Components of Translation Competence: A Job Task Analysis¹ Farzaneh Farahzad² & Mohsen Jazeb³ Abstract

Translator training programs—whether at universities or higher education institutes—have been mushrooming in Iran. The avowed objective of these programs is to prepare trainee translators for the competitive market. This article attempts to identify sub-competences of Translation Competence. To this aim, a job task analysis is conducted. First, a 12-member focus group are asked to set forth all a translator need to function competently—this involves filling out a 3-question survey followed by online interviews which have been recorded. Then, based on the data from the survey, a 50-item questionnaire is developed and distributed among professional translators to rate the items in terms of their importance. Finally, the results are discussed and compared with the PACTE's Translation Competence model. The results of the study show four categories of Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Attributes, the majority of which are considered necessary for the success of a translator. Also, there is a significant correlation between the results of the present study and PACTE's Translation Competence model.

Keywords: TC, Translator training, Job task analysis

1. Introduction

That Translation Competence (TC) is distinct from and goes beyond bilingual competence or merely proficiency in two languages has long been accepted. The idea has been the very incentive and the result of longitudinal

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empirical studies into TC including PACTE (2000–2011) and EMT (2009) as well as a myriad of other classifications of components of TC. The mapping of TC can go a long way in developing more efficient translator training programs as required by current market needs.

In a paper titled Iranian Instructors' Practices and Criteria for Teaching English Translation, Heidari and Mowlaie (2016) are mainly concerned with determining what criteria provide the best platform for designing teaching practices that would result in the most satisfactory outcomes for translation training. In their empirical research, they approach TC from a translator-training point of view. They report a consensus among the instructors "that implementing and covering models of TC, through both materials and teaching methods, should be part of any translation training program" (2016, p 625).

Farahzad (2018), also rightly points out that:

During these years the attitudes to and the expectations of the translator as well as the social conditions and market have all changed. Today's translator should, in addition to linguistic skills, enjoy transfer competence, be able to translate various types of written, oral and multimedia texts, and be familiar with new technologies in their own field of work [emphasis added]. (p 5)

This was probably the idea behind the revision of the Undergraduate English Translation Program in Iran. It was revised at the beginning of 2018 after some 26 years. Farahzad—the supervisor of the project—emphasizes that there was a growing need for the revision because of the wide gap between the content of the old version of the program and the requirements of today's market.

In the quotation from Farahzad (2018), however, some words require special attention: skills, competence and new technologies. Here she is, in fact,

referring to a whole gamut of knowledge, skills and abilities expected from a translator to stay abreast of today's competitive market.

In their paper, Mobaraki and Aminzadeh (2014) are also concerned with TC from a pedagogical point of view. They believe that the ultimate goal of teaching in any field is to train professionals. Furthermore, they claim that teaching translation is not limited to language teaching. The basis of their work is the assumption that ignoring TC has adverse effects on the translation teaching programs.

In the same line with the studies mentioned and countless other research on TC (e.g., Neubert, 2000; Kelly, 2005), the present study assumes that the identification of components of TC can have significant pedagogical implications for translator training programs.

Therefore, the present study seeks to identify components of TC as viewed by subject matter (translation) experts and professional translation practitioners. Then, the results are compared with the TC model proposed by PACTE to see how and to what extent they match. Therefore, the following research questions are formulated:

- 1) What are components of TC—including knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes—in the Iranian context?
- 2) How do these components of TC compare against TC model proposed by PACTE?

2. Review of the literature

2.1. Translation Competence

One of the challenging issues of translation studies is the conceptualization and definition of theoretical and practical context for teaching and practice of translation, so the concept of translation competence plays a key role in this regard (Šeböková, 2010). Competence, which is one of the issues

related to the cognitive aspects of translation, is an essential factor for translation. Competence enables translators to perform this cognitive function. This concept has been increasingly considered in Translation Studies since the 1990s, and initial attempts to define this concept are largely in line with applied linguistics and the theory of language acquisition, especially with reference to linguistic competence and bilingualism. The separation of Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies led to the emergence of other definitions and models of TC. Since translation is a multidimensional activity and requires different knowledge and skills, the problem of defining translation competence does not end with naming it. Jutorán and Albir (2002) believe that there are writers and researchers who use this concept and may have a definition of it in mind but do not express it.

Bell (1991) believes that the competence is the knowledge and skills that a translator must have to be able to translate. According to the definition of the PACTE group (2011), the ability to translate is the underlying system of knowledge and skills required for translation. In addition, the research group claims that the ability to translate cannot be directly assessed. It is specialized knowledge and should be defined on the basis of declarative and procedural knowledge. In any case, the concept of competence should not be confused with Chomsky's (1965) binary definition of competence and performance. In translation studies, translation skills are more consistent with performance (Šeböková, 2010). Moreover, TC, like Chomsky's linguistic competence, is an abstract concept as long as it can be measured only through performance (Beeby, 2000), which consists of a combination of different activities. It would be impossible to describe the ability to translate as an independent entity (Šeböková, 2010). According to Kane (1988, cited in Rothe-Neves, 2007), competence is the result of the translator's actions, and not the cause.

2.2. TC Models

There are many models for how TC works, but most have not been empirically tested and their validity has not been measured (Albir & Alvez, 2009). Current models of TC are divided into three types of models: basic/simple models, pedagogical models and empirical models (šeböková, 2010).

2.2.1. Basic/Simple models

One of the basic/simple models of TC is provided by Pym (2003). He defines TC as follows: 1. The ability to produce a set of more than one suitable target text (first target text, second target text nth target text) for a given source text; 2. The ability to quickly, safely and logically select a suitable target text from these few candidate texts (Albir & Alves, 2009). Contrary to the general model of Pym TC, Winkler (1992) presents a model based on specific structures in the technical translation training course. Accordingly, the model of technical translation skills depends on three factors: engineering, language proficiency (which includes cultural competence), and language information technology. Another model presented by the American Translators Association consists of three basic elements: 1. "Understanding the text of the source language; 2." Translation techniques; 9. "Writing in the target language" (Angelelli & Jacobson, 2009, p. 2).

2.2.2. Pedagogical Models

Šeböková (2010) believes that pedagogical models are the result of certain problems that arise in translation education. Schäffner and Adab (2000) define TC as a complex concept involving the awareness of conscious thinking about all the factors involved in producing a target text that plays its role correctly for its audience. Schäffner's (2000) TC model consists of the following sub-competences:

• Linguistic competence—the languages in question

- Cultural competence: General information about historical, political, economic, cultural, etc. aspects in the target countries
- Textual competence: knowledge of the rules and conventions of texts, textual types and genres
- Technical competence of a field or subject competence: knowledge of the subject, the field of specialization
- Research competence: The capability of a general strategy that aims to be able to solve specific problems for intercultural transfer of the text.
- Transfer competence: The ability to produce target texts that meet the needs of translation work (Schäffner & Adab, 2000, p. 146)

According to Schäffner and Adab (2000), competent students should be able to analyze the text in a situation and in a culture that is contrary to their own background. Pedagogical models can be constructed in the light of students' undesirable traits and the product of their efforts (Shabkova, 2011, p. 95). Fox (2000) has provided the following definition of TC:

- Communication competence: Awareness of the purpose of the translation work and the situation that leads to the ability to produce the appropriate target text.
- Socio-cultural competence: Awareness of the socio-cultural context in which the source text is created and the ability to understand texts in the culture of the source language and the target language
- Linguistic-cultural awareness: Awareness of how language works and the transmission of meaning and the ability to produce target texts that meet the linguistic and cultural expectations of the target audience
- Learning how to learn: Knowledge of different sources and how to use them and how to record observations for problem-solving goals: Knowledge of situational, linguistic, cultural or textual problems and the ability to solve them. (p. 117)

Another model for translation competence is provided by Beeby (2000). Her TC model is related to the translation of the second language, and consists of the following three sub-competences (Beeby, 2000, pp. 186–187)

- Transfer Competence: Awareness of the translation process (advanced reading skills in the source language, skills for deverbalization, reformulation skills in the target languages), knowledge of the multiple contexts in the translation, awareness of the interdependence of micro and macro structures in the translation text.
- Contrastive linguistic competence: Knowledge of the typesetting differences between source and target languages, knowledge of lexical differences between source and target languages, knowledge of lexical limitations, knowledge of syntactic differences between source and target languages.
- Contrastive discourse competence: Knowledge of the difference between text types between the source and the target language, knowledge of the relationship between context and register, mode, implicature, understanding the difference between cohesion and coherence.
- Metalinguistic competence: Knowing the semantic and semiotic differences between the culture of the source language and the culture of the target language, content recording skills.

2.2.3. Empirical Models

The first empirical model is Campbell's (1991) model, which is based on a case study evaluating several solutions for the target text production using the Mean Lean Agreement (MLA) tool, which was an error-based evaluation. To find out the extent of these errors, Campbell developed this measurement tool, a tool that measures the correctness of the solution in its samples (Šeböková, 2010, p. 41). Based on the results of this case study, Campbell (1991) proposes a model of TC that consists of two main sub-competences: Disposition and Proficiency. He believes that the ability to translate is related to certain bilingual skills, and has an evolutionary nature. Proficiency has three aspects: meaning encoding, the universal ability of the target language, and lexical transmission (Campbell, 1991, p. 993). He also states that disposition moves in two paths: risk-taking versus caution and stability versus surrender. Campbell's view is significant

because it seeks to link the translation product to the processes (Šeböková, 2010, p. 41).

Another empirical model is the one proposed by the PACTE (2003) research group. Based on the model of communication competence, this group has defined TC as follows: the underlying system of knowledge and skills that are necessary for translation performance (Orozco & Albir, 2002, p. 976). The PACTE translation competency model consists of a set of related subcompetencies that cover each other's shortcomings. They are interdependent and hierarchical (Shab Wakwa, 2010). The main difference between this model and other models is that this model emphasizes a procedural aspect and considers TC as specialized knowledge in which procedural knowledge has a central place (PACTE, 2003, p. 53). This model consists of five sub-competences and psychophysiological components (PACTE, 2003, pp. 58–59)

- 1. Bilingualism: Procedural knowledge is mainly required for communication between two languages. This sub-competence contains a special ability to control interference during code switching. This ability consists of semantic, linguistic, social, textual, grammatical and lexical knowledge in two languages
- 2. Pragmatic competence: mainly declarative, explicit and implicit knowledge about the world in general and specific fields (about the culture of origin and destination), encyclopedic knowledge about the world in general and thematic knowledge in specific fields
- 3. Knowledge about translation sub-competences: mainly expressive, tacit and explicit knowledge, about what translation is and knowledge about translation work: Labor market knowledge
- 4. Instrumental competence: Mainly procedural knowledge about the use of information and communication resources and technologies used in translation: dictionaries, encyclopedias, grammars, style books, parallel corpora, electronics, sculptures, search engines, etc.

5. Strategic competence: procedural knowledge to ensure the efficiency of the translation process and solve the problems ahead. This competence is an essential ability that affects all other abilities and establishes a relationship between them because it controls the translation process.

For more empirical reports, see Ashrafi (2012).

3. Methodology

3.1. Design

The present work is based on a job task analysis (JTA), which is the process of investigating knowledge and skills required to perform a job. There are various ways of conducting a job analysis, namely Critical Incident Technique (CIT), Position Analysis Questionnaire (PAQ) and Hierarchical Task Analysis (HTA). CIT is an observation-based data collection method, where participants—people involved in a certain task or job—are asked to describe an 'incident' with a specified goal and events which had a positive or negative influence on achieving it. PAQ identifies and measures qualifications required for a certain job. According to Wang (2005) task-oriented HTA is popular for, however not limited to, certification purposes such as certifying a translator. HTA is a detailed scrutiny of a job with the aim of producing a list of tasks needed to successfully perform the job.

According to Wang (2005), there are five steps involved in a taskoriented job analysis:

1. Ask subject matter experts (SMEs) to identify the job tasks or other activities performed by professionals in the domain in question and to define possible items for test content (that is knowledge, skills, and abilities). (For some jobs, the phases of developing a list of tasks and of linking KSAs to various tasks are separated. However, in the case of the domain of translation, the primary task, translation, is not in question, and these two parts can be combined.)

- 2. Develop a survey questionnaire using the results of the first step.
- 3. Select a representative sample of practitioners in the profession to respond to the survey.
- 4. Ask the survey respondents to rate each task-oriented item according to frequency and importance to being a competent professional in the domain.
- 5. Analyze the survey data to determine the relative importance of each task. (as cited in Koby & Melby, 2013)

The present study is a mixed methods research. The first phase—the qualitative part—involved a focus group and interviews; and the second phase—the quantitative part—consisted of collecting and analyzing data using a questionnaire.

3.2. JTA procedures: focus group and survey

Following the ATA (2009) Job Task Analysis, the present study sought to investigate knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) as well as attributes required to successfully perform translation services.

As for the first step of the five steps proposed by Wang (2005), a number of experts in the field of translation—both professional and academic—were asked to enumerate all the knowledge, skills, abilities and characteristic which they deemed necessary to perform translational activities competently. This was conducted in the form of a three-question survey completed by the experts followed by an online—WhatsApp—interview to ensure that questions are clear and no more items may be mentioned. All the online interviews—10 to 20 minutes each—were recorded and relistened to extract every single item. This focus group consisted of (Translation Studies) university professors (who also have years of experience in translation practice), professional translators (with more than 20 years of experience), translators working in news agencies and publication houses. This phase started with 5 and ended with 12 experts, the data reached saturation and no new items were mentioned. There was considerable similarity and homogeneity among items proposed by the focus

group. Therefore, it was safe to move to the second phase and develop a survey questionnaire based on the data obtained from phase one.

The resulting questionnaire consisted of five sections: the first part collected demographic data, and the following sections asked about the knowledge (13 items), abilities (6 items), skills (15 items)—KASs—and the attributes (16 items). The 50-item questionnaire was distributed among a large number of practicing professional translators—using Google Forms—to rate the items in terms of their importance for a translator to perform competently. All the participants had to be at least 24 years old, have at least a Bachelor's degree and a minimum of 1 year of translation experience. All the items were rated on a four-point scale: Not important at all, Relatively less important, Somehow important and Vitally important.

Cronbach's alpha test was used to evaluate the reliability of the present questionnaire. For this purpose, first the reliability of each section of the questionnaire, and then the reliability of all sections of the questionnaire were measured. Thus, the calculated reliability for the components of knowledge, skills, abilities and attitude were 0.79, 0.81, 0.66 and 0.79, respectively. Also, the total reliability for all sections of the questionnaire was 0.90.

Also, six experts—five Translation Studies experts and one Educational Research expert—confirmed the face and content validity of the questionnaire.

In order to analyze data obtained from the questionnaire, SPSS 26.0.0.1 was used for descriptive statistics including frequencies, mean and median.

3. Results

3.1. Demographics

As part of the questionnaire, information was gathered about the participants including their age, gender, level of education, filed of study and professional translation experience.

162 translators completed the questionnaire. 64% were female and 36% were male; the age range was from 24 to 60 years old. 50% held a Master's

Degree, 34% a Bachelor's Degree and 16% held a Doctoral Degree. 73% majored in Translation Studies, almost another 25% studied Linguistics, English Literature or TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) and only 2% were from other fields of studies (such as Political Science, Management and Accounting etc.), who also had years of translating experience. The minimum level of translating experience was 1 year; however, more than 55% had at least 4 years of experience. However, the differences in gender, age and experience were not taken into account.

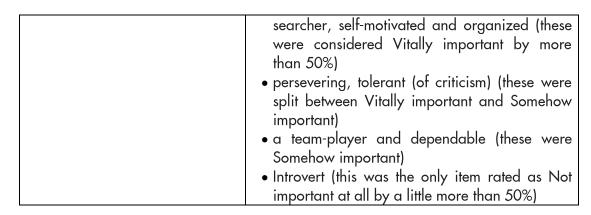
3.2. Knowledge, Skills, Abilities (KSAs) and Attributes

Table 1 below presents the percentage for each item in the questionnaire:

Table 1 KSAs and Attributes obtained from the questionnaire

Competence	Sub-competence
Knowledge (13 items)	 Vocabulary knowledge (76% Vitally important) Grammar knowledge (83% Vitally important) Knowledge of punctuation rules (53% Vitally important) Pragmatic knowledge (74% Vitally important) Metalinguistic knowledge (45% Somewhat important and 39% Vitally important) General/encyclopedic knowledge (split between Vitally important (41%) and Somewhat important (46%)) Social, cultural, historical and political knowledge (split between Vitally important (45%) and Somewhat important (45%)) Subject-matter specific knowledge (48% Somewhat important and 40% Vitally important) Knowledge of translation theories and principles (41% Somewhat important) Knowledge of professional conduct (58% Somewhat important) Knowledge of ethics in translation (47% Somewhat important and 38% Vitally important) Knowledge of translation quality assessment (46% Somewhat important and 30% Vitally important) Knowledge of (translation) industry (42% Somewhat important and 29% Vitally important)

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Skills (15 items)	 Text analysis skills (51% Vitally important) Terminology research skills (67% Vitally important) General writing skills (66% Vitally important) Technical writing skills (51% Somewhat important and 40% Vitally important) Editing and proofreading skills (split between Vitally important (48%) and Somewhat important (45%)) Copy editing skills (split between Vitally important (42%) and Somewhat important (43%)) Technology skills: working with word processors (65% Vitally important) Technology skills: the internet (69% Vitally important) Technology skills: cat (51% Somewhat important) Technology skills: ten-finger typing (42% Somewhat important and 19% Vitally important) Organizational/multitasking skills (53% Somewhat important) Communication/interpersonal skills (49% Somewhat important) Rhetorical skills (57% Somewhat important) Rhetorical skills (57% Somewhat important) Time management skills (55% Vitally important) Business/marketing skills (40% Somewhat
Abilities (6 items) Attributes (16 items)	 important and 20% Vitally important) Able to read and understand a source language text, and write to produce a target text in a language pair (75% Vitally important) Able to understand nuances of language use in a language pair (72% Vitally important) Able to use a corpus (50% Somewhat important and 29% Vitally important) Able to create and maintain a term base (57% Somewhat important) Able to use common sense (51% Vitally important) Able to follow a translation brief (split between Vitally important (48%) and Somewhat important 42%)) lifelong learner, patient, punctual, meticulous,
- Allitibules (10 liems)	attention and concentration, commitment, linguistically sensitive, culturally sensitive,



According to Table 1, all questionnaire items were ranked "Vitally important", "Somehow important" or both by the majority of respondents. The only exception was the item from Attribute section "a translator should be introvert", which was ranked Not important at all by almost 53% of the participants.

As Table 1 shows, some areas of knowledge such as professional conduct, ethics in translation and (translation) industry were rated less important than anticipated; these are areas which are mostly overlooked in translator training programs but which play a significant role in a translator's success.

In skills section, "editing and proofreading skills" was again rated less important than expected; a fact which is also reflected in many published translations which suffer many editing and proofreading-related mistakes such as spelling mistakes.

The most surprising under-rated skills, however, were "technology skills: CAT" and "technology skills: ten-finger typing". The role such skills play in the efficiency and accuracy of translation services is undeniable.

It seems that some of under-rated items do not receive due attention in translator training programs, where they are to learn knowledge and skills which can make a difference in their translation services.

The following section of the article puts items obtained from the questionnaire side by side with the PACTE's sub-competences. The PACTE Group conducts empirical-experimental research with the aim of improving "the quality of applied research into the teaching of translation" (PACTE, 2008, p.105), which lays the foundations for training more efficient translators.

3.3. Mapping the Results against PACTE's TC Model

Table 2. A comparison of PACTE's TC model and the results of the questionnaire

PACTE (2000–2008)	Results of the present study
Bilingual sub-competence	 Vocabulary knowledge Grammar knowledge Knowledge of punctuation rules Pragmatic knowledge Metalinguistic knowledge
	 Text analysis skills General writing skills Technical writing skills Editing and proofreading skills Copy editing skills
	 ✓ Able to read and understand a source language text, and write to produce a target text in a language pair ✓ Able to understand nuances of language use in a language pair
Extra-linguistic sub-competence	 General/encyclopedic knowledge Social, cultural, historical and political knowledge Subject-matter specific knowledge
Instrumental sub-competence	 Business/marketing skills Terminology research skills Technology skills: working with word processors Technology skills: the internet Technology skills: CAT Technology skills: ten-finger typing

	 ✓ Able to use a corpus (Somewhat important) ✓ Able to create and maintain a term base
Knowledge-about-translation sub- competence	 Knowledge of translation theories and principles Knowledge of professional conduct Knowledge of ethics in translation Knowledge of translation quality assessment Knowledge of (translation) industry ✓ Able to follow a translation brief
Psycho-physiological sub-competence	 All the items in Attributes section Communication/interpersonal skills Rhetorical skills Able to use common sense
Strategic sub-competence	Organizational/multitasking skillsTime management skills

Table 2 displays that all the components (knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes) identified by the expert focus group and rated by professional translators almost neatly match the sub-competencies proposed by the PACTE group.

Most of the items here can be directly measured in translator trainees, which makes it easier for these items to be incorporated into translator training programs—and the majority of them have already been. A number of these competences, however, are less accessible to direct observation and therefore assessment. This includes almost all the "Attributes" and items related to PACTE's Psycho-physiological sub-competence. Although these may be reflected in the outcome of a translation service, there seems to be no objective way of teaching or assessing them. Some areas of knowledge such as "General/Encyclopedic knowledge" and "Social, cultural, historical and political knowledge" have the same issue.

3.4. Discussion

Research questions 1 and 2 were addressed in tables 1 and 2 respectively; due to the space limitation they are not repeated here in detail. 13 items of Knowledge, 15 Skills, 6 Abilities and 16 Attributes were identified. Also, the results (see Table 2) indicate that there is a significant correlation between components of TC identified in the present study and those proposed by PACTE.

PACTE's TC model was used in the present study as a point of reference since it has distinctive features from other TC models. Reviewing the literature, PACTE (2002) lists some of the shortcomings of previous studies: lack of an empirical element, "the limited size of the sample" and "no longitudinal study" (p. 43).

However, the results of the focus group and the questionnaire in this study are in line with TC models proposed by Beeby (2000), Fox (2000) and Schäffner and Adab (2000), whose models were discussed in the literature reviewed in section 2.

Farahzad (2018) defines the objectives of the new Undergraduate English Translation Program in Iran in three levels:

- 1. Developing language skills (the four skills in English as well as skills in Persian including writing and editing).
- 2. Developing translation competence including:
 - Understanding the principles and techniques of translation
 - Acquiring skills in translating from English into Persian and vice versa in written, oral and multimedia forms.
 - Using current tools and technologies for translating

Most of the key words she uses here correspond to the items in the questionnaire of the present study: language skills, the principles and techniques of translation and current tools and technologies for translating.

4. Conclusion

A systematic identification of the desired competences—needs analysis—required for the successful and efficient completion of a task can go a long way

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in improving the performance of people involved. Translation as a technical, professional service calls for certain qualifications.

In the present study, a job task analysis was conducted to identify KSAs (or in a more general term competences) necessary for translation. It stands to argue that the identification and classification of translation sub-competencies should be the starting point of any improvements in translator training programs. Once sub-competencies are identified, future studies can focus on innovative approaches to incorporate them into training programs.

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$^{\mathsf{L}}$ اجزاء توانش ترجمه: روش تجزیهوتحلیل شغل

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چکیده

برنامههای آموزش مترجم—چه در دانشگاهها و چه در مؤسسات آموزش عالی—در ایران بهسرعت افزایش پیدا کردهاند. هدف این برنامهها آمادهسازی کار آموزان ترجمه برای بازار رقابتی است. این مقاله سعی دارد زیر توانشهای توانش ترجمه را شناسایی کند. برای این منظور، یک تجزیهوتحلیل وظیفه انجام میشود. ابتدا از یک گروه متمرکز ۱۲ نفره خواسته میشود که کلیه نیازهای مترجم برای عملکرد مناسب را بیان کنند—این مرحله شامل تکمیل یک نظرسنجی ۳ سؤالی همراه مصاحبه آنلاین است که همگی ضبط شدهاند. سپس، براساس دادههای حاصل از نظر سنجی، یک پرسشنامه ۵۰ سؤالی تهیه و بین مترجمان حرفهای توزیع میشود تا موارد را از نظر اهمیت آنها درجهبندی کنند. سرانجام، نتایج مورد بحث و مقایسه قرار می گیرد و با مدل توانش ترجمه PACTE مقایسه میشود. نتایج تحقیق نشان میدهد که چهار زیرتوانش دانش، مهارتها، تواناییها و ویژگیها برای موفقیت مترجم ضروری هستند. همچنین، بین نتایج این مطالعه و مدل توانش ترجمه PACTE

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