

The ICRETRA Stimulus: Incentivizing CREative Competence in the Context of TRAnslator Training by Translating Humor

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Abstract

In Translation Studies, research into how to encourage creativity has been carried out mainly in the field of translator training and has included theoretical, methodological and empirical studies. From an interdisciplinary approach, including Psychology and Translation, in this paper we put forward a methodological proposal, arising in the context of translator training, by combining scientific/technical translation with the translation of humorous texts.

After fifteen years as translator trainers in our university's Bachelor's Degree in Translation and Interpreting, we have observed that in the last phases of their training our students still produce translations that are quite literal in terms of vocabulary, syntax and pragmatism.

It was in response to this situation that the idea of what we have decided to refer to as the "ICRETRA stimulus" arose. ICRETRA, which stands for Incentivizing CREative competence in the context of TRAnslator training, consists of a training methodology specifically developed to foster fluency and wealth of expressiveness in the practice of specialized translation – in particular, in the practice of scientific/technical translation.

For this purpose, we propose a training model, based on the translation of humorous texts, which, when implemented systematically, make students aware of the importance of activating the creative competence to produce fluent natural translations.

Keywords: ICRETRA stimulus, Humorous texts, Scientific/technical translation, Creative competence, Fluent natural translations

Resumen

El estímulo ICRETRA: incentivar la competencia creativa en el contexto de la formación de traductores traduciendo humor

En Traductología, la investigación centrada en el fomento de la creatividad se lleva principalmente a cabo en el ámbito de la formación de traductores y los estudios que se realizan son tanto de naturaleza teórica y metodológica como empírica. Desde una aproximación bidisciplinar, que abarca la psicología y la traducción, en este artículo presentamos una propuesta de naturaleza metodológica, que se origina en el contexto de la formación de traductores, combinando la traducción científico-técnica con la traducción de textos humorísticos.

Tras quince años formando a futuros traductores en el Grado de Traducción e Interpretación ofertado por nuestra Universidad, hemos observado que aún en los últimos estadios de su

formación los estudiantes siguen produciendo traducciones con un elevado grado de literalidad, tanto en el plano léxico como en el plano sintáctico y en el plano pragmático.

Fue en respuesta a esta situación como surgió la idea que hemos denominado «el estímulo ICRETRA»: la Incentivación de la competencia CREativa en la formación de TRAductores. ICRETRA consiste en un modelo de formación desarrollado específicamente con el objetivo de fomentar la fluidez y la riqueza expresiva en la práctica de la traducción especializada –en concreto, en la práctica de la traducción científico-técnica–.

Con esta finalidad, se diseña una metodología desarrollada a partir de la traducción de textos de naturaleza humorística, que, cuando se implementa de forma sistemática, ayuda a concienciar a los estudiantes de la importancia de activar la competencia creativa para producir traducciones fluidas y naturales.

Palabras clave: estímulo ICRETRA, textos de naturaleza humorística, traducción científico-técnica, competencia creativa, traducciones fluidas y naturales

1. Introduction

Translating means having communicative competence in the two working languages, extra-linguistic competence – i.e., thematic, cultural and, by extension, documentary competence, competence in understanding and producing texts, translatorial competence to transfer the message from one language to another with no interference, and skills associated with professional, day-to-day translation practice, including instrumental and interpersonal competence (Hurtado 1996: 34). The PACTE group (2000: 101) extends this list of sub-competences to include strategic competence – i.e., the ability to identify intervention zones, find solutions to translation challenges¹, and revise and evaluate one's own work – and psycho-physiological competence, which revolves around the importance of self-awareness and self-confidence for training and professional performance.

In the wake of the technological revolution that has taken place in the field of translation, some of the more professionalization-orientated sub-competences – such as instrumental, documentary, thematic, terminological, psycho-physiological and interpersonal competence – seem to have gained ground in translator training, above all in the training of scientific/technical translators, at the expense of other, academically more traditional, sub-competences like actual mastery of the languages involved.

For many years, the authors of this work have taught the Specialized Translation B I (English/Spanish) and Specialized Translation B II (German/Spanish) courses in the third and fourth year syllabuses of the Bachelor's Degree in Translation and Interpreting at Pablo de Olavide University. One of the most recurrent problems we have noticed in our students' translations is over-adherence to the source text (ST) at the lexical-semantic, syntactic-grammatical and pragmatic levels.

The scientific/technical translations performed in these two courses typically involve a high degree of objectiveness and neutrality when transferring content (Varela

2009: 116; Rodríguez-Tapia 2016: 996) and a more rigid, controlled syntax (Cabré 2002: 13; Hoofst 2004: 53) than that found in other types of translation. After a number of discussions held with our students about these specialized translation-related issues within the context of these two courses over the past five years, we assume that our students' awareness of all these aspects inhibits their creative freedom. Indeed, the students themselves admit that the lexical-semantic and syntactic-grammatical calques so frequently found in their translations stem from their fear of committing translation errors² if they stray too far from the structure or the pragmatic intention of the ST.

Thus, despite having correctly implemented all the steps in the pre-transfer phase of the translation process – analysis of the extratextual and intratextual factors that will influence their translating decisions, identification of intervention zones and translation challenges, documentation and creation of glossaries – their translations tend to lack the fluency required in the target language.

Essentially, our students appear to be disproportionately preoccupied with purely terminological issues and with the use of CAT tools, and this hinders their production of the fluent, natural language desirable in the target text (TT). It was this observation which gave rise to what we call the ICRETRA stimulus: the Incentivization of CREative competence in TRAnslator training.

Although we are fully aware of the inherent interconnections between all the sub-competences that make up translation macrocompetence (Kelly 2002: 10), our objective in this work is to present a methodological proposal specifically designed to incentivize students' creative competence in the translation process and thereby help endow their translations with fluency, naturalness and expressive richness.

The methodology, designed to be adopted systematically as part of the training dynamic in scientific/technical translation courses, has as its objective to boost students' self-confidence – a key component of psychophysiological competence – and help them produce translations that are faithful to the message of the original but at the same time semantically, pragmatically and syntactically more flexible.

Our objective with the ICRETRA stimulus is perfectly illustrated in the well-known example by Vinay y Darbelnet (1972 [1958]: 58) and reproduced by Avilán (2014: 175) – an example we ourselves have often used in the Introduction to Translation and Interpretation Theory course, in the first year of the Bachelor's Degree in Translation and Interpreting, to introduce students to the subject –:

[...] un ejemplo clásico que mis profesores de traducción de inglés citaron muchas veces y que luego vi en un libro: He swam across the river; nos pedían traducir eso al español y muchos saltamos con la lengua fresca a dar, casi todos, la misma solución «Él nadó a través del río», cual Google Translator. Nos sorprendió la belleza con la que el español puede preferir que un adverbio se convierta en verbo y que un verbo se convierta en un complemento circunstancial de modo en una solución tan simple como natural: cruzó el río a nado. Se hace evidente que la naturaleza de los modificadores también puede cambiar en pro de la idiomatidad³.

Each language conceives and represents the reality of the world around us and how we relate to it in a different way and, as Avilán (2014: 176) also points out, as translators, by using our knowledge of linguistics, we must reinterpret and manipulate that reality in order to place it in the minds of those other people who have a different way of looking at the world and who otherwise would not be able to understand it.

We fully agree with these words, but would add that natural, fluent translations are the result not only of an in-depth command of how languages work but also of the translator's own creativity. Creativity needs to be activated not only in expressive texts like literary or advertising texts. Creative capacity is also an indispensable prerequisite in the translation of scientific/technical texts. Elucidating further on this premise, Ruschiensky (2015: 10) declared that:

Creativity in translation is often understood as belonging exclusively to the realm of literary translation. However, as Jääskeläinen (2012: 193) points out, creativity plays a role whenever there is no ready-made answer, therefore “creativity is part and parcel of the cognitive problem-solving in other kinds of translation tasks as well”.

2. The concept of *creativity*

2.1. The concept of *creativity* in Psychology

In terms of psychological theory, Guilford (1950), widely considered the father of research into concept, asserted that creativity encompasses nine different skills: sensitivity to problems, fluency (ideational, associational and expressional), flexibility, originality, ability to synthesize, ability to analyze, ability to reorganize or redefine, ability to assimilate complex data and ability to evaluate.

The ability to solve problems requires sufficient sensitivity to be able to identify them beforehand (Guilford 1950; in Núñez 2014: 14).

Fluency, which is described by Guilford (1966; in Canel 2015: 7) as a sub-dimension of creative thinking, comprises three different dimensions, namely: a) ideational fluency, which refers to the ability to express as many ideas as possible related to a particular concept (the stress is put on quantity, not quality); b) associational fluency, which alludes to the ability to produce a series of original or useful ideas associated to a specific concept (in contrast to ideational fluency, quality rather quantity of production is emphasized); and c) expressional fluency, which implies the capacity to rapidly think of different ways of expressing an idea (Guilford 1959; in Pérez 1990: 29, 30-31, 63). In terms of language skills, ideational fluency of language and style refers to language that is commonly found and easy (Huidobro 2004: 63), associative fluency refers to the establishment of semantic bonds to interrelate ideas and content (Pérez 1990: 29, 31) and expressive fluency refers to the wide range of verbal expres-

sions a creative writer uses (Guilford 1976; in Pérez 1990: 30-31) and the ability to construct sentences and phrases (Guilford 1976; in Pérez 1990: 30-31).

According to Guilford (1950; in García 1998: 154), flexibility or transferential skill is the ability to change ways of approaching a problem that makes an individual capable of dealing with a series of tasks, each one of which requires a different strategy. Flexibility is therefore linked to a capacity to produce divergent or creative material, a capacity defined as the ability to elicit a large number of different ideas in response to an open-ended problem, that is to say, a problem for which there is no one single correct answer (Guilford, 1959; in Huidobro 2004: 60). Specifically, Guilford (1976; in Núñez 2014: 14) differentiated between two types of flexibility: spontaneous flexibility, when the subject is capable of producing different types of response, and adaptive flexibility, when the subject changes things as a problem-solving strategy. This capacity is directly linked to originality, the aptitude for coming up with uncommon ideas or solutions (Garaigordobil and Pérez Fernández 2004: 71). The principle of creative synthesis, or heterogony of ends, formulated by Wundt – the father of Experimental Psychology and of Psychology as a formal academic discipline –, states that when the parts of a whole come together, completely new properties are formed which cannot be explained as the consequences of a simple process of addition. This implies that the whole is something more than just the sum of its parts (Lafuente *et al.* 2017: n.p.). Finally, the ability to redefine things refers to the capacity to transform something into something else. In other words, the creator both facilitates the solving of the problem and also reviews the way a concept is used by restructuring perceptions, concepts and things (Guilford 1967; in Gómez Milán and De Córdoba 2014: 117).

Other authors have also provided a wide variety of definitions and descriptions to the concept of *creativity* from different psychological approaches, all of which can be extrapolated to creativity as manifested in translating practice. They include that proposed by Flanagan (1958; in Gómez Milán and De Córdoba 2014: 111), who affirms that creativity involves inventing or discovering a solution to a problem and the manifestation of outstanding qualities in that solution, and that of MacKinnon (1960; in Huidobro 2004: 106), for whom creativity requires an ability to adapt to reality in order to solve a problem or attain a goal. In the field of Translation Studies, this would be referred to as strategic competence.

Other proposals focus on the capacity to generate different solutions for the same problem (Guilford 1971; in Gómez Milán and De Córdoba, 2014: 113). In Translation Studies, this is related to what Pym (1992: 281) describes as “the specifically translational part” of translating practice or the capacity or aptitude for generating alternatives for a given situation. Gruber (1984; in Puche 1997: 14) concentrated on the importance of specialist knowledge of a subject matter, an idea associated in Translation Studies with thematic competence, as a prerequisite for performing a creative task. Finally, as Mintzberg (1991 [1989]: 71) noted, all these conditions can only be fulfilled if there is a connection, and a balance, between systematic analysis and

intuition, or, in translation terms, between acquired creative competence and innate creative competence.

To sum up, although psychologists have offered a great variety of definitions of creativity (Guilford 1950; or, more recently, Plucker, Beghetto and Dow 2004; Runco and Jaeger 2012), the study of this concept has become a very complex task. Within the context of Translation Studies, O'Sullivan (2013: 42) affirms that "Creativity has proven a rather slippery concept for translation scholars". Thus, as explained in the next section, for some scholars creativity is just a basic requirement for producing an effective translation, whereas other scholars believe it is something that goes beyond the translation process. For the first aforementioned group of scholars, creativity is just a kind of resource that translators can implement in order to produce adequate translations. In other words, creativity is considered to be a problem-solving resource (Kenny 2001: 111). By contrast, other scholars such as Gerrit Bayer-Hohenwarter (2009: 40) conceive creativity as "exceptional performance that considerably exceeds translational routine". After compiling and analyzing a number of opinions by different scholars, in this article we agree with O'Sullivan when defining creativity as "something which happens in translation and is demanded of translators" (O'Sullivan 2013: 45).

2.2. The concept of *creativity* in Translation Studies

As explained above, there are two different theoretical approaches to the concept of *creativity* in Translation Studies. Some scholars consider creativity the degree of originality shown in the solutions a translator comes up with (Bayer-Hohenwarter 2009: 40). Others define it as the key element in an activity centered on problem-solving: i.e., on strategic competence (PACTE 2000: 101; Kelly 2002: 10). Defenders of this view include Ivir (1998: 144) and O'Sullivan (2013: 42, 44), who, adopting a functional, pragmatic, sociocultural approach, sees translation as an inherently creative activity.

Although in this article our starting premise is that both opinions are equally valid, we tend to agree more with the second insofar that, regardless of text types, translating always involves the constant overcoming of challenges, a process for which the translator relies on his/her creative capacity. We therefore coincide with the position of Ivir (1998: 144), who defines the translator's creativity as "[...] his/her ability to choose a strategy that will suit the context of situation in which the translational situation takes place".

Delisle (1988: 37) adopts a similar approach, noting that "the most distinctive trait of human translation is its creativity, for translation involves choices that are not determined by pre-set rules". Indeed, it is precisely creativity that differentiates human translation from machine translation – and that has been lacking in the translations of scientific/technical texts produced by our students on the aforementioned Specialized

Translation courses –. As Mayoral (2005: 180) states, you cannot be a good language mediator without some degree of creative capacity.

As trainers very aware of what is required in the translation labor market, where CAT tools and machine translation with post-editing are becoming essential resources for scientific/technical translators, we strive specifically to encourage the development of instrumental, documentary and thematic competences and to incentivize the acquisition of such competences using methodologies based on different training theories and approaches – but we often tend to overlook aspects more directly associated with actual language competence. And it is precisely language competence which enables a translator to produce natural, fluent texts by employing correct syntax and grammar, choosing the most appropriate vocabulary and adapting register and tone to the requirements of each specific translation job.

Following in the footsteps of authors like Bayer-Hohenwarter (2009: 41, 44), this article highlights the importance firstly of using different types of translation tasks in the training context to stimulate creative competence and, secondly, of following the same methodological procedure over and over again to make students systematically aware of all those aspects they must always take into account to activate their creative skills.

2.3. Encouraging creative competence in the context of translator training

Creativity was first addressed in studies into translator training in the 1990s (Bayer-Hohenwarter 2011: 664) and since then it has been analyzed both theoretically and from a methodological perspective. The studies carried out in this area have included cognitive, pragmatic, literary, hermeneutic and sociological works. There are, therefore, both empirical-experimental analyses, which examine the cognitive processes involved in the translating process, and literary/cultural studies, which look at parallels between translation and other forms of creative writing and examine creativity in translation in a specific historical, political, sociocultural context (Rojo 2017: 361-362).

Just as some studies in Psychology focus on the creative process and others focus on the result of that process (Huidobro 2004: 119), research into creativity in translation includes studies into the end-product and also work concerned more with the process of translation (Ruschiensky 2015: 11). One of the concepts most extensively studied in empirical research both into the product and into the process has been that of *translation shifts* (Ruschiensky 2015: 11-12), a notion based on the idea that such shifts are potential indicators of creativity, quality and professionalism in translation. According to Bayer-Hohenwarter (2011: 668) “[...] a translator’s ability to produce creative shifts is an aspect of translational competence and so fostering this ability should take place in the translator classroom”. Bayer-Hohenwarter (2009; in Ruschiensky 2015: 12) actually developed a method for assessing a translator’s

overall degree of creativity. The system establishes a set of criteria for quantifying the level of creativity from the translation solutions provided in different analysis units, regardless of the type of text being translated.

The information obtained from empirical research into the translation process have also raised some interesting ideas, making it possible to design innovative new methods for incentivizing creativity in the translation classroom. Some studies into translation competence for example, show that it is possible to develop creative competence by designing teaching models based on the creative dimension in translation. Others examine the emotional factors that may influence the development of creativity in translation, and suggest that students' creativity may be stimulated by an appropriate choice of text types. And some research concludes that positive feedback and constructive criticism of the translations proposed by students can motivate, raise self-confidence and thereby galvanize their creative capacity (Rojo 2017: 632).

With regard to the role creativity plays in the different phases of the translation process, the studies carried out to date suggest that the translator's creativity is triggered in all the stages involved; i.e., the comprehension phase, the production and reformulation phase, and the revision phase (Rojo 2017: 355). However, some notable differences have been identified between the degrees of creativity shown by students in those different phases (Fontanet 2005).

Some studies also seem to suggest that the most creative solutions appear in the first phase, but that these are then consolidated in the revision phase, and that the longer the translator spends on that third phase of the translation process, the higher the level of creativity attained in the final translation. A long revision phase does not in itself guarantee creativity, but dedicating sufficient time to revision may benefit the creative process (Heiden 2005; in Rojo 2017: 355). It is important to put an emphasis on the fact that the training methodology proposed in this article is mainly focused on the revision phase of the translation process.

In short, regardless of the research objective, the fact remains that, in the words of Rojo (2017: 632), "the translation classroom can be an important source of ideas to be empirically tested [and] can provide teachers with the right clues to form competent creative translators". As translator trainers concerned about the efficiency of our teaching methodology and its future impact on our graduates' professional success, we have therefore drawn on our own experience in the classroom – more specifically, the Specialized Translation classroom – to produce this proposal for a method geared towards encouraging creativity in the translation of scientific/technical texts. Our point of departure is our conviction that creativity is the key competence, the factor which makes it possible to differentiate a mediocre producer of "acceptable" translations from a translator capable of creating target language texts marked by their level of excellence.

2.4. Humor and creativity

Since the 1950s, many studies have demonstrated the existence of a close relationship between humor and creativity (McGhee 1999: 46). One of McGhee's arguments in defense of this conclusion is that humor is linked to creative thought processes because it allows us to stand back and see problems from a new perspective. Indeed, this same premise is the basis for a number of psychological theories about the humorous phenomenon. Compiling the main theories about humour reviewed by authors such as Gruner (1997), Joubert, (2002), Ford and Ferguson (2004), Fry (2002), Roeckelin (2002), Wycoff and Pryor (2003), Carretero *et al.* (2006: 465-470) summarize these theories into three distinct groups: a) superiority/denigration (response theories), b) incongruity (stimulation theories) and c) restraint/control versus relief/release (the functional approach). According to these theories, the humorous phenomenon may occur (a) when a person is mocked, as a means of externalizing a sense of superiority, (b) in an unusual, unexpected, illogical situation, or (c) when the person experiencing a situation sees the humorous side of it because they feel relieved about the outcome.

The three types of theory converge in Fuentes's definition of the human being as *homo ludens* (Fuentes 2000: 20). Considering this innate human ability to produce and perceive humor, it is logical also to think about how humorous phenomena need to be conveyed through translation, as a vehicle of intercultural communication (Newmark 1988; Laroche 1989; Santana 2006; Ponce 2009). In this regard, Hickey (n.d.: online) proposes the following very clear classification of cases in which humor can occur: a) cases in which the humor arises out of a breakdown in the universal rules of basic behavior, b) cases in which the humor is indissolubly linked to one particular culture or society, and c) cases in which the humor is purely language-based and is the result of a specific grammatical or phraseological structure or a play on words. In case a), in which the humor has a universal dimension, it is usually possible to translate literally, because the effect produced in the source and target cultures and its underlying explanation are both identical. For cases b) and c), Hickey proposes the rigorous, pragmatic analysis of the humorous effect, allowing the translator to move beyond the locutionary act (literal translation), to draw out the illocutionary act (the message hidden behind the sequence of sounds and signs) and analyze the perlocutionary act (the intended effect, which is generally laughter based on one of the psychological theories described above).

To convey the humorous effect to the target culture, it is therefore necessary to analyze the message and form of the ST and to exercise a high degree of creativity. This is not a simple process. To illustrate its complexity, however, there is no need to resort to long texts: the whole process can be charted perfectly well even in the short jokes that are common to all cultures. In fact, one of the most interesting theories behind research into the translation of humor – Attardo and Raskin's General Theory of Verbal Humour, or GTVH (1991) – is based on analyzing short jokes. From a linguistic point of view, the GTHV is considered to be the cradle of research on humour. In

this context, Attardo (2002: 231) affirms that “linguists who study humour may well be pleased to find out that they were doing cognitive stylistics all along”. A brief but precise definition of Cognitive Linguistics (CL) is provided by Brône and Feyaerts (2006: 204) when describing this discipline “as part and parcel of cognition, guided by general cognitive principles that are not restricted to linguistic organization”. As these researchers state, the GTVH and CL have in common the fundamental interest in the interrelationship between language and cognition in language use. The concept of *frames* (or *scripts*), which is one of the main issues developed by the GTVH, plays an essential role within the semantic field of CL. Basically, humorous texts are regarded as the result of the opposition, overlap and switch between two (or more) scripts or frames.

One decade after the emergence of the GTVH, Coulson deepened and widened the concept of *frame* and elaborated the *space structuring model*, based upon the phenomenon of frame-shifting within a larger cognitive linguistic framework of language comprehension. Nowadays, as Brône and Feyaerts remember “it is argued that this model better accounts for the influence of context in meaning construction and the flexible mechanisms that are involved in that process than [...] GTVH” (Brône and Feyaerts 2006: 207).⁴

3. Presentation of the proposed training methodology: the ICRETRA stimulus

3.1. Objectives

This paper stems from our belief that it is possible to nurture the basic elements of Guilford’s *creativity* concept (1950) and to incentivize fluent, natural discourse in translations of scientific/technical texts by translating humorous texts of varying lengths. The teaching method we propose focuses on developing the following areas, identified by Guilford, which we associate with the different subcompetences involved in translation macrocompetence (Table 1).

Apart from stimulating these subcompetences associated with Guilford’s concept of *creativity*, our teaching proposal also aims to raise awareness about how translation proposals lacking in naturalness can be improved and how self-criticism and constructive criticism can be encouraged in the classroom by pooling solutions and suggestions.

Table 1. Areas (by Guilford) and translation subcompetences

Areas (by Guilford)	Translation subcompetences
Associative fluency or the interrelationship of ideas and content and the establishment of appropriate semantic relationships for a specific text type in a specific thematic, sociocultural context.	Communicative and textual competence in the reception phase (Kelly 2002: 14); receptive competence (Wilss 1976: 120); cultural competence and thematic competence (Kelly 2002: 14).
Ability to identify and solve translation problems.	Strategic competence (Kelly 2002: 15).
Flexibility and heterogony of ends, or the ability to adapt to different situations to solve problems and the ability to generate alternatives for a given situation, encouraged by setting different translation tasks for which students have to propose different translation strategies.	Extra-linguistic competence (Hurtado 1996: 34).
Translations with expressive fluency or diversity of verbal expressions and correctly structured phrases and sentences.	Communicative and textual competence in the production phase (Kelly 2002: 14); productive competence (Wilss 1976: 120).
Ideational fluency in terms of the language and style used in the translations produced.	Communicative and textual competence in the production phase (Kelly 2002: 14); productive competence (Wilss 1976: 120).
Originality in the solutions proposed for the pragmatic, cultural and humorous challenges posed in the texts to be translated.	A skill we choose to refer to as <i>strategic-creative competence</i> in this study. It is important to remark that, within the context of the teaching method we propose, the level of originality is discussed in the classroom. Thus, based on an agreement reached in the classroom, students and lecturers together establish a scale ranging from a lower to a higher level of originality.
Creative synthesis, insofar that neither the ST nor the translation are the sum of different text fragments but make up a whole in which all elements are interrelated and indissociable.	Analytical and synthetic competence (Hurtado 1996: 34).
Redefinition, or the ability to turn the ST – which belongs to a specific sociocultural system – into another text acceptable in the target sociocultural system.	Transfereential competence (Hurtado 1996: 34; Neubert 2000: 6).

3.2. Description

The ICRETRA methodology is based on incentivizing creativity by systematically using emotional elements such as humor.

The activity is designed for a 90-minute classroom session, the time being divided up as indicated throughout the description of the procedure below:

1. Students are given a translation task (a simulated real task, adapted for practice purposes) and a scientific/technical ST and asked to translate the text outside the classroom. The scientific/technical ST selected has approximately 200-250 words.

A sample task is shown below, together with a technical-advertising ST. Due to restrictions on length, in this article we will illustrate the methodology proposed with a sample used in class on the Specialized Translation B I English course (academic year 2017/18):

TRANSLATION TASK

The company which manufactures ORAL B products is going to change some of the content on its web site. Below is an extract from the new text that is going to be added as a general promotion of its products. The agency for which you work has asked you to translate it.

SPECIALIZED ST (technical-advertising text)5

Features of a power toothbrush

[...] In addition to things like your brushing technique, how often you brush and the length of time you spend doing it, experts believe that the type of toothbrush you use will directly affect how well you remove plaque. In order to decide which type of power toothbrush is right for you, it's helpful to understand exactly what kinds are available to you and how they differ from one another.

The three types of power toothbrushes

The three types of power toothbrushes on the market are rechargeable power (including sonic), regular manual and battery power.

- Rechargeable electric toothbrush: A rechargeable electric toothbrush, also known as a “power toothbrush” is the kind you plug into the wall to recharge, keeping the handle and replacing the brush head every three months [...]
- Regular manual toothbrush: In contrast, regular manual toothbrushes are the basic toothbrushes you're probably accustomed to with a plastic handle and various nylon bristle designs on the brush head. This is the most common type of toothbrush, and it doesn't require any power sources.
- Those who want a dose of power but are wary of electric toothbrushes may like battery power toothbrushes [...] While similar in design to regular manual toothbrushes, battery power toothbrushes have just enough vibration to add some extra cleaning action.

Accessible at <https://www.oralb.co.uk/en-gb/oral-health/why-oral-b/electric-toothbrushes/benefits-of-electric-toothbrush-vs-manual> (Last accessed 13/03/2020)

2. Once the students have translated the scientific/technical text outside the classroom, and before correction, they are asked to translate (in class) (10 minutes) and carry

out a post-transfer analysis (10 minutes) of a short humorous text. The translation produced by one of the students is then randomly selected and pooled (10 minutes).

The humorous ST (for example, a joke) is chosen taking into account the different types of translation challenges to be addressed to help the students attain the desired level of fluency and naturalness in their translations (word order, choice of vocabulary, cultural elements, puns, register, tone, etcetera). The students are asked to translate the text paying particular attention to those specific aspects of translation they wish to improve. The activity may, therefore, focus on just one, on several, or on all the types of translation challenge mentioned above.

A proposed humorous text is shown below, together with an (anonymous) translation produced by one of our students:

HUMOROUS TEXT

A bear was taking a dump in the forest when a rabbit walked by. The bear said, “Hey rabbit, does poo stick to your fur?”

“No”, replied the rabbit.

The bear picked up the rabbit and wiped his butt with him.

Accessible at <http://www.superjokes.net/28517> (Last accessed 13/03/2020)

(ANONYMOUS) TRANSLATION BY STUDENT (10 minutes)

Esto es un oso que está plantando un pino en el bosque cuando, de repente, un conejo pasa por su lado.

- ¡Hola, conejito! Una pregunta... ¿A ti no se te queda la caca pegada a los pelillos? - le preguntó el oso.

- Ehm... no... - le contestó el conejo.

Entonces, el oso cogió al conejo y se limpió el culo con él.

Students are then given a work chart containing a predetermined list of translation challenges, which is designed to encourage them to reflect individually on their translation of the humorous text. As can be seen below, the chart has two main columns: in the first, the students are asked to indicate which of those translation challenges the text poses, and in the second, they are asked to indicate the types of strategy/ies they used to overcome the challenges and illustrate their choice of solution with a specific example from the translation. It is important here to highlight that in the third and fourth academic years of the undergraduate degree programme the students are already completely familiarized with these translation strategies.

This first work is shown in Chart 1, (anonymously) completed by one of our students. Here, though, we only show a representative sample of the student’s work. For the full analysis conducted by the student, see Appendix 1.

Chart 1. (Anonymous) post-transfer analysis of the humorous text (representative sample of the full analysis)

(Anonymous) post-transfer analysis of the humorous text				
(representative sample)				
TRANSLATION CHALLENGES		TRANSLATION STRATEGIES		
Indicate with a √ the main translation challenges you have dealt with		Indicate with a √ the sorts of translation strategies you have used to face the translation challenges indicated in the column on the left		Illustrate with specific example/s
Literality	√	Connectors (links and organizers)	√	ST: The bear picked up the rabbit and [...] TT: Entonces, el oso cogió al conejo y [...]
		Changes in word order (NATURALNESS)	√	ST: The bear said [...] TT: [...] le preguntó el oso.
		Additions (FLUENCY)	√	ST: [...] when a rabbit walked by. TT: [...] cuando, de repente, un conejo pasa por su lado.
		Omissions (Avoiding <i>VERBOSITY</i>)	X	
		Punctuation	X	
		OTHERS	X	
Puns	X	Equivalent to the source play on words /Prevalence of the humorous effect on the meaning and vice versa (literal translation, descriptive translation, modulation, neutralization, recreation, omission...)	Non applicable	
Cultural elements	X	Domesticating or foreignizing translation	Non applicable	
Language register	√	Choice of vocabulary to maintain the informal language register	√	ST: A bear was taking a dump [...] TT: Esto es un oso que está plantando un pino [...]
Tone	√	Scientific informative, persuasive, humorous, sarcastic, critical, literary...	√	Selecciones léxicas utilizadas para mantener el tono humorístico: ST: A bear was taking a dump [...] TT: Esto es un oso que está plantando un pino [...]
Orthotypography	√	Inverted commas, slashes, italics, bold type, capital letters...	√	The slashes have been replaced by the inverted commas in the DIALOGUE.

The translation produced by the student and the contents of the completed chart is then pooled.

3. Students are then immediately asked to review the translation of the scientific/technical text they produced prior to the class, focusing their attention on the same types of translation challenges they worked on in the humorous text and filling out a chart similar to the one they did after translating that text (30 minutes). In this phase of the process, the objective is to show the extent to which the ICRE-TRA philosophy helps to improve the fluency and naturalness of the students' final translations.

As can be seen in Chart 2, (anonymously) filled out by the same student who completed the work chart 1, after reviewing his/her translation of the technical/advertising text, there was a considerable improvement in accuracy, expressiveness, fluency and naturalness. Once again, we only show a representative sample of the student's work. For the full analysis conducted by the student, see Appendix 2.

The translation produced by the student and the contents of the completed chart is then pooled.

To help visualize the entire procedure and its time sequence, we summarize the process in Table 2.

Throughout the process, both self-criticism by individual students and constructive criticism from the group in the translation classroom will constitute decisive parameters for encouraging the systematic implementation of strategies aimed at maximizing the fluency and naturalness of their translations.

Chart 2. Impact of the ICRETRA stimulus on the translation of the specialized text (representative sample of the full analysis)

Impact of the ICRETRA stimulus on the translation of the specialized text			
(representative sample)			
TRANSLATION CHALLENGES		TRANSLATION STRATEGIES	
Indicate with a √ the main translation challenges you have dealt with		Indicate with a √ the sorts of translation strategies you have used to face the translation challenges indicated in the column on the left	
		Illustrate with specific example/s	
Literality	√	Connectors (links and organizers)	X
		Changes in word order (NATURALNESS)	√
		Additions (FLUENCY)	√
		Omissions (Avoiding VERBOSITY)	√
		Punctuation	X
		OTHERS	√
		<p>TRANS: Los cepillos a pilas quizás les interesen a aquellos que no quieran utilizar un cepillo eléctrico pero deseen algo con más potencia.</p> <p>REV: Si quieres más potencia, pero no quieres utilizar un cepillo eléctrico, este es el cepillo ideal para ti.</p> <p>TRANS: [...] qué tipos hay [...]</p> <p>REV: [...] qué tipos de cepillos existen en el mercado [...]</p> <p>TRANS: [...] que añade una acción de limpieza adicional [...]</p> <p>REV: [...] con una acción de limpieza adicional [...]</p> <p>TRANS.: Conoce los tres tipos de cepillos de dientes disponibles [...]</p> <p>REV.: Conoce los tres tipos de cepillos de dientes disponibles [...] (Omission of <i>power="eléctricos"</i> applied in this case already in the first version of the translation, due to the semantic incoherence detected in the content of the ST since it is not reasonable to include a <i>regular manual toothbrush</i> as a type of <i>power toothbrushes</i>.)</p> <p>Change in the text structure according to the different types of toothbrush: from more modern to more conventional</p> <p>TRANS:</p> <p>Cepillo eléctrico recargable</p> <p>Cepillo manual</p> <p>Cepillo a pilas</p> <p>REV:</p> <p>Cepillo eléctrico recargable</p> <p>Cepillo a pilas</p> <p>Cepillo manual</p>	

Impact of the ICRETRA stimulus on the translation of the specialized text				
(representative sample)				
TRANSLATION CHALLENGES		TRANSLATION STRATEGIES		
Indicate with a √ the main translation challenges you have dealt with		Indicate with a √ the sorts of translation strategies you have used to face the translation challenges indicated in the column on the left		Illustrate with specific example/s
Puns	X	Equivalent to the source play on words /Prevalence of the humorous effect on the meaning and vice versa (literal translation, descriptive translation, modulation, neutralization, recreation, omission...)	Non applicable	
Cultural elements	X	Domesticating or foreignizing translation	Non applicable	
Language register	√	Choice of vocabulary to maintain the informal language register		TRANS: [...] diversos diseños de cerdas de nailon en el cabezal del cepillo [...] REV: [...] varios diseños de cabezales con filamentos de nailon [...]
Tone	X	Scientific informative, persuasive, humorous, sarcastic, critical, literary...		All the changes made have contributed to maintaining the informative and persuasive tone found in technical and advertising texts.
Orthotypography	X	Inverted commas, slashes, italics, bold type, capital letters...		

Table 2. Procedure phases and time sequence

Procedure phases	time sequence
Translation of a short humorous text	10 minutes
Filling out of the post-transfer analysis chart for the humorous text	10 minutes
Correcting and pooling of the solutions of the post-transfer analysis chart for the humorous text produced by one of the students	10 minutes
Revision of the translation of the scientific/technical text and filling out the post-transfer analysis chart of such translation	30 minutes
Pooling of the translation produced by one of the students and the contents of the chart	30 minutes

4. Conclusions

The method proposed in this work had its origins in the observation that, despite adopting the appropriate strategies for analyzing the ST and the TT context and for carrying out the necessary documentary and terminological research, the translations produced by Specialized Translation students in their last training phases continue to suffer from considerable syntactical, lexical and pragmatic shortcomings. These problems do not, however, seem to stem from a lack of understanding of the TT or from an inadequate command of the target language, but from the students' reluctance to stray too far from the ST for fear that doing so may lead to translation errors. In this work, we therefore wanted to draw attention to the need for Specialized Translation training to include more activities aimed at improving actual language competence – which is, in turn, based on creative competence – and thereby to ensure accuracy, expressiveness, fluency and natural discourse, in addition to developing the other subcompetences closely associated with this type of translation.

In our opinion, the training method described above helps attain these objectives for three main reasons:

Firstly, using a humor-based activity creates a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom before moving on to translate texts on subjects which may at first sight seem dry and not very creative, and this stimulates the students' creativity.

Secondly, the translation of a short humorous text helps students to see that a literal translation does not necessarily have the same effect on the target audience, and the proposed activity makes it easier to extend that idea to the translation of scientific/technical texts. We believe that following the same translation procedure and exposing students to the same type of translation challenges in both humorous and specialized, scientific/technical texts help them to acquire the confidence needed to produce fluent, natural texts, regardless of the text they are dealing with (without, of course, overlooking the idiosyncrasies of each specific text type).

Thirdly, the proposed selection of short humorous texts and the habitual repetition of the activity described as a preliminary phase, prior to the translation of scientific/technical texts, help students retain, both in their short term and long-term memories, the translation strategies available to them when faced by different types of translation challenge, and therefore contribute to the development of strategic competence. In other words, the systematic use of the proposed method enables us to stimulate the students' "unconscious" creativity.

In addition to all of the above, we believe the proposed method is equally applicable to many other types of texts that might be considered specialized – not only to scientific/technical texts –, and also to many other language combinations – not only English/Spanish and German/Spanish.

We have been pilot testing the training methodology proposed herein for two academic years now. Our intention in the short-time future is to use all the data so far collected and conduct an empirical study to assess the efficacy of the methodology.

5. References

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5.1. Electronic Resources

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Notes

1. This article adopts the terminology proposed by authors like Ponce (2009), who speaks of *translation challenges* rather than using the traditional term *translation problems*, because the word *challenge* is deemed more positive than the word *problem* in that it places greater emphasis on the idea of successfully overcoming a difficulty. *Problem* tends to have negative connotations.
2. Our references to the concept of *translation error* are made from a functional perspective. That is to say, the term is taken to mean “[...] any infraction of the instructions specified in the translation brief: i.e., errors are identified by comparing the target text submitted by the student with an ideal *translatum* compliant with the pragmatic purpose of the text, the cultural conventions that need to be respected for it to function in the desired manner, and the linguistic and stylistic features expected in a text with that specific purpose for that specific audience, as indicated in the translation brief” (Nord 2009: 237).
3. “[...] a classic example which my translation teachers cited many times, and which I eventually saw in a book: He swam across the river. We were asked to translate that sentence into Spanish, and many of us, nearly all of us, immediately blurted out the same translation ‘Él nadó a través del río’, just like Google Translator. And we were surprised at the beauty with which Spanish prefers an adverb to become a verb and a verb a circumstantial adverbial phrase in a solution as simple as it is natural: Cruzó el río a nado. Clearly, modifiers can also be changed to produce more idiomatic sentences” (Authors’ translation).
4. For further information about the experimental approach to humour research (psycholinguistic, neurolinguistic and corpus-linguistic approaches) as well as a series of case studies about the translation of humour in specific contexts (e.g. humour on the Internet and social media), we recommend the compilation of research papers included in *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Humor* (2017).
5. It is important to take into account that in this article the concept of *specialized translation* is not understood from a traditional perspective but from a most recent approach, according to which specialized texts are not just those addressed to experts in the field, with a practical not a aesthetic function, which make use of a specialized language. Thus, specialized texts are not anymore just those belonging to a specific field of knowledge – such as legal, financial, scientific or technical texts – but also even humanistic and literary texts can be considered as *specialized texts* (Buthmann 2013: 265).

Appendix 1. (Anonymous) post-transfer analysis of the humorous text (full analysis)

(Anonymous) post-transfer analysis of the humorous text				
(full analysis)				
TRANSLATION CHALLENGES		TRANSLATION STRATEGIES		
Indicate with a √ the main translation challenges you have dealt with		Indicate with a √ the sorts of translation strategies you have used to face the translation challenges indicated in the column on the left		Illustrate with specific example/s
Literality	√	Connectors (links and organizers)	√	<p>ST: The bear picked up the rabbit and [...]</p> <p>TT: Entonces, el oso cogió al conejo y [...]</p>
		Changes in word order (NATURALNESS)	√	<p>ST: The bear said [...]</p> <p>TT: [...] le preguntó el oso.</p>
		Additions (FLUENCY)	√	<p>ST: A bear was taking a dump in the forest [...]</p> <p>TT: Esto es un oso que está plantando un pino en el bosque [...]</p> <p>ST: [...] when a rabbit walked by.</p> <p>TT: [...] cuando, de repente, un conejo pasa por su lado.</p> <p>ST: "Hey rabbit, does poo stick to your fur?"</p> <p>TT: -¡Hola, conejito! Una pregunta... ¿a ti no se te queda la caca pegada a los pelillos? -</p> <p>ST: "No", replied the rabbit.</p> <p>TT: -Ehm... no...- le contestó el conejo.</p>
		Omissions (Avoiding <i>VERBOSITY</i>)	X	
		Punctuation	X	
		OTHERS	X	

(Anonymous) post-transfer analysis of the humorous text				
(full analysis)				
TRANSLATION CHALLENGES		TRANSLATION STRATEGIES		
Indicate with a ✓ the main translation challenges you have dealt with		Indicate with a ✓ the sorts of translation strategies you have used to face the translation challenges indicated in the column on the left		Illustrate with specific example/s
Puns	X	Equivalent to the source play on words /Prevalence of the humorous effect on the meaning and vice versa (literal translation, descriptive translation, modulation, neutralization, recreation, omission...)	Non applicable	
Cultural elements	X	Domesticating or foreignizing translation	Non applicable	
Language register	✓	Choice of vocabulary to maintain the informal language register	✓	<p>ST: A bear was taking a dump [...]</p> <p>TT: Esto es un oso que está plantando un pino [...]</p> <p>ST: [...] and wiped his butt with him.</p> <p>TT: [...] y se limpió el culo con él.</p> <p>ST: “[...] does poo stick to your fur?”</p> <p>TT: [...] ¿a ti no se te queda la caca pegada a los pelillos?</p>
Tone	✓	Scientific informative, persuasive, humorous, sarcastic, critical, literary...	✓	<p>Selecciones léxicas utilizadas para mantener el tono humorístico:</p> <p>ST: A bear was taking a dump [...]</p> <p>TT: Esto es un oso que está plantando un pino [...]</p> <p>ST: [...] and wiped his butt with him [...]</p> <p>TT: [...] y se limpió el culo con él [...]</p> <p>ST: “[...] does poo stick to your fur?”</p> <p>TT: [...] ¿a ti no se te queda la caca pegada a los pelillos? - [...]</p>
Orthotypography	✓	Inverted commas, slashes, italics, bold type, capital letters...	✓	The slashes have been replaced by the inverted commas in the DIALOGUE.

Appendix 2. Impact of the ICRETRA stimulus on the translation of the specialized text (full analysis)

Impact of the ICRETRA stimulus on the translation of the specialized text (full analysis)				
TRANSLATION CHALLENGES		TRANSLATION STRATEGIES		
Indicate with a √ the main translation challenges you have dealt with		Indicate with a √ the sorts of translation strategies you have used to face the translation challenges indicated in the column on the left		Illustrate with specific example/s
Literality	√	Connectors (links and organizers)	X	
		Changes in word order (NATURALNESS)	√	<p>TRANS: Además del modo de cepillarte los dientes, cuántas veces te los lavas y cuánto tiempo le dedicas, los expertos creen que [...]</p> <p>REV: Los expertos creen que, además del modo de cepillarte los dientes, las veces que te los cepilles al día [...]</p> <p>TRANS: [...] los recargables (incluyendo los sónicos), los manuales y los que funcionan con baterías.</p> <p>REV: [...] los manuales, los que funcionan con batería y los recargables (incluidos los que utilizan tecnología con sónica)</p> <p>TRANS: [...] el mango se mantiene [...]</p> <p>REV: [...] se conserva el mango [...]</p> <p>TRANS: Los cepillos a pilas quizás les interesen a aquellos que no quieran utilizar un cepillo eléctrico pero deseen algo con más potencia.</p> <p>REV: Si quieres más potencia, pero no quieres utilizar un cepillo eléctrico, este el cepillo ideal para ti.</p>

Impact of the ICRETRA stimulus on the translation of the specialized text (full analysis)				
TRANSLATION CHALLENGES		TRANSLATION STRATEGIES		
Indicate with a √ the main translation challenges you have dealt with		Indicate with a √ the sorts of translation strategies you have used to face the translation challenges indicated in the column on the left		Illustrate with specific example/s
		<p>Additions (FLUENCY)</p>	√	<p>TRANS: [...] qué tipos hay [...]</p> <p>REV: [...] qué tipos de cepillos existen en el mercado [...]</p> <p>TRANS.: Conoce los tres tipos de cepillos de dientes [...]</p> <p>REV.: Conoce los tres tipos de cepillos de dientes disponibles [...]</p> <p>TRANS: Los tres tipos de cepillos de dientes que se encuentran en el mercado [...]</p> <p>REV: Los tres tipos de cepillos de dientes que se encuentran actualmente en el mercado [...]</p> <p>TRANS: Es el tipo más común [...]</p> <p>REV: Es el tipo de cepillo más común [...]</p>

Impact of the ICRETRA stimulus on the translation of the specialized text (full analysis)				
TRANSLATION CHALLENGES		TRANSLATION STRATEGIES		
Indicate with a √ the main translation challenges you have dealt with		Indicate with a √ the sorts of translation strategies you have used to face the translation challenges indicated in the column on the left		Illustrate with specific example/s
		Omissions (Avoiding VERBOSITY)	√	<p>TRANS: [...] afecta directamente a lo bien que eliminas la placa.</p> <p>REV: [...] afecta directamente a la higiene bucal.</p> <p>TRANS: A diferencia del cepillo eléctrico, los cepillos manuales, probablemente los que estás más habituado a utilizar.</p> <p>REV.: Los cepillos manuales son los que probablemente estás más habituado a utilizar.</p> <p>TRANS: [...] que añade una acción de limpieza adicional [...]</p> <p>REV: [...] con una acción de limpieza adicional [...]</p> <p>TRANS: [...] diversos diseños de cerdas de nailon en el cabezal del cepillo [...]</p> <p>REV: [...] varios diseños de cabezales con filamentos de nailon [...]</p> <p>TRANS.: Conoce los tres tipos de cepillos de dientes disponibles [...]</p> <p>REV.: Conoce los tres tipos de cepillos de dientes disponibles [...] (Omission of <i>power</i>="eléctricos" applied in this case already in the first version of the translation, due to the semantic incoherence detected in the content of the ST since it is not reasonable to include a <i>regular manual toothbrush</i> as a type of <i>power toothbrush</i>).</p>
		Punctuation	X	

Impact of the ICRETRA stimulus on the translation of the specialized text (full analysis)				
TRANSLATION CHALLENGES		TRANSLATION STRATEGIES		
Indicate with a ✓ the main translation challenges you have dealt with		Indicate with a ✓ the sorts of translation strategies you have used to face the translation challenges indicated in the column on the left		Illustrate with specific example/s
		OTHERS		<p>Change in the text structure according to the different types of toothbrush: from more modern to more conventional</p> <p>TRANS:</p> <p>Cepillo eléctrico recargable</p> <p>Cepillo manual</p> <p>Cepillo a pilas</p> <p>REV:</p> <p>Cepillo eléctrico recargable</p> <p>Cepillo a pilas</p> <p>Cepillo manual</p>
Puns	X	Equivalent to the source play on words /Prevalence of the humorous effect on the meaning and vice versa (literal translation, descriptive translation, modulation, neutralization, recreation, omission...)	Non applicable	
Cultural elements	X	Domesticating or foreignizing translation	Non applicable	
Language register		Choice of vocabulary to maintain the informal language register		<p>TRANS: [...] diversos diseños de cerdas de nailon en el cabezal del cepillo [...]</p> <p>REV: [...] varios diseños de cabezales con filamentos de nailon [...]</p>
Tone	X	Scientific informative, persuasive, humorous, sarcastic, critical, literary...		All the changes made have contributed to maintaining the informative and persuasive tone found in technical and advertising texts.
Orthotypography	X	Inverted commas, slashes, italics, bold type, capital letters...		