Abstract:

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Fostering the acquisition of generic competencies through project simulation

In our field translation studies, the research on domain-specific competencies has made serious progress (cf. PACTE 2003; Göpferich 2008; EMT 2009) and led to a range of competence models, nowadays in strong relation to employability and the market readiness of the educated translator (cf. Nitzke et al. in print). Whereas the modelling of domain-specific cognitive competencies as well as some soft skills in translation studies has been well researched in the last years, especially through translation process studies (cf. Carl et al. 2016), many aspects of the generic cognitive competencies have either not been properly defined yet, not to mention their empirical investigation. Generic cognitive competencies that address abilities like problem solving strategies, argumentation, research strategies and technological literacy as well as non-cognitive generic competencies that concern self-regulating aspects, such as a positive self-concept, socio-emotional traits and other are here commonly only defined as parts of strategies to solve translation problems within the core process of translation (cf. Göpferich 2008; PACTE 2003). They are strongly linked to the subjects involved in the field, e.g. linguistics, cultural studies or translation technology but are not singularly investigated.

Motivated by the research in several international and interdisciplinary initiatives (cf. Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia et al. 2015, 2017), e.g. P21 Partnership for 21st Century Learning or the Collegiate Learning Assessment instruments on generic competencies (Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia et al. in print; see also Klein et al. 2007; Pellegrino and Hilton 2012) and the common competence definition by Weinert (2001a, 2001b) we seek for a scalable and measurable set of generic competencies in respect to the needs of the translation profession. Together with the exploration of a competence set we also see a necessity to adopt existing teaching approaches in translation studies to foster their development during translator education. Up to now, this acquisition of especially generic competencies in translation studies has primarily been operationalized by implementing authentic projects in higher education classes using socio-constructivist approaches. This results in a hybridization of subject-specific competencies and generic competencies in translator education. Because of the necessity to develop the skills of a translator as a final product on a macro-level, the acquisition of generic competencies is often a secondary learning outcome. Due to this strong focus on authentic translator training (e.g. Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow 2011), an additional teaching approach, the simulated project, as a new method for a solid generic competence development within higher education processes will be described within this paper.