
Conceptualizing Documentary Research in Translation Didactics: Trends and Outlook

Mohammed BERRABAH¹, Mahbouba BEKKOUCHE²

¹University of Algiers 2, mohammed.berrabah@univ-alger2.dz

²University of Algiers 2, mahbouba.bekouche@univ-alger2.dz

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Abstract:

This paper aims to explore the documentary research practices as well as its role in the field of translation, a specific focus on specialized texts. It also highlights the cognitive importance of documentary research in translator training and professional practice, and emphasize its contribution to developing non-linguistic competencies, acquiring specialized subject-matter knowledge, and mastering terminology. This study suggests that the integration of systematic documentary research practices into translator training can significantly improve training outcomes at universities. It also enables students to develop a broader general culture and information literacy, strengthen their translational competence, and adapt more effectively to the market demands.

Keywords: Documentary research, translation studies, information literacy, specialized translation, terminological competence.

1. Introduction:

Documentary research (hereinafter DR) is an important tool for professional and translator trainees alike. It is the systematic process of using different information resources, based on data mining in order to collect, analyze, and present information extracted from different documents, such as books, manuscripts, photographs, and other materials, for the purpose of understanding a particular topic.

Translation scholars subscribe to the belief that DR is an increasingly important issue in the field, notably in specialized translation, where professional translators likely need to consult external sources such as documents, dictionaries (paper or online), parallel texts, and human resources in order to bridge the information gap, complement their previous knowledge and develop their procedural competence so as to provide a high-quality translation.

In this paper, we will address the topic of documentary research in general, followed by its uses in the field of translation and its epistemological importance. We will then examine the

¹ Corresponding Author : Mohammed BERRABAH

acquisition of non-linguistic competence by translation students, the role of subject-matter knowledge in the translation process, and the enhancement of students' translational performance in specialized domains. This will be explored through the various types and stages of documentary research techniques. We will also review how this topic has been addressed in translation studies, before turning to its textual, electronic, and human resources, as well as the extent of their reliability and credibility. Furthermore, attention will be given to the skills required to acquire specialized knowledge and terminology, and to investigate them across different types of specialized dictionaries, by discussing the discipline of terminology.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Renewed Interest in Documentary Research

Recent developments in the field of translation have led to a renewed interest in documentary or information search at the professional or student levels. In fact, several attempts have been made to tackle this issue and suggest procedures for the benefit of students who may need them when dealing with specialized texts.

Although it is often mentioned in articles about specialized translation, translation competence (as is the case with the PACTE Group) or any other subject related to information search behavior of translators, surprisingly few studies have systematically investigated the importance of DR in developing a documentary competence that allow students or professional translators to provide high-quality translations.

In this article, we commence with a conceptual analysis of the meaning of documentary research and then provide a synthesis of its use and importance in the field of specialized translation.

2.1. Documentary Research as a Problem-Solving Tool

According to PACTE group (in Vanessa Raído, 2014: 17), documentary research can also be used as a tool to solve translation problems and make decisions in this regard. This procedure requires “two types of support: internal and external”. These two supports are respectively related to “the retrieval of knowledge from the translator's long-term memory” and “the consultation of external sources”. The PACTE Group, for instance, stresses the importance of “integrating research and knowledge into translation problem-solving and decision-making processes”.

There is, in fact, an organic and complementary relationship between documentary research and specialized texts. Specialized texts, with their precise terminology and concepts laden with extralinguistic knowledge, present translators with cognitive and terminological challenges that necessitate documentary research.

This research acts as the tool that allows the translator to gather and verify information from various sources like specialized dictionaries, scientific articles, legal statutes, catalogs, or databases. This ensures a deep and accurate understanding of the text. Thus, documentary research becomes the bridge connecting the translator to the specialized text; a successful and reliable translation cannot be achieved without a systematic approach.

2.2.The Specialized Text:

Specialized texts carry knowledge and insights for the reader, and their comprehension often becomes more difficult the deeper one delves into the field to which they belong. The reader of a specialized text is not like the reader of a general text, whose codes are easier to decipher and analyze thanks to the general vocabulary that makes up its fabric—unlike the terminology of the specialized text. This is something that the translator into another language must take into account when dealing with such a specialized text.

Furthermore, Christine Durieux (1996-1997) believes that specialized language is “a language practiced by a group in order to respond to its specific needs in the field of internal communication”. This clarifies that the “needs” refer to the dissemination and exchange of information that carries a specialized character among these specialists in a precise and clear way.

According to Pierre Le Rat (1995), the specialized text is any medium—whether paper-based, electronic, or otherwise—on which ideas are recorded, mental representations are constructed, and information is conveyed through sentences, expressions, forms, and other means. In this context, it is essential to emphasize the complementary relationship between the specialized text and specialized language. Specialized texts, as Le Rat notes (*ibid.*), play a significant role in defining the very nature of the specialized language in which they are embedded. Without them, it would not be possible to speak of a specialized language. Research studies, theses, presentations, lectures, discussions, minutes, encyclopedia entries, abstracts, newsletters, specialized dictionaries, glossaries, biographies, model guides, and similar works—all constitute specialized texts that contribute to delineating the specialized field.

Moreover, Daniel Gile (2005) argues that specialized language, or language of specialization, is entirely different from other forms of language. He states that each specialized field has at least one language of specialization, distinct from general language and from other specialized languages, confirming that the most apparent aspect of these differences lies in terminology, in the form of specialized terms, which may lead one to believe that technical writing is nothing more than a matter of dictionaries and their scope.

Having identified the nature of specialized language—which characterizes technical fields and reflects their particular way of expressing ideas and information—we can affirm that language remains the primary means of transmitting knowledge and experience to readers. Even if it contains specific structures, expressions, and technical terms that are only understood by specialists in a given field, it nonetheless always conveys knowledge and experience, regardless of the domain in which it is used.

Thus, we can affirm that the specialized text is one of the most challenging fields for the translator due to its unique characteristics, whether in terms of style and wording or in terms of the vocabulary and terminology used (حدادوة وآخرون، 2022).

2.3.Documentary Research Competency

Hurtado Albir (2001) emphasized that every form of translation—whether literary, audiovisual, or otherwise—is in itself a form of specialized translation, requiring the acquisition of specific knowledge and competencies (p. 59). Her ideas, views, and research were embodied in the research group she established under the name PACTE Group, devoted to the study of translation competence and the development of translators' and trainees' cognitive, informational, and practical abilities at the University of Barcelona.

Documentary competence is an essential component of any translator's work, regardless of the type of text or field of translation. It constitutes an indispensable necessity in the world of translation and forms part of a broader concept—namely, translation competence (Enriquez Raído, 2014). The importance of documentary competence has been highlighted in several models of translation competence proposed by scholars in the field (Kelly, 2002; Göpferich, 2009a), as well as by the PACTE research group (2005).

According to the PACTE group (2009) and Susanne Göpferich (2009a), instrumental competence is considered one of the three sub-competences that make up translation competence. PACTE (2009) points out that instrumental competence involves prior procedural knowledge related to the use of documentary sources and ICT applied to translation, whereas Göpferich defines it as the ability to use electronic and traditional tools specific to translation (Vanessa Raído, *Ibid.*).

For Hurtado Albir (2001), documentary competence comprises the following elements: familiarity with all types of documentation sources and their use, knowledge and application of new technologies, as well as an understanding of the translation market and the professional behavior of the translator.

Documentary competence is manifested in the acquisition of extensive knowledge of linguistic and terminological resources available to translators through the use of bilingual and/or monolingual dictionaries, legal and economic legislation, economic manuals, electronic resources, parallel texts, comparisons between source texts and their translations, as well as consultations with experts and specialists, among others (see Iván Delgado & Tanagua Barceló, 2011).

On the other hand, Pinto Molina and Sales Salvador (2007) explained that the translator is required to develop his or her documentary competence in the work environment through three complementary dimensions. The translator is not only considered an information user, but also a processor and producer of information. In this sense, the translator acts as a user of information sources and resources; as a processor of the original information and its transmitter into another language; and as a producer of new documents in the target language.

Molina and Salvador (*Ibid.*) also stress that the technological environment, characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity, has a significant impact on strengthening the role of research competence for every student. This highlights the importance of searching for and acquiring information within the knowledge society.

For his part, Daniel Gouadec (In Lavault-Olléon, 2007) classified documentary competence among the core "intrinsic" competences that a technical text translator must possess, and he referred to it as "information search and documentation techniques" (*Recherche d'informations et de documentation*). He emphasized the competence of searching and verifying the consistency of terminology (competence terminographique) and linguistic competence (compétence phraséographique) through the search and validation of useful and required stereotyped forms (*stéréotypes*).

Still on the topic of documentary competence, François Maniez and Philippe Thoiron stressed the importance of acquiring competence related to information retrieval in the field of medical text translation, whether this involves linguistic or medical knowledge of the specialty, particularly in the context of the development of information and communication technologies and the availability of the internet (Maniez & Thoiron, in Lavault-Olléon, *Ibid.*).

From a pedagogical perspective, Véronique Anne Sauron (In Lavault-Olléon, *Ibid.*) pointed out that adopting documentary research methods and strategies aims at developing students' skills in information searching, learning, and retrieving the data that enables them to understand the intended message in the text to be translated, as well as to find solutions to the problems they are likely to encounter during the translation process. It also seeks to train them in evaluating and verifying information based on their own knowledge and on cross-checking techniques (*techniques de recoupement*), in addition to enhancing their ability to select relevant information in light of the translation situation.

The translator's research competence is therefore linked to his or her ability to extract information, identify the need for it, and develop strategies for documentary and terminological research, while processing information related to the specific field and text being translated.

The translator must also develop criteria for evaluating sources available on the web or in any other medium, by acquiring a critical and analytical spirit, in addition to mastering search and archiving tools for the acquired information (see EMT Group, 2009). The team of experts involved in developing the European Master's in Translation (EMT) curricula drew a distinction between this information competence and thematic competence (*compétence thématique*), which consists in knowing how to search for the appropriate information in order to understand the thematic aspects of a document through skills of extracting and exploiting information, mastering specialized fields, developing analytical and summarizing abilities, and cultivating a spirit of scientific curiosity.

Furthermore, according to Gambier (2009), the EMT expert group highlights the importance of thematic competence and information-mining competence. Information-mining competence refers to the ability to extract information, identify documentary needs, develop strategies for documentary and terminological research, as well as to extract and process information (In Vanessa Raído, 2014).

Additionally, the European quality standard (EN15038), which defines the criteria for providing a quality translation service, emphasizes the importance of developing research competence as well as acquiring and processing information. Research competence also requires expertise in

the use of research tools and the ability to develop appropriate strategies for the effective use of available information sources (CEN, 2006).

In the same vein, Esther Monzó Nebot (2008) argues that acquiring this competence enables the translator to identify his or her information needs, to recognize the different types of reference sources, and to select the most suitable ones in order to solve research-related problems. It also involves the ability to locate, compare, evaluate, organize, apply, and appropriately communicate information, as well as to build upon it, thereby contributing to the creation and dissemination of new knowledge in response to emerging requirements. Moreover, it entails using such information critically in order to make decisions and solve problems.

In short, the translator's documentary competence lies in his or her ability to handle the variety of reference sources available and to seek solutions to the linguistic, conceptual, and specialized terminological problems that may arise during translation. This competence manifests itself in the translator's ability to make effective use of dictionaries, encyclopedias, parallel texts, and other documentary sources—whether print or electronic—as well as human sources, such as experts and specialists.

Furthermore, this documentary competence requires a set of strategies and methods for carrying out documentary research. In what follows, we will address this broad concept in translation studies, examining its processes and importance as an operational stage that falls within comprehension and precedes translation and linguistic transfer. We will then consider the types of sources a translator resorts to and the criteria for their reliability and validity.

2.4.Models of Documentary Research

2.4.1. Durieux Model

Discussing the importance of documentary research, Christine Durieux (1988) explained, in her book, that translation exercises involving general and simplified texts require students to follow three stages: reading, understanding the message, and re-expressing it in the target language. These stages do not change according to the nature of the texts; rather, additional elements are added, which, according to Durieux, refer essentially to documentary research. On this matter, she stated that the translation of technical or scientific texts requires, in addition to this common mechanism, an 'addition' that is essentially in-depth documentary research, appropriate terminological research, encyclopedic information gathering, and a constant effort to integrate the information progressively acquired during the translation into the translator's existing knowledge base.

Thus, the process of translating technical or scientific texts, according to the researcher, requires consulting specialized dictionaries, glossaries, encyclopedias, and corpora related to the field in which the translator is working, in order to complement his or her subject-matter knowledge and enrich general culture. This helps in finding the specialized equivalent in the target language.

She also emphasized that this process reflects a micro-phenomenon whereby the translator gradually acquires and assimilates knowledge while translating the beginning of the text, which

then facilitates comprehension of the rest. Similarly, the translation of technical documents contributes to enriching the translator's knowledge base and encyclopedic resources, which serve him or her in the future (see Durieux, *Ibid.*).

The importance of documentary research in translation lies in the operations carried out by the translator while rendering specialized content—operations that would be difficult to accomplish without relying on complementary resources that enable the construction of a correct understanding of the source text and the identification of equivalents in the target language.

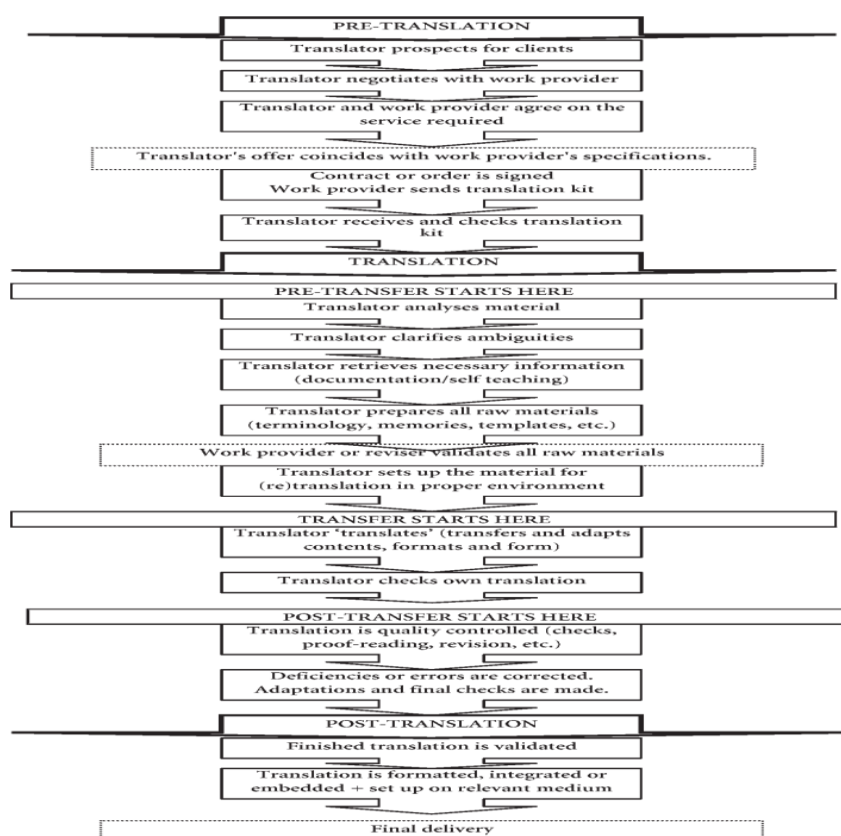
2.4.2. Gouadec Model

The importance of documentary research in translation lies in the operations carried out by the translator while rendering specialized content—operations that would be difficult to accomplish without relying on complementary resources that enable the construction of a correct understanding of the source text and the identification of equivalents in the target language.

Translation, therefore, does not only involve mastering the working languages, as Daniel Gouadec (2007) underlined when stressing the importance of acquiring thorough knowledge of commercial, cultural, technical, and legal backgrounds, as well as a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter of the translation. He insisted that a translator must be eager for knowledge, inquisitive, and passionate about writing, while demonstrating initiative.

Moreover, a thirst for knowledge and the ability to endure contribute to the acquisition of the fundamental knowledge that helps translators fully understand the source text. Initiative, in turn, plays a crucial role in overcoming textual difficulties, terminological challenges, and cultural obstacles.

Gouadec (*Ibid.*) also considered the search for necessary information in the various sources available to the translator as one of the essential stages of the translation process undertaken for a client. According to him, this stage follows the phase of clarifying ambiguities and attempting to understand what is obscure. This comprehensive framework proposed by Gouadec may be outlined as follows:



From the foregoing, we can see the importance of searching for and acquiring information in the field of translation—a topic that, until recently, had not received much attention within translation studies. Translation departments in universities, not long ago, paid little heed to this issue. As Daniel Gile (2005) points out, academic translation training neglects the dimension of searching for the necessary information, which constitutes an essential component of professional translation, limiting itself to references to lexicographic sources such as bilingual dictionaries.

For her part, Christine Durieux (1988) addressed the necessity of integrating documentary research into translation pedagogy. She stressed that it is of crucial importance given the amount of knowledge it provides to translators for understanding, analyzing, and conveying the meaning of texts—especially specialized terminology in technical domains.

In her discussion, she distinguished between technical and literary texts, but at the same time did not deny the technical dimension that also characterizes literary texts. She emphasized that these, too, require a form of documentary research even before the writing of a novel.

Documentary research thus plays a significant role in enabling the translator to acquire specialized, encyclopedic, and subject-matter knowledge that allows for a better understanding of the target language, the ability to find equivalents in specialized fields, and mastery of their usage. Consequently, documentary research complements the translator's cultural competence and enriches his or her knowledge, skills, and expertise when dealing with specialized

terminology and texts that may otherwise be difficult to comprehend, and that require extensive investigation in references and sources.

2.5.The Translator's General Knowledge

The element of general knowledge holds great importance in the work of the professional translator in general, and for the translation student in particular. According to Jean-Claude G  mar, the translator's task consists in conveying the essence of the message expressed in the source text. In the absence of an adequate level of general knowledge and the necessary competence to decode the text, the translated version will inevitably be flawed and will lose part of its value (see Lavault-Oll  on, 2007).

General knowledge is considered an essential element in understanding the context in which the text is situated, whether specialized or general, as well as in grasping the circumstances of discourse and rendering them appropriately (Collombat, 2006). General knowledge can be summarized in the notion of "cognitive complements", whose acquisition is strongly emphasized by both Jean Delisle (2003) and Marianne Lederer (1997). They stress the necessity for translation learners to be able to draw on non-linguistic supplementary knowledge in order to produce translations that are intelligent, coherent, and accurate.

2.6.Cognitive Theories and the Importance of Knowledge Acquisition

Knowledge has always held paramount importance in human life throughout the ages. It constitutes the intellectual nourishment of every individual eager to acquire specific skills in a field of personal interest. Knowledge, or knowledge systems more broadly, enjoys a special status in the social sciences, insofar as it constitutes the subject of numerous studies carried out by researchers concerned with cognitive sciences.

Although we will not delve deeply into cognitive sciences in this study, we will briefly highlight their importance in examining the relationship between human thought and its acquisitions, perceptions, and intellectual capacities. These faculties assist individuals in acquiring, processing, storing, and retrieving knowledge whenever needed in a given situation.

The significance of cognitive sciences also becomes evident in what the translator acquires when dealing with specialized texts: namely, subject-matter knowledge that enables them to resolve complex problems related to terminology or syntax. This is reinforced through the guidance of the instructor, who directs students toward researching and acquiring such information in practice from different knowledge sources.

This process is supported by continuous assessment, constant motivation, and feedback, which together help students enhance their translation performance and gain mastery over specialized texts—texts which often require a meticulous search for the precise information necessary to understand the source text, capture the author's intended meaning, and render it in a style comprehensible both to the general reader and to specialists in the field.

The development of cognitive sciences over the past twenty years has given rise to multifaceted perspectives spanning disciplines such as neuroscience, psychology, philosophy, linguistics,

and artificial intelligence. She notes that translation engages the deepest and most complex dimensions of human thought in order to accomplish this task successfully (Vandaele, 2007).

Cognitive sciences face a major challenge: grasping the functioning of the brain, understanding the processes of thought, and recognizing their mechanisms. Human translation remains, above all, a cognitive activity, one that mobilizes human intelligence across its various dimensions (Vandaele, *ibid.*).

Naturally, cognitive sciences—by examining human thought, reasoning, and inference—make a substantial contribution to translation studies. They enable translation learners to better understand the translator's mental processes and problem-solving strategies in tackling the most challenging issues of language and transfer, especially in specialized texts. In such cases, translation demands a precise process involving terminological and subject-matter comprehension, alongside analysis, interpretation, and synthesis.

The cognitive trend—or cognitive theories—emerged in contrast to socially oriented approaches within the field of translation. For over thirty years, this domain has witnessed studies devoted to the cognitive aspects of translation and to the mental processes involved in translators' work (Juliane House, 2015: 5).

Juliane House also observes that the growing interest in the cognitive dimension and in the translator's mental activity while transferring a text from one language to another is largely attributable to the development of modern technologies and the expansion of experimental research methods. These have focused on various aspects of translators' performance and efficiency in handling translation tasks, drawing on tools such as keystroke logging, eye-tracking, screen recording, as well as a range of neuropsychological techniques (House, *ibid.*).

With technological advancement, research into the cognitive dimensions of translation has become increasingly oriented toward application—namely, toward the translation process itself as a procedural activity. Sharon O'Brien (In House, *Ibid.*) emphasizes that translation process research has drawn its principles from multiple disciplines, including linguistics, cognitive sciences, neuroscience, studies of writing and reading, and language technologies.

2.7.Stages of Documentary Research

Documentary research generally contributes to enriching the translator's knowledge and information, particularly when he/she lacks specialized information or terminology related to a given field. It enables the translator to complement his/her knowledge and gain mastery over the subject dealt with in the text to be translated into the target language.

In this process, the translator turns to a range of sources—linguistic, textual, electronic, and even human—in order to understand the text, identify specialized terminology, and more. To achieve this, he/she must follow a series of necessary steps and stages in searching for information, which involve: defining the research topic, identifying and consulting sources and references, exploiting the extracted information, and ultimately producing output.

Hélène Guertin (2011) outlines six (6) essential steps in conducting information research. The first consists in becoming familiar with the topic by understanding its nature, identifying the problem, drafting a research plan, and considering which references will be used. The researcher then proceeds to use information sources by formulating search equations based on keywords and launching the search with these keywords, while ensuring the effectiveness of the search equation and selecting the documents and sources to be used.

Next, the researcher selects the necessary documents, organizes the chosen material, and evaluates the quality of the information according to objective criteria. He/she then examines the different perspectives and identify the essential informational elements. The fourth step consists in extracting information through reading, listening, watching, reflecting, and taking notes. Afterwards, the researcher processes and analyzes the information, anticipating possible solutions that may allow for addressing the research problem. He/she also summarizes the ideas and information obtained from various sources. Finally, the researcher produces their work on the basis of their objectives and intended audience, verifying the quality of their work and its adherence to research standards.

On this basis, we may summarize the overall process into five (5) essential and comprehensive elements, which encompass the stages generally followed in any search for information.

2.7.1. Defining the Research Topic and Objectives

Defining the research topic and its objectives is considered the most important stage in documentary research. Generally, the translator must carefully read the source text, then determine the type of task to be undertaken and the specific needs related to the text in question. At this stage, the translator formulates a set of preliminary questions about the research topic, situating it within a general framework that allows them to organize the search for either specialized or general information. This also involves identifying the range of sources and references that will be consulted in accordance with their linguistic and knowledge-related needs.

It is also essential for the translator to gain a solid understanding of the subject and to grasp its scope according to certain criteria, often with the help of documents. This stage is crucial for determining the necessary sources and focusing only on what is useful for finding the required information. Once this stage is completed and the need is clearly defined, the process of documentary research and information gathering can begin (see Del Castellanos, 2012).

2.7.2. Identifying and Using Information Sources

This stage comes after defining the research topic. According to María Castellanos et al (2012), it consists in formulating the keywords that the researcher intends to search for. It is essential to define the research field and its distinctive keywords in order to ensure optimal information retrieval. The next step involves identifying references or sources—whether textual, electronic, or human—and selecting the type of document most suitable to meet the information need. Moreover, exploring the topic may include creating a mind map that contains the key questions surrounding it, such as: What? When? Who? Where? How? and Why?

2.7.3. Selecting and Evaluating Sources and References

At this stage, the translator must carefully choose the most relevant sources and references necessary to obtain the information they seek. This selection may depend on their personal needs and the specific nature of the subject at hand, which requires knowing when and how to access the appropriate information source without wasting time. Thus, modern pedagogical approaches must place significant emphasis on training students and learners in methods of collecting, evaluating, and verifying information through their own effort, rather than relying solely on the teacher's guidance. The objective is "to enable them to become accustomed to studying the problems they encounter, and to view solutions from different perspectives," within the framework of self-education and the promotion of collaborative learning to overcome difficulties by consulting information sources and knowing how to use them.

2.7.4. Exploitation and Production

This stage consists of gathering documents and data by extracting useful information from them and organizing it according to defined criteria (such as source and relevance). It also involves evaluating the documentary sources obtained and the type of information extracted, in order to identify what is directly related to the research through analytical reading of reference materials such as dictionaries, manuscripts, encyclopedias, abstracts, books, documents, and others. At this precise stage, the translator needs broad cognitive abilities that enable them to understand the nature of sources and collect data from them with minimal effort and time, while still meeting the requirements of their research.

2.7.5. Evaluating the Research Process

This final step is of great importance due to its role in improving the translator's future performance and developing their ability to work independently in seeking information, thereby fostering information behavior that facilitates their translation tasks.

At this stage, feedback plays a crucial role in enabling the translation student to coordinate and collaborate with the instructor, ensuring the smooth progress of the documentary research process and the successful completion of all its stages. Here, feedback takes the form of evaluating and correcting mistakes, as well as identifying the strengths and weaknesses that characterized the research process. With the instructor's guidance, the student compares the degree of alignment between the research process and the adopted methodology, and assesses their performance in order to achieve the highest possible objectives.

2.8.Documentary Research in the Digital Age

With the advent of information and communication technologies (ICT), a revolution broke out in the educational sphere that has seen a change in students' attitudes towards traditional paper dictionaries. In fact, Internet has completely revolutionized the way we use information for specific language purposes, in providing online dictionaries as popular tools for searching information in order to gain knowledge of a particular topic. This kind of resources is invaluable to students, researchers and other people who look for easy access to definitions of words or phrases.

Nowadays, students tend to utilize online dictionaries to look up for words, phrasal verbs or whatever they need in their daily life. And so is the case in the field of translation, where students prefer the use of online resources over their traditional counterparts, which requires thinking deeply about their information behavior.

2.9.Documentary Research as Technical Skill

Documentary research, as the subject of our study, has also had its share in this evolution. Between traditional documentary research and contemporary research with its techniques in the field of modern technologies, there lies an ever-expanding domain. Researchers are therefore required to develop themselves in order to keep pace with this progress and become part of a world overflowing with information of paramount importance. According to Anne-Sophie Closet (2010), documentary activities—or the practice of this type of research—require the ability to mobilize, instantly and appropriately, complex competencies and skills. These combine an understanding of the tools employed, mastery of procedural skills, recourse to psychological and cognitive processes, in addition to carrying out the concrete task itself.

The field of translation, for its part, has not been devoid of studies addressing documentary research and assigning it great importance in the translation process—particularly those that focus on the process-oriented perspective rather than the translation product itself. This is because documentary research, as a technical skill, is integrated into the translation process to improve comprehension and bear fruit in the form of enhanced translational performance. Translation scholars and practitioners alike have thus found themselves facing an imperative necessity: to keep up with the twenty-first century's contemporary technologies, to master techniques of acquiring, providing, and exploiting information for the purpose of language learning and the translation of specialized texts, and to contribute to the advancement of translation pedagogy as a major field within linguistic studies.

Robert Burnheim (1992) emphasized that every student knowledgeable in information must also possess the ability for autonomous learning, knowledge acquisition, and information retrieval, through mastering a set of practical skills encompassing research methodologies, strategies, and the evaluation of the quality of information available across various sources. To this end, Burnheim (Ibid.) listed a number of additional competencies that students should acquire, namely formulating and analyzing the need for information, determining the value of sources, evaluating them, and then identifying individual sources. He further adds examining and selecting individual sources in light of the information need; probing the sources to identify the required information; recording and storing the information. In addition to interpreting, analyzing, summarizing, and evaluating the information collected; presenting and communicating the results; and finally, evaluating the progress of the information search process.

2.10. Basic Rules of Information Retrieval

The fundamental rules of any documentary research generally consist in mastering its techniques and tools, and in verifying the validity of any informational source, with a strong

emphasis on carefully selecting and targeting the information. In other words, it requires awareness of the importance of selection, processing, and optimal use of information.

Maria Del Mar Castellanos et al. (2012) outlined a set of essential principles that an information seeker should possess, namely the development of information literacy by acquiring solid theoretical knowledge about documents and available resources; the knowledge of who publishes and produces information and understanding the information environment; the use of research tools; the identification of different types of documents, regardless of their nature or form; the selection of relevant documents; and the localization of information within the structure of documents.

Although these fundamentals apply in general to any researcher or information seeker, our focus will be on selecting the most important and effective techniques and applying them to the field of translation—specifically specialized translation—and to translator training, which must also take into account the importance of documentary research and the acquisition of relevant knowledge and expertise.

In this respect, translation curricula should include courses dedicated to teaching documentary research techniques, encouraging students to acquire the necessary specialized knowledge, strengthening their general culture, and training them in the fundamentals of data mining. This is particularly crucial in our era of rapid progress, where references and informational sources are increasingly widespread on the Internet—thus contributing significantly to making translation a knowledge-driven field that intersects with numerous other sciences.

2.11. Translation as a Knowledge-Based Activity

The information society in which we live today requires translators to be well-versed in research techniques, information retrieval, and data mining—whether in their field of specialization or in any general domain. Even when a translator possesses broad and substantial general knowledge, they remain in constant need of information and resources that provide them with a better understanding and a more accurate equivalent for any terminological problem. Maria Pinto Molina and Dora Sales Salvador (2007) stressed the importance of “information literacy” for translators, highlighting the need to understand students’ perceptions of their information needs, their search and use of information—that is, their “information behavior”—through the perspectives of both translation instructors and professional practitioners.

Moreover, the digital environment in which we live today compels us, inevitably, to give due attention to issues related to knowledge acquisition, information searching, and data mining. This is manifested in the form of “informational behavior”, which involves identifying sources of information, organizing them, and mastering the techniques and skills necessary for their effective use. Documentary research, or information retrieval, in the field of translation also drives us to address students’ behaviors and examine how they search for and access information sources, whether in printed or digital dictionaries, encyclopedias, books, or other references.

2.12. The Translator’s Information Behavior

Information behavior refers to the general need of a researcher for information and its role in shaping his/her knowledge and perceptions of the research subject. This need is manifested in the behaviors and strategies adopted when interacting with information sources and searching within them to achieve the intended purpose. In this regard, we refer to Wilson's (1981) model of information behavior, which is based on the idea that any user resorts to searching for information as a result of a need. In other words, this need for information alone determines how the individual approaches different sources of information, processes and analyses them, and ultimately fulfils the purpose by selecting the information sought (Kumar Kundu, 2017).

Wilson also considers information-seeking behavior to be a branch of the field of information behavior, as it focuses on the range of methods individuals use to discover and access information sources (Wilson, in Raído, 2014). Accordingly, information behavior is embodied in the methods used by the information seeker, the approaches adopted, and the strategies employed. It is reflected in how the individual engages with information, as well as in the type of sources consulted, selected, and from which information is extracted.

Here, we can link this notion of information behavior to the context of translation, since the translator seeks information to strengthen textual knowledge or to clarify a term that may be difficult to understand in the source text. The translator searches for it in references, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other resources, whether textual, electronic, or human (by consulting experts and specialists). Thus, the translator's need for this useful information determines his/her cognitive behavior, information-seeking strategies, and efforts to find the most appropriate equivalent for any given term.

We aim to highlight the foundations upon which the translator's information-seeking behavior is built, through what is referred to as "documentary research." This involves the translator's or translation student's engagement with a variety of textual, electronic, and human sources, and the ways in which these sources are interrogated and mined for relevant information. This process can only be carried out properly and effectively if the translator acquires documentary competence, which enables him/her to know how to use these sources, to appreciate their importance, and to verify the reliability and scholarly value of documentary resources.

Accordingly, information behavior refers to the methods used by the information seeker, as well as the set of approaches or strategies they adopt. This behavior is reflected in the way they interact with information and in the types of sources they consult, select, and extract information from. In this sense, we can link information behavior to the act of translation, since the translator searches for information to strengthen their textual knowledge or to clarify a term that may be difficult to understand in the source text. The translator conducts this search in references, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other resources, whether textual, electronic, or human, by consulting experts and specialists. Thus, their need for useful information shapes both their cognitive behavior and their search strategies, guiding their verification process and their effort to find the most appropriate equivalent for any given term.

Our aim, therefore, is to highlight the foundations of information-seeking behavior in translation through what is known as "documentary research," as manifested in the way

translators or translation students engage with the range of textual, electronic, and human sources available to them, and in the methods, they use to interpret and extract information from these resources. Such a process, however, can only be properly achieved if the translator develops documentary competence—the ability to use these sources effectively, to recognize their importance, and to assess the credibility of documentary resources and their scientific value.

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

From our study, we conclude that documentary research, in all its traditional and modern forms, constitutes a fundamental component in the training of both translators and students. It contributes to the development of their translational competence by enabling them to acquire specialized knowledge, deal with precise and complex terminology, and comprehend texts of a scientific, technical, or otherwise specialized nature. Moreover, the integration of documentary research techniques into university curricula undoubtedly enhances the translator's general knowledge and improves their information literacy, in addition to refining their cognitive skills and enabling them to address textual, terminological, and cultural challenges.

Our study therefore recommends the incorporation of specialized courses in documentary research within translation training programs, while encouraging students to regularly rely on diverse sources—textual, electronic, and human—and to be trained in assessing their reliability. It is also essential to strengthen the translator's general knowledge and encyclopedic awareness, as a crucial complement to understanding specialized texts, as well as to develop students' cognitive-behavioral competences to enable them to conduct effective research and resolve terminological problems. Furthermore, adopting contemporary cognitive and technological approaches to keep pace with the rapid development of research tools and electronic resources is of paramount importance, especially with the emergence of Large Language Models (LLMs) and artificial intelligence tools, which are increasingly replacing most steps of traditional documentary research.

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