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Developing Selected Components of Translator Competence through the Analysis of Discourse Moves

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Abstract: One of the ways in which to augment the development of translator competence in courses delivered as part of university-level programmes in Translation Studies is the implementation of collaborative learning, as it has been promoted by D. Kiraly (2015), K. Klimkowski (2015), or G. Massey (2017). The work mode which seems to best support the development of translator competences through telecollaboration are team translation projects (cf. D. Kiraly & S. Hofmann 2016). However, Online Intercultural Exchanges (OIEs), which were initially introduced to develop foreign language learners' intercultural communication competence, can also – when adequately geared towards that end – be implemented to foster other components of translator competence. This paper reports on research into what behavioural and cognitive components of the language and culture component of students' translator competence can be identified for further development through the analysis of discourse moves in TS students' online communication.

Keywords: online intercultural exchanges; translator competence; discourse moves, linguistic analysis

Introduction

The use of computer-mediated communication for educational purposes has had a relatively long tradition. Initially, it took the form of virtual exchanges (VEs) which aimed to hone foreign language learners' linguistic skills through interaction with partners from abroad (M. Dooly 2017). Over time, VEs have developed into the more elaborate format of Online Intercultural Exchanges (OIEs), which – when introduced to foreign language education well over 20 years ago – involved computer-mediated interaction between physically distanced student groups with a view to developing the participants' intercultural competence (R. O'Dowd 2016).

However, since then OIEs have evolved to cover educational objectives beyond language learning, e.g. to provide students from remote areas with an opportunity to negotiate their socio-political perspectives, as was the case with the Soliya Connect Program, where students from the USA, the Middle East and North Africa discussed potentially divisive issues (F. Helm 2016).

Other OIEs promote collaboration in various professional areas, including business and management, e.g. in the X-Culture project (V. Taras et al. 2013), or education, environment and health – within the Global BEEHIVE project (GPE 2022). OIEs have also entered translator education, where they have been successfully harnessed

to develop students' metacognitive competence (M. Marczak 2019). The present paper examines both theoretically and empirically the extent to which the behavioural (action-related) and cognitive (knowledge-related) elements of the language and culture component of translator competence are amenable to development through OIEs.

1. Developing behavioural and cognitive components of translator competence through IOEs

The choice of competences to be developed in university-level programmes in Translation Studies (TS) could potentially be informed by a number of sources, including translation theories, TS research findings, students' preferences or translation professionals' personal experiences.

However, a synthesised overview of the competences to be developed in TS students is offered by the so-called multi-componential models of translation competence proposed to date, e.g. by the EMT Expert Group (EMT 2017), S. Göpferich (2009), PACTE Group (2005), or H. Risku/ A. Dickinson/ R. Pircher (2010), to name a few. Multi-componential models have received considerable criticism on the grounds that they tend to exhibit a bias towards particular institutional interests and are behind market demands (A. Pym 2003), or that they are simply product of theorising (D. Kiraly/ S. Hofmann 2016). At the same time, the inclusiveness of the models – particularly pedagogical ones – makes them convenient resources through which to inform TS course design.

A model of this kind is TransComp, which was proposed by S. Göpferich (2009) as a pedagogical adaptation of the PACTE model of professional translation competence (PACTE Group 2005). As in PACTE, Göpferich (2009) makes strategic sub-competence the centre of her model defining it as the ability to plan and evaluate the translation process, activate relevant sub-competencies, compensate for deficiencies, identify translation problems and apply adequate solutions to ensure efficiency. What is more, Göpferich (2009) relates it to situational motivation, which affects the extent to which strategic sub-competence is utilised to activate the other sub-competences in concrete contexts. She builds on PACTE's main components – strategic sub-competence, bilingual sub-competence, extra-linguistic sub-competence, translation knowledge sub-competence, instrumental sub-competence and psychophysiological factors – by appending them with translation routine activation competence, which involves the knowledge and the abilities needed in order to recall and apply necessary transfer operations that result in acceptable translation. She also singles out psychomotor competence, which permits the translator to read and write with the use of electronic tools without being distracted from translation problems.

In addition, she superimposes upon the entire model three elements affecting the efficiency with which translation is performed: familiarity with the translation brief and translation norms, the translator's self-concept and the awareness of, and adherence, to professional ethos, as well as the translator's psycho-physical dispositions, e.g. intelligence or perseverance.

From the European perspective, the most important model of translation competence was developed within the European Master's in Translation (EMT) project,

which was initiated by the European Commission in 1990s to introduce uniformity across university-level translator education programmes across Europe in response to the provisions of the Bologna process. The model is currently being used to inform translator education at 85 different higher education institutions (EMT 2022). Its latest version (EMT 2017) lays out its sub-competences as mutually complimentary and comprises: (i) language and culture competence, which cover communication skills, , transcultural and sociolinguistic awareness; (ii) translation competence, which entails strategic, methodological and thematic competence; (iii) technology competence, including the use of translation technologies, text analysis tools and any other IT tools relevant to translation; the new element of (iv) personal and interpersonal competence, which comprises self-learning, self-assessment and collaborative learning skills, as well as (v) service provision competence.

Table 1 provides a tabular analysis of which of the EMT sub-competences, each labelled as behavioural (B) or cognitive (C), seem particularly amenable to development through OIEs and which of them may be ill-suited for that work mode.

1. EMT Competence Areas	**2. Components amenable to development via OIEs**		**3. Components ill-suited for development via OIEs**	
Language and culture	Knowledge about language	C	_____	
	Knowledge about culture	C		
	Language skills,	B		
	Intercultural communication skills	B		
Translation	(Multimodal) translation of general material	B	Domain knowledge	C
	Source evaluation skills	B	Implementing instructions, style guides, and translation conventions	B
	Document analysis skills,	B		
	Summarising, rephrasing, restructuring and adaptation skills	B	Domain-specific translation skills	B
Technology	Adapting to new tools	B	Using CAT tools	B
	Using IT applications, including office software	B	Using MT systems	B
			Using workflow management software	B
Personal/ interpersonal	Planning, time management	B	_____	
	Complying with deadlines, instructions	B		
	Using social media,	B		
	Self-reflection, self-learning skills	B		
Service provision	_____		Market requirements	C
			Professional standards	C
			Dealing with clients	C
			Project management	B
			Reviewing language services	B

Table 1. Developing translation competence via OIEs.

It must be underlined that due the spatial limitations of this paper, Table 1 has an illustrative function only and some of sub-competences have been left out of it. However, it was done only where the sub-competences already featured in the table suffice to conclude that particular major EMT competences are amenable (column 2), or ill-suited (column 3), for development through OIEs.

As the table illustrates, all the constituents of two major competences (language and culture competence and personal and interpersonal competence) seem to lend themselves to development via OIEs. It is so because OIEs involve the use of language skills and bring students in contact with other cultures, thus creating opportunities for exploring both native and target language and culture, as well as they foster students' practical language skills, including intercultural communication skills. In addition, OIEs permit students to hone their personal and interpersonal skills such as the ability to plan actions, manage time, or use social media responsibly. At the same time, they also have the potential to support the development of metacognitive competences through self-reflection and self-learning, albeit as irrelevant to the scope of the present paper, that category will not be further discussed.

Service provision competence seems impossible to develop via general-purpose OIEs, which – *inter alia* – stems from the fact that it would require students to monitor market demands, deal with clients and meet their requirements, implement professional standards, manage translation projects or review language services. For that, students would need to engage in professional or simulated translation projects, which can only be done in professional settings, or in online collaborative translation projects, not OIEs.

The remaining two competences (translation competence and technology competence) can – to a greater of lesser extent – be developed even via general-purpose OIEs. Yet, the development of some of their elements seems to be difficult. As for translation competence, OIEs might involve students in the translation of general content, e.g. to explicate aspects of their native culture to strangers, evaluate the source text before translation, analyse documents, or summarise, rephrase, restructure and adapt in order to facilitate intercultural communication. However, it would be much more difficult for students to develop domain knowledge and domain-specific translation skills, as specialised translation or translation in accordance with professional translation conventions by definition fall beyond the scope of OIEs.

As far as technology competence goes, students in OIEs are likely to adapt to and use new IT tools, including generic office software, e.g. online communicators, but it is impossible to envisage that students will be using Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) tools, workflow management software, or that they will be assessing the relevance of Machine Translation (MT) systems to a translation workflow, which are all skills applicable to translation projects or professional translation.

2. A text-linguistic analysis of discourse moves

OIEs will be most effective when enhanced through retrospective reflections based on the analysis of in-project student-student interactions. As Apedaile and Schill underline, ‘to develop intercultural competence, learners need opportunities to reflect in an

intentional way on the very real shifts and threats to their identities as they learn a new language and learn how to cope in a new culture' (S. Apedaile/ L. Schill 2007: 9).

By the same token, interactions which occur in other types of OIEs, including those which are administered to develop translator competence, need to be facilitated by post-experience reflection, with the caveat that in translator education settings the data under review and the nature of the reflection need to be geared towards relevant learning outcomes. Pertinently to the research which the present paper reports on, this kind of retrospective reflection might focus on selected cognitive and behavioural components of translator/ translation competence. The former would entail various types of declarative and procedural (*know-how*) knowledge relating to the translation process or the profession at large, e.g. knowledge about culture, thematic knowledge, while the latter would cover relevant skills and abilities, including adaptation skills, the ability to use CAT tools or project management skills (cf. Table 1).

The present paper focuses on the development of the cognitive and behavioural elements of language and culture competence – including interaction skills – via the text-linguistic analysis of student-student communication in an OIE. An example of linguistic analysis that can be used to examine online interaction has been discussed by Wise and Chiu (2011), who demonstrated how by analysing information sharing or exploring dissonance and negotiation of meaning or using linguistic content analysis and statistical discourse analysis the process of knowledge construction in online discussions can be investigated. Although Wise and Chiu (2011) conducted their analysis for the purpose of linguistic research, their idea could be used as a post-OIE task, whereby students could reflect on their own and partners' interaction patterns, repertoire of linguistic means used to communicate and roles adopted in online exchanges. As a result, students would be able to develop, e.g. their knowledge of native and foreign language and culture (cognitive element) or possible communication practices (behavioural element).

Chiu (2000) also discussed how interaction data collected during a team collaboration project can be utilised to explore students' problem-solving actions. He proposed that such individual actions fall into three major categories: (i) turns constituting an evaluation of other interlocutors' actions, (ii) turns carrying knowledge content, and (iii) turns with invitational intent, and demonstrates how students' use of the these interactive actions indicate specific degrees of cooperation, where knowledge can be constructed in a team through independent actions (e.g. piecemeal guessing, lecture and accepted demonstration) or cooperative actions (e.g. joint reconstruction, and guided construction). Again, his categorisations of interactive individual actions, team roles and strategies might be used as a means of focusing students' reflections in OIEs on the aforementioned aspects on their interaction, thus permitting them to increase their knowledge of native and foreign language and culture (cognitive element) and repertoire of interactive practices (behavioural element).

Sauro/ O'Dowd/ Spector-Cohen (2020) presented how a teacher-led analysis of the linguistic and interactional features such as the use of emotive words, personal forms of address, question posing and emoticons and tone tags – which were originally identified by Ware (2013) in messages which students sent to one another in an

American (USA)-Spanish online cultural exchange – could be implemented to increase the quality of interaction and enrich learning experiences in VEs.

Last but not least, Ryshina-Pankova (2018) conducted research on discourse moves and their linguistic realisations which were used by students in an American (USA)-German synchronous written online exchange, drawing upon the principles of systemic-functional linguistic analysis, as proposed by Eggins and Slade (1997).

Her analysis involved four major interactional features: initiating moves, responding moves, continuing moves and rejoinder moves, each performed with a different intent. The initiating moves which she examined were used by the exchange participants to introduce new ideas to the online discussion and they were linguistically realised as commands, fact-giving statements or statements expressing opinions, and fact- or opinion-giving open/ closed questions.

The responding moves that she subjected to scrutiny were the ways in which the students reacted to their co-communicators' interactional moves by supporting (interaction-supporting moves), developing (interaction-developing moves) or challenging (confronting moves) what had been communicated. Depending on their linguistic realisations, these three moves were further categorised as follows. The interaction-supporting moves included respond-answer, respond-agree, respond-register, and respond-acknowledge moves. The interaction-developing moves comprised respond-elaborate, respond-extend and respond-enhance moves, while the confronting moves involved respond-contradict and respond-withhold moves.

The continuing moves analysed by Ryshina-Pankova (2018) were those which individuals performed to expand their own previous moves by elaborating on what they had stated (continue-elaborate moves), extending moves produced before (continue-extend moves) and enhancing the original move (continue-enhance moves).

The last category of moves included in Ryshina-Pankova's (2018) research was constituted by rejoinder moves, which the exchange participants used to take the conversation with their partners to a deeper level through alignment and disalignment strategies. The alignment moves were used in instances where the students elicited more information in order to obtain clarification (rejoinder-clarify), verified the information they had already gained (rejoinder-confirm), added more information in order to receive confirmation (rejoinder-probe) or provided clarifications themselves (rejoinder-resolve). The disalignment moves consisted in the students questioning their interlocutors' right to voice opinions (rejoinder-challenge moves), questioning the legitimacy or relevance of a move that had already been performed (rejoinder-rebound moves), contradicting a challenge (rejoinder-refute moves), or offering an alternative position (rejoinder-rechallenge moves).

The brief review of selected research studies on the linguistic-interactional aspects of VEs which has been provided above already suggests a choice of ways in which the text-linguistic analysis of records of students' communication in VE projects might be used to answer the calls for increasing the effectiveness of telecollaboration and enhancing the learning experience through retrospective reflection. What needs to be decided upon is what learning goals the above-cited kinds of analyses will serve in particular learning contexts. Some of the analyses could be used to stimulate the

development of various components of intercultural communication competence (cf. S. Sauro/ R. O'Dowd/ E. Spector-Cohen (2020), while others might also serve the purpose of developing selected aspects of translator competence such as personal and interpersonal competence, including elements of more generic transferrable skills, e.g. planning, time management, or responsible use of social media (cf. M. Marczak 2020).

What follows is an account of research into how the analysis of discourse moves conducted by the teacher overseeing an OIE, held as part of an MA programme in Translation Studies, can be implemented to reveal lapses in students' online communicative performance and identify potential areas for student reflection which would augment the development of selected cognitive and behavioural aspects of translator competence, particularly within the language and culture competence.

3. Identifying cognitive and behavioural components of translator competence for post-experience reflection development of in an OIE

The research was conducted during an OIE which was held as part of the 10th iteration of the Global Understanding project, coordinated by the Global Partners in Education (GPE 2022) consortium. The project involved students from East Carolina University, USA (ECU) and Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland (UJ) who worked face-to-face (f2f) and online to hone their online communication skills. When in class, the students split into two groups, with one participating in a videoconferencing session and the other using laptops to work in small teams via text-based online chat. Both groups discussed a total of five topics: College Life, Family and Cultural Traditions, Meaning of Life and Religion, Stereotypes and Prejudices; and Free Topic. In addition, teamed-up ECU and UJ students designed joint multimedia presentations about selected aspects of culture in the Telecollaborative Project, on which they worked at home.

The research aimed to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Which discourse moves did the OIE students tend to use, underuse and not use at all?

RQ2: What cognitive and behavioural elements of the language and culture component of translator competence for retrospective student reflection and further development can be identified on the basis of the findings?

The students' discourse moves were analysed in chat data collected from 10 participants, 9 females and a male, all in their early twenties: 6 ECU and 4 UJ students. The UJ participants were TS students, while their ECU partners majored in health and natural sciences. The students worked in four chat teams: Team 1 contained two students (S1, ECU and S2, UJ), Team 2 – three students (S1, ECU, S2, ECU and S3, UJ), Team 3 – another three students (S1, UJ, S2, ECU and S3, ECU), while Team 4 – two students (S1, ECU and S2, UJ).

To compute the frequencies of the students' use of particular discourse moves the online chat data were coded in the R software. Subsequently, numerical data were

entered into MS Excel to produce relevant bar charts. Subsequently, the research data were analysed qualitatively.

The data analysis revealed that the students collectively produced a total of 302 moves, including 66 initiating moves (IMs), 150 responding moves (RMs), 50 continuing moves (CMs) and 36 rejoinder moves (RejMs), with the frequencies of particular moves illustrated in Figure 1.

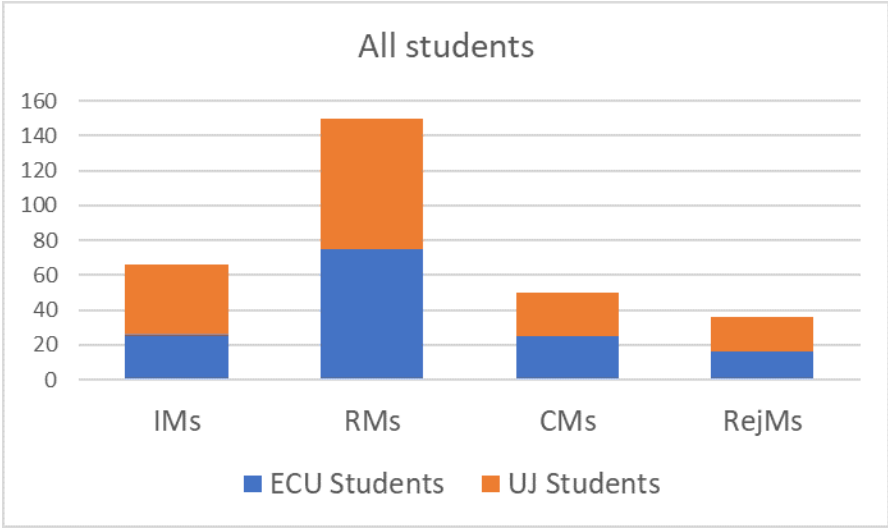

Figure 1. Frequencies of discourse moves in all teams.

Interestingly, the UJ students – although outnumbered by colleagues from ECU – produced more IMs (40 vs. 26) and RejMs (20 vs. 16) and exactly the same number of RMs (75) and CMs (25). A breakdown of the frequencies with which the students from both institutions used particular realisations of the four major discourse move types are presented in Figure 2.

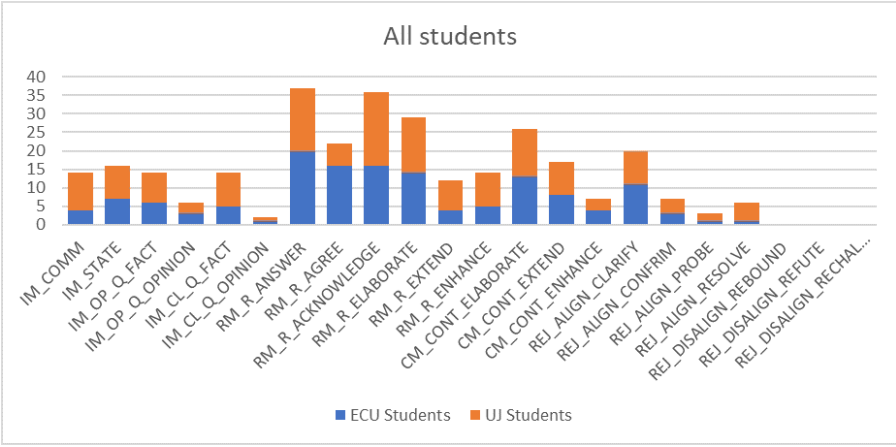

Figure 2. Frequencies of discourse move realisations in all teams.

Due to the scarcity of space, the cognitive and behavioural elements of the language and culture component of translator competence for further development were identified on the basis of a detailed analysis of students' performance in Team 1, which was selected randomly. As Figure 3 illustrates, in Team 1 S1 produced 4 IMs, 17 RMs, 2 CMs and no RejMs, while S2 produced 8 IMs, 24 IMs, 3 CMs and 4 RejMs.

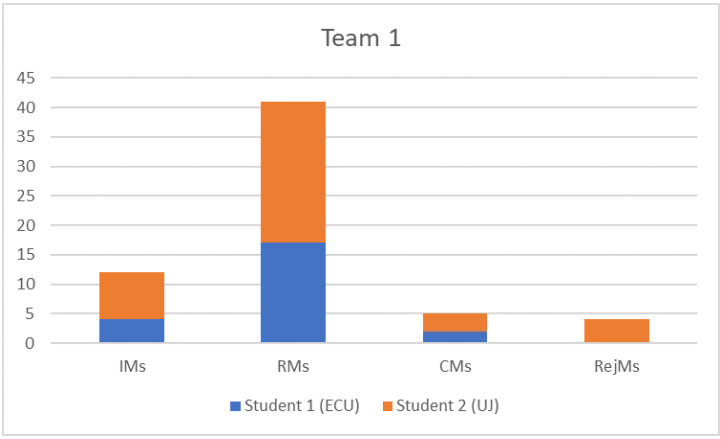

Figure 3. Frequencies of discourse moves in Team 1.

Student 1 was the only one to use RMs. Moreover, s/he produced more RMs than IMs, which seems to demonstrate that their communication transcended the simple pattern of question-answer. Apparently, both students made increased efforts to provide their interlocutors with more elaborate answers to the questions they were asked. S2 produced more IMs, RMs, and CMs, which seems to indicate that their involvement in the conversation was slightly larger. Since the very number of discourse moves may be misleading as an indicator of involvement, the total number of words used by both interlocutors was additionally computed, and it corroborated S2's larger verbosity, as S2 used a total of 529 words, while S1 used 33 words less (496). S2's use of RejMs, which help sustain the conversation, also seems to confirm his/her active involvement. Figure 4 presents how exactly particular discourse moves were realised by Team 1 members.

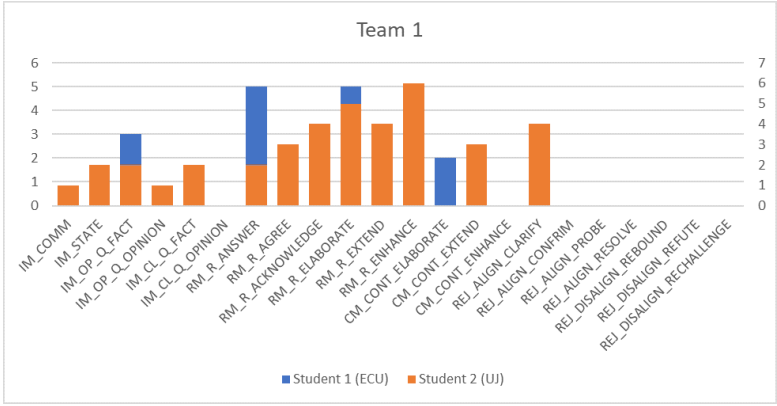

Figure 4. Frequencies of discourse move realisations in Team 1.

As it can be seen in Figure 4, S2 initiated discussion in a number of ways, using comments, statements, open questions about facts and opinions, as well as closed questions about facts. S1 limited themselves to statements and open questions about facts.

What draws attention is that in Team 1 only one question was asked about the interlocutor's opinion, which may imply that both students believed they could elicit factual information from one another. In the context of intercultural learning, it might indicate both students' reliance on the interlocutor's answers as facts. This opens room for improving the students' cultural discovery and learning skills, which could be achieved by making the students reflect on the extent to which they can genuinely treat their partner's responses as facts rather than personal opinions. The students need to be made aware that the validity of their partner's responses cannot be taken for granted, thus the responses should be treated more as opinions, personal beliefs, or interpretations of reality. To increase their partner's awareness of that, the students might ask questions about opinions rather than facts, unless their partner validates their own responses with credible evidence.

As for responding moves, S1 realised them mostly by providing straight-forward answers to the questions received, but also made 6 attempts to elaborate on the answers they provided. To a lesser degree they expressed acknowledgement (1), agreement (2), extended (2) or enhanced (2) their responses. S2 tended to express agreement slightly more, elaborated on their responses to exactly the same extent (6 times), but made noticeably more attempts to express acknowledgement (4), extend (4) and enhance (6) their responses. The pattern of responding moves in the conversation in Team 1 might indicate that while S1 decided to provide matter-of-fact responses to his/her partner's questions, S2 took more care to go beyond straight-forward answers and develop a little on them, thus possibly providing more information. S2 also took care to express acknowledgement, which might suggest their attempts to seek alignment with the team partner. Further attempts to deepen the conversation through continuing moves (3) and rejoinder-clarify moves seem to corroborate S2's intention to explore the content of the discussion and elicit more information from his/her partner. In contrast, S1 appeared to be more passive in this respect.

It is also worth noting that the most intricate realisations of rejoinder moves expressing alignment and disalignment were not used at all, which opens room for practice devoted to them with regard to both their functions and usage.

4. Conclusions

When it comes to the development of cognitive components of translator competence, the research results revealed which discourse moves the students tend to neglect in online interactions. Familiarising the students with those results would enable them to learn about the nature, realisations and functions of discourse moves in communicative situations (knowledge about language). It would also help in focusing their attention on language as an element of culture and the cultural information which they have been able to elicit or explicate through specific discourse moves (knowledge about culture). Consequently, they would also be able to increase their knowledge about culture at large, the culture of the project partner, as well as their native culture, which they may

need to explore and explicate to their partners (knowledge about culture). All in all, the students would be able to develop all the cognitive components of the language and culture competence. As an aside, by using the metalanguage necessary to refer to discourse moves, they might also additionally increase their thematic competence in the area of linguistics, which is part of translation competence.

As far as the development of behavioural components goes, the results reveal the students' interactional practices, and if the data are scrutinised, they are likely to increase the students' repertoire of communication devices which they will be able to use in future intercultural exchanges. What is more, the students could be asked to test these devices, e.g. especially the discourse moves which have been found to be underrepresented in their language performance so far – in further OIE interactions or other communicative situations, also outside the study context. By testing the devices in practice, the students would have an opportunity to rehearse particular discourse moves rather than learning about them vicariously. Thus, they would have a chance to gain more confidence in using the discourse moves and to increase the number of communication devices in actual performance (intercultural communication skills). It needs to be observed that those devices do not only facilitate communication at large and foster students' interpersonal competence, which involves the use of social media, but also develop elicitation skills, which in the long run is likely to increase the scope of the students' intercultural learning, as more elicitation means more cultural material for analysis.

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