ENGLISH LANGUAGE INTERNSHIP – TRANSLATION PROJECT

FINAL REPORT

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# ABSTRACT

The Department of Foreign Languages in the University of Córdoba proposes a macro project called "*Servicios de Traducción e Interpretación*" led by professors of the English Teaching program and current internship tutors: B.S. Jaime Nieto and M.S. Paula García. This macro project has two micro projects, one focuses on interpretation services to expert visitors whereas the other is aimed at translations and revisions of academic papers.

The University of Córdoba offers this project as a selectable option for students to graduate, but the internship process was modified due to the global pandemic of the current year. This report describes the strategies, theories, and overall experience from three interns as they accomplished the tasks, functions, and responsibilities they were given under the micro project focused on the translation and revision process of academic papers.

*Keywords:* Internship process, revision and edition, collaborative work, asynchronous communication.

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# 1.  INTRODUCTION

The Department of Foreign Languages in the University of Córdoba proposes a macro project called "*Servicios de Traducción e Interpretación*" led by professors of the English Teaching program and current internship tutors: B.S. Jaime Nieto and M.S. Paula García. Within this project there are two micro projects, one focuses on interpretation services to expert visitors whereas the other is aimed at translations and revisions of academic papers. This last scenario was the context in which this internship took place.

The exponential demand on academic papers in English for their international recognition, serves as a part of the basis on which this project is founded. The service is aimed at those authors who want to contribute to the scientific development of the region but do not have a good domain of English.  This situation has occurred on numerous occasions in Monteria specifically at the University of Córdoba where students, administrators and professors of the institution constantly require English translations of academic and scientific texts, such as: abstracts, summaries, posters, theses, dissertations, monographs, and scientific articles categorized in quartiles (Q1-Q4) for indexed journals.

Due to COVID-19, the normal development of this internship process was modified to the point where interns were obliged to carry it out virtually. In regular circumstances the internship would have requested interns to interpret in international events and translate scientific papers. However, given the current conditions, interns' functions were limited to the revision and edition of papers via the internet.

.        The purpose of this project is to generate national and international visibility for the academic program, the Department of Foreign Languages, the Faculty of Education and the University of Córdoba regarding the demand of translation and interpretation services to the educational community and the region. Additionally, this project offers an opportunity for The English Degree program to respond to the need for publication in international contexts where foreign language usage is required.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Translation

Translation is an activity that includes the interpretation of the meaning of any text in one language to another equivalent text in another language. Translatology is the discipline that studies translation; it is, therefore, a knowledge that seeks to explore the different processes within the translation practice.

Hurtado, A. (2011) suggests that this scientific discipline needs to establish relationships with many other disciplines. She also explains that translation can also be conceived as the translation to any communication act, stating that any communication model works as a model of transfer. That is, a vertical or horizontal transfer of meaning. In addition, she adds that "within or between languages, human communication is a translation. A translation study is a language study"(p 65) .

Today, translation is also related to other discursive practices of a transformation process from an original text. Therefore, the modern conception of translation consists of an act of communication in which interpretive processes participate.

As concluded by Hurtado, A. (2011), there are four (4) characteristics to take into consideration in the translation activity; she points that: (i) The reason why the translation exists is due to the difference between languages and cultures, (ii) the translation has a communicative purpose, (iii) This process is addressed to a recipient that needs the translation because he does not know the language and culture in which the original text is and (iv) the translation is conditioned by the purpose pursued and this purpose varies according to the cases (28-29).

## 2.2 Collaborative Translation

Defined by Pavlović & Jurida (2019), the "collaboration in translation refers to the actual cooperation among professional translators while performing their tasks, or the collaboration between translators on the one side, and authors, editors, reviewers, and professionals in other fields on the other" (p. 6). In other words, collaborating in translation-related tasks and projects consists of the combined work done by several participants of such projects. This interaction could be said to be present when the performance of a translator is aided either by other translators or agents with similar positions, such as: reviewers, editors, other professionals, etc.

The presence of this strategy is documented in several forms. Similar to what O'Brien (2011) stated that "collaboration can occur between translators and any one of these other agents or between two or more translators"(p. 17). Besides, the author stated that "being able to consult with the source text author, or to exchange ideas and debate with a fellow translator will most likely lead to higher quality translation and might contribute towards skill enhancement of novice or junior translators" (2011, p. 19). That is, collaborative translation has the potential of generating clear benefits for any translation project where it is implemented. This method offers all participants in the translation process (translation and revision) the ability to work collectively towards a shared goal, producing a solid well-translated text. The decision of implementing the approach of collaborative translation was established by the mutual agreement that any correction had to be approved by all members of the team.

**2.3 Scientific text**

According to Crookes, G. (1984) the scientific text can be defined as a type of scientific writing, based on a single research, whose objective is to contribute to the progress of science or technology. In other words, any kind of research-based text that grants progression in the fields of science and technology can be categorized as a scientific text. Moyano (2001) offers some examples of texts that are grouped as scientific texts and provides a brief definition as follows:

> *2.3.1 Scientific article:* it is normally published in a specialized journal and its main function is to inform the scientific community about the results of a research work carried out.
>
> *2.3.2 Preliminary communication:* it is usually published in update days and congresses. Its main function is to report on the first results with their respective research advances that have not yet been finished to the scientific community. It has the same logical structure as the scientific article, although the conclusions are provisionally formulated.
>
> *2.3.3 Mural or poster:* it is usually an exhibition of a researcher's work and its purpose is to expose the results of a complete investigation or its preliminary results to the scientific community. It is presented schematically and has graphic resources.
>
> *2.3.4 Thesis:* it is usually published within the scope of the institution in which the text originates, so that it results from a fairly reduced circulation, although it is defended publicly and orally.

*2.3.5 Dissertation*: refers to the thesis, which are usually less complex than the thesis and the subject chosen is less thoroughly discussed.

*2.3.6 Monograph*: the purpose is to accredit merits before teachers of a subject of university degree or postgraduate.

*2.3.7 Scientific report:* informs about the status of an investigation, proposes techniques for the solution of a problem or reports of a study that has allowed to diagnose it. In addition, its main function is to accredit merits before an official or entrepreneur in order to obtain money for a project.

*2.3.8 Summary*: it is normally published in magazines and in congress memoirs. It consists of a brief text that aims to inform about the content of another scientific text to inform the recipients.

## 2.4 Translation of technical-scientific texts

According to Viera, R. (1997) for translating technical-scientific texts one must consider "the accuracy of the translated text, in terms of how it transmits the goal of the writer of the source text to the reader of the translated text" (p. 435). She adds that if one is aware of that "the translated text will be able to contribute instrumentally to the technical-scientific area as a whole" (Ibid). That is to say, the process to transcribe scientific texts requires translators to be aware of the preciseness of the authors' ideas in the translated text so as to make it significant for the field the text belongs.

To guarantee an accurate scientific translation, it is important to consider three (3) essential stages: (i) *Understanding of the original text*. This can be done if translators have access to the meaning of the many technical terms and are aware of the complexity of the reasoning that is proper from the scientific texts, (ii) *Drafting of technical-scientific*

*translation.* For this second stage of translation, translators need to have a high writing skill level, know the specific jargon of the field and domain the target language, and (iii) *Revising from experts*. Here, translators proceed to review and share the translated text conducted by scientists to native reviewers or translators.

### 3. METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS

Considering the conditions in which we, as members of the translation team of the University of Córdoba had to work in, we decided to take on a collaborative approach supported by our personal contribution.

It is noteworthy that the whole internship process has been conformed not only by translation sessions but also by tutoring sessions with internship coordinators and proofreading sessions. These sessions permitted the socialization of the correction and revision progress. The sequence of the events during the internship is scheduled in the following chart:

| WEEKS | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Week 1 (13/04/2020 - 18/04/2020)** | 8:30-10:30 | 8:30-10:30 | 8:30-10:30 | 8:30-10:30 | X | 9:00-11:00 proofreading session |
| | 15:00-17:00 translation | 15:00-17:00 translation | 15:00-17:00 translation | 15:00-17:00 translation | | |
| **Week 2 (20/04/2020- 25/04/2020)** | 8:30-11:30 | 14:30-16:30 tutoring session | 8:30-11:30 | 14:30-16:30 tutoring session | 8:30-11:30 | X |
| | 15:00-17:30 translation | | 15:00-17:30 translation | | 15:00-17:30 translation | |
| **Week 3 (27/04/2020 - 02/05/202)** | 8:30-11:30 | 8:30-11:30 | 8:30-11:30 | 8:30-11:30 | X | 10:00-11:00 proofreading session |
| | 15:00-17:30 translation | 15:00-17:30 translation | 15:00-17:30 translation | 15:00-17:30 translation | | |
| **Week 4 (04/05/2020 - 09/05/2020)** | 8:30-10:30 | 14:30-16:30 tutoring session | 8:30-10:30 | 14:30-16:30 tutoring session | 8:30-10:30 | X |
| | 15:00-17:30 translation | | 15:00-17:30 translation | | 15:00-17:30 translation | |
| **Week 5 (11/05/2020 - 16/05/2020)** | 9:00-11:00 | 9:00-11:00 | 9:00-11:00 | 9:00-11:00 | 9:00-11:00 | 9:30-11:00 proofreading session |
| | 15:00-17:00 translation | 15:00-17:00 translation | 15:00-17:00 translation | 15:00-17:00 translation | 15:00-17:00 translation | |

Ordinary Collaborative Translations would require interns to schedule face-to-face meetings, use translation devices, interview authors directly, and have sessions with tutors in order to discuss and debate concerns related to the issues found in the articles. However, due to current global COVID-19 conditions, the collaborative translation was developed using on-line Google Apps services and other reliable sources on the web such as online dictionaries and forums. The aforementioned tools' concepts and their utilization during this translation process will be briefly described below:

*Google Apps (Drive, Meet & Translate):* These resources from Google provided us a means of communication to share opinions and conclusions, real-time edition features that facilitated the edition and correction process, and allowed us to obtain quick references for some of the words we could use in said edition. Sessions with tutors were also made using two of these platforms (*Meet* and *Drive)*.

*Dictionary.com - WordReference:* These free online dictionaries gave us accurate suggestions for different terms that could be changed in the articles with the reason of giving a more appropriate structure for its technical purposes.

*Linguee:* This tool, with its enormous database of articles, provided us with an accurate representation of how several words could be utilized based on the context in which we needed them to be placed.

The project included the revision and edition of three scientific articles whose content were in English. As a group, we first did skimming over the document in order to identify the most evident mistakes or sections where the writing lacked cohesion. Then, a familiarization process with the content within the article was done for better understanding of the science field we would deal with. This process, marked the beginning of our collaborative work, followed by a more detailed reading session that started from the first

paragraph where we identified each problem and classified them based on the offered solution.

For a better identification and understanding of the problems evidenced in the articles, the translation team created a color code as illustrated in table 1:

| Color | Mistakes / Errors |
|---|---|
| Yellow | General grammar, spelling and syntax problems |
| Green | Additions (Adding necessary items for achieving cohesion) |
| Orange | Considerable grammatical mistakes |
| Blue | Word order, structure- related |
| Magenta | Contextual revision and edition |
| Strikethrough | Omission of unnecessary or incorrect items |

*Table 1. Color code for identification of mistakes within the articles.*

After pointing out and correcting the issues found in the article, a copy of the corrected document was sent to the original author via e-mail. In this copy, there were highlighted words, phrases or ideas attached to comments made by the translators. Within the comments, there were presented questions or suggestions for the author to answer so as to clarify translators' doubts in terms of concepts or ideas. Once the author resolves translators' comments in the document, interns' tutors would be a final filter for corrections, assuring in that way an appropriate translation of the document.

## 4. RESULTS

The articles we worked with were provided by the project group "Servicos de traducción e interpretación". However, the articles were not written in the translators' mother tongue (Spanish). These articles had already been attempted to be translated into English without specialized supervision. That resulted in a text with some language difficulties: lexico-grammatical mistakes, incorrect use of collocations, various misspellings, punctuation errors, lack of coherence, and inaccurate paraphrasing.

The following chart shows some examples of the most common mistakes within the three (3) articles:

| Problems identified | Lexicogrammar | Paraphrasing | Punctuation | Collocations | Cohesion / Coherence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Article 1:** "This component is centered on teachers' ideas about student misconceptions, as well as, the exploration of previous knowledge..." (Appendix 1) | | | X | | |
| "Also, Latham et.al [16], affirm should be detected and adapting dynamically to a learner's learning styles." (Appendix 2) | X | X | | | X |
| Other research developed an ITS *"Genie 2"* based on instructional methods that through coding the behavior of Russian math teachers and their PCK, which has the ability to simulate the educational experiences students would receive [26]. Other researches have been based on the TPACK of teachers to develop computational systems for the teaching of algebra, Sciences fractions [34], among others. (Appendix 3) | | | | X | X |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Article 2:** "Perception Stage (perception CF), Situation Assesment Stage (Situation Assesment CF…" (Appendix 4) | X | | | | |
| "...attention, thought, memory, language among others [3]. CF also called executive functions (EF)..." (Appendix 5) | | | X | | |
| "These goals are pointers that indicate to the Metacognitive Architecture how will be modified, a mental state." (Appendix 6) | | | | | X |
| "This experiment allowed to contrast the amount of time in milliseconds used by the system required to accomplish this task and the weight in megabytes of the AKP of each cognitive function…" (Appendix 7) | X | | | X | |
| **Article 3:** "An autonomous agent is a computational system that has a set of goals and drive completely autonomously in an unstructured, dynamic environment..." (Appendix 8) | X | | | | |
| "The Goal Manager will select $g_n$ become it in $g_c$ to be given to the Planner." (Appendix 9) | X | | | X | |
| "This method have been widely implemented in metacognitive architectures [22] formalism of the notion of metacognitive expectations and plans, in strategy game [17] on intelligent system [21] to establish hierarchical plans and hierarchical expectations to enable high-level planning." (Appendix 10) | X | | X | | |

**ARTICLE 1:**

**a.**

*Student thinking about science*

This component is centered on teachers' ideas about student misconceptions, as well as, the exploration of previous knowledge and the identification of difficulties or limitations in learning [6],[41]. The student thinking about science component is

*Appendix 1. Problem related to punctuation in Article 1.*

**b.**

particular time. Also, Latham et.al [16], affirm should be detected and adapted ing dynamically to an learner's learning styles.

*Appendix 2. Lexicogrammar, paraphrasing and coherence issues in Article 1.*

**c.**

observing an experienced human tutor. Other research Previous studies developed an ITS *"Genie 2"* based on instructional methods that through coding carried out the process of coding on the behavior of Russian math teachers and their PCK, which has the ability with the purpose of to simulate simulating the educational experiences students would receive [26]. Other researches Similar studies have been based on the TPACK of teachers to develop computational systems for the teaching of Algebra, Sciences fractions [34], among others. Nevertheless, these systems' in their structure are not based on the teachers' PCK.

*Appendix 3. Problem related to collocation in Article 1.*

**ARTICLE 2:**

**a.**

cognitive functions (CF), as shown in Fig. 1: Perception Stage (perception CF), Situation Assessment Stage (Situation Assessment CF, Categorization CF, Recognition CF), Reasoning Stage (Reasoning CF, Belief Maintenance CF, Decision Making CF), Problem Solving Stage (Planning CF, Prediction CF), Interaction Stage (Interaction CF, Communication CF) and Action Stage (Action CF).

*Appendix 4. Problem related to lexicogrammar in Article 2.*

**b.**

action [2]. In the human biology, the following cognitive functions can be found: perception, attention, thought, memory, language, among others [3]. CF also called executive functions (EF) allow to synthesize enable the synthesization of external

*Appendix 5. Problem related to punctuation in Article 2.*

**c.**

These goals are pointers that indicate to the Metacognitive Architecture how a mental state will be modified.

*Appendix 6. Problem related to cohesion and coherence in Article 2.*

**d.**

time. This experiment allowed to contrast the amount of time in milliseconds ~~used by the system~~ required to accomplish this task, and the ~~weight~~ size in megabytes of the AKP of each cognitive function in format .json file, ~~of the~~ from two tests described above. ~~Below,~~ The results of the experiment are described below.

*Appendix 7*. Problem related to lexicogrammar and collocation in Article 2.

## ARTICLE 3:

**a.**

An autonomous agent is a computational system that has a set of goals and drives ~~completely autonomously~~ with complete autonomy in an unstructured, dynamic environment [29]. A goal-driven autonomous system must ~~be~~ generated plans to

*Appendix 8*. Problem related to lexicogrammar in Article 3.

**b.**

Then the *Goal Manager* update $G_p$ adding $g_n$ which may also ~~warrant~~ ensures other edits (e.g., to remove and to modify goals). The Goal Manager will select $g_n$ ~~become~~ and turn it into $g_c$ to be given to the Planner.

*Appendix 9*. Problem related to lexicogrammar and collocation in Article 3.

**c.**

planning, execution, and goal reasoning. This method ~~have~~ has been widely implemented in metacognitive architectures [22], formalism of the notion of metacognitive expectations, and plans, in strategy games [17] on intelligent systems [21] to establish hierarchical plans and hierarchical expectations to enable high-level planning.

*Appendix 10*. Problem related to lexicogrammar and punctuation in Article 3.

As seen in the extracts of the three articles, there is a varied range of issues found in the writing, which creates the need to use strong strategies. Consequently, for the revising process we took as a basis the following five stages proposed by Regmi, Naidoo & Pilkington, (2010) concerning the translation process:

1. Determination of the relevance or context,

2. Forward-translation of the research instruments (i.e. topic guides),

3. Backward-translation,

4. Examination of the translated meaning in both source and target languages

5. Revisiting the whole process to get similar interpretations. (p. 20)

Appendix 2 works as an example where the application of the aforementioned stages is evidenced. Here, the translation team decided to include the implementation of collaborative analysis to establish the article's relevance and context (1). To that end, the team examined the meaning of both, the author's native idea and the already translated original version (4). To finally perform a review of all the processes so as to come up with equivalent interpretations (5). The above relates to what Brislin et al. (1973) referred to as a translation technique that leads to the attainment of an accurate representation of information in words by consulting with other people, having discussion sessions, or any other communicative interaction that involves sharing ideas and personal thoughts.

Moreover, as it is shown below (appendix 11), we would establish communication with the authors by adding comments for them to read and provide approval, which would supply us with instruction on how to achieve the sense they expected the document to have.



*Appendix 11. One of the comments that were written for the authors to revise.*

Our set goal from the start was to preserve meaning as much as possible. That is, we made use of the strategies the context allowed us to, always attempting to respect the original meaning so as to maintaining it in the revised version. Having taken advantage of those stages

lessened the possibility to make possible mistakes, distort key information, and lower risk of losing key messages from sources. In other words, the misuse of the mentioned strategies could potentialize the risk of misrepresentation of the article's contextual meaning.

## 5. CHALLENGES

Once we started, our priority was to identify the possible meaning for each of the parts in the paragraphs and to ensure its presence on the applied correction.  At first, we were disoriented because of the lack of familiarization the three of us shared regarding the topic of the document.  But soon, we started getting information from external sources to help us grasp the meaning of the majority of the concepts and ideas used throughout the paper. Additionally, we started getting familiarized with the expressions the authors used, which would help us with a better understanding for the next stages of the process.

It is evident that the writing had problems and it was hard to identify the actual meaning of the sentences due to the mistaken strategies that were probably used when attempting to translate this paper into English without professional help. Examples of these could be: overusing literal translation that ultimately ended up making the text sound stiff and too similar to Spanish, and ignoring basic English grammatical rules. However, after carrying out the process of proofreading, we expected that the meaning is still preserved after the modifications.

Another challenge to face was the absence of face-to-face interview sessions with the articles' authors. The need for these interviews was to get to know the authors' intention when writing, and have the opportunity to get closer to what the articles were

about. Moreover, we did not have the original text in Spanish, making it difficult for us to come to a conclusion on the meaning of some sections. Consequently, we added comments for each of these cases, but the lack of simultaneous communication with the original authors modified the pace of our revision. It is worth mentioning that we overcame all challenges by coming up with alternative solutions so as to meet the assigned deadlines.

Due to the current conditions, we did not have the opportunity to be fully immersed in a Translation and Interpretation experience. Nevertheless, our experience with this project could not be said to be effortless, as we faced many limitations that would affect or even halt the process in some cases. Examples of these inconveniences could be: absence of a stable internet connection, unpredictable power outages produced by environmental factors, and even the unavailability of resources that would enable synchronous communication apart from our initial choice.

# 6. CONCLUSIONS

This project was a wonderful experience for us, as we had the opportunity to contribute to our program in a different way than performing pedagogy-driven activities. Evidently, it was not an easy task, since we had many challenges to face throughout the length of the internship. Although we had already worked with research-related writing tasks, we had to adapt to the new tone we encountered regarding the delivered documents. Sincerely, revising all these documents did not look attractive at first, but we soon got used to dealing with the meaning of the concepts, the writing style, and the intended goal for the writing as a whole. The interaction and work pattern we adapted with the project proved to be effective, as we could advance through adversity and use all the tools we could get our hands on.

The experience could easily be described as fruitful, mainly because we accomplished many tasks we initially did not think ourselves capable of doing. It is worth to say that from the completion of this project, what we get is a newly found sense of efficacy and adaptability that could be utilized in different contexts. We feel truly grateful for being provided with such a building experience. This project marks the end of a long chapter on our lives as we enter an exciting new pathway of possibilities, where translation and interpretation are now a selectable option.

As a team, we consider that our professional development was highly awarded in this immersive experience. The use of revision skills was something we could potentialize during this stretch of time. Also, we could get to know this translation project in a deeper way. Thanks to that, we are fully conscious that this faculty service will be of vast help for the university's academic and administrative personnel as well as the department of Córdoba. We can take for granted that this translation project will be a new opened door for the numerous scientific contributions of our region awaiting to be translated and shared to the world of science.

Taking into account the problems we faced, we considered that our experience could have been better if we had been granted access to different devices, applications, books, dictionaries and/or software that would provide us with extra help in especial cases where the fields are in some way not very related to what we master. Another important thing to add, is the organization students and tutors had in order to get better results. As communication is key during the whole project, authors and editors must establish a homogeneous link so as to achieve the expected results. That is, we hope that in the future, there is more communication between both parties so that the goal and a general sense of each document is clearly understood from the very beginning. Doing this will surely make the process easier for interns and will definitely create a higher chance of achieving a higher quality of the process.

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