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5th International Conference
on **Teacher Education**

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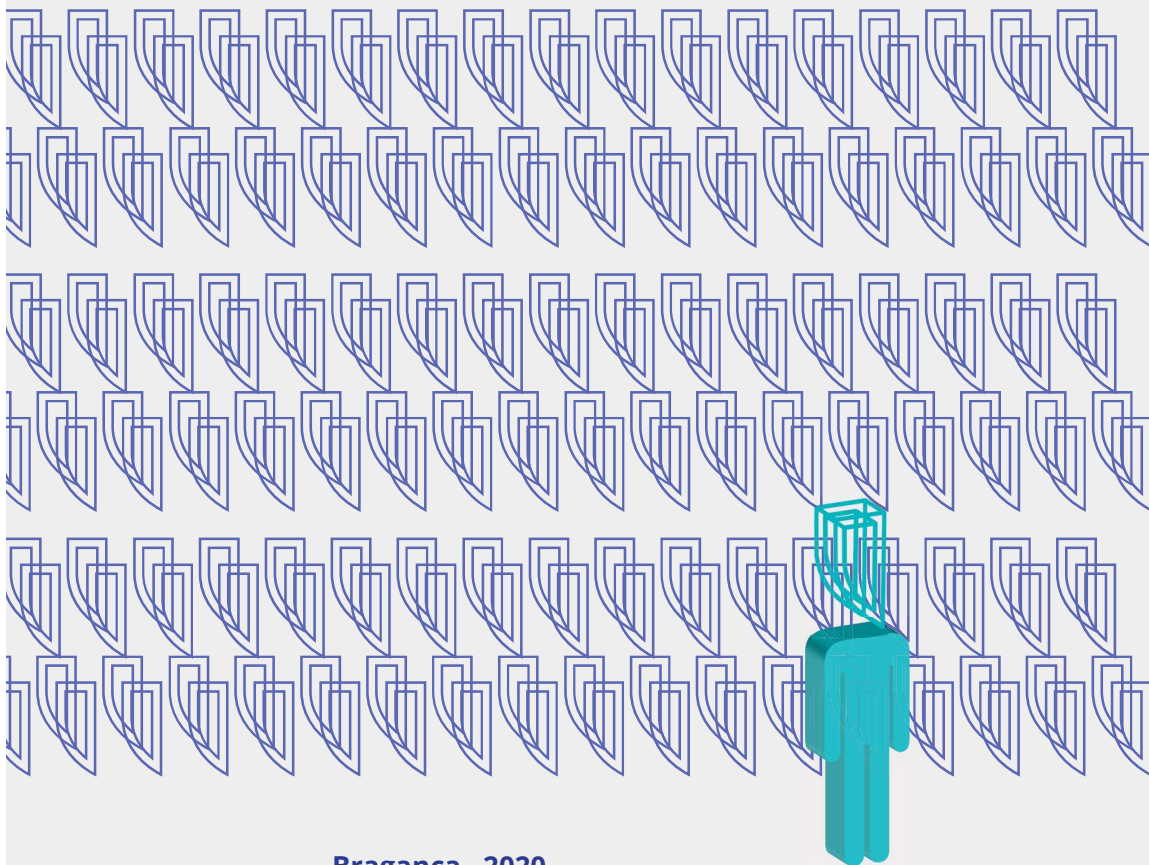
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**CROSSROADS IN
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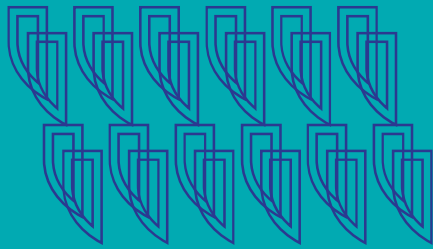
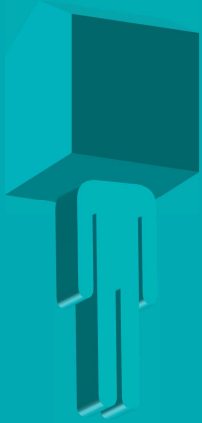
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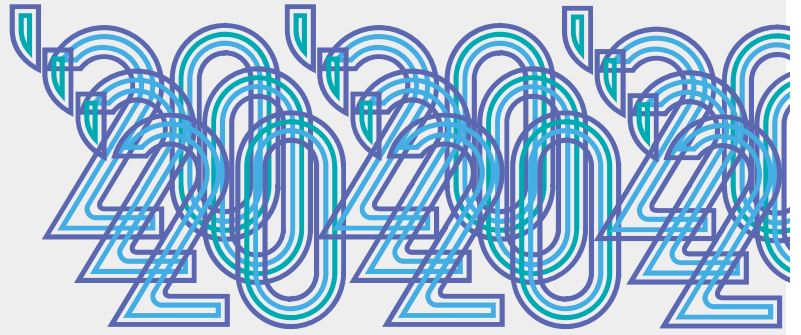
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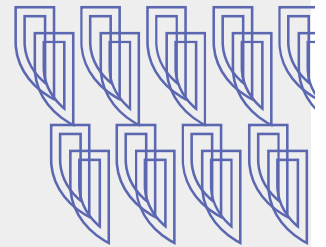
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Once upon a time... an insight into the teaching of translation history

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Abstract

The teaching of translation assumes many forms. As an eminently practical subject with a highly competence-based outcome, translation degrees, at any cycle of higher education, incorporate a minimum number of theoretical subjects. History of translation rarely appears as an independent subject or module, at most it is taught under the umbrella subject of translation theory. Translation history has been in the spotlight of research for nearly two decades now. Since the 1990s many histories of translation have been published, in the form of anthologies, compilation of cross-cultural translational traditions, dissertations, specific books and especially as the result of numerous academic events. However, it has been viewed as a neglected topic within translator training, with rare research upon the relation of translation history and its didactics. Bearing this in mind, this paper provides an overview of the academic degrees in Portuguese higher education institutions offering translation history as a module or a subject within its curricula. The data is drawn from the institutions' websites. A comparative analysis of syllabi will be presented in order to understand which topics are approached at the several institutions. The main objectives of this paper are to allow an insight into and debate the role of translation history within the Portuguese higher education context, to describe the pedagogical approach of the different institutions in order to identify patterns, similarities and differences. It will also focus on the case of the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança, following a descriptive case study approach. This exploratory study will provide information on how the topic is approached in the translation degrees across Portugal, thus contributing to an overview of what is taught on the topic and how this occurs in the different degrees. The comparative analysis of the syllabi's contents will grant the identification of a Portuguese trend in teaching translation history as well as to reach conclusions regarding the underlying pedagogic principles.

Keywords: translation history, translation didactics, Portuguese higher education.

Resumo

O ensino da tradução assume muitas formas. Sendo uma disciplina eminentemente prática com resultados de aprendizagem baseados em competências, os cursos de tradução, em qualquer ciclo de ensino superior, incorporam um número mínimo de disciplinas teóricas. Aliás, a história da tradução raramente surge como uma disciplina ou módulo independente, sendo, quando muito, ensinada dentro da teoria da tradução. A história da tradução integra a investigação na área há cerca de duas décadas. Desde os anos 90 que muitas histórias da tradução foram publicadas, seja sob a forma de antologias, compilações sobre diversas tradições tradutológicas, dissertações, livros específicos e sobretudo como livros de atas, resultado de inúmeros eventos académicos na área. Ainda assim, a história da tradução tem sido negligenciada no âmbito da formação do tradutor, existindo escassa investigação sobre a relação entre esta e a sua didática. Partindo deste pressuposto, este artigo oferece uma

perspetiva abrangente dos cursos de ensino superior português que possuem história da tradução como disciplina ou módulo na sua oferta formativa. Estes dados são extraídos dos sítios web das respetivas instituições, sendo depois realizada uma análise comparativa dos conteúdos das disciplinas com o intuito de perceber quais os tópicos abordados em cada uma das instituições. Os objetivos deste artigo são: permitir verificar e debater qual o papel da história da tradução no contexto do ensino superior português, descrever a abordagem pedagógica das diferentes instituições na tentativa de identificar padrões, semelhanças e diferenças. O artigo também abordará o exemplo do Instituto Politécnico de Bragança através de um estudo de caso descritivo. Este estudo exploratório vai permitir obter informação relevante sobre a forma como este tema é abordado nos cursos de tradução em Portugal, contribuindo assim para uma visão geral sobre o que é ensinado no âmbito deste tema e como tal ocorre nos diferentes cursos. A análise comparativa dos conteúdos programáticos vai permitir a identificação de uma tendência portuguesa no ensino da história da tradução bem como concluir quais os princípios pedagógicos subjacentes a tal ensino.

Palavras-Chave: história da tradução, didática da tradução, ensino superior português.

1 Introduction

All fields of study are grounded in a past, be it architecture, mathematics or law. However, the study of the past is not always viewed as essential in different areas. One might argue that the history of robotics is not relevant for any outcomes or application in the field, that it is a mere subject of secondary interest. To a certain extent the question as to whether the past is worth studying and therefore teaching remains.

The same applies to translation studies. The discipline in itself is fairly recent, gaining momentum in the 1970s due to a paper presented by Holmes and later published in 1988 under the title “The Name and Nature of Translation Studies”. This seminal text mapped the discipline and paved the way for many subareas which remain more or less unchanged until these days. The history of translation is indirectly referred to and can be found implicitly in the theoretical branch of translation studies Holmes envisaged. The more research was carried out, the more the subfields became clarified within the vast discipline of translation studies. The 1980s and 1990s were fundamental to establish firm ground for many aspects. This paper, as the title reveals, is focused on the idea that the history of translation exists as a field within translation studies and moreover, as a field that has a place in the broad spectrum of courses that can be taught to university students undergoing training in translation.

Before moving into academia, history of translation had to create boundaries, define methods and embed theoretical models. Many academic events created the rightful opportunity for debate around the topic. Universities could not ignore the wealth of material which linked translation and history. The 1990s gave way to an unprecedented interest and publication rhythm, which had begun with Steiner’s *After Babel*, much earlier, in 1975, and followed by Lefevere (1977), Van Hoof (1986), D’Hulst (1990) and Ballard (1992). The discourse on translation saw the light in the form of anthologies, like Douglas Robinson’s book on Western translation theory (1997) or José Sabio Pinilla’s book on Portugal (1998). Moreover, the study of individual translator contribution gained attention. The broad overview provided by Delisle and Woodsworth in *Translators through History* (1995) and the detailed insight of Pym’s work on *Method in Translation*

History (1998) covered aspects which had never before been highlighted, apart from the many prefaces and letters written by translators and scattered along history.

In 1998 the first edition of the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* was published. It aimed at covering a wide range of topics within the field and had a very specific second part called “History and Traditions”, which was reprised in the following two editions, though leaving out some of the histories, like the Portuguese one.

Around the world the ongoing public access to archives and documentation from the first half of the 20th century gave rise to a number of thematic publications which related translation to censorship (*Traduction, Terminologie, Redaction*, 2002), the wealth of publications related to literature and the Nazi regime, translation and the Italian fascist regime, translation in the Franco era in Spain, and also during Salazar’s dictatorship in Portugal. All of these publications helped coining the idea that history of translation exists, is relevant and can simultaneously shape and contribute to a broader and better understanding of the role of history within the wider discipline.

Curriculum design in translation studies varies greatly according to geographical location or to translational traditions. Nevertheless, Martino (2013) considers that by including history of translation in study programs

the prospective translator has the opportunity to expand his/her worldview and learn how to handle the tapestry of encyclopedic knowledge which will allow weaving the texts with artistic and real craftsmanship (p. 72).

Mossop (2003) also believes that there is a reason why history of translation should be part of a translation curriculum: “it will help make a difference between a thinking translator and a mere word engineer” (p. 21), since students have to be able to reflect on “how translators have functioned in different societies at different times” (p. 21). As explained before, history of translation does indeed appear as an immense body of knowledge, which, according to Woodsworth (1996), can be “complex, overwhelming, or even irrelevant” (p. 9).

Didactics of translation and translator training have received considerable attention in the last 30 years, following the drive that the increase of technological tools for (future) translators has precipitated and even promoted. This has induced scholars to hint at what should be taught in the subfield of history of translation. A very brief proposal by Fawcett (1981) suggests that a course of the kind should “reveal the major schools of thought throughout history” (p. 144). Another proposal, by Woodsworth (1996), provides details in what the author calls the traditional periodization “in Western scholarship” (p. 15), thus including the classical antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries in England and France. A further suggestion is by Martino (2013), focusing on the Antiquity (Western and Eastern tradition), the Middle Ages (Western and Eastern tradition), the Modern Era (from the 15th to the 18th centuries) and the Contemporary Era (19th to 21st centuries).

These proposals materialise under the assumption that history of translation should be taught as a course in itself. However, there is no consensus regarding this issue. Hence the question remains: should such a subfield correspond to a course on its own or should history be taught and studied under the umbrella course of translation theory? There is no direct answer and even scholars who have proposed contents for a course are not clear regarding this aspect.

This exploratory study will provide a review of the translation study programs in Portuguese higher education institutions from first cycle to third cycle degrees, excluding post-graduation programs, which are usually very focused and concerned with a specialization for the maximum duration of a year.

Firstly, the review aims at trying to understand the place and role of history of translation in the different programs since the academic year of 2018/19. Then, it describes the different approaches of the institutions, thus allowing to perceive patterns, similarities or differences.

Finally, this article will highlight the case of the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança in order to provide a detailed insight into an example of how the issue is approached.

2 Description of the data and methodological aspects

The data for this exploratory study was obtained from the websites of Portuguese higher education institutions which offer translation programs at first, second and third cycles. Postgraduation programs were not considered due to the fact that they are usually only one year long and therefore highly focused on a specialisation or a rather practical topic, such as interpreting, automatically excluding any general theoretical approaches, and as such, discussion of the historical kind.

As this is an exploratory study, qualitative data is relevant, especially when presenting the comparative analysis of syllabi, which allows to perceive which topics are approached in the different institutions.

On the whole there are 21 programs offered at 10 higher education institutions, covering universities and polytechnics, as well as the different cycles, as can be seen in figure 1:

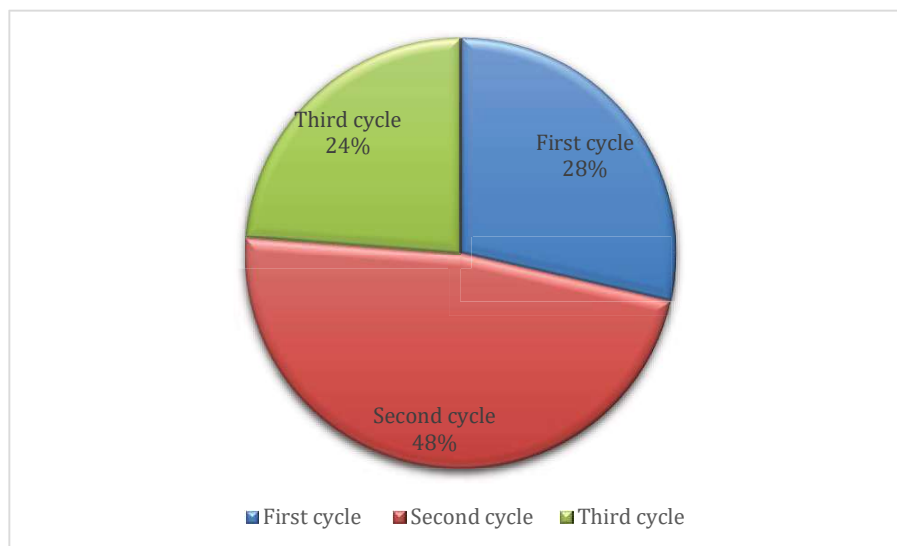


Figure 1: Translation program on offer in Portuguese higher education institutions.

Only programs containing the word 'translation' in the official designation were considered, although there are other programs which offer translation courses as optionals

or one-offs. However, these offers admittedly are, for instance, bachelors in Modern Languages or Applied Languages, therefore, not in the field of translator training.

As the figure reveals, most translation degrees exist as second cycle offers in 10 different institutions (48%). At first cycle level, only six institutions (28%) offer a degree in translation and at third level, the number is slightly lower: 24%. This percentage demands an extra explanation, though. In fact, doctorates in translation are offered at five institutions, however, there are only three different degrees, since two of them are offered in collaboration with other institutions as joint doctoral programs. This is the case of the joint doctorate from the Aveiro University and Nova University in Lisbon, and again of the doctorate that is shared by the University of Lisbon, Nova University of Lisbon and the Catholic University of Portugal. Currently, only Coimbra University offers a doctorate in translation on its own.

After this identification, a detailed analysis of the curricula took place in order to verify the inclusion of the topic of history of translation. All 10 institutions offer a course in translation theory, but only four of them have an autonomous course in history of translation. The latter situation only occurs in one institution at all three levels of training plus another two, at first and third cycle levels. None of the first cycle offers have history of translation in their curricula except for one institution (Nova University of Lisbon), but they do offer modules on history within the framework of the subject translation theory. Three institutions do not display the contents of the courses publicly, although one of them indeed offers history and translation theory at second cycle level. This has prevented the analysis of the respective syllabi for the upcoming comparison.

3 Analysis of the results

As explained in the previous section, all 10 institutions offer theory of translation, and from these, four offer a course in history of translation. These specific courses in history will be dealt with later.

The first overall category of theoretical courses is translation theory, though the designations vary according to institutions:

- Teoria e Metodologia da Tradução (translation theory and methodology)
- Teorias e Metodologias da Tradução (translation theories and methodologies)
- Teoria da Tradução (translation theory)
- Teorias da Tradução (translation theories)
- Teoria da Tradução Especializada (specialised theory of translation)
- Teoria e Prática da Tradução (translation theory and practice)
- Tradução e Cânone (translation and canon)

The third designation is more widespread and occurs in five of the 10 institutions, namely at the University of Porto, University of Coimbra, Nova University of Lisbon, University of Lisbon and the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança. The remaining designations are variations of the same topic, but with additions, such as practice and methodologies, therefore originating less focus on a possible reference to history in the field.

The examination of the aforementioned syllabi reveals that history finds a place within these courses, even if just through a single line. Such is the case of the University of Coimbra where the course in translation theory provides an introductory module titled “Revisão: abordagens históricas” (Revision: historical approaches). The University of Coimbra, on the other hand, proposes a wider range of topics in the historical field with reflections on the practice of translation from the antiquity to the 20th century, covering the Romans, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, Schleiermacher’s thoughts and the development of translation studies in the 20th century (*Unidade Curricular Teoria da Tradução*, n.d.). At the same university, the doctorate offers the course theories and methodologies of translation studies, including only one historical subtopic: reflection on translation from Cicero to Schleiermacher. At the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança translation theory includes a module on history covering: “History of Translation (origins, evolution, periodization) with emphasis on the following: the Romans, from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, Bible Translations; the 17th century in France and England; the 18th century – Germany as a theoretical centre for translation; the 19th century – Romanticism and Translation; the 20th century – Translation in a brave new world” (*Guia ECTS Theory of Translation*, 2020).

Autonomous courses in history of translation are a reality at the Nova University of Lisbon (bachelor, masters and doctorate) and at the Catholic University of Portugal and University of Lisbon, through the joint doctorate of the three institutions. The contents, taught in the last two academic years, appear in the following comparative table:

Table 1: History of translation syllabi at the three institutions (my translation).

Nova University of Lisbon (first cycle – 6 credits)	Nova University of Lisbon (second cycle – 10 credits)	Nova, Catholic University, University of Lisbon (third cycle – 12 credits)
Introductory module: - Presentation - Introduction to the critical analysis of translations Module 1. Antiquity: - Introduction to the translation of the Bible - Cicero and the rhetorical tradition - Saint Jerome Module 2. The Middle Ages: - Translation theory in the Middle Ages - Schools of Toledo and Baghdad- The Wycliffe Bible- translation and the development of the press Module 3. The modern age: - translation theory in the modern age - Vernacular Bibles - Joachim du Bellay and La	Module A. The Bible A1. Antique biblical translations: the Septuagint, the Vulgate, St Augustine A2. The vernacular Bibles: Wycliffe, Erasmus, Luther, Tyndale A3. Evangelism and reaction: the Jesuits; colonial and evangelical Bibles; feminist Bibles Module B. Classical Heritage B1. The rhetorical in Antiquity: Cicero, Horatio, St. Jerome B2. The classical heritage in the medieval and modern ages: translatio imperii et studii; Schools of Toledo and Baghdad; the Humanism of the Renaissance B3. The classical heritage	History of translation: an incommensurable project? 1. History of translation and translation studies: a difficult relationship 2. Towards the feasibility of a history of translation: several limitations 3. Defining the object of history of translation 4. The historiographical discourse on translation. Progress, evolution and change. Periodisation. 5. History of translation in Portugal: a project to accomplish 6. Assumptions and conditions for the project

<p>Pléiade Module 4. 17th and 18th centuries - The French neoclassicism and ‘les belles infidèles’ - Sir John Denham (translation as propaganda) - John Dryden Module 5. The 19th century - German romanticism - The controversy Newman-Arnold Module 6. The 20th century (first half) - The hermeneutic tradition - E. V. Rieu and the Penguin Classics collection</p>	<p>from the 18th century: Neoclassicism, Penguin Classics Module C. Nations and vernaculars C1. Establishment of the nation-state: Caxton, Dolet, Du Bellay C2. Romantic Germany: Herder, Schleiermacher, Goethe Module D. Colonial Heritage D1. Orientalism: Thousand and one nights; Rubaiyat D2. Postcolonialism: Africa, India, Brazil Module E. The hermeneutic tradition E1. The German philosophy heritage: Benjamin, Ortega y Gasset E2. Contemporary expressions: Derrida, Steiner, Cassin</p>	
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Considering the presented syllabi, the initial comparison allows to perceive a different length and depth in the contents. The first case comprises six subtopics in the history of translation, covering most of the proposals introduced in the first section of this article, thus revealing a comprehensive overview of the history of translation. More details are presented in the second case (taught at master level) and apart from the main topics, different currents in translation studies are approached, in combination with the historical perspective, for instance postcolonialism. Although the syllabus of the course taught at third level in the joint doctorate is presented in a more compact form, this is an illusion, since six main topics are presented, but all sort of insights and contributions can be lectured in them, thus promoting a thorough critical and reflective teaching and learning process, as to be expected at such level, therefore hinting at a future research path.

These three cases are clearly exceptions within the translator training programs offered in the higher education system in Portugal, for they acknowledge history of translation as an autonomous subject within the 21 programs identified in this study.

4 The Polytechnic Institute of Bragança: a more detailed insight

This case is presented as an illustration of what commonly happens in many institutions and countries in Europe and also because it is a firsthand experience of teaching. For instance, the British case, studied by Ordóñez-López (2016), revealed that the availability of modules in history of translation is limited and that teaching of history as an autonomous academic tradition is “far from ubiquitous” (p. 274). This very same idea can also be applied to the Portuguese context, as such this case is a regular one, and common

to most Portuguese higher education institutions which train translators, because it includes a module about history of translation within the wider subject of translation theory.

The course (*Guia ECTS Theory of Translation*, 2020), taught at second cycle level, presents the following sub-topics in a module on translation history:

- History of Translation (origins, evolution, periodization) with emphasis on the following:
 - The Romans, from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, Bible Translations;
 - The 17th century in France and England;
 - The 18th century – Germany as a theoretical centre for translation;
 - The 19th century – Romanticism and Translation;
 - The 20th century– Translation in a brave new world.

These six sub-topics are comprehensive and mainly focused on the Western tradition of translation, thus corresponding to the main trends presented in the teaching proposals mentioned earlier in this study by scholars, such as Woodsworth (1996) and Martino (2013). Of relevance is also the methodology used in the teaching and learning process. The several sub-topics are presented to the students using video lessons of the MOOC kind, followed by quizzes and a task-based approach, allowing them to perceive the different aspects not only in a purely chronological order, but also in relation to their current notion of translation. At a certain point, students are expected to research on a translator from the past, then presenting to the class their findings on that translator's definition of translation and consequent translation process. They should provide a critical reflection on the implication of that translator's actions in the past and to be able to compare that with probable situations nowadays. The emphasis is placed on a critical approach to the periodization of translation rather than a purely event-oriented history module.

This course covers the main topics of history of translation but not in an extensive way, mainly due to time restrictions related to the global course syllabus in translation theory. However, this module does not represent knowledge which is acquired merely at that point in the curriculum, since there is a close relationship with other courses in the program, such as translation practice and the internship.

5 Concluding remarks

The exploratory study carried out allowed the identification of a trend regarding the inclusion of history of translation in the Portuguese higher education institutions training translators. The historical approach is offered within the umbrella subject of translation theory, except for three cases, presented in the analysis' section. This comparison allows the conclusion that courses are quite comprehensive and proceed to be more detailed while progressing from first to third cycle degrees, though they still conform to the proposals indicated in the introductory literature review.

As a rule, aspects of the history of translation are typically incorporated into modules on the theory of translation, translation approaches, practice and methodology and this occurs at national level across the 21 programs identified in 10 different institutions.

In general, the syllabi have shown that no drastic distinction is made, regarding the study of theoretical subjects, among study cycles. Taking into consideration that translation programs are offered mainly at master level in Portugal, it might have been expected that the teaching of the history of translation would be more associated with postgraduate programs. Nevertheless, this exploratory study shows that there is no significant variation regarding this aspect.

In summary, an insight into the role of history of translation in the Portuguese higher education context was indeed provided, as well as the main patterns, similarities and differences, following the comparative analysis of the syllabi. The Polytechnic Institute of Bragança was then presented as a descriptive case study, delving into its methodology for the teaching of history of translation and also as an example of the overall national approach to the issue.

This study was of a mere exploratory nature, thus, questions remain unanswered and left available for further research, which would contribute to develop this area in a more comprehensive and detailed way. Reasons for the limited availability of the historical approach are left unexplained. The views of the lecturers involved in teaching translation could provide a more accurate idea of the rationale behind this specific curriculum design, which directly influenced the inclusion or exclusion of a course or module in history of translation. Another aspect not pursued in this study is related to the contribution that the study of history of translation could make to the training of future translators.

There is an important lesson to be learned here. As previously mentioned, the topic has scarcely been the object of study within translation studies or translator education and didactics, and this accounts for the fact why there are so many questions left unanswered. Fewer questions will remain with further research. Undoubtedly, the everyday making of history demands it, so that these issues become more clarified and deep-rooted.

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