





CURRICULUM DESIGN TO CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETATION ANALYTICAL PROGRAM

DISEÑO CURRICULAR PARA EL PROGRAMA ANALÍTICO DE INTERPRETACIÓN CONSECUTIVA



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ABSTRACT

The detection of insufficiencies in the teaching-learning process of Consecutive Interpretation in the English Language Major in the University of Holguín served as the starting point of a qualitative study to improve said process. This article presents the analytical program proposed by the authors for this subject as solution to the problematic situation, and the process followed to conceive it, which are the main results of the research. Its objective is to design an analytical program coherent with the skills and characteristics of the interpretation modality in question. This will serve as foundation for the rest of the modalities it contributes to and thus highlights the relevance of an upgraded preparation. For its elaboration, the authors followed Stringer's Model of Action Research (2007): observed lessons and exams and interviewed a convenience sample of 10 students and five faculty members as empirical methods. The theoretical methods applied were analysis-synthesis, induction-deduction, transit from the abstract to the concrete. They allowed the critical appraisal of the collected data and the needed generalizations to arrive at the assessments provided. The proposed analytical program is coherent and updated in terms of aims, contents and pedagogy.

KEYWORDS: Skills, consecutive interpretation, curriculum design

RESUMEN

Las insuficiencias detectadas en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de Interpretación Consecutiva en la carrera Lengua Inglesa en la Universidad de Holguín dieron inicio a un estudio cualitativo que buscaba perfeccionar dicho proceso. Este artículo presenta el programa analítico que proponen los autores para dicha asignatura, como solución a la problemática planteada, así como el proceso que se siguió para su concepción como resultados fundamentales de la investigación. Su objetivo es diseñar un programa analítico coherente con las habilidades y los rasgos distintivos de la modalidad de interpretación a la que tributa, y que servirá de sustento para el resto de las modalidades que se estudian. Esto resalta la importancia de una preparación más detallada de la misma. Para su elaboración, los autores siguieron el modelo de investigación-acción de Stringer: observaron clases y exámenes y entrevistaron a un muestreo deliberado de 10 estudiantes y cinco profesores como métodos empíricos. El análisis y síntesis, la inducción-deducción y el tránsito de lo abstracto a lo concreto fueron los métodos teóricos que permitieron la apreciación crítica de la información obtenida y las generalizaciones necesarias para llegar a las evaluaciones brindadas. El programa analítico propuesto muestra coherencia y actualización en cuanto a objetivos, contenido y orientaciones metodológicas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Habilidades, interpretación consecutiva, diseño curricular



INTRODUCTION

Consecutive interpretation is one of the first modalities learned within interpretive studies, because it comprises and trains basic skills for subsequent modalities. Such is the case of analysis and synthesis, division of attention, and public speaking in simultaneous interpretation, and public speaking, memory and social interaction in both bilateral interpretation and sight interpretation. Note-taking skills, however, are considered typical of the ‘classical’ consecutive mode, which, although apparently displaced, continues to be taught for its didactic merits.

The critical analysis of the Translation-Interpretation discipline in the English Language Major with a Second Foreign Language at the University of Holguin inserted in a doctoral research on the development of professional habits and skills in consecutive interpretation revealed insufficiencies regarding the curricular design of the subjects Fundamentals of Translation and Interpretation and Consecutive Interpretation of the new Syllabus E.

The educational practice, the observation of exams and interviews to faculty and students demonstrate the difficulties presented by the latter. The abuse of note-taking in modalities and situations where this technique is not indispensable, their inability to divide their attention effectively in active listening and simultaneous note-taking in the comprehension and reformulation stages, and omissions, changes of senses and contradictions characterize the product of their interpretation. All these deficiencies point to a low level of development of basic skills evidenced from the very conception of the discipline and the subjects dealing with consecutive interpretation. The purpose of this article is to design a curricular proposal for the Consecutive interpretation subject that includes restructuring its aims, content and pedagogy.



METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research presented here is based on Stringer’s Model of Action Research (2007) that serves as a framework to solve educational problems in this case departing from the practical knowledge of the teacher/researcher. This has “as much validity and utility as knowledge linked to the concepts and theories of the academic disciplines or bureaucratic policies and procedures” (Nasrollahi, 2015, p. 18665). The Action Research Sequence (Stringer, 2007 in Nasrollahi, 2015, p. 18666) was followed as described below.

1. Research Design

The main categories and sources of information of the research were determined. In the first phase of the research, the governing documents of the major were analyzed. The authors first studied what is stipulated in articles 83 and 84 of the Regulations for Teaching and Methodological Work in Higher Education contained in Resolution no. 2/2018 (GOC-2018-460-O25) with regard to the mandatory categories to design a course. Such elements were contrasted with the documentation corresponding to the major: Model of the Professional, Program of the Discipline Translation-Interpretation (Syllabus E), Analytical Programs and files of the subjects Fundamentals of Translation and Interpretation and Consecutive Interpretation. The parameters that were taken into consideration were coherence, gradualness and relevance of the contents of the discipline and courses and the congruence with the Model of the Professional and the formative objectives of the major.

2. Data Gathering

In this phase, a total of 10 classes corresponding to the courses Fundamentals of Translation and Interpretation (first semester) and Consecutive Interpretation (second semester) were observed in the academic year 2022: two of them corresponded to a partial and a final exam. An observation guide was elaborated; its aim was to register the treatment given to the basic skills covered in the governing documents of the Discipline Translation-Interpretation throughout both courses mentioned above. The elements covered in the observation guide were their inclusion in the course's aims, their practice during the course and their inclusion in the evaluation criteria in the final exams. (Table 1) shows the results obtained.

Table 1: Results of the teaching-learning process observation

Basic skills mentioned in the governing documents	Declared in the aims	Specifically practiced in class	Included in the evaluation criteria at the end of the course
Memory	x	x	x
Analysis and Synthesis	x	-	-
Concentration of Attention	x	-	-
Note-taking	x	x	-

Two sets of semi-structured interviews (one at the end of each semester) were conducted to a convenience sample of 10 third year students that took both courses to determine their dissatisfactions. The sample was made up of the only group of students that received the subject in 2022 in the University of Holguin. The constituent elements of the interview



guide were: general practice, skill-related specific practice and quality of the didactic material used and its oral presentation. (Figure 1) shows the results obtained.

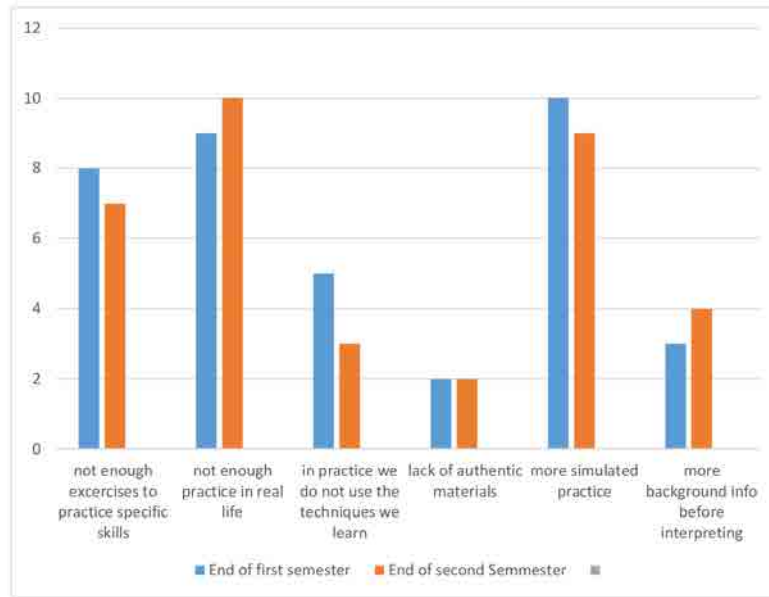


Figure 1: Results of the interview to students

Likewise, five out of the six professors that make up the faculty of the Discipline Translation-Interpretation were interviewed. All five professors graduated and worked at the University of Holguin and taught consecutive interpretation at different moments. The guide for this interview sought to assess teachers’ general knowledge regarding non-personal componentes of the teaching-learning process of Consecutive Interpretation (aims, content and evaluation) and their correspondance with the skills declared in the subject’s governing documents and those characteristic of the consecutive modality. The results obtained are reflected in (Table 2).

Table 2: Results of the interview to professors

Questions	Professor 1	Professor 2	Professor 3	Professor 4	Professor 5
What subject do you teach in this course?	Fundamentals of Translation and Interpretation	Consecutive Interpretation	Bilateral Interpretation	Bilateral Interpretation II	none
Have you ever taught consecutive interpretation?	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Do you know what skills are trained in consecutive interpretation? Which of them are declared within the aims of the subject?	note-taking x memory x public speaking	note-taking x memory x concentration of attention analysis and synthesis documentation	note-taking x memory x documentation divided attention	note-taking x memory x	note-taking x memory x concentration of attention x documentation public speaking
Is the content of this subject in accordance with the system of skills necessary for this modality?	yes	yes	no	yes	no
Are these skills part of the evaluation criteria used in the final exam of the subject?	no	yes	not sure	not really	no



All participants were informed by writing about the aim and the characteristics of the study and signed their consent to participate in it and to the publication of the results obtained.

The following step was the revision of the scientific literature concerning the teaching of consecutive interpretation, the relevance of skill development in general and within consecutive interpretation and its training, and curricular design approaches in higher education.

3. Data Analysis

In this phase the data collected was critically analyzed with the use of theoretical methods such as induction-deduction to generalize and particularize on the foundations of skills and habits and their process of development regarding consecutive interpretation, transit from the abstract to the concrete and analysis-synthesis to characterize both types of consecutive interpretation and determine the constituent skills of each as well as those of note-taking.

4. Communication

The results obtained were presented to the faculty of the Discipline Translation-Interpretation specifically, and of the Department of English Language, in general, in a series of four methodological preparation meetings. The opinions emitted there were taken into consideration to improve the proposal hereby presented.

5. Action

In the last phase of the research, the analytical program defended here was elaborated. It was based on the weaknesses found regarding the correct derivation of the aims from the Program of the Discipline Translation-Interpretation to the programs of the aforementioned courses, the determination of the content system in accordance with the updated knowledge that exists in this modality, and a coherent pedagogy to fulfill the set goals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

“Curriculum should be seen as the ‘what’ of the educational experience, such as the description of the intended learning outcomes or the document used to describe these, whose development is naturally driven by the discipline itself” (Schneiderhan et al., 2019, p. 1). “It encompasses the contribution of teachers and administrative officials, and also needs careful planning and updating in a systematic process to create positive improvements in the educational system” (Mohanasundaram, 2018,



p. 4). To make all this possible, the elements of the curriculum and their distribution throughout the course are relevant criteria, alongside the scientific data that serves as foundation for their inclusion in the syllabus. Thus, the curriculum is a framework that binds aims, content and pedagogy into a seamless whole.

Horrutiner (2008, p. 63) views curriculum design as “a continuous process that begins with the preparation of teachers and does not end with the design, but continues with its implementation and evaluation, which may even give rise to new curricula”. The classroom itself and all that is involved to reach that moment is but the first part of this transformation process where curriculum is applied and readjusted based on the elements that did not work properly. This must occur in each course, as part of the methodological work the faculty does, and is an essential part of didactic management. The accumulation of the changes that occur over several years and, hence, new scientific and methodological knowledge give rise to curricular transformation at higher organizational levels, the completion of curricular design, and the beginning of a new cycle.

Interpretation teaching follows the same logic. The components of any interpreter-training curriculum will unavoidably include “objectives, competencies, systematization, methodology and evaluation” (Albir, 2019, p. 57). However, as stated by Horrutiner, curricular transformation begins with the actual enforcement of the curriculum because more often than not there is a difference between a program as presented on paper and what is actually done in the classroom.



CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETATION IN THE UNIVERSITY OF HOLGUIN

In Cuban curricula, aims, content, pedagogy and values are the elements that have guided the educational process at all levels. Due to international standards, the first three elements are the ones to be analyzed in the present paper.

The English Language with a Second Language was created at the University of Holguin ‘Oscar Lucero Moya’ in the school year 1990-1991 to respond to the growing need of the territory for English language professionals who could work as English teachers in higher education, and translators and interpreters in the tourist pole. In the different curricula that have governed the major’s educational process (Syllabi C, C’, D and E) the Translation-Interpretation discipline has played a relevant role, as it includes three out of the four state exams that students must pass in order to graduate with a Bachelor’s Degree in

English Language with a Second Language.

The general aim of this discipline is for students to master the particular contents and develop the basic professional skills of the profession's object of work: the foreign language as a means of interlinguistic communication, which is manifested in the fields of action of translation and interpretation. The subjects that comprise it are grouped into three branches, interpretation, translation and sight translation and have a theoretical-practical nature. A logical relationship between theory and practice is established by starting with the courses that offer the theoretical-conceptual foundations of the discipline and then moving on to practical instrumentation. Such is the case of Fundamentals of Translation and interpretation.

AIMS

The aim is a component that, “although not immediately apparent in the process, it is what we want to achieve in the student; the purpose and aspiration that we intend to form in them” (De Zayas, 1992, p. 59).

The program of the discipline lists 15 instructional and formative objectives. Twelve of them are also the objectives of Fundamentals of Translation and Interpretation and 11 of Consecutive Interpretation, without lexical or semantic variations, even though they represent different levels in the educational process. Due to the repetition of objectives, there is no evident approach to the levels of assimilation, depth or systematization in them.

When considering that “the aim is a guiding category of the training process from which one determines contents and methods, as well as the rest of the components of the training process” (Horruitiner, 2008, p. 94), the weaknesses detected in the content of the courses are a reflection of the above mentioned.

“The aim, as an aspiration to be achieved in students, must integrate the instructive, the developmental and the educational aspects of the content, which are united in a single process” (Horruitiner, 2008, p. 50). Within the Translation-Interpretation discipline, 15 general aims are listed, that is, 15 aspirations expected of the graduates trained in the major.

Another deficiency detected is the lack of orientation that characterizes the discipline's and, hence, the courses' aims, for they lack clearly stated skills or actions. Schneiderhan et al. (2019, p. 3) state that “an objective is a specific measurable skill or attitude that the learner will be able to demonstrate at the end of the educational activity and, thus, are necessary in order to measure if your curriculum is successful.”



Among the 12 general aims of Fundamentals of Translation and Interpretation there is only one distinguishable skill: critically assess the texts that the students are going to work with. Although general and derivative, this aim is not in accordance with specific courses such as translation and interpretation that are specific to the professional profile of the English language student. These aims also fail to state the different levels of systematization, assimilation and depth, necessary in the accurate evaluation of the students' performance.

CONTENT

Content “gives answer to the question ‘what is learned and taught?, in other words, what the student must master” (González, 2004 in Clavero et al., 2020, p. 6). “In its structure there are four foundational components: system of knowledge, system of skills, system of experiences of the creative activity and the system of world-related rules” (Lerner & Skatkin, 1978 in Clavero et al., 2020, pp. 6-7). In the analytical programs of disciplines and courses in Cuban schools, the system of values that contributes to the educational dimension of the process is also added.

The content cannot be equated only with knowledge, for it ignores the system of modes of relations of man with his objects of work, the system of skills.

In today's school, and based on a dialectical approach, it is understood that the latter, i.e., the development of skills, is achieved through the assimilation of knowledge, and vice versa, both elements are interrelated in practice and should be offered in the teaching-educational process. In this classification, habits are included within the system of skills, knowing that habits are the skills that, in the teaching process, given their repeated use and greater degree of appropriation, become less conscious, i.e., they become automated. As part of culture, a third concept must be added to the two, that of values, as an expression of the significance of things for man, which is also an inherent part of culture and, therefore, also of the content, the object of study (Horruitiner, 2008, p. 50).

With Fundamentals of Translation and Interpretation, students acquire the fundamental notions and basic skills of both translation and interpretation, and the professional values and habits necessary for translators and interpreters. Its practical nature determines that skills and the techniques to achieve its mastery are the contents to be learned by the students (covering translation and interpretation). The initial contents are organized in three conferences of two hours each to receive



the theoretical elements necessary to both translation and interpretation.

Two other contents correspond to ‘classical’ Consecutive Interpretation. In addition to excluding skills considered fundamental for mastering the rest of the modalities, the study of note-taking is included in this first stage of learning, contrary to what is advised by the researchers mentioned before. The exclusion of basic skills (Figure 2) is evident both in the program of the Translation-Interpretation discipline and in the analytical program of Consecutive interpretation. This last one is constituted by one theme: broken consecutive interpretation as a process, to which 96 hour/classes are devoted.

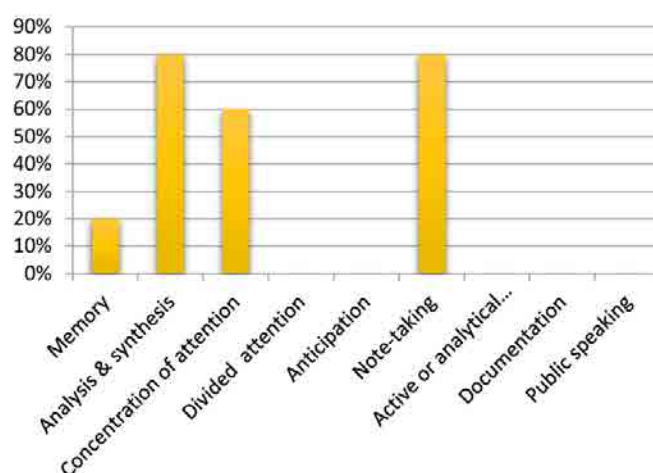


Figure 2: Basic interpretation skills acknowledged in interpretation courses in the Translation-Interpretation Discipline.

The system of skills declared for both Fundamentals of Translation and Interpretation and Consecutive Interpretation exhibits the same deficiency detected in the statement of the general objectives of the programs. The same system of skills is stated in both analytical programs, without exploring in depth the intrinsic differences that exist according to the modalities addressed. With regards to the skill:

“The most important component of this is the verb, or the ‘will do’ piece, which should be open to as few interpretations as possible. Good verbs to use may include ‘list’, ‘define’, ‘execute’ and ‘differentiate’, as opposed to verbs that should be avoided such as ‘know’, ‘understand’ or ‘appreciate’, which are vague and difficult to measure.” (Bloom et al., 1984 in Schneiderhan et al. 2019, p. 4)

The neglect of the system of skills proper of the consecutive modality evidences insufficient awareness of the specificities of the craft and

translates into a misleading curriculum. As a result, professors have utilized different methodologies in their approaches to the course, based on their personal and teaching experiences, and their interpretation of the directing documents of the discipline and course.

PEDAGOGY

The procedures and methodology to teach the content and achieve the aims is stated in the methodological orientations within the curriculum design of the course. It comprises the method or methods to be used, the guiding principles and approach, the manner to organize the course in general and the lessons in particular, the teaching aids and the different ways and rubrics to assess if the aims are fulfilled at the end of the course.

“The method is the manner in which the courses develop the process, that is, the order, sequence and inner organization during the execution of said process” (De Zayas, 1992, p. 29). However, the method is just a component of the process where all the other components are as important for the attainment of the learning goals.

In the program of the discipline, the methodological indications begin with the number of courses that make up the discipline, the forms of organization that should generally prevail during classes and the premise of focusing the educational process on the fulfillment of the professional aims and the mastery of the processes that characterize translation and interpretation. It orients the adherence to the communicative, textual and discursive approaches to develop the translating and interpreting activity as well as to the professional method of translation, interpretation and sight translation, and what students should do in the different stages.

However, it is the authors’ opinion that these are very general methodological guidelines that are not expanded in a relevant way in the programs of the courses, nor do they offer sufficient guidance for the teacher. Several aspects are not mentioned: the level of linguistic difficulty and the length of the segments to be interpreted in each course corresponding to interpretation, the degree of difficulty of the texts to be used in translation and how to progress regarding text complexity. This would differentiate the programs in terms of levels of depth.

The analytical programs of the courses of the same branch (translation, interpretation and oral sight translation) are characterized by having the same text in terms of methodological orientation, which does not differ greatly from that of the discipline program. The only difference is the distinction of courses that have a final exam or not.

The application of empirical methods evidenced practical insufficiencies:



1. Predominance of teacher-centered methods that limit students' meaningful learning and do not reflect the characteristics of the real contexts in which the students will work after graduation.
2. Contents that are taught in both courses without variations in assimilation, depth or systematization and contents that are insufficiently developed by the professor and understood by the students.
3. Students show little command of skills considered fundamental for consecutive interpretation and poor documentation habits, as well as an abuse and misuse of notes.
4. Multiplicity of aims and unclear evaluation criteria, not in correspondence with the aims declared or the contents taught.
5. Insufficient preparation of the faculty in relation with curricular demands and consecutive interpretation theory.

All these insufficiencies point to shortcomings in the planning of the teaching-learning process where theory and practice of interpretation are integrated with a constructivist approach and clear evaluation criteria based on well-determined skills. A more structured and updated analytical program would translate into a teaching practice more in accordance with the learning needs of students that demand to be prepared for a competitive market even before they start working. This implies strategies that combine theory and practice in simulated or actual scenarios and that give the student protagonism in developing the skills they need to interpret consecutively diverse materials.



SKILLS

The knowledge and mastery of the skills of any field have practical and methodological importance. Skills are psychological and pedagogical phenomena whose regulatory role in knowledge, activity and human behavior make them essential elements in the educational process. “They are the way how subjects interact with the object of study; the action constituted by a series of operations that is performed according to a certain method and with a conscious general objective” (Mulet, 2011 in Hierrezuelo et al., 2023): “It is the most perfected way of executing an action and presupposes the acquisition of knowledge and the formation of habits as its essential previous components” (p. 128).

“Being an executory or cognitive property of the personality, it constitutes the domain of the action (psychic and external) that allows a rational regulation of the activity with the help of the knowledge and habits that the subject possesses” (González, 2003 in Hierrezuelo et al., 2023, p. 128).

Within the learning process, the skill constitutes one of the indispensable procedural elements of the content to be mastered by the students. “It is the dimension of the content that shows the behavior of man in a branch of knowledge proper to the culture of humanity” (De Zayas, 1992, p. 56) and that, “together with habits, is part of the instructive function of education” (Rodríguez et al., 2003, p. 13).

To elaborate the aims that govern teaching activities, the first element to take into account is the constituent action of the skill. The other elements are the definition of the conditions in which the student must perform the action and the determination of the qualitative characteristics or indicators that such action must have. The mastery of skills in the educational teaching process is as important for the student who learns as it is for the teacher who plans and directs his or her learning.

To analyze the process of skill acquisition, the process of expertise development is used as a foundation (Anderson, 2009). Skills develop in three stages. The first stage is cognitive and it is characterized by the memorization of a series of relevant facts about the skill, the review of this information during its first executions and the low speed rate of usage of this knowledge. The second stage is associative where the errors resulting from these first executions of the skill are detected and eliminated, the connections between the various elements required for a successful execution are strengthened, and successful procedures for the implementation of the skill are perfected. In this stage, the procedural aspect of the skill predominates over the declarative. The third and final stage is the autonomous one where the procedure reaches such a level of refinement that it is executed automatically and quickly.

The implications of the stages of skill development in educational contexts make its systematization “the backbone of the teaching-learning process through the integration of old and new contents, on the basis of the continuous ascent of the aim’s depth and the subject’s assimilation” (Gómez & González, 2010, p. 41). The systematization process cannot be seen as the repetition of the action until it becomes the skill as a response to the stimulus of repetition, though.

It must be based on a deliberate practice where “students are motivated to learn, not only to perform, they are given feedback and the correspondence of their performance with that of what is considered correct is carefully monitored and any deviation from this pattern is determined” (Anderson, 2009, p. 266). To achieve an efficient systematization, the teacher must have a deep knowledge of the skill that allows him to decompose it into its constituent operations and to plan that all three stages of skill development are successfully fulfilled in them. The subsequent integration of the skill to more complex professional problems will determine its consolidation.

The training of basic skills for the mastery of interlingual interpretation in different scenarios and modalities is made possible through the study



of consecutive interpretation.

CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETATION

Intralingual interpretation is the process and result of transferring to a target language (L2) the sense of an oral speech originally delivered in a source language (L1). It is a cognitive and communicative phenomenon in which man's mental processes of information processing as a function of communication prevail, and become more complex by the confluence of two or more languages in the same communicative situation. Its complexity determines the need for the training of mental skills and the automation of its operations in order to free capacities and facilitate the interpreter's performance. In consecutive interpretation (CI) "the interpreter waits for the speaker to finish a complete line of thought in the source language to give his/her rendition of it in the target language" (Hierrezuelo et al., 2023, p. 133).

This in turn is divided into classical, long or full consecutive; and broken or short consecutive. In classical consecutive, the speaker's intervention may last several minutes during which the interpreter takes a series of notes that will function as a subsequent memory stimulus. "From the notes taken and the interpreter's memory skills, the interpreter reformulates the speaker's speech, in many cases making use of synthesis and paraphrasing to produce a target speech shorter in length than the original speech" (Russell & Takeda, 2015, p. 102).

Although CI has apparently been displaced by simultaneous interpretation, several authors (Russell et al., 2010; Vázquez, 2015; Russell & Takeda, 2015; and Gile, 2018) defend the formative value of consecutive interpretation, "mainly to being able to approach simultaneous interpretation, although this aspect is not supported by scientific studies" (Vázquez, 2015, p. 186).

The skills needed for the development of the cognitive processes specific to consecutive interpretation can be summarized as memory, oratory, anticipation, note-taking (Ilg & Lambert, 1996), analysis and synthesis (Vázquez, 2015), analytical listening (Russell et al., 2015) concentration of attention, divided attention, and documentation (Madrid, 2015). These skills are present in both bilateral and simultaneous interpretation and oral sight translation.

CI didactics is based on well-focused practice and learning progression. "For this, the skills of interpretation must be divided into discrete tasks that are addressed separately in an artificial and controlled environment, and new tasks are only added once the previous ones have been



internalized” (Domínguez, 2015, p. 69).

“Because it is the most representative skill of ‘classical’ CI, note-taking has been one of the main topics in CI research and teaching” (Russell & Takeda, 2015). “It is a graphic symbolization technique by means of which the interpreter records, in parallel to the memorization operations, signs, terms or words that allow him/her to preserve - with a view to reformulation - linguistic and informative aspects of the discourse” (Abuín, 2009, p. 1). “It is the graphic representation of the interpreter’s analysis of the discourse” (Gillies, 2017, p. 9) and “allows him/her to summarize and note down information prone to be forgotten” (Vázquez, 2005, p. 186).

“The didactics of note-taking is based on the segmentation of the consecutive interpretation process linked to the different stages of skill acquisition” (Abuín, 2009, p. 18), even though teaching a particular system and interpretation separately is still a challenge for teachers. Based on the research of Jamshidifarsani et al. (2021), it is a highly complex activity because of the cognitive load it requires and the number of parts into which it can be decomposed; and of low organization since it can be segmented into discrete parts. Because of these characteristics, its practice should not become the unreflective repetition of the actions and operations that constitutes it.

A key question is when to introduce note-taking into the curriculum. A number of authors (Gile, 1991; Ilg & Lambert, 1996; Abuín, 2009; Russell & Takeda, 2015; Santamaría, 2015; Domínguez, 2015; Gillies, 2017) agree that teaching this technique should not be initiated in the early stages of consecutive interpretation training as it results in the habituation of the student to its indiscriminate use even in situations where it is not strictly necessary.

“Note-taking is a partially automatized habit controlled by the skill of the same name that controls the habit albeit the latter’s continuous development and/or modification” (García et al., 2023, pp. 19-20). Attainment of the habit, which coincides with the automation phase, should be a teaching aim in CI given the fact that, “it can decrease concentration and processing capacity available for different tasks” (Gile, 1991, p. 155). This is why there must be a thorough period of practice of the skills and operations necessary for consecutive interpretation before note-taking is introduced. Its basic principles must be internalized so that note-taking does not become an obstacle when starting to practice it.

CURRICULAR DESIGN

As a result of the study carried out, an analytical program was elaborated for the course Consecutive Interpretation in which the two consecutive



modalities, classical and broken, are conceived. For this purpose, the module of knowledge of the course Fundamentals of Translation and Interpretation, corresponding to the note-taking technique, was transferred to Consecutive interpretation. The aims, knowledge and skills system designed for this course are presented below.

Syllabus “E

Discipline: Translation and interpretation.

Course: Consecutive Interpretation

Major: Bachelor of Arts Degree in English Language.

Position: semester 6

Total of Hours: 96

Practical lessons: 92

Evaluation: 4

Teaching Methods Theoretical-practical class.

General Aims

Students should be able to:

Consecutively interpret conferences, speeches and oral talks on sociocultural topics from English into Spanish supported by the application of professional techniques and strategies that guarantee a target text faithful to the original and interculturally accurate.

Contents of the course

Knowledge system

Theme I: Broken consecutive interpretation as a process (46 hours)

Aims: to interpret consecutively oral segments in English of up to 5 minutes in length, using the technique of note-taking to achieve a faithful re-expression of their meaning in Spanish.

Contents:

- ✓Broken consecutive interpretation. Definition and characteristics.
- ✓The note-taking technique. Definition. Indications and general principles.
- ✓Analysis and synthesis. Discourse analysis as a prerequisite for note-taking. Synthesis and mental representation techniques.
- ✓Abbreviation (lexical, grammatical, stylistic).
- ✓Symbolization (symbols of expression, movement, correspondence, independent symbols, variants of abbreviations and symbols).



- ✓Speech modulation.
- ✓Chaining of ideas.
- ✓Speech organization (verticalization, scrolling, vertical and horizontal relationship bars, substitution bar, reference arrow).
- ✓Interlinguistic consecutive interpretation with the use of the note-taking technique.

Skill system:

- ✓To focus on comprehension of the spoken text in English.
- ✓To analyze the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic relations of the oral discourse in English.
- ✓To memorize the meaning of the oral text in English.
- ✓To synthesize in written form the structure of the analyzed oral discourse in English.
- ✓To abbreviate key words of an oral discourse in English.
- ✓To symbolize key concepts of an oral discourse in English.
- ✓To graphically represent the structure of an oral discourse in the English.
- ✓To divide the attention between active listening to an oral text in English and note taking; and note reading and oral production in Spanish.
- ✓To re-express orally in Spanish the meaning of the text in English represented mentally and graphically.

Theme II: Broken Consecutive Interpretation as a Process (46 hours)

Aims: to interpret consecutively oral segments in English of up to one and a half minutes in length, applying adequate comprehension strategies to achieve the faithful re-expression of its meaning in the Spanish language.

Contents

- ✓Broken consecutive interpretation. Characteristics of broken consecutive interpretation.
- ✓The professional translation model applied to broken consecutive interpretation.
 - a) comprehension of the original spoken text: apprehension of the meaning, apprehension of the sense.
 - b) re-expression of the meaning of the original spoken text in an equivalent spoken text in the target language.



Skill system

- ✓To focus on the comprehension of the spoken text in English.
- ✓To analyze the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic relations of the oral discourse in English.
- ✓To memorize the meaning of the oral text in English.
- ✓To re-express orally in Spanish the meaning of the text in English represented mentally and graphically.

Methodological Orientations

The course should lay the foundations for correct professional work habits and skills. Therefore, the following should be taken into account:

- The dialectical interrelationship between thought and language, language and society, and speech and discourse.

Students should be made very aware that, as translators and interpreters, they are an active part of a communicative situation. Therefore, they should be aware of the extralinguistic and pragmatic elements that condition the text.

- Meaning: what meaning is and how it corresponds to the discourse as a whole.
- Discourse: what discourse is and how its components (word, phrase, phrase, expression, sentence, and paragraph) contribute to the pattern of meaning. How it is in discourse that the potential meaning of each of its parts is realized.

For these reasons, the work of comprehension of oral texts should be approached from the internal relations established in the text, the ordering of ideas and the components of the statement, always taking into account the linguistic and pragmatic elements that determine the process of consecutive interpretation.

The course is taught in a series of theoretical and practical classes in which individual and collective reflection is favored in pursuit of the conscious assimilation of the students' professional skills and habits, as well as independent study as a professional habit to be developed by each one of them. Personal discovery and knowledge construction are encouraged in terms of learning strategies and associative resources used by students to represent and defend their knowledge.

Priority is given to the individual context when designing educational actions and procedures and adjusting them to unforeseen situations resulting from the exploration and reflection of each student. It also favors cooperative relationships by encouraging group actions, teamwork, debates, reflections, flexibility and awareness of the importance of personal actions for the development of society through



the resolution of work tasks. This is why the teacher must make use of student-centered teaching methods.

The actions of the teacher are aimed not only at directing the teaching-learning process of students individually and collectively, but also at transferring this direction to each student so that they are responsible for their own learning and practice. For this, it is necessary to:

- plan concentrated and closed practices of the constituent operations of note-taking in a staggered manner for their gradual automation with systems of activities to be performed individually and scale in difficulty according to the steps conceived;
- organize collective reflection sessions in the classroom on the performance of the individual practice;
- edit oral and written materials that students can use to exercise during their independent practice;
- guide independent study sessions that require work in pairs or study teams where roles are exchanged;
- design teaching activities where previously automated operations are gradually integrated;
- elaborate metacognitive guidelines that guide students to reflect on the effectiveness of the strategies used in the practice of the operations and their future improvement, as well as constructive criticism regarding the performance of their classmates;
- reinforce positive performance, both in the execution of the note-taking operations and in the reflective processes that contribute to the habituation of such behaviors;
- provide concurrent feedback during the gradual practice of the constituent elements terminal operations in the integrated practice of the same that emphasizes the positive features of each student's performance that functions as motivation to continue developing the skill;
- provide gradual dishabituation to the use of note-taking by decreasing the number of segments to be interpreted once the study of broken consecutive interpretation is initiated.

The texts to be used in the classroom and in the independent study should be of a sociocultural nature and it is recommended that they be real transcriptions of a speech delivered orally. If written speeches are used, they should be carefully edited before bringing them to the classroom or to the independent study in order to replicate the characteristics of impromptu oral discourse. Complex structures that hinder comprehension should be eliminated, and crutches, redundancies and other elements that enrich the interpreter's experience should be



added.

The segments to be interpreted should increase in length until they reach two and a half minutes during the interlinguistic interpretation with note-taking, the final content of the first theme. Inversely, this duration will be reduced in the second theme, corresponding to broken consecutive interpretation up to segments of a minimum duration of several seconds.

In this second content, notes will be used only for decontextualized elements such as numbers, names, acronyms and series that are more difficult to remember.

Evaluation system

The search for information and equivalences of phrases and terms assigned as independent study will be considered account, as well as previous elaboration of notes and symbols. Daily class participation, and frequent and partial evaluation will be taken into account.

For the evaluation, frequent participation in classes and the quality of the student's reflective process will be taken into account, which should lead to the consolidation of a work and note-taking method, and thus to a higher quality in the students' interpretation product. In addition, as many simulation sessions as necessary during the course, the teacher will organize such sessions so that each student assumes the role of interpreter and in the other students, the professor or a guest assume the role of speaker. The rest of the students will assume the role of audience and evaluators.

These situations should be planned in such a manner that the student-interpreter demonstrates the professional skills and habits corresponding to all stages of the interpretive process and is evaluated on aspects such as: previous preparation, etiquette, use of the appropriate notepad, positioning in front of the audience, eye contact with the audience, control of facial expressions and hand movement and the quality and fidelity of the interpretive product.

This course has a final exam.

CONCLUSIONS

The action research hereby detailed revealed practical shortcomings in the teaching-learning process of Consecutive Interpretation in the English Language Major with a Second Foreign Language after empirical methods involving 10 students and five professors of said major were applied. These insufficiencies were reflected in the curricular



design of the course, characterized by vaguely stated aims, inadequate content with respect to the theoretical foundations of the interpretative modality it tributes to and imprecise methodological orientations.

The revision of the documentation governing the educational processes in Cuban Higher Education, the guiding documents of the major and the course in question, as well as the literature concerning consecutive interpretation training and the development of skills, highlighted the importance of the latter, as a didactic category, for determining courses' aims, contents to be taught and the pedagogy to be used to achieve the set goals, and from which evaluation criteria derive.

Thus, the main objective of the research was the curricular design of the analytical program for the Consecutive Interpretation course according to what is stipulated in Cuban Higher Education and correct didactics practices. It is distinguished by having a general aim and two specific aims for the two declared contents, adjusted to the characteristics of consecutive interpretation and its two types: classical and broken. The use of theoretical methods allowed to align such contents with those defended by the scientific community, with emphasis on the system of skills proposed that serves as a basis for the evaluation criteria to be used throughout the course. The pedagogy described in the program guides the professor through student-centered procedures that will make it possible for the students to gain autonomy in their training and conformation of individual working and note-taking methods.

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- Hortencia Cruz López: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Methodology, Writing - original draft, Writing - revision and editing.
- Rafael Rodríguez Devesa: Research, Formal analysis, Methodology.

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