TEACHING COMMERCIAL TRANSLATION (ENGLISH-SPANISH): A TEACHING PROPOSAL[1]

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Abstract

Reconciling professional International Trade Law with translation teaching is the first aim that we pursue in this paper. Our ultimate objective is to create a working space appropriate for teaching translation for commercial purposes. Thus, we believe that future translation graduates will be able to translate successfully since they will develop skills that will make them more appealing to employers in this area. Under this assumption, we propose a methodological proposal focused on the preparatory stage which, in our opinion, favors understanding, translation training as well as thematic immersion. On the whole, we aim to develop full translation competence among translation trainees enabling them to translate professionally for commercial purposes.

Resumen

Conciliar la traducción profesional del ámbito del Derecho Mercantil Internacional con la pedagogía es el primer objetivo que nos planteamos para crear un espacio de trabajo que favorezca la enseñanza de la traducción comercial con el fin particular de que el futuro egresado en traducción llegue a traducir con garantía de éxito y a resultar atractivo al empleador de este ámbito de especialidad. Partiendo de esta premisa, en este trabajo establecemos una propuesta metodológica que pone el foco en la fase preparatoria del aprendizaje, que, a nuestro modo de ver, contempla la comprensión del texto, la instrucción, la inmersión temática y, en definitiva, la adquisición de la competencia traductora del aprendiz de traductor, fundamental para desenvolverse en el mundo de la traducción comercial profesionalmente.

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1. This article is the English version of "La enseñanza de la traducción comercial (inglés-español): una propuesta formativa" by Carina Socorro Trujillo. It was not published on the print version of *MonTI* for reasons of space. The online version of *MonTI* does not suffer from these limitations, and this is our way of promoting plurilingualism.

1. Introduction

As we know, one of the key elements of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is that universities maintain responsibility for training capable and competent professionals in specific areas of employment related to each qualification and, therefore, it is essential to use the professional profile as the starting point for designing a study syllabus. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2001):

> The world economy has experienced rapid growth in recent decades, due to factors including the acceleration of international trade, stemming from technological progress and a concerted effort to reduce trade barriers.

In light of the importance of commercial translation as a consequence, the subject of Translation and Interpreting has been taught at graduate and post-graduate level ever since it was created in 2009. This paper will show that we approach the teaching of commercial translation from a professional perspective. One of the matters we address to such end is the need for both teachers and students to have an idea about career possibilities in this field and professional needs right from the outset. But what is understood by commercial translation?

> Commercial translation is an activity that we can find under a range of names: mercantile translation, overseas trade or international trade translation and it has links to legal translation – through mercantile law – although not all the texts generated by trade can be classified strictly as legal texts (Mayoral, 2006: 1).
> (…) nor is it difficult to find coincidences between economics, trade, finance and business economics, but at the same time, each of these activities irrefutably presents well-defined traits of its own (Mayoral, 2006: 1-2)[2].

It is in fact, due to the novel and recent introduction of this subject in the syllabuses of Translation and Interpreting courses – it used to be taught as part of economic-legal translation and at the discretion of the teacher - that research into commercial translation dates back to the end of the 20th century. The

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leading authors in Spain include Mayoral (2006, 2007, 2013), Suau Jiménez (2010), Román Mínguez (2012) and Medina Reguera (2007, 2009) – devoted to the Spanish-German linguistic combination -, and Socorro Trujillo (2008, 2012) and Del Pozo Triviño (2009, 2014). The latter two authors have also written monographic papers focusing specifically on the genres of international trade and legal maritime documents respectively. It must be pointed out on the other hand, that initiatives have been taken in this same area that have materialised in research projects such as the COMENEGO project, a multi-lingual body of documents specialising in the area of economics and business, which is useful as a text bank and it promotes the standardisation of the terminology in this area (Gallego, 2013, Gallego & Rodríguez-Inés, 2014), or the First International Economic, Commercial, Financial and Institutional Translation Congress held in Alicante in 2014, which attracted professionals, researchers, teachers and other stakeholders interested in the translation of these specialist fields.

The White Paper on the Translation and Interpreting Degree states that the main objective of teaching commercial translation is to provide graduates with the knowledge and the skills to enable them to accept commercial translations. To such end, the following capabilities have been assigned to the degree: a) recognition of the trading conventions included in the texts with the greatest social demand; b) critical assessment of the linguistic and cultural factors that influence the commercial discourse; c) application of translation strategy in accordance with the assignment and the kind of text; d) awareness of the most important professional aspects of practical commercial translation; e) command of the best terminological and documentary tools and multi-media resources for commercial translation.

In light of such conditions, the main objective that we set in this paper is to propose a thematic immersion training methodology or approach that unravels the conceptual complexity of the trade texts studied in class, while at the same time, helping all those interested in the teaching-learning of these specialist documents. To this end, we propose, first of all, working with the kind of texts one can find in this field. The second step is to establish the commonest textual conventions and difficulties of commercial translation and offer possible solutions in accordance with the scope of the translation. And, finally, develop glossaries of terms in order to offer the best preparation and training to our students in this speciality, which must include at the very least the following components: the term in the OL, term in the TL; definition or explanation; kind of text and sources used. The next section presents the opinions received from surveys conducted among students who have studied the subject as part

of their degree courses in the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting (FTI) of the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC) in the academic year 2014-2015 in order to get their appraisal of aspects we considered important regarding the educational approach they have followed. Our paper closes with conclusions drawn on the most important points addressed herein.

First and foremost, the apprentice translator facing commercial translation for the first time must be aware of just how complex and heterogeneous this subject is, and of the need to acquire specialised knowledge to develop his or her cognitive and communications skills. We must remember that researchers, including Rodríguez Camacho (2002: 312-313), consider the following as skills of the translator of specialist language uses: cognitive skills, which focus on a knowledge of the specialist field; linguistic, related to the command of the two or more languages; communicative skills, which is the ability to communicate specialist knowledge (written or oral) and methodology, which is the ability to do the work in an orderly and systematic fashion by applying a method and by using the documentary, terminological and computer tools and resources available.

Based on the conviction that translation skills for international trade can be acquired with a methodology that includes the development of the abilities and know-how required for learning-teaching them, we now present our educational approach for teaching this subject, which places the emphasis on the translation process.

2. Educational proposal: some considerations

The benefits of drawing on textural genres both for teaching and for the practise of translation and specialised communication are well consolidated, as can be seen from the different studies that have been conducted in recent years, which have favoured both research and teaching. Some of the precursors of these studies are Swales (1990), Bathia (1993) and Trosborg (1997). Here in Spain the leading papers include the works of the Gentt research team (Montalt *et al.*: 2008; Borja *et al.*: 2012; García Izquierdo: 2009; Gamero: 2001), who found their research on the concept of text genre applied to the areas of specialised communication (legal, medical and technical). We consider that the development of textual competency in commercial translation must be one of the objectives of teaching this subject because:

> (…) the tasks of importing and exporting are negotiated basically by means of the commercial correspondence first of all and, later, they materialise in the form of mercantile documents. It is thanks to these (latter) documents that commercial transactions can finally be conducted with guarantees of security

between the two companies, one purchasing and the other selling, in different countries (Socorro Trujillo, 2012: 304).

2.1. Text Typology

Trade texts are the ones that, directly or indirectly, generate the different trade transactions. Certain trade texts may be of a legal nature, if a legal relation between two or more parties is triggered by that text: It is a legal or contractual relation in the sense that it creates rights and obligations among said parties. These are "stereotype and sometimes repetitive texts that constitute perfectly defined textual genres as each and every one of them has a communication objective" (Borja: 2007). As Mayoral (2006) points out, "uniformity within textual types is very high in the case of trade. The main reason for this is that a deliberate effort has been made to standardise trade internationally, and thus, the documents generated by it". These will be translated in real professional life, as they are issued frequently by companies involved in this specialist field, such as the overseas departments of banks, overseas health department, insurance companies, shipping companies, ports and companies that import and export merchandise, international trade administration, the storage of products, etc.

As the apprentice translator does not have the specialist knowledge initially, he or she needs to develop this cognitive skill first, as it forms part of his or her "textual skill" (García Izquierdo: 2011). They have to know pragmatic aspects that are so necessary for their education such as linguistic aspects. To acquire this skill, apart from the general theoretical input that the student receives from the teacher about the field of study, we also consider it a priority *to contextualise the original texts* worked on in class so that the student can put the text in its context, first of all, and then identify the communication purpose of the text. Hence, in class we use a flexible and dynamic taxonomy of commercial texts as a starting point, or in other words, the system of genres (Bazerman, 1994 terminology: 82) of international trade. We start working with the typical texts of trading correspondence or of the letter genre because they allow us: 1) to introduce the students to the specialist field, and more specifically to the specialist concepts and communication situations gradually, as this is the instrument of communication between two companies, which will be the key to the success or failure of a contact or a sale-purchase, and 2) to present and contextualise the mercantile documents mentioned in the letters, which we will work on later, first of all in general, and then individually, as this is where the trading transaction materialises. The texts of the letter genre can be classified according to their function or intention (claim,

congratulation, request for an order, etc.). In our approach to mercantile documents, we propose working with sets of documents, as this is what has to be used in a commercial transaction. This allows the students to study different kinds of texts that represent international trade and they are typical of different specific kinds of communication situation. The mercantile document taxonomy that we use as a foundation for constructing the student's textual competence is the Socorro Trujillo method (2008: 45-124). This groups and classifies the documents in such a way as to make them useful and easy to find and contextualise before working on them individually. This taxonomy, which in turn encompasses genres and sub-genres that will not be explained here as this is not the objective of the paper, includes the following four macro-genres: a) information documents, those requested by the parties for the production and the purchase stage of the merchandise (trading invoice, list of contents, etc.); b) official or administrative documents, which are important to enable government authorities to monitor and check the international movements of merchandise (customs documents such as those generated for EU merchandise or for third countries and for customs itself, such as health or quality-control documents); c) transport and accompanying documents, including those used for intermediary services, transport and insurances (bill of lading, charter party, insurance certificate, etc.) and d) financial documents or documents relating to bank requisites to ensure and monitor payment (declarations of overseas transactions between residents and non-residents, payment systems, etc.) .

On the other hand, the kind of text becomes an organisational system for the teacher, as texts are selected progressively and in an orderly fashion in accordance with the degree of difficulty, in other words, depending fundamentally on criteria of the complexity of the text (PISA, 2007: 28) and the terminological density of the text (cfr. Cabré: 1999)[3].

Once the student has contextualised each kind of text, he must *define the communication purpose* because, this way, he will better understand the communication situation and the social use of the texts. We now propose a *linguistic analysis of each text type,* bearing in mind the peculiarities of the documents, first in general, and then individually. We will not go into the details of the study of letter-type texts because this has already been addressed in another paper (Socorro Trujillo, 2012: 307-320). We would add that this working methodology can be applied to any kind of text regularly used and generated by companies working in trade that can be feasibly translated (In the Canary

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Islands, for instance, there is a large presence of shipping agents and oil rigs that generate a large volume of texts).

2.2. *Text conventions of mercantile documents: problems, difficulties and solutions*

2.2.1. Inter-textuality and other aspects of the text

The textual skill of the specialist translator involves not only an awareness of the genres of text in this field, but also "an adequate knowledge of the conceptual schematics that support OT, the rhetorical structure of the specific kinds of texts of the same genre, and the rules governing the production of texts […] in both the original and the target linguistic-cultural community" (Corpas, 2004: 139-140). It must be remembered that commercial texts are characterised by the presence of non-verbal elements (stamps, signatures, logos, headings, etc.) and verbal elements (of a linguistic nature). The trade document is a hybrid text that presents one part, normally on the back, in the style of a form (with block language due to the lack of space or with simplified sentence structures, abundant nominalisation, abbreviations or initials, in many cases following international standards, shortened words, lack of personal pronouns and intensifiers, etc.). This part of the document that, in general, is the first page or the cover page, is the abbreviated *(short form)* and variable part of the document, because this is where the information concerning a specific trade transaction is inserted. On the other hand, we have the part of the document that does not vary *(long form),* which is where the regulations or the jurisdiction applicable to the document in question is inserted, often in the form of clauses, and, therefore, the part that presents the characteristics of legal language. Legal language is usually included in a space on the front page of the document, in the case of shorter documents like invoices or some certificates of origin, or on the back, in other samples such as insurance certificates or shipping documents. That is why we would go as far as to say that the very nature of mercantile documents makes inter-textuality (Kristeva: 1969), which considers the direct relation of a text with one or several previous texts, a manifest feature of these kinds of texts. Apart from these two varieties of prototypical languages of mercantile documents, the texts may contain technical terminology that has nothing to do with legal or commercial language, also in the part of the document that contains the description of the merchandise, depending on what the contents are, corroborating the hybrid nature of texts of this kind. So inter-textuality is an aspect that future translators must become familiar with, as they need

to both discern the different textual markers of each part of the Original Text and adapt them properly to produce the Target Text.

2.2.3. Standardisation and the translation assignment

Cabré (2002: 8) defines "standardisation" as:

> a) the process of becoming a standard, understood as a standard pattern or form of reference. The term "normalisation is also used and;
> b) the process of becoming normal, in other words, become usual or habitual, the process aimed at extending the use of a language.

When studying commercial texts, we have seen the effort that is made in international trade to standardise the documents generated. The Baltic International Maritime Conference (BIMCO), for example, publishes internationally standardised certificates of lading and charter party forms, although they are not the only ones. Furthermore, there are phrases, codes and abbreviations –such as the ISO 4217 standard for the currencies of the world, the UNE-EN code or the ISO 445: 2013 standard that regulates the dimensions and kinds of pallets for handling merchandise – that are internationally standardised and which we could call "internationalisms"[4], in the terminology of Gómez Capuz (2005: 57). These all facilitate access to new markets, international trade and the traffic of merchandise, and they are established by different bodies, such as the International Standards Organisation (ISO), the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), *Lloyd's* and the *Institute of London Underwriters* (ILU) or the World Trade Organisation (WTO). ISO, for example, is an international body responsible for promoting manufacturing standards, trade and communication throughout the world. With headquarters in Geneva, it is a federation of national bodies, including AENOR in Spain, DIN in Germany and AFNOR in France. It is unquestionably effective. There are no standards for each product and service of course, and most trade is done directly between companies in practice, through private contracts that remain outside the reach of the multi-lateral trade system. This fact is a constant challenge for standardisation.

The incorporation and use of appropriate technical standards in the industry, for example, generates competitive and comparative advantages because they guarantees the suitability of the product, which, as it is standardised – and in the best-case scenario – certified with a quality stamp – the guarantor has to form part of a controlled model that unifies and sets technical standards for

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4. This author includes them in the special or marginal category of loans.

how it is produced and considers vital aspects for the consumer or user, which also represent major added value in the eyes of the market. That is why we can safely say that certain standards, such as the ISO standards or the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) *Incoterms,* have become an important requisite for entering and operating in international markets and their application has a positive impact on the positioning and competitiveness of companies, their products and services, so they also help to enhance their commercial penetration. The ISO itself refers to the benefits of standardisation for business on its website www.iso.org:

> (…) they are strategic tools that reduce costs by minimizing waste and errors, and increasing productivity. They help companies to access new markets, level the playing field for developing countries and facilitate free and fair global trade.
> International Standards bring technological, economic and societal benefits. They help to harmonize technical specifications of products and services making industry more efficient and breaking down barriers to international trade. Conformity to International Standards helps reassure consumers that products are safe, efficient and good for the environment.

For all the reasons explained above, we believe that the future translator has to be able to identify these internationally standardised phrases, codes and expressions and should also be able to study and determine the best translation strategies (depending on the assignment and the kind of text). It is true that the regular use of standardised forms facilitates interaction among specialists in the same field, such that they can communicate amongst each other by using this standardisation even if they have no communicative competency in the language of exchange. From the point of view of translation, this means that there is no apparent need to translate or explain many internationally standardised terms because they know them, in which case this information is transferred to produce the TT. Newmark (1988) defines "transfer" as the translation procedure that consists of copying a palabra from the OT to a TT without modifying it or of maintaining the term intact. Jaaskelainen (1999:71), for is part, defines "strategy" as follows:

> A series of competencies, a set of steps or processes that favor the acquisition, storage, and/or utilization of information. Strategies are heuristic and flexible in nature, and their adoption implies a decision influenced by amendments in the translator's objectives.

As the German functionalist school considers however, the final use of a target text does not necessarily have to be identical to the use of the original text (Reiss and Vermeer: 1996). The translations may not always go to specialists or experts in a field. For example, a translation may be used in a court case or

in litigation involving both experts in the matter and non-experts; or it may have been commissioned by a client wanting to start out in the world of trade; or on the contrary, it may have a fundamentally informative function within the area of a company, where the right interpretation of the translation is vital to a trading or financial transaction. Hence, the translation strategy applied does not necessarily have to be the same in all cases either. In conclusion, the apprentice translator must be aware of this fact and know which translation strategy to apply (between untranslatability and transfer, translation or, where applicable, providing further information) to prevent infra-translation or semantic losses (Corpas Pastor, 2001: 70) or the complete opposite: over-translation or the addition of unnecessary information. In any event, the translation assignment will determine which is the best strategy and teachers must "guide" students in this sense.

2.2.4. Trading terminology: proposal to draw up terminological glossaries

The purpose of commercial translation, just like translation in any specialist area, is to communicate between experts of different languages. Thus, the need for terminology to express the specialised knowledge properly is unquestionable, and this knowledge is what the translator uses to act as a mediator, assuming the same competencies as the specialist. In fact, Cabré (2000: 6) claims:

> If terminological units are the best way of expressing knowledge, we can say that their prime function is to represent said knowledge. Each terminological unit is a cognitive node in a specialist field and all these nodes as a whole, connected by specific relations, constitute the conceptual representation of that speciality. If this is so, the fact that we represent the specialist reality through terminology is beyond doubt[5].

"Translating presumes certain knowledge of the matter being translated (knowing or understanding the terms) and knowing how to express it accurately and properly as a specialist would" (Cabré: 2006). On the other hand, in recent years, the translation world has undergone a major transformation with respect to both the texts that are translated and the use of computer tools applied to translation (see for example, the studies conducted by Austermühl, 2001; Alcina, 2002; Bowker, 2002 on the matter), which are used in practically all phases of translation; from the moment that the original document is created, during the translation process itself, or the elaboration and search for useful

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resources (glossaries, terminological data bases, linguistic documents, parallel documents, etc.), to the moment when the translation is given its final format.

It is worth remembering that commercial texts have their own particular format, in the style of a form, at least on the front page, which is more effective to imitate in translations. According to Mayoral (2013: 206), when referring to the format of the sworn translation of civil registry documents, we have opted for the latter system:

> There are two totally opposite systems: the older or traditional system, which consists of conserving the text of the printed document in a series of consecutive paragraphs that follow the normal reading order in our culture, or, the more modern system, facilitated by computer applications, that consists of replicating the original format[6].

These are the reasons why we consider that translations students should have a computer available both in class and at home as far as possible, in order to reproduce the original document – which the translator sometimes corrects and improves if it contains elements that the photocopy process have made illegible, abbreviations or grammatical and other kinds of mistake (such as diglossia[7], for example) –, the search for information and the elaboration of glossaries because, although the student does not always need to take in all the specialist knowledge available, he or she does need to consult them and understand them in order to translate his or her texts correctly. However, although the process of obtaining information may vary considerably depending on the technological competencies (command of CAT tools), linguistic knowledge and the student's subjects and just how specialised the document is that he or she has to translate, in general, in commercial translation, working with the common lexicographic resources (dictionaries with or without monolingual, bilingual or multilingual definitions, parallel texts, etc.) allows students to locate information about the subject to cover their cognitive deficits. Furthermore, the greater his or her knowledge, the more specialised they will be. To reinforce this in students, we propose drawing up terminological glossaries. Contreras (2014: 1) corroborates this:

> One cannot translate without fully understanding the original text, one cannot translate without culture and one cannot translate without retaining either.

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7. Understood as "alternating the use of an official language and another alternative"; it is far from unusual to find texts in which the user filling them in combines his working languages spontaneously, and even with grammatical mistakes. [Example obtained from a shipping bill of lading: "5 contenedores conteniendo 4076 *carton*s rones CIF *landed* Las Palmas"].

> Even if we have excellent computer assisted tools, they are still only instruments to help us; a translation memory does not remember for you, it stores data for later use. Hence, the best hard drive remains our own brain: the more and the better we learn, the more and better we will understand and retain, and retention in the field of translation and similar professions is fundamental, especially in terms of return on your investment. Our semantic memory is our mental dictionary, and we must try to maintain it as active as possible with the right preparation based on added effort and the mental association of ideas. Drawing up a terminological and phraseological glossary takes considerable time, dedication and effort if we aim to help our memory (my personal translation).

So, we insist that students must elaborate glossaries of terms for each kind of text for several reasons: 1) it promotes the acquisition of specialist knowledge and textual competency, 2) because polysemy is a difficulty faced by apprentice translators as there are terms that can be translated in different ways, depending on the kind of text they appear in – such as the case of *draft* (which could be the "draft" of a boat in a shipping document, or a "commercial bill" or "sight bill" in payment documents) – and 3) because students acquire good working habits while generating a resource that could be useful both in their education and in the practice of their profession, which could enhance their competencies. Moreover, by drawing up bilingual glossaries, students cover the linguistic, cognitive and translation dimensions, all of which are necessary for commercial translation. This way, a link is established between pedagogical translation and the profession because an approach that trains experts in commercial translation has to consider a translation method that can help students in their future professional life. But, as we have already pointed out: we propose including at least the following fields for each term: term in OL; term in TL; definition or explanation; kind of text and sources used. These fields cover the minimum needs of the apprentice translator. Below are some examples of terminological entries that include the aforementioned fields with respect to *CHOPT* terms and *option*:

> (1) First example
> CHOPT (Charterer's Option) *(Spanish)* CHOPT (opción del fletador) *(Definition)* At the option of the charterer (see *option*). *(Kind of text)* Charter party. *(Source)* CEMA (2000). *Maritime terminology course.* Atlantic Maritime Studies Centre, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.; *Acronym Finder* Electronic version:
> <http://www.rimship.no/sider/liste.html>
> (2) Second example
> option *(Spanish)* opción *(Definition)* 1) Agreement establishing a right to purchase (or sell) a certain good, at a pre-determined price and within a pre-determined period. 2) Clause in a Charter party allowing additional or

alternative cargo to be loaded "at the option of the charterer", in ports of call in order to load or unload a cargo. 3) (Clause) Faculty which, in case of a claim, the insurance company has to bring compensatory action, choosing between: a) paying the party suffering the damage the sum of the damaged goods in cash; b) repairing the damaged objects; c) replacing the affected goods with others of the same quality. *(Kind of text)* Charter party. *(Sources)* Castelo Matrán, Julio & Antonio Guardiola Lozano. (1992) *Diccionario MAPFRE de Seguros*, new tri-lingual edition, Madrid: Fundación Mapfre; Branch, Alan. (1995) *Dictionary of Shipping International Business Trade Terms and Abbreviations*, London: Witherby & Co. Ltd.

In this manner, the documentation work (subject matter, terminology, phraseology, textual work, etc.) of the apprentice translator is stored.

3. Students' opinions

In this section, we present the results of surveys conducted among the students of two different commercial translation groups (a total of 69 students) of the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting (FTI, as it is known in Spanish) of the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC) in the academic year 2014-2015. It seemed timely to include the opinions of the students in this paper because it helps us to rectify or confirm our suspicions regarding some of the issues addressed prior to this paper; regarding the teaching of commercial translation. The students surveyed have studied the subject of *English-Spanish tourist-commercial translation* from the English-German degree and from the English-French degree. The survey was conducted at the end of the commercial translation block (which accounts for 30 teaching hours in each group).

Bearing in mind that the subjects of the survey are students that have attended class regularly (69 present on the day of the survey), they are given a 12-item questionnaire. Nine questions requiring a numerical answer, which rate from 1 to 5, in which 1 means "Not at all"; 2 "Somewhat; 3, "Important"; 4 "Very Important" and 5, "Essential". And three questions with an open answer: that is: justification of the usefulness of the glossary, in the event of an affirmative answer, the most useful kind of sources for commercial translation must be specified and offer an opinion about how closely associated the subject is with professional practise. A brief description of the results of the surveys follows.

As we can see in Figure 1, which shows the answers to the questions requiring a numerical answer, all the values of the answers are positive. For example, 75.3% of the students (a total of 52) score the glossary as "essential" and 98.5 give a positive score to the usefulness of the glossary as the scores are between 3 and 5. Furthermore, in the open-answered question that asks them to justify their answer, which does not appear in this figure, but which

we have calculated, 56% of students reply that they think it is useful because "it helps to assimilate concepts" and 45% consider that "it facilitates translation". Although other positive responses have been received, we have not considered them because they vary enormously and they are not representative. In other cases, although the student has given a positive numerical appraisal, they do not provide a justification, so we cannot offer that information either. Al in all, their responses corroborate our idea that drawing up glossaries with translations of terms, definitions and sources stimulates understanding and both linguistic and cognitive competency.

Another issue that we wish to highlight concerns "the need to acquire specialist knowledge for commercial translation" reflected in the last item of the graph. 7.2% of the students did not think this knowledge was necessary to engage in commercial translation, compared with 92.7% who thought it was. We must add that all the students scored the following issues higher than 3: knowing the meaning of the terms, both for understanding and for producing the TT; adapting the kind of texts worked on in class and the need to work with specialist sources for commercial translation. Regarding the question on the association between the subject and the professional field, most of the open answers emphasise that the fact that they can discover the socio-economic reality of their surroundings and a possible professional opportunity through this subject motivates them, as does the fact that they work with real documents and assignments. Finally, although the general figure remains positive, 15.6% declare that they are not interested in this specialist field.

Regarding the kinds of sources used by the students, they say first and foremost specialised glossaries and web sites with definitions, parallel texts and class material. 100% of students consult specialised dictionaries and websites with definitions at some time, obviously, 20% resort to parallel texts and 42% to support material provided in class. In some cases, they consult two or more kinds of sources, including the above. As this is an open question, the answers are not always identical, although in general, the most widely mentioned sources include the following: ISO standards (4217), *Incoterms* guide that they find on the websites of banks and chambers of commerce, also websites of ports or companies working in international trade (the most popular one is found at *iate.europa.eu)*, Dictionaries of acronyms and abbreviations (*Acronymfinder.com*, *Acronyms and abbreviations del Freedictionary.com)*, the glossary of overseas trade at *www.taric.es*, Diccionario Comercio-exterior.es, *International Trade Glossary* of the *TranslationJournal.net* (Socorro Trujillo: 2013*), www.logisnet.com*, Inter-cargo (logistics glossary), *Andymiles.com*, Diccionario de Mapfre, etc.
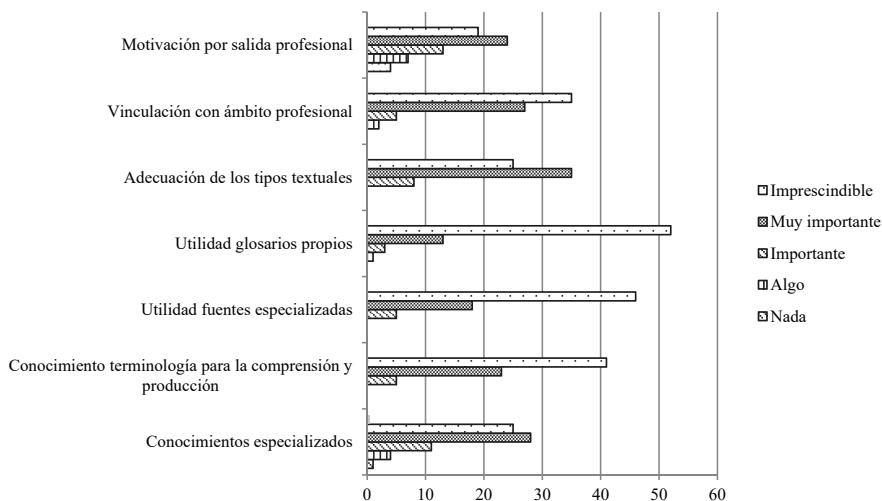
Figure 1. Students appraisal of issues pertaining to the subject

Finally, it must be pointed out that, in the open-answer questions, there were several cases in which the students have left the answer blank or have not filled it in, despite appearing positive in the numbers and, on other occasions, they answer with several different answers.

5. Conclusions

In general terms, the student translator facing the translation of the kinds of texts covered in this paper for the first time finds it a complex and highly varied matter. We consider that the methodology that we propose here contemplates acquiring the competencies required by the teaching-learning of this subject as it focuses on developing the student's cognitive and communicative competency. Some problems posed by commercial translation are in fact linguistic problems, but there are also cognitive and pragmatic problems (with the subject matter, the kinds of text in question, the interlocutors and the communication situation). Moreover, it ensures that the theoretical concepts and the specialist know-how are actually linked to professional practise. It is important that students build a theoretical foundation and that they acquire a command of the concepts that are handled in international trade before embarking on the translation. The must understand the OT or understand what it contains

and be able to write the TT pursuant to the conventions of the TT in the TC (Target Culture) and its use.

We also consider that a glossary elaborated by the student – which includes at least the commercial terms and their equivalencies, concepts, context and sources – is a useful element in the translation process because it allows the student to gradually assimilate the specialist concepts while familiarising him or her with the subject and the field. On the other hand, we also try to create real situations and modify translation assignments as far as possible by, for example, incorporating the modality "sight translation for inexpert clients". This stimulates specialist knowledge, as it implies translation with explanations and having to elaborate glossaries. In short, it is worthwhile creating real situations in which the student also has to demonstrate what he or she knows. That apart, we suggest exchanging glossaries among students.

One aspect that we need to emphasise is consulting linguistic bodies of information as pedagogical tools in the teaching-learning of this subject, along with the use of printed sources by students as, in light of the answers to the questionnaire, they do not use them to any great extent. In practical terms, they limit their consultations to the class material and very few students consult the basic literature. It is obviously easier and less effort to log onto the Internet. One handicap is the high number of students, making it impossible for all of them to gain access to the library. One possible solution to this problem would be to scan printed bibliographic sources into an electronic format. That aside, we have observed that, although not all students have the same preferences in general, they do seem to be motivated by the same thing: the fact that the subject is given a professional focus. So, we believe that teachers should investigate the local employment market as far as possible, along with the most wide-spread kinds of texts that are generated, the kind of assignments, and make an attempt to simulate real situations. Although this is a first glance at commercial translation, it is worth advising students who wish to continue their education in this sector, especially, about post-graduate courses, master's degrees, specialisation courses, on-the-job training opportunities with companies, grants, etc. Although, in principle, our methodology aims at attaining a passive knowledge of the subject that enables the student to understand an OT and produce an adequate TT, graduates that specialise in this field will experience an increasing and more active immersion, especially if he or she ends up devoting him or herself to it professionally.

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