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CRITERIA AND LEVELS OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE FORMATION IN FUTURE TRANSLATORS TRAINED ON SOCIO-POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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This paper presents a system of criteria and levels for assessing the formation of intercultural competence in future translators trained through socio-political discourse (SPD). The relevance of the study stems from the absence of a unified diagnostic instrument capable of objectively tracking the dynamics of intercultural competence development during translator training. Three groups of criteria are distinguished - cognitive, operational, and value-motivational - together with three corresponding levels of formation: low, intermediate, and high. It is shown that the proposed criteria system can be used for both initial diagnostics and intermediate and final assessment in the course of instruction. The findings are of practical value to instructors of translation-cycle disciplines and to developers of assessment instruments.

Keywords: intercultural competence; formation criteria; competence levels; future translators; socio-political discourse; pedagogical diagnostics.

The development of intercultural competence in future translators cannot be effectively managed without a clearly defined system of criteria and levels against which its formation can be diagnosed and tracked. In the absence of such a system, claims about the effectiveness of any given instructional methodology remain impressionistic rather than verifiable [2, C.27]. This paper presents a criteria-and-levels system developed as part of a broader study on improving future translators' intercultural competence through socio-political discourse (SPD), and considers its diagnostic application in the translator training process.

The topicality of this problem is heightened by the specific demands that SPD places on translator competence: because socio-political texts are dense with ideologically and culturally loaded content, general-purpose language proficiency scales are insufficiently sensitive to capture the particular competencies required for their adequate translation, necessitating a criteria system tailored to this discourse type.

Through the analysis of the materials we can suggest a three-component criteria system:

The cognitive criterion reflects the extent of students' declarative knowledge of source- and target-culture political realia, institutions, and historical-cultural background required for adequate comprehension of SPD. This criterion draws on I.I. Khaleyeva's concept of the translator's "secondary linguistic personality," that presupposes an internalized system of cultural knowledge parallel to linguistic knowledge [5, C.63].

The operational criterion reflects students' procedural ability to select and apply adequate translation transformations when working with culturally and ideologically marked material, including euphemisms, precedent names, and culturally conditioned metaphors. V.N. Komissarov's position that translation competence is fundamentally a matter of trained operational skill rather than passive knowledge [3, C.11] underlies the centrality of this criterion within the system.

The value-motivational criterion reflects students' attitude toward cultural difference and their sense of professional responsibility as intercultural mediators, corresponding to the attitudinal

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dimension of M. Byram's model of intercultural competence [1, C.34]. Unlike the two preceding criteria, this component is assessed primarily through self-report instruments and reflective analysis of translation decisions rather than through direct performance testing.

For each of the three criteria, three levels of formation are distinguished. At the low level, students demonstrate fragmentary knowledge of culturally marked political content, apply translation transformations inconsistently or inappropriately, and show limited awareness of the cultural dimension of translation as a professional responsibility. At the intermediate level, students possess systematic but incomplete cultural knowledge, apply appropriate transformations in familiar text types but struggle with unfamiliar genres or unusually dense culturally marked material, and demonstrate a developing but not yet consistent professional orientation toward intercultural mediation. At the high level, students demonstrate broad and flexible cultural knowledge applicable across genres of SPD, select translation transformations confidently and justify their choices through explicit reflective reasoning, and consistently treat cultural sensitivity as a core professional value rather than an incidental consideration, consistent with V.V. Safonova's characterization of advanced communicative competence as encompassing both procedural skill and reflective awareness [1, C.58].

The criteria-and-levels system described above is designed to support three points of diagnostic measurement within the translator training process: an initial diagnostic administered before targeted instruction in SPD translation begins, an intermediate diagnostic administered at the midpoint of instruction to inform adjustments to the instructional sequence, and a final diagnostic administered upon completion of the course. This three-point design is consistent with recommendations in the methodological literature on formative pedagogical experimentation, which stress the importance of tracking competence development longitudinally rather than through single-point assessment alone [2, C.31].

The proposed three-component criteria system, comprising cognitive, operational, and value-motivational dimensions, each assessed across three levels of formation, offers a practical instrument for diagnosing and tracking the development of intercultural competence in future translators trained through socio-political discourse. Its adoption in translator training practice can support both the objective evaluation of student progress and the empirical verification of instructional methodologies aimed at developing this competence.

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