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### Research Paper

## Translation Teaching Competence: Teachers and Students' Perspectives

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### Abstract

This qualitative study is an attempt to gain insights into the competence and sub-competencies required for a successful English and Persian translation teacher in the context of undergraduate education in Iran. To this end, 95 senior graduate and undergraduate students of English translation and 13 experienced translation teachers in Iranian universities were invited to participate in the study. Using focus-group and in-depth interviews, two sets of qualitative data were collected and analyzed through open, axial, and selective coding procedures of Grounded Theory. According to the students, translation teaching competence includes the components of pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and psychological-personality competence, while the teachers believed in pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and mental-personality competence as the underlying constructs. Whereas content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge are mainly common in the views of the students and teachers, psychological-personality and mental-personality sub-competences are the factors which are not shared by the two groups.

**Keywords:** Translator Education, Translator Training, Translation Teaching Competence, Translation Students, Translation Teachers, English-Persian Translation

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## **1. Introduction**

Teachers and students as the main parties in teaching and learning processes require a set of competencies to be able to serve their purpose effectively. Although at first glance, the outcome of learning process is the result of students' competence and performance, one cannot deny the significant role of teachers, as the individuals who actively guide the learning process, and their qualities and skills (Passos, 2009, p. 53). Teachers are supposed to fulfil a variety of responsibilities, such as managing classroom, organizing the learning process, and monitoring students' progress, to name a few (Fathi & Derakhshan, 2019); therefore, it is not surprising that training qualified teachers who can subsequently help educate successful graduates, has been regarded as the goal of all educational systems around the world. As pointed by Passos (2009), the association between teacher's competence and effectiveness determines the teacher's influence on student's progress towards the expected educational goals. It is the reason why teachers have to possess a number of specific sub-competencies so that they are able to serve efficiently to fulfill the prospective students' needs.

The various qualifications for translation work, time restrictions, the essential expertise for being a translator, and the increasing development in translation technologies, all require qualified translators and interpreters who are equipped with a variety of competences such as translational competence, communicative competence and professional competence (Tao, 2012). Therefore, it seems that the importance of translation in all social aspects of the modern life as well as the growing number of translator and interpreter training programs over the past two to three decades have contributed to a pressing need to train professional translators and employ qualified translator

teachers with the specific characteristics and qualifications for the prospective intercultural mediators.

The debates over the effectiveness of teaching translation in universities and the growth of attentions towards designing better programs in translator training (e.g., Khoshsaligheh et al., 2019), have led scholars to believe that it is necessary to improve the standards of translation education and to train skillful teachers to pursue this career in the present educational context. Translator training should be provided by those who are themselves equipped with the diverse set of sub-competences and skills in teaching translation; therefore, translation teachers require training to complete their task as educators successfully (Kelly, 2005). However, translator education suffers from lack of formal and systematic training for translator educators (Piotrowska, 2015). Without courses of studies for translation teaching, we cannot expect to have competent translation teachers. Moreover, although the amount of research on translator education is not satisfactory, the results and the pedagogical recommendations produced by this body of research have barely been put into practice (Wu et al., 2019). Therefore, development of courses for translator educators and professional development courses for those who are already teaching translation (Massey et al., 2019), can help bridge the gap between translation education research and practice (Orlando, 2019). Consequently, prior to the development of such courses or translator teacher training curricula, it seems necessary to determine the sub-competencies that translator educators should have.

Despite the current practical measures in training competent teachers and compilation of the relevant curricula and educational programs in different realms of translation studies, there is still not enough research on specifying the components and constructs of translation teaching competence in the context of Iran. In line with the continued interest in researching translation-

related competence issues from various aspects in diverse locales (e.g., Göpferich, 2019; Lin, & Liu, 2020; Mohammed, 2020; PACTE, 2019), this study explores the optimal competencies and sub-competencies for English and Persian translation teachers in the Iranian translator training setting, considering the expectations of both Iranian translation trainers and trainees. It is assumed that the results of this study can be applied to improve the quality of translation teachers' training programs and educational standards in universities as well as engaging teachers and students in reviving the educational system and building a sustainable future according to their preferences. The study intends to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are the competencies and sub-competencies of English-Persian translator trainers in the view of translation trainers?
- 2) What are the competencies and sub-competencies of English-Persian translator trainers in the view of translation trainees?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Teaching Translation**

In the twenty-first century, translation has witnessed significant changes and challenges which have affected translation teaching (Wu et al., 2019). Global communications and internationalization of the economy call for more qualified translators to work as communicators across different cultures and languages (Tao, 2012). Moreover, the professional translation market is constantly making demands on the translators and translator education centers to keep the pace with the technological developments (Wu et al., 2019). Although early translator training did not occur within institutional/formal settings and was offered by either professional bodies or the industry (Kelly, 2005), today, there is a consensus among scholars and the industry that the practical way to teach translators and assess translators' abilities along with preparing them to work in the shifting market is formal training in Translation schools (Gile, 2009). In essence, two prototypes of

formal training programs can be defined which entail initial training programs for newcomers and further training programs for practicing translators. Considering the former, students are involved in full-time training over long periods of time and in the latter, the professionals who wish to enhance their basic technical skills and improve their passive and active proficiency in working languages take part in brief workshops and seminars. As a result, translator training requirements may vary depending on trainees' pre-existing knowledge and skills, and translation programs can be different ranging from generalist training to training in specific areas of translation (Kelly, 2005).

Translator education cannot afford to be haphazard and it is of paramount importance for the translation programs to be oriented toward fulfilling well-defined goals. From a social constructivist approach to translator education, Kiraly (2000) enumerates a number of goals that all translation programs should pursue, including enhancing student's understanding of factors relevant to translation, assisting them to create their own self-concept as translators, facilitating the formulation, or more accurately construction, of personal strategies through collaboration to be able to survive in the market. The development of translation competence as well as practice-centered literacy are also identified as the purposes of translator education (Tao, 2012). Translation competence is a recurring key concept in the field of translation education and has such a central role in the field that it is used as a point of departure for developing translation curricula (Khoshsaligheh et al., 2019). Although having clear well-defined goals and a well-designed curriculum assist in training good future translators, realizing such goals and plans without knowledgeable and skillful teachers employing appropriate translator training approaches is impossible.

## **2.2 Approaches to Translator Training**

Translator training initially started using conventional trial-and-error approach to teaching translation, in which the instructor essentially identifies

the errors and provides correct solutions to translation problems. Such a teaching approach does not allow students to reach the point of autonomy so that they can apply their already learnt techniques to the translation tasks they encounter (Kiraly, 2000; Tao, 2016). Besides, such teaching practice is mainly uninformative and reportedly irritates the trainers and trainees (Kelly, 2005). Indeed, the traditional teacher-centered approach has not been compatible with translator trainees' current expectations and has been criticized (Moghaddas & Khoshsaligheh, 2019).

In recent years, different student-centered translation teaching methods and approaches have emerged and been practiced: task-based model (Davies, 2004), situation-based model (Risku, 2016), project-based model (Kiraly, 2005) as well as computer-assisted multimedia model (Yin & Xu, 2005). One of the initial models of translation training, focusing on student-centered teaching was Nord's model (1991), which is said to result in a direct move towards student-centered teaching, making progress for more recent approaches in this new movement (Kelly, 2005). The emphasis on student-centeredness and on learning process rather than translation product (Gile, 2009, p. 23) in the recent approaches to translator education has demonstrated that the acquisition of translator competence is a gradual process and requires teachers to intervene in the learning process differently than the past (Kelly, 2005).

Today, more teachers are eager to apply translation theories and translation research results in practice, adopting interdisciplinary theories, including learning theories (such as constructivism), cognitive theories (such as schema theory), pragmatics, aesthetics and Think Aloud Protocols (TAPs). The move from traditional approaches to translator education to the modern student-centered ones, the requirement to keep pace with the developments in the translator education research (Wu, Zhang, & Wei, 2019) and market

(Albir, 2007), and the importance of ongoing professional development for teaching (Alibakhshi, 2019; Massey et al., 2019) have prompted the significance of training translator trainers and identification of the competencies and sub-competencies essential to successful teaching.

### **2.3 Teachers and Competence**

The concept of competence refers to the skills, knowledge and behaviors needed to effectively perform real-world activities (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 94). Relating to teachers, Bailey (2006, p. 210) describes competence as "statements about what teachers are supposed to know and be able to do". Competence in education has two distinct meanings; from a theoretical point of view, competence can be regarded as a cognitive structure shaping particular behaviors; and from an operational point of view, competence can be defined as a set of higher-order skills and behaviors indicating to the ability to deal with complicated situations that are not predictable.

What we need to deal with complicated unusual situations are competencies which help us to incorporate knowledge or cognition, attitudes and skills (Westera, 2001, p. 81). Accordingly, competence may be *decomposed* into contributing sub-competencies and the sub-competencies can be *decomposed* as well and this process can go on, several times so that this "decomposition procedure" results in a hierarchical structure of conditional sub-competencies that become more specific and limited as one goes down the hierarchy and finally, there comes a stage in which the sub-competencies are equal to the supporting skills (Westera, 2001, p. 85).

While maintaining the idea of skills as being different from competencies, Passos (2009) admits that skills themselves can also be *decomposed* into a hierarchical system of sub-skills. According to Westera (2001), there are two main problems with the concept of competence. First, it attempts to assign

cognitive standards for behaviors that cannot be standardized. Second, from a research point of view, competencies make up a sub-category of cognitive skills; therefore, the idea of *competence* as a distinct category different from *cognitive skills* cannot be acceptable.

In education, there is usually a relationship between competence and high professional performance, and students' performance largely depends on the teacher's professional competence (Passos, 2009). Some researchers have offered different frameworks for fields of teacher knowledge, but the best one depicting teacher competence is that of Passos (2009), who adapted the model of Westera (2001) to the context of teaching. According to this model, what determines a teacher's performance is their knowledge including their content and general pedagogical knowledge, and the teacher's knowledge is dependent on their competencies, attitudes and characteristics (Passos, 2009). In addition, teacher effectiveness depends on teacher performance, and this is determined by how competent the teacher is (Passos, 2009), therefore, it is impossible to think about competencies without the concepts of performance and effectiveness, because there is an association between competence and effective performance in complex situations.

#### **2.4 Translator Trainer Competence**

Kelly (2005) describes translator trainer competence in which the different areas of competence required to be a competent translator trainer include: 1) Professional translation practice, 2) Translation Studies as an academic discipline, 3) Teaching skills. The first two are fundamental to translator trainer's competence and the last one is divided into several sub-competencies, including Organizational, Interpersonal, Contextual or professional, and Instrumental. In her later work, Kelly (2008) suggests that there is a harmony between this approach and the UKHEA standards, so she combined the two and commented on the state of affairs within translation



discipline in general and in each of the different areas covered by the standards.

Kelly (2008) maintains development of competence-based profile for translator trainers is instrumental in the analysis of the current state of affairs and designing the training process more appropriately. In her attempt to define trainer's competence profile, she refers to UK Higher Education Academy's (UKHEA) Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning, which emphasizes the importance of proper training of teaching staff in all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment. Broadly speaking, *areas of activity*, *core knowledge*, and *professional values* for higher education teachers are the three elements of this framework which fit well into the standard definitions of competence as defined by Kelly (2005).

Ashrafi (2012) developed a translation teacher competency test, which identified the competencies of translation teachers in the context of Iran, including teaching skills, and content knowledge (specialized translation knowledge) in addition to methodology, translational competence and a set of micro sub-competencies.

In an attempt to identify different aspects of translator trainer profile in the context of Europe, the EMT (2013) conducted a comprehensive study and proposed a list of competences that translator trainers are supposed to be equipped with. The identified competencies include Field Competence (relevant to teaching professional aspects of translation), Interpersonal Competence (relevant to trainer's ability to interact with trainees at different levels), Organization Competence (relevant to pedagogical and didactic knowledge), Instructional Competence (relevant to trainer's ability to task specification and motivating students), Assessment Competence (indicating trainer's understanding of evaluation and assessment).

In a survey conducted at Monash University (as reported by Orlando, 2019) 21 instructors were assigned to complete a questionnaire. To address one of the objectives of the study, the participants were asked to name the didactic competences (or in this case better to say abilities) that a translation teacher requires to be trained in. The identified abilities are assessment and evaluation, feedback techniques, classroom techniques, lesson plan design, design of learning objectives, curriculum design and use of new technologies, translation and interpreting history, and market updates.

Reviewing the literature on translator trainer, a few studies investigating trainer's attitudes and beliefs can be found. For instance, Wu, Zhang and Wei (2019) delve into Chinese translator trainers' beliefs about translator competence and their beliefs about their own actual training practices through a mixed-methods research design. The study uses questionnaire and interviews through which it was indicated that the trainers consider all sub-competences of translator competence similarly important. However, the classroom observations indicate to prioritization of bilingual and translation knowledge sub-competences over other sub-competences which indicate discrepancies between what teachers believe and how they act.

In a similar vein, Wu, Wei, and Mo (2019) study how formal training of translator trainers can positively influence their perception of their abilities to successfully implement the tasks of translating, teaching and researching. In an exploratory study, the researchers focus on self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service translator trainers enrolled in MA in Translation Education at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (GDUFS) in China. The program integrates four aspects of translator trainer profile as the basic areas to develop among the pre-service translator trainers which include Teaching practicums, Research practices, Translation Practices, and Classroom-based instruction. The authors discuss how taking courses on these four areas

positively influences the pre-service translator trainers' self-efficacy, which demonstrates the importance of educating translator trainers.

As indicated above, the number of studies delving into identification of translator trainer competence is limited. Moreover, as different contexts and cultures require their own educational specifics, it is essential to investigate the current accumulated knowledge on the issue in such local educational landscapes as Iran.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1 Participants**

In order to identify the competencies and sub-competencies from both the translation trainers and trainees' point of views, two groups of translation teachers and senior undergraduate and graduate translation students took part in the study. To that end, 13 male and female Iranian translation teachers who had more than seven years of experience in teaching translation theory and practice at undergraduate and graduate levels from six different universities in two cities in Iran, Tehran and Mashhad, were purposively selected based on a number of criteria (experience, training background, location, willingness to contribute) and were invited for in-depth interviews.

Data collection initially started with 10 translation teachers, but the number of the participants was increased to 13 to reach data saturation (Dornyei, 2007). Besides, 95 male and female senior undergraduate and graduate English translation students, who were students of four different universities and institutions of higher education in a city of Iran, Mashhad, were invited to participate and interviewed in 12-member focus-groups and all of them were selected based on criterion sampling. To obtain more insightful data, the participants were selected from senior undergraduate and graduate students because they had an acceptable knowledge of translation theories and some experience in translation practice and also, they had passed

the related courses and had taken part in different trainers' translation classes. The questions of these in-depth interviews consisted of nine guiding questions with open-ended format but during the interviews the number of questions was increased according to the subject of the discussion. Besides, the questions of these focus-group interviews were seven primary open-ended questions accompanied by a few closed-ended questions.

### **3.2 Data Collection**

Both in-depth interviews and focus group interviews were held in a single session. On the one hand, a structured interview with pre-prepared questions and ready-made responses to choose from would limit the response variations and depth of data; on the other hand, unstructured interview would necessitate establishing good rapport with interviewees to create a relaxed atmosphere, which was not quite achievable in the study; therefore, both in-depth interviews and focus group interviews were semi-structured. Considering the semi-structured nature of these interviews, it was essential to pilot an interview in advance (Dornyei, 2007). Therefore, based on a few pilot interviews with potential participants, according to the preliminary data obtained and in consultation with a number of experienced trainers, the questions of the interviews were revised and later employed. To document all the details, the interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent.

The in-depth interviews included the phases of exploring, probing, and open-ended questions, and every session approximately took one hour. All interviews were conducted in trainers' offices at the universities. Nine questions were selected in the beginning, but during the interviews the number of questions was increased according to the subject of the discussion.

After obtaining necessary permissions, focus-group interviews were conducted in participants' universities. The focus group interviews' format was based on the collective experience of group brainstorming. To achieve

adequate and deep information, eight focus group interviews were carried out in this project. Each interview took approximately ninety minutes.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

In order to determine competencies and sub-competencies from the translation trainees and trainers' perspectives, the interviews including focus-groups and in-depth interviews, were transcribed and then categorized and analyzed separately through the *Grounded Theory* coding system. Grounded Theory describes a logical, three-level system: "first, break up the data into chunks" the length of which may vary from long phrases to short paragraphs "and assign conceptual categories to the data segments (open coding). Second, interrelationships between these categories were identified (axial coding)". In this level, the researcher integrates these categories and groups them into compassing concepts that include several subcategories. "Third, these relationships are explained at a higher level of abstraction (selective coding)" (Dornyei, 2007, p. 260).

By following these steps and analyzing the participants' responses along with the information drawn from the literature, the researcher obtained the required sub-competencies of translator teacher competence from the pool of information. To ensure the soundness of these categorizations and to achieve inter-subjectivity and credibility, two other researchers, besides the authors, were asked to analyze selected segments of the data by re-coding the transcripts and reviewing the categorizations. Attempts were made to reach compromise through negotiations and discussions of the few points of partial disagreements.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

After categorization and analysis of the data obtained from the interviews, the results led to the identification of main competencies, macro sub-competencies and micro sub-competencies of translation teachers from the

trainers and trainees' perspectives. According to results of the study, from the perspective of the translation teachers, the main competencies are pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge and psychological-personality competence. The pedagogical knowledge comprises of two macro sub-competencies of class organization and general management skills, and translation teaching skills; the content knowledge competence comprises of four macro sub-competencies of instrumental sub-competence, translational knowledge, literary knowledge and extra linguistic skills; and mental-personality sub-competence further consists of two underlying macro sub-competencies of personality and behavioral sub-competence, as well as mental capabilities and aptitudes.

Besides, in the views of the translator students, the main competencies are educational knowledge, content knowledge and mental-personality competence. The interviewed students believed that educational knowledge competence is comprised of two sub-competencies of class organization and management skills, translation teaching skills; content knowledge competence is comprised of four sub-competencies of instrumental sub-competence, translational knowledge, literary knowledge and extra linguistic skills; and psychological-personality competence is comprised of personality and behavioral sub-competence.

The results of transcribing, coding and categorization of the interviews showed that trainees and trainers, each had indicated three main competencies for translation teachers. Among the identified competencies, two of them were the same in both the trainer and trainee groups. According to the results, while content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge are common in the views of the students and teachers, psychological-personality competence and mental-personality competence are the competencies which are not shared by the two groups.

## **4.1 The Shared View**

### **4.1.1 Pedagogical knowledge**

According to Mishra and Koehler (2006) pedagogical knowledge is a deep and thorough knowledge of the processes, practices, and methods of teaching and learning and also knowing how to realize all the educational objectives, values and goals. It is a generic form of knowledge that includes all matters related to student learning, classroom management and curriculum development and implementation. The data analysis showed that based on the teachers' views, pedagogical knowledge is one of the important competencies of a translation teacher. By codification and successive categorization of data and aggregation and classification of micro sub-competencies, two macro sub-competencies of class organization and management and translation teaching skills were obtained.

Larrivee (2005) notes that classroom management is an important part of effective teaching strategies, meaningful content, and powerful teaching which is comprised of meaningful content, powerful teaching strategies, and an organizational structure to support productive learning. This macro sub-competence includes a set of micro sub-competencies of skills to create an effective environment, skills of establishing a clear framework for classroom skills and accuracy on the principles and methods of assessment. Data analysis showed that most of the interviewed teachers believe that class management is one of the most important factors in creating an effective and favorable educational environment for learning and teaching any subject, including translation and achieving educational objectives and success of any teacher, including translation teachers. Also, the majority of interviewed teachers have emphasized applying neutral and effective translation assessment techniques and they believe that translation trainers should take advantage of more objective and various assessment methods; for example,

some of them referred to different translation assessment techniques and tools including formative assessment, continuous assessment, self-assessment, peer assessment and portfolio. According to Albir (2015), there are different types of assessment which can be classified by purpose, timing and assessor. She believes that competence assessment in translator training must include all types of summative assessment, diagnostic assessment, formative assessment, initial assessment, continuous assessment, final assessment, self-assessment, peer assessment, and hetero-assessment.

Although the general meaning of teaching skills refers to a wide range of general capabilities and teaching skills, according to the teaching approach based on the field of study, the required skills for teaching translation, due to some subtle differences and despite some common points with general teaching skills, are different from the general skills in some aspects (Aminkhandaghi & Seyfi, 2013). The results of data analysis revealed that most of the participants believed teaching skill is one of the most important sub-competencies of a translation teacher. This macro sub-competence includes a set of micro sub-competencies of specific skills for teaching pedagogical content and practical translation teaching skill. For example, most of the teachers and students who took part in the study have referred to the importance of practical translation teaching. According to Kornacki (2015), "apart from the obvious fact that practical classes are more interesting to students... it is more efficient to discuss theory with the use of actual examples (practical classes) rather than out-of-context, artificial examples to illustrate a theoretical approach (theoretical classes)" (285). As stated by Kornacki, the majority of participants in the study believed that translation theories should be taught palpably and should be mentioned in practical translation tasks, while translating.



The obtained micro and macro sub-competencies of content knowledge identified in the present study, which are mentioned and explained earlier in detail, showed that the results of the study are in line with Kelly's (2008) proposed areas of competency for a translation teacher. As mentioned earlier, Kelly (2005) indicated this sub-competence as organizational sub-competence and mentioned some components for this sub-competence which includes designing appropriate training and teaching courses, ability in using and managing them and ability to design and implement appropriate assessment activities.

#### **4.1.2 Content knowledge**

According to Shulman (1987) content knowledge is the knowledge that teachers have about the subject matter. The importance of this knowledge is to the extent that McNamara (1991) believes that teachers with higher content knowledge use more interesting and dynamic methods of teaching, while those with low content knowledge may avoid the more difficult aspects of the subject matter or tend to use more teacher-oriented methods. The data analysis of the present study indicated content knowledge as one of the most important competencies of translation teachers based on teachers' point of view. In this part of the analysis, the researchers reached four macro sub-competencies of content knowledge competence which are instrumental knowledge, translational knowledge, literary knowledge and extra linguistic knowledge. The findings of the study are consistent with those of Westera's model (2001), modified by Passos (2009). According to Passos's model (2009), teacher's performance is dependent on his knowledge of subject matter or curriculum and general pedagogy which directly depends on his competencies, characteristics and attitudes. In the same vein, Ashrafi (2012) also showed that content knowledge is one of the main components of translation teaching competence and includes a sub-competence (translation

competence) and also a number of constructs which in most cases overlap with the micro and macro sub-competencies of content knowledge competence in this study.

According to the definition provided by PACTE (2005), instrumental sub-competence is comprised of the knowledge of using documents, information and communicative technologies in translation which include dictionaries, encyclopedias, books, electronic knowledge, search engines and corpora. Considering the direct link between translation practice and translation teaching, they are not possible without using these auxiliary resources and instruments. The results of analyzing the interviews showed that according to the teachers, instrumental sub-competence is a macro sub-competence in teaching translation. The results indicated that the teachers believed the knowledge of using new resources and technologies including electronic and non-electronic resources are both necessary requirements for teaching translation. According to Kościałkowska-Okońska (2015, p. 56) "the application of modern technologies does bring a new quality to teaching, does change the translation class and enhances its dynamics".

In fact, the results demonstrated that due to the continuous rise of the various aspects of electronic knowledge in research and education and its importance and auxiliary role in educational and scientific environments, the general electronic knowledge is necessary for translation teachers and also the specialized knowledge is very beneficial for them, since it significantly accelerates and facilitates the translation practice. These findings are in line with Kelly's (2005) statements regarding the importance of educational resources and using them appropriately in teaching as a sub-competence required by translation teachers.

According to the teachers' point of view, translation knowledge is one of the most important macro sub-competencies of translation teachers. PACTE

(2005) defined translation knowledge as knowledge of the principles that guide translation and profession. All of the interviewed teachers indicated the theoretical and especially, practical translation knowledge as a prerequisite for teaching translation and recognized the direct link between translation teachers' knowledge of principles and techniques of translation, their practical translation experience and their teaching. As Kościałkowska-Okońska (2015, p. 58) points out, this sub-competency allows teachers to "convey more practicalities of the profession, tricks of the trade, practical experience, experience in solving real-life and real-text problems instead of imagined or book-extracted ones".

All the teachers in the study mentioned factors such as the necessity of practical experience, whether as a professional or semi-professional translator, the necessity of translation teacher's mastery over translation theories, and the necessity of acquiring practical and theoretical translation knowledge through experience or higher education. Kelly (2005) also explicitly refers to having a translation-related education as one of the necessary competencies of a translation teacher which seems to be directly related to teacher's theoretical and practical knowledge of translation.

The analysis of the data also showed that literary knowledge is one of the basic needs of a translation teacher, because the participants believed teaching translation without knowledge of its educational content (the translation itself) and its requirements (the complete mastery of the both source and target languages), is impossible. This ability is called bilingualism sub-competence and includes areas of pragmatic knowledge such as textual knowledge, lexical knowledge, grammatical knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge (PACTE, 2003).

According to PACTE's (2005) definition of extra linguistic sub-competence, it is a declarative knowledge about the world which can be as

general as knowledge about the world or as specific as knowledge about a specific area. This sub-competence includes encyclopedic knowledge, bicultural knowledge and thematic or subject knowledge. The analysis of the data demonstrated that the translation trainees believe extra linguistic sub-competence is one of the important aspects of content knowledge. It is also revealed that most of the teachers have emphasized the necessity of background knowledge, encyclopedic knowledge and socio-cultural knowledge. Most of the interviewed teachers stated that translation is not just finding an appropriate equivalence in another language; a translator may face words or phrases to which there are no equivalents in the target language due to being affected by various issues such as cultural, social, linguistic and value differences or because they belong to unfamiliar sciences and new sciences. As a result, in addition to having linguistic competence, the translator has to broaden his knowledge in different areas to be able to overcome such challenges. Considering the fact that there is a close relationship between the teaching of translation and practice of translation and also bearing in mind the importance of the teacher's appropriate content knowledge, awareness of this knowledge for teachers of translation is required.

## **4.2 The Contrasting Views**

### **4.2.1 Mental-personality competence**

The results of data analysis revealed that according to the teachers, mental-personality competence is one of the translation teachers' competencies. This competence includes macro sub-competence of personality and behavioral sub-competence, and mental capabilities and aptitudes, which are in turn formed by micro sub-competencies of flexibility, accepting criticism, sociability, and generosity in knowledge and social intelligence, and language command, aesthetic taste, cognitive readiness, and common sense.

Ashrafi (2012) believes these sub-competencies are psychological sub-competencies and are formed by a set of psychological components such as flexibility, interpersonal relations, individual differences, motivation, self-confidence, self-disclosure and intelligence, which are almost consistent with the findings of the study.

All teachers need to benefit from having the common personality characteristics of a teacher, which are the necessary characteristics of all teachers, yet the emphasis on aspects of which could be different due to certain conditions, or being influenced by variables such as the type of audience, level of education, training courses and nature of the course; this is what the data analysis of the study has proved. In other words, based on the information obtained from interviews, four characteristics of flexibility, accepting criticism, sociability and generosity in knowledge are the most important ones among the general characteristics of translation teachers. The interviewees described sociability of translation teacher as being extrovert, having interpersonal relationship skills and the teacher's ability to participate in group works. Besides, most of the interviewees mentioned patience, behavioral flexibility, not being biased and being open to variability as components of translation teacher's flexibility. Kelly (2005) mentioned these components in describing interpersonal sub-competence of translation teachers, and considered them as one of the necessary sub-competencies of teaching skills.

One of the important factors for being successful in any profession or field is having a degree of capability and intelligences to work in that area of expertise; because in addition to being interested and receiving training and developing the necessary skills, people need to have certain requirements such as mental faculties and aptitudes. The emphasis of most of the interviewees on factors such as aptitude and talents, intuition, language

aptitude, common sense, high mental preparation and social intelligence, suggests the importance of mental abilities and talents of translation teachers, because all the mentioned factors are associated with mental capabilities and aptitudes.

#### **4.2.2 Psychological-personality competence**

The results of data analysis revealed that according to the students, psychological-personality competence is one of the translation teacher's competencies. This competence includes macro sub-competence of personality and behavioral sub-competence, which is formed by micro sub-competencies of flexibility, accepting criticism, and sociability. According to the information obtained from the eight focus-group interviews with students, the three characteristics of flexibility, accepting criticism, and sociability are the most important ones among the general characteristics of translation teachers. Clearly, these three characteristics are manifested through an extensive range of teachers' behaviors, which students have referred to; for example, in explanation of translation trainer's flexibility and accepting criticism, all of the students who participated in the study mentioned characteristics such as patience, behavioral flexibility, not being biased towards unique translations and being welcoming to contrary ideas, as components of translation teacher's flexibility and accepting criticism. Also, most of the students mentioned that a translation teacher needs to be a sociable person. They believe that success in translation classes depends on mutual and effective cooperation of trainers and trainees, which requires interpersonal skills and sociability.

As the results of the study show, in each part, there is a consistency between translation trainer's competencies drawn from the study and the Westera's model (2001) of teachers' competencies, modified by Passos (2009). As mentioned earlier, according to Passos (2009, p. 42), "a teacher's

performance depends on the teacher's knowledge, (comprised of subject matter and general pedagogy), which is directly linked to the teacher's competencies, characteristics and attitudes". In terms of the identification of translation trainer's competencies, there is theoretical consistency between them and Kelly's (2005, 2008) work in describing translation trainer's underlying constructs of competence. The findings of this study are different from those of Kelly, as psychological competence in the current study was not mentioned, but it was emphasized in Kelly's study clearly and specifically. Besides, the obtained teacher translation competencies and sub-competencies in the study are mostly consistent with the themes of translation trainer's competencies test which emerged in Ashrafi's study (2012).

### **5. Conclusions and Recommendations**

Based on the results, it can be concluded that pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge are the two main competencies of translator trainers. Also, the results indicated that there is disagreement between the interviewed students and teachers regarding the third identified competence; while the students believed that psychological-personality competence is another group of translator trainers' competence, the teachers believed that mental-personality competence is the third competence of translator trainers. The findings seem to suggest that the difference results from their disagreement about sub-competencies of translator trainers in lower levels. In fact, it can be concluded that as the students did not have any experience in translation training, they have only referred to theoretical and external aspects of translation training. However, the teachers' views may have resulted from their tangible, extensive experiences. Based on data analysis, by mentioning a set of mental aptitudes and characteristics such as mental linguistic intelligence, social intelligence and common sense, the interviewed teachers

have emphasized mental capabilities and aptitudes as an important macro sub-competence of translator trainers and they believed such sub-competence is the prerequisite of translation teaching profession.

Furthermore, the results of the study showed that the teachers believed that content knowledge is comprised of four sub-competencies, one of which is translational knowledge (translation practice and theories). Interestingly, the interviewed teachers indicated the necessity of having both practical knowledge and experience, and theoretical knowledge for translation teachers. Most of the teachers believed that a translation teacher needs to have an academic education related to translation in addition to having experience in translation practice. Therefore, it can be concluded that the employment of translation teachers, who have practical knowledge and experience in translation and at least have a master's or doctoral degree in translation, particularly in training graduate students, can improve the quality of translation training in universities.

This study is merely a preliminary effort towards broader and more comprehensive research in identifying the target criteria to help appropriate curricula for translation teacher training in universities. Furthermore, the findings of the study can be helpful in optimizing the quality of translation training programs and further innovation in educational standards of pedagogy in translation education at universities. Similarly, curriculum designers may find the results helpful in developing courses tailored to the present and future needs of translation students, especially at graduate levels.

Due to the qualitative nature of the study besides the limited financial and human resources and restricted timeframe of this study, the translation trainers were selected from six universities in two cities of Iran. Consequently, the results of this study cannot be generalized to all Iranian translator trainers. In addition, translation students were chosen from four universities in a city of Iran, Mashhad. Therefore, the results of the study will



be limited to the used non-probability sample and may not be generalized. This study is one of the first exploratory studies to identify the underlying components of English and Persian translation teaching competence. As a qualitative study, it has paved the way for broader investigations. Confirmatory studies through large scale quantitative studies with probability and more representative samples can provide generalizable results. Further triangulated qualitative research still can supplement the findings of this study using multiple samples and various other methods of data collection and analysis.

Similar exploratory and confirmatory studies in other cultures and languages are also recommended, which can help test hypotheses in terms of the cross-cultural aspects of the translation teaching competence.

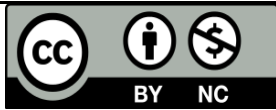
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