

## TRANSLATOR'S PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE: A MODEL AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN UNIVERSITY TRAINING

*The article identifies the structure of translator's professional competence, grounds its model and suggests the ways of its implementation. The following sub-competences necessary to be acquired by future translators have been identified and analyzed with the aim of providing best training: linguistic competence, intercultural competence, subject (thematic) competence, instrumental competence, psychophysiological competence, interpersonal competence, strategic competence, self-reflection competence. The role of the subject (thematic) competence for specialized translation is analysed. The ways of the translator's professional competence model implementation are highlighted.*

**Key words:** *translator's competence, model, linguistic competence, intercultural competence, subject (thematic) competence, instrumental competence, psychophysiological competence, interpersonal competence, strategic competence, self-reflection competence.*

**Introduction.** Nowadays there is an increased need for professional translation, which is the response to the modern globalized world. Since ancient times translation has been an important part of communication between people of different nationalities, linguo-cultural communities.

In almost all the approaches to language teaching translation is seen as a process of negotiation to fit the needs of comprehensibility, acceptability, and tolerance (Kramsch, 2020, p. 30). Thus, in the grammar-translation approach translation was used to practice in the field of linguistic equivalence, expand the knowledge of the two systems. The communicative approach implies the idea of negotiating meaning between partners. The intercultural approach focuses on the equivalence in two cultures, understanding and a willingness to accept different values (Kramsch, 2020, p. 30).

Translator training is of utmost importance nowadays. It can take many forms. First of all, much is learnt at work, from colleagues, through trial and mistakes. Many

professional translators have not had any specialized training in translation beyond such experience, which is nevertheless very precious. However, many universities offer bachelors' and masters' programs which began to appear mostly in the second half of the twentieth century and rose greatly in the 1990s (Pym, 2012).

There is a widespread view that university training does not fully meet the requirements of the market (Pym, 2012). The product of translation is analyzed by the teacher, and it is positively assessed only when it corresponds to the teacher's ideas about the effective translation. If the teacher has little or no experience in translation, the students skills will be also limited. Another problem is the programs of training, which often correspond first of all to internal needs of educational institutions, do not take into account market developments and are too theoretical (Pym, 2012). The two above mentioned problems may be solved by: 1) involving more professional translators in the classroom; 2) continuous professional development of teachers; 3) involving stakeholders in the development of the curriculum and programs; 4) updating programs on the basis of more recent translation theories; 5) incorporating effective teaching methods and practices.

Effective programs usually take into account the objectives of training, in other words, competences which graduates should acquire to perform professional duties efficiently.

**Analysis of relevant research.** The problem of developing translation competence has been widely discussed in the scientific literature. Thus, it has been studied by a range of Ukrainian (L. Chernovaty, T. Kavytska, A. Monashnenko, T. Vasylenko etc.) as well as foreign scholars (D. Gile, C. Kramsch, A. Neubert, A. Pym etc.). However, programs of training are still far from perfect. In order to understand what professional qualities a graduate should possess it is necessary to analyze translation competence and determine the ways it can be developed.

**Aim of the study** is to identify the structure of translator's professional competence, develop its model and suggest the ways of its implementation.

**Research methods.** The research is based on the following methods: analysis, synthesis, generalization, classification in order to study the literature on the problem, modelling with the aim of the translation competence model development.

**Results.** There are different approaches to the definition of translator's competence, but scholars agree on its compositional nature and regard it as a set of sub-competences (Quinci, 2015, p. 182).

There is the view that translation competence consists of: 1) language competence, 2) textual competence, 3) subject competence, 4) cultural competence, 5) transfer competence. All the competences are of equal importance (Neubert, 2000, p. 6).

PACTE determines five sub-competencies: 1) bilingual, 2) extra-linguistic, 3) instrumental, 4) translation knowledge, 5) strategic sub-competence. The latter is considered to be a key one in the translation process. Besides, PACTE identifies a psycho-physiological component, which influences the translation process, but is not regarded as a specific sub-competence. PACTE's model represents the interrelation between the components with the strategic sub-competence as a core component (PACTE, 2003, p. 60).

C. Quinci considers translation competence to be a combination of the following sub-competences: 1) communicative and textual competence, 2) cultural competence, 3) thematic competence, 4) instrumental-professional competence, 5) psychophysiological competence, 6) interpersonal competence, 7) strategic competence, 7) self-reflection competence (Quinci, 2015, p. 182).

Taking into account the abovementioned views, we identify the following sub-competences necessary to be acquired by prospective translators:

- 1) linguistic competence,
- 2) intercultural competence,
- 3) subject (thematic) competence,
- 4) instrumental competence,
- 5) psychophysiological competence,
- 6) interpersonal competence,
- 7) strategic competence,

8) self-reflection competence.

Figure 1 illustrates the model of translation competence with interrelated components.

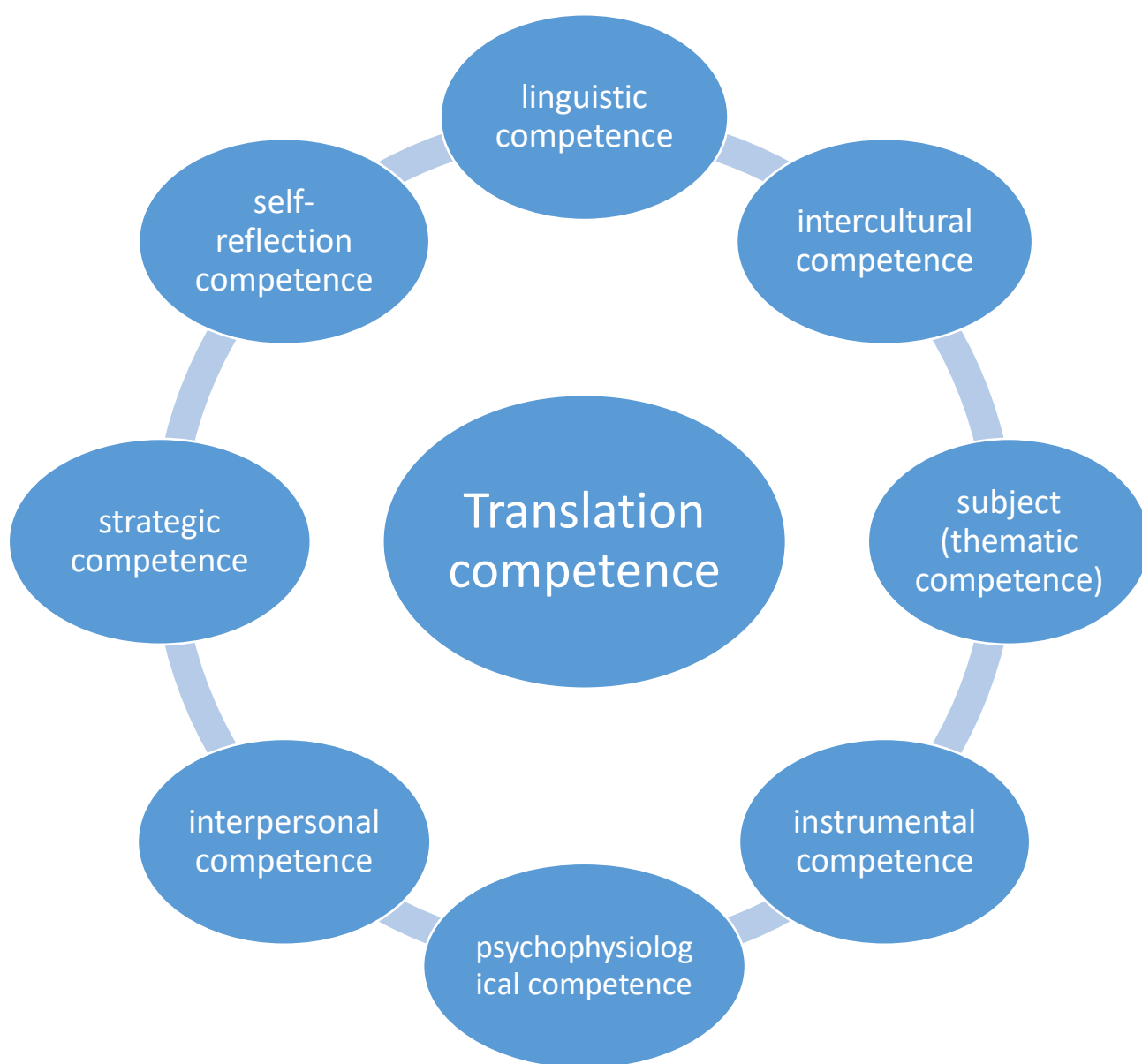


Figure 1. Model of translator's professional competence.

*Linguistic (bilingual competence)* is actually a good mastery of two languages, high level of speaking, reading, writing, listening, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation skills. However, as G. S. Koby and G. Champe state, to provide a professional translation it is not enough to comprehend a text. Though it is the key component of the translation process, a set of other constituents are necessary to complete translation successfully (Koby & Champe, 2013, p. 157).

*Intercultural competence* is also an important component of translation competence. Even specialized texts reflect national cultural peculiarities, for example, specific institutions of a particular country. Thus, with regard to legal texts P. Sandrini states that legal language is always culturebound, which is important not only for the content, but also for the expressions used in legal texts (Sandrini, 1999, p. 10]. As a conclusion, to produce an efficient translation it is necessary to understand such peculiarities, differences of legal institutions, processes in the countries.

Five components were identified within the translation intercultural competence: 1) intercultural communication process awareness, 2) cultural awareness, 3) ability to compare cultures, 4) learning dimension, 5) ability to learn autonomously (Yarosh, 2015, p. 164).

The intercultural competence aims at demonstrating interculturally competent translation behavior. Such behavior is achieved if intercultural features are taken into consideration at all stages of the translation process (Yarosh, 2015, p. 165). Interculturally competent translation behavior is the result of purposeful intercultural competence development.

Intercultural communication process awareness implies awareness of how culture affects intercultural communication (Yarosh, 2015, p. 165) (for example, peculiarities of behavior in cultural contexts, the necessity to take into account the cultural features of different types of texts).

Cultural awareness implies understanding that different cultures see the world in their own way, demonstrate different attitudes and behavior considering them correct (Yarosh, 2015, p. 165).

Comparative cultural knowledge implies the knowledge of differences and similarities between cultures on the national, global, local levels depending on the situation and with reference to the target audience (Yarosh, 2015, p. 165).

The learning dimension is aimed at developing 1) students' awareness of the translator's role in the intercultural mediation process, 2) understanding how they can build translation intercultural competence, 2) the habit of comparative cultural learning (Yarosh, 2015, p. 165).

*Subject (thematic competence).* Subject knowledge is an important factor in successful translation, a cornerstone in specialized translation (Pecalver, 2015, p. 109) as it focuses on the knowledge in the field. It is not always possible within bachelor's programs to provide students with training in translation in a specific field. However, there is the view that training in specialized translation can be provided at master's levels to acquire "linguistic, textual and communicative" aspects (Pecalver, 2015, p. 108).

The debate as to whether it is necessary to have subject knowledge to translate in a specific field is still on the agenda.

Studying the peculiarities of financial translation F. Heras, for example, thinks that a translator should be an expert in the field and in translation, and undergo a double training in both disciplines (Pecalver, 2015, p. 104). E. A. Pecalver, on the contrary, suggests understanding of economic affairs but not the deep knowledge of all the subfields since it is hardly possible to achieve (Pecalver, 2015).

The American Translators Association conducted a survey (2009) which showed that translators consider thematic knowledge to be vital for efficient translation (Koby & Melby, 2013, p. 184). The conclusion was made about the necessity to have a sufficient subject-matter expertise (Koby & Melby, 2013, p. 184).

Studying the requirements to legal translators C. Valderrey made the conclusion that novice translators should develop thematic competence by acquiring two types of knowledge: 1) declarative knowledge, which helps to understand how legal systems function and to get acquainted with the main terms and concepts; 2) procedural knowledge, which implies the use of research techniques to get the necessary information in a specific subject area (Pecalver, 2015, p. 103).

There is a view expressed in publications that thematic knowledge of the translator is used to understand the text, but not to produce new texts or participate actively in the field (Pecalver, 2015, p. 103). Such claim can be argued as translation implies the creation of a text so the translator uses the subject knowledge not only passively, but actively as well.

Thus, subject area expertise may come during studying at a Master's program or during professional career (Gile, 2009). Specialization is necessary for the translator to be a strong competitor in the job market (Pecalver, 2015). In order to develop good professional skills it is necessary to continuously specialize in some subject area, work with experts who will assist in bridging the gap in the knowledge, find out the updates in the field, read specialized literature, attend specialized conferences, workshops in the field, have knowledge of the terminology and phraseology, try to be acquainted with the new terminology and expressions that reflect the new reality of the field (Pecalver, 2015, p. 109–110).

Each subject field has specialised language – *language for special purposes* with its own lexicon, specific rules of syntax. There are different views on the percentage of terms in specialised texts (Żrałka, 2007, p. 75). Thus, P. Newmark claims that terms constitute about 5% of the vocabulary of the text (Newmark, 2004, p. 12), but E. Arsentyeva states that this figure is 20-30% of the whole vocabulary of such texts (Arsentyeva, 2003, p. 170–171).

Specialised texts are characterized by a number of features which translator should be aware of. For example, a typical feature of such texts is nominalisation (predominance of nouns and adjectives over verbs and adverbs and prepositions over conjunctions, impersonal style, frequent use of some grammatical structures (for example, passive voice with the verbs *assume*, *suppose*, *claim* etc., participle structures, modal verbs to express obligations, rights and prohibitions (Żrałka, 2007, p. 76).

Though specialization is usually obtained during the postgraduate studies and in professional translation career, students should be acquainted with and trained to deal with the specialized translation at the bachelor's levels. The first thing they should be suggested is to analyze the source text, compare it with translation and identify elements which are significant for translation. Comparison of parallel texts gives an opportunity to produce the best translation, avoid pitfalls. To give students the idea of a specialized text in some field the teacher should encourage students to look for elements characteristic of this particular type of text in this particular field. As a result students will make the conclusion that parallel text analysis should include comparison of

structure, content, vocabulary, grammar (typical structures, syntax), register (stylistic features). Besides, they will learn to imitate from the model text everything that can be imitated with the use of the patterns of the target language (Żrałka, 2007, p. 78).

E. Żrałka suggests the following steps for the academics to follow in teaching students specialized translation: 1) source text analysis with the aim of determining its characteristics; 2) parallel texts analysis to make conclusions about the common features of both texts; 3) analysis of the terms used in the translation; 4) considerations on grammar used; 5) style analysis; 6) teacher's feedback on the results of students' analysis (Żrałka, 2007, p. 85).

All in all, subject (thematic) competence should be continuously developed through lifelong learning.

*Instrumental competence* is defined as the ability to acquire the necessary knowledge of resources (terminological, phraseological etc.) that the translator has to complete the translation (dictionaries, textbooks, official documents, parallel texts, etc.), appropriate use of new technologies, understanding of the labor market. The competence helps to find, organize and apply information. In fact instrumental competence assists in eliminating the subject matter gap (Pecalver, 2015, p. 109–110).

*Psychophysiological competence* is the ability to use psychomotor skills for “reading and writing, cognitive skills (e.g. memory, attention span, creativity and logical reasoning); psychological attitudes (e.g. intellectual curiosity, perseverance, rigour, a critical spirit, and self-confidence)” (PACTE, 2003, p. 59). It implies understanding of the profession, peculiarities of being a translator, professional responsibility. Psychophysiological competence is developed at the undergraduate level and established during the specific training in the field and performing professional duties (Pecalver, 2015, p. 109–110).

*Interpersonal competence* is another component necessary for prospective translators to acquire to produce effective translation. Professional translators work both independently and in teams (together with researchers, revisers, experts in the subject field, other translators, clients, agencies). Interdisciplinary work is always a part of the translator's profession mainly through collaboration with experts and other translators



in large translation projects, which can be fulfilled both face-to-face and online. The virtual-team cooperation includes: 1) learning aptitude (having skills and will to learn in a particular social context); 2) trust building; 3) problem-solving and conflict-handling; 4) learning (Pecalver, 2015, p. 110–111; Vandepitte et al, 2015, p. 142–143).

*Strategic competence* covers the organization of work, identification of the problem and its solution, revision etc. Strategic competence should be focused on at the undergraduate level since it is in general not specific to the field (Pecalver, 2015, p. 111). Strategic competence should be purposefully developed by getting students acquainted with different strategies and practicing their usage. Prospective translators should learn to use: 1) learning strategies; 2) communicative strategies; 3) translation strategies. Students should master all scope of learning strategies – memorizing, metacognitive etc. to be able to succeed in learning. Communicative strategies are necessary to communicate effectively in intercultural context. For example compensation strategies help to avoid difficulties, paraphrase the expression if necessary and possible. Translation strategies (e.g. use of reference literature, models, previous acquaintance with the thematic area etc.) improve the process of translation and the end product.

*Self-reflection* is an integral part of translation competence. Reflection is a mental process which implies students' concentration on the analysis of experience, motivation, objectives in order to understand them better and means change of behavior (Zadorozhna et al, 2018, p. 65). Self-reflection skills are developed through self-observation, think-aloud techniques during which translators express orally what they do when translating (Zadorozhna et al, 2018, p. 149). Self-reflection is vital for developing autonomy which is the ability and willingness to set goals, tasks and plan ways to attain them, analyze the results. It can be best achieved through self-directed learning which focuses more attention on the process of learning than on the process of teaching (Zhong, 2008, p. 205). It is widely used in foreign language methodology within a student-centred curriculum. Self-directed learning means that the learner with or without the help of a teacher determines learning needs, sets objectives, chooses

content, strategies and methods, identifies resources, assesses the results (Knowles, 1975, p. 18).

Self-directed learning requires a lot of preparatory work. To be successful in self-directed learning students should demonstrate:

1. Awareness and appreciation of professional requirements (e.g. ethics, standards and real practice).
2. A good self knowledge (e.g. knowledge of own needs, competences, strengths and weaknesses, gaps etc.).
3. Awareness of the resources and tools available (e.g. modern information technologies).
4. Awareness of the outcome, which is not perfect but optimal in the particular situation, challenging but realistic (Zhong, 2008, p. 209).
5. Understanding of the task, situation and analysis of the possible difficulties (e.g. problems with terminology).
6. Positive attitude, willingness to study with the aim of achieving best results.
7. Self-responsibility.

The implementation of the model of translator's competence may involve a range of activities to be used in classroom. Literature analysis (Gouadec, 2007; Nord, 1988; Nord, 1996; Pym, 2012) and observation of the teaching process prove the feasibility of using the following steps.

1. Bringing training closer to the market by inviting professionals into the classroom, evaluating students' performance on the basis of portfolios which include their completed translations, using authentic materials and authentic translation tasks with instructions from a client, involving stakeholders in training (Pym, 2012).
2. Employing different classroom activities, for example, combinations of the translation instructions, group work, guided translation, 'gist' translation, reviewing (Kiraly, 2000, p. 55-57).
3. Analyzing the communicative purpose of the task.

4. Involving students into large translation projects in which students should play different roles (translator, reviewer etc.) (Gouadec, 2007).
5. Pedagogical progression which means that simpler and declarative tasks precede more complex translation projects (Nord, 1998; Nord, 1996).
6. Employing activities from language classes, for example, bilingual crossword puzzles, terminology searches (Pym, 2012).
7. Analysis of individual author's style in literary translation.
8. Comparison of translations done by different groups of students, further discussion, inviting experts to assess the translations.

**Conclusions.** The rising demands for the professional qualities and qualifications of translators require special attention to their education. The following sub-competences necessary to be acquired by future translators have been identified and analyzed with the aim of providing best training: linguistic competence, intercultural competence, subject (thematic) competence, instrumental competence, psychophysiological competence, interpersonal competence, strategic competence, self-reflection competence.

The study does not cover all aspects of translation competence development. Further research on the problem of subject (thematic) competence development is of utmost importance.

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## РЕЗЮМЕ

**Оксана Баб'юк.** Професійна компетентність перекладача: модель та шляхи її реалізації в процесі підготовки в ЗВО.

У статті визначено структуру перекладацької компетентності, обґрунтовано її модель та запропоновано шляхи реалізації моделі. У процесі дослідження використано методи аналізу, синтезу, узагальнення, класифікації з метою вивчення літератури з проблеми, моделювання з метою розвитку моделі перекладацької компетентності. На основі вивчення наукових публікацій визначено та проаналізовано компоненти перекладацької компетентності, необхідні для оволодіння майбутніми перекладачами: лінгвістичну (білінгвальну) компетентність (володіння лексичними, граматичними, фонетичними навичками, а також уміннями в аудіюванні, читанні, говорінні та письмі в двох мовах), міжкультурну компетентність (спрямовану на формування міжкультурно коректної поведінки, яка базується на усвідомленні процесу міжкультурного спілкування, розуміння культури, здатності порівнювати різні культури, можливості оволодіння іншомовною культурою та порівняння її з рідною, здатності до самостійного навчання в галузі міжкультурної комунікації), предметну (тематичну) компетентність (спрямовану на оволодіння знаннями в галузі, необхідними для коректного розуміння спеціалізованого тексту та його перекладу), інструментальну компетентність (здатність використовувати ресурси, у тому числі інформаційні технології, розуміння ринку праці), психофізіологічну компетентність (здатність курувати когнітивними процесами, психологічними установками тощо), міжособистісну компетентність (здатність до міжособистісної комунікації в процесі виконання перекладацьких проєктів, спілкування з клієнтами тощо), стратегічну компетентність (здатність використовувати навчальні, комунікативні, перекладацькі стратегії), рефлексивну компетентність (здатність до аналізу цілей, шляхів їх досягнення, досвіду, мотивації, ресурсів, результатів з метою зміни поведінки та досягнення максимальних результатів).

Проаналізовано роль предметної (тематичної) компетентності для спеціалізованого перекладу. Запропоновано шляхи впровадження моделі перекладацької компетентності (залучення професіоналів, стейкхолдерів до процесу підготовки, оцінка успішності студентів на основі перекладацьких портфоліо тощо).

**Ключові слова:** перекладацька компетентність, модель, лінгвістична компетентність, міжкультурна компетентність, предметна (тематична) компетентність, інструментальна компетентність, психофізіологічна компетентність, міжособистісна компетентність, стратегічна компетентність, рефлексивна компетентність.

## РЕЗЮМЕ

**Оксана Бабюк. Профессиональная компетентность переводчика: модель и пути её реализации в процессе подготовки в вузе.**

*Статья посвящена анализу структуры переводческой компетентности, обоснованию ее модели и изучению путей ее реализации. Определены и проанализированы следующие компоненты, которыми необходимо овладеть будущим переводчикам с целью достижения эффективной подготовки: лингвистическая компетентность, межкультурная компетентность, предметная (тематическая) компетентность, инструментальная компетентность, психофизиологическая компетентность, межличностная компетентность, стратегическая компетентность, саморефлексивная компетентность. Определены возможности реализации предложенной модели.*

**Ключевые слова:** переводческая компетентность, модель, лингвистическая компетентность, межкультурная компетентность, предметная (тематическая) компетентность, инструментальная компетентность, психофизиологическая компетентность, межличностная компетентность, стратегическая компетентность, рефлексивная компетентность.