that, in turn, would oblige us to understand the training of translators in a broader and more generic sense of the word.

Our T&I graduates' profiles are plainly flexible, since they are capable (as shown by the data on their occupational integration) of gaining access to a related field traditionally reserved for more specific academic profiles like social sciences or law. Their capacity to adapt to new work environments, the ease with which they become familiarised with new computer tools, the fact that they have been trained to perform under transitory pressure and know

how to work towards project goals and as a team, and their well-developed capacity of oral and written communication seem to be behind the success of this professional profile, and to compensate for their thematic lacunae in accounting or finance when being engaged. In any case, to bridge these gaps all the respondents have taken suitable training courses to supplement their knowledge (Aguayo Arrabal 2010, Álvarez García 2015). Indisputably, it is essential to continue to probe into the mandatory interdisciplinarity between Bachelor's and Master's degrees, which is still rather infrequent in Spain.

In the current context of the Spanish economic crisis, and considering the scandalous level of unemployment among university graduates, we do not shy away from defending a curricular model focusing on employability and training geared to covering the current needs of the market (in line with other authors like Olohan (2007), Lee-Jahnke (2004) and Gouadec (2007)), without going to the extreme of the dichotomy of academic or professionalising training, but rather putting the accent on the need for bridge-building and making the most of the competences that T&I studies offer the market, especially in the business internationalisation sector. Admittedly, few disciplines have managed so successfully to keep pace with these changes, adapting themselves so perfectly to the rhythm at which T&I have evolved.

In our geographical context, we have offered real examples of how Spanish companies belonging to sectors unrelated to T&I are gradually being convinced of the advantages of engaging T&I graduates, in spite of occupying a variety of posts that have little or nothing to do with the term "translator". The interviews and consultations with the graduates indicate that the perception they have of their work is that they are undertaking "tasks unrelated to translation". The recurring issue of the identity of translators and their visibility in the job market crops up here yet again, raising interesting questions for future research: Are the professionals described here still translators? Does traductology regard them as such? Is it in the interests of the discipline that this be the case?

Although it does not overcome the constraints already outlined by Calvo Encinas (2006) with respect to existing employability studies (too partial, limited to a professional or geographical context and, for the most part, non-longitudinal), the intention of this work has been to approach a reality with scant visibility in our White Paper, which can be seen in the real employability of our graduates, as well as in the training practice of specialised translation.

In conclusion, at a time when the Bologna Plan is the target of frequent criticism, we believe that it is in everyone's interest to highlight the advantages that come with the development of transversal skills (Robinson 1997, Way

2008, Kiraly 2013), which has focused on employability, new technologies, flexibility and mobility. However, there is still the unresolved matter of achieving greater interdisciplinarity in Spanish undergraduate degree programmes, of which, by the by, we have rendered an account in this research.

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