

# Interpreter preparation in the interpreting classroom environment. A study on the usefulness of terminological glossaries

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## Abstract

*This paper explores the perception held by 135 students from two Spanish universities in their third, fourth and fifth years of study, on the conceptualisation, preparation and use of terminology glossaries. Respondents answered a series of questions about their experiences in preparing and using glossaries in their translation and interpreting courses. The methodology consisted of a questionnaire divided into four blocks of open- and closed-ended questions, aimed at identifying the use of glossaries in the interpreting classroom, to define their content and structure, as well as the importance students attach to this tool. The data obtained revealed that while glossaries are regularly addressed in translation, interpreting, documentation and terminology courses, students fail to perceive the full potential of this tool as a way of collecting the information necessary to understand the context in which the interpretation is to take place.*

## Keywords

Glossary, interpreting, interpreter training, preparation for interpretation assignments, terminology.

The simultaneous interpreting process involves a series of sequential sub-processes that begin at the very moment the assignment is materialised (Jiang 2013). Among these processes, there is no doubt, the interpreter's own preparation stands out as essential to guarantee the success of the final rendering and must be taken into serious consideration not only within the interpreters' own training, but also in the professional performance (Díaz Galaz 2011). In a professional setting, "the client is expected to provide the interpreter with all the information available in advance about the conference assignment" (Pérez-Pérez 2018: 138). But it is a well-known fact that the interpreter may well receive all the relevant documents, including the transcripts, the schedule and even the slides intended for use *during* the presentations, and often they may receive very little information at all.

Students should be taught about the range of possibilities they might encounter and be prepared for the fact that the organisers rarely realise that providing the interpreters with as much information as possible might mean the difference between a good and an excellent interpretation. Studies show that when organisers provide interpreters with information in advance, not only is the quality of the delivery of the target message perceived to be higher, but also the success of the event is greater (Díaz-Galaz *et al.* 2015).

In the interpreting classroom, it is necessary to try to enhance the limits of human capacity for processing and develop the students' abilities to deal with linguistic material (Padilla Benítez 1998), while highlighting the vital importance that terminology has for conference interpreters, since it is directly related to cohesion and the correct conveyance of meaning (García de Quesada 2007). Mastery of previously acquired terminology and its correct use throughout the event in which the interpreter is to participate are undoubtedly key determinants of the quality of their performance. In this sense, Fantinuoli (2017) emphasises the importance of advance preparation, especially in highly specialised settings. To do this, such terminology must be collated in the most effective way possible, thus allowing the interpreter to internalise it in a logical manner and retrieve it quickly when necessary. Poor terminology management by the interpreter is directly linked to key content-related parameters of interpreting quality, such as a lack of logical cohesion, incorrect or incomplete transmission of the original speech or inappropriate terminology, not to mention more formal parameters such as monotonous intonation (García de Quesada 2007).

Thus, glossaries may – and perhaps, should – be considered to be an essential and integral part of the whole interpretation process. It is probably safe to say that all interpreters have created some kind of glossary at some stage in their careers (Jiang 2015). However, students perceive the ad-hoc acquisition of terminological information as a time-consuming task, to which they tend to devote less time, although trainers should stress that accuracy in terminology usage is a key element to guarantee quality (Gile 2009). This perception held by students is probably linked to the fact that interpreter preparation before a conference is often analysed in passing or even taken for granted rather than addressed in de-

tail, as students in conference interpretation programmes could find it hard to fathom the particularities of the preparation process performed by professionals throughout the entire conference (Luccarelli 2006). This lack of interest is transmitted to the concept of glossaries, which is studied in even less detail (Jiang 2013). Additionally, the traditional glossary is no longer attractive to students that are used to smartphones, tablets and apps. The new generations of interpreters – digital natives and digital immigrants – are certainly more tech-savvy than their older colleagues and seem to be ready to embrace technology. In fact, laptops, tablets, and other kinds of technological tools have become a staple in the interpreting booth (Prandi 2020; Corpas Pastor 2021). Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that they may prefer to use more advanced tools or software solutions to meet their current needs in terms of technology and knowledge management, such as computer-assisted interpreting tools (Fantinuoli 2017), automatic speech recognition (Gaber *et al.* 2020; Corpas Pastor 2021; Defrancq/Fantinuoli 2021) and artificial intelligence solutions (see Fantinuoli 2018).

In this context, our study has three main aims. One is to determine how glossaries are used in the interpreting classroom. Another is to get an idea of the content and structure of the glossaries that students produce for their classwork. Finally, the third objective is to find out the degree of importance that students attach to glossary preparation. In other words, this paper aims to offer an insight into how translation and interpreting students are introduced to the preparation of terminology glossaries, as well as to determine the importance attributed to this tool throughout their training period, and to gauge the relevance that students give to glossary preparation during their training and in their professional careers. To do this, a self-developed questionnaire was used, which was answered by third, fourth and fifth-year students of Translation and Interpreting Studies from Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC) and Universidad Internacional de Valencia (VIU), both from Spain, in order to determine the way in which glossaries are introduced to students during their training and the perception students have of this tool.

1. The importance of context and knowledge: advance preparation as an essential tool for quality

The very essence of interpreting requires the interpreter to have a high degree not only of general knowledge, but also of the specific context in which the assignment is to take place. This is described by Hale in Crezee *et al.* (2015), who also pay particular attention to the importance of terminology in achieving this goal.

Interpreters do not work in isolation. They work in specific settings with their own cultures, organisational practices, institutional goals, participant roles, and context-specific discourses. In order for interpreters to be able to interpret accurately, they must first understand the context in which they are working, the content they are to interpret, the discourse strategies used by the different participants and the discipline-specific terminology (p. xxv).

Following the tenets of Alexieva, who, as early as 1985, regarded the conference as a “macro-text” in which different relations between the various individual “micro-texts” that made up the event converged, Pöchhacker (1992) applied the notion of “hypertext” from the origins of the network of networks to the analysis of the discourses (“texts”) that interrelate in a conference environment.

This interrelation is based on the precepts of functionalism, which argues that the communicative purpose (*skopos*) of the conference is defined in reference to the contractual specificities of the hypertext, defined as a “communicative act” (Pöchhacker 2015: 186). Thus, the knowledge of this network of texts or micro-texts that both Alexieva and Pöchhacker recognised as forming the units of any conference, as well as the interpreter’s familiarity with the terminology specific to each of these elements, is presented as a core aspect when approaching the preparation of any conference as a communicative act (see Bendazzoli 2010, Chapters 1-2).

It is therefore worth highlighting the types of knowledge that are essential for the interpreter’s work, which Díaz Galaz (2012) addresses from the following perspective:

[...] models describing the simultaneous interpreting process from a cognitive perspective attach great importance to prior linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge. Most authors agree that this relevance is due to the fact that prior knowledge makes it possible to “extract” the deep meaning of the source discourse and to facilitate inferential, predictive and anticipatory operations that would speed up the interpreting process (Díaz Galaz 2012: 112).

In the same vein, Pérez-Luzardo Díaz (2005) points out that every interpreter should not only possess solid lexical and semantic knowledge, but also cultural knowledge, knowledge of the world, encyclopaedic and background knowledge, as well as a firm interest in current affairs, in order to be able to contextualise the message and relate it to previously held knowledge. This premise emanates from a rather basic prerequisite which is the deep knowledge of the interpreting trainee’s working languages. In this respect, Blasco Mayor (2007) also highlights the importance of having a good command of the working languages to have a better performance in interpreting courses. Interestingly, the author also links language proficiency to motivation as a key driver in the execution of complementary activities that could enhance the students’ linguistic performance (*Ibid.*).

This general knowledge, which interpreters are presumed to have *per se* as a natural consequence of their experience, training and contact with the world, must be underpinned by preparation prior to any interpreting assignment. Moser-Mercer (1992) defines this preparatory process as continuous and constantly evolving, usually beginning some time before the interpreting assignment and lasting until the very moments before the assignment begins. This is partly in line with the interpreting model suggested later by Kalina (2002), which in turn drew on earlier precepts expressed by Gile (1985, 1986), whereby every interpreting act can be divided into four stages (pre-process, in-process, peri-process, and post-process), and wherein preparation is always present.

This emphasis on advance preparation must therefore be a constant in the interpreting classroom. Students must grasp the fact that it is only by acquiring

a thorough understanding of the environment in which a given event is taking place, and of its terminological and conceptual particularities, that it will be possible to produce a good quality interpretation. Bearing in mind that prior preparation might be regarded as a complex process which entails a series of interwoven sub-phases, glossaries acquire special relevance as a compilation element in the phase of terminological and documentary research.

## 2. Didactics of interpreting and its relation to glossary preparation

Interpreter training cannot turn its back on teaching methodologies that go beyond the structured setting of the classroom in today's increasingly virtualised teaching scenario. In spite of the fact that it seems plausible to believe that little has changed when it comes to teaching at the university level (Nouri 2016), a series of innovative trends has been increasingly opening space in university systems over the last decades. Such is the case of the flipped-classroom methodology. Although few studies have been carried out in this area in the field of translation and interpreting, Huynh/Nguyen (2019: 1100) identify this trend and attempt to analyse its application in the context of the interpreting classroom, on the basis that the "flipped classroom is viewed as a unique pedagogical approach, in which the roles of classroom activities and homework are reversed".

Huynh/Nguyen (*Ibid.*) base their study on Kong's (2014) categorisation of this teaching modality, and the three stages he sets out that structure the process of reversing the traditional classroom: pre-class preparation, in-class activities and post-class consolidation. It is this last stage that is of most interest to our study, since it is the moment when the authors introduce the development of glossaries in the organisational scheme of their flipped classroom. Although Huynh and Nguyen do not specify the intention behind creating glossaries after an individual interpretation, they do argue that this terminological tool should be present in the organisational scheme, and that it is useful for compiling part of the practical work carried out by students in the flipped classroom setting.

In other words, it highlights the importance of prior preparation as an element of the interpreters' behaviour during both their training and their professional practice (Díaz Galaz 2011); as well as the importance of glossaries as a relevant, if not indispensable, component in the professional practice of interpreting (Jiang 2013).

Conscientious conference preparation is a skill that can be learnt, but often remains untaught (Luccarelli 2006). University programmes in interpreting usually offer trainees an initial theoretical basis which may be deemed necessary to understand the essential basics of interpretation, as well as a brief introduction not only to preparation, but also to glossary creation. But perhaps, it may seem insufficient. In this sense, Luccarelli (*Ibid.*) states that students in conference interpreting courses are not usually given the opportunity to become familiar with preparation methodologies while practising, and it is only as professional interpreters that they really master the preparation technique. This is because trainees have scant knowledge about conference settings and little access to dummy booths, which is undoubtedly the most realistic practice setting for stu-

dents. Therefore, it would be safe to assume that given this context, for trainees, preparation simply means practice, the acquisition of new vocabulary and the expansion of general knowledge (Luccarelli 2006). In addition, internship opportunities are limited (Li 2015), which makes it even more difficult to become familiar with real-life interpreting settings. To tackle this, one example of good practice deserving of mention is the proposal put forward by Crezee *et al.* (2015), designed for a specific interpreting context but that could be extrapolated to general interpreting practice. Their training proposal for interpreters who wish to enter the healthcare field focuses on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge of terminology and potential work scenarios; a theoretical-practical introduction to the professional code of conduct; and finally, a look at real-life interpretation contexts using media such as videos.

Watching video clips will serve to give student interpreters the feeling of being 'right there' in the hospital room. This simulated presence in the healthcare setting may help give student interpreters the feeling that they are being induced into the community of practice of practicing healthcare interpreters [...]. Once they are practicing interpreters, they will repeat this experience in real life, and this will consolidate their knowledge of healthcare settings, allowing them to develop as healthcare interpreters (Crezee *et al.* 2015: 8).

This practical approach to teaching interpreting is underpinned by the importance that the authors give to glossaries in their handbook, as a tool for the complete and successful performance of the interpreter.

This is further explored in a practical simulated model analysed by Conde/Couch (2019) based on exposing trainees to "mini conferences" or "mock conferences" in order to experience the essentials of real interpreting situations. The outcome of their research shed light on how useful students often find effective terminological preparation when facing a new interpreting task.

[...] students started to reflect on practical aspects of professional practice, such as which tools to bring into the booth and how to use them, as highlighted by respondent 9: "I think I need to prepare the glossary well in advance. I need to tune the channels and I need to give the message in simple language" (Conde/Couch 2019: 11).

These activities may be regarded as a way of helping students understand the real relevance of the individual skills they are taught within the interpreting classroom – preparation, collaboration, etc., because, as stated by Conde/Couch (2019: 3), "students no longer behave as students, but as practitioners".

### 3. Glossaries in the interpreting classroom

Interpreter trainers often point out the importance of preparing for a conference (Chang *et al.* 2018). Díaz Galaz (2011) states that many authors agree that any preparation should start before the conference, with the study of conference materials (e.g. programmes, written speeches or presentations) and documentation related to the topic, the compilation of notes on both known and unfamiliar

concepts, the exchange of terminology with specialists and other interpreters, and finally, the compilation of a glossary containing information that is relevant to the interpreter.

Gile (2009) argues that interpreters tend to take on a more generalist profile. This is especially so when they work as freelancers (Chang *et al.* 2018), as they have to deal with a wide variety of topics. However, Gile (1985, 1986) also argues that terminological units are defined by the sociolinguistic aspects of specialised communication. In this vein, García de Quesada (2007) states that such units are also influenced by the conditions of production of each speech. For all these reasons, it seems logical that the preparation process of any interpreter before tackling an assignment must be thorough and methodical, since the success of this process may determine the quality of their subsequent performance.

The above statements serve as a starting point for the analysis of glossaries not only from a professional but also from an academic and didactic perspective, which is the main focus of this paper. Despite their importance, Interpreting Studies have often reduced the relevance of glossaries to a mere list of words containing mainly terms related to the subject of the conference in question (Jiang 2013), which is a very reductionist approach to the importance of this tool. This is confirmed by Díaz-Galaz *et al.* (2015), who define glossaries as the final product of the interpreter's preparation, in which specialised terms and their equivalents in the target language are collated. García de Quesada /Montero Martínez (2003) defend a cognitive paradigm of documentation and terminological acquisition, in which the mere compilation of equivalents prior to interpreting is not enough.

Preparation must be a central element in the training of conference interpreters, and subsequently, glossaries must play a central role as the tangible outcome of that preparation. That is because it represents the final product, containing not only the terminological research on the subject, as suggested by Díaz-Galaz *et al.* (*Ibid.*), but also the conference theme preparation in the form of parallel content extracted from various sources (literature, speeches, videos, etc.). The interpreter trainer, in turn, must be aware of this fact, and must be able to convey and demonstrate the importance and usefulness of this terminological tool to their students.

Along these same lines, Caburlotto/Cecco (2015) state in their conclusions that including glossary preparation in the syllabus of different interpreting courses should neither be regarded as a waste of time nor a task that should be autonomously performed by the trainee. Instead, the authors suggest that glossary preparation be taught, discussed, and shared in order to have a fruitful outcome – not doing so may undermine the real relevance this tool has within academic and professional practice.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Design of the study

The three aims of our study are: to determine the way glossaries are used in the interpreting classroom; to elucidate the structure and content of this terminological



tool; and finally to identify the degree of importance that trainees attach to glossary preparation. Bearing this in mind, a questionnaire was designed, consisting mainly of closed-ended multiple-choice and, to a lesser extent, open-ended questions, focusing on the use of glossaries in the interpreting classroom environment.

The aim was to determine firstly the students' definition of the term "glossary", identifying, at the same time, the origin of this conceptualisation and the direct and indirect presence of this terminology compilation tool in interpreting, documentation, terminology and translation courses. Likewise, it was necessary to determine the practical usefulness that students see in this tool. For this section, multiple-choice questions were used.

Subsequently, two multiple-choice questions were asked to determine how frequently the students prepared glossaries, firstly in their work in translation courses, which are generally taught earlier on in the curricula, and then in interpreting courses.

Finally, students were asked about the structure of their glossaries in practice. The questions did not only refer to the format of the tool, but also to the elements the students deemed necessary to include. Similarly, the questionnaire sought to elicit a personal assessment from each of the respondents of the need for specific training in glossary preparation and the way in which such training should be provided.

The final control questions posed at the end of the questionnaire, as suggested by Dörnyei/Taguchi (2010), aim not only to provide a general profile of the participating students, but also to determine the average level attained by the respondents in their most recent courses in their first foreign language (English in all cases), which is referred to as B language in the corresponding curricula. However, it is important to note that this definition is not the same as AIIC's classification of foreign language ability. For the purposes of this study, a "B language" will refer to the students' first foreign language, while a "C language" will refer to their second foreign language (French, German, or both). The "A language" is Spanish in all cases.

#### 4.2 Description of the sample

The total sample is N=135 students: 25 are students of Translation and Interpreting at VIU and the rest are from the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting at ULPGC. All the students that participated in the study were enrolled in the corresponding BA programmes at their universities, where no specialisation is offered in either specifically Translation or Interpreting Studies<sup>1</sup>. At VIU, students begin Interpreting Studies with a first course in the first semester of the third year that is eminently theoretical, followed by two courses in consecutive interpreting and simultaneous interpreting in the third and fourth year respectively. At this university, students are not offered the chance to practise interpreting

1 It is worth noting that, unlike the common practice in other EU universities, where BA programmes last three years followed by a two-year MA programme aimed at specialisation either in interpreting or translation, in Spain BA programmes last four years, often followed by a one-year MA programme.



with their C language, nor are there any optional subjects related to interpreting. ULPGC, on the other hand, offers two compulsory courses in consecutive interpreting B/A during both semesters of the third year, plus two compulsory semester-long courses in simultaneous interpreting in the fourth year, together with another compulsory consecutive C/A interpreting course. In addition, the programme offers an optional course in consecutive and liaison interpreting C/A and a course in simultaneous interpreting C/A. In all cases, students mainly interpret from their B or C languages to their A language, although vice versa exercises are often planned in all courses, especially in those focused on the practice of bilateral interpretation.

In addition to the BA programmes in translation and interpreting with one B language (English) and one C language (with German or French as the only options), ULPGC also offers the possibility of taking a dual BA programme that allows students to specialise in one B language (English) and two C languages (German and French), as well as a second dual programme in translation and interpreting combined with Tourism Studies. Both options last five years, with consecutive interpreting courses being taught in the fourth year and simultaneous interpreting courses in the fifth year. In both cases, students are familiar with documentation and terminology management, as courses on both topics are taught before students start their interpreting courses. Likewise, students are taught introductory translation courses before interpreting, and several specialised translation courses occur simultaneously while interpreting courses are in progress.

A total of 105 of the survey participants are women (78%). Although there is a notable disparity in the number of students from VIU compared to students from ULPGC, for the purposes of our study, all subjects will be treated as a single sample, as the origin of the respondents is not relevant to this work, given that the corresponding curricula and programmes have been compared and no significant differences have been identified in terms of content or teaching methodologies. The survey was conducted in the final stretch of the academic year 2020/2021 in order to ensure that students would have had the opportunity at that time to have worked on glossary preparation, not only in subjects related to translation and documentation, but also to interpreting.

All respondents had taken at least one course in interpreting, as well as in translation, terminology and documentation, as outlined in the curricula of both universities.

After requesting permission both from the Dean's Office of the Translation and Interpreting Programme at ULPGC, and from the Director of the Degree in Translation and Interpreting at VIU, third, fourth and fifth-year students were asked to complete the questionnaire, which was accessible via a link provided both by e-mail and through the Virtual Campus in the case of ULPGC. Third-year students participated the most, representing 58% of the sample.

## 5. Results and discussion

In order to facilitate the explanation of the percentages obtained, the figures will be analysed according to the thematic blocks into which the questionnaire was

divided, and will be rounded up to the next whole number. As far as the first block on the conceptualisation of the term “glossary” is concerned, which is expressed in Table 1, 55% of respondents (74 subjects) agreed that the most accurate description was that of a “compilation of terms in the form of a list in two languages with their definition, examples and other elements”. This is in contrast with the other three options, which achieved considerably lower percentages (9%, 16% and 24% respectively).

Conceptualisation of the term “glossary”		
	n	%
Compilation of terms in the form of a list in two languages	12	9
Compilation of terms in the form of a list in two languages with definition	22	16
Compilation of terms in the form of a list in two languages with their definition and examples.	32	24
Compilation of terms in the form of a list in two languages with their definition, examples and other elements.	74	55

Table 1. Conceptualisation of the term “glossary”.

Interestingly, almost an equal percentage of all 135 students surveyed, attributed their understanding of glossaries to the explanations provided by their trainers – 43% (58 subjects) from translation course teachers and 42% (56 subjects) from interpreting course teachers, as shown in Table 2 below. However, it is worth noting that 37% of respondents stated that their understanding of glossaries was the result of independent work based on materials provided by the teachers and then put into practice in the classroom. This point is of particular interest as it shows that the introduction of the flipped classroom modality in the field of translation, and especially interpreting, is a reality that is gaining ground, as Huynh/ Nguyen (2019) have observed.

Origin of the conceptualisation of the term “glossary”		
	n	%
Concept prior to the translation and interpreting studies.	16	12
Explanation provided by translation trainers or through exercises.	58	43
Explanation provided by interpreting trainers or through exercises.	56	42
Concept tackled autonomously using materials provided by the teacher and then put into practice in the classroom.	50	37

Table 2. Origin of the conceptualisation of the term “glossary”.

With regard to the usefulness of glossaries, which is summarised in Table 3, it is significant that a similar number of subjects concluded that this tool brings together the entire documentation phase prior to an assignment in both translation (62%, 83 respondents) and interpreting (66%, 89 respondents) classes. This corresponds directly to the definition offered by Díaz-Galaz *et al.* (2015), who described glossaries as the final product of the interpreter's preparation.

Usefulness of glossaries	Translation classroom		Interpreting classroom	
	n	%	n	%
	Compilation of terms for a specific assignment.	43	32	59
Compilation of terms as a personal dictionary.	87	64	50	37
The glossary is regarded as an optional tool.	5	4	13	10
The glossary is regarded as a tool that covers the entire documentation phase prior to an assignment.	83	62	89	66
The glossary is regarded as useless in this field.	1	1	0	0

Table 3. Usefulness of glossaries.

In the same block, students were asked if they had received training (directly or indirectly) and/or practical sessions in their translation, documentation, interpreting, or terminology courses, on glossary creation and its further application in course assignments. Although the responses received were largely as predicted, it is worth looking at them in detail. A similar number of respondents claimed to have received such training in all courses: 80% (108 subjects) in translation; 76% (103 subjects) in interpreting; and 74% (100 subjects) in terminology. However, it is striking that half of the respondents (50%, 67 subjects) claim not to have received any training or practice in glossary preparation in the documentation class. This figure may be justified by the fact that documentation is taught in both universities in the first year, and is presented, as described in the course description at ULPGC, as a “basic cross-cutting course, which ensures the competencies that enable the mastery of search mechanisms and the development of terminological repertoires which are essential in the work of translation and interpreting”. It can therefore be inferred from the responses obtained that the pedagogical approach focuses more on the mastery of these search mechanisms to find the appropriate terminology than on the development of tools such as glossaries.

The second block dealt with frequency in the use of glossaries in translation and interpreting classes. The questions included in this segment offered multiple-choice responses, as it was our understanding that the circumstances that occur in the classroom throughout the year can lead to different responses, given the increasing level of expertise that students gain throughout the course. A good number of respondents agreed that for both translation (50%, 68 subjects) and interpreting (42%, 56 subjects), glossaries are only created in the event that

the topic involves a certain level of challenge in terminological or thematic aspects, as shown in Table 4. The other possible responses made reference to the demands of the teacher, the scarcity of time available, or the perception that glossaries are not a useful tool. These figures are particularly revealing as they show that students see glossary preparation as a task that does not have to be carried out consistently and systematically for each and every assignment. In fact, as illustrated in Table 4, a considerable proportion of those surveyed in the area of translation (33%, 44 subjects) and interpreting (29%, 39 subjects) stated that they only produce glossaries if required to by the teacher, as they have little time available. These percentages suggest that, despite the fact that the number of students who claim to make glossaries for each assignment, whether required to by the teacher or not, is relatively high – 29% (39 subjects) in translation and 34% (46 subjects) in interpreting, perhaps many do not use this terminology tool on a regular basis, because the course demands at the time when interpreting and translation subjects are taught (from years three to five) are greater than in the first two years, and students cannot afford the time required to produce them. This difference in the percentage of students who always prepare glossaries in translation and interpreting classrooms, although minor, may reveal a greater prevalence of glossary use in interpreting courses than in translation courses, as well as a greater emphasis on the use of this tool by interpreting trainers.

Glossaries in the translation and interpreting classroom

	Translation classroom		Interpreting classroom	
	n	%	n	%
I always make glossaries, whether it is a requirement or not.	39	29	46	34
I only make glossaries if I consider the topic to be complex.	68	50	56	42
I only make glossaries if requested by the trainer; the time we have is scarce.	44	33	39	29
I only make glossaries if requested by the trainer; I do not find glossaries useful.	5	4	5	4

Table 4. Glossaries in the translation and interpreting classroom.

The third and final section focuses on the formal structure of the glossary used in the translation and interpreting classroom environment. The results are displayed in Table 5. Firstly, it is necessary to point out the low percentage of students that use specific applications – such as Interplex, InterpretBank, Interpreter’s Help, Intragloss, and Terminus (Prandi 2020) – to create their own glossaries: only 6% (8 subjects) in interpreting and 10% (13 subjects) in translation, compared to the widespread use of Word (65%, 88 subjects in translation and 63%, 85 subjects in interpreting) and Excel (55%, 74 subjects, and 47%, 63 subjects, respectively). These figures suggest that specific applications for glossary creation

occupy a limited space in the field of translator and interpreter training. Teachers may consider encouraging their students in this regard by using specific applications during their in-class preparation tasks.

Tools or formats used for glossary preparation				
	Translation glossaries		Interpreting glossaries	
	n	%	n	%
Word	88	65	85	63
Excel	74	55	63	47
PDF	12	9	9	7
Paper cards	19	14	25	19
Notepad	9	7	14	10
Glossary management apps	13	10	8	6

Table 5. Tools or formats used for glossary preparation.

This third block also contains two open-ended questions that allow for a wider range of responses and to discover the extent to which glossary preparation is examined in each subject. The range of responses obtained from the students was divided into nine general categories. These categories were then analysed as nine unique response options, the statistical analysis of which yielded the results presented here. The possible responses for the question regarding the content of each respondent's glossary included such essential elements as: the term in language A; the corresponding term in language B (as stated by 100% of respondents); the definition of the term (79%, 106 subjects); and the use of the term (49%, 66 subjects). Respondents were then asked to indicate the elements they considered to be useful in glossaries for interpreting practice. It is striking that the variables "context" and "examples", which are essential for understanding not only the term in question but also the content of the event or practice itself, were of interest to only 29% of respondents (39 subjects). This suggests that most respondents do not perceive the terminological search for an assignment as part of an interwoven whole in which the context is of vital importance to achieve a high degree of immersion in the subject matter in question. Instead, such terminology research is isolated and disjointed, detached from the particularities of the assignment and the specificities of the subject being addressed, which may result, *a posteriori*, in poor or incomplete preparation.

The marks obtained by students in previous English courses might serve as a reliable indicator of how students would cope with new challenges in translation and interpreting courses, such as glossary preparation. In their most recent English course, 59% (79 subjects) of respondents obtained a B grade and 30% (40 subjects) an A or A<sup>+</sup>. When asked about glossary use, 29% (23 subjects out of a total of

2 The Spanish grading system at university level is based on a numeric scale ranging from 10 (maximum score) to 0. Such scores are distributed in the following manner:

79) of students who achieved a B confirmed that they always used them, regardless of whether or not they were required to by the teacher. In contrast, 40% of students who had obtained an A or A+ (16 subjects out of 40) selected this same answer.

It is worth highlighting the degree of students' commitment to the preparation of glossaries for every assignment, regardless of the teacher's demands, in different age ranges, as shown in Table 6.

Age Group	Total of subjects in this age group		Total of subjects of each age group who always prepare glossaries, whether it is required or not	
	n	%	n	%
20-21	77	57	25	32
22-23	28	21	10	36
24-25	4	3	0	0
>25	26	19	11	42

Table 6. Comparison between the age of the subjects and the number of students who always make glossaries, regardless of whether it is required by the teacher or not.

The data contained in the previous table reveal a clear upward trend through the rising age groups, with a difference of almost ten percentage points between the youngest and oldest groups. Thus, it can be concluded that the older the student, the greater the degree of maturity, and the clearer understanding they have of the need to systematically develop glossaries in their interpreting practice. This degree of maturity is once again reflected when respondents were asked to rate the need for specific glossary training in interpreting subjects, from zero to five (five being "absolutely necessary"), as shown in Table 7.

Age Group	Total of subjects in this age group		Number of subjects of each age group rating 5 with regard to the need for glossary training	
	n	%	n	%
20-21	77	57	42	55
22-23	28	21	19	68
24-25	4	3	1	25
>25	26	19	18	69

Table 7. Comparison between the age of the subjects and the number of students who rate the need for glossary training with a maximum score.

A+ (10-9, granted at the teacher's discretion), A (10-9, if A+ is not granted), B (8,9-7), C (6,9-5), D (4,9-0, which means the student did not pass the course or test in question).

As can be seen in Table 7, the older subjects again show a higher response to the need for specific training, with a difference of almost 15 percentage points compared to the younger group. This shows that, as well as being the group that produces the most glossaries in their interpreting practice, students over 25 are at the same time the most interested in acquiring the skills required to master a technique they consider necessary for their future professional careers as interpreters.

## 6. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to examine three different questions: how glossaries are used in the interpreting classroom; how the glossaries produced by students are structured; and finally, what importance students attach to glossaries as a preparation tool. Despite being limited to the setting of two universities where the teaching of interpreting follows similar patterns, the data obtained allow us to create a fairly accurate image of the attention awarded to glossaries in interpreter training.

The results show that, for the most part, students use glossaries as an additional tool which only acquires relevance on those occasions when the topic being dealt with poses a challenge in terms of terminology. It can be inferred, therefore, that the students have not assimilated the necessity and convenience of developing a system of documentation and continuous preparation during their training, which will be useful later on when they enter the labour market, where preparation is without a doubt essential for achieving the highest quality interpretation.

Students see glossaries as a mere collection of terminology with definitions that do not directly connect with the context that surrounds any communicative act that will be interpreted. Encyclopaedic knowledge and knowledge of the world in general are certainly necessary in the daily work of any interpreter, but this must be firmly backed up by specific knowledge that places the interpreter within the context where the communicative act is taking place. Not being familiar with this context places the interpreter at a clear disadvantage and may even compromise the outcome of the event. On the other hand, solid, comprehensive, and thorough preparation can ensure that the interpreter is aligned with the speaker and thus produces a more natural and precise interpretation. The glossary, as a unifying element of thematic (context) and linguistic content, is the most important tool for achieving this quality outcome, and this is the message that should be transmitted to students by their trainers.

Although the analysis of the curricula of the programmes studied show that glossaries are repeatedly addressed in different courses in the fields of translation, documentation, terminology and interpreting, during students' training, it is not clear to what extent trainers highlight the relevance and ultimate usefulness of this terminological tool, especially in the field of interpreting. Perhaps the advent of alternative methodologies such as blended learning, which promotes a more autonomous way of learning, will favour the understanding of the usefulness of glossaries as an ally for interpreters, insofar as trainers may recreate more real-life activities that would require autonomous prior preparation on the part of the student, as noted by Huynh/Nguyen (2019). This is something that can certainly be further explored in the future.



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