BUILDING FROM THE GROUND UP: ON THE NECESSITY OF USING TRANSLATION COMPETENCE MODELS IN PLANNING AND EVALUATING TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING PROGRAMS

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Abstract
Translation and interpreting education is currently experiencing a boom in the United States. More and more programs are emerging around the nation due to the social need for college-educated professionals in the field. However, despite the large body of literature in the didactics of Translation Studies, the notions of translation competence and translation competence acquisition are not necessarily at the core of many programs. This article reviews this surge of translation training programs in the USA, provides a comprehensive overview of research on translation competence models, and proposes how to incorporate these theoretical constructs in the planning and evaluation of graduate and undergraduate programs. The paper ends with a practical example of how to use translation competence research to structure the learning objectives for a course on legal translation.

Keywords
Translation competence, translation competence acquisition, translation training, structuring translation programs.

1. Introduction
For over a decade, the United States has experienced a boom in translation and interpreting education, with more and more universities, community colleges, professional associations and organizations offering degrees, certificates, courses and seminars. The United States is currently a multilingual country, with over 50 million Spanish speakers and other language communities spreading throughout the nation. For example, New York officially recognizes that over 140 languages are spoken in the city, while reports of the New Jersey Department of Justice indicate that interpreters for 83 languages were needed by the courts in 2010-2011. The
demand for translators and interpreters is fueled by intrasocial and intersocial translation-mediated interactions, both for translation within the US and for commercial, social, and institutional exchanges with other countries. Current estimates place the global language service industry at 33 billion, while the US Bureau of statistics predicts a growth of 45% for interpreting jobs in the upcoming year. This percentage is well above the 12.5% for all professions (Kelly, Natalie). The growth in the language industry has found a reflection in the increasing development of translation and interpreting education, with new emerging programs and the restructuring or expansion of existing ones. Considering that these efforts should be grounded in the most up-to-date research in Translation Studies, the overall goal of this paper is to shed light on the necessity of a solid foundation for their development or restructuring.

Translation competence, the body of knowledge possessed by professional translators rather than by all bilinguals, has precisely served this purpose for over two decades in regions with a more established tradition in this discipline, such as the European Union or Canada. This paper briefly reviews the current state of translation education in the USA, and provides a comprehensive, but necessarily limited, overview of current literature on translation competence models and its significance for translation programs. It will finish with a proposal on how to structure and evaluate these programs around the notion of competence in both graduate and undergraduate settings. It should be mentioned that research on interpreting competence is equally significant for programs that include both translation and interpreting. However, due to inherent space limitations, for the purposes of this paper the discussion will solely focus on translation.

2. Translation Education in the USA, the European Union, and the Structuring of Academic programs

The academic world in the United States is finally starting to recognize the significance of the discipline of Translation Studies in a multilingual society, partly due to the crisis in the foreign language and literature departments around the nation. In this context, institutions of higher learning are striving to find new directions to place their activities in a wired multilingual world, casting light on translation and interpreting as a potentially exciting avenue for expansion and change. Despite its growth, translation education is still far from the achieving the recognized status of highly structured programs found in other industrialized nations. Currently approximately 48 colleges and universities in the United States offer some type of translation education, with 10 universities offering Master programs and two PhD programs in Translation Studies, and two more universities offering programs focused on literary translation or comparative literature and translation (Hague et al).
Two models coexist, on the one hand community colleges and continuing-professional education centers at universities that conceptualize translation as a professional activity without the research component that other disciplines enjoy and, on the other, universities that are striving to highlight this discipline, hiring tenure track PhDs in Translation Studies or related fields. Still, these programs tend to be housed in Departments where Literature, Comparative Literature or Linguistics are the main focus, with the exception of the program at Kent State University.

In the light of other world regions with a more established tradition, two of the most distinct factors in American Academia are the relatively minimal percentage of universities offering translation programs, and the dearth of doctoral programs in which the next generation of translation scholars, professionals and program coordinators can be educated. In fact, a number of recent tenure track positions in translation have been filled by PhDs from Canadian and European universities. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the global organization of translation programs in terms of goals and objectives, overall learning progression, courses offered, evaluation of the learning outcomes, teaching effectiveness, and program improvement are often based on ad-hoc solutions or experiential-anecdotal professional approaches. Despite the remarkable job of Associations such as the American Translation and Interpreter Scholars Association (ATISA), who devoted its last annual conference to Translation Pedagogy, there is much work to be done to foster the adoption of program models based on Translation Studies research.

Taking as an example the European Union, a region where translation plays a key role in its integration and functioning, much work has been devoted to developing a framework to harmonize these types of programs. An intense process of discussions among the main stakeholders (institutions, researchers, trainers and industry representatives) recently took place regarding the basic components of translation education at the university level. This was done within the context of the wider Bologna process to reform the common European higher education system, with results such as common goals for MA degrees in the discipline (Rico). In the context of this push for integration, the Tuning project (Student Workload, Competences) identified the general competences that all college students should acquire independent of their specialization, such as capacity for organization and planning, ability to communicate with experts in other fields, capacity to learn or to adapt to new situations (González and Wagenaar). This was framed in terms of general competences, defined as a combination of skills, knowledge, aptitudes and attitudes, and to include disposition to learn as well as know-how. The Bologna process also required all disciplinary programs to identify guidelines and directions of the specific components that should make up their specific learning goals. In the translation work groups, the
main operative notion was that of translation competence(s), precisely the focus of this paper.

Translation competence is not new to the discipline. The components that make up this professional translation competence have been the focus of intense theoretical and empirical research efforts during the last few decades. They have been mostly geared towards establishing a foundation for translation training programs such as the case of the PACTE group (“Investigating Translation Competence”; “Results of the Validation” in 2009 and 2011) in Spain or the Transcom group in Austria (Göpferich, “Towards a Model”). In order to organize programs around this notion, a more in-depth understanding of translation competence and these models is required. The next section, thus, offers a concise overview with an eye on the purpose at hand, how to use this theoretical construct in the context of US translation education.

3. Translation Competence as a Core Construct in Translation education

In Translation Studies, the notion of translation competence has been studied for over 15 years from both cognitive and didactic perspectives. It was early on, when the first translation training manuals appeared, that scholars started to describe the notion of translation competence as the main component of translation education (Deslisle). It was then described as both the knowledge shared by professional translators that trainees did not possess, or the learning objective of translation training. The basic underlying premise is that professional translators, as opposed to non-professional ones, possess a certain degree of this competence, which has been defined as “the underlying knowledge system needed to translate” (PACTE, “Investigating Translation” 610) or “the knowledge and skills the translator must possess in order to carry out a translation” (Bell 43). Among several other terms used in the discipline, this notion has also been referred to as professionalism (Kiraly, A Social Constructivist Approach). It is normally understood to be expert knowledge that is not possessed by all bilinguals; it is mostly procedural-operative knowledge (knowing how to do things) as opposed to declarative knowledge (knowledge about something).

From the onset, one of the basic points of departure upon which translation competence was built was natural translation (Harris; Harris and Sherwood), the innate ability of any bilingual to translate. This has also been referred to as native translation by Toury or circumstantial interpreting and translation from the perspective of language acquisition (Angelelli, “A Professional Ideology,” “A Glimpse”). The goal of any translation training program is to move trainees from a departure point, ideally near college level fluency
in two or more languages and/or a small degree of translation competence, to a graduation moment in which students are closer to (though not yet fully developed) professional translation competence. This is precisely why this notion plays a key role in translation education, as translation competence represents precisely the core knowledge to be acquired throughout the program. Any person responsible for development, coordination or oversight should ideally ground his/her efforts on the latest research in this area. An understanding of translation competence models can not only be beneficial to comprehensive organizational efforts, but also serve as a frame of reference for all parties involved: administration, coordinators, faculty, students and future employers. It also can help in the more daunting task of justifying the program to administrators or departmental colleges that might not understand the field and whose votes are necessary for implementation or approval.

A number of scholars have proposed more or less detailed theoretical models of translation competence since the 80's (Deslisle; Bell; Hönik; Gile; Kiraly, *Pathways to Translation*; Pym, "Redefining Translation Competence"; Shreve; Neubert; González-Davis; Kelly, *Handbook*). Nevertheless, only two research groups have engaged in extensive empirical research efforts in order to validate the proposals, the PACTE group in the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the TRANSCOM group led by Göpferich (Göpferich; Göpferich et al). Both models account for a number of interrelated subcompetences. For example, the PACTE model includes bilingual, extralinguistic, instrumental, strategic and knowledge-about-translation subcompetences.

From the cognitive paradigm, definitions of translation competence focus more on the way professionals cognitively process translation tasks as opposed to bilinguals or trainees. According to Shreve and Diamond “what distinguishes the translator / interpreter from the non-translating bilingual are the nature and development of the relevant Long Term Memory (LTM) resources and the way that they are activated in the different communicative tasks” (247). That is, translation competence is conceptualized as the accumulation of resources and the creation of connections that activate the accumulated knowledge through systematic training in an efficient manner. In this sense, professional translators are experts on this specific task (Shreve, “The Deliberate Practice”; Muñoz Martin). Shreve specifically emphasizes the importance of systematic training or deliberate practice, therefore underscoring the importance of task selection for translation training (“The Deliberate Practice”).


3.1. The PACTE and TRANSCOM Translation Competence Models

Without any doubt, the two most comprehensive models to date are those proposed by the PACTE and TRANSCOM research groups. These are the only models that have been used in longitudinal empirical research into translation competence and its acquisition. Both models are mostly inspired in previous psycholinguistic models such as Hönig’s. The PACTE research project has its roots in the theoretical research carried out by Hurtado (“La competencia traductora,” “La cuestión del método traductor”), leading to the first version of their model in 1997. PACTE has been empirically testing their model for over a decade with translation students, translation professional and language teachers. The PACTE group is currently at the validation stage after a decade of research (“Results of the Validation” in Methods and Cognitive Explorations), ready to overcome most common criticism on proposed theoretical models, namely the lack of empirical validation (Hurtado, Traducción; Kelly, Handbook; Pym, “Translation Skill-sets”). The following sections review the different subcompetences in both models.

3.1.1. The PACTE Translation Competence Model

The PACTE model consists of five interrelated subcompetences: (1) bilingual, (2) extralinguistic, (3) instrumental, (4) knowledge-about-translation

![PACTE Group Translation Competence Model](PACTE, "Investigating Translation" 610).
and (5) strategic. It also includes physio-psychological components, such as memory, logic, and attention. Together, all these subcompetences represent “a system of competences that interact, are hierarchical, and subject to variation” (PACTE, “Acquiring Translation Competence” 100). Figure 1 illustrates this model.

The bilingual subcompetence includes “pragmatic, socio-linguistic, textual and lexical-grammatical knowledge in each language” (PACTE, “Investigating Translation” 610). It includes knowledge about the communicative situation, such as participants and sociocultural norms, illocutionary competence (knowledge about the functions of language) and advanced textual competence. As an example, the recognition and production of specialized textual genres, such as a contract, a patent or information leaflet in both languages would be part of this component. Obviously, not all college-educated bilinguals possess the ability to draft legal or technical texts that are acceptable by specialists as appropriate and efficient in form and style. This requires the acquisition of advanced writing skills and the socialization in specialized groups. This subcompetence also includes the ability to control the interference between the language pair or interference control. It also includes the terminological competence in both languages (Montero and Faber). Some other scholars differentiate between language and textual competence (Neubert; Kelly, Handbook). It could be argued that separating these two competences might be productive in order to highlight the acquisition of advanced knowledge on writing styles, specialized genres, text types, different registers, etc. In fact, an approximation based on genre theory has been proposed as an effective tool in order to acquire the textual competence required for specialized translation (Montalt et al).

The PACTE group indicates that bilingual subcompetence is shared with other bilinguals and professionals, similarly to what happens with many components of translation competence (Kiraly, Pathways 108). For example, a bilingual nurse might possess a similar degree of bilingual subcompetence in medical settings as a medical translator. Therefore, this component in isolation could not be considered a differentiating component of the translation competence possessed by medical translators.

The extralinguistic subcompetence includes “encyclopedic, thematic and bicultural knowledge” (PACTE, “Investigating Translation” 610). It includes both the entire accumulated knowledge about the world a subject might have, in addition to specific advanced domain knowledge related to translators’ specialized field(s), such as knowledge about legal processes or how a patent might be registered. To a certain degree, this subcompetence is also shared with other bilingual professionals.

The knowledge-about-translation subcompetence is mostly declarative knowledge about what translation is and aspects of the profession. It includes:
(1) Knowledge about how translation functions: types of translation units, processes required, methods and procedures used (strategies and techniques), and types of problems; (2) knowledge related to professional translation practice: knowledge of the work market (different types of briefs, clients and audiences, etc.) (PACTE, “Building a Translation Competence” 92).

The instrumental subcompetence refers to two distinctive types of knowledge, (1) the translation technology tools and other technology applied to the entire cycle, and (2) research and documentation sources and strategies, including paper or online dictionaries of all kinds, encyclopedias, grammars, style books, corpora, translation memories, etc. The significance of this subcompetence has been increasing exponentially during the last two decades as the translation profession cannot be understood nowadays independent of the technologies that support it (O’Brien).

At the center of the model is the main and most important component, strategic subcompetence. Its purpose is to solve problems and guarantee 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 subcompetences and compensating for deficiencies, identifying translation problems and applying procedures to solve them.

This subcompetence entails mostly operative knowledge and interrelates and mobilizes all other subcompetences in order to solve any given translation problem that translators might encounter during their tasks. Finally, the PACTE model includes a separate physio-psychological component that is not considered a subcompetence as such, but rather, “an integral part of all expert knowledge” (PACTE, “Building a Translation Competence” 91). It includes: (1) cognitive components such as memory, perception, attention and emotion; (2) attitudinal aspects such as intellectual curiosity, perseverance, rigor, critical spirit, knowledge of and confidence in one’s own abilities, the ability to measure one’s own abilities, motivation, etc.; (3) abilities such as creativity, logical reasoning, analysis and synthesis, etc. (PACTE, “Building a Translation Competence”). The development of these components, despite not being part of translation competence per se, can be easily related to the goals of the translation education in institutions of higher learning (Bernardini; Pym, “Training Translators”), being many of them, such as creativity, key to a successful professional translator (Kiraly, Pathways). It also relates in part to the benefits of the development of cognitive skills that higher education in general provides.
3.1.2. The Impact of the PACTE Research on Later Models: the TRANSCOM Research Group

The TRANSCOM model is based on Hönig’s and PACTE models with certain variations. It is used as the framework for reference for their longitudinal study on translation competence acquisition. This model includes six subcompetences: (1) communicative competence in at least two languages, (2) domain competence (3) tools and research competence (4) translation routine activation competence (5) psychomotor competence (6) strategic competence.

![TRANSCOM Translation Competence Model](image)

The impact of PACTE research can be clearly seen in this model: four subcompetences out of six perfectly correspond to others in PACTE’s: both models include the strategic subcompetence as a key element, the communicative competence in the TRANSCOM model corresponds to the bilingual subcompetence, the tools and research competence with the...
instrumental subcompetence, the strategic subcompetence and the domain competence correspond approximately to PACTE’s extra-linguistic subcompetence. This last one comprises not only “general and domain specific knowledge that [...] is necessary to understand the source text and formulate the target texts” (Göpferich 22), but also the ability to recognize what additional knowledge from external sources is needed at any specific moment. Given that this latter model indicates that general knowledge is also key in this component, it can be argued that extralinguistic competence might be a better term for this component than domain competence as the latter leans more towards the specific knowledge in specialized translation settings.

Göpferich is renowned for her research in the cognitive paradigm within Translation Studies, and this partly explains the differences between her model and PACTE’s. The last two subcompetences that differ between both models are thus related to the development of cognitive abilities. The model includes a translation routine activation competence that represents the knowledge and ability to recall and apply some transfer operations of shifts that frequently occur between specific language pairs (i.e. translating “I hereby certify” in Spanish by *Por la presente certifico* or changing in verb in imperative form into an infinitive in instructional texts, “Add a spoonful and mix well” to *Añadir una cucharada y mezclar bien*). The last subcompetence is referred to as psychomotor competence, related to the abilities to read and write using technologies. This last subcompetence was included because the more developed this competence is, the less cognitive capacity is required to control this effort. Therefore, more working memory resources are liberated for other cognitive tasks related to translation, such as problem solving. To some extent, the inclusion of this competence could be questioned insofar as psychomotor abilities related to translation such as typing or reading are not exclusive to translation, any person that has problems typing in a keyboard will have to allocate cognitive resources for this matter. In any case, and for the goals of this paper, the question would be whether typing and using computers and technologies during translation would be part of any translation curriculum. It could be said that college students nowadays are required to use technologies for all their other subjects and, therefore, the development of this competence would not be exclusive of translation programs. This could be also included in the development of higher cognitive skills and processing that translation education in a university setting can provide as a whole (Folaron).

This model also includes three factors that determine the employment of these subcompetences, another main difference with the PACTE model. One of them is common between both models: the existence of a psychophysiological disposition such as intelligence, perseverance
or self-confidence. Göpferich indicates that these components might accelerate the development of translation competence. The other factors are (1) the translation brief and the translation norms, as well as (2) the translator’s self-concept of professional ethos in which:

“[T]he contents conveyed and the methods employed in theoretical and practical translation training courses have an impact and which form the component of [the] model where aspects of social responsibility and roles come in” (Göpferich 22). These last two factors are included in the other model in the knowledge-about-translation subcompetence, as subjects with advanced competence might be able to make strategic decisions depending on the instructions provided and the translation norms under which they might operate. At this point it should be indicated that the model to some extent combines general acquired skills and knowledge, with task dependent issues such as translation briefs and norms. Even though all the theoretical models thus far have been created with a didactic objective in mind, the combination of task-dependent issues with other general ones highlights the situatedness of the cognitive paradigm from which this last research group approaches their project.

3.2. The Acquisition of Translation Competence

Once these two models have been described, the next question in order to incorporate them in translation programs is, how does this translation competence develop in trainees? This process is addressed in translation research by the notion of translation competence acquisition. Despite the relatively large number of theoretical proposals of translation competence, fewer efforts have been devoted to how it is acquired. Generally, it can be defined as the progression in which professional translation competence is acquired by bilinguals (Toury 241-258; Shreve, “Cognition”; PACTE, “La competencia”; Göpferich). The acquisition process is understood as a dynamic and cyclical process in which the development of the strategic competence or operative translation knowledge plays an essential role. In training courses, the set of interrelated subcompetences can be somewhat acquired in isolation. However, the advanced stage in competence acquisition is characterized by the development of macrocompetence that prioritizes and interrelates individual subcompetences depending on the translation problem or communicative situation. This advanced stage does not necessarily mean that students acquire or store new declarative knowledge but, rather, existing knowledge is restructured (PACTE, “Acquiring Translation Competence”).
The heterogeneous and complex nature of this competence implies that the acquisition is a non-finite process (Neubert): highly professional translators are continually adding new knowledge and merging it with existing knowledge. This is precisely one of the main arguments to defend the inclusion of translation and interpreting within regular graduate and undergraduate university programs as opposed to ad-hoc professional training courses: trainees and translators need to develop the capacity to be creative and adapt themselves to novel and existing situations, a basic skill acquired in comprehensive college level programs.\(^{\text{6}}\)

Only three models of translation competence acquisition have been put forward, that of PACTE (“Acquiring Translation Competence”), Shreve (“Cognition”), and Kiraly (“Growing a Project-Based”). In the PACTE one, subjects depart from a pre-translational competence and develop individual subcompetences but, most importantly, the integration of all of the subcompetences take place in order to prioritize them depending on the specifics of the task or the communicative situation. This integration process and the restructuring of existing competences (i.e. bilingual competence in any specific communicative situation or textual genre) can only occur when a competence is activated by specific learning strategies. Research participants of the PACTE project have for example proposed learning strategies based
on task-learning (Hurtado, “La competencia traductora;” González Davis). In this didactic approach, translation is acquired through a series of tasks that do not necessarily entail translation proper, but rather components of the translation competence or related tasks are gradually being integrated.

For the purposes of planning training programs, it should be mentioned that the different components that make up individual subcompetences do not develop at the same time or in parallel fashion, but rather, they are acquired unequally and progressively as they interrelate and compensate. The process might also develop at different speeds. It should also be mentioned that depending on the translation and interpreting types (legal, medical, journalistic, literary) and modalities (liaison, simultaneous, subtitles, etc.) some components of subcompetences might be more relevant than others. As an example, the advanced acquisition of technological competence is paramount to modalities such as the localization of websites, while legal translation courses need to focus heavily on the acquisition of advanced monolingual and contrastive knowledge of legal genres and their terminology and conventionalized phraseology, a component that belongs to bilingual subcompetence.

4. Structuring Translation Training Programs around the Notion of Competence

The criteria selected (or lack thereof) as a framework for a translation training program is of utmost importance as this guides the types and number of courses taught, the learning objectives of the entire program and of specific modules, the evaluation of learning goals acquired in individual courses and global programs. This also sets the type of assessment of overall university programs required in US institutions of higher learning. Different approaches underlie the structuring of translation programs to date. The first one would be the experiential one, in which professionals reflect on what their personal experiences have taught them and arrange courses and programs around it. This anecdotal-experiential approach can be seen in multiple areas of translation, from quality evaluation (Colina) to training. It should be noted that this is often the approach taken in the United States, a perspective that is not often seen in other disciplines (i.e. professional psychologists do not necessarily structure coursework around their professional experiences but on sound theoretical models).

Another approach is to observe the market through surveys and job postings and deduct the main skills required in the job market, as the role of training is supposed to be structured around these range of skills demanded by the market in the form of job postings (Pym, “Redefining Translation Competence”). Lately, it has also been proposed to inform translation training
from the pitfalls of college graduates in admission or certification exams (Lafeber), as this subsumes the gap between what universities are teaching and what the market actually requires.

However, the most prevalent approach around the world is the one based on the notion of translation competence. Kelly, in her *Handbook of Translation Trainers*, reviews how to introduce current competence research in all the stages of the planning translation and interpreting training, from identifying learning goals to evaluation of courses and overall program outcomes. For example, one of the most essential steps is the process of formulation of learning outcomes. In this step, the disaggregation of the subcomponents of translation competence provided by these models represents an outstanding departure point. The learning outcomes selected also determine the tasks that will take place in the classroom, as well as the evaluation to assure that students have acquired precisely the objectives targeted, both in individual courses and in the overall program. However, it is often the case that: “[M]any training courses, especially those run in certain university systems and academic traditions, […] do not have explicit definitions of their intentions which can be referred to by both staff and students as a basic reference point” (*Handbook* 21-22). This is especially true in the context of the United States, due to several issues, such as the frequent reliance on professionals to organize and teach translation courses or the relative lack of doctoral programs that can prepare the next generation of researcher and translation trainers (Kelly, “Training the Trainers”). Translation competence also helps identify and prioritize the components that students will acquire throughout the entire program and the subcomponents that will be specifically targeted in each course. For example, and as far as bilingual subcompetence is concerned, students will continually improve their advanced knowledge of both languages and their contrastive differences in all courses, while the acquisition of domain-specific specialized subsets such as medical or technical writing can be acquired in a course designed to cover these types of specialized translation. The same can be said of the documentation component in the instrumental subcompetence: general translation courses can cover the main style guides in each language, general authoritative dictionaries and sources, while specialized or type-specific courses can cover the documentation strategies, domain specific style guides and main authoritative sources for each field. In order to provide a more in-depth treatment of the practical application of these models, the next section reviews how to implement the PACTE model in the structuring of translation programs.
4.1. Structuring Translation Programs Using the PACTE Model of Translation Competence

This section intends to provide a brief and practical summary of how the PACTE model can serve as the foundation for drafting overall program learning objectives as well as the specific ones for each course. The final configuration will obviously depend on the overall constraints and characteristics of the program, the number of credits or courses required, the courses that can complement the program within established programs (such as contrastive courses, advanced composition or technical writing, etc.), the pre-translational competence (Presas) of the students before they start the program, etc. This will allow to identify which skills or components of each subcompetence, formulated as learning objectives in syllabi, can be included in each course. In the words of Lafeber: “[F]or syllabus planning or justification purposes, a catalogue of skills and knowledge types [competences] […] grouped under various headings serves as a frame of reference” (17).

Starting with the bilingual competence, the implications for overall programs is that trainees are acquiring in each course a more advanced knowledge on pragmatic, sociolinguistic, lexical and grammatical issues for each language in addition to storing matching pairs for translation purposes. It also includes knowledge about communicative situations and genres that need to be acquired progressively throughout the program, mostly from a general to specialized progression. The monolingual and contrastive knowledge of general and specialized textual genres is of utmost importance and normally, members of discourse communities possess active, passive or no competence of them (Jiménez-Crespo, “Conventions in Localization”; Hatim and Mason). Passive competence implies that we can recognize a genre, such as a patent or a contract but we cannot produce a valid exemplar of it in the target language; active competence means that we can both recognize a genre and produce it in both languages, while sometimes in specialized cases we cannot even recognize what type of genre it might be. In the progression from general to specialized translator training, students are introduced to the most frequently translated genres both general (a recipe, a tourist brochure, an op-ed article) and specialized (a medical information leaflet, a medical research paper or a purchase or freight contract). In general courses student can acquire not only advanced bilingual subcompetence at the grammatical, lexical and pragmatic levels, but also monolingual and contrastive knowledge of the most frequently translated genres and their associated conventions in each targeted domain. Many scholars have approached specialized translation departing from genre theory and offer genre taxonomies in translation in medical (Montalt and González Davis; Mayor Serrano), legal (Alcaráz and Huges; Borja Albí), technical (Byrne) or web localization settings (Jiménez-Crespo, forthcoming).
Extralinguistic subcompetence covers a wide range of general world knowledge that any college educated individual might acquire not only in translation courses but, also, in the larger learning experience at the university level. It is precisely in planning specialized courses, that the learning objectives need to incorporate general to specific knowledge of the field in question. This will obviously depend on the different constraints, such as time-related ones or previous knowledge. For example, in a legal translation course, how much country-specific knowledge about legislation is necessary to incorporate? If the course is on court interpreting, how much time will be devoted to learning main court processes (i.e. plea agreement, conviction) that will alleviate the cognitive load in the short term memory while interpreting? Apart from the knowledge acquisition objectives, a skill shared with instrumental-documentation subcompetences is the acquisition of the ability to acquire enough domain specific knowledge for any specific translation task.

Instrumental subcompetences cover both technological and documentation skills. As far as the latter, the goals of the entire program should be to acquire a knowledge of the main general documentation sources in both languages (main monolingual dictionaries, authoritative bilingual dictionaries, term databases such as the European Union IATE, main monolingual and bilingual corpora such as the Corpus del Español of the Spanish Royal Academy, the British National corpus, all the English, Spanish and Portuguese corpora from Brigham Young University, Parallel Memory databases such as Opus Corpus or Webitext). Specialized courses should have as learning objectives the identification and use of main specialized printed and online dictionaries, terminological databases, documentation sources, parallel texts and bi-texts, etc. for each specialized domain. It should also include research and documentation strategies to complement internal support, or what the subject already knows, with external support or outside sources.

Nowadays, professional translation cannot be considered independent of the technologies that support it (O’Brien). Ideally, students should make use of all the possible translation technologies from the very beginning of their training (Pym, “Translation Skill-Sets”). Technology here refers to both specialized translation technologies and to general proficiency in computer use (i.e. word processors including advanced reviewing and editing, file managing, working within online platforms that replicate online translation agencies’ systems, email, advanced internet use including advance search techniques in search engines, etc.). The latter should be included from the onset in the learning goals of any translation program. Translation technologies represent a wide range of tools and processes (Alcina) that, depending on the scope of the program, can be part of a non-language specific course or included
within each course. For example, literary translation nowadays requires advanced general computer skills as well as online and offline documentation skills, while professional technical translation cannot be conceived without the use of translation memory and terminology management tools. In this case, ideally a course on specialized translation should replicate professional environments and make use of translation memory tools from the start as previously mentioned (Pym, “Translation Skill-Sets”). Additionally, as Pym (“Translation Skill-Sets”) and García indicate, it is likely that the professional future of translation will move towards a combination of straight translation and Machine Translation post-editing, and training programs should probably account for this shift.

The knowledge-about-translation subcompetence relates both to the translation processes and the methods and procedures used, such as how to proceed before translation, how to get orientation through the creation of a macrostrategy depending on the task and translation brief to guide the entire process, how to review the text after, etc. as well as types of process related to strategies, techniques and how to solve translation problems. This includes lexical, terminological, grammatical, pragmatic, cross-cultural, technological, domain specific, documentation, professional, ethical, etc. The notion of translation problems is still an extremely controversial notion in Translation Studies (i.e. Martínez Melis and Hurtado Albir 2001). One of the most agreed upon points of departure is that problems are subject-specific and are to some extent impossible to predict. In addition it is difficult to anticipate which problems subjects might not be able to resolve (Löscher). However, both for general and specialized translation types and modalities, translation acquisition studies have identified the most recurrent issues that novices cannot resolve and that need to be part of the learning goals in training programs. The objectives in this area should not only be the ability to select and apply the most efficient and quick strategies to solve the most recurring problems, but also, to identify the most common problems first. This is due to the fact that one of the main differences between novices and experts is that the former often fail to identify problems (i.e. Jääskeläinen), thus rendering themselves incapable of applying any sort of strategy to fix them. In this sense, learning objectives for individual courses should include the identification of the most recurrent translation problems in the targeted modality (identification and recognition of main translation problems in legal translation, for example) or type and the range of strategies to solve them (learning the most common strategies and which subcompetences should be mobilized in each instance). Many didactic translation publications offer detailed lists of the most common translation problems and the strategies to solve them in cases such as medical (Montalt and González Davies), legal (Borja Albi) or technical (Byrne) translations.
Knowledge-about-translation subcompetence also includes knowledge of the world translation market, including different types of employers, customers, briefs, audiences, the creation and estimation of an invoice, student conduct in professional settings, the workings of the language industry and the different types of business processes and agents involved, etc. This implies that, if the goal of a program at a graduate level is to create professionals that can work independently immediately after graduation, promoting the acquisition of the specifics of how to move from a source text to a final product that can be delivered is not enough. Programs must also promote a thorough understanding of the wide range of business, sociological and ethical issues that surround translational activities in real world settings (Dunne; Gouadec). This can be accomplished, for example, by using the socio-constructivist approach advocated by Kiraly (A Social Constructivist) in which the students are faced with real job complete situations that are carried out in group settings. In other cases, programs also include internships and professional workshops that can lead to the acquisition of these necessary components of translation as a business and social transaction. For example, in the translation program at Rutgers University, the internship program includes nine hours of weekly translation-interpreting work within organizations and translation companies. It also involves, three hour weekly meetings in which the professional, ethical and business aspects of developing a career in the language industry are targeted (how to do a CV, how to be accepted as a freelance translator in a database, how to excel at certification exams of different sorts, career counseling in the presentation of the widest possible range of career placements after graduation, etc.).

The last and most important of the sub-competences targeted in translation courses is the strategic sub-competence. As previously mentioned, it prioritizes and mobilizes all other sub-competences in order to solve specific problems that might be encountered during any translation task. The acquisition of this competence throughout a program should entail presenting students with the most common problems and range of possible strategies to solve them at all levels. In terms of strategic competence, it is important to remember that the acquisition goals relate to how to mobilize and use different sub-competences to solve problems. For example, if trainees are dealing with a technical text on the functioning of photovoltaic cells, they should be able to acknowledge that they need to identify an appropriate reputable source to acquire a basic understanding of the specific process that the translation deals with (instrumental-documentation sub-competence) or its related terminology and phraseology. This might be considered necessary both for the understanding process of the source text, as well as for rendering an appropriate version of the target text. Making use of these parallel texts (bilingual sub-competence) for the purposes intended for the translation (knowledge-about-translation
sub-competence) is essential. The ability to have solved all possible problems presented by the text, and the effective completion of an adequate target text within the established time limitations for a test or project would indicate that the students have effectively acquired the necessary degree of strategic sub-competence.

Table 1 shows a practical example of the results obtained by applying these different components in which translation sub-competences can be disaggregated. It represents the potential structure of the learning goals of a legal translation course. It only deals with the specific components that will be acquired during the course, even when many other components can be shared with other components of a holistic program.

Table 1. Sample objectives of syllabus for a legal translation course based on translation competence research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Learning Objectives based on Translation Competence</th>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal Translation Course</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subcompetence</strong></td>
<td><strong>Learning Objectives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual</td>
<td>Learn to read, understand and analyze legal language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learn to recognize and contrastively analyze conventionalized terminology and phraseology in the main legal genres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learn to contrastively analyze the macro and superstructures of highly conventionalized legal genres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learn to analyze and translate the most representative legal genres in the United States, such as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Legal Translation: Contracts (purchase, rent, freight, etc.), powers of attorney, wills, depositions, court proceedings, court resolutions, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Sworn translation: birth, death, marriage and adoption certificates, college degrees, transcripts, translation of the authentication (The Hague apostille)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sample Learning Objectives based on Translation Competence

#### Legal Translation Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcompetence</th>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Extralinguistic                      | Understand the basic principles in the USA and Spanish legal systems.  
|                                      | Learn the differences between civil, business and criminal laws and processes.  
|                                      | Understand the main branches of the law and the main processes associated to them.                                                                                                                                 |
| Knowledge-about-translation          | Understand the ethical, sociological and professional aspects of the legal translation.  
|                                      | Learn to translate legal documents depending on the required brief (as proof in court, as a reference for involved parties, as legal instruments in the target country, etc.).  
|                                      | Learn the main characteristics and principles of sworn translations.  
|                                      | How to include a legal certification statement to sworn translations.                                                                                                                                               |
| Instrumental                         | Improve documentation skills in the field of general legal translation and its different subspecialties, such as criminal law, family law, civil law, etc.  
|                                      | Introduce students to the main legal terminology and phraseology sources both online and in print.  
|                                      | Introduce students to the main parallel corpora of legal translated documents (Eurolex, Acquis, etc.).                                                                                                                                 |
| Strategic                            | Develop the ability to efficiently deal with specific problems in Spanish-English legal translation.  
|                                      | Learn the most efficient strategies in legal translation.                                                                                                                                                           |

It is important to bear in mind that these learning objectives are the ones precisely evaluated at the end of the course. As such, evaluation can move beyond producing a translation more or less free of errors to the possibility of holistically assessing all the components that represent the knowledge required in the job market and possessed by professionals.
5. Conclusions

Translation competence has been used around the world—especially within the common educational area in the European Union—as the guiding framework in order to structure higher education translation training programs. The current expansion in translation education within the United States would benefit enormously from both current research on translation competence and its current applications to structure comprehensive programs. This paper has presented an overview of the different models of translation competence and its different subcomponents. This review was geared towards separating the different components that represent learning objectives of both specific courses and the overall program as a whole. In addition, it helps to evaluate at both course and program levels precisely which objectives have been targeted. In a sense, translation evaluation in academic settings moves beyond whether the students produce more or less translation errors to whether they have been able to correctly utilize and connect the targeted skills that make up translation sub-competences. For example, whether the student can produce more than one adequate version of a source text depending on the translation brief (Pym, “Redefining Translation Competence”) (i.e. a version for the Spanish Colombian market) or whether the students proficiently used a dialectal variation tool such as Diatopix or the Corpus del Español in order to select the most adequate dialectal variety of the language for a specific translation assignment. Another example would be whether the student proficiently uses parallel texts in order to identify terminological, phraseological and style conventions in any specific source textual genre and produces an adequate target exemplar of that genre. These represent example of the advanced competences that professional translators possess if compared to novices.

It has been argued that these models not only provide an efficient theoretical and empirical foundation for course design and evaluation, but also a framework to contextualize and support translation education as an independent but interdisciplinary field with a consolidated scholarly tradition. This can also assist in separating the expanding network of ad hoc professional training courses offered by professional and for-profit organizations from the wider academic and educational purpose of translation education (Bernardini) in institutions of higher learning. Additionally, translation competence research can also help shape the contribution by professional translators in academic courses by channeling their personal experiences through a solid foundation. In light of the relative boom of translation programs around the United States, it is hoped that this article can open up a wider debate within the academic translation community about the necessity of bringing more consolidated translation research into US academic circles.
WORKS CITED


NOTES

1 Kalina defines interpreting competence as: “The competence to process texts within the scope of a bi- or multilingual communication situation with the aim of interlingual mediation. It is also the capability of acting and performing in a situation characterized by externally determined constraints, such as the pressure of time, lack of semantic autonomy and the potential interference between closely connected processes of production and comprehension” (5).

2 The list of approved programs by the American Translators Association can be found at http://www.atanet.org/certification/eligibility_approved.php#us. Other lists can be found at the Translation and Interpreting Advisory Council: http://tisac.org/programs/

3 Angelelli (“A Professional Ideology”) contrasts circumstantial translators and interpreters, those bilinguals that have to perform these tasks not by choice in non-professional settings to elective ones, those that intend to do this professionally in market settings and are educated to do so.

4 Another empirical research effort that could also be considered an empirical effort into the study of translation competence acquisition is the European Project MellAnage LTC (http://corpus.leeds.ac.uk/mellange/ltc.html). It consists of a parallel aligned corpus of student translations across the EU in different directionalities that has been tagged for learner errors, even when the notion of competence is not mentioned per se.

5 Among the many other definitions, and in order to highlight the differences between the USA and other regions, Pym defines translation competence from a market perspective and a minimalist approach, as the “[…] whole range of skills required by the labor market” (“Redefining Translation Competence” 482). This definition might not be appropriate in certain regions such as United States, as market conditions can vary. For example, it is still common in the US market to find job descriptions that require a GDP or high school diploma for translation or interpreting jobs, even when it has been scientifically proven that the level of expertise required is similar to many other professions that require a graduate education level.
This is also included in the results of the Tuning Project ("Student Workload") in the EU as main general acquisition goals for all college programs.

According to a survey of US translation training programs by Hague et al, thirteen programs in this country have some sort of exit requirement, either a translation test or project, sometimes combined with a theory exam.

Kelly (Handbook) identifies in her handbook of translation trainers the following stages similarly to what happens in other educational programs: (1) Identify social needs, (2) Formulate outcomes (3) Identify student profile and needs, (4) Design course content, (5) Identify-acquire resources (trainer training), (6) Design activities, (7) Design assessment, (9) Design course evaluation, (9) Implementation, (10) Quality enhancement.

Nowadays, many translation technology tools such as Wordfast or MemoQ offer free demos with limited translation memory segments. Most tools except for Trados offer free licenses to university training programs.
