Design of a syllabus for Translation students: Learning Outcomes in the subjects of Spanish Language

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Abstract- **In the new design of educational programs in European Higher Education Area (EHEA), what defines a subject it is Learning Outcomes (LO). These LO, as explicit and precise declarations, turn into the center of teaching and learning process. Keeping this change in mind, our research examines the Educational Guides (EG) of Spanish Language (SL) through a list of verbs, according to the graduation of educational objectives of Bloom's Taxonomy (2014-2015). We meet answers to the following research questions, with a quantitative methodology: Have been planned LO to give preference the theoretical contents or the practical application in SL? What verbs are used in different EG to write LO? And consequently, what trend does appear in used verbs regarding the educational objectives of Bloom's Taxonomy? The results showed that application, synthesis and analysis are very used in EG. Other levels present unequal information in EG. This information demonstrates the need to evaluate and to think about definition of LO in order to elaborate the degrees through EHEA's criteria.**

Index Terms— **European Higher Education Area, Learning Outcomes, Educational Guides, Spanish Language.**

I. INTRODUCTION

LO are a new concept, gathered in EG of Higher Education in Spain. Its objective is the student transformation into the center of the teaching and learning process. Moreover, this term tries to leave proof of what students must be able to do at the end of the module or program. How to write these specific LO in terms of visible results? To answer to the previous question, the *National Agency of Evaluation of the Quality and Accreditation* (ANECA 2013: 25) proposes certain verbs for the correct writing of the specific statements of a LO, with a long previous bibliography. These verbs show the different levels of learning (knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation), according to Bloom's Taxonomy (1975). This classification functions as generic criteria for assessment, quantifying levels of students' attainment.

LO have received considerable attention in recent years, in the EHEA context, both within the educational literature and from educational practitioners. These revolve primarily around the notion of putting the student in the middle of the learning experience by using LO to focus attention more directly on the activities and the achievements of students, rather than simply on the teaching of the curriculum content. In this way, LO are viewed as representing a shift in undergraduate education from a traditional 'instructional paradigm' to a 'learning paradigm' (ANECA 2013).

Benefits recognized to LO are that they enable higher education systems and qualifications to become transparent benchmarked against nationally established standards applied by a professional, statutory and regulatory body. Maher (2004: 48) observes that this benchmarking ensures universities are delivering high quality and achieving value for money from public investment (Brooks, Dobbins, Scott, Rawlinson & Norman 2014: 725).

Werquin (2012) and Gleeson (2013) further proposed that LO help to connect the educational world and the employment by making standards associated with particular qualifications easier to understand for users. For this reason, its specification must be as coherent as possible with the profile of students.

We have thought for this research, that it is possible to value the trend of the subjects of SL in the Translation and Interpreting Degrees in Spanish territory, through the verbs used to write LO. The *White Book of title of Degree in Translation and Interpreting* (ANECA 2004: 120), it indicates that this subject has an especially practical character. Therefore, LO must promote Bloom's high levels. At the same time, LO have to be related with the standards of the *Spanish Guide of Qualifications for the Higher Education* (ANECA 2013: 39).

This could be evident, but Pierce & Robisco (2010), Rico (2010), Presas (2012) and Brooks, Dobbins, Scott, Rawlinson & Norman (2014) indicate the methodological change raised is not always expressed in the new degrees of Bologna, in spite of the need to adapt the formative programs.

Taking into account previous ideas, research questions we propose are: Have been planned LO to give preference the theoretical contents or the practical application in the SL? What verbs are used in the different EG to write LO? And consequently, what trend does appear in the used verbs regarding the educational objectives of Bloom's Taxonomy?

We hope the results indicate the demonstrated trend in the EG of Translation and Interpreting Degrees in Spain, at the moment of defining the LO.

This paper is structured on the following way. After introducing our abstract we explain the method which we work during the whole research. In this paragraph it is specified studied universities. Later, we expose the obtained results and finally, the conclusions that stem from these.

II. METHOD

In order to give response to our research questions, we examine the EG of the subject of SL in twenty Spanish universities (2014-2015), with a quantitative methodology. EG are published online. In particular, the consulted universities are the following ones:

1. Alicante (UA, University of Alicante)
2. Alfonso X El Sabio (UAX)
3. Jaume I (UJI)
4. Salamanca (USAL)
5. Valladolid (UVA)
6. País Vasco (UPV)
7. Pablo de Olavide (UPO)
8. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC)
9. Autónoma de Madrid (UAM)
10. Autónoma de Barcelona (UA)
11. Granada (UG)
12. Málaga (UMA)
13. Murcia (UM)
14. Córdoba (UCO)
15. Pompeu Fabra (UPF)
16. Pontificia Comillas (UPCO)
17. San Jorge (USJ)
18. Europea de Madrid (UEM)
19. Europea de Valencia (UEV)
20. Valencia (UV)

We analyse four subjects in some universities whereas in others just only one. Four of twenty-four centers were rejected for not having available the EG of the subjects online (2014-2015). LO's specific sections and the epigraphs of objectives and competences were kept in mind in the examination. From the beginning, we focus only on LO. Nevertheless, after gathering the information, we realized that there exists a common misunderstanding between this three previous terms (LO, objectives and competences). In Spain, the LO seem to have been related to "competences", much more extended in our system of Higher Education (ANECA 2013: 61). This term is used to indicate the development of teaching and learning actions. The result is the formation and training of the student, according to the objectives of the formative program.

In relation to Bloom's Taxonomy and the verbs that expresses "knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation", they have been used those who appear in Bloom (1975).

III. RESULTS

The obtained information demonstrates that six categories of Bloom's Taxonomy are not worked in a balanced way. This means that some of the verbs are user than other. "Application, analysis and synthesis" are very used categories in the definition of the LO. "Knowledge, comprehension and evaluation" are not worked too much.

Most of Translation and Interpreting Degrees agrees about this standard. This result means that normally, the categories are not used of a balanced form. Therefore, it does not work all the aspects proposed by Bloom, what supposes not working all skills included inside the theoretical frame. The six categories can be thought of as degrees of difficulties. That is, the first ones must normally be mastered before the next one can take place. So, it is really important to work all them.
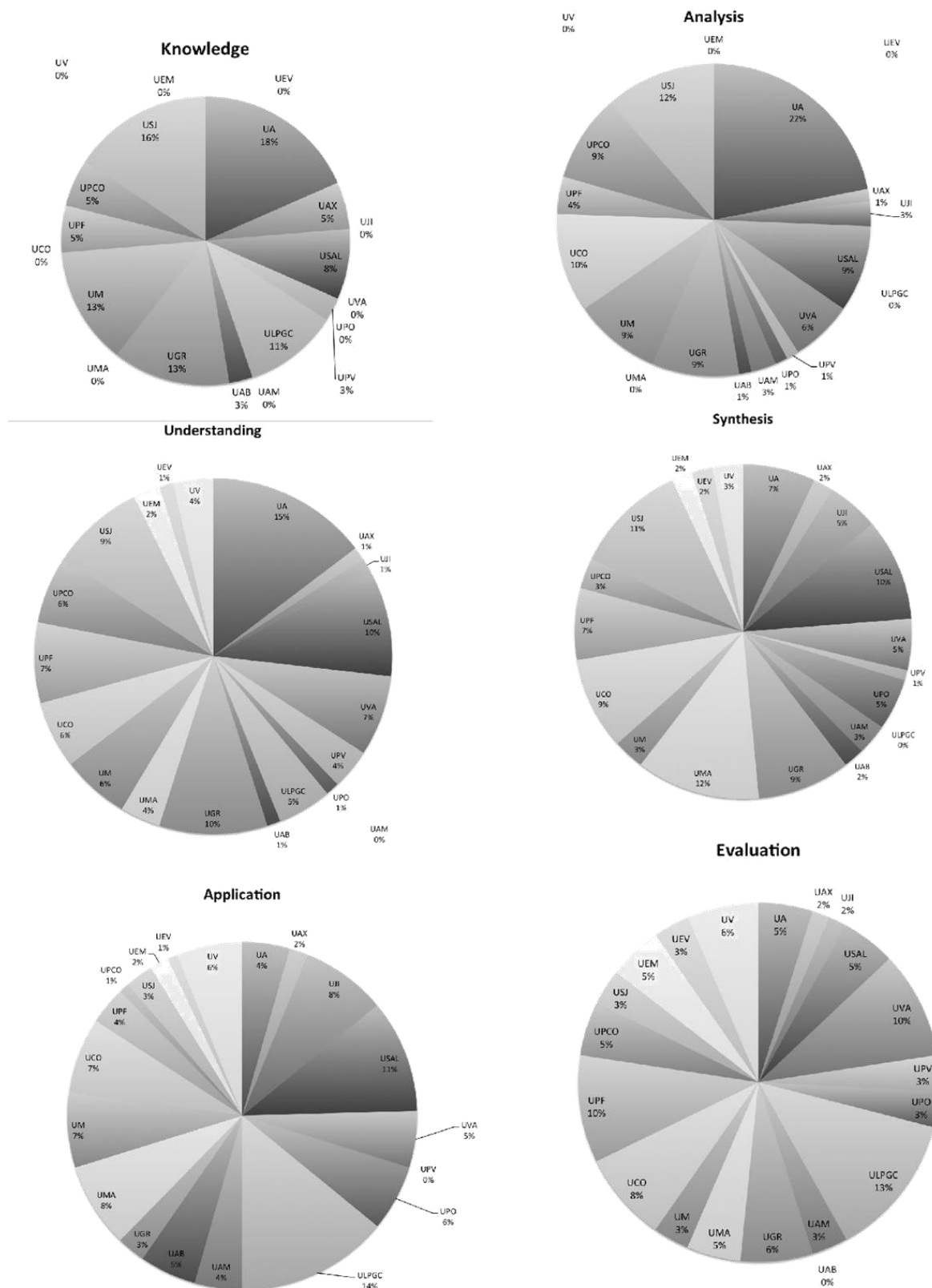
Fig. 1. Results by levels in percentages (2014-2015).

Figure 1 represents six categories of Bloom's taxonomy. Each circle corresponds to each of them (knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation). We wanted to represent final results on percentages. For this reason, every circle is composed of the researched universities and the percentage of the obtained figure.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Our information in the academic year 2014-2015 shows obvious differences in the analysed universities at the moment of assimilate Bloom's Taxonomy, in the EG of SL. These differences bring closer to the theory exposed by Pierce & Robisco (2010). At the same time, it is possible to observe that many LO are associated with the levels of "application and synthesis".

However, it is not demonstrated the need to define LO in the categories of understanding and evaluation". We propose another research about the coherence. On this new research, LO that define a subject are coherent with the competences that define the degree and in turn, all the planning of the subject is coherent with the results that define it. Also it is possible to analyse the use of the original Bloom's Taxonomy, rather than the revised, more sophisticated, model developed by Anderson & Krath whol (2001).

Two dimensions of knowledge and cognitive process of this model, it would suggest a lack of awareness of the shortcomings of the original behaviorist approach. The last objective is to express LO as coherent as possible form with the translator labor needs. All the above reasons they are new approach of research to the evaluation of the degrees in the EHEA.

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