

Translation competence from the acquisition point of view

A situation-based approach

Minna Kumpulainen
University of Eastern Finland

This article discusses translation competence (TC) and its acquisition, introducing a framework, which depicts TC as a situation-based construct with interlingual skills at its core. In this framework, translation is defined as any mediation between different languages and cultures, from everyday conversations to professional translation practise. This view is assumed to reflect the acquisition of TC (ATC), since a rudimentary ability to mediate between two languages can be regarded as the first step towards professional translation skills. The model is built around interlingual text production skills, and it conceptualizes various types of extra-linguistic knowledge as task-specific: the extent to which they are needed in translation is situation-bound. The framework is designed to be used as a theoretical framework in empirical studies into ATC, an example of which is presented in the article.

Keywords: translation competence, interlingual text production, acquisition of translation competence, translation situation

1. Introduction

This paper introduces the theoretical outcome of a PhD project studying the development of translation competence (TC) over the course of a BA programme in translation. The focus in the project was on translation-specific linguistic skills, which differ from bilingual competence because when translating, one does not work with one language at a time, but with two languages at once, operating *between* them (Chesterman 1998, 39). Hence, learning to operate between languages marks the shift from a bilingual language-user to a translator. Enhancing these skills is one of the key objectives in the BA programme in the institutional context of the project, the basic assumption being that the stronger they are, the more solid the base on which to build other elements of TC.

The starting point and the focus on linguistic aspects set the project apart from earlier empirical studies into *acquisition of TC* (henceforth, ATC) such as those of the PACTE group and TransComp project (PACTE 2014; Göpferich 2009). These studies focused on the acquisition of subcompetences that set translators apart from other language professionals (PACTE 2005, 612–13; 2014, 94–95; Göpferich 2009, 29). PACTE (2000, 103) states that novice translators have at least partially acquired various subcompetences, but these do not interact with each other efficiently, suggesting that ATC is about strengthening existing subcompetences and their interplay in the translation process. In these approaches, then, the very first steps of becoming a translator—for example those of acquiring the basic linguistic competence needed for translation—are not focused upon.

PACTE's and TransComp's ATC research is based on their own multicomponent TC models. These models depict TC top-down, i.e., from an expert translator's point of view. This approach emphasizes the role of the strategic subcompetence, since it characterizes expert performance in particular. While both models acknowledge the role of linguistic competence in the making of TC, from the expert perspective it is not more important than other subcompetences. Since my interest lay in the very first steps in particular, a need arose to design a framework that zoomed into the linguistic elements of TC in more detail. In effect, then, the framework elaborates on the linguistic aspects of TC in order to allow a glimpse into the development from a bilingual to a translator.

The emerging TC framework approaches translation bottom-up rather than top-down. While in the top-down approaches, translation and TC refer to professional practise only, in the bottom-up approach translation refers to any mediation between two languages, from the simplest everyday situation to a complex professional scene. In other words, all mediation in which (written or spoken) text is produced on the basis of a text in another language is regarded as translation. This view is assumed to mirror TC development: ATC is about gradually learning to deal with different kinds of translation situations. The following sections will look into the rationale for the framework in more detail. Following this, a PhD project is introduced to illustrate the use and fine-graining of the framework in an empirical study.

2. Towards a situation-based TC framework

The key question underlying earlier empirical ATC studies concerns the way students improve with regard to the specifically translation-related competences of an expert, such as knowledge about translation (PACTE 2014), strategic competence (PACTE 2005, 612–13; 2014, 94–95; Göpferich 2009, 29), and translation

routine activation competence (Bayer-Hohenwarter 2012). The TransComp project yielded interesting results with regard to the latter two: the students seemed to show no progress in terms of developing strategic behaviour, and little changes in their translation routine activation competence during the first four semesters (Göpferich 2013, 68–70; Bayer-Hohenwarter 2012, 211). However, the fact that the *observed* variables did not seem to improve does not mean that none of the other subcompetences of TC had improved. It might be more appropriate to say that improvement did not yet show in the production output (Göpferich 2013, 73). This suggests that subcompetences that seem to be characteristic of expert translator's TC—such as strategic problem solving behaviour—may not be relevant points of interest when looking at the early stages of ATC. This could be explained by a complex, intertwined nature of knowledge underlying expert performance; expert competences can only surface when there is sufficient amount of more basic-level knowledge that *can* intertangle.

Presas (2000, 19) expresses a need to look into the *bases* of translation competence and suggests that some features in novices' problem-solving strategies may actually stem from their bilingualism. Top-down TC models emphasizing the *interplay* of subcompetences as the key to expertise do not explicitate the foundation of TC: from the developmental perspective, all subcompetences are depicted as equal. The new framework approaches TC from the opposite direction, aiming to capture the nature of the acquisition process from the very start. Although this perspective is new in empirical ATC studies, it has been touched upon in various theoretical discussions on the nature of (A)TC. These discussions provide the backbone for the bottom-up model, the basic tenets of which will be introduced in what follows.

First of all, for this bottom-up approach it seems necessary to broaden the scope of translation outside professional practice to cover *natural translation*, defined as “the translation done by bilinguals in everyday circumstances without special training for it” (Harris 1977, 6). This need is emphasized by Lörcher (1994, 41) who subsumes even the most rudimentary kind of mediation between languages under the heading of translation. This allows a comparison of translation processes in different levels of mediation. He also justifies his view by drawing an analogy between bilingual skills and translation skills: since a perfect command of two languages is rare, bilingualism is necessarily an approximate concept. Therefore, translation must be an approximate concept as well. Similarly, both the acquisition of bilingual competence and the transition from TC needed for rudimentary mediation to the TC needed for more demanding mediation tasks form a continuum. From this acquisition perspective, then, it is reasonable to call all mediation tasks *translation*. Whyatt (2013, 29) shares this view, approaching

translation as a human skill, which can develop from bilinguals' natural predisposition to translate to professional-level TC.

Secondly, the key issue in the bottom-up approach is establishing the foundation of TC. From the trainers' perspective, this relates to questions such as *what competences need to be trained first? What is the basic competence, the foundation of TC, and what comes later?* According to Toury (1995, 282–83), the *predisposition* for translating mentioned above can be deemed coextensive to bilingualism. Other scholars have expressed similar ideas: Englund-Dimitrova (2005, 10–13) calls this predisposition *translation ability*, which a bilingual possesses “simply as a consequence of knowing more than one language”. Shreve (1997, 125) regards the natural ability of bilinguals to translate as the starting point towards a more developed translation ability. Lörscher (1994; 2012, 6), in turn, points out that mastering two or more languages, even with various degrees of proficiency, brings along a rudimentary ability to *mediate information between the two languages*. This can be regarded as the first step towards TC, implying that TC is based on linguistic skills of a specific nature. This approach reflects the view according to which translation is a linguistic activity *in essence*. House (2015, 2), for example, defines translation as “a linguistic-textual operation in which a text in one language is re-contextualized in another language”. Although this operation is substantially influenced by a variety of extra-linguistic factors and conditions, and is therefore not *only* a linguistic act, it certainly has a linguistic core (House 2015, 3).

The third key concept in the new framework is ‘situation’. According to Pym (2009), the point of translator training is *not* to train people just to translate, *because they can already do that*, but to train them to translate *well, for a specific purpose*. The statement reflects the varying nature of translation and points out that students can already translate upon entering translator training—some way or another. Shreve (1997, 125–126) touches upon the same issue, adding the notion of a ‘situation’. He (*ibid.*) proposes that the evolution of translator competence is about widening the range of situations in which one can produce a translation that fulfils its communicative needs, arguing that translator training “can develop the initial ability to translate in ways that are different than the forms of translation one started with” (Shreve 1997, 124). TC at the most rudimentary level is the ability to produce translations in a limited range of situations. A translator with varied sets of translating abilities, in turn, can produce various forms of translations for various functions. In other words, she is better equipped to carry out translation typically expected in different professional translation situations (Shreve 1997, 125). This is in line with Toury’s (2012, 288) developmental hypothesis, according to which translators’ ultimate ability to perform in a socially accepted manner in a wide range of translation situations is dependent on the variety of situations they are put into during training.

Presas (2000, 27) argues that TC acquisition is about *reorientation of bilingual competence into interlingual competence*. This reorientation is one of the main aims in the BA programme in translation at the University of Eastern Finland, the institutional setting of the present PhD project. The emphasis is on the ability to work *between* languages, which can be detected in learning outcomes stated in the curriculum. Students are to be able to “plan and produce texts that conform to the translation brief and linguistic conventions *both in Finnish and in English*”, “analyse the structure of Finnish and compare it to that of foreign languages”, “observe different nuances” and “explore (translated) texts from the language correctness point of view”.

Based on the arguments above, the framework conceptualizes TC as a relative, situation-bound concept, which is built upon a specific type of linguistic competence. It can be evaluated against the demands of the situation and can hence be defined as *the ability to produce a TT on the basis of text in a different language so that the TT meets the demands of the situation*. Having outlined the basic tenets of the framework, I will move on to introduce its construction along with its theoretical underpinnings in more detail.

3. Situation-based framework explained

The situation-based TC framework is a synthesis of existing models and views on TC, but it organizes various subcompetences differently, specifically with regard to the role and nature of linguistic skills. The framework presupposes that there is no universal set of knowledge that together make up TC, but different translation situations create different frames for TC. Basically, a distinction is made between (a) knowledge needed (to some level) in *all* translation situations, and (b) knowledge needed to a varying degree in different types of translation situations. The first kind of knowledge is depicted as the core TC: It is the skill that defines translation and portrays TC as *interlingual text production competence in essence*. The other types of knowledge serve interlingual text production and are in this sense contributory knowledge needed for text production. The framework does not limit itself to capturing the elements of professional translation, but lends itself to be used in more rudimentary translation situations. This, I believe, is relevant from the acquisition perspective: learning to translate is to become competent to deal with a wide array of translation situations. Professional level TC does not appear suddenly at the end of training, but builds up gradually.

In this section, the situation-based TC framework will be introduced in detail, along with its theoretical premises. The model is visualized in Figure 1,

and the different components and concepts will be explained and discussed in what follows.

3.1 Situation as the determiner of expected level of TC

Neubert & Shreve (1992, 5) stated that “translation is an intersection of situation, translator competence, source text, and target text-to-be”. Therefore, no generalizations can be made about translation without specifying the situations in which texts are to be used (*ibid.*). We can, however, judge how the translator has responded to the demands of the translation situation (Neubert & Shreve 1992, 7). *Context of situation* is one of the key concepts in the systemic-functional approaches to translation, too; the linguistic form of the translated message is dependent on it (House 2000, 81). The concept refers to the participants in the situation and their relations and purposes, the topic, the content or the subject matter of the text, and the channel of communication (House 2015, 64). The idea of a situation determining the TC needed is also one aspect in Risku’s (1998) TC model. Her model is based on cognitive science and the action theory of translation, especially Holz-Mänttari (1984), and its focus is on the social reality of the translation situation and on the translator’s ability to handle this situation. The lowest level of TC in Risku’s model is *lay competence*, defined as “the ability to translate amateurishly in simple everyday situations” (Risku 1998, 139, 141, translated by Cnyrim et al. 2013).

TC required of the translator, then, can be evaluated *on the basis of the demands set by the translation situation*. The translation situation (at the top in Figure 1) creates expectations, demands and constraints, which in turn define the nature of TC required for that specific situation. ‘Situation’ covers all elements that may possibly affect the translation event: actors involved, purpose of translation, translation brief, existing norms, etc. The more complex the situation, the more complex the combination of knowledge and skills expected from the translator. In everyday settings, the rudimentary translation skill of bilinguals is perfectly consistent with and adequate for the communicative needs it is meant to fulfil (Shreve 1997, 124) and hence defines the configuration of TC required for that situation. A more complex, norm-governed professional translation situation sets more demands on the quality of the TT, creating different requirements for TC.

Different translation situations can be placed on the continuum of translatorial action (Kolehmainen et al. 2015, 392). Situations demanding professional translation occupy one end of the continuum, while translatorial action taking place in multilingual individual’s everyday life can be placed at the other end. Obviously, a wide range of situations falls between the two poles. The multifaceted

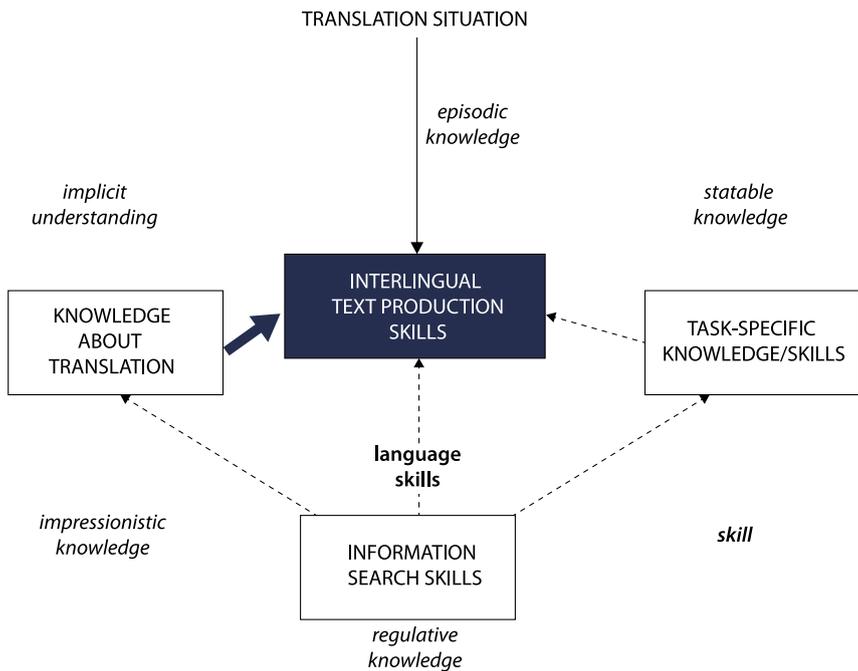


Figure 1. The situation-based TC framework (adapted from Kumpulainen 2016, 59)

nature of translatorial action means that different situations also have varying functions for translation (Kolehmainen et al. 2015, 393), which, from the competence perspective, implies that a varying set and level of knowledge is needed in different situations for a functional translation to emerge. In principle, then, TC is defined anew in each translation situation: if a translator understands the constraints and expectations set by the situation and is able to comply with them, she has the TC that is needed in that specific situation. In the simplest situations, sets of abilities needed to translate arise naturally from bilingualism, whereas in more complex situations, the set of translation abilities needed *cannot* develop from mere bilingualism but other cognitive structures must have developed (Shreve 1997, 124–125).

3.2 Knowledge about translation

The role of theoretical knowledge as a part of the overall TC was largely ignored until PACTE's model, in which it is listed as one subcompetence of TC (e.g., PACTE 2000; 2003). In my framework, *knowledge about translation* plays a role in all translation situations. *Every* translation situation presupposes some level of translation-related knowledge on the part of the translator, hence a bold arrow in

the figure. In the simplest situations, this knowledge may be—from the professional point of view—unsophisticated and simple, and the mediators may transfer a message from one language to another without even considering it a translation. In more complex situations, one needs more sophisticated knowledge in order to understand all expectations and constraints the situation sets. This knowledge pertains to the overall concept of translation, knowledge of potential problems and problem-solving strategies, knowledge of different *skopoi* of translation, of translation norms and so forth.

Knowledge about translation serves the purpose of interlingual text production in a translation situation. Just how much and how sophisticated knowledge about translation is needed is defined by the situation. In this sense, it is task-specific knowledge. However, unlike other types of task-specific knowledge, knowledge about translation also has a special, *orienting function* in translation. This is the reason why it is set apart from the others in the model. Translators orientate themselves to translation tasks according to their knowledge about translation: for example, a static concept of translation as a mechanical, source-text abiding process of language change may automatically lead to a word-for-word translation. Such a view may inhibit the translator from using their interlingual knowledge altogether, as the need to go beyond the words goes unnoticed (see, e.g., Kumpulainen 2011). The translator may think it is forbidden or wrong to change the word order or structural elements when translating.

3.3 Language skills and interlingual text production skills

Most attempts at partitioning TC assume that “knowing how to translate” means *at least* having L1 and L2 linguistic knowledge (Shreve 2012, 1). In this framework, however, bilingual competence as such is not considered a subcompetence in translation but rather a necessary *precondition* for interlingual text production skills to emerge. Languages can be regarded as the raw material with which a translator works (Baker 1992, 4). Therefore, language skills are placed outside interlingual skills in Figure 1. *Interlingual text production skills* bears resemblance to *translation routine activation subcompetence* in Göpferich’s (2009) model in the sense that they both involve dealing with interlingual differences (and similarities) in translation. However, ‘routine activation’ can also refer to other types of challenges in translation, such as dealing with culture-specific items. In my view, increasing routine activation competence refers to the ability to deal with more and more complex translation problems in a routinized, efficient manner without having to invest a lot of cognitive effort (Göpferich 2011, 11).

Interlingual text production skills form the core of the framework. This is motivated by the notions of *transfer skills* and *transfer competence* (e.g., Neubert

1994, 412; Pym 2013, 490; Malmkjaer 2009, 132), and *interlingual competence* (Toury 1984, 189), all of which refer to the *specifically translation-related linguistic skills*. The notion of transfer skills or transfer competence was first introduced by Wilss (1976, 120) who defined it as the ability to transfer the message from the SL language system into the TL language system. It has later been integrated into most accounts of TC. Roberts (1984, 172) and Hurtado (1996, 34) in fact call it ‘translational’ competence. Beeby (2000, 186–187) offers a TC model of inverse translation that strongly emphasizes translators’ ability to work between two languages rather than knowing two languages in separation. Neubert (2000, 6), too, emphasizes the specific nature of transfer competence, stating that “transfer competence is the distinguishing domain of a translator... transfer skills integrate language, text, subject, and culture knowledge with the sole aim of satisfying transfer needs.”

Pym (2013, 490) defines transfer skills as “the set of skills that actually enable a person to produce a translation”. Transfer skills, then, could be taken as the purely *translational* skill which is needed for delivering messages from one language to another and which does not alter with time or technological developments in the profession (cf. Pym 2003, 490). Pym (1991; 2003, 489) defines TC as “the ability to generate a series of more than one viable target text for a pertinent source text, and the ability to select only one viable TT from this series, quickly and with justified confidence”. Pym, then, conceptualizes TC as a *text production skill*, adding that the same ST may be translated in various ways, and the competent translator knows which translation is viable in which situation. In essence, Pym’s TC provides a working definition of (the advanced level of) transfer competence.

Malmkjær (2009, 132), in turn, states explicitly that transfer competence should be renamed as TC. In her view, transfer competence makes a translator. According to Malmkjær (*ibid.*, my emphasis), transfer competence is “the knowledge of the translational relationships between the languages that allows translators to match languages appropriately when translating, *as distinct from their ability to use their languages individually*”. As she points out, transfer competence defines the linguistic competence of a professional translator. Toury (1984, 189) proposes the term *interlingual competence* to refer to this translation-specific linguistic competence, defining it as “the ability to establish similarities and differences, on more than one level, between items and structures, if not full utterances, pertinent to the languages that one has actually acquired.”

Malmkjær (2009, 125–126) also discusses the development of transfer competence, assuming that it develops against the background of interaction between the initial state and relevant input. This initial state, according to her (*ibid.*), would include two or more languages *in whatever measure*. The process towards transfer competence is, in essence, about *refining one’s skill to work between the languages*

within the limits of one's language competence, starting from the very rudimentary skill to mediate between the two languages. While Malmkjær regards the initial stage in which a person possesses some level of language skills in two languages as the starting point *towards* transfer competence, I regard it as the most rudimentary level of transfer competence. The difference in the line of thinking can be explained by different approaches to translation: Malmkjær approaches it as a profession, whereas I approach it as any mediation activity carried out between two languages.

In this new framework, the term *interlingual* is preferred to *transfer*, because it seems more accurately to capture the nature of translation as a cognitive task taking place *between* languages. Interlingual text production skills, illustrated in the centre of the model in Figure 1, form the core of TC, because *any act of translation unavoidably requires some level of these skills*. In some translation situations, rudimentary interlingual text production skills are sufficient to produce a TT that meets the demands of the situation. For example, in translating a letter from an American cousin to a Finnish grandmother, competence comes down to understanding the approximate contents of the letter and the ability to explain it in TL. Such rudimentary skills can be deemed sufficient in various situations of natural translation, in which “linguistic expression is relatively unimportant so long as it does not interfere with information” (Harris 1977).

More complex translation situations with higher quality expectations require more advanced interlingual text production skills. The more expectations are set on the outcome of interlingual text production, the more emphasis is laid on the translator's skills to work between the languages (and cultures). The advanced level is characterized by contrastive skills, ability to analyse both the contents and the language of the ST as a text that is to be transferred to a different readership. In practice, this means that a translator can take both differences and similarities between languages as well as cultures into consideration when translating.

3.4 Task-specific knowledge

Obviously, many translation situations presuppose various extra-linguistic knowledge to enable interlingual TT production. In this framework, such knowledge is referred to as task-specific knowledge. These are largely the same as in PACTE's and Göpferich's models. In this framework they are not, however, illustrated as *subcompetences*, but as contributory knowledge needed for producing a text on the basis of a ST. In different translation situations, *task-specific knowledge in different combinations is taken into the service of text production*.

Subject field knowledge and (inter)cultural knowledge are perhaps the types of knowledge most often expected from a translator in more complex translation

situations. Just how much task-specific knowledge is required is dictated by the translation situation. In some situations, a piece of basic intercultural knowledge may suffice in order to avoid ‘cultural bumps’ (Leppihalme 1997). Replacing imperial units by metric equivalents when translating cooking recipes from English into Finnish might serve as one example of this. In other situations, more profound knowledge of cultures may be expected; for example, to recognize potentially negative connotations of otherwise linguistically suitable translation equivalents in the target culture. This knowledge was insufficient, for example, when marketing Finnish mobile phones in Germany by the use of a slogan *Jedem das Seine* as more or less literal translation of the original Finnish slogan in the 1990s.¹ With regard to special field knowledge, it is not elementary for a translator to master the special field of the translation situation thoroughly, but they need to know enough to be able to produce a TT that serves the communicative needs in the situation. As Robinson (2003, 128) notes, professional special-field translators “make a living pretending to be (or at least to speak or write as if they were) licensed practitioners of professions that they have typically never practiced.”

Knowledge related to translation technology is also task-specific knowledge. Many professional translation situations nowadays involve the use of translation memories and terminological tools. Technological knowledge has a different function than subject-field or intercultural knowledge; ideally, it makes the text production process faster and more efficient, but it does not really contribute to the cognitive process of the interlingual TT production as such.² The translator would have to be able to produce the text without technology, too. It is also different in the sense that it needs to emerge as a *skill* in the translation process, i.e., it is not enough just to know *about* translation tools but it is essential to have the skill to use them in practice.

3.5 Information search skills

In today’s multilingual, multicultural, and technological environment, documentary research plays “a vital instrumental link in the chain of mediation and knowl-

1. The company may have meant something like “we have a perfect phone for each and everyone.” The idiomatic German expression features in Martin Luther’s writings and in the title of a Bach’s cantata *Nur jedem das Seine* (BWV 163) but, crucially, it was also the motto displayed over the gate of the Buchenwald concentration camp. Thus, this version of an ancient Greek principle of justice was controversial in Germany at the time of the promotion campaign.

2. However, when translation process consists of revising translation memory matches rather than producing a target text from scratch, the nature of interlingual skills needed may change from interlingual text *production* skills to interlingual text *revision* skills (see Pym 2013).

edge transfer that makes up translation” (Pinto & Sales 2007, 532). Hence, knowledge related to information search also serves the purpose of interlingual text production. With such knowledge, translators can compensate for the lack of any task-specific or interlingual knowledge. Naturally, the more shortcomings translators have in the knowledge required by the situation, the more they must rely on information search in order to be able to translate the text. Similarly to technological knowledge, information search knowledge must entail both *knowing what* and *knowing how* aspects in order to be useful in the translation process. In other words, it is a *skill* (see e.g., Schäffner 2000, 148).

A translator can compensate for different types of shortcomings by different types of information search activities. They may have comprehension problems, in which case they resort to bilingual or monolingual dictionaries, looking up a word or a phrase. The comprehension problem may be due to ignorance of the ST’s subject field, in which case they may turn to parallel texts or subject field experts, or look for explanations of field-specific terms. A translator may be uncertain of the way some lexical items are used in the TL, and use corpora to look up pragmatic information on their register and connotations, for example, thus compensating for lacking knowledge for text production. Parallel texts may be consulted also to compensate for the lack of knowledge of textual conventions in a certain special field. In short, information search—referred to as *information literacy* by Massey & Ehrensberger-Dow (2011, 193), *instrumental subcompetence* by PACTE (2000; 2005; 2009) and *tools and research competence* by Göpferich (2009)—comes down to the translator’s ability to use the tools and resources at their disposal to their benefit in a translation situation.

3.6 Cognitive framework of knowledge

The italicized concepts within the model refer to different types of knowledge underlying TC. In line with the idea of translation being a part of every bilinguals’ everyday life, the basic assumption behind this model is that the content knowledge needed to translate accumulates throughout life. Knowledge arising from experience and that gained from books and lectures during training and self-studies are regarded as equally essential in ATC. The framework posits that TC is a result of both nature and nurture (e.g., Toury 2012, 277) and recognizes the role of *tacit knowledge* in the making of competence. The concept of tacit knowledge stems from Polanyi (1966, 4) who argued that “we know more than we can tell”, and that this knowledge underlies a wide range of skills from tool use to application of the scientific method and, arguably, translation. Therefore, instead of the traditional approach of conceptualizing knowledge via the dichotomy of declar-

ative vs. procedural distinction (Anderson 1983), the model suggests Bereiter's (2002) knowledge typology as the cognitive framework of knowledge.

Bereiter's typology defines six types of knowledge: regulative knowledge, storable knowledge, skill, episodic knowledge, impressionistic knowledge, and implicit understanding, of which the last three represent tacit or implicit knowledge. Bereiter (2002, 148–149) emphasizes that competence arises from the interplay of all six types. Bereiter's typology is strongly rooted in the constructivist idea of learning, which views learning as the result of mental construction: it takes place when “new information is built into and added onto individual's current structure of knowledge, understanding and skills” (Pritchard 2013, 18). Constructivism emphasizes individual ways of constructing knowledge, hence offering an explanation as to *why* students learn in different ways: each possesses a unique set of knowledge at different points of training since their experiences of the world and language are unique.

Storable knowledge refers to knowledge that is deliberately sought or read—be it from the Internet, from lectures, from books, from special field experts. *Episodic* and *impressionistic knowledge* as well as *implicit understanding*, in turn, are acquired through experience, not only as a translator but also as a language speaker and a member of various discourse communities. The type of knowledge that shows in performance is *skill*. Without skill, other types of knowledge remain unobservable in performance. For example, one can have storable or tacit knowledge about translation strategies, but lack the skill to use them in practise. In contrast, skill entails both ‘knowing in principle’ and ‘knowing in practice’ (Bereiter 2002). The knowledge types underlying skill may be storable or tacit, in some cases beyond a translator's awareness. *Regulative knowledge* differs from the other knowledge types due to its controlling function: it is metacognitive knowledge of one's own knowledge. Regulative knowledge alerts translators to deficiencies in their ability to carry out a translation task and, for example, makes them search for information. As such, its functions are similar to those of strategic competence in PACTE's and Göpferich's models.³

4. Using the model in an empirical study

The framework provides a starting point for an empirical study into ATC. However, the components in the general framework need to be fine-grained first. Naturally, there are many ways to divide general components of TC into smaller constituents. In the following, an account is given of the method of fine-graining

3. For a more detailed introduction of knowledge types, see Kumpulainen (2016, 49–57).

interlingual text production skills for the purpose of studying their acquisition in a BA programme in translation (Kumpulainen 2016).

4.1 Study design

The empirical part of the PhD project had two aims: first, to *refine* the situation-based TC framework designed in the theoretical part, with regard to interlingual text production skills in particular, and second, to give an account of how these skills emerge in student translations at the beginning and end of BA programme. To reach both aims, two rounds of analysis were carried out with the same material. The material was collected from a group of seven students at the beginning and end of their BA programme in translation, and it consists of translations, screen recordings of translation processes, translation commentaries and questionnaires about translation-related knowledge. The first was essential in refining the components of interlingual text production skills, while all played a role in the discussion of students' overall development.

Since TC in this framework is situation-bound, its *indicators* arise from the expectations set by the situation. In the translation situation in this study, students translated one article from the book *501 Must-See Movies* at the beginning and another article the end of their BA studies. According to the translation brief, the TTs were to be published as a part of a printed handbook; therefore, the situation placed high expectations on the linguistic quality of the TT. The STs did not contain special-field terminology or phrases, but the challenges in translation stemmed mainly from interlingual differences between the working languages. To make the translation situations more comparable, the text translated at the end was slightly manipulated so that a part of the interlingual issues in translation were exactly the same in the two texts. In these situations, a *competent* translator produces a TT that abides to the TL norms and contains no false information. Hence, *linguistic accuracy* and *content accuracy* were taken as the indicators of TC.

The first round of data analysis focused on translations of 13 ST chunks (both beginning and end), all of which could not be transferred word for word into the TT. This round aimed at identifying different skills needed in advanced interlingual text production. The product data was analysed for content accuracy and linguistic accuracy. TT chunks that were accurate implied advanced interlingual text production skills whereas inaccurate TT chunks implied that some skill component was yet to be developed. Of the TT chunks translated at the beginning of BA programme, 60.4% were inaccurate, and of those translated at the end, 35.2%. The fine-graining of interlingual text production skills in my study was based on the descriptive analysis of these inaccurate TT chunks: a TT chunk is inaccurate due

to a specific linguistic or content-related feature and, therefore, points to *a specific type of skill* needed in interlingual text production (or rather, a lack of such a skill).

The second round of data analysis is the actual longitudinal study into ATC. It looks at each students' performance at both ends of BA programme with regard to the skills specified in the first round, thus bringing forth individual differences as well as common trends in the acquisition of interlingual text production skills.

4.2 Results

As a result of the first analysis, interlingual text production skills were first split into three main categories: (1) skills needed for understanding the ST for the purpose of translation, (2) skills needed to monitor the TT for negative transfer—i.e., disturbing ST influence –, and (3) skills needed to produce norm-abiding TL text in a translation situation. The first category was derived from content inaccuracies whereas the second and the third were linked with linguistic inaccuracies. Each of these main categories were further fine-grained according to the type of inaccuracy in the TT chunk, as shown in Table 1. As a result, interlingual text production skills were fine-grained into subskills. (For a detailed account of each subskill, see Kumpulainen 2016, 97–124).

The first category is split into three subskills according to content inaccuracies in the whole data. These were low in number, since the STs in the study were rather easy to understand. The second category, skills needed to monitor the TT for negative transfer, is linked with the ability to deal with interlingual differences in translation. In effect, this category zooms into the skills needed “to keep languages apart when alternating between them” (PACTE 2003). Subskills reflect translators' ability to recognize and react on ST influence depending on the type of linguistic inaccuracy it causes in a TT. The different subskills in this category imply that a translator may spot one type of ST influence in a TT but ignore others. For example, a translator may possess a skill to detect ST influence in the TT when the TL expression makes no sense due to ST influence, but may lack the skill to detect disturbing ST influence in TT punctuation, or in a lexical item that is unnatural or unconventional in the TT without being incomprehensible. The third category comprises skills related TL text production. They emerge from those linguistic inaccuracies in the data that could not be traced back to the ST structure.

The second round of data analysis constituted a longitudinal study, investigating changes in students' performance with regard to the skills specified above. Students' performance at the beginning and end of their BA programme was analysed individually. This round revealed both general trends as well as individual differences in the acquisition of interlingual text production skills. The first main category—skills to understand the ST for the purpose of translation—showed little

Table 1. Specification of interlingual text production skills

skills needed for understanding the ST for the purpose of translation	to interpret polysemous lexical items in context to recognize idioms and grasp their meaning to link concepts with appropriate terms (understanding terms)
skills needed to monitor the TT for negative transfer (i.e., disturbing ST influence)	for meaning for idiomaticity, conventionality, naturalness for TL structural/syntax norms/rules for textual cohesion and coherence for punctuation and spelling for the level of formality/informality
skills needed to produce norm-abiding TL text in a translation situation	to produce exact, idiomatic TL text to produce text that applies to TL syntactic and structural rules to produce coherent and cohesive text to produce text that applies to TL orthography rules to produce TL text with appropriate level of formality/informality to use exact terminology

change in the longitudinal study, since the number of content inaccuracies was low in the data. The most significant changes took place in the subskills of the latter categories.

Students at the beginning of BA programme can be placed on a continuum with regard to skills needed to monitor the TT for negative transfer. Those whose TT was heavily influenced by disturbing ST influence occupied one end while those whose TTs are almost completely devoid of it occupy the other. Of the group of seven students in my study, two can be placed at both ends, while the rest three fall between the two poles. 'Heavy influence' does not refer to the number of TT chunks with disturbing ST influence only, but also to the nature of it: TTs with heavy ST influence implied insufficiency of skills to monitor the TT for meaning. This means that ST influence was not spotted and revised in the TT chunk even if the TT was incomprehensible TL. It seems, then, that at the beginning, students' ability to deal with interlingual differences differs substantially. By the end of BA programme, the differences between students were almost completely vanished. In general, by then most of the monitoring skills seemed developed.

All students' performance implied insufficiencies in some skills needed to produce a norm-abiding TL text, both at the beginning and end of BA programme—including students who seemed able to avoid negative ST influence at the beginning. Generally, the most challenges seems to be linked with the production of exact, idiomatic TL text, although differences between students could

be observed. One may be unable to follow the TL orthography rules in particular while another tends to produce syntactically unorthodox clauses. Three students' TL text production skills had slightly improved by the end of BA programme, while four students' performance showed no change. This seeming stagnation may have a simple explanation: at the beginning, a word for word translation strategy that shows as a ST-influenced TT may hide insufficiencies in TL text production skills. When students learn to recognize interlingual differences and learn to deal with them in translation, the product no longer shows disturbing ST influence—but may still imply problems in TL text production.

5. Conclusions

The framework presented in this paper provides a bottom-up approach TC and its acquisition, highlighting the role of interlingual text production skills as the foundation of TC. The PhD project discussed in the paper aimed at, first, complementing the framework by specifying the interlingual text production skills in more detail, and second, accounting for changes in students' performance with regard to the specified subskills. In this data-driven study, then, the identified subskills represent skills that students do not yet possess at the beginning of BA programme in translation, bringing forth skills that need to be strengthened during training and are therefore interesting from the trainer's point of view. Hence, while the study discussed in the paper outlined some basic skills that form the core of TC, more studies are needed to further explicitate the skills involved in interlingual text production, in particular with regard to the skills needed for ST comprehension. Those skills were not really challenged by the relatively easy ST in the study and, consequently, only a few subskills were identified. A more demanding text would probably yield a more encompassing spectrum of inaccuracies, which would point to different subskills. Furthermore, the analysis in the PhD project focused on translation of 13 ST chunks only, with a limited selection of interlingual challenges. Similar studies with a variety of STs and language pairs would contribute to specify more subskills.

The framework is open to further development and complementation with regard to task-specific or contributory knowledge as well. The data of the study presented in this paper, for example, can be further exploited to outline some basic skills needed in information search, the use of electronic dictionaries in particular. A special-field ST could focus on specifying skills needed for information search or use of translation technology. A series of studies with different situations and research settings could result in a comprehensive understanding of the scale of skills needed in complex translation situations.

References

- Anderson, John R. 1983. *The Architecture of Cognition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Baker, Mona. 1992. *In Other Words. A Coursebook on Translation*. London: Routledge. doi: 10.4324/9780203327579
- Beeby, Allison. 2000. "Evaluating the Development of Translation Competence." In *Developing Translation Competence*. Edited by C. Schäffner, and B. Adab, 185–198. New York: John Benjamins. doi: 10.1075/btl.38.18bee
- Bereiter, Carl. 2002. *Education and Mind in the Knowledge Age*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Chesterman, Andrew. 1998. *Contrastive Functional Analysis*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. doi: 10.1075/pbns.47
- Cnyrim, Andrea, Susanne Hagemann, and Julia Neu. 2013. "Towards a Framework of Reference for Translation Competence." In *New Prospects and Perspectives for Educating Language Mediators*. Edited by D. Kiraly, S. Hansen-Schirra, and K. Maksymski, 9–34. Tübingen: Narr.
- Englund-Dimitrova, Birgitta. 2005. *Expertise and Explicitation in the Translation Process*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. doi: 10.1075/btl.64
- Göpferich, Susanne. 2009. "Towards a Model of Translation Competence and its Acquisition: the Longitudinal Study TransComp." In *Behind the Mind. Methods, Models and Results in Translation Process Research*. Edited by S. Göpferich, A. L. Jakobsen, and I. M. Mees, 11–37. Copenhagen: Samfundslitteratur Press.
- Göpferich, Susanne. 2011. "From multidisciplinary to transdisciplinarity: The Investigation of Competence Development as a Case in Point." *Electronic Proceedings of the KäTu Symposium on Translation and Interpreting Studies* 5. Accessed September 22, 2017. ISSN 1797–3112.
- Göpferich, Susanne. 2013. "Translation Competence: Explaining Development and Stagnation from a Dynamic Systems Perspective." *Target* 25 (1): 61–76. doi: 10.1075/target.25.1.06goe
- Harris, Brian. 1977. "The Importance of Natural Translation." *Working Papers on Bilingualism* 12: 96–114.
- Holz-Mänttari, Justa. 1984. *Translatorisches Handeln. Theorie und Methode*. Helsinki: Suomalainen tiedeakatemia.
- House, Juliane. 2000. "Linguistic Relativity and Translation." In *Explorations in Linguistic Relativity*. Edited by M. Pütz, and M. H. Verspoor, 69–88. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. doi: 10.1075/cilt.199.06hou
- House, Juliane. 2015. *Translation Quality Assessment. Past and Present*. New York: Routledge.
- Hurtado Albir, Amparo. 1996. "La enseñanza de la traducción directa general". In *La enseñanza de la traducción*. Edited by A. Hurtado, 31–56. Castellón: Universitat Jaume I.
- Kolehmainen, Leena, Kaisa Koskinen, and Helka Riionheimo. 2015. "Translatorisen toiminnan jatkumot" [The Continuums of Translatorial Action]. *Virittäjä* 3: 370–398.
- Kumpulainen, Minna. 2011. "Mitä käännöprosessi ja -tuote kertovat opiskelijan kompetensista?" [What do the Translation Process and Product Tell about a Student's Competence?] *Electronic Proceedings of the KäTu Symposium on Translation and Interpreting Studies* 5. Accessed May 23, 2017. ISSN 1797–3112.

- Kumpulainen, Minna. 2016. *Learning Translation. An Empirical Study into the Acquisition of Interlingual Text Production Skills*. Publications of the University of Eastern Finland. Dissertations in Education, Humanities, and Theology, No 91. Joensuu: University of Eastern Finland.
- Leppihalme, Ritva. 1997. *Culture Bumps: An Empirical Approach to the Translation of Allusions*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Lörscher, Wolfgang. 1994. "Process-oriented Research into Translation and Implications for Translation Teaching." *LETRAS* 8: 38–54. Available at <https://periodicos.ufsm.br/letras/issue/view/631/showToc>
- Lörscher, Wolfgang. 2012. "Bilingualism and Translation Competence. A Research Project and its First Results." *SYNAPS. A Journal of Professional Communication* 27: 3–15.
- Malmkjær, Kirsten. 2009. "What is Translation Competence?" *Revue française de linguistique appliquée* XIV: 121–134. Accessed May 17, 2017. Available at http://cairn-int.info/article-E_RFLA_141_0121--what-is-translation-competence.htm
- Massey, Gary, and Maureen Ehrensberger-Dow. 2011. "Investigating Information Literacy: a Growing Priority in Translation Studies." *Across Languages and Cultures* 12 (2): 193–211. doi:10.1556/Acr.12.2011.2.4
- Neubert, Albrecht. 1994. "Competence in Translation: A Complex Skill, How to Study it and How to Teach It." In *Translation studies: an Interdiscipline*. Edited by M. Snell-Hornby, F. Pöchhacker, and K. Kaindl, 411–420. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. doi:10.1075/btl.2.48neu
- Neubert, Albrecht, and Gregory Shreve. 1992. *Translation as Text*. Kent: Kent State University Press.
- Neubert, Albrecht. 2000. "Competence in Language, in Languages, and in Translation." In *Developing Translation Competence*. Edited by C. Schäffner, and B. Adab, 3–18. New York: John Benjamins. doi:10.1075/btl.38.03neu
- PACTE. 2000. "Acquiring Translation Competence: Hypotheses and Methodological Problems in a Research Project." In *Investigating Translation*. Edited by A. Beeby, D. Ensinger, and M. Presas, 99–106. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. doi:10.1075/btl.32
- PACTE. 2003. "Building a Translation Competence Model." In *Triangulating Translation: Perspectives on Process-oriented Research*. Edited by F. Alves, 43–66. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. doi:10.1075/btl.45
- PACTE. 2005. "Investigating Translation Competence: Conceptual and Methodological Issues." *Meta* 50 (2): 609–619. doi:10.7202/011004ar
- PACTE. 2009. "Results of the Validitation of the PACTE Translation Competence Model: Acceptability and Decision-making." *Across languages and cultures* 10 (2): 207–230. doi:10.1556/Acr.10.2009.2.3
- PACTE. 2014. "First Results of PACTE Group's Experimental Research on Translation Competence Acquisition: the Acquisition of Declarative Knowledge of Translation." In *Minding Translation*. Edited by R. Muñoz, 85–115. *MonTI*, special issue 1. Alicante: Universidad de Alicante.
- Pinto Molina, María, and Dora Sales Salvador. 2007. "A Research Case Study for User-Centred Information Literacy Instruction: Information Behaviour of Translation Trainees." *Journal of Information Science* 33 (5): 531–550. doi:10.1177/0165551506076404
- Polanyi, Michael. 1966. *The Tacit Dimension*. New York: Doubleday.
- Presas Corbella, M^a. Lluïsa. 2000. "Bilingual Competence and Translation Competence." In *Developing Translation Competence*. Edited by C. Schäffner, and B. Adab, 19–32. New York: John Benjamins. doi:10.1075/btl.38.04pre

- Pritchard, Alan. 2013. *Ways of Learning: Learning Theories and Learning Styles in the Classroom*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge.
- Pym, Anthony. 1991. "A Definition of Translational Competence, Applied to the Teaching of Translation." In *Translation: A creative profession. Proceedings of the 12th World Congress of FIT*. Edited by Mladen Jovanović, 541–546. Belgrad: Prevodilac.
- Pym, Anthony. 2003. "Redefining Translation Competence in an Electronic Age." *Meta* 48 (4): 481–497. Accessed June 5, 2017. doi: 10.7202/008533ar
- Pym, Anthony. 2009. "Using Process Studies in Translator Training: Self-discovery through Lousy Experiments." In *Methodology, Technology and Innovation in Translation Process Research: A Tribute to Arnt Lykke Jakobsen*. Edited by I. M. Mees, F. Alves, and S. Göpferich, 135–156. Copenhagen: Samfundslitteratur.
- Pym, Anthony. 2013. "Translation Skill-sets in a Machine-translation Age." *Meta* 58 (3): 487–503. doi: 10.7202/1025047ar
- Risku, Hanna. 1998. *Translatorische Kompetenz*. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.
- Roberts, Roda. 1984. "Compétence du nouveau diploma en traduction." In *Traduction et Qualité de Langue. Actes du Colloque Société des traducteurs du Québec, Conseil de la langue française*, 172–184. Québec: Éditeur officiel du Québec.
- Robinson, Douglas. 2003. *Becoming a Translator. An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Translation*. London: Routledge.
- Schäffner, Christina. 2000. "Running before Walking? Designing a Translation Programme at Undergraduate Level." In *Developing Translation Competence*. Edited by C. Schäffner, and B. Adab, 143–156. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. doi: 10.1075/btl.38.14sch
- Shreve, Gregory. 1997. "Cognition and the Evolution of Translation Competence." In *Cognitive Processes in Translation and Interpreting*. Edited by J. H. Danks, G. Shreve, S. Fountain, and M. McBeath, 120–136. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Shreve, Gregory. 2012. "Bilingualism and Translation." In *Handbook of Translation Studies* vol. 3. Edited by Yves Gambier, and Luc van Doorslaer, 1–6. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. doi: 10.1075/hts.3.b1h
- Toury, Gideon. 1984. "The Notion of 'Native Translator' and Translation Teaching." In *Die Theorie des Übersetzens und ihr Aufschlusswert für die Übersetzungs- und Dolmetschdidaktik*. Edited by W. Wilss, and G. Thome, 186–195. Tübingen: Narr.
- Toury, Gideon. 1995/2012. *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. doi: 10.1075/btl.4
- Whyatt, Bogusława. 2013. *Translation as a Human Skill. From Predisposition to Expertise*. Poznań: Adam Mickiewicz University Press.
- Wills, Wolfram. 1976. "Perspectives and Limitations of a Didactic Framework for the Teaching of Translation." In *Translation Applications and Research*. Edited by R. W. Brislin, 117–137. New York: Gardner.

Author's address

Minna Kumpulainen
University of Eastern Finland
PL 111
80101 Joensuu
Finland
minna.kumpulainen@uef.fi

Biographical note

Minna Kumpulainen, PhD, works as a university teacher in the University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu, at the Department of Foreign Languages and Translation studies. She teaches both theoretical and practical courses of translation, and her research deals with translation competence and its acquisition.