

LIFELONG LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATOR PRACTICES



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Abstract:

This study aims to discuss lifelong learning in translation and the lack of need for formal training to become a translator in Portugal. We also aim to contribute mechanisms for regulating the profession.

The concept of Lifelong Learning gained relevance with a UNESCO report published in 2010 on 21st-century education. The report advocated an encompassing concept of formal, non-formal and informal education and training along time and space. This would allow individuals to acquire skills throughout their employability (Xhomaqi et al., 2022).

In Portugal, many translators do not have a bachelor's degree in translation; in fact, many do not even have a bachelor's degree. Traditionally, translation was reserved for those who knew a foreign language (sometimes the only qualification required). This has gradually changed in the past decades. In the global market, not only linguistic and technological skills, but they need to evidence those skills by having completed formal training. Formal education is not a requirement for access to the profession (not required by Portuguese law) but for practising it. Moreover, in the international market, lifelong learning in translation is essential for career development. Portuguese legislation, however, lays down that the translation of a document may be exempted if the official competent to register it knows the language (English, French and Spanish); in other cases, the translation may be carried out by a suitable translator and then certified, certification being given by a notary officer, a lawyer, a solicitor or a chamber of commerce.

The opposing views on formal training between the global market and Portuguese legislation have led us to question the role of formal education in accessing the profession in Portugal and to understand this issue from the perspective of professional translators.

Ours is an exploratory study based on semi-structured interviews using content analysis methodology. The interviewees are professionals in the field in the different experience levels (from 10 to more than 30 years). Some of them have attended the post-graduation program in translation at Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa; others are members of one of the Portuguese translators' associations.

Our general conclusions are that formal training in translation and technology, as well as in specialised fields, is valued by almost all our interviewees. Lifelong learning is valued because it ensures them and the market that they master the skills needed to meet market demands. Finally, the global market values formal education and it adds credibility and reliability to translation services and their providers, the translators.

Reference:

[1] Xhomaqi, B., Rodriguez, E., Vitez, M (Eds.). (2022). LLLGlossary Review of Lifelong Learning Terminology. LifeLong Learning Platform and European Union <http://content/uploads/2022/12/LLLGlossary.pdf>

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Lifelong learning, translation, formal learning.