



## Employability and entrepreneurship in the training of translators and interpreters: A proposal to develop the entrepreneurial skills of translation and interpreting graduates

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**Abstract:** Since the Bologna Process came into force, many Higher Education (HE) institutions have started to include in their curricula professional competences and skills that help to develop entrepreneurship in their graduates in the context of a constantly evolving labour market. Within the framework of Translation and Interpreting (T&I) Studies, although numerous initiatives are being carried out in recent years to improve professional skills and encourage students' entrepreneurial attitudes, several recent research studies show that professional and entrepreneurship contents are not clearly integrated in all undergraduate T&I curricula. This article aims to describe the scene of T&I training in Spain in relation to entrepreneurship between 2015 and 2020. To do so, we will first analyse the concept of entrepreneurship in the current HE framework, paying special attention to its integration into the curricula for translator training in Spain. Subsequently, we will present a specific proposal for the development of employability and entrepreneurship skills in this context, developed at the University of Valladolid over several academic years.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship; translator training; entrepreneurial skills; employability.

### 1. Introduction

In the current European Higher Education Area (EHEA), concepts such as employability and entrepreneurship, which have gone unnoticed in traditional training models, have gradually begun to be integrated into curricula (Yorke & Knight, 2003, 2006; Yorke, 2006; Hepworth et al., 2015; QAA, 2018), in order to adapt university academic training to the demands of the labour market. In fact, employability, understood as “the ability to gain initial meaningful employment, or to become self-employed, to maintain employment and to be able to move around the labour market” (Working



Group on Employability, 2009, p. 5), was already identified as one of the main objectives of the Sorbonne Declaration (1998) and has been maintained as a priority in each and every one of the communiqués that have laid the foundations of the EHEA (Álvarez-Álvarez & Arnáiz-Uzquiza, 2017, pp. 140-141). Furthermore, the Bologna Process 2020 stresses that, as the labour market requires increasing levels of skills and transversal competences, higher education must equip students with the necessary skills, competences, and knowledge that can be used throughout their professional life, so that the individual can take full advantage of the opportunities of the changing market (Leuven Communiqué, 2009, p. 3). In the light of this idea, the concept of employability does not only refer to the fact of getting a job, but also to the development of competences and skills that should enable individuals to access the constantly evolving world of work (Rodríguez de Céspedes, 2017), *i.e.* it is conceived as the basic tool that enables the link between academic education and the labour market to be established.

Entrepreneurship is emerging as a priority not only in the Strategic Framework for Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) (European Commission, 2016), but also in the Europe 2020 Strategy, which, through the Entrepreneurship Action Plan 2020 (EAP 2020) (European Commission, 2013), stresses the need for education and training in entrepreneurship to promote growth and business creation at European level. Moreover, entrepreneurship forms part of the key competences identified in the European Reference Framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (European Parliament and Council of the EU, 2006). It follows from this policy framework that education has a key role to play in promoting at all levels of education “the spirit of initiative and entrepreneurship by fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and the related knowledge, skills and competences that can enhance competitiveness and smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth” (European Parliament, 2015, p. 78). In this context, educational institutions -especially universities- are called upon to be more entrepreneurial and to design formal and informal training actions that enable students to benefit from learning about entrepreneurship and to develop entrepreneurial knowledge and essential skills and attitudes, such as creativity, initiative, tenacity, teamwork, risk awareness and a sense of responsibility (European Commission, 2013, p. 6).

In this frame of reference, it seems clear that this concept should be considered in the design of training plans. We agree with Galán-Mañas (2017, 2018) when she states that training for employability and entrepreneurship should cover all educational levels from the beginning of training until at least graduation. However, in the field of translator and interpreter training, professional competences for employability and entrepreneurship are not as integrated as they should be, considering previous research such as Álvarez-Álvarez and Arnáiz-Uzquiza (2017), Galán-Mañas (2017, 2018), Rodríguez de Céspedes (2017), Haro Soler (2019), Galán-Mañas et al. (2020, 2021), Álvarez-Álvarez and Ortego-Antón (2020), Galán-Mañas et al. (2021), Gonçalves (2021), Haro Soler and Singer (2022), Veiga Díaz (2023) and Clavijo Olmos (2023).

The aim of this article is, firstly, to review how the concept of entrepreneurship is currently being addressed in the training plans for translators and interpreters and, secondly, to show some of the initiatives – both curricular and non-curricular – that are being carried out in the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting of the University of Valladolid to improve the entrepreneurial skills and employability of its graduates. Moreover, it seeks to suggest the potential applicability of these



initiatives in other institutions and countries, providing a model for enhancing the training of translators and interpreters globally.

## **1.1 Employability and entrepreneurship training**

As we have previously explained, training for employability and entrepreneurship has been one of the objectives guiding the European strategy in the educational framework over the last decade. Employability and entrepreneurship, while often going hand in hand, refer to two distinct concepts but converge as priority areas within the context of current HE (European Commission, 2016a). Employability is defined in global terms as “a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy” (York & Knight, 2006, p. 3). It has been a key focus of the Bologna Process since their conception. On the other hand, entrepreneurship, understood as one of the main drivers of economic growth and job creation (European Commission, 2013, p. 3; European Commission, 2020) has gained increasing prominence in recent years, where the need to train students in entrepreneurship in order to re-launch entrepreneurship in Europe and turn national economies into innovative and competitive models has been more clearly emphasised (European Commission, 2013, p. 4). In the following sections, we will analyse how these two concepts have taken shape in the educational context of the EHEA, the context in which we focus the training actions we present.

### **1.1.1 Employability as a driver for training in the EHEA**

Since the Sorbonne Declaration (1998) and the Bologna Declaration (1999), every communiqué that has shaped the EHEA has identified employability as one of the priorities in education. The Prague Communiqué (2001) and the Berlin Communiqué (2003) refer to employability from a curricular point of view and stress the importance of designing flexible curricula which combine “academic quality with relevance to lasting employability and called for a continued proactive role of higher education institutions” (Prague Communiqué, 2001, p. 3). In the London Communiqué (2007), for its part, employability takes on a prominent role, since throughout the document the need to improve the employability of graduates at different levels of education, as well as in the context of lifelong learning, is stressed; furthermore, HE institutions are urged to develop cooperation agreements or other types of collaboration instruments with employers in order to link academic training more effectively with the professional world. This idea of collaboration between academia and work practice, first mentioned in the Bergen Communiqué (2005), is reinforced in the Leuven Communiqué (2009, p. 3), which emphasises the need for close cooperation between governments, HE institutions, social partners, and students to “maintain and renew a skilled workforce”. The document also stresses the importance of integrating work placements and on-the-job learning into curricula, so that curricular designs can be more responsive to employers' needs and employers can better understand all the dimensions that define educational action.



In the subsequent Communiqués (Budapest-Vienna, 2010; Bucharest, 2012; Yerevan, 2015, Paris, 2018 and Rome, 2020)<sup>1</sup>, enhancing employability continues to appear as one of the priority lines of training. For example, the Yerevan Communiqué (2015, p. 2) stresses the need to ensure that graduates develop not only transversal competences and specific competences related to their professional profile, but also “new competences they may need for their employability later in throughout their working lives”, especially in the context of a constantly evolving labour market.

Using the same approach, Humburg et al. (2013) analyse the employability of university graduates from the perspective of employers and describe the optimal framework of competences, skills, and aptitudes for successful integration into the labour market. They identify the seven blocks of competences and skills that are necessary to enter the labour market in the opinion of employers: professional competences (knowledge and skills needed to solve the specific problems of a job); general academic competences (analytical thinking, reflective skills, etc.); innovation/creativity (ability to generate new ideas and to analyse problems from different perspectives); strategic and organisational skills (ability to act strategically to achieve the goals pursued by the company/organisation); interpersonal skills (ability to work collaboratively, communicate and cooperate with colleagues and customers); entrepreneurial skills (ability to recognise the commercial value of an idea and to seek opportunities to turn an idea into a product) and international orientation (foreign language skills and intercultural competences) (Humburg et al., 2013, p. 91).

All of these policy and research efforts have gradually taken hold in HE institutions, and numerous studies have focused on the relationship between employability (and the key competences that define it) and HE curricula, proposing specific models for integrating these competences into the educational curriculum (Moreland, 2004; York & Knight, 2003, 2006; York, 2006; Dacre Pool & Sewell, 2007; Silva et al., 2013; Cole & Tibby, 2013). However, in the light of the results of the Education and Training Monitor 2019 published by the European Commission, much remains to be done in this respect, as improving employability remains one of the challenges of training today, especially in some countries where the consequences of the economic crisis are still being felt (European Commission, 2019).

### **1.1.2 Entrepreneurship in current European training curricula**

Although entrepreneurship and its competences are not explicitly mentioned in the documents that have been consolidating the EHEA until the Bucharest Communiqué (2012), training in entrepreneurship has formed part of the European Commission's priorities since 2003, when it published the European Green Paper on Entrepreneurship in Europe (European Commission, 2003). In fact, “sense of initiative and entrepreneurship” is identified as one of the eight key competences to be possessed by all members of the Knowledge Society (European Parliament and Council of the EU, 2006, p. 13). Subsequent European documents (European Commission, 2012, 2013, 2016b) insist on the need to develop entrepreneurial skills in students, as these not only contribute to the

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<sup>1</sup> These Communiqués are listed in the bibliography under the authorship of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education.

creation of new enterprises, but also to the employability of young people (European Commission, 2012, p. 4).

As a result of these European directives, an increasing number of HE institutions have become entrepreneurial universities, *i.e.* centres that incorporate teaching and research in entrepreneurship and contribute to social and economic development (Clark, 1998; Audretsch & Keilbach, 2008). These universities promote entrepreneurship not only through entrepreneurship training, but also through the generation of patents and the creation of start-ups and spin-offs in the framework of specific infrastructures to support entrepreneurship (science and technology parks)<sup>2</sup> (Pugh et al., 2017). However, we agree with Galán-Mañas (2018, p. 35) when she states that, although there has recently been an increase in entrepreneurship training in global terms, this has often been in business administration or similar degrees, *i.e.* degrees in which entrepreneurship was already present (Guerrero et al., 2016). From a European perspective, the data confirms this statement as it reveals that “participation in entrepreneurship education in the EU is mostly optional, and only a handful of countries make it compulsory” (European Commission, 2019, p. 12). To foster entrepreneurship, it would therefore be necessary for training in entrepreneurial competence to be addressed to all students, regardless of their degree and educational level, as highlighted in European regulations; otherwise, it will be very difficult for the entrepreneurial spirit to permeate society.

So, what do we mean by entrepreneurial competence? EntreComp, the European reference framework for entrepreneurial competence, defines it as a transversal competence that “enables citizens to nurture their personal development, to actively contribute to social development, to enter the job market as employee or as self-employed, and to start-up or scale-up ventures which may have a cultural, social or commercial motive” (Bacigalupo et al., 2016, p. 10). This model, as can be seen in Table 1, is based on 15 sub-competences, organised in 3 areas<sup>3</sup>:

Table 1: Sub-competences integrated in the concept of entrepreneurial competence

Areas	Sub-competences
1. Ideas and opportunities	1.1 Identifying opportunities 1.2 Creativity 1.3 Vision 1.4 Evaluation of ideas 1.5. Critical and sustainable thinking
2. Resources	2.1. Self-awareness and self-efficacy (self-confidence) 2.2. Motivation and perseverance 2.3. Mobilising resources 2.4. Economic and financial know-how 2.5. Mobilising human resources (capacity to inspire, enthuse, convince others, etc.)
3. Into Action	3.1. Taking the initiative

<sup>2</sup> In Spain, more and more HE institutions are including entrepreneurship in their action plans, either with specific departments or units or with training or support programmes for entrepreneurship. In the case of the University of Valladolid, several projects are being developed in this sense both in the Science Park of the University of Valladolid (UVa) (<http://emprendimientotecnologico.com/>) and in the General Foundation of the UVa (<https://funge.uva.es/fundacion/proyecto-enter/>).

<sup>3</sup> Each of these sub-competences is defined in the model with precise descriptors that help to understand its scope. In addition, the model is completed with the definition of 4 global levels of acquisition for each competence (initial, intermediate, advanced, and expert) structured in 8 specific progressive levels.

	3.2. Planning and management 3.3. Coping with uncertainty, ambiguity & risk 3.4. Teamwork 3.5. Experiential learning
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Source: Adapted from Bacigalupo et al. (2016, pp. 12-13)

[Description]: Areas: Subcompetences, 1. Ideas and opportunities: 1.1. Identifying opportunities, 1.2. Creativity, 1.3. Vision, 1.4. Evaluation of ideas, 1.5. Critical and sustainable thinking, 2. Resources: 2.1. Self-awareness and self-efficacy (self-confidence), 2.2. Motivation and perseverance, 2.3. Mobilising resources, 2.4. Economic and financial know-how, 2.5. Mobilising human resources (capacity to inspire, enthuse, convince others, etc.), 3. Into Action: 3.1. Taking the initiative, 3.2. Planning and management, 3.3. Coping with uncertainty, ambiguity & risk, 3.4. Teamwork, 3.5. Experiential learning [End of description].

Some of these sub-competences are not new in the educational models developed since the EHEA, as they were already identified as generic competences in the Tuning Project. This is the case of competences such as the ability to organise and plan, critical and self-critical capacity, interpersonal skills, teamwork, initiative, and entrepreneurship, etc. (González & Wagenaar, 2006).

The EntreComp model can be useful in the design of training actions aimed at entrepreneurship training, as we will see below.

## 1.2 Employability and entrepreneurship in training translators and interpreters

Despite European efforts to include entrepreneurship and professional competences to improve the employability of graduates in all training plans and levels, there is no clear repercussion of this fact in the case of Translation and Interpreting Studies. In the following sections, to provide background for the training proposal we introduce, we will analyse some of the programmes and experiences that have been developed in the field of translator and interpreter training.

### 1.2.1 Employability in translator and interpreter training

Although employability – and the professional skills linked to it – have not traditionally been integrated into the curricula for training translators and interpreters (Calvo et al., 2010), we find in the literature some pioneering initiatives that highlight the need to provide students with professional training based on the needs of the market that will facilitate their subsequent access to the world of work. Such is the case of Olvera-Lobo et al. (2005), who propose a practical translation course with real projects in a context that simulates the professional practice of translation with the aim of familiarising students with the real conditions of the workplace.

For their part, Calvo et al. (2010) and Chouc and Calvo (2011) present two different proposals, based on the inclusion of specific modules for the development of professional competences and skills in the training plans of translators and interpreters. From this perspective, they describe a series of extracurricular actions and strategies (seminars given by professional translators, internship programmes, job fairs, etc.) that can help define the professional profile of graduates and facilitate their entry into the professional world. Way (2008) describes a model for introducing professional internships and projects (especially those linked to project management and revision of translations) into the classroom in a structured way, with the aim of equipping students with the skills and competences needed to enter the professional world. With this same



aim, the same author proposes in a pilot experiment the possibility of including interdisciplinary projects in training in which students from different faculties work collaboratively (Way, 2016). For her part, Peverati (2013) approaches professional competences not from a curricular perspective, but from a methodological one, as she stresses the need to implement methodologies oriented towards the professional practice of translation to bring the academic world as close as possible to the professional sphere. With this same goal in mind, Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow (2014) point out the importance of including specific modules on professional skills and work placements in the training plans of translators and interpreters to increase their employability in the market. Galán-Mañas (2017) presents a specific programme for the employability of graduates in T&I with different curricular and extracurricular actions aimed at developing professional skills to improve students' employability.

However, despite these efforts, several studies show that professional competences are not as integrated as they should be in the curricula for the training of translators and interpreters. Álvarez-Álvarez and Arnáiz-Uzquiza (2017, p. 15) show that only half of the curricula for the bachelor's degree in T&I in Spain include compulsory work placements and that less than 50% of them include specific professional content in their training offer<sup>4</sup>. Rodríguez de Céspedes (2017, p. 109), taking as a starting point the results of the European OPTIMALE project (Optimising Professional Translator Training in a Multilingual Europe), states that “the curriculum is taking over aspects of training traditionally left to employers and not all translation departments are equipped to address the challenge”. She stresses the need to equip students not only with the academic content necessary for the profession, but also with the professional tools and competences that will enable them to successfully access a constantly evolving labour market. From a broader perspective, Galán-Mañas (2017) also highlights the scarcity of proposals on training for employability and employability that we find in the framework of Translation and Interpreting Studies. Therefore, there is a need for more actions that include professional training itineraries and opportunities that help students to identify their own competences and guide them in the design of their professional project (Galán-Mañas, 2017, p. 165).

### 1.2.2 Entrepreneurship as a goal in translator and interpreter training

As we have previously explained, training in entrepreneurship is not very well established in current training plans, despite the political commitments of the European Union and the efforts being made at institutional level (European Commission, 2019). The case of the training of translators and interpreters is no exception; this fact is surprising since the guidelines shaping the design of the training plans for the bachelor's degree in T&I (*White Paper: Bachelor's Degree in Translation and Interpreting*) indicated as basic systemic transversal competences some competences inherent to entrepreneurship: creativity, initiative and entrepreneurship and leadership (ANECA, 2004, p. 82). Similarly, these competences are included among the service provision competences in the competence framework developed by the EMT European Masters network (EMT, 2017). However,

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<sup>4</sup> In fact, the authors state that only 35% of the curricula for the bachelor's degree in Translation and Interpreting in Spain, i.e. 9 of the 26 curricula analysed, include specific professional content in their offer (Álvarez-Álvarez & Arnáiz-Uzquiza, 2017, p. 155).

Henter (2016) stated in a survey of graduates in T&I –mainly from the United Kingdom and Spain– that only 14% of the 155 participants had acquired the basic entrepreneurial competences to exercise their profession as freelancers.

Within the discipline's research, there are limited studies focusing on this aspect. Vandepitte (2009) presents a pilot experiment carried out within the framework of the Master's Degree in Translation at the University College Ghent whose main goal was for students to develop the skills and tasks necessary for the creation of their own translation company (planning, design of a business plan, search for clients, promotion of the services offered, development of a marketing plan, negotiation, time management and control, etc.) in a real situation. Along the same lines, we also find the proposal by Santafé (2014), which proposes the creation of translation business projects at the University of Exeter.

On the other hand, Klimkowski (2015) approaches entrepreneurship in translator and interpreter training from a holistic perspective and describes a study in which a group of students had to assess the importance of some of the traits that define entrepreneurship (creativity, need to seek new solutions, communication skills, ability to adapt to new situations, ability to predict, evaluate and cope with risks, etc.) and determine whether or not the training they had received enhanced their entrepreneurial skills. The results show that students needed more training in entrepreneurship, as more than 40% of the survey participants were not able to indicate what influence the training they had received had on their entrepreneurial skills (Klimkowski, 2015, p. 78).

Giure Sastre (2016), in the framework of her doctoral thesis, also analyses training in entrepreneurship in the training plans for translators and interpreters, as well as reviewing the professional opportunities for graduates in T&I.

Rodríguez de Céspedes (2017, pp. 114-116) describes some specific tasks for entrepreneurship that are developed within the framework of the Professional Aspects of Translation course of the MA in Translation at the University of Portsmouth. This is a specific module on entrepreneurship and employability, in which students analyse their level of competence and create an improvement plan adapted to their needs.

From this same perspective, Galán-Mañas (2018) proposes a set of sequenced learning tasks –both curricular and extracurricular– for the development of competences linked to entrepreneurship for the bachelor's degree in T&I. The author, following the classification suggested by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2012) for training in entrepreneurship, classifies them into four levels of progression: awareness of entrepreneurship; development of an entrepreneurial mindset; development of entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial effectiveness. Also noteworthy is the monograph on entrepreneurship in translator and interpreter training published by Galán-Mañas et al. (2020).

In the light of the few studies that exist on training in entrepreneurial skills in the training of translators and interpreters and being aware that self-employment (either individually as a freelancer or with other partners through a company) is a possible professional niche for graduates, it is necessary to design specific training actions focused on entrepreneurship that provide students with the necessary tools to access the world of work from an entrepreneurial perspective.





## 2. Methodology

Within this frame of reference, the teaching innovation project Objective: *Employability. Professional skills and entrepreneurship in Translation and Interpreting Studies*<sup>5</sup> was developed. The aim of this project is to provide students with a series of specific skills for employability and entrepreneurship, which will allow them to complete the training given in the degree in T&I with curricular and extracurricular actions aimed at professional practice and job placement. The project takes as a starting point for its design the employability competences identified by Humburg et al. (2013), as well as the subcompetences for entrepreneurship identified in EntreComp, both of which are analysed in the theoretical framework of this article.

### 2.1 Project objectives

As we have already mentioned, the main objective of this project is to provide students with a set of contents and professional skills that will enable them to develop the necessary competences to successfully enter the world of work, *i.e.* the project aims to link university academic training with the professional world in the field of T&I. To this end, several secondary objectives have been set:

- To understand the different professional profiles of graduates in T&I.
- To analyse the different channels currently available for job search.
- Develop different job search strategies.
- Identify the particularities of the profession of translator and interpreter and of the market.
- Become familiar with the accounting and tax responsibilities of professional T&I practice.
- To know the phases of the entrepreneurial process and the competences required in each one of them.
- Apply the professional knowledge acquired in the framework of the project to different subjects of the degree.

### 2.2. Design, development and implementation

The project has been designed and developed at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting of the University of Valladolid (UVA) since the 2016-2017 academic year. In the first four years, the project focused on the development of professional competences for the improvement of employability. However, in the academic year 2020-2021 it was considered appropriate to include a specific module on entrepreneurship, following the guidelines set by the European Union. This is

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<sup>5</sup> This innovation project has been developed linked to the Degree in Translation and Interpreting since the 2016-2017 academic year and has the financial support of the Vice-Rectorate for Academic Organisation of the University of Valladolid (from 2016 to 2020) and, subsequently, of the Vice-Rectorate for Teaching Innovation. In addition, it was awarded in 2018 with one of the second prizes of the Teaching Innovation Award of the Social Council of the UVA.



a living project, which is constantly evolving, as it has to respond to the needs of a constantly changing market.

### 2.2.1 Target group of the Project

The main target groups of the project are students of the bachelor's degree in T&I. Although we agree with Galán-Mañas (2017, p. 155) when she states that training in employability and entrepreneurship should be included from the beginning of training, we have observed that students in the last two years of the degree (third and fourth) are the ones who show most interest in the project and in the training actions designed within the framework of the project. This is logical, given that these students perceive their entry into the professional sphere as the most imminent. It is also necessary to highlight that some actions (especially conferences related to new market niches or new professional profiles) are also of interest to students who have graduated from the faculty, as they perceive them as an opportunity to update their knowledge and open new paths in their professional practice.

### 2.2.2 Actors involved

Several actors are involved in this innovation project:

- Teachers of the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting of the University of Valladolid; in the initial design and implementation of the project in the first 3 academic years, 4 teachers have participated more actively. However, in the last academic year, a new teacher has joined the working group.
- Coordinator of Work Placements at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting.
- Two freelance translators (former students of the faculty).
- A technician from the Employment Area of the General Foundation of the University.
- Two technicians from the Science Park of the University of Valladolid (experts in managing entrepreneurship projects in the framework of the university).
- Professional associations; since the project's inception, we have had the collaboration of the president of ASPROSET (Sectoral Association of Translation Service Providers).

### 2.2.3 Project structuring

Although the project is conceived as a complement to the bachelor's degree in T&I, it is implemented in coordination with the degree subjects, especially those with a more practical focus. In other words, the project facilitates the practical application of knowledge and skills learned in extracurricular activities to the curriculum subjects shaping students' professional identities, while also allowing insights from these subjects to enrich the extracurricular experiences. From this perspective, the teaching methodology applied in the subjects is also conceived as a tool that helps to develop and consolidate competences that improve students' employability. Thus, active



methodologies<sup>6</sup> such as learning by tasks and translation projects, cooperative learning, or strategies such as the use of real texts in the learning process also bring students closer to the professional practices of the professional world in the learning environment and develop competences to improve their employability.

The project is structured in 4 training modules, made up of different actions (conferences, round tables, workshops, and related activities), which allow to work on employability and entrepreneurship skills from a principally practical approach. The conferences are planned to last a maximum of two hours; in the first hour, the speaker gives a presentation of the contents and, in the following hour, interacts with the attendees. The round tables last one hour and serve as a starting point for discussion between the participants and the speakers. The workshops, which last between two and four hours (depending on the content covered), are designed to be hands-on. Finally, each module includes compulsory training activities, that must be completed as part of the bachelor's degree in T&I coursework (for example, in specialised translation subjects – both reverse and direct translation –, IT applied to translation or in the final degree project<sup>7</sup>) or voluntarily in the context of the project.

The selection of the four modules for this project was guided by a strategic focus on bridging the gap between academic learning and professional competences, as outlined in academic literature (Galán-Mañas, 2017, 2018; Rodríguez de Céspedes, 2017; Galán-Mañas et al., 2020, 2021; Álvarez-Álvarez & Ortego-Antón, 2020; Gonçalves, 2021; Veiga Díaz, 2023) and in competence frameworks like PACTE (2003, 2017). These modules were chosen because they encompass content areas closely linked to professional skills identified as critical for employability and entrepreneurship in T&I field. By integrating these specific modules, the project aims to complement and enhance the formal education provided in the degree programme, ensuring that students acquire a well-rounded set of skills that are directly applicable to the professional world.

Below are details of the modules that form part of the project, the objectives they pursue, as well as the conferences, round tables, workshops, and related activities they present:

#### Module I. Professional profiles of graduates in translation and interpreting

##### Module objectives:

- Identify the different profiles and professional opportunities for graduates in T&I.
- To learn about the experiences of other graduates working in different fields (in-house translation, freelance translation, teaching, international trade, project management, etc.).

##### Conference:

- C.I.I The professional profiles of the bachelor's degree in T&I

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<sup>6</sup> For a more exhaustive study of teaching methodologies applied to the training of translators and interpreters, see Álvarez-Álvarez (2012) and Galán-Mañas (2017).

<sup>7</sup> According to Article 12 of the Spanish Royal Decree 1393/2007, of 29 October, which establishes the organisation of official university education in Spain, all official degree courses will conclude with the preparation and defence of a final degree project (BOE, 2007).



The aim of this conference is to provide students with a general overview of the different career opportunities linked to their studies: translation and interpreting, foreign language teaching, international business, lexicography and terminology, project management, linguistic revision, copywriting, etc.

Round table:

- RT.1.1 Experiences in relation to the employability of graduates in T&I

The aim of this round table, made up of former students from the faculty, is to show students the different career paths taken by classmates from previous years. This type of session is very enriching, as it allows students to learn first-hand about the professional experiences of people who have received the same training as them and with whom they can identify.

As this is an introductory module, no learning activities are associated with it.

Module 2. Job search

Module objectives:

- Know the different existing channels for job search and develop a search strategy.
- Compare the potential of different social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Bebee, LinkedIn) for job search.
- Preparing documentation to help with the job search (CV, motivation letter, etc.).

Conferences:

- C.2.1 Digital and non-digital job search skills
- C.2.2 Personal branding and job search

These two introductory sessions provide context for the following practical workshops.

Workshops:

- W.2.1 Channels and strategies for job search
- W.2.2 Social networks for job search
- W.2.3 How to create a visual CV

The first two workshops aim to analyse different channels for job search (specific portals, social networks, mobile phone applications, etc.), in order for students to design their own search strategy according to their interests. In the framework of the third workshop (W.2.3.) attention is paid to some documents necessary in the job search process, e.g. the CV (in traditional and video-CV format) and the motivation letter for a job, and the particularities of the job interview are analysed by means of role-plays.

Related activities:



- Preparation of CV and motivation letter. Students are required to prepare these two documents in both Spanish and English as part of two subjects of the degree: Specialised Translation B/A (English) -Spanish version- and Translation 4 A/B (English) -English version.
- Job search on social networks and specific portals (e.g. Infojobs, Infoempleo, Monster, etc.). Students, on a voluntary basis, undertake the task of analysing the job search potential offered by social networks and these specialised portals.
- Creation (or debugging) of profiles on social networks for professional purposes. Also, as part of the ICT for Translation degree course, students are required to create (or update) their profiles on the main social networks (Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram, LinkedIn) for professional purposes. This is a first step towards building their personal brand.

### Module 3. The profession of translator and interpreter

#### Module objectives:

- Identify the particularities of the profession of translator and interpreter and the code of ethics that governs it.
- Research the current T&I market (rates, services, needs, niches, etc.).
- Know the main associations of translators and interpreters and what they are for.
- Designing a marketing strategy for self-employed translators (freelancers).

#### Conferences:

- C.3.1 Freelance translators vs. in-house translators
- C.3.2 Translator and interpreter code of ethics
- C.3.3 Professional associations
- C.3.4 Professional profiles of translators and interpreters (audiovisual translation, sworn translation, conference interpreting, localisation, machine translation and post-editing, etc.).
- C.3.5 The current T&I market
- C.3.6 New market niches

The purpose of these lectures is to provide a general overview of the nuances of the T&I profession and the current state of the market. This approach allows students to gain insight into the profession's various facets, along with the diverse professional opportunities and niches available in today's market. Additionally, the content covered in these lectures is enhanced by the content explored in the module's various workshops.

#### Workshops:

- W.3.1 Introduction to the profession of freelance translator and interpreter
- W.3.2 Basic accounting and taxation for translators and interpreters
- W.3.3 Marketing laboratory for translators and interpreters



The first workshop (W.3.1) aims to explain to students how to get started in the profession as freelance translators and interpreters, including registration procedures, recommendations for finding clients, etc. The second workshop (W.3.2) focuses on aspects related to the financial management of professional activities. This includes determining appropriate rates for different projects, preparing estimates and invoices, applying value added tax and personal income tax on invoices, understanding tax obligations for freelancers, and identifying specific programmes for managing professional accounts, among other topics. Meanwhile, the third workshop (W.3.3) aims to underscore the significance of cultivating a well-defined personal brand for professionals. It covers managing an online identity, creating a professional website, employing alternative marketing techniques, enhancing the value of their work, strategic positioning, and the crucial role of networking.

Related activities:

- Preparation of estimates and invoices. In the compulsory course Specialized Translation B/A (English) during their fourth year, students are required to create these documents for various translation projects. This process enables them to implement the knowledge acquired in a real translation task.
- Designing a professional website. This activity is part of the programme of the ICT for Translation degree course, which has among its objectives assisting students in defining their professional personal brand from different perspectives.
- Within the scope of the final degree project, different activities associated with this module can be undertaken, including creating a guide for entering the freelance translation and interpreting profession; executing real translation projects in which all the professional skills developed are put into practice (such as client communication and negotiation, estimate preparation, project completion, invoicing, etc.); developing a marketing strategy for a freelance career; analysing the translation market in Spain relative to other EU nations, and more.

Module 4. Translate-Entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship as a professional opportunity for graduates in translation and interpreting

Module objectives:

- Identify the phases of the entrepreneurial project.
- Develop a business plan for the creation of a T&I services company.
- Setting up a mini company for T&I services.

This last module of the project focuses on promoting entrepreneurship among students of the bachelor's degree in T&I. To this end, two practical workshops are proposed, in which different skills linked to entrepreneurship are worked on and a round table with real experiences on entrepreneurship in the field of translation and interpreting.



Workshops:

- W.4.1 Learning to undertake
- W.4.2 Effective communication for entrepreneurs

The first workshop (W.4.1) focuses on general aspects of entrepreneurial action (entrepreneurial skills, generation of ideas, business opportunities, design of the business plan, economic viability of the project, estimation of costs, practical issues related to the creation of the company, risks, etc.). The second (W.4.2) aims to improve students' communication skills (verbal and non-verbal communication, how to overcome stage fright, how to effectively sell a project in a very limited time – elevator pitch – etc.).

Round tables:

- RT.4.1 Positive and negative aspects of setting up a T&I company

This round table, which brings together entrepreneurial graduates and professionals who have their own T&I company, provides an opportunity to learn about the advantages and disadvantages of setting up a company in this sector based on the speakers' own experiences. One of the most interesting aspects of this activity is the debate that takes place with the attendees, who, after the initial interventions of the speakers, raise their questions and comments.

Related activities:

- Creation and start-up of a mini company (or student company)<sup>8</sup> following the recommendations given in the workshops.
- Within the scope of the final degree project, the following activities related to this training module are proposed: analysing the entrepreneurial profile of T&I students; creating a guide for establishing a T&I company; developing a business plan; formulating a marketing strategy for a T&I services company, among others.

The professional skills developed in these 4 modules and in the subjects of the bachelor's degree in T&I are complemented by the in-company internships that students take in the second term of the fourth year, which are compulsory and last 150 hours. In this way, students can apply what they have learned to real situations and can continue to learn from their experience in the professional world.

## 2.2.4 Timeline for implementation

As we have previously explained, this project was implemented in the 2016-2017 academic year, which means that it has been running for 6 academic years. The actions integrated within the

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<sup>8</sup> The Spanish Entrepreneurs Law defines a mini company or student company as “an educational tool, through which economic and monetary transactions can be carried out, invoices can be issued, and bank accounts can be opened. [...] Students will be able, through them, to carry out real transactions, without having to embark on the risk involved in creating a real company” (BOE, 2013, p. 78799).

training modules are scheduled between November and May of each academic year. It is during this period that fourth-year undergraduate students start their mandatory work placements. This arrangement allows them to apply and strengthen the professional competences acquired throughout their coursework in actual work environments.

### 2.3 Assessment of the project

After each year of the project, the satisfaction of the students (main addressees) was evaluated by means of a survey, consisting of 5 closed questions based on a Likert scale (from 1 to 5) and a final open question in which they could raise the negative aspects of the project and their proposals for improvement. Each question (Table 2) was strategically crafted to capture a specific aspect of the students' experience, collectively providing a comprehensive overview of the project's effectiveness from multiple angles.

Table 2: Questions included in the survey

Questions	Objective
1. The skills acquired in the project will be useful for my professional life.	To evaluate the relevance of the project's skills to the students' future careers.
2. The activities proposed throughout the project (curricular and extracurricular) have made it easier for me to learn the contents.	To examine whether the range of activities proposed in the project facilitated a deeper understanding of the content.
3. The number and type of activities (conferences, workshops, round tables) seem appropriate to me.	To assess students' opinions on the adequacy and variety of the pedagogical methods and strategies used.
4. The project has been useful in giving me a clearer understanding of the professional profile I aspire to.	To measure the project's effectiveness in helping students clarify their professional goals.
5. In general, my level of satisfaction with the project is...	To provide a comprehensive assessment of the project's impact.

Source: Author (2024)

[Description] Questions: Objective, 1. The skills acquired in the project will be useful for my professional life: To evaluate the relevance of the project's skills to the students' future careers, 2. The activities proposed throughout the project (curricular and extracurricular) have made it easier for me to learn the contents: To examine whether the range of activities proposed in the project facilitated a deeper understanding of the content, 3. The number and type of activities (conferences, workshops, round tables) seem appropriate to me: To assess students' opinions on the adequacy and variety of the pedagogical methods and strategies used, 4. The project has been useful in giving me a clearer understanding of the professional profile I aspire to: To measure the project's effectiveness in helping students clarify their professional goals, 5. In general, my level of satisfaction with the project is...: To provide a comprehensive assessment of the project's impact [End of description].

The development of our student satisfaction survey instrument was intricately planned to balance quantitative and qualitative insights, drawing on a mixed-methods approach to enhance the depth and applicability of the collected data. This methodology aligns with the principles outlined by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), who advocate for the integration of qualitative and quantitative data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of research phenomena. The instrument's design, incorporating Likert-scale questions alongside open-ended responses, was inspired by the psychometric theory and qualitative research traditions that emphasize the utility of such scales for





capturing a continuum of perceptions and the richness of narrative data, respectively (Patton, 2015; Fink, 2017).

If the students' rating was 3 or lower, they were obliged to fill in an open box with comments justifying their rating. In this way, we were able to collect more detailed information about the opinion of the project participants.

### 3. Results

Since the implementation of the project, a total of 191 students enrolled in the Degree in Translation and Interpreting at the UVa have benefited from the actions designed within the framework of the project. The number of interested students has increased from 16 in the first year the project ran to 43 in the 2020-2021 academic year, and to 35 in 2021-2022. In addition, 11 final degree projects linked to the project have been defended.

Next, we delve into a detailed analysis of the students' evaluations<sup>9</sup> concerning each of the survey questions. By examining the range of responses across the 5-point Likert scale, from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5), we can gain nuanced insights into the students' experiences. Additionally, the qualitative data from the open-ended question provides a richer, more personalized context to the numerical ratings, enabling us to understand the reasons behind the students' feedback and to tailor future projects more closely to their needs and aspirations.

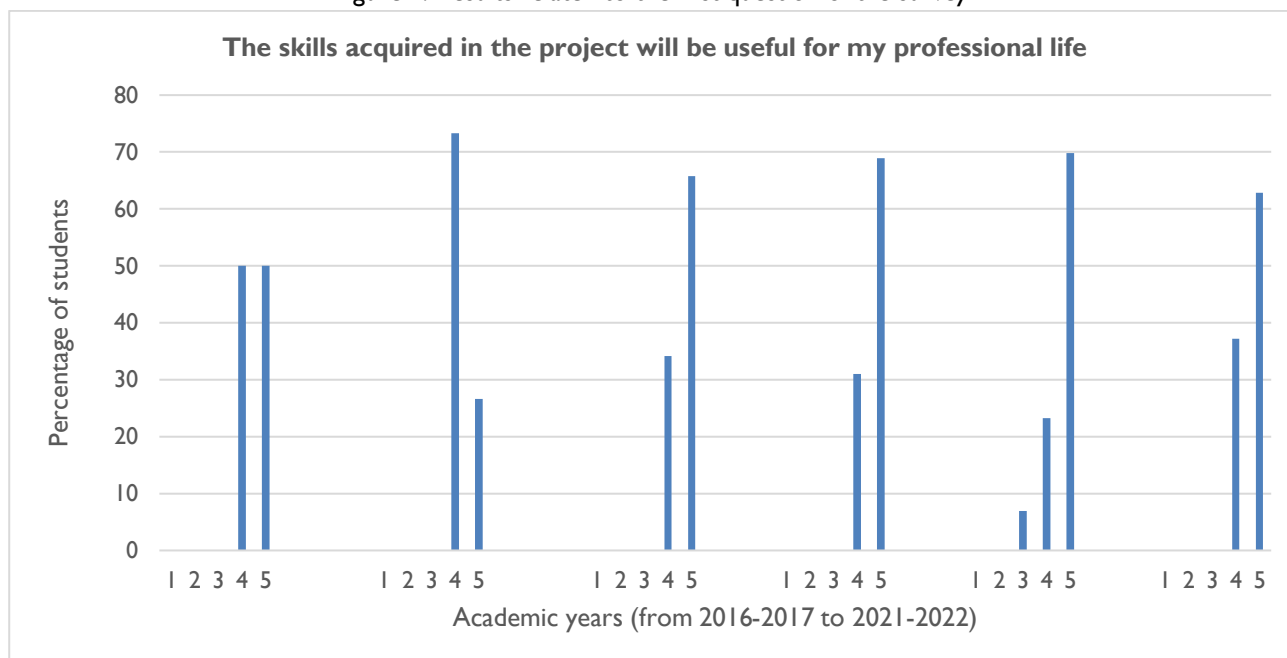
The survey results related to the first question (Figure 1) showed a strong and consistent recognition of the value of competences developed in the project among the students from 2016 to 2022. Initially, in 2016-2017, the utility of these competences was highly regarded, with 50% rating them a 4 and another 50% a 5 on a 5-point scale. The following year, 2017-2018, saw an increase in perceived value, with 73.33% rating them a 4 and 26.67% a 5. The 2018-2019 academic year marked a peak in satisfaction, as 34.21% rated the utility at 4, and a significant 65.79% at the highest rating of 5. The trend of high valuation continued in 2019-2020, with 31.03% giving a rating of 4 and 68.97% rating a 5. A slight deviation was observed in 2020-2021, where a small group (6.98%) rated the competences at 3, though the majority still rated them highly, with 23.26% at 4 and 69.77% at 5. In the latest year, 2021-2022, the data showed a sustained positive view with 37.14% rating the competences at 4 and 62.86% at 5. These figures illustrate an enduring approval of the project's contribution to the students' professional skill set, emphasizing its relevance and effectiveness over the years.

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<sup>9</sup> Student participation data by academic year were as follows: 16 (2016-2017), 30 (2017-2018), 38 (2018-2019), 29 (2019-2020), 43 (2020-2021) and 35 (2021-2022).



Figure 1: Results related to the first question of the survey

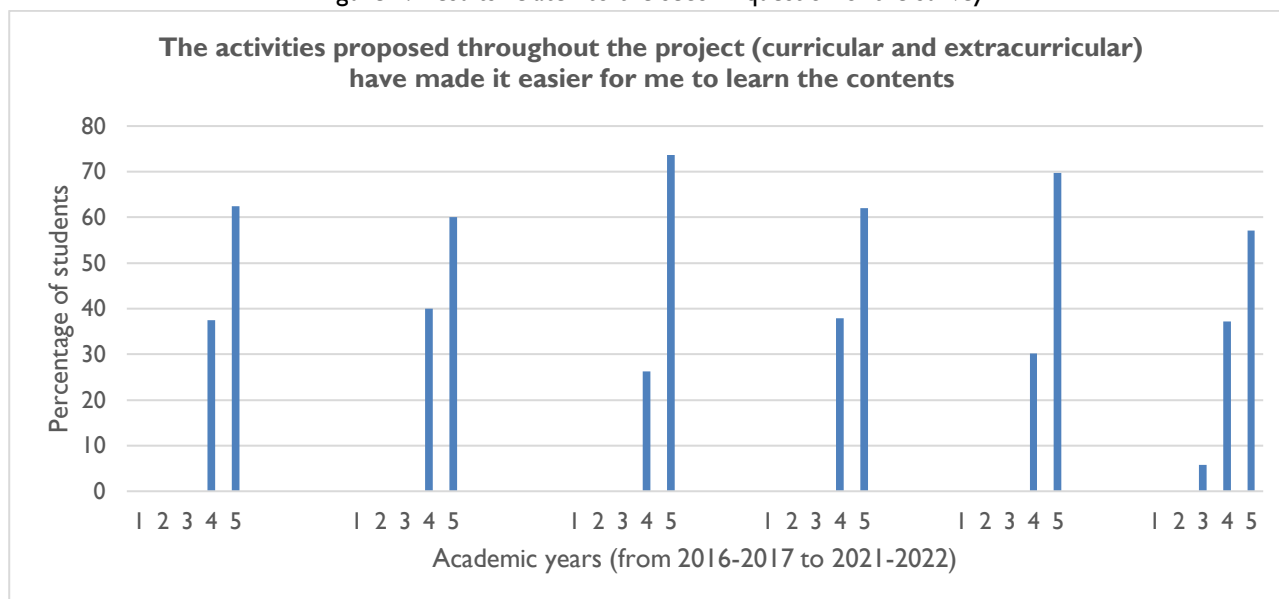


Source: Author (2024)

[Description of the image] Title of the figure: The skills acquired in the project will be useful for my professional life. This is a horizontal bar graph with six clusters representing six different academic years. Each cluster contains five vertical bars corresponding to a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates strong disagreement and 5 indicates strong agreement with the title statement. The vertical axis on the left is labelled 'Percentage of students' and it's segmented into increments of 10, ranging from 0 at the bottom to 80 at the top. The horizontal axis along the bottom is labelled 'Academic years (from 2016-2017 to 2021-2022)' with each cluster of bars representing a year's survey results. Each bar's height is proportional to the percentage of students who selected that particular level of agreement for each academic year. The pattern of bar heights varies across the academic years, indicating fluctuations in the students' perceptions of the usefulness of the skills acquired [End of description].

The second question of the survey aimed to evaluate whether the activities proposed in the project facilitated learning from the students' perspective (Figure 2). The responses to this question were very positive across the years. In the 2016-2017 academic year, 37.50% of the students rated the effectiveness of the activities at level 4 on a scale of 1 to 5, while 62.50% awarded the highest rating of 5. The year 2017-2018 saw a slightly more balanced distribution, with 40% scoring a 4 and 60% a 5. The 2018-2019 academic year continued the trend of high satisfaction, with 26.32% giving a rating of 4 and an even higher 73.68% opting for the top rating of 5. In 2019-2020, the pattern remained positive, with 37.93% of students marking a 4 and 62.07% marking a 5. The following academic year, 2020-2021, maintained the high valuation with 30.23% rating the activities as a 4 and 69.77% as a 5. Lastly, in the 2021-2022 academic year, a slight dip in the highest rating was observed, where 5.71% of students rated the activities at a 3, yet the majority continued to show high approval, with 37.14% rating them a 4 and 57.14% rating them a 5. Comparatively, these results indicate a consistently high appreciation for the project's learning activities over the years, with most students finding them to be highly effective in facilitating their learning process.

Figure 2: Results related to the second question of the survey

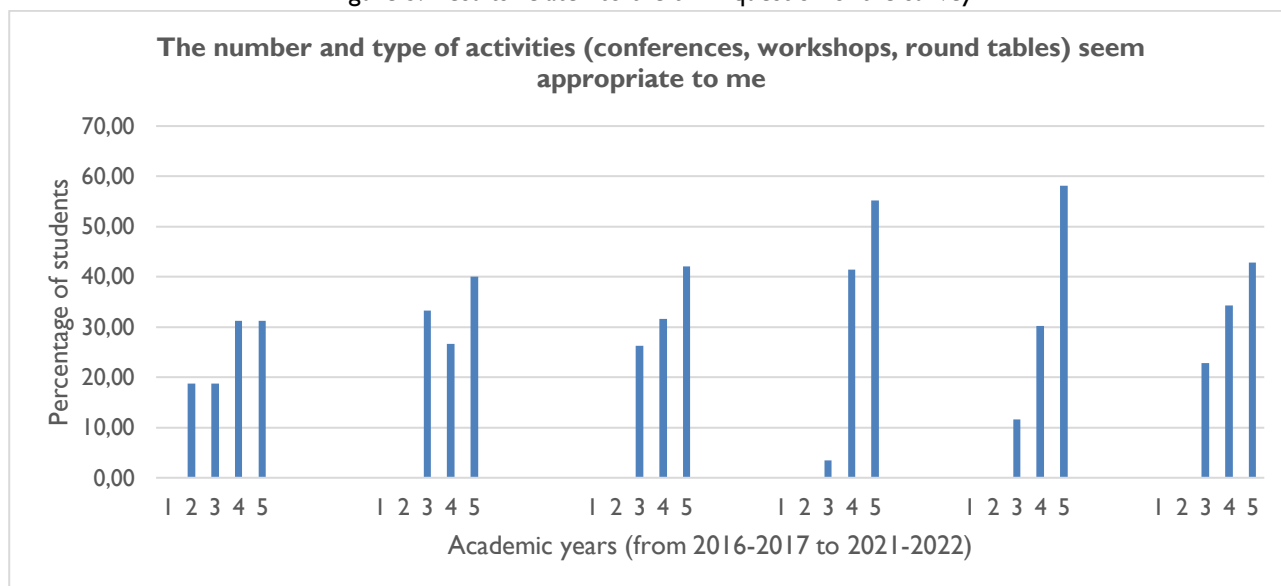


Source: Author (2024)

[Description of the image] Title of the figure: The activities proposed throughout the project (curricular and extracurricular) have made it easier for me to learn the contents. This is a horizontal bar graph with six clusters representing six different academic years. Each cluster contains five vertical bars corresponding to a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates strong disagreement and 5 indicates strong agreement with the title statement. The vertical axis on the left-hand side is labelled 'Percentage of students', and it ranges from 0% to 80%, with horizontal lines marking each increment of 10%. Each bar's height indicates the percentage of students who selected each Likert scale rating for that academic year's activities in relation to how those activities affected their learning. The horizontal axis along the bottom is labelled 'Academic years (from 2016-2017 to 2021-2022)' with each cluster of bars representing a year's survey results. Each bar's height is proportional to the percentage of students who selected that particular level of agreement for each academic year [End of description].

Responses to the third question on the survey, which focused on the appropriateness of the project's activities from the students' viewpoint, indicate a positive reception over the years, with a trend towards high approval (Figure 3). In the 2016-2017 academic year, the ratings were somewhat divided, with 18.75% of students giving a rating of 2, another 18.75% a rating of 3, and 31.25% each for ratings of 4 and 5. The following year, 2017-2018, saw 33.33% of students rating the activities as moderately appropriate (3), but a significant 66.67% rating them as high or very high in appropriateness (4 and 5). This positive trend was sustained in 2018-2019, with a slight shift towards higher ratings—26.32% at 3, 31.58% at 4, and an approving 42.11% at 5. Satisfaction increased in 2019-2020, with over half the respondents (55.17%) giving the highest mark. The 2020-2021 academic year continued this high regard, with 58.14% marking a 5. The latest data from 2021-2022 shows a spread of responses, yet nearly half (42.86%) still indicated the highest level of appropriateness. Overall, the data reflects a consensus of approval for the types of activities implemented, showcasing their effectiveness from the students' perspectives.

Figure 3: Results related to the third question of the survey

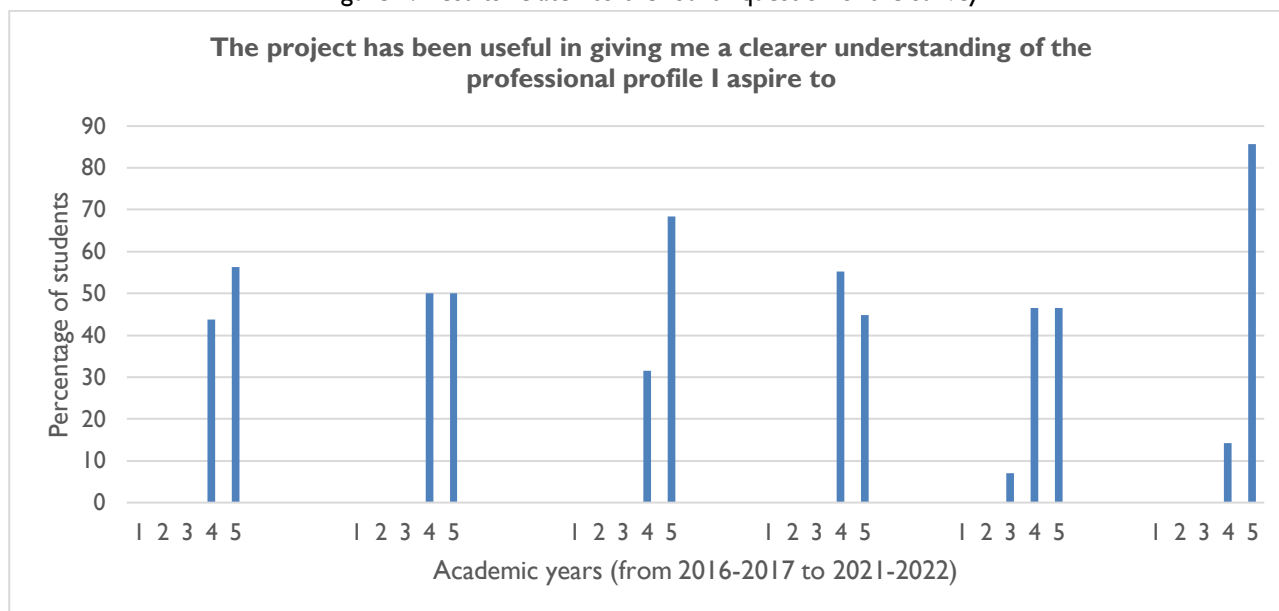


Source: Author (2024)

[Description of the image] Title of the figure: The number and type of activities (conferences, workshops, round tables) seem appropriate to me. This is a horizontal bar graph with six clusters representing six different academic years. Each cluster contains five vertical bars corresponding to a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates strong disagreement and 5 indicates strong agreement with the title statement. The vertical axis on the left-hand side is labelled 'Percentage of students' and it's marked in increments of 10, ranging from 0% to 70%. The horizontal axis, labelled 'Academic years (from 2016-2017 to 2021-2022)', is divided into six categories, each containing a group of bars for the Likert scale ratings from 1 to 5. The height of each bar reflects the proportion of students that chose each level of agreement for each academic year. The distribution of responses varies across the years, showing the differing levels of student agreement with the statement about the appropriateness of the activities proposed [End of description].

The fourth question aimed to evaluate the project's effectiveness in helping students define their professional profiles and market niches upon completing their studies (Figure 4). The responses to this question were also markedly positive across the years. In the 2016-2017 academic year, a significant portion of the students found the project helpful, with 43.75% rating its usefulness as a 4 and 56.25% giving it the highest score. The following year, 2017-2018, saw an even split in perception, with half of the respondents marking a 4 and the other half a 5. The 2018-2019 academic year continued to show strong positive feedback, with 31.58% rating the project's utility at 4 and a notable 68.42% at 5. The 2019-2020 academic year presented a slightly different distribution, where 55.17% rated it a 4 and 44.83%—nearly half—rated it a 5. In 2020-2021, a small fraction (6.98%) rated it a 3, but the majority still rated it highly, with 46.51% giving both a 4 and a 5. Lastly, the 2021-2022 academic year saw an overwhelming majority (85.71%) awarding the project the highest mark, while 14.29% rated it a 4.

Figure 4: Results related to the fourth question of the survey



Source: Author (2024)

[Description of the image] Title of the figure: The project has been useful in giving me a clearer understanding of the professional profile I aspire to. This is a horizontal bar graph with six clusters representing six different academic years. Each cluster contains five vertical bars corresponding to a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates strong disagreement and 5 indicates strong agreement with the title statement. The vertical axis on the left-hand side is labelled 'Percentage of students' and it's marked in increments of 10, ranging from 0% to 90%. The horizontal axis, labelled 'Academic years (from 2016-2017 to 2021-2022)', is divided into six categories, each containing a group of bars for the Likert scale ratings from 1 to 5. Each bar's height shows the percentage of students who have chosen each level of agreement regarding the project's utility in clarifying their aspired professional profile for each academic year. The variation in the heights of the bars across the groups suggests changes in the students' perspectives over the years [End of description].

Comparatively, these results underscore the project's consistent and significant impact on assisting students in understanding their professional directions and market opportunities. Over the years, the overwhelmingly positive ratings reflect students' appreciation for the project's role in clarifying their career pathways, with a notable increase in the highest ratings over time, especially in the latest year.

The final question of the survey aimed at assessing the overall satisfaction of students with the project. The feedback to this question was highly positive across different academic years. Figure 5 illustrates that during the academic year 2016-2017, 37.50% of the students assigned a satisfaction level of 4, while a significant 62.50% opted for the maximum rating of 5. In the subsequent year, 2017-2018, a minor segment (10%) selected a 3, 36.56% rated their satisfaction as 4, and over half (53.33%) attributed the highest possible score. In 2018-2019, a slight increase in satisfaction was observed, with 5.26% rating a 3, 28.95% a 4, and a significant 65.79% choosing the highest rating. The 2019-2020 academic year showed a similar trend, with 6.90% marking a 3, 24.14% a 4, and a noteworthy 68.97% expressing the highest level of satisfaction. In 2020-2021, the distribution remained consistent, with 4.65% of students rating a 3, 25.58% a 4, and 69.77% giving a 5. Lastly, in the 2021-2022 academic year, 5.71% of respondents rated their overall satisfaction as a 3, 22.86% as a 4, and a substantial 71.43% awarded the project the highest satisfaction rating of 5. These results demonstrate a consistent and high level of satisfaction among students with the project over the years. The data reflects a growing trend towards the highest satisfaction rating, indicating the



project's increasing effectiveness in meeting or exceeding student expectations. Despite a small fraction of students rating their satisfaction in the mid-range, the overwhelming majority consistently rated their satisfaction at the highest levels, underscoring the project's success in delivering a valuable and impactful educational experience.

Figure 5: Results related to the fifth question of the survey



Source: Author (2024)

[Description of the image] Title of the figure: In general, my level of satisfaction with the project is.... This is a horizontal bar graph with six clusters representing six different academic years. Each cluster contains five vertical bars corresponding to a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates strong disagreement and 5 indicates strong agreement with the title statement. The vertical axis on the left-hand side is labelled 'Percentage of students' and it's marked in increments of 10, ranging from 0% to 80%. The horizontal axis, labelled 'Academic years (from 2016-2017 to 2021-2022)', is divided into six categories, each containing a group of bars for the Likert scale ratings from 1 to 5. Each bar visually represents the percentage of students that chose a particular level of satisfaction with the project. The pattern of bar heights varies across the academic years, indicating different levels of overall student satisfaction for each year [End of description].

From a general perspective, we could affirm that the assessment of the project by the beneficiaries has been very positive in the six academic years it has run, as the overall degree of satisfaction in all cases has been rated with the two highest scores on the scale by most of the students. On the other hand, the question that has received the lowest scores in the six academic years in which the project has been developed (although without being negative in any of them) has been the one related to the number and type of actions carried out (Figure 3). In this case, in the first year of implementation, 6 students out of a total of 16 (37,5%) rated this aspect with a score of 2 or 3 points, arguing that, although the type of actions was adequate, the number was excessive, especially because they had to combine them with class hours and the tasks of the degree subjects. For this reason, in the following academic years it was considered appropriate to link some of the project activities -those of a compulsory nature- to degree subjects; in this way, students would not have such a heavy load and the competences could be worked on in a coordinated way between the degree subjects and the project actions. In the following academic years, no student gave this

aspect a rating of less than 3 points, although we did identify students in each edition who gave this aspect a rating of 3 on the scale. Likewise, in the comments they expressed that the project actions (workshops, conferences, and round tables), although they found them very useful, were very time-consuming, so they recommended as a proposal for improvement that some of the actions (not only the activities) should be integrated into the framework of the degree subjects from the first year of the degree and not be approached from an extracurricular perspective. This same idea has been pointed out by the lecturers involved in the development of the project, as they identify as a problem that some of the actions developed are not compulsory for all students, as, in this way, some graduates will not acquire all the professional competences necessary to access the job market. If employability and entrepreneurship competences were integrated into the bachelor's degree curricula, this would guarantee that all graduates would develop these competences during their degree.

Furthermore, the open responses suggested a desire for a curriculum that is inherently designed to foster professional skills, indicating a preference for a holistic educational approach where employability and entrepreneurship are not ancillary but central to the academic experience. This feedback, mirrored by both students and lecturers, points towards a transformative direction for curriculum development, ensuring that every graduate is fully equipped for the job market through a deliberate and comprehensive embedding of professional competences within the degree programmes.

Finally, if we assess the project from the perspective of the agents involved, we could also highlight the positive synergies created between the business world and the academic world, as the actions carried out have enabled the consolidation of a working group made up of university lecturers and technicians who, together with professionals from the business world, work jointly on the development of an innovative training action. However, they also acknowledge the additional time invested in the project, an excess that is not rewarded with either academic or professional recognition. This surplus effort solely reflects the strong dedication of these individuals to student training.

#### 4. Conclusions

The purpose of this article was to, firstly, analyse the incorporation of entrepreneurship and professional competences within the educational frameworks for translators and interpreters, and secondly, to present an array of initiatives -encompassing both academic coursework and extracurricular efforts- underway at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting at the University of Valladolid since the 2016-2017 academic year, aimed at bolstering the entrepreneurial competences and employability of its students.

Despite ongoing efforts, there is a notable gap in integrating professional competences and entrepreneurial skills into translator and interpreter training programmes (Galán-Mañas, 2017, 2018; Galán-Mañas et al., 2020, 2021; Álvarez-Álvarez & Ortego-Antón, 2020; Gonçalves, 2021). Studies have revealed not only a lack of compulsory work placements and specific professional content in these curricula but also a compounded scarcity of research on entrepreneurial training in this field. Recognizing that self-employment, whether as freelancers or through starting a company, is a viable



career path for graduates, there is an urgent need for targeted training initiatives. Such programmes should focus on entrepreneurship, equipping students not just with academic knowledge but also with practical professional skills and competences to successfully navigate and enter the job market from an entrepreneurial standpoint. In this context, the project we are presenting in this article addresses the dual challenge of preparing students for a dynamic job market while also filling the existing gap in employability and entrepreneurial training within the discipline. To bridge this gap effectively, our project incorporates a comprehensive approach that blends theoretical knowledge with practical experience, targeting the nuanced demands of today's job market. This involves curating a curriculum that includes not only in-depth study of the T&I field but also hands-on workshops, real-world projects, and networking opportunities with industry professionals.

Our project, named *Objective: Employability. Professional skills and entrepreneurship in Translation and Interpreting Studies*, responds to the guidelines set by the European Union, which emphasise the importance of training in skills for employability and entrepreneurship in 21st century society. Beyond offering students an understanding of the professional opportunities linked to their degree, this initiative also aims to enhance essential generic professional skills, such as responsibility, creativity, teamwork, time management, and communication skills, crucial for any employment. It is vital for students to recognize their actual skill levels before they complete their education. This understanding allows them to strategically build their professional identities before graduation. For this reason, as a part of the project, efforts are being made to develop a test of professional competences for employability and entrepreneurship. This test will measure students' professional skills related to employability and entrepreneurship, offering insights into their competence levels. With this information, students will be able to adjust their educational focus and create a plan to enhance underdeveloped skills.

In concluding this article, it is pertinent to acknowledge certain limitations that accompany our study and outline directions for future research. A primary limitation of our analysis is its reliance on self-reporting by students, which, while providing invaluable insights into their perceptions and experiences, may introduce biases or inaccuracies in gauging the actual efficacy of the initiatives discussed. Self-reporting methods, although widely used for their practicality and direct access to participants' views, can sometimes reflect respondents' aspirations or perceptions rather than objective outcomes. Thus, future studies could benefit from incorporating more objective measures of skill acquisition and employability outcomes, such as tracking the career trajectories of graduates or analysing the tangible impact of these skills in their professional settings. We are aware that training is only one of the factors that influence employment, as there are many other determining factors (economic situation, age, previous work experience, etc.); however, in order to assess the success of our training initiative, it would be necessary to examine our graduates' employability rates, the career paths and professional roles they pursue, and explore the impact that the employability and entrepreneurship skills cultivated during their education have had on their career progression. This analysis will not only provide insight into the immediate outcomes of our programme but also inform how these skills contribute to long-term career success and adaptability in the workforce.

Furthermore, while this article has shed light on the innovative efforts at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting at the University of Valladolid to enhance employability and





entrepreneurial competences among students, it also highlights the broader need for systematic integration of such skills across translator and interpreter training programmes. Future work should thus explore the implementation and outcomes of similar initiatives in diverse contexts, enabling a comparative analysis that could offer more generalized conclusions about the best practices in fostering employability and entrepreneurship within this field.

Additionally, research into the specific challenges and opportunities presented by different markets and sectors within the translation and interpreting industry could provide further insights into tailoring training programmes more effectively. Given the rapidly evolving nature of the job market and the specific demands of the translation and interpreting industry, continuous investigation into how educational programmes can adapt to prepare students not just for today's challenges but for future opportunities is essential.

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The data from this research, which are not included in this work, may be made available by the author(s) upon request.

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