



UM ESTUDO COMPARATIVO, ENTRE A CHINA E PORTUGAL, DA FORMAÇÃO PROFISSIONALIZANTE DO MESTRADO EM TRADUÇÃO

A COMPARATIVE STUDY, BETWEEN CHINA AND PORTUGAL, OF THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF THE MASTER'S COURSE IN TRANSLATION

UN ESTUDIO COMPARATIVO, ENTRE CHINA Y PORTUGAL, DE LA FORMACIÓN PROFESIONAL DEL MÁSTER DE TRADUCCIÓN

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RESUMO

Introdução: Com a globalização, a interdependência de competências e de domínios tem-se aprofundado mundialmente. A formação de tradutores competentes torna-se cada vez mais importante. Em 2007, a Comissão de Grau Académico da China começou a implementação piloto do MTI (*Master's in Translation and Interpreting*), sendo que até agora mais de duzentas universidades já receberam a qualificação para iniciar este curso. Diferente dos cursos académicos de mestrado, o MTI é um mestrado profissionalizante, cujo objetivo consiste na formação de tradutores competentes para que, depois da formação, sejam capazes de adaptar-se rapidamente às exigências do mercado laboral.

Objetivos: Devido ao início tardio e à pouca experiência nesta área, apesar de um crescimento muito rápido da quantidade de universidades com MTI, os tradutores formados neste mestrado não possuem as competências compatíveis com as exigências do mercado. Precisamente porque o nível de formação do MTI na China ainda dista muito de modelos maduros existentes no estrangeiro, propomos esta análise comparativa, entre a China e Portugal, do curso de mestrado em tradução. Com base no modelo teórico de Nord (2006) em relação à formação de tradutores, pretendemos realizar um estudo comparativo entre o curso de mestrado em tradução na China e um em Portugal. Concretamente, abordaremos os objetivos e os planos curriculares de ambos os mestrados, analisando as diferenças e semelhanças no que diz respeito à formação dos futuros profissionais.

Métodos: Segundo Nord (2006), além da competência de tradução, existem ainda as competências em línguas, a competência cultural, a profissional e a técnica. Na formação o foco deve incidir mais na competência de tradução, na profissional e na técnica. Aliás, Nord criou o modelo de análise textual, enfatizando a importância da análise e da decisão quanto aos fatores internos e externos aos textos. Assim, apresentou as sugestões para os passos a seguir na formação de tradutores, esclarecendo o carácter intercultural da tradução e os papéis dos tradutores.

Resultados: Neste trabalho comparam-se os planos curriculares dos ciclos de estudos de três universidades chinesas e uma portuguesa nomeadamente no que se refere às competências da tradução, linguística, cultural, profissional e teórica.

Conclusões: Esperamos que esta pesquisa possa servir como incentivo para a formulação de novas políticas no ensino do MTI, contribuindo para o aumento do ensino prático e especializado em alunos que desejam a profissão de tradutor.

Palavras-chave: Mestrado em Tradução; Formação Profissionalizante; China; Portugal; Mercado de Trabalho

ABSTRACT

Introduction: With globalization, the interdependence of skills and domains has deepened worldwide. The training of competent translators is becoming more and more important. In 2007, the Chinese Academic Degree Commission began the implementation of the MTI (*Master's in Translation and Interpreting*). So far, more than 200 universities have already received the qualification to start this course. Unlike the academic masters', the MTI is a professional master's degree, with the objective of training competent translators so that, after training, they can adapt quickly to the demands of the labour market.

Objectives: Due to the late start and little experience in this area, despite the very rapid growth of the number of universities with MTI, the translators trained in this master's course do not have the skills required by the labour market. For the time being, the level of MTI training in China is still very far from the foreign mature models, which resulted in this comparative analysis, between China and Portugal, of the master's degree in translation. According to Nord (2006), besides the translation skill, there are also linguistic, cultural, professional, and technical skills. During training the focus should mainly be on the translation, professional and technical skills. In fact, Nord created the textual analysis model, emphasizing the importance of the analysis and of the decision concerning the internal and external factors to the texts. This way, she made the suggestions for the steps to be followed in the training of translators, clarifying the intercultural character of the translation and the roles of translators.

Methods: Based on Nord's (2006) theoretical model concerning the training of translators, a comparative study is carried out between the master's course in translation in China and Portugal. Specifically, the objectives and the study plans of both masters' courses will be studied, analyzing the differences and similarities with regard to the training of future professionals.

Results: In this paper we compare the curricular plans of the three study cycles of Chinese and Portuguese universities, regarding translation, linguistic, cultural, professional and theoretical competences.

Conclusions: We hope that this research can become an incentive for new policy making in education, contributing to the increase of practical and specialized teaching in students who wish to become a translator.

Keywords: Master's Course in Translation; Professional Training; China; Portugal; Labour Market

RESUMEN

Introducción: Con la globalización, la interdependencia de competencias y de dominios se ha profundizado en todo el mundo. La formación de tradutores competentes es cada vez más importante. En 2007, la Comisión de Grado Académico de China comenzó la implementación piloto del MTI (*Master's in Translation and Interpreting*), hasta ahora más de doscientas universidades ya

recibieron la calificación para iniciar este curso. A diferencia de los másteres académicos, el MTI es un máster profesional, cuyo objetivo consiste en la formación de traductores competentes para que, después de la formación, sean capaces de adaptarse rápidamente a las exigencias del mercado laboral.

Objetivos: Debido al inicio tardío ya la poca experiencia en esta área, a pesar de un crecimiento muy rápido de la cantidad de universidades con MTI, los traductores formados en este máster no tienen las competencias compatibles con las exigencias del mercado. Por ahora, el nivel de formación de los MTI en China todavía se encuentra a una distancia nada menos dos modelos maduros existentes en el extranjero; como resultado, se nos ocurrió la idea de realizar un análisis comparativo de máster de traducción entre China y Portugal. Según Nord (2006), además de la competencia de traducción, existen aún la competencia lingüística, la cultural, la profesional y la técnica; en la formación, el foco debe incidir más en la de traducción, en la profesional y en la técnica. Por otra parte, Nord creó el modelo de análisis textual, enfatizando la importancia del análisis y de la decisión de los factores internos y externos a los textos y, con ello, ofreció las sugerencias sobre los pasos en la formación de traductores, aclarando el carácter intercultural de la traducción y los papeles de los traductores.

Métodos: Basado en el modelo teórico de Nord (2006) para la formación de traductores, tenemos la intención de realizar un estudio comparativo de los másteres de traducción entre China con Portugal, en particular, iremos a discutir los objetivos e los planos curriculares de los másteres entre ambos los países, analizando las diferencias y semejanzas en lo que se refiere a la formación de los futuros profesionales.

Resultados: En este trabajo se comparan los planes de estudio de los ciclos de tres grados de las universidades chinas y una portuguesa, en particular en lo relativo a las habilidades de traducción, lingüísticas, culturales, profesionales y teóricas.

Conclusiones: Esperamos que esta investigación pueda servir como incentivo para la formulación de nuevas políticas en la enseñanza del MTI, contribuyendo al aumento de la enseñanza práctica y especializada en alumnos que desean la profesión de traductor.

Palabras-Clave: Máster en Traducción; Formación Profesional; China; Portugal; Mercado de trabajo

INTRODUCTION

As exchanges between China and the outside world continue to deepen, the demand for high-level professional translators is increasingly urgent. Thus, based on foreign experience in translator training, the master's degree in Translation and Interpreting (hereinafter referred to as MTI) was established in China in 2007, with the purpose of training professional translators and interpreters. Due to its recent emergence and its practical nature, the MTI has attracted much attention from both the applicants and from universities. To date, 215 universities have opened the MTI course and this number continues to grow annually.

The MTI focuses mainly on the training of practical translation skills and provides knowledge strongly linked to future employment. Regarding the characteristics of the MTI orientation towards employment, Liu and Ren (2011, p. 47) claim that the MTI differs from traditional master's degrees in linguistics, literature or translation. In other words, the MTI is a professional type of master's degree rather than an academic one. According to these scholars, the professional master's degree is aimed at training professionals with high-level skills so that they meet the demands of the labour market. According to Zhong (cited by Liu & Ren, 2011, p. 47), the students' ability to practise translation or interpreting can be greatly enhanced through the MTI, while research is the emphasised competence acquired in traditional master's programmes. In Zhong's view, the focus of these two types of master's courses is different: the professional master's degree emphasises, above all, the capacity for translation practice (translation or interpreting), while traditional master's courses are characterised by the importance given to research skills. In this regard, Mu (2011, 78) clarifies that the goal of the MTI is to increase the students' practical capacity, whereas the goal of traditional master's degrees is to train students so that they are in full control of research methods and acquire complete knowledge of translation theories.

With the development of the MTI over the last 10 years, great progress has already been made. Being a new master's degree, the MTI professional teaching in China still presents some problems, such as: the goal of talent training is not clear enough; the study plan is not suitable for this purpose, etc. In order to further discuss these problems, we will draw inspiration from the five competences defined by Nord (2006) for the training of translators. According to Nord (2006), besides the translation competence itself, there are also linguistic, cultural, professional and technical competences. It should be emphasised that, during training, the focus should be mainly on the professional and technical competences of translation.

Based on Nord's theoretical model (2006) concerning the training of translators, we intend to carry out a comparative study between the master's degree course in translation in China and the one in Portugal. Specifically, we will address the training objectives and the course plans of both master's degrees, analysing the differences and similarities with regard to the training of future professional translators.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Christiane Nord, one of the representatives of the German school of functionalist translation, teaches at the University of Heidelberg. She has extensive experience in translator training, which has led her to systematically study translation teaching and to write the book entitled *Text Analysis in Translation: Theory, Methodology, and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation-Oriented Text Analysis*. In this book, Nord presents five competences for professional translators and for translation teaching, including:

- 1) Translational competence: conversion from source to target language;
- 2) Linguistic competence: native language and foreign language skills (lexicon, grammar, linguistic variants, registers, styles, textual genres, norms, etc.), which serve as a basis for the translation ability;
- 3) Cultural competence: a command of general knowledge of the target culture (involving many aspects: daily life, society, economy, politics, among others);
- 4) Professional competence: acquisition of knowledge in a specific area, such as the legal area, the political system, international business, digital technology, etc.;
- 5) Technical competence: the ability to research information or literature in some specific fields, the use of tools, dictionaries, etc.

Nord distinguishes translation competence from linguistic competence. As the aim of the MTI is to train professional translators and interpreters, the focus should be on reinforcing the professional and technical competences of translation, emphasising the professional part rather than emphasising the traditional ability to study foreign languages.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION AND PROBLEMS IN THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF THE MASTER IN TRANSLATION IN CHINA AND PORTUGAL

2.1. Training Objectives

2.1.1. Training objectives in China

In 2007, the State Council Academic Degrees Committee of China reviewed and approved the Master's Programme in Translation and Interpreting, and from then on, the MTI was officially implemented at Chinese universities. Since then, the MTI has developed for more than 10 years and the number of universities that have opened the MTI course has also increased from 15 to 215.

According to the Orientation Programme for the Training of MTI Students, defined by the State Council Academic Degrees Committee of China, the objective of the MTI is to train high-level translators and interpreters so that they can adapt to globalisation and to the necessary requirements for enhancing the country's competitiveness, while at the same time meeting China's economic, cultural and social needs in terms of translation.

We can take as an example the MTI course at the **University of Foreign Languages in Beijing**, in order to know the fulfilment of the objectives of the Orientation Programme in this university. So, let us see:

- To master basic theories, systematic knowledge and basic methods of scientific research in its field.
- To have the skills to carry out tasks (teaching, scientific research, diplomacy, management of work related to the subject, etc.) in universities, scientific research entities, government agencies, business entities, multinational organisations, among others.

We consider the University of Foreign Languages in Beijing as a university that is oriented to the teaching of foreign languages. Therefore, to make a more balanced comparison, we have also selected universities oriented to other areas, such as technologies, business and economics. Given the nature of this work, we have chosen only one university in the technical area and one university in the field of economics and business (Beihang University and the University of International Business and Economics).

At **Beihang University** (more technology-oriented), through systematic training and practice, the aim is to foster strong professional skills and to enable students to gain enriching professional experiences. After training, they must have high-level professional skills in the area of translation and interpreting, capable of meeting the development needs of the country.

Through MTI training, the **University of International Business and Economics** (oriented towards business and economics), aims to train high-level professional talents in the area of translation and interpreting, who have a thorough knowledge of both English and Chinese (displaying a practical capacity adjusted to high competitiveness), as well as specific knowledge in the field of translation, intercultural communication, commerce and international business, in addition to being able to adapt to translation or interpreting work in multinational companies, diplomatic entities, etc., and to meet the demands of the country's economic, cultural and social development.

Taking into account the objectives of the universities listed above, we notice that, in a sense, they are similar to the objectives set by the general educational orientation programme, which means that the autonomy of these universities is not absolutely guaranteed and the dependence of their objectives on the ones defined by the orientation programme is substantial. However, the objectives of the University of International Business and Economics are an exception, in that they are very well defined and

in accordance with the specific characteristics of this university (a university focused on the areas of business and economics), which can also prove its autonomous approach.

2.1.2. Training objectives in Portugal

Although the Portuguese Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education has not designed a specific programme to guide the training offered by the master's degrees in translation, after our research, we are inclined to the idea that, as a general rule, the master's degree in translation in Portugal follows the *Requirements for translation services of ISO 17100*.

According to *Translation services: Requirements for translation services of ISO 17100* (2015, p.7), translators should have the following competences:

- a) *Translation competence: the ability to translate content ... including the ability to address the problems of language content comprehension and language content production and the ability to render the target language content in accordance with the client-TSP agreement and other project specifications.*
- b) *Linguistic and textual competence in the source language and the target language: the ability to understand the source language, fluency in the target language, and general or specialized knowledge of text-type conventions. This linguistic and textual competence includes the ability to apply this knowledge when producing translation or other target language content.*
- c) *Competence in research, information acquisition, and processing: the ability to efficiently acquire the additional linguistic and specialized knowledge necessary to understand the source language content and to produce the target language content. Research competence also requires experience in the use of research tools and the ability to develop suitable strategies for the efficient use of the information sources available.*
- d) *Cultural competence: ability to make use of information on the behavioral standards, up-to-date terminology, value systems, and locale that characterize both source and target language cultures.*
- e) *Technical competence: the knowledge, abilities, and skills required to perform the technical tasks in the translation process by employing technical resources including the tools and IT systems that support the whole translation process.*
- f) *Domain competence: the ability to understand content produced in the source language and to reproduce it in the target language using the appropriate style and terminology.*

After comparing the two, we notice that the Chinese and Portuguese systems show substantial differences (there are no similarities). The specifications of the Orientation Programme for the Training of MTI Students are intended for training purposes inherent to the master's degree in translation and interpreting, whereas the specifications contained in the *Requirements for translation services of ISO 17100 (2015)* are merely requirements for translators to work as qualified workers. Despite this, we cannot deny the fact that, compared to the requirements set for the translators in Portugal, the objectives imposed by the Chinese committee for the master's degrees in translation and interpreting are much less precise, not to mention the fact that they have no reference to the translators' specific competences.

After careful consideration of the two orientation programmes, we will analyse and discuss how the norms and requirements are put into practice at the University of Aveiro (given time and space constraints, we will only focus on the University of Aveiro). Therefore, let us see the training objectives of the master's degree in Specialised Translation at the University of Aveiro:

- *The Master's programme in Specialised Translation is designed to provide 2nd cycle qualifications for graduate students wishing to strengthen their translation skills in the area of Legal Sciences or Health and Life Sciences. It therefore aims to:*
 - o *Provide advanced knowledge and adequate work methodologies so that students may develop their translation skills in a specialised field of study.*
 - o *Expand the students' translation skills in two foreign languages (English, French, German or Spanish).*
 - o *Provide students with adequate analysis and research skills in the field of specialised translation.*
 - o *Provide students with competences for assessing and managing specialised translation projects.*
 - o *Enable students to pursue post-graduate work at doctoral level.*

Comparing the specific objectives of the Chinese universities with those of the University of Aveiro, we notice the following:

- a) In the definition of the objectives of the University of Aveiro, it is clearly stated that this is a Master's Degree in Specialised Translation (hereinafter referred to as MST), which aims to strengthen translation skills in the area of Legal Sciences or Health and Life Sciences; while in the programmes of Chinese universities there is not much information in this respect (except for the University of International Business and Economics, which has four areas of specialisation: translation in the area of Business and Economics; translation in legal issues; interpreting in the area of international conferences; interpreting in business and economics);
- b) In China, the MTI (Master's Degree in Translation and Interpreting) usually has two strands (translation and interpreting). After entering this master's programme, students have to choose one of them at the beginning. However, among the objectives of the MST of the University of Aveiro, there is information on the fact that it is directed at translators and it excludes, by default, the possibility of including training for interpreters;

- c) In the objectives of the MST, there is also reference to the inclusion of two foreign languages, whereas, in the objectives of the MTI at the three Chinese universities, only the University of Beihang and the University of International Business and Economics clearly indicate that the programme involves but one foreign language (English). The case of Beijing Foreign Studies University is a bit different. As it is a foreign language teaching university, students can choose the MTIs involving two foreign languages (English and Russian, English and French, English and German, English and Spanish, English and Japanese). For this type of MTI (involving two foreign languages), besides the very strong competition among applicants in the application process, they have to study these foreign languages in the degree; otherwise, the application is forbidden. For MTI applicants whose only required language is English, there is no requirement as to their background;
- d) The MST at the University of Aveiro focuses mainly on specialised translation, whereas the MTI in most Chinese universities is not restricted to specialised translation. Sometimes, the focus can also be on literary translation. This is in line with what we indicated in the introduction to this study that many Chinese universities do not have a very clear definition of their training in terms of the MTI;
- e) The skills in management and evaluation of translation projects are not part of the objectives of the Chinese universities, although there are course units that tackle them in the curricula;
- f) MTI students from Chinese universities are generally not advised to continue their PhD studies. They can apply for doctoral degrees but are often discriminated against in the application. Since the MTI only lasts for two years and the academic master's degrees take three years, if MTI students apply for doctoral degrees, they are ranked less favourably in the shortlisting process. This is unfair to students of academic master's programmes in terms of total training duration (academic master's degrees also include master's programmes in translation, which take three years), but there is another constraint: students apply for the MTI expecting that, upon completion of their course, they can be translators with emphasis on professional practice rather than having to pursue their academic studies.

2.2. Course plan

Besides defining the course units that the students have to attend and the ones that are compulsory or optional, the course plan also specifies the sequential order of the course units and the distribution of their teaching hours. In fact, the course plan is also often accompanied by a brief presentation explaining the objectives, contents and requirements of the course units. Through the analysis of the organisation of the course units in the master's degree in translation of the universities of both countries, we can see how the skills of future translators are strengthened.

2.2.1. The Course Plan in China

According to the Orientation Programme for the Training of MTI Students, defined by the *State Council Academic Degrees Committee* of China, the course includes compulsory and optional course units, but the total number of ECTS credits should not be less than 30.

With regard to **compulsory course units**, the MTI has:

- Compulsory course units for all master's students (regardless of the course): Political theories (3); Chinese language and culture (3);
- Compulsory course units for MTI students: Introduction to translation (2); Interpreting theories (2); Introduction to translation studies (2);
- Compulsory course units for master's students of translation: Literary translation (4); Specialised translation (4);
- Compulsory course units for master's students of interpreting: consecutive interpreting (4); simultaneous interpreting (4).
- As for the **optional course units** (the choice of a second foreign language is mandatory), universities are free to open courses appropriate to their characteristics.
- **General course units**: Second foreign language (2); Brief history of translation in China and abroad (2); Translation criticism (2); Cultural communication (2); Contrastive linguistics between Chinese and foreign languages (2); Translation with CAT tools (2);
- **Interpreting course units**: Visual interpreting (2); Thematic interpreting (2); Interpreting at international conferences (2); Interpreting in business and economics (2); Legal interpreting (2); Diplomatic interpreting (2); Interpreting workshop (2);
- **Translation course units**: Specialised writing (2); Technical translation (2); Translation at international conferences (2); Translation in business and economics (2); Legal translation (2); Media translation (2); Translation of classical Chinese literature (2); Translation workshop (2); Translation and localisation management (2).

As a governmental document of mandatory enforcement, the orientation programme has set rigid regulation in many respects, so that the autonomy of Chinese universities has become less prevalent than that of foreign universities. However, the Chinese orientation programme also states that all universities can open special courses as compulsory options, according to the orientation programme and the characteristics of each institution.

2.2.2. The Course Plan in Portugal

Unlike the situation in China, there is no orientation programme in Portugal to guide the course plan of master's degrees in translation. The MST course plans offered by the Portuguese universities are, to a great extent, based on the characteristics of each university, on the students' perspective and on the set of competences with which they reach the second cycle of studies. Again, due to time and space constraints, we will only focus on the course plan of the University of Aveiro:

First semester:

- Project Management and Evaluation (6)
- **Paths: Legal Sciences**
- Language A I - Advanced Translation Practice (10) (French or English)
- Language B I - Advanced Translation Practice (10) (French, English, German or Spanish)
- Fundamentals in Science for Specialised Translation (4)
- **Path: Health and Life Sciences**
- Fundamentals in Science for Specialised Translation I (Chemistry) (4)
- Language A I - Advanced Translation Practice (10) (French or English)
- Language B I - Advanced Translation Practice (10) (French, English, German or Spanish)

Second semester:

- Revision Techniques (4)
- Orientation Seminar (6)
- **Path: Legal Sciences**
- Language A II - Advanced Translation Practice (10) (French or English)
- Language B II - Advanced Translation Practice (10) (French, English, German or Spanish)
- **Path: Health and Life Sciences**
- Language A II - Advanced Translation Practice (10) (French or English)
- Language B II - Advanced Translation Practice (10) (French, English, German or Spanish)

Third semester:

- CAT - Tools for Translation (8)
- Option:
- Technical Communication or Audiovisual Translation (6)
- Internship / Project / Dissertation (12)
- **Path: Legal Sciences**
- Fundamentals in Science for Specialised Translation II (4)
- **Path: Health and Life Sciences**
- Fundamentals in Science for Specialised Translation II (4)

Fourth semester:

- Internship / Project / Dissertation (30)

2.2.3. Comparative study of Course Plans

The comparison between the MST course plan, held at the University of Aveiro, and the Orientation Programme for the Training of MTI Students allowed us to conclude the following:

- a) On the training duration: the MST at the University of Aveiro has the same duration as the MTI in China;
- b) Regarding the organisation of course units: both the MST at the University of Aveiro and the MTI in China require that students attend compulsory and optional course units in order to obtain the necessary skills and credits.

In the MST at the University of Aveiro, students have to choose, at the beginning, a specific future area of study (legal area or health and life sciences) and the course plans also depend on the students' choices. We also noticed that the MST course units, at the University of Aveiro, offer preparation for translation only and not for interpreting, contrary to what happens in China.

On this separation between translation and interpreting in the MTI at Chinese universities, Liu and Ren (2011: 48) point out that it comes as a natural consequence of the fact that, with economic development, exchange activities have become increasingly rich and varied; but high-quality professional translators are very scarce and far from meeting real translation/interpreting needs. From their point of view, the main reason for this lack of qualified translators is the separation between translation and interpreting, without a specific strand being defined for each of them. This results in difficulties to find high-level professional workers who can meet the market needs. We notice then that the separation between specific strands of specialised application sometimes becomes more important than the simple separation between translation and interpreting.

Thus, what solutions can be pointed out? In fact, the comparison with the course plan of the University of Aveiro offers a different perspective. The University of Aveiro is an academic institution mainly focused on science and technology and this is what led to the creation of the MST oriented to the legal area and to health and life sciences. Although the MST is not separated into translation and interpreting and offers training in translation only, this does not affect the specialised translation training that the University promotes. In this light, and based on the MTI Orientation Programme, which defines that universities can open translation or interpreting courses based on the course plan of the orientation programme and on their own characteristics, it is important that the MTI course plans held in each Chinese university are adjusted to the characteristics of each institution.

For example, the University of International Business and Economics has different strands for both the MTI in translation and the MTI in interpreting (translation in the area of business and economics; translation in legal issues; interpreting in the area of international conferences; interpreting in business and economics). As its name suggests, it is a university focused on the areas of business and economics, and its separation into specialised areas also portrays this reality. Similarly, some universities with a more technical vocation, when offering an MTI, may consider creating an MTI with a focus on technical translation. The separation into specialised strands at the beginning can help universities to provide translators with better preparation and professional qualification so that they can meet the real needs of the market.

As indicated above, Nord (2006, p.155) proposed the acquisition of five competences for students to qualify as translators: translational, linguistic, cultural, professional and technical competences. By reinforcing these competencies, the problems faced by the MTI can be solved. Strengthening these competences can also break the traditional Chinese teaching model in this area by promoting a close combination of teaching, research and the practice of translation. Let us analyse each of them.

Translational competence - Nord (2006, p. 155) points out the need to reinforce this competence in translation classes. From his point of view, language competence should be second in translation classes. With the focus on translation practice, this competence can be reinforced. In this sense, the MTI course units related to translation practice, such as *Consecutive and Simultaneous Interpreting* and *Specialised and Literary Translation*, and the course units in *Advanced Translation Practice* of the MST, held at the University of Aveiro, can help a lot.

Linguistic competence - according to Nord (2006, pp. 155-166), the representation of linguistic competence comprises the words of one's native language and the foreign language, grammar, semantics, linguistic variants, linguistic registers, language standards, among others. As this competence lies at the heart of the exercises on translational competence, it cannot be in any way underestimated, even though it does not have the same importance as the previous competence. The reinforcement of the linguistic competence is made apparent in the MTI course plan (in the course unit of Chinese Language and Culture), but it is not shown in the MST course plan. In fact, almost all the MST students, generally master the vocabulary and grammar of these languages, because they come from a degree in foreign languages. For MTI students, however, in addition to the necessary reinforcement of foreign languages, written skills in their native language should also be strengthened. This is because, even though many students may well understand a given source text written in a foreign language, they find it difficult to express the ideas conveyed using their native language: vocabulary may be poor, with little tuning of synonyms or quasi-synonyms or subtle forms of expression, and linguistic registers may not be the most appropriate for the context, the target readers or the textual genre.

Cultural competence - according to Nord (2006, p. 161), the concept of this competence is very broad, including many aspects such as everyday life, society, the political system, customs and habits, among others. The reinforcement of this competence can be achieved through interdisciplinary training. Master's students (usually with degrees in foreign languages) lack knowledge in the economic and business fields, in legal sciences, and in technical and technological knowledge. In order to reinforce this competence, course units of general studies should be offered, including different areas (each area does not need to be very deepened; students only need to have some functional knowledge of the different contents). The areas can cover current social, political and economic issues, the environment, science, among others. These general studies course units can be offered as a set of modules to be chosen by the students. From the analysis carried out, we notice that neither the MTI nor the MST course plan offers course units related to the reinforcement of this competence.

Professional competence - as Nord states (2006, p. 161), this competence relates to the specific knowledge of professional fields (legal, economic, business, technological, etc.). Knowledge in any of these specific areas is essential if translators are to be specialised professionals. At first glance, it seems that this competence is in conflict with cultural competence. However, in fact, they have different emphases. For future translators, mastery of a specific area is very important, as it will help them to be specialised professionals when entering the job market, without having to rely on the acquisition of this competence through experience or individual study. With the natural limits on one's level of knowledge, one cannot expect the translator to be versed in all areas. We can expect the translator to master the knowledge of a given area (specific terms, general discourse and textual genres). On the one hand, translators should know a little about everything (cultural competence); on the other hand, they should

be “specialised translators” in at least one area. We believe that, at a basic level (after the first cycle of studies), translators should identify terms specific to an area and be able to investigate the concepts, discourse and textual genres of that area; but then, at a more advanced level of study, they should be able to deepen their knowledge in a specific area. In our opinion, the reinforcement of both cultural and professional competences can be achieved with the support of other departments or faculties, through lectures or course units specifically designed for these students. Once again, after the analysis carried out, we can conclude that there are no course units related to the reinforcement of this competence in the MIT or in the MST.

Technical competence - Nord (2006, p. 161) points out that in order to strengthen the students’ qualifications, the development of their technical competence should not be ignored. The reinforcement of this competence can be achieved concretely through the following course units: Translation with CAT tools (MTI, optional); Translation and localisation management (MTI, optional); Project management and evaluation (MST, mandatory); Technological tools to support translation (MST, mandatory); and Technical Communication (MST, optional). The compulsory or optional nature of the course units shows that the emphasis differs greatly between universities in both countries. For the course plan of the MTI in China, they are optional course units; however, in the course plan of the MST at the University of Aveiro, two of the three are compulsory course units. Nowadays, translators work in an increasingly professional market, especially in the field of translation, and efficiency and professionalism are factors of paramount importance, which can be achieved through training in this area. Although the reinforcement of the technical competence in the orientation programme has not been given the importance it deserves, we believe that, by exchanging experiences with other foreign universities, where the master’s degree course in translation is successful and with the pressure of the translation market, the MTI course plan in China will consider other factors that may influence the reinforcement of this competence.

CONCLUSIONS

In the present study, we based ourselves on Christine Nord's (2006) considerations on the five-skills approach that translators should have; we carried out a comparative analysis between the master’s degree in translation from three Chinese universities (University of Foreign Languages in Beijing, oriented to the teaching of foreign language); Beihang University (focused on the technical field); University of International Business and Economics (oriented towards the economic and business areas) and that of the University of Aveiro, in order to identify similarities and differences in terms of training objectives and course plans (regarding the course plans, the comparative analysis was carried out between the Orientation Programme for MTI Students and the course plan of the University of Aveiro).

The comparative analysis has led us to conclude that the MTI orientation programme is still at an exploratory stage, and the level of MTI training in China is still far from the mature models abroad, which is reflected in the training objectives, for example. The objectives of the MTI and the master's degree courses in translation at Chinese universities are not as detailed and clear as those of the MST at the University of Aveiro. There are no specific areas in most MTIs in China. Regarding the course plans, the comparative study showed us that the MTI course plan did not give the attention it deserved to the course units related to the reinforcement of technical competence; both the MTI and the MST course plans do not include general studies units (cultural competence), nor specialised knowledge in the field of professional areas (professional competence).

We hope that this research can serve as a starting point for the adoption of new policies regarding the teaching of MTIs, working as a contribution that helps to increase the practical and specialised teaching of students who aspire to become translators, thus fostering the steady development of the teaching of translation in China.

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