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## PROSPECTIVE PHILOLOGISTS' TRANSLATION COMPETENCE AS AN ASSESSMENT OBJECT

Current university training of prospective philologists is primarily aimed at the acquisition of the translation competence proficiency level, sufficient for the provision of qualitative and competitive intermediary services at the contemporary globalized language market. Consequently, it should be directed, traced, and facilitated by the efficient assessment system providing thorough monitoring of all training stages in terms of acquisition relevant declarative and procedural knowledge, subskills, and skills by students. Therefore, the aim of this article, which focuses on the inventory and interpretation of translation competence components as assessment objects, while considering the main principles of their acquisition by students, is both timely and relevant. By analyzing, contrasting, and integrating the leading translation competence structures and models developed by foreign translator trainers and researchers, along with current foreign language competence acquisition models, the author presents a working structure of translation competence. It can serve as a framework for developing an assessment system to be implemented in domestic training contexts. The suggested structure includes the following subcompetences, that should be defined in terms of knowledge, subskills, skills, abilities, and attitudes: 1) polylingual subcompetence; 2) extralinguistic subcompetence; 3) translation / transfer subcompetence itself; 4) technology subcompetence; 5) personal subcompetence; 6) service provision subcompetence and 7) strategic subcompetence as an integrating one. Some of them are to be modified and adjusted in the process of training, while the others are to be newly acquired by the students. As a result, translation competence components should be interpreted in terms of a dynamic system of direct and indirect assessment objects. They should be supplemented with their manifestations in the translation process and indicators in the target text. Future research should focus on developing a proficiency scale and level descriptors, as well as selecting and creating relevant assessment forms and tools.

**Key words:** translation competence, knowledge, subskills, skills, abilities, attitudes, assessment.

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## ПЕРЕКЛАДАЦЬКА КОМПЕТЕНТНІСТЬ МАЙБУТНІХ ФІЛОЛОГІВ ЯК ОБ'ЄКТ КОНТРОЛЮ

Підготовка майбутніх філологів у вітчизняних закладах вищої освіти першопочатково спрямована на формування перекладацької компетентності на рівні, достатньому для надання якісних та конкурентоспроможних посередницьких послуг на сучасному глобалізованому ринку праці. Відповідно, вона має керуватися, відстежуватися та всіляко підтримуватися ефективною системою контролю, здатною забезпечити ретельне й послідовне відстеження перебігу опанування студентами відповідними декларативними й процедурними знаннями, перекладацькими навичками й уміннями на всіх етапах навчання. Таким чином, мета цієї публікації, що полягає в укладенні вичерпного переліку компонентів та елементів перекладацької компетентності як об'єктів контролю з урахуванням основних принципів їх засвоєння студентами, є нагальною та актуальною. Шляхом аналізу, зіставлення та синтезування провідних структур і моделей формування перекладацької й ініомовної компетентностей, запропонованих зарубіжними викладачами-практиками й науковцями, автор презентує робочу структуру перекладацької компетентності, яка може слугувати основою для розроблення системи контролю в сучасних умовах навчання. Запропонована структура включає такі компоненти, які мають бути визначені у вигляді переліку знань, навичок, умінь, здатностей та ціннісних настанов: 1) полілінгвальна субкомпетентність; 2) екстралінгвістична субкомпетентність; 3) власне перекладацька субкомпетентність; 4) технологічна субкомпетентність; 5) особистісна субкомпетентність; 6) субкомпетентність у наданні перекладацьких послуг та 7) стратегічна субкомпетентність як інтегрувальний компонент. Деякі з них підлягають удосконаленню, модифікації й адаптації у процесі навчання, тоді як інші мають бути сформованими з самого початку. Як наслідок, вони мають бути проінтерпретовані у контексті безпосередніх проявів у процесі виконання перекладу та показників у тексті перекладу. Подальші пошуки мають зосередитися на розробці рівнів володіння перекладацькою компетентністю та їх дескрипторів, а також відборі й створенні відповідних форм і засобів контролю.

**Ключові слова:** перекладацька компетентність, знання, навички, уміння, здатності, ціннісні орієнтири, контроль.

**Introduction.** A competence-based approach has been widely embraced in all spheres of contemporary education. It involves the holistic development and formation of an independent personality in specialists, aiming to produce university graduates who can meet the needs of society globally and the current demands of the labor market locally. This approach dates back to the 1970s in the United States. It emphasises the ability of a future specialist to function effectively in society and integrate into the broader socio-cultural context, as well as to solve problems that arise directly in the course of their life in general and professional life in particular. Consequently, university training objectives extend far beyond simple awareness or knowledge of professional activities transmitted by a teacher. The main achievements of the competence-based approach include transparency representation of the specialist's profile in curricula and programmes, emphasis on learning outcomes, flexibility and integration of all curriculum components (Hurtado Albir, 2007). Competence, as its key concept, underpins training objectives and defines assessment content. Foreign language teaching methodology provides a vast array of research devoted to the problems of foreign language communicative competence acquisition and assessment. However, this area is still underdeveloped in the context of future philologists' university training. In particular, translation competence as an assessment object is still represented by discrete and scattered studies, which require further synthesis, reconciliation and alignment taking into account the peculiarities of domestic university training and language industry requests.

Therefore, the **aim of the given article** is to specify the structure of translation competence in order to single out the list of assessment objects to gauge students' training progress and outcomes at university level.

**Theoretical background.** The definition of *competence* suggested by F. Lasnier (2001) aligns with our research tasks and needs. It is seen as a complex ability to act effectively in situations sharing common parameters and characteristics. The competence is acquired due to the integration, mobilisation and organisation of a certain system of knowledge, skills, abilities (cognitive, affective, psychomotor or social) and attitudes. It should be noted here, that the above definition is fully consistent with the definition of the competence provided in the European Master's in Translation Framework (2022: 3) and aligned with the European Qualifications Framework, namely: the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations

and in professional and personal development. *Knowledge* includes facts, principles, theories and procedures related to a professional or academic field (EMT. Competence Framework, 2022: 3). F. Lasnier (2001), in turn, proposes to distinguish between declarative (know-what), procedural (know-how) and strategic or meta-cognitive (know-how-to-be) knowledge. *Declarative knowledge* covers the acquisition of theoretical information, the content of various concepts and ideas by learning or formulating them in the process of exercising and practice (Anderson, 1983). *Procedural knowledge* refers to mastering algorithms for performing certain actions, operations, tasks and activities in general (Baartman & Bruijn, 2011). *Metacognitive knowledge* is related to the information about the content of the task, the context of its performance, problem-solving processes and knowledge about oneself as a task-performer (Baartman & Bruijn, 2011). Skills and abilities are based on these groups of knowledge. They are formed and developed in the course of translation performance, and differ in their level of complexity. A *skill* is ability to apply knowledge and use know-how (procedure knowledge) to complete tasks and solve problems (EMT. Competence Framework, 2022: 3). Finally, *attitudes* include personal and professional qualities such as motivation, self-efficacy, self-esteem, etc. and determine the way and nature of the integration of knowledge, skills and abilities in the process of activity performance (Lasnier, 2001).

Accordingly, the sequential process of forming and integrating these elements is the learning process, while the formation of the relevant competence is its logical product or outcome (Baartman & Bruijn, 2011). At the same time, a prerequisite for the effective formation of any competence is the possibility of its effective application in the relevant context (Hurtado Albir, 2017). Therefore, competence serves as a bridge between learning objectives, programme outcomes (statements about what the student knows, understands and is able to do upon the completion of the study, formulated in the categories of knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy (EMT. Competence Framework, 2022)) and qualification requirements for a specialist in a particular field. After all, the level of competence is directly reflected in the quality of the relevant activity performance.

Cano Garcíá (2015: 15) considers the following features of any competence formation:

- 1) integration of knowledge, skills, abilities, strategies and attitudes manifested in the ability to use them in a coordinated and effective manner in the process of activity performance;
- 2) ability to apply it practically;

3) ability to act flexibly in accordance with the particular situation;

4) dynamism revealed in the ability to continuously develop and improve;

5) independence, which lies in the ability to make decisions and take responsibility for their implementation.

Pym (2003: 481-497) identifies four fundamental approaches to defining the structure and content of the translation competence:

1) complete denial of the existence of translation competence, which does not comply with the needs of our research;

2) reducing translation competence to the sum of competences in two languages, i.e. bilingual competence, which completely neglects the need for translation training as it is;

3) viewing translation competence as an integrated yet multi-componential structure, which seems to be quite operational in view of translators' training needs, where each and particular component should be practiced and gauged separately first and then in integrative manner;

4) conceptualizing translation competence as an indivisible supercompetence, which precludes listing essential components for successful translation, which can be quite helpful in the professional but not academic context.

Our research aligns with and supports the perspective of translation competence as an integrated, multi-componential structure, formed through dynamic and cyclical learning and translating, leading to a higher qualitative level of translation performance. It is important to note, that we differentiate between the structure of translation competence as the inventory of its main components and the model of translation competence acquisition as a dynamic process of its formation. Influential structures of translation competence, from this perspective, include relatively similar sets of sub-competences, emphasising the crucial role of some. They include those by S. Göpferich (2009), the PACTE Group (2017), and the EMT's translation competence model (2022). The first two models were developed in the context of university training, while the latter is mainly industry-oriented. We believe that all these models should be used to refine the inventory of components to be acquired and formed at particular training stages. They will guide the involvement of relevant assessment agents and the development of appropriate assessment methods and tools.

Cheng (2017) conditionally divides multicomponent structures of translation competence into groups according to their aim:

1) those to be used for training purposes (Pym, 2003; Schäffner, 2000; Kelly, 2007);

2) those to be employed for research purposes (PACTE Group, 2017; Göpferich, 2009);

3) those to be utilized for specialists' certification and accreditation (EMT. Competence framework, 2022; ATA, 2012; NAATI, 2015).

To our mind, their thorough analysis and consolidation will contribute to the enhancement of translation competence assessment.

**Findings.** According to Presas (2000: 29), the acquisition of translation competence involves several stages, which should be considered when arranging different types of assessment:

1) acquisition and improvement of completely new components. It means that at this stage students master new elements, which were not previously acquired within other language-related areas. These are of particular interest for assessment because they encompass specific knowledge and skills unique to translation.

2) restructuring and adapting previously acquired components. This stage involves modifying and adjusting existing skills, such as foreign language reading and listening comprehension, to meet the needs of translation and interpretation. Initially, these components should be monitored directly, followed by indirect monitoring during prospective translators' training.

3) strategic subcompetence acquisition. This stage serves as a unifying one, integrating all components for the provision of optimal translation performance. Thus, we believe that the list of translation competence components should include strategies. These strategies are conscious and individual methods of utilizing available internal and external resources to efficiently complete translation or learning tasks.

F. Alves (2005) defines the levels of translation competence based on the procedural indicators of translation, namely:

1) the efficiency of effort distribution at different stages of translation performance;

2) the volume of translation units being processed within a specific time period;

3) the level of development of metacognitive skills and strategies.

Within our research we suggest to combine the PACTE Group translation competence structure (PACTE Group, 2017), primarily developed to meet research needs, and industry-oriented EMT Competence framework (2022), supplementing them with the essential details.

In general, the skills that should be developed in translation students include:

- 1) to identify the type of a translation problem;
- 2) to solve a translation problem by applying internal (cognitive and mental) resources;
- 3) to select external resources in accordance with the type of a translation problem;
- 4) to operate with optimally long translation units, which is manifested in the production of fragments of the translation text of the appropriate length;
- 5) to minimise the need for rereading and correction when producing a translation text;
- 6) to manage the sequence of performing a multidimensional task with the use of methodological tools.

PACTE group (2022: 41) single out the following subcompetences in the structure of translation competence:

1) **bilingual subcompetence**, which comprises pragmatic, sociolinguistic, textual, lexical and grammatical knowledge, subskills, skills and abilities in both languages. To our mind, they should be specified in terms of plurilingual and mediation competence recently distinguished by Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume (2020). In EMT Competence framework these components are named Language and Culture (EMT. Competence Framework, 2022). This component belongs to the category of knowledge, subskills, and skills that should be restructured for translation performance needs.

2) **extralinguistic competence**, which covers bicultural, expert and background knowledge, essential from the viewpoint of the performance of translation in specific domain. In most cases this knowledge is newly acquired.

3) **translation knowledge subcompetence**, which involves declarative knowledge related to translator's professional activity. This knowledge needs to be newly acquired. Within EMT Competence Framework (2022) extralinguistic and translation knowledge subcompetences are treated together and defined with the list of 14 practical skills concerning the ability to analyse the source text as a translation object, compress and shorten the source language message, widen domain knowledge, carry out reference search, draft the target text, evaluate and assess possible translation solutions, follow the styleguide, etc.

4) **instrumental subcompetence**, connected with the skills to use reference resources and information technology for the solution of translation tasks in the process of translation. These skills should be both restructured and newly formed. Partially this subcompetence is seen as a technology one by EMT Competence Framework (2022). It is absolutely

translation specific and requires the acquisition of a set of declarative and procedural knowledge, as well as practical subskills and skills.

5) **strategic subcompetence**, which involves the acquisition of the set of procedures required for the optimisation of translation process, including efficient translation problems solving. To some extent, this subcompetence relates to personal and interpersonal subcompetence determined by EMT Competence Framework (2022). It is noteworthy, that in the previous version of translation competence structure, the PACTE group also suggested to assess students' psychophysiological component as the factor affecting translation performance.

Finally, EMT Competence Framework (2022) suggests one more subcompetence of a great professional value that is Service Provision subcompetence connected with the ability to provide efficient translation services in the context of modern language market, keeping in contact with the customers, charging the projects, fixing procedural issues, etc..

From the viewpoint of its further use for the development of an assessment system to be applied in translators' training, we believe that all the mentioned components should be traced and monitored at different stages of the training process.

#### **Conclusions and prospects for further research.**

The analysis of current translation competence structure enabled us to identify:

1) polylingual subcompetence as the set of source and target language knowledge, subskills and skills to be adjusted for the performance of a specific type of translation or interpretation;

2) extralinguistic subcompetence as the set of domain specific knowledge to be acquired for translation performance;

3) translation subcompetence itself as the set of declarative and procedural knowledge, practical subskills and skills necessary for problem-solving as the key task in the translation process;

4) technology subcompetence as the set of practical subskills, skills and procedures to be used for the optimization of translation process;

5) personal competence defined by students' individual peculiarities influencing the process of translation;

6) service provision subcompetence as a set of knowledge and practical skills necessary for the effective functioning in the professional domain;

7) strategic subcompetence as a consolidating element and driving force of translation performance.

Some of them are to be enhanced, modified and adjusted in the process of training, while the others are

to be newly acquired by the students at university. These translation competence components should be interpreted in terms of a dynamic system of direct (gauged with the help of specifically developed assessment tools) and indirect assessment objects (evaluated in parallel with the direct ones serving an essential prerequisite for the

given task performance). They should be supplemented with their manifestations in the translation process and indicators in the target text. Future research should also focus on developing a proficiency scale and level descriptors, as well as selecting and creating relevant assessment forms and tools.

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