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STUDENT GERMAN–UKRAINIAN TRANSLATION AS A FORM OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

The article explores student collaboration in online German–Ukrainian translation classes within the challenging socio-political context of the Russo-Ukrainian War. The author describes a practice-based research project carried out at the Mykhailo Dragomanov State University of Ukraine, involving second-year Bachelor students at the A2 proficiency level in German. The research investigated changes in group work resulting from the implementation of an interactive mini-project. The central task was the collaborative translation of a popular article from the German journal Demokratischer Salon, which was later published on the Ukrainian cultural platform Experiment. To analyze student interaction, motivation, and language skills development, the study combined such qualitative methods as observations, a questionnaire, and analysis of student responses. The results indicate that the mini-project meaningfully increased student engagement and promoted critical thinking, intercultural communication skills, and reflection on learning processes. At the same time, the project also revealed challenges such as uneven participation, technical limitations of the online format, and the limited use of German in class communication due to students’ low proficiency levels. The author underscores the importance of applying the Deutsch Lehren Lernen (DLL) principles flexibly, especially in wartime conditions, where external factors (air raid alerts, power outages, and forced migration) complicate the educational process. The interactive mini-project enabled the integration of authentic tasks with tangible outcomes (publication) and demonstrated the potential of online tools to support collaboration despite the absence of face-to-face learning. The article also discusses an alternative project involving a theater visit, as an example of flexible planning and other forms of interactive learning. The author concludes that implementing interactive translation projects with public outcomes enhances student motivation and responsibility while positioning translation as a form of intercultural communication.

Keywords: *German–Ukrainian translation, interactive translation project, intercultural communication, online translation, student translation, teaching German as a foreign language.*

1. Introduction.

In the context of contemporary German–Ukrainian translation teaching at institutions of higher education, fostering meaningful student interaction remains an important yet

challenging goal, especially in online learning and under conditions of the Russo-Ukrainian War. This article presents the results of a practical research project (Praxiserkundungsprojekt, PEP), carried out by the author in collaboration with German language teachers Anna Shcherbak and Olena Popova within the framework of the professional development program *Deutsch Lehren Lernen* [Learning to Teach German] (DLL), in the course *Aufgaben, Übungen, Interaktion* [Tasks, Exercises, Interaction] (DLL 4), which took place from September 30 to December 8, 2024, under the supervision of Olena Beketova at the Goethe-Institut in Ukraine (Matvieieva, 2024b). In collaboration with colleagues, the author examined how an interaction-oriented mini-project, a joint task of translating a journalistic text, can influence student engagement, cooperation among them, and the development of language skills within the framework of online university instruction, as well as students' intercultural communication skills, such as negotiating meaning, addressing a target audience, and collaborating across perspectives. From this perspective, student translation is approached as a concrete form of intercultural communication, in which meaning is negotiated between languages, cultures, and audiences.

The courses in German and Translation that the author organized at the Mykhailo Dragomanov State University of Ukraine were conducted online in the 2024–2025 academic year due to the war. For the project, the students were adult second-year undergraduates working at the beginner A2 level. The classes alternated between *German as a Foreign Language* and *Translation from German into Ukrainian.* Since the author taught both courses, he was able to alternate tasks and forms of work with reference to both strands. In this context, the central research question of our study was formulated as follows: "What changes occur in the classroom during group work when I implement an interactive mini-project?" This question emerged as an attempt to address an urgent didactic problem: how to engage students and sustain their active participation throughout the entire online class.

2. Literature Review.

Hermann Funk et al., in section 1.1.2 *"Didaktisch-methodische Prinzipien"* ["Didactic and Methodological Principles"] of the textbook *Aufgaben, Übungen, Interaktion* (2014), define interaction as grounded in social relations and communication between students and teacher as well as among the students themselves – factors that are critically important for achieving high-quality learning outcomes (Funk et al., 2014, pp. 16–22). In section 4.1 *"Merkmale von projektorientiertem Lernen"* ["Features of Project-Oriented Learning"] the authors explain how mini-projects embody the principles of interaction by fostering authentic collaboration, group learning, and shared responsibility (Funk et al., 2014, pp. 126–131).

The translation project described in this study is an example of such a task: the students collaboratively translated an authentic journalistic article from the German journal *Demokratischer Salon* (Heidorn, 2024a) into Ukrainian, and their translation was published in Ukrainian online media, on the website of the cultural portal *Experiment* (Heidorn, 2024b). This process involved negotiating meanings, peer review, self-assessment, and orientation toward the real world, which created a fruitful basis for observing the dynamics of interaction during online classes. During the implementation of the interactive mini-project, students worked on linguistic problems, learned to support one another, reflected on their own learning process, and presented their work to a broader audience.

The present study also builds on a broad body of research on the development of intercultural communication skills in foreign language education. Intercultural communication is understood as a set of learnable skills related to interaction, negotiation of meaning, perspective-taking, and audience awareness (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006). In applied linguistics and language pedagogy, these skills are regarded as processual and

practice-based, emerging through authentic communicative tasks (Kramsch, 1993; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Task-based and project-based learning environments have been shown to foster intercultural communication skills by placing learners in situations that require collaboration, decision-making, and reflection across linguistic and cultural boundaries (Byram et al., 2001; Turula et al., 2019). Recent research has also emphasized the role of mediation, collaborative meaning-making, and real-world audiences in developing learners' ability to communicate interculturally, especially in multilingual and digitally mediated contexts (Byram et al., 2013). Thus, collaborative translation projects can be viewed as particularly productive pedagogical settings in which translation itself functions as a form of intercultural communication, as they combine linguistic analysis with social interaction, ethical responsibility, and a focus on a concrete readership.

3. Aim and Objectives.

The relevance of the article is determined by the need to find effective intercultural communicative forms of student interaction in the context of online learning and under the influence of external factors related to the Russo-Ukrainian War. **The object of the study** is the learning process in German–Ukrainian translation courses in higher education, and **the subject** is student collaboration during the implementation of an interactive mini-project involving the translation of a journalistic text as a form on intercultural communication. **The aim of the article** is to analyze the changes that occur in group dynamics and student learning outcomes during the implementation of the mini-project in an online format, with particular attention to the development of intercultural communication skills through collaborative translation.

4. Methodology.

To achieve the stated aim, a combination of **qualitative methods** (observations, questionnaire, analysis of student responses to the questionnaire) was used. The results of student activity within the interactive mini-project, as well as the empirical data collected during the learning process, serve as **the material for the study**.

The article describes the planning, implementation, and evaluation of a translation mini-project, analyzes qualitative and quantitative data collected through student observations and questionnaires, and reflects on the implications for teaching practice, particularly in the context of online learning and emergency intercultural situations. In addition, the author discusses another project – connected with theater and initially conceived as the main practice-based research project – which ultimately did not become the basis of the study, but nevertheless provided valuable insights into student interaction beyond the framework of university classes.

By documenting this practical activity within the framework of an interactive mini-project in online classes, the author aims to contribute to ongoing discussions among teachers and researchers on how to design effective, motivating, intercultural-oriented, and interaction-rich foreign language lessons, particularly in translation courses and amid the challenging realities of the Russo-Ukrainian War.

5. Results and Discussion.

5.1. Research Question and Its Didactic Foundations.

The central research question of the practice-based research project was formulated as follows: *"What changes occur in the classroom during group work when the teacher implements an interactive mini-project?"* This question arose in the context of daily practice in teaching German language and translation. As a university instructor responsible for

courses in both German language and translation, the author repeatedly encountered a fundamental problem: although students are formally present in online classes, it is often difficult to sustain their motivation, their active participation in communication, and genuine collaboration. Especially in translation courses, students tend to focus only on their own "correctness," rather than on the collective creation of meaning when a group of students translates a single text together. This prompted reflection on how to integrate into the class a format that would simultaneously reflect the authentic process of translation and stimulate interactive learning.

The DLL 4 course *Aufgaben, Übungen, Interaktion* provided the necessary conceptual basis for investigating this issue. In particular, several key principles from the course materials became the foundation for designing the study. **Interaction as an indicator of learning quality**: The quality of foreign language teaching depends largely on the extent to which students are actively engaged in communicative processes. This includes interaction both between students and the teacher, and among the students themselves. Passive reception or execution of isolated tasks may yield correct answers but rarely fosters deep learning or confidence in language use. **Group work as the primary space for interaction:** Carefully designed group tasks can activate various forms of interaction: negotiation, clarification, turn-taking, and collaborative construction of knowledge. However, such potential is realized only when the tasks are meaningful, roles are clearly defined, and cooperation is not purely mechanical. **Mini-projects as an interactive learning format:** Mini-projects emerge as an effective student-centered learning model. They are characterized by authenticity, a cooperative structure, and relevance to real life, as well as by a high level of interaction between students and teachers and among students themselves. They provide opportunities for differentiation, individualization, and the simultaneous development of social and linguistic competences.

These didactic principles resonate with broader constructivist approaches to foreign language learning, where learning is viewed as a socially conditioned and jointly constructed process (see Szabó & Csépes, 2022). Working on a joint task with public outcomes – in this case, the translation and publication of a German-language article proposed for publication in Ukrainian online media – places students in a situation where they must use language as a tool for creating meaning, making decisions, and negotiating with their peers.

Each student translated one fragment of the text and reviewed another. Peer feedback and group support during translation allow students to overcome their own limitations, especially in a group where the students' language proficiency levels vary but are predominantly at the beginner A2 level. Through collaborative translation, students make use of each other's strengths and perspectives, which contributes to deeper understanding of the material and increased motivation.

Another important element was the development of student autonomy. The mini-project required them to make decisions, choose the text, distribute roles and responsibilities, and reflect on both their own and their peers' work. This corresponds to the emphasis of the DLL professional development program on giving students the opportunity to take responsibility for the learning process and fits seamlessly into the contemporary trend of task-based language teaching, particularly tasks that go beyond textbook exercises and model authentic language use.

Taken together, these practices constitute key components of intercultural communication skills, enacted here through translation as a situated communicative practice, including collaborative meaning-making, sensitivity to audience expectations, and dialogic interaction in a multilingual context.

Thus, this project was conceived as an experimental activity and as a principled

response to a pedagogical problem – how to transform translation exercises into an active, interactive, and student-centered learning process. In the following sections, the author describes how this idea was implemented in practice and what conclusions were drawn as a result.

5.2. Learning Context and Students.

The practice-based research project was carried out at the Mykhailo Dragomanov State University of Ukraine (Kyiv), in the Department of Applied Language Studies, Comparative Linguistics, and Translation. The participants were second-year students studying German as a second foreign language (after English) in the course *Translation from German into Ukrainian.* The group's language proficiency level was assessed as A2 (beginner), which created both pedagogical and linguistic challenges for tasks involving in-depth text analysis and intercultural understanding.

The classes were conducted online via the Google Meet platform due to constant power outages and the forced displacement of a significant number of students caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Air raid alerts, shelling, electricity cuts, and psychological strain regularly disrupted the continuity of learning over the past two years. Despite these constraints, the group met regularly and had already completed similar mini-projects in previous semesters, which created a foundation of mutual trust and familiarity with collaborative work. At the same time, the online format had its own specific limitations, particularly regarding spontaneous interaction, nonverbal communication, and informal exchanges among students – all of which play an important role in the development of communicative skills, but whose potential is restricted by online communication or requires a different form of interaction.

On the day of the mini-project (26 November 2024), ten second-year full-time Bachelor's students of the program *"035.041 Germanic Languages and Literatures (including Translation), first language – English"* attended the class, of whom six actively participated in the main activity. These six students (Oleksandra Shadrina, Yuliia Kovalchuk, Sofiia Fedotova, Marharyta Serhiichuk, Sofiia Borovyk, Oleksandr Kastarnov) also completed the questionnaire after the class.

A distinctive feature of the course was its hybrid structure: officially, it was a translation course, but the instructor (and author of this article) often shifted the focus to German as a foreign language depending on the needs and preferences of the students, since at the beginner level there are significant limitations to the ability to translate from a foreign language into the native language. At the beginning of each class, the group jointly decided whether to place the emphasis on translation or on learning German. This flexibility was extremely important for maintaining student motivation and engagement, especially under the conditions of uncertainty and the displacement of a large number of students due to the Russo-Ukrainian War. On the day of the project, the group collectively chose to work on translation.

The language of communication in the course was predominantly Ukrainian, especially during classes devoted to translation, since the students are still at the beginner stage of learning German. However, gradual attempts are being made to increase the use of German in the classroom, particularly when explaining vocabulary, grammatical points, and task instructions. During the implementation of the mini-project involving the translation of a journalistic article, German was present mainly in the source text and partly in the instructor's explanations, while the students' discussions and comments took place mostly in Ukrainian.

An important motivational factor for the students was the authenticity of the text and

the relevance of the task. They knew that the results of their translation work would be evaluated not only by the instructor but also published online on the Ukrainian cultural platform *Experiment*. The source text was selected from the German online journal *Demokratischer Salon*, with whose editor, Norbert Reichel, instructor Pavlo Shopin and his students had already been collaborating for more than a year, as mentioned on the journal's website: "Selected texts of *Demokratischer Salon* are translated into Ukrainian. The translators are young Germanists from the Mykhailo Dragomanov State University of Ukraine under the guidance of Pavlo Shopin. The translations are usually published in the media outlet *Experiment* and in the journal *Krytyka*. *Demokratischer Salon*, in turn, publishes texts by Ukrainian authors, including reviews of theater productions in Ukraine and useful overview materials for a better understanding of the situation" (Reichel, 2025). This partnership provides Ukrainian students with the opportunity to translate popular texts from German into Ukrainian for a Ukrainian readership, often on social, cultural, historical, or political topics. In this case, the article chosen was Fritz Heidorn's *"The Road to Climate Dystopia? Warum wir Kim Stanley Robinson lesen sollten!"* (Heidorn, 2024a).

The group chose this text through a democratic vote. Out of four proposed articles – on art in the GDR (Reichel & Pooth, 2024), colonial heritage (Lessing, 2024), peace movements in Germany (Reichel, 2024), and climate change in literature (Heidorn, 2024a) – the students selected the article on climate change. This student choice of task was a key factor in fostering their interest and sense of responsibility.

Thus, the students who took part in this project worked within a complex educational, linguistic, and geopolitical context. The project had to take into account their language needs, genuine interests, and the external constraints caused by the war and online learning. It was precisely in this reality that the interactive mini-project was implemented, offering at the same time new opportunities and challenges that shaped both the process itself and its outcomes.

5.3. Description of the Mini-Project.

The mini-project, which became the central part of this practice-based study, was designed to combine translation teaching methodology, foster student autonomy, and create a task structure oriented toward interaction. Its core task was for students to collaboratively translate a German-language journalistic article into Ukrainian and to engage in peer review, reflection, and subsequent publication of the Ukrainian translation. This activity was not conceived as a simulation or purely classroom exercise but as a practical task, close to professional activity beyond the university, with concrete results and a broad readership.

Step 1. Task Setting and Introduction. The class began with a 10-minute introduction during which the instructor explained the purpose of the activity, presented the concept of the PEP (practice-based research project), and emphasized that this session would contribute to the students' academic development and allow a wider community of readers to become acquainted with their translation work. The students were shown the formal research question of the PEP and were invited to participate in shaping the process – through reviewing and adapting a short questionnaire to the context of the class (the initial questions had been formulated by the instructor in collaboration with colleagues during the planning of the study, but in the class these questions were adjusted according to the specific mini-project, and the students took part in adapting them). This approach created transparency and engaged the students in active participation in the project.

Step 2. Text Selection and Student Participation in Decision-Making. The students were offered four articles (three of them from the journal *Demokratischer Salon*): on art in the GDR (Reichel & Pooth, 2024), colonial heritage (Lessing, 2024), peace movements in

Germany (Reichel, 2024), and climate change in literature (Heidorn, 2024a). The students almost unanimously (5 out of 6 active students participated in the vote) chose Fritz Heidorn's article *"The Road to Climate Dystopia? Warum wir Kim Stanley Robinson lesen sollten!"* (Heidorn, 2024a). The choice of this text reflected not only the students' interest but also the relevance of the topic in global debates and the literary context. The fact that the article combined ecological issues with science fiction proved especially motivating for the group of philology students.

Step 3. Task Structure and Collaborative Work. The selected text was uploaded as an online document and divided into six approximately equal parts, with each of the six active students assigned one part to translate (the Ukrainian translation was to be added beneath the original text, paragraph by paragraph). This division of labor reflects the possible organization of project work in professional translation. Importantly, each student also received another task: to review and comment, in Track Changes mode, on the translation of another student. Thus, the project consisted of two interconnected stages: individual work (translating one section of the text) and collaborative interaction (peer reviewing and commenting on another section). The entire process took place in a shared Google document (created by the instructor, who granted students editing access), where students could read each other's work, insert comments, and respond to feedback. This format allowed for both asynchronous and synchronous interaction, depending on student availability and internet stability. The instructor monitored the document in real time but intervened minimally during the translation task, allowing the students to take initiative in communication.

Step 4. Peer Feedback and Group Discussion. After the stage of individual translation and peer review, the group discussed a translation previously completed in an earlier class. The purpose of this task was to analyze typical errors, consider stylistic alternatives, and address cultural nuances. Through this reflective discussion, the students could recognize themselves as co-creators of meaning and become active participants in the broader discourse through translation.

The current class did not involve a full-group discussion of the entire translation. The instructor undertook to review the entire document independently, finalize the Ukrainian version, and submit it for publication to the editorial office of the cultural portal *Experiment*. The completed translation was later published on the portal's website (27 November 2024), which became the final stage of the mini-project – its public, tangible outcome (Heidorn, 2024b).

Step 5. Collaboration with External Partners and Publication. The success of the mini-project depended both on the students' activity in class and on external collaboration with two partners: Norbert Reichel, editor of the journal *Demokratischer Salon*, who granted permission for the use and translation of the article, and the editorial team of the portal *Experiment* (in particular, editor Herman Hoshkador), a Ukrainian cultural online platform that agreed to publish the student translation. This tripartite collaboration – between the German editor, Ukrainian student translators, and the editorial team of Ukrainian media – illustrates how classroom interaction can grow into broader transnational and intercultural learning networks. While practicing translation; the students were actively contributing to the exchange of knowledge in a multilingual environment.

5.4. Student Survey and Pedagogical Observations.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the interactive mini-project, the instructor combined qualitative classroom observations with a short written survey completed by the six most active participants. The questionnaire consisted of four closed questions (in Ukrainian) and an open comment field following each question concerning collaboration, task performance,

assessment of language skill development, and the use of German during the project. In addition, the author of the study drew on his own field notes and informal post-project reflections to contextualize the students' responses.

For the survey, the author formulated four questions with three possible answers (yes, partially, no): 1) *"Do you consider collaboration with other students (checking their translations and having them check yours) useful for the learning process?"* (yes – 5; partially – 1; no – 0); 2) *"Were you able to successfully complete the translation project?"* (yes – 3; partially – 3; no – 0); 3) *"Did your language skills (reading, writing) improve as a result of this project?"* (yes – 5; partially – 1; no – 0); 4) *"Did you use German during the project in class?"* (yes – 4; partially – 0; no – 2). Half of the students successfully completed their translation projects, while the other half achieved only partial results. Regarding the improvement of language skills (reading and writing), five students reported significant progress, and one reported partial progress. During the project work, four students actively used German in class, while two did not use it at all. Overall, the responses indicate that collaborative activity and project work had a positive impact on student learning, although some participants encountered difficulties in fully completing the projects and in using German during class.

The answers to the first question demonstrated the high value of interaction with peers. Students noted that correcting the translations of others helped them to broaden their understanding of linguistic nuances, notice their own mistakes through comparison, and observe different translation strategies and styles. Here are some comments in response to the first question: "*This collaboration with classmates helps me notice my own mistakes and better understand linguistic nuances. When I analyze the translations of others, I improve my critical thinking and enrich my vocabulary, because I often have to search for the right equivalents*" (Marharyta Serhiichuk); "*It is very useful for me to see feedback from my colleagues, as it helps me improve my skills and pay attention to mistakes*" (Yuliia Kovalchuk); "*I consider collaboration with other students on translations very useful for the learning process. It allows me to check my own knowledge and to become familiar with the different approaches to translation that my classmates use. When I analyze the work of others, I pay attention to various translation nuances that might previously have escaped me. In addition, by discussing different translation options, we learn to collaborate effectively, express our opinions, and argue our point of view. I consider this quite useful for future professional activity*" (Oleksandra Shadrina).

These comments underscore the importance of the principle of the DLL professional development program *Aufgaben, Übungen, Interaktion* regarding cooperative learning as a method of deepening language awareness and developing metalinguistic reflection – even at the beginner language level.

Three students reported that they had completed the project in full, while another three indicated that they had done so only "partially." In explaining this, they noted that for them the project continued until the final publication, which took place after the class. Importantly, none of the students considered their work unsuccessful. Student Oleksandra Shadrina commented on her experience as follows: "Of course, certain difficulties and mistakes may arise during the work. However, thanks to the constructive criticism of the instructor and my classmates, I have the opportunity to identify my weak points and improve my translation skills." Some students pointed to the delay of the final result as a difficulty: they completed their translation and peer feedback, but the final editing and publication depended on the instructor and the editorial team. This highlights an important aspect of projects that extend beyond university learning: the outcome is distributed over time and often delayed, but it nevertheless retains its significance.

Most students noted that their reading and writing skills improved significantly thanks to the project. Even at the A2 level, the task of working with a complex German text and new vocabulary had a positive effect. Students commented on the development of their language skills as follows: "*While completing the tasks, I constantly encounter new words, idiomatic expressions, and grammatical constructions that enrich my vocabulary. Although my level of German is not high and therefore sometimes it is difficult to translate texts, the very process of translation helps me to at least slightly enrich my vocabulary, and in this way the process also helps me become acquainted with certain nuances of the German language*" (Oleksandra Shadrina); "*Translation practice helps me greatly to develop reading skills, specifically the understanding of complex texts, and also writing skills, since it is necessary to adapt the text*" (Marharyta Serhiichuk). Thus, meaningful contact with somewhat more challenging texts fosters acquisition, even if full mastery has not yet been achieved. Translation itself also served as a form of processing the source material, reinforcing grammatical structures and deepening vocabulary.

The most contradictory responses concerned the question of using German during the project: four students indicated that they had used it, while two said they had not. This reflects a general tension in the course format: although the source text was in German, most communication and explanations took place in Ukrainian due to the still limited level of active proficiency in German. Student Oleksandra Shadrina remarked: "*No, we did not use German in class. In my opinion, since we are at the beginner level of proficiency in German, constant use of it could have complicated the learning process and caused misunderstanding.*"

In his own "field notes" (pedagogical observations during the class), the instructor identified several important patterns of student behavior: student activity increased during the cooperative phase; they were noticeably more focused and motivated than in regular translation classes; peer support was evident even in small details – students politely commented on each other's translations, offered praise, and cautiously suggested changes; students remained focused on the task throughout the entire 80-minute class, despite the online format and the fact that cameras were turned off (a common but, in the author's view, questionable practice in Ukrainian online learning); some students were significantly more active than others, highlighting the problem of uneven participation in group tasks. These observations confirmed earlier assumptions: students are more engaged when performing authentic, cooperative tasks; interaction among students fosters self-assessment and mutual support; students are capable of reflecting on the quality of their own work; tangible outcomes (such as the publication of a translation) motivate students and enhance their sense of responsibility. At the same time, the project also revealed structural difficulties. First, not all students participated equally actively in the class. Second, the online format limits spontaneous oral interaction. Third, the use of the target language (German) remains problematic at a low proficiency level during translation classes.

5.5. Reflection on the Results.

The main success of the practice-based research project was the fact that students worked more actively in class and willingly engaged in the tasks. Within the framework of the mini-project, they demonstrated a high level of motivation and responsibility for the results of their work. The authentic nature of the task, the wide audience, and the prospect of online publication generated a sense of responsibility and helped students work with focus and purpose – something often lacking in traditional classroom exercises. The applied relevance, real-world character, and topicality of the task increased student engagement, since they understood that their work would be read by others.

At the same time, several challenges emerged that deserve critical analysis. One of the main difficulties was the uneven participation of students: some took a very active part in translation and peer review, while others limited themselves to completing their translation without reviewing. This typical problem of group learning was exacerbated by the technical limitations of the online format. In addition, the students' low language competence – that is, their limited active command of German – complicated the possibility of deep, spontaneous interaction during class. Although the task was designed to encourage collaboration, the lack of sufficient lexical resources sometimes hindered productive dialogue, so Ukrainian was usually used for discussing the translation.

Another structural problem was that the final result of the project could only be demonstrated after the online class. Since the translation required review by the instructor and subsequent publication on a media platform, the students did not see the outcome of their collective translation work during the class itself. Instead, the students had to understand that the professional translation process often consists of several stages, takes a certain amount of time, and involves the participation of various parties. This realization is valuable in itself, as it reflects the temporal and cyclical nature of professional translation activity. At the same time, it highlights the difference between the rhythm of classroom work and professional project cycles.

Reflecting on the results, it is important to emphasize the significance of carefully formulating translation tasks and consciously organizing the interactive components of learning. For future projects, we plan to provide clearer instructions for effective peer review. Before carrying out such interactive translation tasks, it is advisable to present demonstration examples and supply a checklist of key actions during the review process. In addition, increasing the use of German as the working language, even at beginner levels, will better align with contemporary principles of German language teaching, which stress the maximum use of the target language in a communicative environment. Despite these challenges, the project confirmed the value of integrating translation tasks that lead to public results into the learning process. It also highlighted the necessity of flexibility and adaptability, especially under wartime conditions, when even the best-planned classes can be disrupted.

The experience of conducting the mini-project once again confirmed the importance of student- and task-oriented approaches and demonstrated the potential of interactive online tools (such as shared documents) in supporting collaboration, especially under limited conditions for interaction. Implementing the mini-project within the framework of the DLL professional development program enabled us to learn to consciously balance between pedagogical ideals and practical realities in the challenging conditions of teaching during the Russo-Ukrainian War.

5.6. Theatre Visit as an Alternative Practice-Based Research Project.

Initially, for the practice-based research project, a theatre visit was planned as a mini-project that would combine a cultural component with interactive language learning. The initial intention was to organize a visit to the play *Vizyt («Візит»)* based on the work of Friedrich Dürrenmatt at the Ivan Franko National Academic Drama Theatre in Kyiv. The idea was to engage students in preparing and completing various tasks: short presentations on Dürrenmatt's life and work, a joint preparation of a quiz on the play and the author, as well as reflection after attending the performance. This would have allowed students to experience the cultural environment of German-language use while developing linguistic and intercultural competences.

However, due to the war, possible air raid alerts, or power outages, it became necessary

to change the initial plan. The risk of the meeting with students being disrupted was too great to guarantee the successful implementation of the interactive mini-project. In addition, the theatre visit itself was scheduled for the end of the professional development course (29 November 2024), leaving very little time to integrate this activity into the official framework of the practice-based research project. These factors ultimately forced the author to abandon the idea of the theatre visit as the main mini-project for the study.

Nevertheless, the theatre visit still provided valuable insights into student interaction and motivation, even if not in the form of a formalized PEP. On the day of the visit, 13 students attended the performance, including some who were not regular participants in the translation course. Before the performance, students briefly presented on Friedrich Dürrenmatt's life and work and also recalled the themes of the play, which was meant to motivate them to watch more attentively. To support this aim, the instructor also prepared an online quiz on the same topic in Google Forms (Shopin, 2024), which students completed on their phones before the performance. This activity fostered interaction among students, cultural learning, and critical thinking – key elements of interactive learning.

It should be noted that the theatre visit demonstrated both the significant potential and the challenges that arise in the context of language learning through culture. On the one hand, students showed enthusiasm and were grateful for the opportunity to experience German-language culture in the Ukrainian theatre. In their reflections, they emphasized the emotional and intellectual impact of the performance (student reflections can be read here: Matvieieva, 2024a), which fully corresponds to the goals of intercultural learning. On the other hand, organizational difficulties – such as some students arriving late, technical issues during online pre-discussions, and the general unpredictability of wartime conditions – required flexibility and well-considered planning of alternatives in project-oriented learning.

Thus, the "unrealized" practice-based research project highlighted the fundamental importance of developing resilience and adaptability, as it reinforced the author's conviction that cultural experiences, even under difficult conditions, can significantly enrich the language learning process. Thanks to this experience, they came to understand the importance and effectiveness of alternative forms of interactive learning, especially in circumstances that threaten to undermine even the most carefully designed plans.

6. Conclusions.

The results of the practice-based research project enabled a comprehensive reflection on translation practice and a conscious application of effective principles of communicative German language teaching in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian War.

First, the project demonstrated the effectiveness of project work and interaction in translation intercultural-oriented classes. Carrying out professional tasks with a broad audience and public outcomes stimulated deeper engagement and a sense of responsibility among students. This result aligns with the principles of the *Deutsch Lehren Lernen* (DLL) program, which emphasizes tasks and exercises that encourage students to actively participate in authentic communication.

Second, the translation project confirmed that online collaboration has significant potential, even under conditions of war, and despite the technical limitations of this format of learning. Despite difficulties with connectivity and class attendance, the use of shared documents and asynchronous peer review gave students the opportunity to engage actively in effective translation work. This experience demonstrated that careful project design and proper support of group work make it possible to overcome some of the challenges associated with online learning.

Third, the interactive translation project highlighted the value of authentic tasks with

tangible outcomes. Students' awareness that their translations would be published online motivated them to work conscientiously on the material and strive for high-quality results. This sense of purpose is often absent when students perform "artificial" classroom exercises. By combining learning with the publication of an article in Ukrainian media, the author successfully bridged the gap between academic foreign language learning and its professional application by translators as intercultural communication mediators.

Based on the project's results, it can be concluded that applying the didactic principles of the DLL (*Deutsch Lehren Lernen*) program flexibly in online teaching is necessary, particularly under the challenging wartime conditions.

Future research could further develop new online interactive models of project-based translation practice, focusing on strengthening intercultural interaction and increasing the use of the target language, even at beginner levels of proficiency.

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Анотація

У статті розглянуто студентську співпрацю під час онлайн-занять із перекладу з німецької на українську мову у складних соціально-політичних умовах російсько-української війни. Автор описує практичний дослідницький проєкт, реалізований на базі Українського державного університету імені Михайла Драгоманова, у якому брали участь студенти другого курсу з початковим рівнем володіння німецькою мовою (A2). Метою дослідження було з'ясувати, які зміни відбуваються під час групової роботи над інтерактивним мініпроєктом. Центральним завданням було спільне перекладання публіцистичної статті з німецького видання «Demokratischer Salon» із подальшою публікацією на вебсайті культурного порталу «Експеримент». Дослідження поєднало якісні методи спостереження, анкетування та аналізу відповідей студентів на запитання анкети для вивчення рівня взаємодії, мотивації та розвитку мовних навичок учасників. Результати свідчать, що мініпроєкт суттєво підвищив залученість студентів, сприяв розвитку критичного мислення, навичок міжкультурної комунікації та рефлексії над власною навчальною діяльністю. Водночас були зафіксовані й проблеми: нерівномірна участь студентів, технічні перешкоди онлайн-формату та обмежене використання німецької мови у спілкуванні під час заняття через низький рівень володіння нею. Автор відзначає важливість гнучкого застосування дидактичних принципів програми підвищення кваліфікації викладачів німецької мови «Deutsch Lehren Lernen» («Вчимося навчати німецької»), особливо в умовах війни, де зовнішні фактори (повітряна тривога, відключення електроенергії, вимушене переміщення) ускладнюють навчальний процес. Досвід інтерактивного мініпроєкту дозволив інтегрувати автентичні завдання з реальними результатами (публікація) та показав потенціал онлайн-інструментів для розвитку співпраці навіть за умов відсутності офлайн-навчання. У статті також обговорюється альтернативний проєкт із відвідування театру як приклад гнучкого планування й пошуку інших форматів інтерактивного навчання. Автор робить висновок, що впровадження інтерактивних перекладацьких проєктів із публічними результатами сприяє підвищенню мотивації та відповідальності студентів, водночас позиціонуючи переклад як форму міжкультурної комунікації.

Ключові слова: *німецько-український переклад, інтерактивний перекладацький проєкт, міжкультурна комунікація, онлайн-переклад, студентський переклад, навчання німецької мови як іноземної.*