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Bridging the gap between translation and interpreting students and freelance professionals. The Mentoring Programme of the Professional Association of Translators and Interpreters of Catalonia

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This paper presents the mentoring programme carried out by Professional Association of Translators and Interpreters of Catalonia (APTIC) based on a multiple-mentoring model. It was offered during the academic years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 in collaboration with the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and the Universitat de Vic and will continue in the future. The goal of APTIC's mentoring programme is to let students experience the translators' and interpreters' profession from the point of view of freelancers. Each student spends one working day with each mentor. During this day, the student carries out the tasks that the mentor assigns him/her. These tasks are related to translation, interpreting, and proofreading, rates, work ethics, project and terminology management, ergonomics, marketing, and CAT tools, among others. In this paper, the following aspects will be discussed: 1) the benefits of mentoring programmes in general and particularly for future translation and interpreting freelance professionals; 2) the functioning, the contents and the assessment procedure of APTIC's programme; 3) the results of the pilot test and of the programme offered in the academic year 2016/2017. Our findings show that, at the end of the programme, the students feel prepared to face some of the challenges of the labour market as freelancers.
Keywords: mentoring programme, situated learning, associationism, translator and interpreter training, freelance translation and interpreting

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present the mentoring programme carried out by Professional Association of Translators and Interpreters of Catalonia (hereafter APTIC) in collaboration with the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and the Universitat de Vic.

Translation and interpreting are freelance professions (Olohan 2007). In 2006, 87% of translation buyers outsourced translation projects to freelance translators (Beninatto 2006). According to Dunne (2012), the evolution of the market shows that outsourcing

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will continue to increase. This is supported by the 2017 report on the language industry presented by Elia, EMT, EUATC Gala and the Lind group (ELIA et al. 2017).

Paradoxically, work placements offered during the Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Translation and Interpreting in Spain are tailored to the in-house translator/interpreter. These placements rarely offer the perspective of self-employment. For example, in the first semester of the academic year 2016/2017 the fourth-year subject Work Placement in the Bachelor's degree in Translation and Interpreting at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (hereafter UAB) offered work placements in 51 organisations: 27.5% were companies, 21.6% were NGOs or associations, 15.7% were translation companies, 9.8% were university agents, 5.9% were government institutions, theatres, and schools or language schools and 2% were news agencies and hospitals. As can be observed in the above figures, freelance translation/interpreting at UAB was not represented as a possible type of work placement, while already in 2010 80% of translation companies based in Barcelona outsourced their projects to freelance translators (Kuznik 2010). As we will discuss later, this situation is present in all Spanish Translation and Interpreting faculties.

In order to bridge the gap between the reality of the labour market and the placements offered by Spanish universities, APTIC and, specifically, the association's University Liaison Committee, began to work on a collaboration with three Catalan universities to offer the students of the Bachelor's degrees in Translation and Interpreting of these universities a mentoring programme as a work placement. The result was a mentorship based on a multiple-mentoring model in which each student spends one working day with each of the freelance translators and interpreters that participate as mentors. The programme aims to offer students a global vision of the freelance translators' and interpreters' profession by interacting with highly experienced professionals.

The main objective of this paper is to present the characteristics and functioning of APTIC's mentoring programme and to comment on its impact on the students who participated. The paper is divided as follows: first, we discuss the uses and benefits of mentoring programmes. Secondly, we describe the different pedagogical theories in Translation Studies where mentoring programmes can be implemented and we also comment on different existing types of mentoring programmes for future professional translators and interpreters. Third, we describe the main characteristics of APTIC's mentoring programme (objectives, functioning, contents, and assessment procedures). Fourth, we present the findings of the pilot study and those of the programme offered in the academic year 2016/2017. Finally, we draw the most relevant conclusions and discuss the limitations of our study.

2. Mentoring programmes. Types and benefits

All mentoring programmes are organised in the same way: an individual with more experience on a particular aspect provides developmental assistance and guidance to another individual with less experience (Kram 1985).

According to Kram (1983; 1985), the areas in which mentoring programmes are conducted are workplace, academy, and youth. In the field of workplace, there have been many studies on programmes related to many professional fields (Ehrich,

Hansford, and Tennent 2004), but especially to medicine and nursing (Garmel 2004; Jokelainen et al. 2011). The main aim of this type of programmes is to facilitate career development among employees. In the case of academic mentorships, a member of the academic field (either a teacher or a student) imparts knowledge and guides students in both academic (academic performance) and non-academic (personal problems) situations (Jacobi 1991; Heider 2005; Zellers, Howard, and Barcic 2008). In the case of youth mentoring, the goal is positive youth development to avoid risky youth behaviour and the personal, emotional, and psychological growth of the young person in question (DuBois and Neville 1997; Eby et al. 2008).

Mentoring programmes pursue one (or both) of two types of functions (Kram 1983): career-related or psycho-social. Career-related functions are: exposure, visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments. Psycho-social functions are: providing a role model, acceptance, confirmation, counselling, and friendship. Kram (1983) found out that in programmes pursuing both functions, career-related functions were developed at the beginning and psycho-social functions were more relevant in later phases. Zellers, Howard, and Barcic (2008, 556) identified two roles of the mentors in each function type. In the case of career-related functions, mentors act as sponsors (they guide, protect, open doors, and make introductions) or as coaches (they teach, challenge, and provide feedback). In the case of psycho-social functions, mentors act as role models (they demonstrate behaviours, attitudes, and values) or as counsellors (they provide support, advice, and coping strategies).

Another possible differentiation of mentoring programmes has to do with the emergence of the mentor-mentee relationship. Chao, Walz, and Gardner (1992) distinguish between formal mentorships (an organisation establishes the relationship between a mentor and a mentee) and informal mentorships (the relationship between the two participants results from informal interactions between members with more and less experience in an organisation).

Karcher et al. (2006) extend the differentiation of mentoring types and classify them in relation to the place of interaction between the mentor and the mentee and to the number of participants. As for the place of interaction, they distinguish between field-based mentoring (mentor and mentee decide when and where they interact) and site-based mentoring (mentor and mentee interact in a time and space indicated by the organisation). As for the number of participants, Karcher et al. (2006) distinguish between group mentoring (several mentors interact at the same time with several mentees), peer mentoring (one mentor interacts with one mentee) and e-mentoring (a mentor interacts with a mentee online). We believe that the latter type should be regarded as peer mentoring, since the only difference is how the participants interact.

In addition to these mentoring types, Zellers, Howard, and Barcic (2008, 572) highlight the importance of multiple mentoring in workplace mentorships. In this model, a mentee interacts with more than one mentor. With this type of mentoring, a more complete and dynamic assistance is achieved, since this model tries to account for the complexity and the different specialisations that can be found in any organisation.

Several studies have demonstrated the benefits of mentoring programmes for both mentors and mentees. In a meta-analysis of empirical studies, Ehrich, Hansford, and Tennent (2004) identified the following benefits for mentees: psycho-social support,

networking, a sense of community, career satisfaction, motivation and promotion, improved skills, and personal satisfaction. Eby et al. (2008) observed that mentoring had favourable behavioural, attitudinal, health-related, relational, motivational, and career outcomes for mentees, although the effect was small except for academic and workplace mentoring. Due to the small size of the effect, Eby et al. recommend not overestimating the potential positive effect of mentoring despite the proven benefits it offers for mentees. In the case of the benefits for mentors, Haack (2006) identified the following: self-gratification, affirming one's competence, and enhancing self-esteem and one's motivation. Parise and Forret (2008) found that mentors who voluntarily participated in mentorships felt that mentoring had been a rewarding experience for them. Ghosh and Reio (2013) found that members of a company participating in a mentoring programme were more satisfied with their work and felt more involved with the company than members who did not participate.

Ehrich, Hansford and Tennent (2004) and Haack (2006) also identified several pitfalls for mentors: lack of time for mentoring, poor planning of the mentoring process, unsuccessful matching of mentors and mentees, and a lack of concrete rewards.

3. Mentoring programmes in translator/interpreter training

3.1. Incorporating mentoring programmes to pedagogical theory in Translation Studies

The inclusion of mentoring programmes in translator/interpreter training became feasible with the adoption of learner-centred and profession-centred approaches (Kelly 2005), which gave the student greater autonomy and encompassed all aspects that he/she would need to be able to succeed in the professional world.

Nord's approach (1988) builds on the idea that translator training should simulate professional practice, and, based on functionalist theories, she proposed a series of questions related to the translation brief that students need to answer in order to translate with a meaningful, realistic purpose.

Also within the functionalist framework, Vienne (1994) introduced the situational approach, where the main idea is that classroom activities should be made up of translation tasks that teachers had carried out professionally. The teacher acts as the translation initiator and can respond to students' questions to help them situate and analyse the translation commission. Similarly to Vienne, Gouadec (1994, 2003) proposed the inclusion of real translation projects in the translation classroom.

Hurtado Albir (1999) and González-Davies (2003, 2004) proposed task-based approaches. The particularity of these approaches is that training is oriented towards learning outcomes. To achieve them, a series of tasks, which include activities aimed at developing the student's declarative and procedural knowledge, are designed.

Kiraly (2000) introduced the socio-constructivist approach, which emphasises the importance of using real translation projects in the classroom to offer authentic translation practice during training. The socio-constructivist approach is also based on the student's socialisation within the professional community of translators in order to improve his/her learning process through interaction with community members and to develop the translator's self-concept. Olvera Lobo et al. (2007) proposed a professional

approach to translator training, which follows Kiraly's approach although with certain differences: in the case of Olvera Lobo et al. (2007, 521), the aim of training is to make students familiar with the methods of work of translation agencies, recreating the production line of the professional workplace by developing teleworking in teams, self-instruction and interdisciplinarity.

Zhong (2008) applied self-directed learning to translation teaching. In this approach, the learning process is understood as unique for each student and, consequently, the knowledge and skills that students need to acquire are not uniform, since they depend on the characteristics of each student and the role he/she wants to assume in his/her learning process, in the diagnosis of his/her learning needs and in the learning goals he/she wants to achieve.

Approaches based on situated learning (i.e.: the exposure to real or realistically simulated tasks and work environments inside and outside the classroom) have received a lot of attention and have been applied to many contexts (see, for example, the special volume co-edited by González-Davies and Enríquez-Raído [2016] in this journal). Mentoring programmes are consistent with these pedagogical approaches, especially with the socio-constructivist approach. Such programmes are generally based on collaborative learning, in which the mentor's primary function is not to instruct but to accompany the mentee in the learning process. In addition, mentoring programmes are geared towards developing the mentee's self-concept through community socialisation. Learning takes place in real-life situations and permits training that goes beyond solving translation problems. The most notable difference with the socio-constructivist approach is that, in mentoring programmes, the mentor may perform more functions than simply guidance: he/she may act as a sponsor, coach, counsellor and even as a role model. Self-directed learning is another approach in which mentoring programmes can be incorporated. The contents of the programme can be adapted to the student's learning needs and goals if he/she decides to engage actively in the learning process, while the mentor remains a guide.

Although mentoring programmes are in line with situated and self-directed, learner-centred and profession-centred approaches, they have hardly been implemented in translator/interpreter training, as discussed below.

3.2. Implementing mentoring programmes in translator/interpreter training

According to our review of available literature, the first scholar to point out the usefulness of these programmes is Kelly (2005), who emphasises the role of the teacher as an academic mentor who acts as a guide and adviser to his/her students in academic matters. Alcina, Soler, and Granell (2007) implemented an academic mentorship to help students develop the skills required to use and manipulate translation technology. Mentors were last-year or postgraduate students and their role was to offer training and support to students as well as offering practical advice, encouragement and reassurance (Alcina, Soler, and Granell 2007, 236). Drugan (2011) emphasises the use of mentors in collaborative translation, where the end product is a non-professional translation (specifically in the case of free and open source software localisation) and highlights the need to create more mentoring programmes for professional translation using online methods as in mentorships for non-professional translators. Granell (2011)

also mentions mentorship as an innovative system for giving feedback to students on their learning process, specifically in the case of teaching video game localisation. The University of New South Wales offers an academic mentorship for the students of the Master's Degree in Translation and Interpreting.

In addition to APTIC's mentoring programme, there are two workplace mentorships in Spain co-organised with Spanish universities: the mentoring programme of the Spanish Association of Translators, Correctors and Interpreters (hereafter Asetrad), which is offered in collaboration with the Spanish universities of Alcalá, Madrid, Córdoba, Salamanca, Vigo, Alicante, Valladolid, and the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, and the mentoring programme included in the Official Master's Degree in Conference Interpreting (MUIC) of the UAB, which is co-organised with the Associated Interpreters of Barcelona (AIB). Table 1 shows the workplace mentorships that exist both in Spain and abroad, except for APTIC's mentoring programme.

All programmes meet career-related functions and some psycho-social functions. All of them are field-based mentorships that last from one semester to two years (except theProZ.com programme). All programmes are based on peer mentoring (except Solidarités), and the mentor's main role is to act as a coach. Despite the variety of mentorships in translator/interpreter training, research on the benefits of these programmes has not been carried out in Translation Studies.

4. APTICS's mentoring programme

APTICs University Liaison Committee started working on a formal mentorship proposal in 2014. Initially, a peer-mentoring model was chosen, but it was later considered that multiple mentoring could be an interesting option that would fit better with the

Table 1. Workplace mentorships in translator/interpreter training

Programme and starting year	Functions	Mentor's role	Field-based/site-based mentorship	Type	Duration
ProZ.com mentoring programme	Career-related	Coach	Field-based	Peer mentoring	Not limited
ATA mentoring programme (since 2001)	Career-related	Coach	Field-based	Peer mentoring	1 year
Solidarités mentorship (since 2009)	Career-related and psycho-social	Coach and counsellor	Field-based	Group mentoring	-
Asetrad's mentorship (since 2012)	Career-related and psycho-social	Coach and counsellor	Field-based	Peer mentoring	1 semester
ALTA Emerging Translator Mentorship Programme (since 2015)	Career-related	Coach	Field-based	Peer mentoring	1 year
ACE Traductores (Literary Translators Association) mentorship (since 2018)	Career-related and psycho-social	Coach and counsellor	Field-based	Peer mentoring	3 months
MUIC-UAB mentorship (since 2018)	Career-related and psycho-social	Coach and counsellor	Field-based	Peer mentoring	2 years

programme's target group. Bachelor's degrees in Translation and Interpreting in Spain offer non-specialised training. Consequently, fourth-year students enrolled in the Work Placement subject often have doubts about their professional future and the fields of specialisation they would like to work in. Thus, we considered that it would be a motivating experience for students to be able to work with mentors from different fields of specialisation in order to gain a global understanding of the profession and to identify the fields they are most interested in.

Our multiple-mentoring model consists on mentees spending a certain amount of time with each of the mentors participating in the programme. Whenever possible, mentors and mentees are matched according to the interests of the mentees and the mentors' specialisations. The programme pursues career-related and psycho-social functions. Consequently, mentors act not only as coaches, but also as role models and counsellors. It is a field-based mentorship, in which mentors and mentees decide when and where they meet. The duration is adjusted to the hours established in the Work Placement subject of the participating universities.

In March 2015, the mentorship project was presented to the three Catalan universities offering a Bachelor's degree in Translation and Interpreting: UAB, Universitat de Vic (hereafter UVic) and Universitat Pompeu Fabra (hereafter UPF). Both UAB and UVic decided to implement the programme, but it could not be implemented at UPF due to administrative reasons. During the academic year 2015/2016, the mentoring programme was implemented for the first time and it served as a pilot test. During the academic year 2016/2017, the programme was carried out again and the problems identified in the pilot test were corrected.

The following sections introduce the objectives of the programme and the target participants, the functioning of the programme, the contents, and the assessment procedure.

4.1. Programme objectives and target participants

The main objective is to ensure that students, through active learning guided by mentors, are aware of the main aspects of the professional activity of freelance translators and interpreters and, thus, develop the necessary skills to enter the labour market. The specific goals of the programme are:

- To transfer the experience and knowledge of the mentor to the student in the fields of translation and interpreting, accounting, tax requirements, dealing with clients, marketing, deontology, etc.
- To improve the student's autonomy and professional self-confidence and help him/her define his/her professional goals.
- To contribute to the development of future translators/interpreters who will carry out their professional activity ethically.

During the programme, not only do students translate and interpret but they also learn about the working life of freelance translators and interpreters.

The programme's target participants are fourth-year students of the Bachelor's degree in Translation and Interpreting at UAB and UVic who enrol in the Work

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Placement subject. Although students from all language combinations can participate, they are made aware beforehand that the foreign languages they will work with during the mentorship are mainly English, French, and German. The organisers of the programme cannot guarantee that students will translate or interpret with all mentors, since this depends on the language combinations and specialisations of the mentors who voluntarily join the programme.

In addition to students, we distinguish three other agents who participate in the mentoring programme: Translation and Interpreting faculties (as the Work Placement subject organisers), APTIC and the University Liaison Committee (as the mentorship organisers) and mentors (selected members of APTIC who voluntarily guide the students' learning process). During the programme, the four agents are constantly in contact to solve doubts and problems that may arise.

3.2. Functioning of the mentoring programme

The mentoring programme lasts one semester. The duration of the programme is adapted to the Work Placement subject of each faculty. At UAB, it lasts 75 hours distributed in a semester. In the case of UVic, the subject lasts 50 hours. We distributed the total hours into three areas (Table 2): working hours with mentors, training hours organised by APTIC, and free hours. During free hours, students carry out assigned tasks, complete self-assessment questionnaires, and prepare a report to be delivered to their institution upon completion of the mentorship.

As mentioned earlier, each student completes a working day with each mentor of the programme, so students need to rotate after completing each day. To determine how many hours students will spend with each mentor, the total number of students participating in the programme and the total number of selected mentors are taken into consideration. At UAB, the Work Placement subject lasts 75 hours from which 60 are distributed among the working days with each mentor. If four students and eight mentors participate, each working day would last 7.5 hours. Therefore, each mentor would spend 7.5 hours with each student. In order to be able to offer the mentoring programme to UVic students, five eight-hour working days were established for these students. Each working day is carried out within a period of fifteen days. Thus, every fifteen days students rotate and start the next working day with the following mentor.

APTIC's mentoring programme was designed to be as flexible as possible. Consequently, each mentor and mentee decide how they meet: face-to-face, virtually, or both. Depending on the contents of the working day, each mentor decides how to distribute the 7.5 hours: in a single day or in more than one.

The Translation and Interpreting faculties are in charge of selecting the students according to their academic record and interests. Once the students have been selected

Table 2. Distribution of hours at each university.

	UAB	UVic
Working hours with mentors	60	40
Training hours	10	5
Hours of free dedication	5	5
Total	75 hours	50 hours

and before the mentoring programme starts, they receive an information dossier about the functioning of the programme. Students are required to write a cover letter in which they indicate their language combination, interests, motivation, career prospects, and expectations of the programme. Additionally, the members of the University Liaison Committee meet the students to resolve doubts about how the programme works.

APTIC's University Liaison Committee is in charge of the selection of the mentors. A few months before the programme starts, a request for collaboration is sent to the association's distribution list. To be selected as a mentor, APTIC members must: 1) have been a member of APTIC for at least five years, and 2) have worked as a professional translator/interpreter for at least ten years. Members fill in an online questionnaire to collect data on the location where they work at, their working languages, the fields of specialisation, years as member of APTIC, and years of experience as a professional translator/interpreter. The selected mentors receive a dossier with detailed information about the functioning of the programme and the University Liaison Committee organises a meeting with all mentors to answer any doubts and to offer basic training on the functions they are going to develop as guides, coaches and counsellors. This training also serves to establish a common ethical and deontological framework to ensure that students receive training in accordance with the professional standards established in the association's code of ethics. Nonetheless, we must admit that, up to now, the training was conducted by members of the University Liaison Committee who were not necessarily experts in mentoring relationships, so this could have negatively influenced the development of the working days in some cases. Mentors also get access to a distribution list so they can exchange information. As a compensation for their help, mentors can enrol in one of the courses offered by APTIC for free.

Since this programme is offered to students pertaining to Bachelor's degrees without specialisation, we believe that it is important to give students an overall vision of professional translators' and interpreters' working routines. Thus, mentors and students are matched according to their language combinations, the students' interests, and the mentors' fields of specialisation. However, it is not always possible to have enough mentors for all language combinations and all fields. In cases where language combinations do not match, mentors focus their assignments on aspects such as taxation, marketing, time management, work environment, deontology, dealing with clients, etc.

4.3. Contents

Álvarez-Álvarez and Arnáiz-Uzquiza (2017) collected data on Translation and Interpreting graduates' perception of employability. These graduates had completed work placements during their degree and had become professional translators. The graduates considered tasks such as invoicing, project management, tax-related contents, etc. as necessary in the professional market and should be included in the curriculum. In our programme, we try to cover these needs and we include these tasks as contents that mentors can address with the students during their working days (Table 3).

For each working day, each mentor selects some of these contents taking into consideration his/her own experience and the student's interests. The University

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Table 3. Mentoring Programme's topics and contents

Topic	Contents
Translation and proofreading	Translation and proofreading practice. Project management. Processing of file types. Revision and proofreading processes. Quality control. Resolution of possible conflicts with clients.
Interpreting	Interpreting practice. Types of clients. Types of interpreting. Terminology management. Resolution of possible conflicts with clients.
Quoting, invoicing and taxation	Quoting and invoicing. Accounting. Fundamental aspects of freelance translators' and interpreters' tax requirements. Taxes and related declarations.
Ergonomics, time and space management	Management of the physical work environment (workplace location, lighting condition, use of peripheral equipment, etc.) and virtual work environment (folder management, tool management, etc.). Compensatory ergonomic exercises and active breaks (muscle stretching, visual exercises, etc.). Time planning.
Marketing	Professional associations and professional distribution lists. Presence on the internet. The fundamental importance of quality of work as a marketing strategy. Contact with other professionals (attendance to events, networking, co-working, etc.). Negotiation with clients.
Rates	Factors that influence the establishment of rates (field of specialisation, urgency, format, minimum services, etc.). Pricing (per word, per hour, per page, minimum service, etc.). Rate calculators (such as Asetrad's CalPro).
Tools and documentation resources	Terminology management tools Specific documentation resources (for fields of specialisation, language combinations, etc.). Use of tools in the translation process (CAT tools, post-editing tools, quality control tools, etc.).
Associationism	Variety of associations (both national and international). Impact of professional associations on the profession. Benefits of becoming a member of a professional association.
Defining professional goals	Career counselling (economic objectives, fields of specialisation, types of clients, language combinations, schedules, etc.).
Deontology	Use of codes of ethics. Confidentiality issues. Ethical dilemmas.

Liaison Committee organises some workshops to complete the 10 training hours (see Table 2) on the topics in which experienced mentors are not available. Appendix 1 shows two examples of working days carried out during the pilot test of the mentoring programme.

The translation, interpreting and proofreading tasks have pedagogical purposes exclusively, despite coming from real assignments. Thus, mentors are not supposed to compensate students economically. Students should not work for mentors, but learn from real projects that mentors have already completed or are currently working on. Since students work with real assignments, they need to sign a non-disclosure agreement.

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4.4. Assessment

The assessment procedure includes three phases: 1) the mentor's assessment of each working day, 2) the student's self-assessment of each working day, and 3) a general assessment that includes both mentors' and students' assessments.

After completing each working day, each mentor fills in an online questionnaire to assess the student's learning process in relation to the contents addressed. The requested information is the following: 1) the contents included in the working day; 2) the student's level of fulfilment of the assigned tasks; 3) the student's learning process in relation to the contents included; 4) the student's application of the acquired knowledge, skills and strategies to solve problems in professional situations; 5) the student's active involvement in the working day, and 6) the student's autonomy in carrying out the assigned tasks. The questionnaire includes quantitative questions (with a scale from 1 to 10) and qualitative questions (with text fields).

Students are asked to fill in a self-assessment questionnaire after completing each working day. Self-assessment improves the student's capacity for reflection and self-criticism. The questionnaire contains the same items as the questionnaire for mentors, but they are worded differently. For example, in the mentor's questionnaire, one item is formulated as: “Has the student carried out the assigned tasks within the agreed deadline?”, while in the student's questionnaire it is as follows: “I have carried out the assigned tasks within the agreed deadline.”

After completing all working days, the University Liaison Committee compiles all the assessments and self-assessments of each student, compares them to compensate for possible bias in both assessments, and writes a report for each student, as requested by UAB and UVic. These reports consist of: 1) the contents included in the working days; 2) the assessment of the student's learning process, and 3) a section with complementary comments.

At the end of the programme, students and mentors are separately invited to a meeting to discuss which aspects of the programme have worked well and which should be modified.

5. Implementing APTIC's mentoring programme

5.1. Piloting the mentoring programme

The mentoring programme was piloted during the first semester of the academic year 2015/2016 with four UAB students and one UVic student. All students translated into Spanish and two of them also translated into Catalan. All five students translated from English, two of them from German and two from French. Only one student had prior professional experience. The students' interests were broadly distributed: two students were interested in scientific-technical translation and two in audiovisual translation. They were also interested in localisation, non-literary publishing translation, proofreading, legal translation, and interpreting.

Nine mentors out of eleven were selected. The characteristics of the mentors are shown in Table 4.

Each student completed eight working days (five in the case of University UVic student) of 7.5 hours of duration each one (8 hours in the case of University UVic

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Table 4. Characteristics of the mentors participating in the pilot test

Characteristics of the mentors	
Selected mentors	9
Years of professional experience (mean)	19.7 years
Years as APTIC members (mean)	8.6 years
Area	Translation: 77.8% Interpreting: 11.1% Both: 11.1%
Source languages	English: 100%, Catalan: 44.4%, French: 44.4%, Spanish: 44.4%, German: 33%, Dutch: 11.1%, Italian: 11.1%
Target languages	Spanish: 88.9%, Catalan: 77.8%, English: 22.2%, French: 22.2%, German: 11.1%
Fields of specialisation	Economic and financial: 44.4%, literary: 44.4%, scientific and technical: 33.3%, non-literary publishing: 33.3%, conference interpreting: 22.2%, legal: 22.2%, audiovisual: 11.1%, localisation: 11.1%.

student). A total of 40 working days were completed. Three workshops were organised: “Fundamental aspects of freelance translators' and interpreters' tax requirements”, “Insertion in the labour market”, and “Marketing strategies”. Figure 1 shows the percentage of working days that included tasks on each content.

Figure 1. Percentage of working days that included tasks on each content

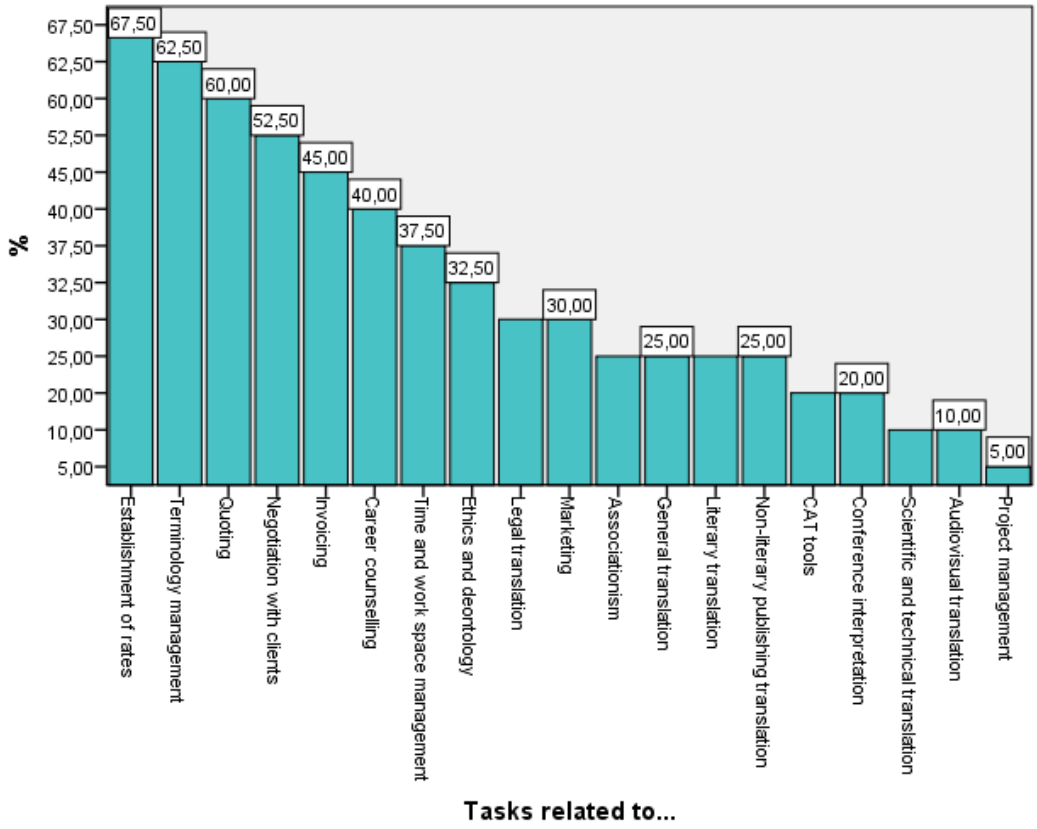

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Table 5. Problems identified in the pilot test and implemented solutions

Problem	Solution
The programme started later than planned since the Committee received the contact details of the students two weeks after the established starting date. Thus, the programme's calendar had to be revised and mentors only had 10 days instead of 15 to complete the 7.5 hours of each working day.	It was decided to carry out the programme during the second semester (this would give the Committee more time to deal with unforeseen situations) and to maintain the 15-day slots for each working day.
It was difficult for some mentors and some students to arrange the meetings for the working days before and after the Christmas holidays since this was the students' examination period.	Carrying out the programme during the second semester could solve this problem. However, during the academic year 2016/2017 it was not possible to leave the Easter holiday period without working days. Thus, it was decided to carry out a special activity without mentors during those weeks, in which a real translation assignment was simulated for which participants had to prepare a quote, translate a text, proofread another text, and finally issue an invoice.
Some mentors considered that 7.5 hours for each working day were not sufficient when students showed interest. However, others thought that 4 hours were enough. For students, 7.5 hours were sufficient.	It was decided not to modify the number of hours given the diversity of opinions. However, it was decided to better match the students' interests with the mentors' fields of specialisation.
Students asked to receive a summary of the contents of the following working day before starting it.	Since it was not feasible to send a detailed description of the following working day because mentors could have made changes to adapt it to each student, it was decided to send an email with information about the mentor (their working languages and fields of specialisation) so that students could get an idea of the contents they would be dealing with.
Many mentors considered that some students were not interested in the mentors' fields of specialisation and this demotivated both mentors and students. Some mentors found that the students were not very involved during the working days. This may have happened because students did not have enough information before choosing the institution or company in which they would complete their placement and, therefore, they did not know the details of the programme.	It was decided to ask more APTIC members to take part in the mentoring programme so that we would be able to select more mentors and to adapt as much as possible each working day to the interests of the students. It was also decided to present the mentoring programme at UAB and UVic so that students could know what the programme was about before choosing where they would complete their placement.
Mentors and students indicated that the assessment and self-assessment questionnaires had not worked well in some cases since it was difficult to assess the students' learning process.	It was decided to redesign the assessment and self-assessment questionnaires. The new versions were based on UVic's report template, which was more comprehensive than UAB's one. The redesigned self-assessment questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2.
Some mentors felt that they had worked with too many students and, thus, it was hard for them to organise themselves.	It was decided to offer the mentoring programme to only two students of each university.

A series of problems were identified during the meetings with mentors and students that were held at the end of the programme. Some solutions were found (Table 5) and they were implemented in the mentoring programme offered during the academic year 2016/2017.

All mentors used real texts and real situations during their working days and all of them agreed that this material was enriching for the students. The mentors who completed the working days virtually were as satisfied with the student's learning process as those who completed them face-to-face. As mentors and students pointed out, differences in the language combinations were not an issue, since in those cases the mentors assigned students tasks that were not language-dependent.

The programme was also carried out during the academic year 2016/2017 and all improvements presented in Table 5 were implemented.

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5.2. Improving the mentoring programme

The mentoring programme was carried out for the second time during the second semester of the academic year 2016/2017 with two UAB students and one UVic student. The three students translated into Spanish and two of them also translated into Catalan. As for their foreign languages, the three students translated from English, two from German, one from French, and one from Russian. None of them had previous professional experience. All three students were interested in interpreting and two in audiovisual translation and in legal translation. One of them was interested in scientific-technical translation, literary translation, non-literary publishing translation, and localisation.

Eleven mentors out of fourteen were selected. Their characteristics are shown in Table 6.

Students spent 7.5 hours with seven mentors in the case of UAB students and five mentors in the case of the UVic student. From the 9th to the 23rd of April, students participated in a special activity without mentors in which they had to act as freelance translators. The Committee selected a text to be translated and another text to be proofread and both texts were sent to the students. They needed to negotiate with the client (that is, the Committee), issue a quote, translate the text, proofread the other one, and issue an invoice for all the tasks carried out.

Given that many mentors were selected, we were able to limit the number of students per mentor to three (Table 7) and we were able to match the mentors and the students according to their interests. However, since very few mentors worked as professional interpreters, it was difficult to meet the students' interest in interpreting.

In total, 19 working days were completed. Figure 2 shows the percentage of working days that included tasks on each content.

In collaboration with Attila Piróth, a member of the Solidarités mentoring programme, the Committee organised two workshops on aligner tools and business risk mitigation.

4.2.1. Results of the mentors' and students' assessment of the programme offered during the academic year 2016/2017

When all working days were completed, both students and mentors were asked to give their opinion on the mentoring programme. A questionnaire was designed for mentors

Table 6. Characteristics of the mentors participating in the mentoring programme offered during the academic year 2016/2017

Characteristics of mentors	
Selected mentors	11
Years of professional experience (mean)	21 years
Years as APTIC members (mean)	9.8 years
Area	Translation: 81.8% Interpreting: 0.0% Both: 18.2%
Source languages	English: 72.7%, German: 36.4%, Catalan: 27.3%, French: 27.3%, Spanish: 27.3%, Dutch: 9.1%, Italian: 9.1%, Portuguese: 9.1%, Russian: 9.1%
Target languages	Spanish: 81.8%, Catalan: 54.5%, French: 18.2%, English: 9.1
Fields of specialisation	Scientific and technical: 63.6%, legal: 63.6%, economic and financial: 45.5%, non-literary publishing: 27.3%, literary: 27.3%, liaison interpreting: 18.2%, localisation: 9.1%, conference interpreting: 9.1%

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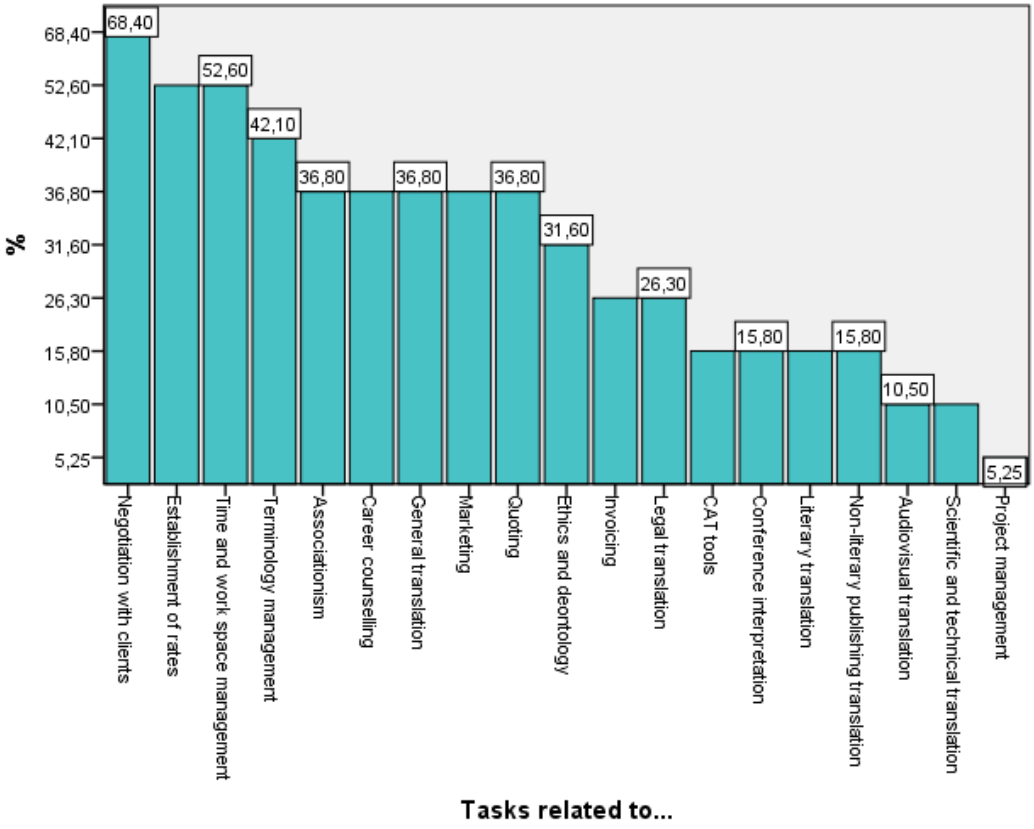
Table 7. The mentoring programme's calendar for the academic year 2016/2017

	27/2 - 12/3	13/3 - 26/3	27/3 - 9/4	9/4-23/4	24/4 - 7/5	8/5 - 21/5	22/5 - 4/6	5/6 - 18/6	19/6 - 25/6
Student 1 (UAB)	Mentor 1	Mentor 2	Mentor 3	Translation and proofreading assignment simulation	Mentor 4	Mentor 5	Mentor 6	Mentor 7	Catch-up week
Student 2 (UAB)	Mentor 8	Mentor 9	Mentor 7		Mentor 10	Mentor 2	Mentor 1	Mentor 4	
Student 3 (UVic)	Mentor 5	Mentor 6	Mentor 1		Mentor 8	Mentor 9	Catch-up week		

Figure 2. Percentage of working days that included tasks on each content



and one for students. Both questionnaires contained the same items, although they were adapted to the characteristics of each group. The items were focused on detecting if the problems identified in the pilot test had been solved and on identifying new problems that could be solved in the programme that will be offered in the academic year 2017/2018. Ten out of the eleven mentors answered the questionnaire.

90% of the mentors felt very comfortable acting as a mentor. All of them considered that fifteen days were enough to complete the 7.5 hours, and 80% considered that 7.5 hours per working day with each student were enough to complete the tasks they had designed and to achieve the learning outcomes. 70% of the mentors considered that they had no difficulty in arranging meetings with the students to complete the working

days. 70% of the mentors felt that students had received enough information before starting their working day and 90% felt that the students with whom they had worked had interests similar to their fields of specialisation. No mentor considered that he/she oversaw too many students and all mentors agreed that the students had been active during their working days. 80% of the mentors felt that the assessment questionnaire had helped them assess the students' learning process, although some of them asked for more qualitative questions. 90% of the mentors would like to participate again in the programme.

Based on their self-assessment, the students considered that they had improved their skills related to translation practice, budgeting and taxation, the establishment of rates, associationism, and the definition of professional goals. They felt that their skills in proofreading, interpreting, ergonomics, and tools and documentation resources had improved to some extent. However, the students considered that their skills in marketing and deontology had not improved much. All three students considered that 15 days were sufficient to complete the 7.5 hours of each working day. They also considered that 7.5 hours with each mentor were sufficient to complete all assigned tasks. However, they believed that they had not received enough information on the following working days. The students were satisfied with the mentors they had worked with and all considered that the mentors had actively participated in the working days. All three students would recommend other students to take part in the programme and all three would participate again if they could.

Students also identified some negative aspects. First, they considered that sometimes they had to work with mentors who were specialised in fields in which they were not interested. Second, they also considered that it would be useful to read the mentors' assessments to get more feedback, since the mentors' answers to the assessment questionnaire were only available to the Committee.

With the results obtained, we consider that we have solved most of the problems that were identified in the pilot test. However, there are still aspects to be improved, such as matching mentors and students who share the same interests and specialisations, although this improvement is subject to the number of APTIC members who decide to take part in the programme. In the programme that will be offered during the academic year 2017/2018, we will make the mentors' assessments accessible to students so that they can get more feedback.

6. Concluding remarks

In this paper we have presented a formal, field-based mentorship with career-based and psycho-social functions based on a multiple mentoring model in which mentors act as coaches, role models and counsellors. APTIC's mentorship programme is an innovative project that aims to give an overview of the profession of a freelance translator and interpreter to students. Despite the low number of students who have participated in the programme and the limitation this entails for this study, the mentored students perceived a positive effect. They feel more prepared to face the labour market because they have developed useful skills for their professional career, have been advised by experienced professionals and have observed different ways of working as a freelance translator and interpreter.

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A series of problems were identified during the pilot programme and most of them were solved in the programme offered during the academic year 2016/2017. However, there are certain aspects that still need improvement, such as matching mentors and students according to the students' interests and giving students more feedback.

From a theoretical perspective, the mentoring programme has proven to follow the principles of situated and self-directed, learner-centred and profession-centred approaches to translator/interpreter training. APTIC's mentoring programme simulates professional practice (Nord 1988), since students use real assignments that mentors are completing or have already completed (Vienne 1994; Gouadec 1994, 2003). In addition, students socialise with real members of the community of freelance translators and interpreters, making it easier for them to develop their translator/interpreter self-concept (Kiraly 2000). Each mentor designs a series of tasks so that the student achieves specific learning outcomes (Hurtado Albir 1999; González-Davies 2003, 2004). The contents of the working days focus not only on the practice of translation and interpretation, but also on quoting, invoicing, taxation, ergonomics, time management, marketing, tools and documentation resources, associationism, and the definition of professional goals, among others. Thus, a holistic training is achieved that is primarily oriented towards the professional world and the student's entry into the labour market (Olvera Lobo et al. 2007). Finally, the (sometimes limited) possibility of matching mentors to students according to students' interests facilitates self-directed learning (Zhong 2008), as the content is aligned with the student's learning goals and self-established learning outcomes.

Considering the promising results obtained by this small mentoring programme, we encourage other Spanish translator/interpreter training centres to include mentoring programmes co-organised with professional freelance translators' and interpreters' associations. The collaboration between academia and professional associations can help to bridge the gap that exists in Spanish universities when it comes to including the viewpoint on the labour market of freelance translators and interpreters in Work Placement subjects.

Limitations

The main limitations of this study are threefold. First, only eight students have participated in this programme and, thus, the positive results obtained cannot be generalised. We must follow the recommendation made by Eby et al. (2008) and not overestimate the positive effect of mentoring on students. In order to be able to generalise the results, we would need to carry out a study with a larger sample and follow up on the professional development of the programme participants and of a group of non-participating students.

The second limitation concerns student self-assessment. Although both the self-assessment and the assessment by each mentor are taken into account in the student's global assessment, self-assessment may not reflect the student's real learning process as it is based on his/her own perception. In the programme that we will offer during the academic year 2017/2018, we will design a questionnaire to measure the students' knowledge of the different contents of the mentorship before starting and after finishing the mentoring programme. With this tool and with the translation and proofreading

assignment simulation, we will be able to measure more accurately the students' progression and estimate the programme's degree of impact on the students' learning process.

The third limitation involves the non-professional training of mentors. Although the Committee organises a meeting and a training session for mentors before the programme begins, the training offered might not be adequate for mentors to develop their coach and counsellor roles in a fully satisfactory manner, as Committee members, who are not experts in mentoring relationships, conducted it. For the academic year 2017/2018, an expert in mentoring relationships and coaching will be hired to provide specific training for mentors.

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Appendix 1. Examples of working sessions explained by mentors

Example of working day on translation	Example of working day on interpreting
We have simulated a real work situation via email in which a museum asked the student to translate an exhibition catalogue. The client sent some information on page and word count. The student had 1000 words as a sample text to issue the quote and as a translation test. Then, the student exchanged emails with the client to negotiate the working conditions (rate, additional charges, delivery deadline, etc.). The mentor gave the student advice and resources to complete each of the tasks. The student completed all tasks and the mentor met the student to give feedback. They also spoke about the world of translation, how to get started, the different fields of specialisation, etc.	We have looked for a free lecture where interpreting was provided. The student attended a round table with David Foenkinos. The round table was interpreted into French/Catalan simultaneously. Before the round table, the student prepared himself/herself as if he/she was the interpreter and prepared a glossary of terms. During the round table, the student assessed the work of the interpreter and the speakers, and analysed different aspects that facilitate or make difficult the process of simultaneous interpreting. The student wrote a report, describing what he/she observed and assessed it. As a different task, the student looked for a speech, and we both took notes for consecutive interpreting. After that, we commented and compared our notes. We analysed the strengths of what he/she had done, and looked for more agile alternatives. We also talked about formal aspects of simultaneous interpreting, such as common working conditions.

Appendix 2. Students' self-assessment questionnaire

Student's name:
Mentor's name:
What tasks have you carried out during the working day? Select as many tasks as you need:

- Translation:
  - General translation
  - Literary and non-literary publishing
  - Scientific and technical
  - Legal

    - Audiovisual
    - Localisation
    - Other fields (indicate which ones):
- Post-editing
- Interpreting
- The freelance translator's/interpreter's routine:
    - Marketing
    - Relationship with customers
    - Associationism
    - Establishing rates
    - Deontology
    - Ergonomics and time and spaces management
    - Quoting
    - Invoicing
    - Tools and documentation resources
    - Project management
    - Terminology management
- Other (indicate which ones):

Answer the questions related to the aspects you have worked on during the working day.

COMPETENCE DEGREE IN THE DEVELOPED TASKS

I can adequately carry out the tasks assigned during the working day in a real professional situation.

(totally disagree) 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10 (totally agree)

[all items with an asterisk are measured with this scale]

I can design my own work plan.*

I can organise and prioritise tasks.*

I can set achievable goals.*

I have completed the assigned tasks within the agreed deadlines.*

I have the basic knowledge and skills that are needed in our profession.*

I master the translation/interpreting process.*

I master the basic computer tools needed in our profession.*

Overall assessment of the competence degree in the tasks performed:

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 10

COMPETENCE DEGREE IN CROSS-CUTTING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (LINGUISTIC, TERMINOLOGICAL, TECHNOLOGICAL AND PROFESSIONAL)

I master the spelling of my mother tongue.*

I master the morphosyntax of my mother tongue.*

I can write a coherent text.*

I master my first foreign language.*

I master my second foreign language.*

My extra-linguistic competence (cultural, encyclopaedic, and domain-specific knowledge) is highly developed.*

I can prepare terminological glossaries.*

I can use terminological glossaries efficiently.*

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I can evaluate the amount of work involved in a specific task.*
I can detect the register and degree of specialisation of a text.*
I know how to seek information and contrast it.*
I can manage the information I find and I can organise it efficiently.*
Overall assessment of the competence degree in cross-cutting knowledge and skills:
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 10
COMPETENCE DEGREE IN PROBLEM RESOLUTION.
I can successfully solve the problems encountered in a task.*
I can act autonomously.*
I can propose alternative solutions to a problem.*
Overall assessment of the competence degree in the resolution of problems:
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 10
STUDENT'S ATTITUDE: PUNCTUALITY, ADAPTABILITY, AVAILABILITY, GOOD DISPOSITION, ETC.)
I show initiative.*
I have actively participated in the tasks.*
I can work in a group.*
I am open to dialogue and debate when different points of view or controversial issues emerge.*
Overall assessment of the student's attitude:
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 10
Do you have any comments regarding your learning process?
Other comments: