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Nurturing Mindful Behaviour in Translation Students. From Learning Practices to Disposition*

Rozwijanie uważnych zachowań u studentów przekładoznawstwa. Od praktyki do usposobienia

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Abstract. Contemporary translator education aims to develop professional competences, adaptability to job market dynamics and life-long learning skills by fostering collaborative, situated and self-directed, experiential learning. In recognition of the essentiality of reflection skills for life-long learning, the author examines the possibility of stimulating students' (cultural) reflection in online (intercultural) projects via guidance on mindful behaviour, as defined by Ritchhart and Perkins and discusses the findings with a view to informing task design which would augment the development of cultural and other components of translator competence.

Keywords: professionalisation, translator education, mindful learning, translation competence, reflective learning

Abstrakt. Współczesna edukacja tłumaczy ma na celu rozwijanie kompetencji zawodowych, zdolności adaptacji do dynamiki rynku pracy oraz umiejętności uczenia się przez całe życie za pośrednictwem opartego o pracę zespołową, sytuowanego i samodzielnego uczenia się przez doświadczenie.

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Uwzględniając wagę refleksji w procesie uczenia się przez całe życie, autor artykułu bada możliwość stymulowania (kulturowej) refleksji nad doświadczeniem u studentów uczestniczących w (międzykulturowych) projektach internetowych poprzez instruktaż na temat uważnego zachowania w rozumieniu Ritchharta i Perkinsa. Wyniki badania omawia zaś pod kątem projektowania zadań dydaktycznych wspomagających rozwój kulturowych i innych elementów kompetencji tłumacza.

Słowa kluczowe: profesjonalizacja, edukacja tłumaczy, uważne uczenie się, kompetencje tłumaczeniowe, refleksyjne uczenie się

1. INTRODUCTION: CONTEMPORARY TRANSLATOR EDUCATION

To discern the justifiability of nurturing mindful behaviour in translation students it is necessary to analyse to what extent mindful learning is pertinent to the goals of contemporary translator education and the pedagogical approaches which are being utilised in order to meet these goals. To that end, the major goals of contemporary translator education and related pedagogies will be briefly reviewed, alongside project-based learning, which seems to be a particularly pertinent – and commonly reported (cf. Mastela, 2022; Paradowska, 2021) – implementation of the former in translation courses.

1.1. Major Goals of Contemporary Translator Education and Relevant Pedagogies

The underlying theme of today's academic translator education programmes and related courses is that of professionalisation and employability, which Joanna Dybiec-Gajer (2014, para 1) attributes to "a far reaching consensus in the literature that needs-based training aimed at developing a set of competences conceptualised as professional translation skills, including a high level of technological skills […], should prepare trainees to meet the demands of real-life settings in which individuals under the job profile of translators work". Therefore, translator education seeks both to reflect the realities of the translation – or language service provision (LSP) – market and to prepare student translators for the job requirements which they will need to meet when transferring from academia to the professional translation industry. The trend finds corroboration in the writings of numerous scholars who posit that academia needs to: equip students with the requisites necessary to successfully deal with the dynamics of the translation market (Orlando, 2016), cater for students' employability (Thelen, 2014; Hu, 2018), prepare future-proof professionals (Rodríguez de Céspedes, 2019), and develop students' sense of preparedness for successfully meeting market demands (Pietrzak, 2022).

At the same time, scholars such as Konrad Klimkowski (2015) advocate for translator education whose goals would transcend the *production* of qualified and employable staff for a specific market. Rather than that, Klimkowski (2015) sees the need for a more holistic translator "education [which] helps particular people develop personal resources in order that they willingly (axiology) and effectively (empowerment) interact with the world we live in – including its professional dimension" (Klimkowski, 2015, p. 112).

All in all, contemporary translator education aims to help students respond to the dynamics of the job market, be it in translation-related or broader professional contexts. This requires adaptability and lifelong learning, thus consequently inspiring a turn in translator education coursework towards self-directed, experiential learning and reflective practice (Pietrzak and Kornacki, 2021), as well as situated learning.

Self-directed learning takes students out of their comfort zone, exposing them to situations conducive to anxiety, frustration, or even failure. On the one hand, it aims to demonstrate to students that learning is likely to involve negative experiences and emotions, while on the other hand, it seeks to teach them an inquiry-based approach to confronting novelty in learning situations. Reflection – as an essential component of experiential learning (cf. Kolb, 1984) – encourages students to relive, objectivise and digest the learning experience with a view to reflecting on it (reflection on experience) or their own actions (self-reflection), which in the long run aims to promote their autonomy and self-discovery skills, often through interaction, or negotiation, with others (Pietrzak and Kornacki, 2021). Situated learning, in Maria Gonzáles-Davies and Vanessa Enríquez Raído's (2016, p. 1) view, is "a context-dependent approach to translator and interpreter training under which learners are exposed to real-life and/or highly simulated work environments and tasks, both inside and outside the classroom".

The overarching outcome of situated, experiential, and reflective learning seems to be a set of metacognitive skills which help students understand and manage their own learning. In fact, Paulina Pietrzak and Michał Kornacki (2021) view them as pivotal to transformative learning, knowledge construction and experience building, which eventually will also warrant students' ability to effectively respond to changes in the translation market (adaptivity). Following Klimkowski's (2015) train of thought, it could be concluded that, due to their generic nature, metacognitive skills, which include "self-regulation, self-assessment, self-reflection and self-feedback" (Pietrzak and Kornacki, 2021, p. 110), would be useful in fostering students' self-regulation in both private and professional contexts, even outside professional translation.

On a practical level, it means that translation coursework needs to entail a range of student-centred tasks, conducive to autonomous learning, which involve students

either in practice, whereby they engage in simulated professional practice – for example, through student translation bureaus (van Egdom, 2020; Paradowska, 2021; Pietrzak and Kornacki, 2021) and translation projects (Kerremans and van Egdom, 2018) – or in internships, where they gain hands-on professional experience (cf. Elia Exchange, 2014; GALA, 2017; 2019).

Don Kiraly (2000) perceives the aforementioned shift towards student-centredness and emancipation as a progression in the pedagogical positions of translation teachers from transmissionist instruction to (social) constructivism to transformative teaching, which has manifested itself even in changes to terminology used to denote particular aspects of translation pedagogy. Most significantly, the terms *translation* competence and *translation* education have increasingly – albeit not completely – given way to *translator* competence and *translator* education. While the original terms reflected the focus which translation programmes placed primarily on developing competences relevant to the translation process *per se*, the newer terms are emblematic of the shift towards holistic education, which promotes the development of a whole range of competences beyond – albeit not excluding – translation competence *per se*, such as socio-cognitive (inter-)personal and intercultural competences (cf. Massey, 2021), thereby equipping students for life and helping them to function in situationally and socially complex professional settings. In other words, the term *translation education*, as it has been defined above, might be perceived as grounded in the anthropocentric perspective on translation as a process isolated from the environment in which it occurs and limited to the function of what happens in the translator's mind. It diverted attention from the situated nature of translation and the embodied, embedded, enacted, extended and affective (4EA) cognition (cf. Hutchins, 2010) that is required to develop competences necessary to perform the act of translation. In extreme cases, it also led to routinisation, which resulted in teaching students how to replicate ready-made procedures for the effective rendering of source texts in the target language. By contrast, the concept underlying *translator education* externalises – as it were – the translation process as a form of socio-cultural, socio-technical, 4EA cognition (Massey, 2021), which involves the interplay of human dispositions and the social and physical environment in which translation is performed.

With regard to translation teaching methodology, holistic education, as Pietrzak (2022) rightly observes, upvalues human potential and personal resources in the learning process and calls for education which would exceed the limiting boundaries of transmissionist or transactional teaching. After all, while transmissionist pedagogy is explicitly teacher-centred (Kiraly, 2000; Pietrzak, 2022), transactional instruction could be viewed as a disguised form of the former, as although it is seemingly learner-centred, it requires students to construct knowledge which,

nevertheless, is prefabricated or modelled by the teacher (Klimkowski, 2015). More learner-emancipating are the transformative (Kiraly, 2000) and transgressionist (Baumgarten et al., 2010) paradigms. Transformative instruction enables students to effect changes to their reference frameworks, mindsets and perspectives (Mezirow, 2003) under the facilitating eye of the teacher, who provides gradually decreasing scaffolding with a view to autonomising the learners. It also involves socially constructed holistic learning (Kiraly, 2000; Klimkowski, 2015). The transgressionist paradigm seems to be even more liberating for students in that it turns the teacher into a collaborator, with whom students will jointly be taking intentional actions to help them cross limitations to achievement in the activity at hand, e.g. translation (Baumgarten et al., 2010). As a result, students are likely to develop competences on two levels: personal (self-esteem, creativity, decision-making) and interpersonal (communication, collaborative problem solving and negotiation skills). Overall, both transformative (Mezirow, 2003) and transgressionist (Baumgarten et al., 2010) learning involves, and also enhances, students' ability to (self-)reflect.

1.2. Project-Based Learning

The work mode which seems particularly suitable for implementing the ideals of learner-centred education, as delineated within the frameworks of transformative and transgressionist approaches, is that of project-based learning. Hence the proliferation of various forms of project work in today's translation teaching practices (cf. Kerremans and van Egdom, 2018; Kiraly et al., 2019; Mastela, 2022; Paradowska, 2021; Tsai, 2020; van Egdom et al., 2017).

The value ascribed to project work is based on several premises, including the fact that it focuses on student performance (Klimkowski, 2015), provides opportunities for students to develop a range of competences and simultaneously delves into the realities of professional translation tasks (Pietrzak, 2022). With regard to the latter, González Davies (2004) reports that project work may involve either genuine (real-life) translation projects, or projects with a high degree of simulation, i.e. those which closely reflect professional practices. Genuine translation projects have an additional advantage in that they engage various stakeholders in the translation process, such as real clients or domain experts, in the learning processes. That, in turn, is particularly helpful not only in professionalising translator education but also demonopolising the power position of the teacher by making room for other voices in the translation classroom (Klimkowski, 2015). After all, although González Davies (2004) states that it is the teacher who evaluates the students' project work, it is possible to envisage that – to the extent to which it is pedagogically feasible – the client may also be invited to provide supplementary

feedback on either the manner in which the commissioned language service will have been provided, or the quality of the final product, e.g. with regard to how it meets the client's requirements.

As for the competences fostered by translation projects, González Davies (2004) lists those which apparently fall into three major areas: (i) translation competence, (ii) professional skills, augmented by the students' responsibility for their own work and the need for adequate project management (meeting deadlines, job sharing and process coordination) or (iii) transferable skills, such as self-confidence, computer-mediated communication skills, resourcing skills or social skills (negotiating skills).

Yet, translation projects may also promote the development of other competences, such as technology competence, through the students' use of CAT tools and translation management systems or thematic/domain competence, as reported by Olga Mastela (2022). At the same time, it must be remembered that even projects which do not necessarily involve translation as such may also be successfully implemented to hone other translator and translation competences, such as (inter) cultural competence (Marczak, 2019). Most importantly, projects potentially situate the learning process (situated learning) and give students a chance to self-organise their learning (self-directed learning), as well as to learn from experience (experiential learning) through reflection on the latter (reflective learning) in ways which are discussed below.

Firstly, project assignments involve collaboration, the (co-)construction of knowledge, self-organisation, application to a social action context, the use of shared artefacts or resources, the provision of feedback, as well as reflection, which are all the characteristics of situated learning proposed by Hanna Risku (2016). Secondly, due to the shift in responsibility for learning from the teacher to the learner, they additionally permit students to engage – at least to a degree – in self-directed learning which, in Malcolm Knowles' (1975) view, defines adult learning and is characterised by learners' initiative in the joint and individual diagnosis of their own learning needs, formulation of learning goals, identification of learning resources, selection and use of adequate learning strategies, and evaluation of learning outcomes. Thirdly, if teachers are able to scaffold their coaching interventions appropriately, projects are likely to foster reflection-based experiential learning, which involves "learning through reflection on doing" (Pappa, 2011, p. 1003). With that in mind, it could be posited that experiential and reflective learning are mutually dependent, which is best illustrated by David Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Model. Within the model, the hands-on experience (concrete experience) is the point of departure for learning, or food for thought, which stimulates observation and reflection (reflective observation). At the same time, the latter helps learners

gain knowledge out of the experience at hand by permitting them to formulate general theories or ideas on it (abstract conceptualisation) and to work out how to act in the future (active experimentation). Consequently, when novel situations arise, the learner's own solutions can be experientially tested and improved, thus, providing an opportunity for another round of reflection on the already-altered experience. The model demonstrates that experience and reflection are interrelated, as experience alone will not lead to much learning, while reflection which is not grounded in a concrete experience will be too abstract to be of practical value. Therefore, it can be stated that, overall, project work seems helpful in promoting opportunities for teachers and students to work towards the goals of contemporary translator education.

2. MINDFUL BEHAVIOUR IN SUPPORT OF REFLECTIVE LEARNING

To enhance student agency, which is an inherent element of project-based learning, it is necessary "to incorporate metacognitive strategies into the translation classroom and make sure that students benefit from teaching by engaging with their own learning" (Pietrzak, 2022, p. 89). One of the ways in which to do so may be to facilitate students' (self-)reflection in project-based work, i.e. by inciting mindful behaviour in their reflective practices.

2.1. Conceptualising Mindfulness

Due to "an apparent tide of mindfulness practices and programmes sweeping into a range of academic, therapeutic and other domains, applications of mindfulness (however, diversely defined and understood) have also begun to flow into educational settings" (Ditrich and Lovegrove, 2017, p. ix). This includes the realm of translator education.

Interestingly, in this area of education, mindfulness has been integrated as a form of instructional intervention leading to either psychological or cognitive outcomes. In the former case, as illustrated by the practices implemented at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting of the University of Granada (Clinical Trials, 2020), mindfulness-based instruction is being used in translator and interpreter education courses to reduce students' psychological distress, which may be caused by expectations of high-quality student performance. In the latter context, mindfulness is viewed as "an insight that all constituents of an experience, including mindfulness and cognition itself, are without a permanent intrinsic nature" (Ditrich, 2017, p. 9), and it is being honed as a disposition conducive to the development

of Aristotelian *phronesis* (Massey, 2022), or practical wisdom, which Massey suggests that translation students need to successfully deal with the challenges of the ever-changing LSP market.

As Nandini Karunamuni and Rasanjala Weerasekera (2019) state, the aforementioned interpretations of mindfulness derive from the Buddhist tradition, where mindfulness is perceived as a form of practice through which individuals systematically manage to understand their experience at hand and gradually develop self-knowledge and wisdom. While self-knowledge entails an individual's understanding of the qualities, interconnections and organisation of their views, emotions, motives, thoughts, memories, as well as the ability to question implicit assumptions which accompany subjective experience, together with the learnt knowledge of – and reflection on – teachings, it is believed to be a prerequisite for the development of wisdom, which ultimately frees individuals from suffering.

At the same time, mindfulness can also be understood in the manner proposed by Ellen Langer and Mihnea Moldoveanu (2000), to whom it is a process of drawing novel – as opposed to past – cognitive distinctions and categories while dealing with the present experience. Stella Ting-Toomey defines it as mindful behaviour, which involves "seeing things from a broader perspective, open-mindedness, seeing things from the other person's viewpoint" (Pérez Cañado, 2008, p. 21). In other words, Langer and Moldoveanu (2000, p. 2) appear to draw a line between "mindless behaviour", which is governed by past rules and routines, and mindful behaviour, which entails greater sensitivity to the environment, increased openness to new information, a new way of structuring one's perception of an experience and greater awareness of multiple perspectives on a problem.

2.2. Mindfulness-Nurturing Techniques

Ron Ritchhart and David Perkins (2000) reported on the results of inspiring research into the possibility nurturing mindfulness, in Langer and Moldoveanu's (2000) sense, as a lasting disposition which would liberate students from the frequently schooling-induced inclination towards reliance on knowledge developed through rote learning, or routine instilled via superficial learning and the resulting learner passivity. They posited that the positioning of mindfulness as an educational goal seemed be an apt response to long-standing appeals from renowned educational theorists, including John Dewey (1933) and Alfred Whitehead (1929), for schooling which would help learners approach problems on an individual basis, without resorting to mechanical habits or routine. Interestingly, the views of Dewey (1933) and Whitehead (1929) happen to underpin the two pedagogical approaches which have been recommended as helpful in the effective implementation of project-based

learning in translator education. While Dewey's line of thought partly underlies *social constructivism*, Whitehead's process philosophy contributed to the rise of the *emergentism*, both of which have been advocated as suitable for translator education – the former by Kiraly (2000) and Klimkowski (2015) and the latter by Kiraly (2014), Kiraly and Sascha Hofmann (2016) and Gary Massey and Kiraly (2016; 2021).

Ritchhart and Perkins (2000) postulate that mindfulness be inculcated in students through three instructional practices which they labelled as: (i) *looking closely*, (ii) *exploring possibilities and perspectives*, and (iii) *introducing ambiguity*. *Looking closely*, to which Ritchhart and Perkins (2000) also refer as *loupe looking*, entails openness to new information, or increased sensitivity to detail, when handling the experience at hand. Straightforward as the practice may seem, it is challenging in that the sharpness of individuals' attention in concrete situations is often blunted by the human tendency to ignore seemingly less important elements of the environment and to replace them with information accumulated through past experiences. As a result, the ability to perceive experiences in a new light is often impeded, which may be counteracted by re-sensitising students – so to speak – to the details which normally escape their attention, e.g. by making them pose questions such as: "What *else* does it remind you of?" (Ritchhart and Perkins, 2000, p. 32).

Exploring possibilities and perspectives involves departing from the egocentric vantage point which people normally tend to adopt when exploring reality. This may be achieved by students stepping into the shoes of the other participants of the experience at hand or by considering factors, such as age or gender, which are likely to alter perceptions. The shift in perspective which this instructional practice requires may comprise physical, attitudinal or temporal dimensions.

Finally, *introducing ambiguity* consists in delivering instruction in a conditional rather than absolute manner, which involves the use of modality words and phrases, such as *may be* or *could be*, to indicate vagueness involved in the learning experience. As Ritchhart and Perkins (2000) observe, this kind of ambiguity requires a degree of sense-making, which motivates students to take a more active role in their learning than in a context where reality is explored by means of absolute truths, expressed through non-modal language forms. While increasing learner autonomy, ambiguity also alters the nature of resulting knowledge, as the need to consider several scenarios increases students' awareness of alternative interpretations of the experience. This augments their perceptions of future situations while also highlighting the dynamic and conditional nature of knowledge at large.

What follows is an account of research on how to possibly foster mindful behaviour in translation students participating in an intercultural virtual exchange project which aimed to develop their generic (inter)cultural competence. The

research was conducted towards the end of 2021 at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland. The research design, results and conclusions are presented in the following sections.

3. RESEARCH INTO THE IMPACT OF IMPLICIT GUIDANCE ON MINDFUL BEHAVIOUR ON STUDENTS' POST-INTERCULTURAL-EXPERIENCE REFLECTIONS

3.1. Research Aims

The quasi-experimental research was conducted between November and December 2021 to investigate whether the degree of explicit guidance on mindful behaviour in an intercultural online exchange (IOE) fosters translation students' reflections on other cultures and thus contributes to the development of their (inter)cultural competence. The students' mindful reflections on the target culture were analysed in two measurable dimensions: the volume and depth of post-experience reflections, with the latter discernible in the number of cultural questions self-posed by the students and the degree of ambiguity, as defined by Ritchhart and Perkins (2000), in their written reflections on the target culture. In addition, possible implications of the research findings for the design of tasks aimed at developing other components of translation competence, as exemplified by technology competence, were also considered.

The research aimed to verify the three-pronged hypothesis, each strand of which addressed the aforementioned observable manifestations of mindful reflection. The hypothesis was worded as follows:

H_1: Explicit guidance on mindful behaviour in retrospective post-experience tasks can increase: (i) the volume of students' cultural reflection, and (ii) the depth of students' cultural reflection, as manifested in the number of self-posed cultural questions, and in (iii) the level of ambiguity (conditionality).

The findings were also reviewed for implications that they might have for task design in coursework aimed at developing cultural and other components of translation competence.

3.2. Research Context

The research was conducted during the 15th edition of the Global Understanding project, organised by the Global Partners in Education (GPE), a network based at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina, USA. This promotes the

development of intercultural competence by involving international students from partner institutions through synchronous in- and out-of-class interaction, mostly via Zoom (zoom.com) videoconferencing.

The details of the project are available on the GPE website (thegpe.org), thus, only information necessary to outline the context of the present research will be provided here. The Online Intercultural Exchange (OIE) which constituted the backdrop of the present research involved a total of 30 students from the Hochschule Heilbronn, Schwabisch Hall, Germany (HHN) (16 students) and the Jagiellonian University in Kraków (UJ) (14 students), with the latter group comprising translation students and constituting the research sample.

The OIE involved five online link days on which students from both institutions discussed five topics: Personal Introductions, College Life and Education, Cultural Traditions, Religion and Ethics, and Meaning of Life. In each institution, the students worked in two groups (A and B), which from class to class alternated between working in a joint Zoom videoconference (e.g. Group A) and smaller pods of 3 or 4 (e.g. Group B), for which separate breakout rooms were created. The caveat is that the first and last link days were all-class videoconferences, with the final day was dedicated to an exchange of post-link reflections. At UJ, each link day was followed by written post-experience reflection tasks distributed via the university's online learning platform. Among those tasks were Task I and Task II, which lay at the core of the research.

4. RESEARCH METHOD, PROCEDURE, INSTRUMENT AND SAMPLING

4.1. Research Method and Procedure

The research can be classified as quasi-experimental, with a pre- and post-test design (Cohen et al., 2017), as it was conducted to examine the effects of the degree of guidance on mindful behaviour on the quality of students' retrospective cultural reflections. This method was selected because it is often used to demonstrate "that an outcome has been caused by a specific intervention" (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 391).

The preparatory work involved two stages. First, the research questions were posed and the two tasks were designed in order to elicit the students' retrospective post-experience written reflections: a semi-guided task (Task I, see Appendix 1) with only general guidance on mindful cultural reflection, and a guided task (Task II, see Appendix 2), containing explicit instructions of the kind. Both tasks were

distributed in .DOCX format and required the students to fill in grids with their cultural reflections.

Task I, which can be viewed as the pre-test, was distributed prior to the intercultural exchange and contained only limited guidance on mindful reflection. The students' responses to the task were reviewed by the course teacher and the students were provided with generic written feedback on the nature and depth of their reflections. Subsequently, the students were asked to complete Task II, which can be viewed as the post-test since its distribution followed the provision of explicit guidance on mindful cultural reflection. The textual data (written responses) collected from the project participants were converted into .TXT format and imported into AntConc, the corpus analysis toolkit for concordancing and text analysis, where concordance searches were run for the total number of words used by individual students in their reflections (volume of reflection), the number of questions which individuals asked in the task about the target culture (depth of reflection) and the number of low, medium and high modality words (extent of ambiguity/conditional learning). The data analysis was both qualitative and quantitative; the former involved the semantic verification of the concordance-searched words, which sought to ensure that particular words were indicative of the students' mindful behaviour, while the latter consisted in the calculation of frequency lists for each of them. Last but not least, the statistical significance of the difference between the results obtained in the pre- and post-test tasks was computed by means of paired-samples *t*-tests at the level of $p \geq .05$.

4.2. Research Sample

The research participants were recruited on a non-random, convenience basis from the Polish participants of the HHN-UJ exchange. The purposive sample on which the research is based comprised Polish translation students attending the elective course Global Understanding on a European Master's in Translation (EMT) programme at UJ. As part of their coursework, the students were subjected to the aforementioned intervention, involving the use of Tasks I and Task II. The sample contained 14 students in total ($N = 14$), 12 females ($N = 12$) and 2 males ($N = 2$), all in their mid-twenties.

4.3. Research Instrument: Post-Experience Reflection Tasks

The research data were elicited through two post-experience reflection tasks: Task I and Task II. Both tasks focused on the exploration of positive and negative stereotypes about German culture which the Polish participants had adhered to before the project. The goal of the tasks was to give the students an opportunity

to critically review the stereotypes in the light of evidence collected when they telecollaborated with their German partners.

However, the tasks differed in the amount of guidance on how to perform it mindfully. Task I (see Appendix 1) was semi-guided in design in that it contained only limited guidance on mindful behaviour. Prior to it, the students were referred to the typology of shared mindfulness communication behaviours, as delineated and operationalised by Helen Spencer-Oatey (2016), and they were encouraged to use those behaviours as often as possible while interacting with their German partners. For documentation purposes, the task also required the students to keep a written record in tabular format of any instances of mindful exploration in which they engaged, including the action(s) they took, the time needed and a description of actual performance.

Task II (see Appendix 2) was designed in response to the observable shallowness of the students' reflections reported in Task I and contained much more detailed guidance on the forms of mindful behaviour the students specifically needed to engage in in order to deepen their post-experience reflections. Hence, it was classified as a guided assignment. The task was based on the three prerequisites of the development of mindfulness as a permanent trait cited by Ritchhart and Perkins (2000): (i) looking closely (at experience), (ii) exploring possibilities and perspectives and (iii) introducing ambiguity (to one's interpretation of observations); each was operationalised for the purpose of the task at hand. To look closely, the students were requested to produce questions which they could potentially ask their foreign partners to elicit information necessary for the exploration of their culture, to research answers to 2–3 of these questions online, and to suggest alternative steps in order to increase the depth of their exploration. To explore possibilities and perspectives, the students were asked to re-examine their relatively shallow findings from Task I through the eyes of their project partners by filling in a table where each cultural stereotype would be described from the perspective of a cultural insider and outsider. Finally, to moderate their cultural observations, the students were requested to reformulate their cultural reflections from Task I by replacing rigid statements with those signifying ambiguity.

5. RESULTS

The results of the research are presented below with regard to the three hypotheses and the research question which it purported to examine. They are followed by a discussion of the findings and the final conclusions which have been drawn from them.

5.1. Hypothesis Testing

5.1.1. VOLUME OF STUDENTS' POST-EXPERIENCE REFLECTIONS

The number of words used in Task I and Task II as computed for the entire sample was 4,216 and 8,973 respectively, which marks an increase by 4,757 words in Task II. When the results were reviewed for individual students, it turned out that all but one student recorded increases in the volume of reflections which they offered in Task II vs. Task I, with the increases varying from 45 words (138 to 183) for Student 9 (S9) to 1,436 words (131 to 1,567) for S14. The only student who did not follow the pattern (S3) recorded a decrease of 245 words, from 491 to 246.

The results of the paired *t*-test revealed a statistically significant ($p = .009$) mean difference between the number of words the students used in Task I ($M = 301.1$, $SD = 118.8$) and Task II ($M = 638.4$, $SD = 397.3$), which caused the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0), which claimed that explicit guidance on mindful behaviour in retrospective post-experience tasks has no effect on the volume and depth of students' cultural reflection. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis (H_1), stating that explicit guidance on mindful behaviour in retrospective post-experience tasks can increase the volume of students' cultural reflection, as manifested by the number of questions which the students self-pose to enhance their cultural exploration, was accepted as potentially valid. Overall, the results demonstrated increased verbosity in the students' post-experience reflections in the guided task. Although the word counts alone cannot be treated as the only indicator of enhanced post-experience reflection, it must be noted that the questions asked by the students in Task II were verified as relevant for increased (inter)cultural probing. By formulating such questions the students had the opportunity to consider ways in which to facilitate their intercultural exploration it, which – if continued on a more systematic basis – is likely to develop the habit of in-depth questioning while in contact with other cultures. Moreover, since they also answered some of their own questions, they practised deeper examination of the cultural issues at hand.

5.1.2. DEPTH OF STUDENTS' POST-EXPERIENCE REFLECTIONS

Since verbosity alone cannot be indicative of the mindfulness of cultural reflections, the depth of the latter was also examined, as observable in the number of questions enquiring into stereotypes about the target culture and the ambiguity of cultural observations in the students' reflections.

Regardless of the difference in the number of words which the students used in Task I and Task II, their reflections in Task II contained more questions (179), potentially stimulating cultural exploration more than in Task I (56), with individual increases ranging from 2 to 46 questions.

As the paired *t*-test revealed, there was a statistically significant (p = .013) mean difference between the number of cultural questions posed in Task I (M = 4, SD = 3.4) and Task II (M = 12.8, SD = 11). Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) was also rejected in this case, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1), stating that explicit guidance on mindful behaviour in post-experience tasks can increase the depth of cultural reflection, as manifested in the number of questions enhancing students' exploration of the target culture, was accepted as valid.

The picture is complemented by the results of the analysis of the number of words with low, medium and high modality which the students used to verbalise their cultural observations in Task and Task II. The low modality words comprised *could*, *couldn't*, *doubtful*, *I think*, *may*, *maybe*, *perhaps*, *might*, *occasionally* and *potentially.* The medium modality words were *rarely*, *sometimes*, *unsure*, *apparently*, *frequently*, *likely*, *often*, *ought to* and *probably*, while high modality words contained *scarcely*, *should*, *shouldn't*, *usually*, *would*, *wouldn't*, *absolutely*, *always*, *certainly*, *clearly*, *definitely*, *has to*, *have to*, *impossibly*, *invariably*, *is*, *are*, *must*, *mustn't*, *never*, *obviously*, *shall*, *surely*, *undoubtedly*, *unquestionably*, *will* and *won't*, including the full versions of the contracted forms.

The conflated frequency counts for words with low and medium (low-mid) modality, which mark ambiguous verbalisations of cultural observations, were compared with the number of high modality words, which characterise absolute verbalisations. The distinction between these two modes of verbalisation was considered important in that absolute cultural statements indicate simplified cultural exploration, which results in sweeping generalisations and rigid *truths* about the target culture, while conditional statements, which leave more room for alternative interpretations, are more likely to be the outcome of deeper exploration. Research into the value of conditional instruction, as opposed to absolute instruction, was initiated by Langer and Alison Piper (1987), who observed that absolute instruction activates learners and encourages them to make sense, and explore alternative interpretations, of encountered situations, as well as use absorbed information creatively in new contexts.

As the research results revealed, the number of the more desired low and mid modality words which the students used in their cultural reflections in Task II was far greater than in Task I. In other words, students' reflections in the semi-guided task tended to be absolute, while in Task II they bore a degree of ambiguity (conditionality). In total, the students used 52 low and mid modality words in Task II and as many as 238 such words in Task II. At the individual level, 13 students used more low and mid modality words in Task II than in Task I, with the differences ranging from 7 to 51 words. For only one student (S9) was a decrease observed from 1 to 0 low and mid words used in Task I and Task II, respectively.

The statistical tests revealed that the mean number of low and mid modality words in Task I and Task II equalled $x = 3.7$ ($SD = 0.20$) and $x = 17$ (0.87), respectively. Consequently, the mean difference for low and mid words between Task I and Task II amounted to $\bar{x}_d = 13$ ($SD_d = 13.28$) and was statistically significant ($p = .002$). As a result, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1), stating that explicit guidance on mindful behaviour in post-experience tasks can increase the level of ambiguity in students' reflections on the target culture, appeared validated.

6. DISCUSSION

Overall, the results obtained in course of the research revealed that the degree of guidance on mindful behaviour which students receive has an impact on the volume and depth of retrospective cultural reflection based on the intercultural project experience. The research clearly indicates that when students are only introduced to strategies for mindful behaviour and encouraged to use them while reflecting on experience, as was the case in the semi-guided task (Task I), the extent to which to do so is likely to be limited. Consequently, they not only reflect less but also fail to engage with the experience at hand to transcend beyond superficial cultural observations and sweeping overgeneralisations, which indicate *mindless behaviour* (Langer and Moldoveanu, 2000). Be it due to lack of awareness of how to act, or lack of the necessity to engage more with the post-experience reflection task, students seemingly resort to precisely what Ritchhart and Perkins (2000) described as the routine human tendency to filter out new information in order to interpret situations with ready-made knowledge and perceptual frameworks which they developed in the past. Apparently, even in the face of potentially perception-altering experiences, students may confirm the truths which they have established rather than refining them in the light of the novel – albeit often less salient – evidence, which demonstrates the need for nurturing mindful reflection in students, e.g. through the kind of guidance which Task II involved.

At the same time, it must be noted that mindful reflection needs to be systematically nurtured across the translator education curriculum and the findings reported above imply how to integrate it into tasks designed to foster the development of other components of translator competence. The manner in which mindfulness-nurturing strategies are potentially applicable to tasks other than intercultural ones, e.g. those which aim to improve technology competence, is demonstrable by considering how they can be used to augment students' reflections on, say, Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) tools in team translation projects. For that purpose, post-project

reflection tasks would need to encourage students to use the three mindfulness-nurturing strategies utilised in the present research, i.e. looking closely, exploring possibilities and perspectives and introducing ambiguity (conditionality), to their conclusions on the learning experience. With that in mind, tasks focused on looking closely need to request students to explore the CAT tool of their choosing in multiple ways, e.g. by reading the technical documentation, consulting relevant tutorials, collecting accounts of user experience, or self-learning through hands-on experience (trial-and-error method). Such means of reflection on the CAT tool are likely to stimulate students to draw informed conclusions.

To explore various possibilities and perspectives related to the CAT tool reflection tasks need to encourage students to consider the usefulness of the tool for various user groups. Students might also be asked to complete a SWOT analysis of the tool to consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which can be associated with (the use of) the tool, or to test the tool in different scenarios in which it is likely to be utilised.

Finally, to introduce ambiguity (conditionality) to learning, reflection tasks could require students to revisit their findings by questioning own judgments, speculating about alternative outcomes of their exploration through *What if* questions, hypothesising about the different aspects of the usage of the tool through *What could*, *What may*, or *What might* questions, or by suggesting alternative means of testing the tool.

7. CONCLUSION

Overall, what the research findings bring to light is that the mere exposure to novel experiences that contemporary translator education calls for will not suffice to stimulate effective reflection; nor will it alone necessarily alter students' perspectives on reality and them more adaptable. The research results demonstrate that the quality of reflection does not derive from the nature of the experience *per se* but from the way the reflection is structured. The increased verbosity of students' reflections and the greater depth cultural exploration in the guided task (Task II) seem to demonstrate that mindful behaviour needs to be properly nurtured through guided practice.

Notwithstanding the above, it must be underlined that the research results cannot be seen as evidence of the complete development of mindfulness, as defined by Ritchhart and Perkins (2000), in the students under examination. After all, it is hard to expect that a one-time experience incited by Task II had already instilled mindful behaviour. It might only be stated that the guided task took the students

in the right direction by illustrating what mindful behaviour entails. The actual learning goal needs to be the attainment of a permanent state where students would routinely display mindful behaviour, even without which explicit instruction, which might be possible if students are given recurrent opportunities to implement mindful behaviour in the learning situations in which they find themselves.

At the same time, in congruence with the principles of student-centred learning, the guidance demonstrated in Task II needs to be decreased overtime with a view to encouraging students to display mindful behaviour of their own accord. Only systematic practice, with the gradual relinquishing of instructional intervention, seems to be potentially conducive to permanent mindful behaviour, with the caveat that if – as Langer (1992) posits – mindfulness is conscious alertness to new information, each individual must make effort to approach reality with sensitivity towards the new. Otherwise, even the guidance demonstrated in Task II will remain ineffective.

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APPENDIX 1. TASK I

Throughout all the project links, use the mindful strategies you have learnt about as often as possible to investigate your stereotypes about German culture and keep a written record of what you use, when and how. Make notes to fill in the table below (feel free to expand the table at will):

Time (date, link day	Strategy used	Description of your actions	Your findings

APPENDIX 2. TASK II

The findings you have reported in Task I tend to be one-dimensional. Most of them read like sweeping overgeneralisations, which is to be avoided in intercultural learning. Please look at the example below.

Time (date, link day)	Strategy used	Description of your actions	Your findings
30.11.21, LD I	Seeking clarification or confirmation of information from partner	I asked if the Germans had dwarfs in their gardens.	X told me that dwarfs are popular in Germany, but nowadays, mostly older people have them in their gardens or houses.

It is a very simplified picture of the world, with no details provided. In fact, it tells you little about the nature of the real nature of the phenomenon which you were meant to examine. It is possible to suggest multiple questions which you might ask to explore the target culture beyond the limited and oversimplified description of your findings which you can find in the last column. All of these potential questions are missing. More importantly, they remain unanswered. In fact, the findings leave go little beyond what we tend to do on a daily basis, when we filter out a lot of the reality to be able to quickly interpret the world around us, if only to live with the illusion that we understand how things really work. Unfortunately, that is exactly what leads to sweeping stereotypes, which is evidenced by the findings above.

To add depth to your cultural exploration, please select one of your findings. Look at what you wrote critically (adopt the same position as above) and re-investigate it mentally by performing the following tasks in the order in which they come, as they are cumulative in nature.

I. LOOK CLOSELY

Imagine you can continue to collaborate with your international project partners to explore the cultural phenomenon under investigation and find out more about it than you originally did. Think carefully and provide the information listed below:

1. What specific questions do you need to ask your partner(s) to be able to examine the cultural phenomenon of your choice in real detail? Consider what information you are missing and what details would need to elicit to describe the phenomenon in a much more comprehensive way which would reflect possible diversity in people's practices or thought patterns? Think of as many questions of the kind as possible.

2. Do online research and try to answer at least 2–3 of those questions.

3. Write what other steps you could possibly take to investigate the problem even further?

II. INTRODUCE AMBIGUITY

Look at the phenomenon under investigation again and try to re-write your new detailed findings from Task I by presenting them as less absolute. In other words, produce a description where you will write less about how things *are*; instead, write more about how things *could*/*may*/*might be*, depending on how likely you believe your findings from Task I to be true. Do not merely re-write your findings using modal verbs; come up with one alternative description of the phenomenon under investigation which you think might be a plausible version of reality.

III. TAKE A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Surely, you have your own thoughts and opinions on the phenomenon you examined in Task I. However, now try to shift your perspective and see how a member of German culture might feel about the very same phenomenon. Describe their perspective (thoughts/opinions/interpretations) and contrast it with yours in the table below.

Outsider's perspective (yours)	Insider's perspective

Data zgłoszenia artykułu: 02.11.2023
Data zakwalifikowania do druku: 22.11.2023