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THE MODEL AND STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS OF A TRANSLATOR'S PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

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Rezumat

Materialul prezentului articol, abordează o problemă semnificativă ce ține de calitatea în educație, și anume, dezvoltarea competențelor profesionale ale traducătorilor, deci a competențelor de traducere (CT). În acest sens, este sugerată tehnologia pedagogică pentru dezvoltarea competențelor de traducere ale studenților-traducători, totodată sunt menționate competențele de traducere relevante profesiei de traducător. Lucrarea conține o succintă descriere a modelului competențelor de traducere și a tehnologiei de dezvoltare a competențelor de traducere ale studenților-traducători, la fel, în acest articol sunt menționate și unele succese obținute ca rezultat a cercetării academice a problemei vizate.

Cuvinte-cheie: competențe de traducere (CT), competența strategică (CS), competența comunicativă (CC), competența instrumental-profesională (CIP), competența socio-culturală (CSC).

There are many translator training institutions all over the world, and even in the ordinary language classroom students are demanding some sort of basic training in translation. But what about professional translation training? The issue is: who is going to do the teaching in such translation training? So far, there is no institutional training for translator trainers, they have to face the problem and deal with preparing their discipline curriculums on their own. Teachers of many disciplines, such as Mathematics or Biology, are trained in their respective Faculties, Language Teachers are trained in Modern Language Departments or Faculties of Second Language Acquisition, but those who apply for a position as translator trainer in a Faculty of Translation and Interpreting need no particular formal qualification, and if they needed one, they would not know where to get it. This does not mean that they are all bad translator trainers, but maybe life would be a little easier for them if they “had had some kind of special instruction and were not forced to re-invent the wheel of translation pedagogy over and over again” [6, p. 209].

This is basically the main concern of this article: designing an appropriate pedagogical methodology as to train translators and that is developing their professional competences or as some researchers call them skills, translation competences model and pedagogical methodology design are our issues of interest and concern in this paper.

The methodology of teaching translation and developing of the translation competences is a field of pedagogical science that is not very developed. Pedagogical methodologies on developing translation competences, which are necessary in all types of translation: oral and

written, sequential and simultaneous, have hardly been developed. But it is with their development (TC), obviously, that one should start teaching translation and instructing translators to be; specific professional/translation competences (that are needed for certain types of translations) should be built. In the translation action, the goal is not given in advance, it is formed/developed during performance, that is, the formation of the goal and its implementation proceed almost simultaneously.

The article is dedicated to the description of the structural components and the so-called models of translation competences or competence. Some researchers use the singular form and mention the co-components of the “*translation competence*” [9], [8], [4], another group of scientists in this field of study uses the plural form “*translation competences*” [3], [1], [2], to which we ally, as we consider that the professional competences of a translator are interdependent competences which are to be developed to some equal levels.

However, all researches agree that there is a vital necessity of developing a set of competences within the process of training translators, and they suggest some models of translation competences for e.g. the PACTE group suggests the following model Figure 1.1.:

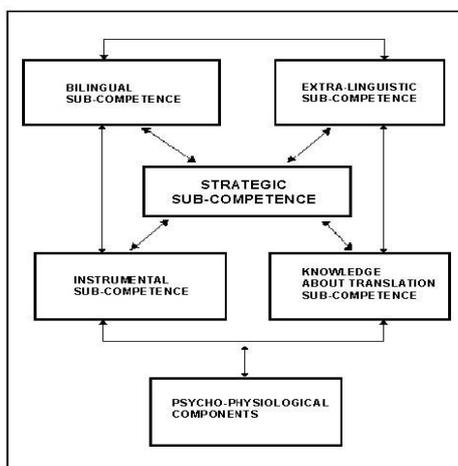


Figure 1.1. PACTE model of TC [8]

This group of researchers uses the term “sub-competence” which we strongly disagree with, as all the competences mentioned in the model have a classic structure and consists of attitudes (beliefs), skills and knowledge, that is why we use the term “*competence*” and in plural form as we regard them as interdependent *competences* specific to the translation profession. So, we approve the model presented by a European research group called EMT (European Masters in Translation), this model looks the following way Figure 1.2.:

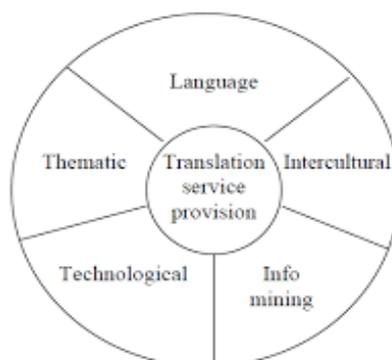


Figure 1.2. EMT model of TC [3]

In this regard, first, let us analyse what is considered to be the groundwork of translation competences, those *professional competences* a translator is to have developed to an extremely

high degree. From the point of view of analysis and selection of the most relevant competences to be developed in the process of training students-translators, and our point of view is that these competences are the following: *strategic competence (SC)*, *communicative competence (CC)*, *instrumental-professional competence (IPC)*, *socio-cultural competence (SCC)*. These are presented in the Figure 1.3. which we designed and consider as well structured and relevant, the competences included are considered to be the key components of the professional reference of a highly qualified translator:

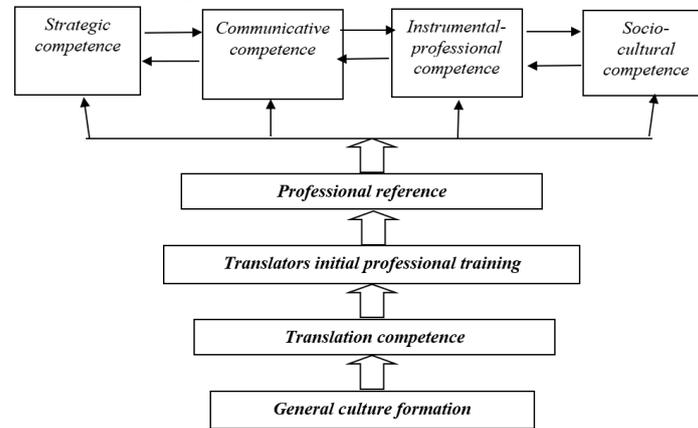


Figure 1.3. Translation competences in the content of the professional reference

The pedagogical models for the formation of translation competences described in the literature aim at didactic strategies oriented towards the formation of professional behaviors. The practical validation of TC formation models (for example, the PACTE and EMT model) demonstrate that these TC contain certain stages of pedagogical implication and refer to as “sub-segments”, defined as “structural elements of the translation competences or translation competence” [8]. Research on language teaching shows that the term translation competence is a reference concept in the design of the university curriculum dedicated to translators’ training. Scientific community theoretical debates on indicators of translation efficiency generate some criteria for assessing the quality of translation competences and teaching assignments/tasks that facilitate the professional development of TC while training students-translators.

The methodological approaches on the development of translation competences show that nowadays there are no didactic technologies unanimously accepted and used by the specialists involved in the training of translators. From the perspective of studying the process of translators’ initial professional training, what was noticed/detected according to some theoretical as well as practical study is that the methodologies of professional training of translators are to be developed in accordance to specific TC models. The methodologies for developing translation competences, elucidated in the pedagogical literature, although they consist of original structural elements, methods and techniques, do not reflect university teaching technologies in accordance to the specific aims and contents of the professional training programs for translators.

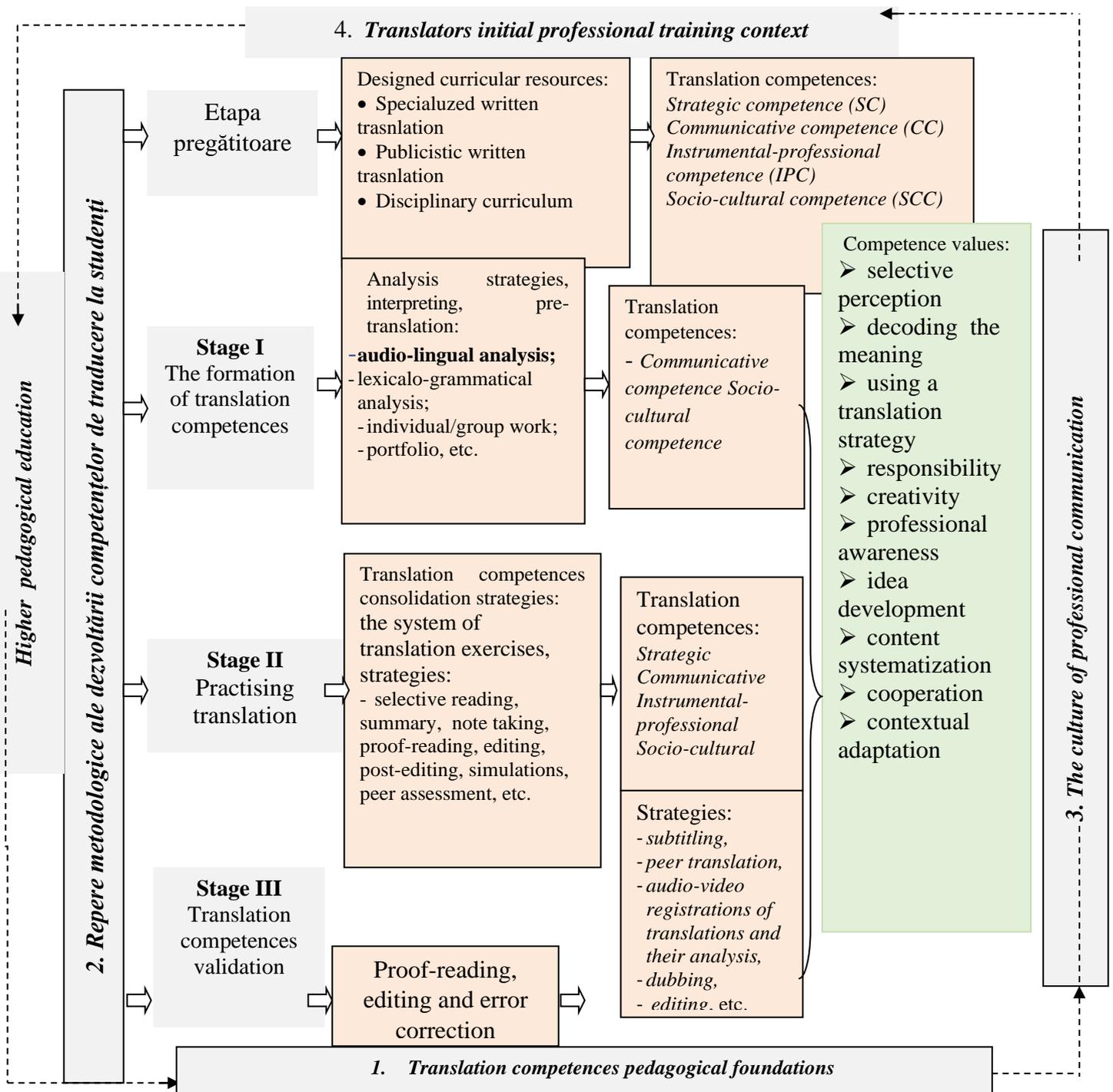


Figure 1.4. Pedagogical methodology for developing students' translation competences

For these reasons, we have dedicated our research, and to a certain degree this article, to the description and use of the *Pedagogical methodology for developing students-translators' translation competences* in a university context, designed during our research study dedicated to TC development, in the perspective of the translators' initial training. This is a pedagogical methodology, organized in three interdependent stages and a preparatory stage, that involves the validation in the university practice of the curricular resources developed for the training of translators (curricular of some university courses), designed for implementation in university disciplines, oriented towards the formation of the values indicated and detected in each translation competence of the model mentioned above. So, the valorization of the

theoretical and practical foundations regarding the professional translation activity facilitated the deduction of some praxiological ideas with reference to the strategies for forming the behaviors specific to the translator profession in terms of professional values that ensure the success of translators on the current translation services market.

Then we shall proceed to discussing the relationship of practice and theory in translator training. The sections that follow will tackle very practical aspects of translator training: the selection of learning material, teaching and learning methods and strategies and quality assessment. All these elements are mentioned and are shown in the *Pedagogical methodology for developing students-translators' translation competences* Figure 1.4. The current pedagogical methodology consists of, as it has already been mentioned, three main stages and one preparatory stage, the stages are: the formation of translation competences; practising translation and finally translation competences validation. At its turn, each stage consists of strategies and specially designed tasks, these are dedicated to developing and forming of specific translation competence and its values, professional values to be developed in translation profession. These three stages are interdependent and dedicated to forming, practicing and finally assessing the level of formation of each TC, through a set of assignments, tasks and exercises, some are mentioned in the Figure 1.4. Therefore, various translation exercises are used - different kinds of tasks on translation, such as peer assessment, simulations of translation situations dedicated to different specialized topics, captions elaboration, etc. – which are effective in terms of developing the goal-setting skill and finally of the TC values. Though on the other hand one can practise translation for a very long time and not gain the necessary confidence, that is necessary translation competences, continuing to experience problems in the selection of acceptable translation options while translating. But the data of our experiment proves that the methodology is very effective as the trainees' results after the experiment period show a considerable improvement of the figures, that is the rise of the number of students with the medium and high level of proficiency during translation tasks, so showing a dramatic decrease of the number of the students with minimal TC level development/formation.

So, according to these stages, gradually a student is getting acquainted with translation, s/he tries to learn the basic rules and his/her perception of the subject is mainly atomistic, because s/he “...operates in terms of particular, separate activities. Then student is starting to be able to “think outside” the concepts that were introduced in the first stage and connect them to each other, his/her behaviour becomes less atomistic” [9, p.78]. After, a trainee “gains the ability to prioritize among various “situational features” of the task at hand and perceive it as a goal-oriented problem-solving activity. S/he becomes aware of the responsibility this particular task involves, which in turn leads to a greater emotional involvement in the process, and the formation of the necessary professional values. This is followed by “proficiency – intuition and personal experience are introduced into the equation, however they both rest on the rules and concepts introduced in previous stages.” Then, “expertise – the expert is driven predominantly by intuition and although s/he is capable of critical self-reflection, intuition is the main mode of operation; ...for real experts, things that might be problems for others are merely routine matters” [9, p.79]. First two stages are purely rational, the third stage introduces emotional involvement and intuition gradually takes over. Along this way, translator encounters many tools, which s/he can use at his/her disposal. They can be divided into *basic concepts, strategies* or *procedures*, which are “conscious, goal-oriented procedures for solving problems” [9, p.82], and *norms or values*. If strategies are the means, norms are the ends. Norms develop and vary in time and

space (e.g. in different cultures) and they can be divided into *Expectation norms* (clarity), *Relation norms* (truth), *Communication norms* (understanding), *Accountability norm* (trust) [7]. The norms or values are not firmly set rules; they can be broken, however each translator should be able to justify such violation and be aware of its consequences. The following perspective will introduce another typology of translators that emerges from bilingual competence.

The issue of defining, modelling, assessing or comparing translation competence/s is an interesting problem that presents many questions and opportunities for both theoretical and practical studies. In conclusion, there is a proposal for further research relating theories that apply risk management strategies in translation, to the concept of TC in general and to error evaluation in particular.

In conclusion, what is to be highlighted, are a few areas where, cooperation between theory and practice could be beneficial to and help make the training of the trainers a fully-fledged branch of applied translation studies. Present article examined the models of translation competences, the theoretical framework surrounding this concept, it was devoted to introduction of the elaborated TC model and pedagogical methodology pertaining to translation competences development. These pedagogical instruments emerged from different backgrounds, and were formed while employing the principles of cognitive science, empirical research or experience in education. Some elements of the aforementioned theoretical background were used as a basis for constructing an authentic TC model and pedagogical methodology, which we have had pleasure to present in this article and have used in our experimental research, and finally these could be considered as valuable instruments which we can suggest to be used by translators' trainers on a daily basis as effective and productive pedagogical methodology which can dramatically ease the process of translators' training.

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