Cognitive and genre approaches in teaching cross-linguistic mediation

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Abstract. The article's main aim is to consider concept and genre text analysis in training professional interpreters and translators as well as students majoring in Publishing and Editing within the framework of complex interactions of theoretical and methodological practices. Theoretical considerations of cross-linguistic mediation, translation-oriented genre and concept analysis provided the basis for developing a set of learning practices. The main research question of this paper is how to exploit the above mentioned considerations in learning cross-linguistic mediation with the help of binary texts (the texts of the same genre considering alike problems in English and Ukrainian). Finally, the suggested methodology was verified and confirmed in the process of experimental teaching. The significance of the study lies in its cross-disciplinary approach to the problem of teaching translation: the mediation in teaching foreign languages, cognitive linguistics, translation-oriented genre analysis.

Keywords: mediation, genre analysis, concept, binary texts, cross-linguistic mediation

1. Introduction

The research aims to study genre analysis as a prerequisite of effective training professional interpreters and translators as well as students majoring in Journalism. The research tasks include developing and experimentally verifying the genre analysis strategies in learning cross-linguistic mediation. What sparked our interest in this research was a new competence in learning foreign languages introduced by CEFR [4]. First, we aim to use cross-linguistic

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mediation to raise the effectiveness of developing the skills in interpreting and translation. Second, we aim to use the translation oriented genre and concepts analysis and binary texts as its mechanism to achieve the goal mentioned above.

We believe that the way scholars distinguish training professional translators and students majoring in various technical subjects can be revised by describing the concepts of mediation and cross-mediation [4].

In the Companion Volume with New Descriptors [4], the concept of mediation is treated as one of the four modes of communication, that is: reception, interaction, production and mediation.

The mediator is treated as "a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning, sometimes within the same language, sometimes from one language to another (cross-linguistic mediation)" [4].

Thus, learning cross-linguistic mediation takes place in translators training and in training students majoring in different branches of science and technology, enabling effective communication within their fields of professional, academic, and personal interest.

The function of mediation is to facilitate understanding and communication in various contexts. Three kinds of mediation are considered: mediating texts, mediating concepts, and mediating communication. It is stated that in practice, all kinds of mediation and their strategies are interconnected [4].

Our main focus in this research is on mediating a text, which involves mediating to another person "the content of a text to which they have no access because of linguistic, cultural, technical or semantic barriers" [4]. The following types of mediation activities are listed in the category of mediating a text: relaying specific information, data explaining, text processing, a written text translating, note-taking, expressing a personal response, analysis and criticism of creative texts [4].

It seems logical to consider mediating in the aspect of cognitive linguistics. First, in cross-linguistic mediation, all its kinds (mediating texts, mediating concepts, mediating interaction) come into play in forming social, cultural and plurilingual competencies. Second, the notion concept is one of the main ones in cognitive linguistics. Hence, such mediation strategies as explaining a new concept and linking to previous knowledge can be considered in terms of this science, making the cognitive approach in teaching translation worth considering.

As far as translation-oriented genre analysis is concerned, it is considered an effective method both in teaching English [3] and in translation training [2].

2. Literature review

In cognitive linguistics, concepts are understood only in connection with background knowledge structure that fully complies with the essence of mediating concepts in CEFR.

Concepts form domains that can be understood in background knowledge as conceptual complexes and are subdivided into the base and non-base ones. Base concepts do not have their background knowledge; they serve as nodes of information and are considered to exist not as linguistic but conceptual resources that can be exploited for linguistic purposes [7].

We argue that the idea of cognitive linguistics, namely a domain that exists independently of

any particular expression and can be exploited for linguistic purposes, is relevant to teaching cross-linguistic mediation in different contexts. Thus, we may consider a text as a particular hierarchy of base and non-base concepts.

In translating literary concepts, which have an associative nature, one should take into consideration such cognitive linguistics notions as image schemas, which are viewed as "pre-conceptual" structures that "give rise to more elaborate and more abstract conceptions (or at least provide their skeletal organization) through combination and metaphorical projection" [7].

In translating scientific and technical terms, cross-linguistic mediators deal not with terms meanings but with the concepts. Polysemous terms that change their meanings in various branches of science and technology evoke translation difficulties. Concept analysis, which helps distinguish base concepts followed by certain training activities, proved to be an effective instrument in coping with these difficulties. It can be exemplified by the experimentally verified bilateral interpreting course in training students of the Faculty of Linguistics of National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute" [6].

It is worth mentioning that different parts of some texts belong to different genres, patents being a good example. It is claimed that the patent domain is very diverse and may be represented by four sections of patent documents (title, abstract, description, claims that can be considered as different linguistic genres that have different stylistic characteristics and communicative function. Texts within the same domain share the same topic, which is reflected in the use of the same vocabulary [10].

We may assume that Invention is the main concept of the description section with wide use of scientific and technical terminology while the concept Claim in the corresponding section is represented mostly by legal vocabulary.

Undoubtedly, cross-linguistic mediation training should provide the knowledge of the conceptual resource (we may refer to as an invariant) and how the content is presented (variant), regulated by genre and style constraints.

We argue that the genre-based approach in learning mediation strategies aims to help students become effective participants in their academic and professional environments. The process genre approach has been set to employ the strengths of both the process approach and the genre approach. The researchers pay attention to different aspects of the genre approach in teaching writing:

- theoretical background of genre-based approaches to writing [3];
- the process genre writing approach [13];
- using the genre-based approach to teaching writing through the use of model texts [5];
- learning descriptive writing [8];
- focusing on disciplinary content and knowledge [9].

The translation oriented genre analysis is given by Biel [2]. It is claimed that genre analysis helps identify differences in genres structures, conventions and expectations across languages and cultures, distinguishing between obligatory and optional elements, grouping texts according to similar communicative and pragmatic features, thus enabling specifying similar translation difficulties. The author states the necessity to promote the use of the concept of genre in translation studies [2].

Blended or so called process-genre approach allows students to study the relationship between purpose and form of a genre as they use the process of prewriting, drafting, revision and editing. The researchers show that it is the effective approach not only to involve students in learning EFL but to familiarize students in social and cultural context the language is used in [12]. In any linguistic mediation occurs cultural mediation that tries to facilitate understanding. Mediation is inherent in cultural awareness that applies both within a language and across languages and cultures.

Mediation involves the use of the target language "in particular social contexts in ways that are based on certain social needs", as Stathopoulou [11] states. In other words, cross-language mediation aims to offer information to the audience that is contextually optimal and relevant, usually in common everyday situations. It requires an overall competence that includes linguistic, intercultural and interpersonal competences, needed for living in a multilingual global society. Nowadays there is an incredible growth of attention not only to teaching culture of foreign language but also to taking into account the socio-cultural influences on communication. Teaching foreign language not only as a means of communication but also as a way of understanding the culture of the target language community has become an inevitable part of foreign languages and translation teaching.

Studies of genre and style dominant in translation enable specifying the core of a genre – primary genre forming features that should be preserved in a relevant translation and interpreting. Thus, specifying genre and style dominant serves as a particular filter in the translator's decision-making process.

We argue that genre and style also regulate the dominance of certain concepts.

We may speak about similar concept complexes or image schemas, offering similar translation difficulties.

Literary texts are represented by literary concepts (feelings, emotions); scientific and technical texts by certain scientific and technical concepts; informative and advertising genres of media texts differ in their key concepts – "Event" and "Positive Evaluation". Mass media advertising genres are characterized by evaluative saturation, represented by lexical units with positive connotations.

3. Methods

The research employs an analysis of educational and linguistic sources on the issue under consideration. The study includes CEFR description of the essence of cross-linguistic mediation [4], translation-oriented genre analysis [2], the essence of cognitive linguistics [7], the content analysis of informative and promotional media texts, the experimental verification of the effectiveness of the integrative concept and genre analysis in learning cross-linguistic mediation.

3.1. Participants

The experimental training conducted in September-November 2020 and included 40 second-year students of the Institute of Publishing and Printing National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute".

3.2. Instruments

The main instruments of the research were:

- integration of the cognitive and translation-oriented genre approaches in learning cross-linguistic mediation;
- experimental verification of the genre approach efficacy in teaching ESP written production at the Publishing and Printing Institute of the National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute";
- content analysis of 100 media texts;
- experimental verification of the efficacy of translation-oriented concept and genre analysis in learning cross-linguistic mediation at the Publishing and Printing Institute of the National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute".

3.3. Procedures

Experimental verification of the genre approach efficacy in teaching ESP written production took place in 2019-2020 at the Publishing and Printing Institute of the National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute" [1].

Analysis of its procedure and results helped plan and conduct new research in September-November 2020.

The main task of the experimental study lies in using translation-oriented concepts and genre analysis in the teaching and learning cross-linguistic mediation. The content analysis of 100 English and Ukrainian media texts proved the dominance of the concept "Event" with such sub-concepts as participants, accompanying activities, envisaged results in informative texts and "Positive Evaluation" in the promotional one. In addition, the analysis of 100 English and Ukrainian media texts enabled selecting 20 binary texts as an instrument in experimental learning cross-linguistic mediation.

Experimental learning included three stages. In the first stage, the students analysed the English and Ukrainian texts of the same genres and similar topics in terms of their genre characteristics and verbal representation of the main concepts. The main aim of the second stage of experimental learning was interpreting activities based on binary texts. The third stage included written translation of English information and advertising texts.

4. Results and discussion

Genre competence is highlighted in teaching written communication to future publishing specialists at the National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute". Analyzing the communicative-pragmatic characteristics of information and advertising texts allowed substantiating the methodological typology of genres in teaching English written communication [1].

To exploit the genre approach to learning cross-linguistic mediation, experimental learning based on genre and concept analysis was conducted in September-November 2020. First, the concept analysis of 100 English and Ukrainian texts of informative and promotional character

was conducted. It revealed such vital concepts as an Event for informative genres with such sub-concepts as Participants/Activities/Expected results of the event and Positive Estimation for promotional ones. Second, the concept and genre analysis resulted in choosing 20 binary texts, that is, the texts in different languages but with similar genre features, topics and concepts.

The sources for selecting the binary texts were such electronic resources as:

- BBC Media Centre: https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/worldwide;
- Book forum: https://bookforum.ua/;
- Events: https://ukrosvita.at.ua/publ, etc.

It is recommended to start learning English with the second-year students familiar with the genres of journalism and who know how to work with information sources and analyse genre peculiarities of information and advertising messages in their native language. The experimental training included 40 second-year students. In preparation for the experiment, its purpose was determined, participants were selected, and experimental materials were prepared.

The developed didactic teaching model became the basis for determining the goals, approaches, methods, teaching aids and control (figure 1). Where objective is developing skills in cross-linguistic mediation; approaches – concepts analysis and genre approaches; methods – mediation of text (binary texts analysis) and practising in interpreting and translation; result – raising effectiveness in interpreting and translation.
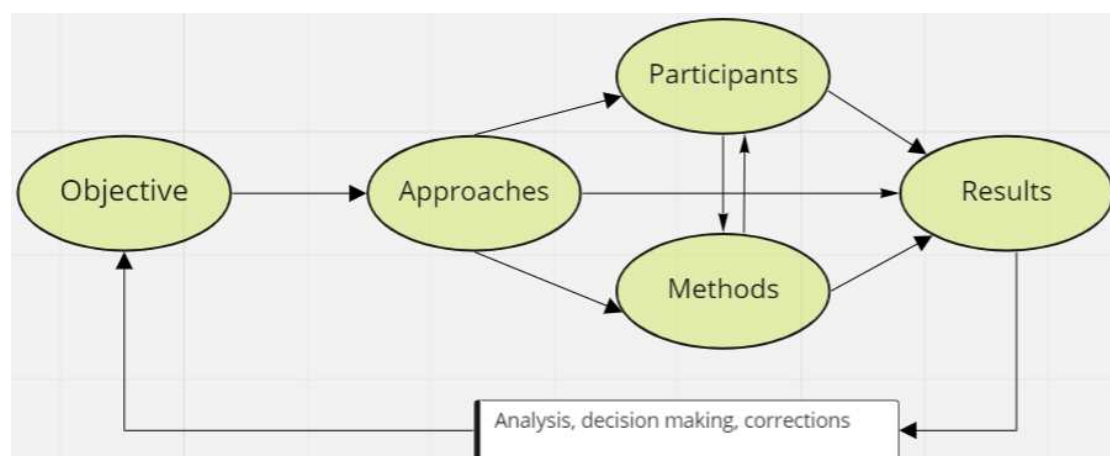
Figure 1: Model of learning cross-linguistic mediation.

The key criteria were a) the content compliance with the source text; b) genre compliance with the source text; c) concepts compliance with the source text; d) lexical and grammatical correctness (table 1).

Before the experimental training, a pre-experimental section was performed. The students of two academic groups EG-91 and EG-92 translated the information and advertising texts. Their results were assessed by chosen criteria and presented in figure 2.

First experimental group EG-91 scored 0.12 for the content compliance, 0.14 for genre compliance, 0.15 for concepts compliance, and 0.12 for lexical and grammatical correctness. The results

Table 1
Scoring according to evaluation criteria.

Criteria	Descriptors	Score
Content compliance	Relevant information to achieve the objectives of the statement is provided. The information presentation corresponds to the required amount to cover topic.	4
	The goals of the statement are almost achieved. The presentation of information is sequential	3
	The information is not logical enough, insufficiently systematized causing difficulties in understanding. The topic is not fully covered.	2
	The information is not arranged properly causing difficulties in understanding. The presentation of information does not cover the topic.	1
Genre compliance	It is necessary to comply with the requirements for the text design in accordance with genre standards. The text is correctly divided by compositional elements, and the statement is logically constructed.	4
	The requirements for the text design in accordance with genre norms have been met. The presentation of information is coherent according to the genre.	3
	There are errors in the text design in accordance with genre standards. The text is divided into compositional elements, but some elements are missing.	2
	The requirements for the text design in accordance with genre norms have not been performed. The text is not divided into compositional elements.	1
Lexical and grammatical correctness	Vocabulary accuracy according to the context. Compliance with grammatical rules. Grammatical structures are used correctly.	4
	The exact use of vocabulary according to the context, but there are some errors. Compliance with grammatical rules, but there are inaccuracies.	3
	Limited range of vocabulary according to the purpose and insufficient linguistic correctness of the text. Some lexical items and grammatical structures are misused.	2
	The use of vocabulary does not correspond to the context; there are some mistakes. The language of the text does not meet the standards. Some grammatical structures are misused.	2
Concepts compliance	Verbal representation of all the source text concepts.	4
	Verbal representation of 75 percent of the source text concepts.	3
	Verbal representation of 60 percent of the source text concepts.	2
	Verbal representation of less than 60 percent of the source text concepts.	1

in the group EG-91 showed that the average learning rate reached 0.53. Second experimental group EG-92 scored 0.14 for the content compliance, 0.14 for genre compliance, 0.12 for concepts compliance, and 0.12 for lexical and grammatical correctness. Pre-experimental results in the group EG-92 showed that the average learning rate in the group reached 0.52.

The results showed a low level of translation skills, justifying the need for experimental training. The experimental learning included the following stages:

1. Before-translating stage (2 hours). Group work. Genre and concept analysis of binary texts with specifying similar and different features in terms of their:

   - logical structure;
   - concept and sub-concepts;
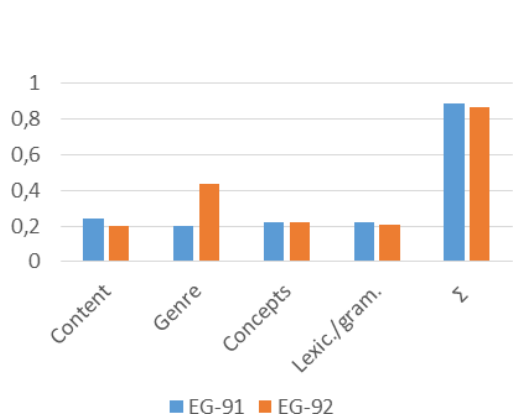
Figure 2: Average results of pre-experimental training according to chosen criteria.
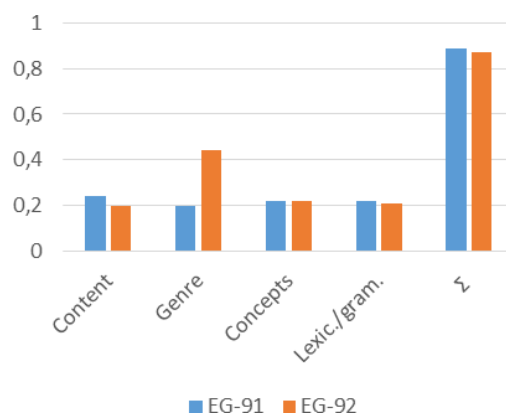
Figure 3: Average results of experimental training according to chosen criteria.

- linguistic representation of sub-concepts.

2. Translation/Interpreting stage (4 hours).

   - Work in pairs: practicing English-Ukrainian and Ukrainian-English interpreting fragments of binary texts;
   - translating English text of the same genre and the same sub-concepts.

3. After-translating stage (2 hours).

   - Pair work. Editing each other translations.
   - Group work/ Discussing translation problems.

Average results of experimental training according to chosen criteria (figure 3) showed the dynamic change.

EG-91 scored 0.23 for the content compliance, 0.24 for genre compliance, 0.20 for concepts compliance, and 0. 22 for lexical and grammatical correctness. The results in the group EG-91 showed that the average learning rate increased to 0.89.

EG-92 scored 0.20 for the content compliance, 0.24 for genre compliance, 0.22 for concepts compliance, and 0.21 for lexical and grammatical correctness. Pre-experimental results in the group EG-92 showed that the average learning rate in the group equals 0.87.

Average results in group EG-91 changed from 0.53 to 0.89 and in group EG-92 – from 0.52 to 0.87. Thus, the integrated concept and genre approach and binary texts as its instrument proved to be effective in learning cross-linguistic mediation. This approach offers a way of adapting the traditional means of translation to a more task-oriented and communicative style of teaching EFL.

The experimental study aimed to apply the integrative concept and genre analysis in the teaching and learning cross-linguistic mediation. 100 English and Ukrainian media texts analysis enabled the selection of 20 binary texts as an instrument in cross-linguistic learning. The results of the pre-experimental stage showed a low level of translation skills, justifying the need for experimental training. Nevertheless, the experimental study results proved the hypothesis that binary texts prove to be an effective tool in learning cross-linguistic mediation.

Therefore, it can be stated that the cross-linguistic mediation training helps provide the knowledge of not only the conceptual resource but also the way the concept is presented, which in its turn is regulated by genre and style constraints [4].

Furthermore, there is no doubt that the focus on disciplinary content and knowledge is crucially vital within learning mediation strategies [9].

In our research we consider the future specialists as the mediator that is viewed as a plurilingual social actor participating in the intercultural communicative event, shaping new meanings and then creating it through writing (or speaking) for people of a different linguistic or cultural background, thus establishing the interaction between languages and cultures, participating in both cultures in the process of mediation [10].

However, the limitations of the research should be mentioned as well. First, the experimental study involved the students majoring in Publishing and Editing only, meaning that a relatively narrow cross-section of the participants was represented.

5. Conclusion

We argue that the concept and genre-based approach in learning mediation strategies aims to help students become effective participants in their academic and professional environments. The process genre approach has been set to employ the strengths of both the process approach and the genre approach. The effective tool represented by binary texts proved effective in learning cross-linguistic mediation in distance learning. The experimental study conducted in 2020 that involved 40 students from the Institute of Publishing and Printing, National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute" verified the efficacy of the application of translation-oriented concepts and genre analysis in the teaching and learning cross-linguistic mediation. This was proved by the results of the experimental study that increased from 0.52-0.53 to 0.87-0.89, respectively.

Nevertheless, this aspect requires further development in terms of expanding the fields of science students majoring in and the genres repertoire.

We hope that our research will raise interest in the genre and concept analysis in learning cross-linguistic mediation and bring to light the efficacy of binary texts as an instrument in this learning.

Authors' contributions

I. Antonenko designed and performed the experiment, and analysed the data.

S. Kolomiiets verified the analytical methods, planned the experiment and supervised the findings of this paper.

S. Kolomiiets and L. Guryeyeva developed the theoretical formalism and verified the analytic calculations.

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