# SETTING LEARNING OBJECTIVES IN TRANSLATION AT THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING THROUGH THE CONCEPT OF COMPETENCE*

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## ABSTRACT

At the department of foreign language teaching, a variety of courses are offered in order for students to acquire translation competence. The courses are often carried out by translating a text from one language into the other. Learning by experience is an effective approach. However, it is inevitable that there are some aspects that we need to re-consider with this methodology. Translation is a creative and functional activity. Any approach neglecting this aspect of translation can be regarded as source-oriented and prescriptive. The concept of translation competence can be used in such a way that is different from the traditional way of translation practice at the department of foreign language teaching. The model put forward by the PACTE Research Group, which investigates the translation competence and its acquisition in Spain, serves this purpose. The model consists of 5 sub-competencies that are inter-related and hierarchic. In the model, linguistic competence is a component of translation competence. It is the plan of the study to start by introducing the concept of competence. After that, a difference will be drawn up between linguistic competence and translation competence. The theoretical framework is followed by a sample practice. As a result, there will be a change from source-orientedness to target-orientedness and from being static to dynamic and functional in translation. This approach will contribute to the build-up of self-efficacy for the learners.

**Key Words:** Learning Objectives, Translation, Pedagogy, Competence, Language Teaching

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## YABANCI DİL EĞİTİMİ BÖLÜMLERİ ÇEVİRİ DERSLERİNDE EDİNÇ KAVRAMI İLE ÖĞRENİM HEDEFLERİNİN BELİRLENMESİ

### ÖZET

Yabancı dil eğitimi bölümlerinde öğrencilerin çeviri edinci kazanmaları için sunulan çeşitli programlar bulunmaktadır. Kimi programların yürütülmesinde izlenen yaygın yöntem ise bir metin bir dilden diğer bir dile çevirisini esas almaktadır. Deneyimle öğrenme (learning by experience) etkili bir yöntem olmasına rağmen bu yöntemde bazı noktaların göz önünde bulundurulması gerekmektedir. Temelde çeviri süreci, yaratıcı ve işlevsel bir etkinlik olarak dikkat çekmektedir. Çeviri olgusunun bu yönünü içine almayan tüm yaklaşımlar, kaynak odaklı ve buyurgan kabul edildiklerinden eleştiri ile karşı karşıya kalabilmektedirler. Çeviri edinci kavramı, yabancı dil eğitimi bölümlerinin müfredatlarında bulunan çeviri derslerinin izlencelerinde geleneksel yöntemden farklı olarak öğrenim hedeflerini belirlemek için yer verilebilir. Bu amaçla İspanya'da çeviri edinci ve edinimi üzerine çalışan PACTE Araştırma Grubu'nun çeviri edinci modeli esas alınarak çalışmanın kuramsal çatısı oluşturulmuştur. Bu çeviri modeli beş alt edinçten oluşmaktadır. Bu alt edinçler, birbiri ile hiyararşik bir şekilde ilişkilidir. Model, dil edincini çeviri edincinin bir bileşeni olarak ele almaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmada çeviri edinci kavramı ele alındıktan sonra çeviri edinci ile dil edinci ayrımı vurgulanmaktadır. Sunulan kuramsal çatı, bir örnek uygulama ile birlikte sunulmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, çeviri derslerinde kaynak odaklılıktan erek odaklılığa, durağanlıktan devingenliğe ve işlevselliğe yönelmek mümkün olabilecektir. Bu yaklaşım, çeviri sürecinde çevirmenlerin kendilerine güven ile ilgili öz-yeterlilik düzeyinin artmasına katkı sağlamaktadır.

**KeyWords:** Öğrenim Hedefleri, Çeviri, Çeviri Eğitimi, Edinç, Dil Eğitimi

### Introduction

At the department of foreign language teaching, a variety of courses are offered in order for students to acquire translation competence. The courses are often carried out by translating a text from one language to the other. Can students learn how to translate just by translating texts? What I aim is to offer a method of translation practice based on the concept of translation competence at tertiary education.

Learning by experience (inductive learning) is an effective approach. However, translation is a creative and functional activity. Any approach neglecting this aspect of translation can be regarded as source-oriented and prescriptive. As approaches identify learning by experience with cognitive learning in translation, students will be able to have a holistic point of view through a synthesization of inductive as well as deductive methods of learning and produce functional translations among different languages and cultures and that translation can not be learnt just by translating texts. There will be a change from source-orientedness to target-orientedness and from being static to dynamic and functional in translation.

It is my purpose to have an insight into the models of translation competence and to emphasize it in terms of setting learning objectives in translation classes. In order to see how I can apply this in a classroom setting, I will present a sample practice at the end.

### Literature Review on the Models of Translation Competence

Competence is a term that is often replaced by such terms as "ability", "aptitude", "capability", "competence", "effectiveness" and "skill" (Weinert, 1999:4)[1]. The concept of competence is widely used across many disciplines and contexts and is problematic because it has many varied meanings and interpretations. Competence is not limited to the acquisition of skills. It deals with the ability to handle challenges that occur in a specific situation in an appropriate way. Competences are expressed and demonstrated in an act of performance and they are always related to a specific social context. (Schneckenberg ve Wildt, 2006:29-30)[2].

The OECD program '**Definition and Selection of Competencies:Theoratical and Conceptual Foundations (DeSeCo)**' initiated in 1997 analyzes thetheoretical foundation, the rationale of the definition and selection process of key competenciesand their relationship to the social and economic environment (DeSeCo, 2001:2)[3]. Rychen defines the concept of competence in the framework carried out under the DeSeCo Program (Rychen, 2003:3)[4]:

> "A competence is defined as the ability to successfully meet complex demands in a particular context through the mobilisation of knowledge, cognitive skills but also practical skills, as well as social and behaviour components such as attitudes, emotions, and values and motivations."

### The model of translation competence by PACTE Research Group

The PACTE research group (Process in the Acquisition of Translation Competence and Evaluation) is a reasech group that investigates translation competence. Previous research prior to PACTE only dealt with certain aspects of translation competence. It was not empirical and experimental. PACTE puts forward a holistic and dynamic model of translation competence. **PACTE** Research Group defines translation competence as follows (PACTE, 2000:100[5]; PACTE, 2003:58; PACTE, 2011:33):

> "Translation competence is defined as the underlying system of knowledge and skills needed to be able to translate."

The model of translation competence is a multi-componential model and consists of some basic principles (PACTE, 2003:48):

[1]Weinert, Franz E.: **Concept of Competence**, Munich, Germany:Max Plank Institute for Psychological research, 1999.

[2]Schneckenberg, Dirk and Johannes Wildt: "Understanding the Concept of Ecompetence for Academic Staff", in **The Challenge of eCompetence in Academic Staff Development**, (Eds.) Mac Labhrainn, I., McDonald Legg, C., Schneckenberg, D., Wildt, J., Galway: CELT, 2006, (Çevirimiçi http://www.ecompetence.info/uploads/media/ch3.pdf, erişim28Subat 2014)

[3]DeSeCo, **Definition and Selection of Competencies:Theoratical and Conceptual Foundations**, Background paper, 2001, (çevirimiçi, http://www.oecd.org/pisa/35070367.pdf, erişim28Subat 2014).

[4]Rychen, Dominique Simone: **Investing in Competencies - but which competencies and for what? A contribution to the ANCLI/AEA Conference on Assessment Challenges for Democratic Society** (Conference paper). Lyon: OECD Project DeSeCo, 2003.

[5]PACTE Group: "Acquiring Translation Competence: Hypotheses and Methodological Problems in a Reseach Project," **Investigating Translation**, Ed. by A.Beeby, D.Ensinger, M.Presas, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 2000, s.99-106.

-        Translation competence is qualitatively different from bilingual competence which is one of the competences that constitute translation competence.

-        it is the underlying system of knowledge and skills needed to be able to translate.

-        it is expert knowledge.

-        it is is made up of a set of sub-competencies that are inter-related and hierarchic, with the strategic sub-competence occupying a dominant position.

- bilingual sub-competence

- extra-linguistic sub-competence

- knowledge about translation sub-competence

- instrumental sub-competence

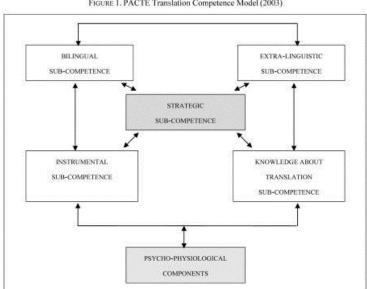- strategic sub-competence

- psycho-physiological components



FIGURE 1. PACTE Translation Competence Model (2003)

In the model, the **bilingual sub-competence** is made up of pragmatic, socio-linguistic, textual and lexical-grammatical knowledge in each language. The **extra-linguistic sub-competence** is made up of encyclopaedic, thematic and bicultural knowledge. The **knowledge about translation sub-competence** is knowledge of the principles that guide translation (processes, methods and procedures, etc.) and the profession (types of translation briefs, users, etc.). The **instrumental sub-competence** is made up of knowledge related to the use of documentation sources and information technologies applied to translation. The **strategic sub-competence** is the most important, as it is responsible for solving problems and the efficiency of the process. It intervenes by planning the process in relation to the translation project, evaluating

the process and partial results obtained, activating the different sub-competencies and compensating for deficiencies, identifying translation problems and applying procedures to solve them. The **psycho-physiological components** are cognitive and behavioural (memory, attention span, perseverance, critical mind, etc.) and psychomotor mechanisms (PACTE, 2005:610). Any bilingual has knowledge of two languages and may have extralinguistic knowledge, we consider that the sub-competencies specific to TC are the **strategic**, the **instrumental** and **knowledge about translation** (PACTE, 2005:611**;** Albir, 2010:57[6]; PACTE, 2011:34).

There is a significant difference between a bi-lingual person and a translator. Hönig states that bilingualism leads to lack of translation competence rather than fosters it naturally (Hönig, 1992:69)[7]. He also points out that translation competence is not acquired through translating texts and that there is a need to apply methodological knowledge for this purpose.The concept of cognitive learning in translation pedagogy is emphasized by Kurultay, too. He embraces three types of approaches to translation pedagogy: Cognitive, experiential, and knowledge-based. Cognitive learning is placed between the other two (Kurultay, 1998:307-320)[8]. He assesses the cognitve learning as the convergence of experience (the inductive way) and knowledge (the deductive way). Thus, a translator can learn how to translate well by way of internalisation. This may also contribute to the build-up of self efficacy in the learner (Aydın, 2014:223)[9] and make them more initiative and determined in the decisions they make during the translation process.

### Procedure

### Significance and Purpose

A sample practice will shed more light on the theoretical bases. Currently, there have been up to 14 different translation sub-competencies from the different models that have been developed so far (Eser, 2013:46-47)[10]. I consider it significant to employ these sub-competencies in setting learning objectives in translation classes as translation competence is defined as the sum of it all. Practice can be based on these sub-competencies in accordance with the needs and syllabus of a translation class.

### Methodology and Sampling

In order to make learners aware of the text types in translation, the extra-linguistic sub-competence and the strategic sub-competence are of primary importance. The sampling of students consists of students with a command of English at the intermediate level at university. The method is a learning-by-discovery activity in which they can participate actively.

### Data Collection Tools

The data collection tool is based on a text involving a joke. It is a text-type which is expressive in nature rather than informative. It requires creativity and a knowledge of the target

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[6]Albir, A. Hurdato:"Competence", in Handbook of Translation Studies ed. by Yves Gambier et. al., Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company,2010

[7]Hönig, Hans G.: "Çeviri Çeviri Yapılarak Öğrenilmez. Çeviride Bir Ön Eğitimin Gerekliliğini Savunma", çev. Turgay Kurultay, **Metis Çeviri, 19**, 1992, s:65-76.

[8]Kurultay, Turgay: "Çeviri Eğitimi Neden Farklı Bir Eğitimdir? Çeviri Bölümlerinin ProgramlarındaYöntem Derslerinin Gerekliliği ve Uygulama Koşulları", **6. Germanistik Sempozyumu**, Yay.Haz. A.Keskin, Mersin Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, Alman Dili ve Edebiyatı, 1998, s.309-323.

[9]AYDIN, Solmaz (2014). "Öğretmen Adaylarının Başarı Amaç Yönelimleri ve Akademik Öz-yeterliliklerinin Yapısal Eşitlik Modeliyle İncelenmesi", TURKISH STUDIES - International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic-, ISSN: 1308-2140, Volume 9/2 Winter 2014, www.turkishstudies.net, Doi Number :http://dx.doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.6338, p. 221-230.

[10]Eser, Oktay: **Çeviri Eğitiminde Edinç Kavramının Değerlendirilmesi**, yayınlanmamış doktora tezi, İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2013.

culture. The students were phased into the whole text from phrase level to text level or from context-free utterances to context-based and functional texts. So, at first they were not concious of the text type at all. I expect the students to have a better understanding of the relationship between a text-type and translation context.

**The Practice**

The following utterances as shown in Figure 2 were given to the participants who, in turn, translated them into Turkish.

Figure 2: Utterances given to the participants without a context

| | Attempt 1 | Attempt 2 | Attempt 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **She shouted at the top of her lungs.** | | | |
| **Honey!** | | | |
| **I won the lottery.** | | | |
| **Beach stuff or mountain stuff?** | | | |
| **It doesn't matter.** | | | |
| **Just get the hell out!** | | | |

The equivalents they came up with were as follows:

Figure 3: The equivalents to the utterances

| Attempt 1 | Uğur Erdem | Duygu Güneri | Beyza Yaman |
|---|---|---|---|
| **She shouted at the top of her lungs.** | Ciğerlerinden çıkan en yüksek sesle bağırdı. | Avazı çıktığınca bağırdı. | Kadın ciğerinden çıkabilen en yüksek sesle bağırdı. |
| **Honey!** | Bal | Bal | Bal |
| **I won the lottery.** | Piyangoyu kazandım. | Piyangoyu kazandım. | Piyangoyu tutturdum. |
| **Beach stuff or mountain stuff?** | Sahil malzemesi ya da dağ malzemesi | Sahil malzemesi mi dağ malzemesi mi? | Sahil malzemeleri ya da dağ malzemeleri? |
| **It doesn't matter.** | Farketmez. | Önemli değil. | Önemli değil. |
| **Just get the hell out!** | Cehenneme git! | Defol! | Hemen buradan çık! |

In Figure 3, I enabled the participants to see the text as a whole in a context in the second phase. I asked them to make the changes that they felt were necessary, and to write them in the second column.

Figure 3: The source text in a context

**Source text**

> A woman came home, screeching her car into the driveway, and ran into the house. She slammed the door and **shouted at the top of her lungs**.

"**Honey**! Pack your bags. **I won the lottery**."
"Oh my God! What should I pack," the husband said, "**beach stuff or mountain stuff?**"

"**It doesn't matter**," she said, "**Just get the hell out!**"

| Attempt 2 | Uğur Erdem | Duygu Güneri | Beyza Yaman |
|---|---|---|---|
| **She shouted at the top of her lungs.** | Ciğerlerinden çıkan en yüksek sesle seslendi. | Avazı çıktığınca seslendi. | Tüm kuvvetiyle seslendi. |
| **Honey!** | Tatlım! | Tatlım! | Tatlım! |
| **I won the lottery.** | Piyangoyu kazandım. | Piyango bana çıktı. | Piyango bana vurdu. |
| **Beach stuff or mountain stuff?** | Deniz malzemeleri ya da kamp malzemeleri | Dağa mı sahile mi? | Sahil kıyısı ya da dağ kıyısı? |
| **It doesn't matter.** | Hiç farketmez. | Hiç farketmez. | Farketmez. |
| **Just get the hell out!** | Allah belanı versin. | Sadece defol! | Cehennem ol da nereye gidersen git! |

In Figure 4, I gave them the text-type saying that it was a joke in nature. They took the text-type into account. They had to make the changes for the translation to be functional. Thus, some new solutions to the specific translation problems appeared.

Figure 4: Producing a functional text in the target culture

| Attempt 3 | Uğur Erdem | Duygu Güneri | Beyza Yaman |
|---|---|---|---|
| **She shouted at the top of her lungs.** | Avazı çıktığı kadar seslenir. | Heyecanlı bir şekilde seslenmiş. | Heyecanla seslenmiş. |
| **Honey!** | Tatlım! | Canım! | Tatlım! |
| **I won the lottery.** | Piyangoyu ben kazandım. | Piyango bana vurdu. | Piyango bana vurdu. |
| **Beach stuff or mountain stuff?** | Deniz malzemeleri ya da kamp malzemeleri | Yazlık mı kışlık mı? | Dağa mı denize mi gidiyoruz? |
| **It doesn't matter.** | Hiç farketmez. | Hiç bir önemi yok. | Farketmez. Sen bilirsin. |
| **Just get the hell out!** | Çünkü sen cehenneme gidiyorsun! | Cehennem kadar yolun var. | Çünkü sadece sen gidiyorsun. |

All in all, the text-type and the context are the concepts which had participants revise their translation decisions and make the changes that they thought were necessary as they moved from one phase to the next in order to produce a functional translation. They were in a position to justify the changes using these fundamental concepts.

**Conclusion**

An approach based on the concept of translation competence can help translation practitioners design a more effective syllabus in translation courses at university. They may well choose to focus on a certain sub-competence until they think that learners have acquired to some certain extent. Among the learning outcomes of a competence-oriented syllabus in translation, learners will be able to develop an understanding of what translation phenomenon is. They will be able to distinguish between bi-lingual competence and translation competence. They will see translation competence as the sum of all the other sub-competencies with the strategic sub-competence playing a central part in deciding on translation problems and sorting them out. There will be a change from source-orientedness to target-orientedness and from being static to dynamic and functional in translation. As approaches identify learning by experience with cognitive learning in translation, students will be able to have a holistic point of view through a synthesization of inductive as well as deductive methods of learning and produce functional translations among different languages and cultures and that translation can not be learnt just by translating texts.

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