

## Investigating the Translation Programme at two Yemeni Universities in the Light of PACTE's Translation Competence Model

Tawffeek A. S. Mohammed

Department of English, Taiz University, Yemen

E-mail: tawffeek@gmail.com

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### Abstract

The present study aims to analyse the current translation programme at two Yemeni universities, namely the University of Science and Technology (UST) and Al-Saeed University (SU) with a view to finding out to what extent the formal training of the Student translators (STs) contributes to the errors/problems they encounter in the actual process of translation. It argues that the problems encountered by the translators can be overcome or minimized if they are taken into account in the process of training the translator/interpreter. Using questionnaires as the main instrument, the study concluded that the syllabus contributes mainly to the lack of translation competence of the STs. It also concluded that the STs are generally not satisfied with the programme. The study recommended that teaching materials need to be revamped and all the translation sub-competencies should be considered.

**Keywords:** Translation Competence, Pacte, Bilingual, Extra-linguistic, Knowledge-about-translation, Strategic, Instrumental, Psycho-physiological, Sub-competence.

### تقييم برنامج الترجمة في جامعتين يمنيتين في ضوء نموذج باكتي لكفاءة الترجمة

توفيق عبدو سعيد محمد

جامعة تعز ، قسم اللغة الإنجليزية ، اليمن

#### المستخلص:

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى تحليل برنامج الترجمة في جامعتين يمنيتين، هما: جامعة العلوم والتكنولوجيا، وجامعة السعيد، لمعرفة إلى أي مدى يسهم التدريب الرسمي للطلاب المترجمين في الأخطاء، التي يواجهونها أثناء عملية الترجمة الفعلية.

وترى الدراسة أنه يمكن التغلب على المشاكل التي يواجهها المترجمون، أو الحد منها، إذا أخذت بعين الاعتبار في برامج اعداد المترجم. وقد اعتمدت الدراسة في تقييمها للبرنامج على نموذج باكتي لكفاءة الترجمة، والذي يتكون من ستة مجالات رئيسية، هي: الكفاءة اللغوية في اللغتين، والكفاءة التي يحتاجها المترجم في مجالات إضافية للغة كالكفاءة الثقافية، والكفاءة التخصصية، والكفاءة الاستراتيجية، والكفاءة التكنولوجية، والكفاءة السيكوفيزيولوجية.

وقد استخدمت الدراسة الاستبيانات كأداة رئيسة لجمع البيانات من الطلاب المترجمين في الجامعتين، وخلصت إلى أن المنهج يسهم بشكل رئيس في افتقار الطلاب لكفاءات الترجمة اللازمة، و بينت الدراسة عدم رضا الطلبة المترجمين عن البرنامج.

#### الكلمات المفتاحية:

كفاءة الترجمة، أنموذج باكتي، الكفاءة اللغوية، الكفاءة التخصصية، الكفاءة الاستراتيجية، الكفاءة التكنولوجية، الكفاءة السيكو فيزيولوجية.

## 1. Introduction

The increasing demand for translators and interpreters necessitated the initiation and extension of translation and interpreting programmes “in an increasing number of countries (Belgium, Canada, Australia, Denmark, UK, Spain...)” (Kelly, 2005, p8). In the 1990s alone, more than 250 programmes were introduced. The third millennium has also witnessed the founding of a lot of translating and interpreting programmes at various universities throughout the Arab World. Unfortunately, the race between Arab universities to open translation programs has led to apparent saturation in the field of translation training, sometimes at the cost of quality.

In fact, a systematic teaching of Arabic-English translation, at Arab and Western universities, is more recent, if compared to teaching translation from and to European languages. The increasing need of the market for professional translators and interpreters encouraged many universities in the United Kingdom, America, and the Arab World to establish Arabic-English translation and interpreting programmes. As Dickins (2006, p364) pointed out:

Interest in the Arab World in Arabic-English translation is significant and seems likely to continue to grow over the next few years. Part of this interest is practical; Arabic-English translation is required throughout the Arab World and is in intense demand in certain Arab states, such as those of the Gulf.

In addition, interest in Arabic-English translation is not only market-related but it can also be academic. Translation is a field of study that “combines practical applicability with intrinsic academic merit” Dickins (2006, p364). It is not only a matter of bilingualism or multilingualism, but it also deals with two or more cultures. This makes translation more interesting from an academic perspective “than the more traditional area of Applied Linguistics” (Dickins, 2006, p364).

However, translation as a multi-disciplinary field has not been given the status it deserves yet. We do agree with Ghazalah, who rightly pointed out that translation “has so far been unfortunately marginalized in the syllabi of English departments all over the Arab World” (Ghazalah, 2004, p215). In fact, teaching translation at existing foreign language departments is a common practice at Yemeni universities. This kind of integration can be useful for two practical reasons. It may enable the graduates of these departments to join professions that require some basic translation skills. It is also beneficial for language students who are not keen to remain in an occupation in direct accord with their original degree major. That is, they prefer to take up other jobs, such as translating, editing, proof-reading and revising (Klein-Braley & Franklin, 1998; Malmkjær, 1998; Na, 2005; Mohammed, 2011). Beaugrande (2000) concurred with this view. For him, it is “the least expensive and most gradual, allowing for translation to be introduced at multiple points without incisive

organizational or administrative changes". In a sense, the majority of translation programmes at Yemeni and Arab universities still follow this kind of training. More measures need to be taken into consideration before these departments can yield competent, let alone professional, translators and interpreters who can actively participate in the global translation and localization market (Preložníková & Toft, 2004, p95). The achievement of such a strategic goal might not be possible unless universities pay more attention to the syllabus, teaching materials, admission policies and teaching methodology.

## **2. Aims and objectives**

Teaching some translation and interpreting modules at a number of Yemeni and South African universities has brought to the researcher's attention some glaring errors or problems that encounter STs while translating texts from Arabic into English. This motivated the researcher to examine the problems/difficulties faced by student translators (STs), novice translators (NTs) and professional translators (PTs) while translating texts from Arabic into English (Mohammed, 2011; Mohammed, 2019). The above studies have adopted a Systemic Functional Linguistics approach and they attempted a taxonomy of translation problems the STs, NTs and even PTs face at the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions. Some problems were also found at the extra-textual or contextual stratum.

The present study is an extension to the above studies. It aims to find out to what extent the current programme at two Yemeni universities, namely University of Science and Technology (UST) and Al-Saeed University (SU) can enhance the translation competence of the would-be translators. It also aims to shed light on the causes of the errors/problems encountered by STs while translating texts from Arabic into English from their own perspectives. This can help develop better instructional materials and classroom techniques. The pedagogical implications of the study may help STs tackle such problems and thus produce more communicative translations.

## **3. Hypothesis**

The study hypothesizes that the STs at the University of Science and Technology and Al-Saeed University have positive attitudes towards the current translation programme at the two universities. There is no statistically significant difference at  $\alpha \leq 0.05$  between the mean and the test value.

## **4. Literature Review**

A considerable number of studies have been conducted to diagnose translation programmes in different Arab countries. Those studies either tackle the curriculum as a massive educational plan or they focus on some aspects of the programme such as the teaching methodology or its relevance to the market. Some of these studies are briefly discussed below:

### **4.1. Studies on Teaching Translation in the Undergraduate level**

As early as 1997, Shaheen argued that the discipline of translation teaching in the Arab World is still in its infancy. Undergraduate translation syllabuses are relatively few and subjective. Fewer courses are available at the post graduate level and they are of the 'do-it-yourself' type (Shaheen, 1997).

Gabr (2002) investigated the then-scenario of translation teaching at Egyptian universities. He argued that translation is offered in a number of public universities in the departments of English as a compulsory subject. However, the teaching materials and approaches used in those departments are arbitrary as they are mainly prepared or

compiled by the teachers based on subjective rather than scientific or market-related criteria. Gabr (2002) suggested some requirements a translation programme should meet with a view to fulfilling the needs of the potential market and the needs of the students themselves. Among these requirements are bilingual and bicultural sub-competencies, subject matter competence (i.e., legal, business, technical), translation strategies, computer literacy, teamwork tactics and the like. In another study (Gabr, 2007), he suggested the adoption of the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) in the design of translation programmes. He argued that the translation programs should be developed on the basis of three inextricably linked criteria: the needs of the market, the needs of translation departments and – equally important – the needs of students (Gabr, 2007).

In a similar vein, Alaoui, (2008) observed that translation programmes at Moroccan universities are more oriented towards the achievement of academic, rather than professional objectives. Translation is simply taught because it is a part of the English BA programme at the Moroccan universities. He attributed the failure of the Moroccan universities to run programs for professional translators to the following reasons: the non-availability of qualified staff as most of the teachers are neither professional translators nor graduates of specialized training institutions; the open-door policy adopted by Moroccan universities which focuses on quantity at the cost of quality as well as the lack of technical infrastructure. Translation departments require the use of sophisticated technology such as computer labs, audio-visual materials, translation software and tools and not just a blackboard and chalk.

Al-Sohbani & Muthanna (2013) discussed the challenges of Arabic-English translation in the Yemeni context. They argued that students encounter problems at the lexical, grammatical, and cultural levels. The study recommended that the teaching materials and methodology as well as the students' admission policies in higher education institutions in Yemen need to be reviewed.

Al Aqad (2017) discussed the problems of teaching translation in some Palestinian universities. The study concluded that the problems involved in teaching translation at these universities are similar to problems observed in other Arab universities.

Al Mubarak (2017) tackled the problems and difficulties faced by translation teachers at the University of Jazan in Saudi Arabia. Some of the problems discussed by the researcher are teaching materials, lack of logistics and equipment, and classroom atmosphere.

Gamal (2014) conducted a study on audio-visual translation in the Arab world. He suggested that the translation industry in the Arab world is in a crisis. He acknowledged that great efforts were exerted by individuals, organizations and governments to reverse the situation, but those efforts and policies have not yielded the desired results yet.

Al-Batineh and Bilali (2017) investigated whether the translation curricula are in line with the needs of the language industry or not. They pointed out that several translator training programmes are offered in the Arab world, but they do not adequately fulfill the needs of the local and global markets their graduates are likely to serve.

#### **4.2. Studies on Teaching some Translation Modules**

There is a dearth of studies that deal with the teaching of certain translation and interpreting modules such as sight translation, simultaneous and consecutive interpreting, technical translation and computer-aided translation technology.

Almutawa & Izwaini (2015) investigated the status of machine translation in the Arab world with special reference to its standing in Saudi Arabia. The study concluded that a considerable number of organizations in Saudi Arabia are reluctant to use machine translation systems. The Saudi universities and centers have dedicated little efforts to research in the field of machine translation.

Alkhatnai (2017) reported on the attitudes of Saudi translation students to the use of a project-based method (PBL) while teaching a computer-aided translation course. The study concluded that the PBL method has enhanced the student's autonomy and teamwork skills. However, some other students have raised some concerns such as the practicality of the procedure and time issues.

Alotaibi (2014) dealt with the attitudes of 103 female students at the College of Languages & Translation, King Saud University, Riyadh towards the use of Computer-Aided Translation (CAT) tools in the translation classroom. The study concluded that technology-enhanced instruction has changed the students' attitudes towards translation as a discipline. The study recommended that CAT tools should be utilized in translation classrooms with the aim to enhance the skills of students and to maximize their job opportunities.

Hence, the above studies have focused mainly on general obstacles for teaching translation at the undergraduate levels such as teaching methodology, syllabus design and lack of infrastructure and other logistics. However, they have overlooked the translation competence of the translator with all its dimensions. More empirical studies are needed to find out the problems that hinder the performance of the STs at the lexico-grammatical, cultural, psycho-psychological and strategic levels. The current empirical study is a humble attempt in this regard. In addition, the above studies have labeled the translation programmes as faulty, based on the evaluation of some study materials or based on statistics on the qualifications of teachers or/and admission policy. However, they have ignored key issues in translator's training such as the employability and graduateness of the trainees.

### **5. Theoretical framework**

We can safely argue that the didactics of translation have not been given an adequate attention like foreign languages teaching. With the emergence of translation studies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there has been extensive literature on some theoretical aspects of translation such as equivalence, Skopos and untranslatability but less empirical studies were conducted on the way in which

it [theory] could best be taught, in order to enhance the different skills acquired in one or more foreign languages and cultures, in relation to and in conjunction with the mother tongue, for the purpose of more effective communication (Schäffner, 2002, p vii).

It is a generally accepted fact that all translation institutions and professional programmes claim that they aim to enhance the translation competence (TC) of the future translators. Yet the description of translation competence and how-to-enhance it was not materialized in some translation programmes in the Arab World. As is the case with other concepts in translation studies, TC has been defined differently by different scholars. The term 'competence' is often interchangeable with terms such as 'skill', 'ability', 'capacity' and the like. However, the term 'competence' is commonly used and favoured in translation studies and higher education institutions (Kelly, 2005, p33). Translation competence represents "...the underlying system of

knowledge, abilities and attitudes required to be able to translate” (PACTE, 2003, p43).

Many TC models were suggested such as Roberts's model (Roberts, 1984), which consists of the following components: linguistic competence, translation competence, methodological competence, disciplinary competence and technical competence.

In a similar vein, Kelly (2005, p38-39) identified several competencies that are necessary in the field of translation training in the context of a general higher education institution.

- Communicative and textual competence in at least two languages and cultures;
- Cultural and intercultural competence;
- Subject area competence;
- Professional and instrumental competence;
- Attitudinal (or psycho-physiological) competence;
- Interpersonal competence;
- Strategic competence.

In our study, we used the TC model known as Process in the Acquisition of Translation Competence and Evaluation (PACTE), which was designed by a group of translation scholars. It is the culmination of a decade-long research project in which the group employs empirical-experimental research methods to investigate translation competence and translation competence acquisition. Unlike previous models, the PACTE group model pays adequate attention to translation as a process and as a product. The subjects participating in the project are expert translators and teachers of foreign languages. In brief, PACTE group tackle translation as a process and as a product on the basis of a myriad of materials and data collection instruments such as empirical elicitation tasks, translation protocols (Neunzig, 2000), direct observation, questionnaires and retrospective interviews.

Our study is based on the last revised fine-tuned model of the PACTE group that appears in the following figure.

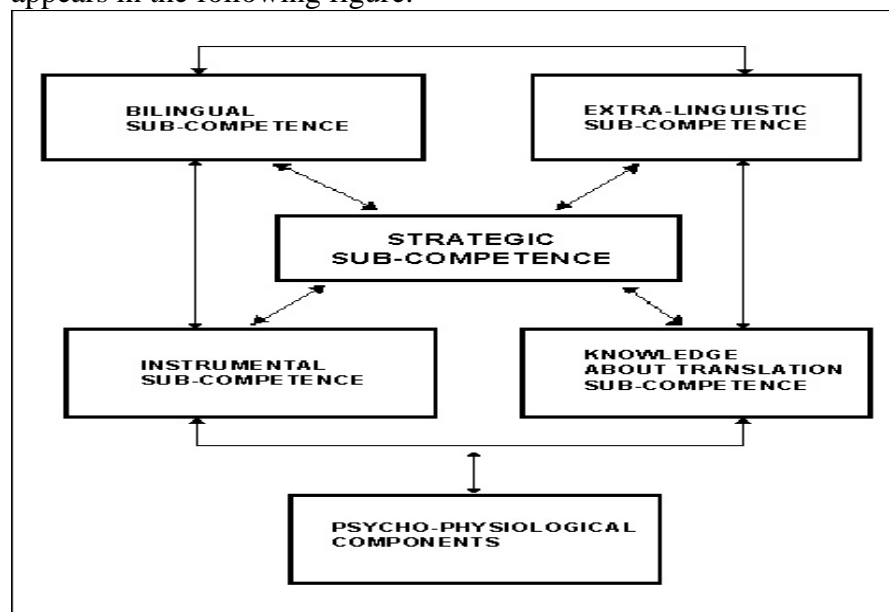


Figure 1. PACTE's model of TC (PACTE, 2005, p610)

As the above diagram shows, PACTE views TC as a construct “made up of a set of sub-competencies that are inter-related and hierarchic, with the strategic sub-

competence occupying a dominant position” (PACTE, 2003, p60). In other words, TC is viewed as a procedural phenomenon with three process oriented sub-competences and two declarative sub-competences. Unlike other TC models, the PACTE model puts special emphasis on the psychology of the would-be translator. As is obvious from the diagram, all sub-competences are influenced and complemented by psycho-physiological components.

The group has associated the model with a detailed description of the respective sub-competences (PACTE, 2003, p58-59), as follows.

*Bilingual sub-competence:* predominantly procedural knowledge needed to communicate in two languages. It includes the specific feature of interference control when alternating between the two languages. It is made up of pragmatic, socio linguistic, textual, grammatical and lexical knowledge in the two languages.

*Extra-linguistic sub-competence:* predominantly declarative knowledge, both implicit and explicit, about the world in general and special areas. It includes bicultural knowledge (about the source and target cultures), encyclopaedic knowledge (about the world in general) and subject knowledge (in special areas).

*Knowledge about translation sub-competence:* predominantly declarative knowledge, both implicit and explicit, about what translation is and aspects of the profession. It includes knowledge about how translation functions and knowledge related to professional translation practice.

*Instrumental sub-competence:* predominantly procedural knowledge related to the use of documentation sources and information and communication technologies applied to translation: dictionaries, encyclopaedias, grammars, style books, parallel texts, electronic, corpora, searchers, etc.

*Strategic sub-competence:* procedural knowledge to guarantee the efficiency of the translation process and solve the problems encountered. This is an essential sub-competence that affects all the others and causes inter-relations amongst them because it controls the translation process.

*Psycho-physiological components:* different types of cognitive and attitudinal components and psycho-motor mechanisms. They include cognitive components (memory, perception, attention and emotion), attitudinal aspects (intellectual curiosity, perseverance, rigour, critical spirit...), abilities such as creativity, logical reasoning, analysis and synthesis, etc.

## 6. Methodology

This empirical study was conducted at the Departments of English and Translation at the University of Science and Technology and Al Saeed University during the academic year 2016-2017. The fourth year STs were purposively selected as the participants of the study due to their sound language skills in both languages. The participants had successfully completed many translation and interpreting courses. A questionnaire was designed to measure their attitudes towards the current translating/interpreting programme at their universities. The items of the questionnaire were designed on the basis of a 5-point Likert scale as follows:

Strongly agree (SA)	Mildly agree (MA)	Undecided (U)	Mildly disagree (MD)	Strongly disagree (SD)
1	2	3	4	5

The questionnaire, in its initial form, was sent to a specialized jury of four professors in the fields of Translation studies, curricula and instruction and educational psychology. The jury recommended the deletion of two items because they have already been incorporated to other items of the questionnaire. In its final form, the questionnaire included 18 items that cover all the components of the TC as suggested by PACTE group.

To test the reliability of the questionnaire, it was administered to a sample of 30 students other than the participants of the study. Then, the same questionnaire was given to the participants 20 days later, under relatively the same conditions. The reliability coefficient was estimated using the Cronbach's Alpha Formula and it was found to be 0.89. This value is considered reliable for the purpose of this study.

We have approached the students on campus, and we have provided them with a consent form to sign. The questionnaire was created using an online survey tool known as *Sogosurvey* and a link was given to students who have agreed to participate in the questionnaire. Sixty participants submitted the online questionnaire and their responses were analysed using the above tool and PSPP, a statistical analysis tool similar to SPSS.

## 7. Discussion of Results

This sub-section deals with the attitudes of the STs at the two universities towards the current programme and its treatment of the various elements of TC.

### 7.1. Bi-lingual sub-competence

Six questions were designed in the questionnaire to cover various aspects of the bi-lingual sub-competence. The responses of the participants are summarized in the following table.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the STs' attitude towards the treatment of linguistic sub-competence in the programme**

Item	Mean	SD	t	Df	Sig.
The syllabus does not focus on the morphological and syntactic differences between English and Arabic.	2,02	1,44	-117,94	59	,000
The syllabus does not pay attention to the lexical knowledge in the two languages.	1.85	1.23	-139.19	59	.000
The syllabus does not familiarize students with the different Arabic and English cohesive systems.	1.38	.76	-230.16	59	.000
Students are not introduced to translation-oriented text analysis in the programme.	1.75	1.39	-124.40	59	.000
Students are not introduced to different genres and text types which may cause text-specific problems	1.67	1.10	-157.33	59	.000
An effective training in the mother-tongue competence is not offered.	1.55	1.06	-163.37	59	.000



As seen in Table 1, the mean scores for STs' attitudes towards the treatment of the linguistic competence in the current programme were low, ranging from 1.38 to 2.02. The first of the above items deals with contrastive morphology and syntax. Some translation problems are attributed to the structural differences between English and Arabic. In response to the statement that the syllabus does not focus on the morphological and syntactic differences between English and Arabic, the mean score was 2.02 with a standard deviation of 1.44. This shows that the difference in syntactic structures is not adequately considered in the syllabus and that might interpret some instances of negative transfer and inappropriate translations while translating tense, gender, number, prepositions, articles, etc.

The STs also believe that the current syllabus falls short to equip them with adequate lexical knowledge in the two languages. The translation activity is sometimes reduced to a dictionary use. Most of the time the focus is on dictionary work and thus the subtle nuances of particular lexical items go unnoticed while translating. In response to the statement that the syllabus does not pay attention to the lexical knowledge in the two languages, the mean score was 1.85 with standard deviation of 1.23. Therefore, finding equivalents to source language lexical items can be very arduous for the STs. Some lexical problems may be ascribable to the lexical gaps between the source and the target languages. Lexical items in English, for instance, are likely to have slightly different shades of meaning and they may not have plausible equivalents in Arabic.

The teaching materials should include texts that do not only require translating the denotative meaning of lexical items but its connotations and subtle nuances. The STs sometimes select the denotative or literal meaning and they do not pay enough attention to contextual meaning. Unless the STs investigate the use of a lexical item in context, the associative, reflective, and attitudinal aspects of meaning may be lost.

Cohesion and coherence constitute another area of difficulty for the STs. In fact, the STs' tendency to render the source text literally results in some textual problems of cohesion and textual restructuring. In response to the statement that the syllabus does not familiarize students with the different Arabic and English cohesive systems, the mean score was 1.38 with a standard deviation of .76. English and Arabic employ different cohesive systems. Arabic cohesion is "context-based, generalized, repetition-oriented, additive, and abounds in parallelism" (Mehamsadji, 1988, p3; Mohamed & Omer, 2000, p45; Mohammed, 2011, p205). English cohesion, on the other hand, is described as "text-based, specified, change-oriented, and non-additive" (Mehamsadji, 1988, p3; Mohamed & Omer, 2000, p45; Mohammed, 2011, p205). The responses of the STs show that the current programme does not consider the above differences in the cohesive systems. As a result, the STs' translations do not only lack cohesion but they also disturb the coherence and logical arrangements of ideas in the target text.

Another cause of the problems the STs face in the process of translation might be attributed to their unfamiliarity with source text analysis. In response to the statement that students are not introduced to translation-oriented text-analysis, the mean score was 1.75 with a standard deviation of 1.39. Undoubtedly, source text analysis plays a significant role in the translation process. It is a phase that aims to identify and highlight "specific textual features which might be expected to present translation problems in order to steer translation decisions" (Erdmann, et al,1994, p4).

In addition, the STs have encountered some problems related to text-type and genre conventions. Text typologies enable translators to "make translation decisions that

produce target texts which meet target reader expectations” (Neubert & Shreve, 1992, p126).

In response to the statement that STs are not introduced to text-typologies, the mean was 1.67 with a standard deviation of 1.10. This obviously shows that the STs do not consider the text-type and genre conventions while translating. The translation of some genres can be very challenging if they do not exist in the target culture (e.g. maqāmāt). Other genres such as Shaylāt and Zawāmil defy translation and they remain unknown despite their long histories (Bassnett, 2006, p91-93).

Certain translation problems might also arise due to the STs’ lack of proficiency in their mother tongue. The results show that the STs feel that the mother tongue component in the programme is peripheral. In response to the statement that an effective training in the mother-tongue competence is not offered with a view to helping students to be more sensitive to the way they use their own language, the mean was 1.55 with a standard deviation of 1.06. Hence, the mother tongue competence of the STs should be considered in the translation programme and it should not be taken for granted.

As opposed to the proclaimed policies of the departments of English and translation at the two universities, the bilingual sub-competence does not receive proper attention in the current programme. In other words, descriptive linguistics (i.e., morphology, syntax, semantics) in the two languages is still marginalized in the current programme.

### 7.2. *Extra-linguistic sub-competence*

The extra-linguistic sub-competence is concerned with the socio-cultural aspects of translation as well as the subject and encyclopedic knowledge of would-be translators. To assess the position of this competence in the two programmes under investigation, two items were included in the questionnaire.

**Table 2 shows the STs’ attitudes towards the integration of extra-linguistic sub-competence in the current syllabus**

Item	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig.
The syllabus in its present form does not focus on the socio-cultural aspects of the target culture properly.	1.58	1.08	-46.10	59	.000
The syllabus does not meet the needs of the students in terms of bi-cultural competence, research skills competence (e.g. encyclopedic and subject knowledge) and this negatively affects the students’ performance.	1.75	1.19	-40.76	59	.000

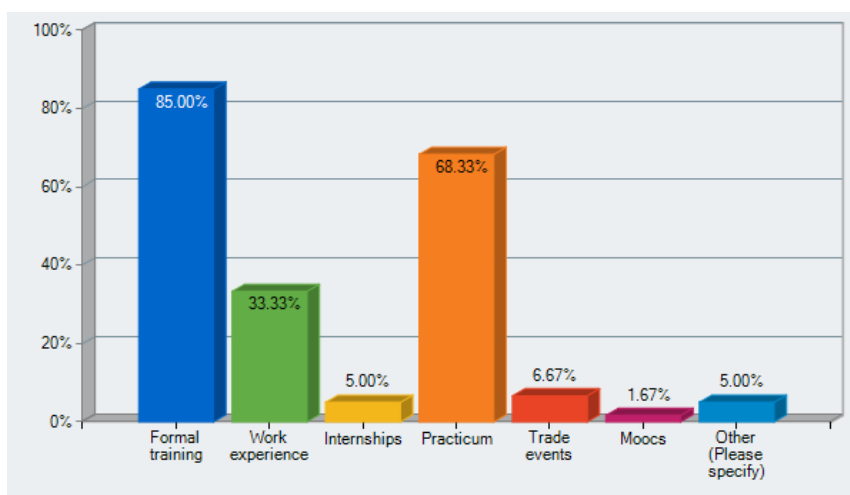
As seen in table 2, the mean scores for the STs’ attitudes towards the incorporation of the extra-linguistic sub-competence in the current programme were low.

Translation is a socio-cultural activity that bridges two diverse cultures. The translator’s unfamiliarity with the socio-cultural background of the text will affect the translation. In response to the statement that the syllabus in its present form does not focus on the socio-cultural aspects of the target culture properly, the mean score was 1.58 with a standard deviation of 1.08. Some frozen expressions, metaphors, historical

and religious allusions and culture-specific terms are lost in translation because the STs translate them literally.

Subject knowledge is also an integral part of this competence. Business, legal, technical, journalistic and literary translation are taught in the current programme in a traditional manner. That is, students are given some business, legal or news texts to be translated in the classroom. That is hardly sufficient to enhance the subject matter competence of STs who are likely to translate texts or genres they have never been exposed to.

In response to the statement that the syllabus does not meet the needs of the students in terms of bi-cultural competence, research skills competence (e.g. encyclopedic and subject knowledge) and this negatively affects the students' performance, the mean score was 1.75 and the standard deviation was 1.19. As for the type of training the STs have received to enhance their subject matter knowledge, 51% of the respondents said that they have received a formal training in a brick-and-mortar environment. Other modes of training given by the respondents are practicum (41%), work experience (20%), internships (3%), trade events (4%) and MOOCs (1%). The responses of the STs are given in the following graph.



**Figure 2: Modes of Training at the two Universities**

**7.3. Knowledge about translation sub-competence**

Theoretical, professional and ethical issues must be part and parcel of any translation programme. Yet, the STs seem dissatisfied with the treatment of those aspects in the current programme, as is clear from the following table.

**Table 3 shows the STs' attitudes towards the integration of the knowledge about translation sub-competence in the current syllabus**

Item	Mean	SD	T	df	Sig.
There is no coordination between translation theory and practice.	2.40	1.25	-34.66	59	.000
Translation is viewed as a creative act and thus linguistic and translation theories are not always considered.	2.37	1.33	-32.88	59	.000

As the above table shows, the STs are not satisfied with the treatment of translation theories in the current syllabus. As Schäffner (2002, p49) put it, translation theories “should formulate a set of strategies for approaching problems and for coordinating the different aspects entailed”. In response to the statement that there is no coordination between theory and practice, the mean score was 2.40 and the standard deviation was 1.25.

When the STs were asked whether translation is more viewed as a creative or linguistic act, the mean score was 2.37 and the standard deviation was 1.33. This finding shows that linguistic theories are not always considered in the process of translation. Translation theories are sometimes intentionally marginalized in translation programs at some Arab universities. As Ghazalah (2006, p26-27) pointed out

The theory is a dress which is to be worn by the SL translated word, expression, sentence or text, as well as by the TL translation. Practice has proved this to be unacceptable and impractical, because this dress may suit a text, but may not suit another of the same type. Also, there is the danger of making, or thinking of a text in terms of the presupposed theory so that a poor, wrongly directed translation can be the result. Above all, theories of translation have undergone, and are still undergoing considerable changes, and at times complete changes.

In fact, infelicitous expressions and inappropriate translations may be attributed to the lack of coordination between theory and practice, rather than to the use of translation theories. Theories of translation, if well-coordinated, can provide translators with a range of strategies and techniques to use when they encounter translation problems.

#### 7.4. Strategic sub-competence

Another drawback of the current syllabus resides in the fact that it does not attempt to promote the strategic sub-competence of the STs. Translation, for example, is never viewed as a problem-solving activity. As a result, the STs are not systematically introduced to the cultural and linguistic problems of translation. Translation, after all, is a problem-solving process in which translators are likely to face many problems and they are required to use certain strategies to solve them (Levy, Althoff, & Vidal, 2012; Reiss, 1981; Varantola, 2003; Mohammed, 2011). When the STs were asked if they were introduced to problems commonly encountered in a text and problem-solving translation strategies (i.e., syntactic, semantic and pragmatic strategies), the mean was 1.83 and the standard deviation was 1.20, as is obvious in table 4 below.

**Table 4 shows the STs' attitudes towards the treatment of strategic sub-competence in the current syllabus**

Item	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig.
students are not introduced to problems commonly encountered in a text and they are not introduced to problem-solving translation strategies (i.e., syntactic, semantic and pragmatic strategies).	1.83	1.20	-14.04	59	.000

#### 7.5. Instrumental sub-competence

Five items of the questionnaire were designed to cover aspects related to the instrumental sub-competence, which aims to enhance the STs' professional and academic skills through the use of technology in general and computer-aided translation technology in particular.

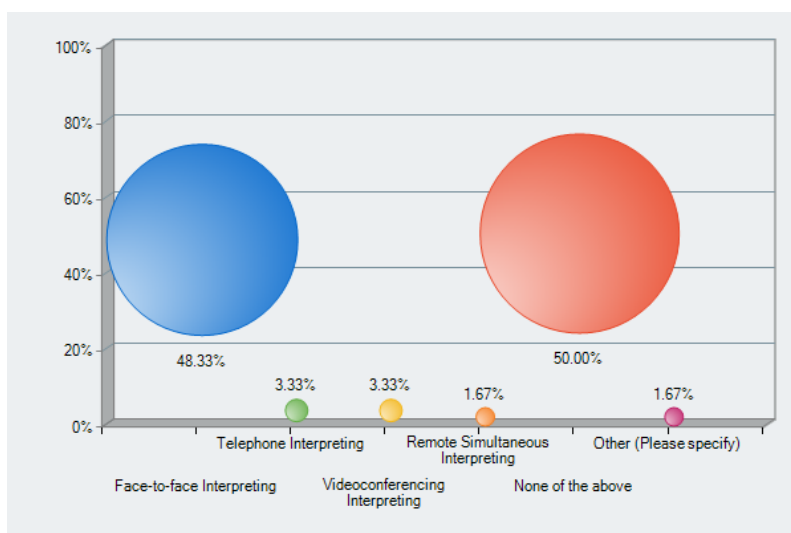
**Table 5 shows the STs' attitudes towards the integration of instrumental sub-competence in the current syllabus**

Item	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig.
Computer-assisted translation tools are not used in the programme at your college/university.	1,92	1,55	-70,17	59	,000
The programme does not introduce the students even in passing to the new trends in translation technology.	1,70	1,43	-77,48	59	,000
The programme does not familiarize students with translation tools they are likely to use in their profession.	1,50	1,05	-107,01	59	,000
The programme does not familiarize students with the new technological trends in corpus linguistics such as concordance tools, corpus tools, web as corpus tools, etc.	1,55	1,14	-98,07	59	,000

In general, the responses of the participants give us the impression that this sub-competence is almost marginalized in the current programme. It overlooks the rapid developments taking place in the translation and language industry such as corpus linguistics and Computer-assisted translation. In response to the statement that computer-assisted translation tools are not used in the programme at your college/university, the mean score was 1.92 and the standard deviation was 1.55. Unfortunately, some of the departments of translation fail miserably to develop the STs' basic computer skills as they do not offer even a single course in computer literacy. In a similar vein, the current programme does not introduce the students even in passing to the new trends in translation technology such as software localization, websites localization, games localization and cloud-based translation technology. The mean score for the above statement was 1.70 with a standard deviation of 1.43.

In response to the statement that the programme does not familiarize the STs with translation tools they are likely to use in their profession, the mean score was 1.50 and the standard deviation was 1.05. The results also indicate that the course did not familiarize them with the translation tools they are likely to use in their profession (e.g., *Trados*, *MemoQ*, *Wordfast*, etc.) or cloud-based translation technologies (e.g. *Wordbee*, *Memsorce*, *Wordfast anywhere*, etc.). Likewise, the new technological trends in neighboring areas such as corpus linguistics (e.g. concordancing tools, corpus tools and web as corpus tools) are even more marginalized in the current programme.

Technology is even used to a lesser extent in the interpreting modules such as simultaneous, consecutive and on sight interpreting. When respondents were asked about the technological devices used in their interpreting classes, the majority of them show that they use face-to-face training sessions. Only 3.33% said they had conducted some kind of telephone interpreting, 3.33% did some kind of videoconferencing interpreting and 1.67% were involved in remote simultaneous interpreting. This finding is represented in the following graph.



**Figure 3 Use of Technology in Teaching Interpreting**

**7.6. Psycho-physiological sub-competence**

The sub-competence that perhaps receives the least in the current programme is the psycho-physiological, as is obvious from the following table.

**Table 6 shows the STs’ attitudes towards the integration of psycho-physiological sub-competence in the current syllabus**

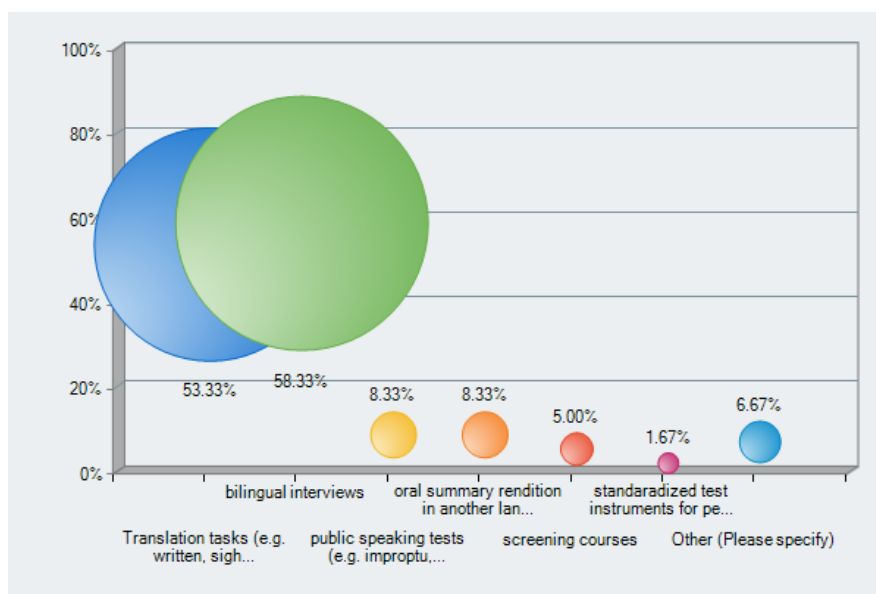
Item	Mean	SD	T	df	Sig.
The syllabus does not help students develop the cognitive abilities they are likely to need in their future career such as memory, perception, attention and emotion).	1.83	1.34	-58.66	59	.000
The syllabus does not help students develop their attitudinal aspects (intellectual curiosity, perseverance, rigour, critical spirit, etc.)	1.85	1.26	-62.40	59	.000
The syllabus does not help students develop their abilities such as creativity, logical reasoning, analysis and synthesis, etc.	1.92	1.45	-53.75	59	.000

The act of translation needs some cognitive, attitudinal and physical abilities. Practicum and internships in particular should be utilized to help STs cope with the psycho-physiological demands of the profession. Unfortunately, when the STs were asked whether they agree or disagree with the statement that the syllabus does not help them develop their cognitive abilities such as memory, perception, attention and emotion, the mean score was low at 1.83 and the standard deviation was 1.34.

In response to the statement that the syllabus does not help the STs develop their attitudinal aspects such as intellectual curiosity and perseverance, the responses reflect a similar degree of dissatisfaction. The mean score was 1.85 and the standard deviation was 1.26. The STs do also feel that the current programme fails to enhance their 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as creativity, analysis and synthesis. In response to the statement that the syllabus does not help STs develop their abilities such as creativity,

logical reasoning, analysis and synthesis, the mean score was 1.92 and the standard deviation was 1.45.

It is obvious from the above analysis that the STs are not satisfied with the current programme and a lot needs to be done to enhance their translation competence. Enhancing the various sub-competencies discussed above is a long process that starts with a strict admission policy and entry requirements. Various types of entry tests/requirements must be put into use. The results of the study have shown that 53.33% of the respondents did some translation tasks (e.g. written, sight, summary writing in another language) before they were admitted to the programme and 58.33% of them said that they had bilingual interviews. Other modes of testing, on the other hand, are hardly featured. 8.33% only did public speaking tests (e.g. impromptu, speech production, presentation skills, etc.), 8.33% had oral summary rendition in another language, 5% were involved in screening courses and 1.67% undertook standardized test instruments for personality traits and psychometric tools. The following graph shows the above responses.



**Figure 4 Entry Tests/ Requirements at the Two Universities**

As the above figure points out, the entry tests followed by the translation departments at the two universities still use some traditional modes of assessment such as written translation tasks and bilingual interviews. Such tests alone are not sufficient for the selection of trainees in a multidisciplinary field like translation studies.

In addition to the analysis of the attitudes of the STs towards various aspects of TC, we have also analyzed their overall attitude towards the current programme with the aim of testing the study's hypothesis. For this purpose, we have used a t-test for one sample. The results of the one-sample statistics and the one-sample test are given in tables 7 and 8 respectively.

**Table 7 One-Sample Statistics**

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	S.E. Mean
SUM	60	32,42	16,55	2,14

**Table 8 One-sample Test**

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 72,000000					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
SUM	-18,53	59	,000	-39,58	-43,86	-35,31

It is clear from the above tables that the sample consists of 60 STs and the test value for the TC scale is 72. The mean of the overall attitude of the STs is 32.24 with a standard deviation of 16.55 and a t-test value of -18.53 with a significance level of 0.000 and a freedom degree (df) of 59 and Confidence interval of the Difference of 95%. Based on the above, the results are statistically significant, and the hypothesis is rejected. In other words, the STs' attitudes towards the translation programmes at their universities are negative.

### 8. Conclusions

The present study investigated the attitudes of STs at two Yemeni Universities towards the translation programme offered currently at their universities. The perceptions of the STs were analyzed based on the PACTE model of translation competence, which encompasses six sub-competences, namely bilingual sub-competence, extra-linguistic sub-competence, knowledge about translation sub-competence, instrumental sub-competence, strategic sub-competence and psycho-physiological sub-competence. The findings of the study have shown that the STs are dissatisfied with the current translation programme and they feel that it falls short to enhance their translation skills. The findings have shown that the bilingual sub-competence is not addressed properly in the syllabus. The difference in morphological and syntactic structures, cohesive systems and genre conventions between Arabic and English are not adequately considered in the syllabus. The STs are not also satisfied with the treatment of the extra-linguistic sub-competence in the current programme. The findings have also shown that the syllabus does not pay adequate attention to the socio-cultural aspects of the two languages; more emphasis should be given to the enhancement of the bi-cultural competence of the STs and their research skills competence (e.g. encyclopedic and subject knowledge). As for the knowledge-about-translation sub-competence, the perceptions of the STs have shown that translation theories are not offered in the current programme and translation is viewed as a creative act.

In addition, the translation market in our age requires translators who are capable to use different translation technologies, computer-aided translation tools, localization tools, cloud-based translation systems and the like. They should also possess hands-on knowledge of technological trends in neighboring areas such as corpus linguistics.



However, the STs' perceptions have shown that the instrumental sub-competence that aims to develop the STs' skills in the use of those technological trends, is given little attention in the syllabus. The pen and paper remain the main tools in the translation classroom at the two universities and computer labs are just a decoration.

The psycho-physiological aspects of translation are also overlooked in the current programme. The findings of the study have indicated that the current programme does not enable the STs to cope with the psycho-physiological demands of the profession. Cognitive, attitudinal and physical abilities are marginalized in the syllabus and they are overlooked during practicum and internships.

We do believe that the translation competence of tomorrow translators cannot be enhanced by improving and revamping the translation modules alone. New modules in neighboring and cognate disciplines to translation studies need to be introduced. Modules in corpus linguistics, critical discourse analysis, intercultural and cross-cultural communication and psychology, among others are highly beneficial for the training of translators.

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