

Assessing the Teaching of Cultural Competence in Translator Training: Research Design and Assessment Parameters

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ABSTRACT: Given the critical consequences of cultural competence deficiencies on translation practice in general and the approved power of cultural competence over the impressive, and sometimes, threatening performance of neural machine translation, it seemed compelling to figure out how far the training provided to trainee translators integrated this ultimate power of cultural competence. For this reason, this paper provides some guidelines and procedures for assessing the effectiveness of cultural competence teaching in translator training. These procedures and guidelines are used within the framework of a PhD thesis study on assessing the teaching of cultural competence in translator training programmes in Cameroon. This paper therefore presents the conceptual framework, the research design as well as the retained parameters for assessing cultural competence teaching in translator training programmes with emphasis on the master's level.

KEYWORDS: Cultural competence, translator training, curriculum evaluation, research design, assessment parameters

1. INTRODUCTION

For decades now, translators are known as “experts in intercultural communication” (Yürük, 2020:1), as the translation process often involves the management of cultural references and can sometimes be complicated by cultural words and expressions resulting from the meeting of two opposing cultures (Nida and Reyburn, 1981: 2). The work of the translator does not just involve transferring text material from a language community to another, but also and most importantly culture. On the market, the significance of culture in translation is more visible when it comes to translating certain kinds of content generated by globalisation and the constant technological development. More specifically, technological advancements generated, either between societies or between companies or simply between people, certain forms of communication and content (commercial and marketing content, websites, video games, telephone recordings, and other audio-visual productions) which translators are called to adapt to different contexts, different audiences, and, of course, different languages and language varieties. Translating these forms of content requires specific translation strategies (Jeon and Brisset, 2006:391) as well as other specific translation skills to understand and respect cultural nuances. The need for these translation skills stems from the fact that the translator, nowadays, is called to translate cultures, as what they translate is discourse grounded on particular social practices and culture-based knowledge. This trend has significantly evolved with the large volume of research conducted in the field of *localization* and the numerous localization courses offered nowadays in certain translation programmes available in schools and on online platforms.

One motivation for carrying out this study was the current threatening influence of artificial intelligence (AI) on the translation market and industry. Basically, translators are known as human beings who provide professional translation services and other related language services like revision, copy editing and proofreading. However, today, through the development of neural machine translation, AI has invaded the translation market in the form of several machine translators who are increasingly providing acceptable translations and therefore reducing the need for human translation services. The rise of AI-based machine translation providing acceptable translations equally led to the recruitment of translators for the performance of Machine Translation Post-Editing (MTPE) on the output of machine translation software. In this context, human translators could be paid half of their translation rates when providing these MTPE services.

This situation has sparked discussions and debates in professional milieus such as at the 2023 conference of the Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters of Cameroon (APTIC) organised on the International Translation Day under the theme “Translation unveils the many faces of humanity”. It was stated at this conference that mastery of culture and the knowledge of context (Enganobel, 2023) as well as excellent writing skills in the target language (Ahinaga, 2023) had the capacity to maintain human translators far above machine translation, be it neural. The above solutions proposed by the two speakers during the 2023 conference, to halt the invading power of AI in the translation industry, highlight the important role of culture, and particularly

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cultural competence, among the indispensable competences of a translator who will not end up as a machine translation posteditor. At this point, the first question that appeared in the researcher's mind was: What are the translator training institutions doing to help trainee translators reinforce their cultural competence? The next question that boggled the researcher's mind was what these institutions are doing to help trainees practise the profession efficiently and effectively after their graduation in a way that they not only flee the invasive power of AI but also subdue it for their benefit.

Given the tricky reality presented above, it appeared interesting to investigate the teaching of cultural competence in translator training programmes (TTP) in order to find out whether what is being done is enough to sufficiently help translators outdo the threatening products of artificial intelligence.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This section examines various relevant assumptions about the key concepts and issues involved in this study. These concepts mainly include culture, translator, translator training, and translation competence while the issues at hand revolve around the complexity of the notion of culture, the immersion in new cultures in the translation field and components of cultural competence.

2.1 Culture: a Polysemous and Ambiguous Concept

Culture is a broad term with a meaning that varies according to subject fields, communicational settings or the speaker's intentions. Each given field, such as ethnography, anthropology, sociology, psychology, education and even translation, has its own conception of the term. Its definition and understanding, especially in scientific subject areas, generally stem from the subject matters discussed within the area as well as its core principles. Thus, to demystify the notion of culture and highlight the conception of culture supported by this study, the researcher examines in turn the definitions provided for the concept and other miscellaneous conceptions from authors who addressed the notion of culture first in other fields and then in relation to translation, the specific interest of this study.

Besides, the notion of culture is ambiguous: its meaning varies across disciplines and communicative contexts. As Johnson (2013:1) puts it, "the concept of culture is deeply contested. Between 1920 and 1950 alone, at least one hundred and fifty-seven definitions were presented". Indeed, there is a plurality of accounts of the concept of culture. In certain disciplines like psychology, culture is conceived as a mental phenomenon which describes the beliefs and behaviours of peoples within a society. In this way, it opposes the perception of culture as a social phenomenon claimed by sociologists, which denotes the collective beliefs and behaviours of a society. Taylor (1948:96) opines that culture consists of: "The contents of minds, not of material objects or observable behaviour". This account therefore positions culture at the base of every human manifestation, be it at the economic, social or intellectual level. Taylor presents the notion of culture as that from which the action or performance of the human being derives, and which is deprived of every sense of concreteness. This stance is rejected by anthropologists. The latter consider culture as a discerning power that influences and even alters the language of peoples and communities. They argue that culture is meaning transmitted through language, and that language significantly differs according to societies. Anthropologists push forward their argument by supporting that understanding forms of meaning is crucial to understanding people. Thus, it is impossible for human beings to understand each other without having captured the illuminating and discerning power that comes from culture. In this vein, Geertz (2000: 5) argues that culture serves as a separator, a mark that distinguishes humans as a species from other species and, along the same lines, culture also distinguishes humans belonging to some cultural group from those belonging to other cultural groups.

From the foregoing, culture is understood not just as the nature of someone's mind or the nature of one's personality or cognitive structure, but rather as a system of "socially established" existing signs, symbols and meaning that guide what people do and how they perceive things. Again, Geertz (2000) summarises his perception of culture by assimilating it to "a set of control mechanisms – plans, recipes, rules, instructions (what computer engineers call "programs") – for the governing of behaviour". Despite the truthfulness of the perception of culture as a mental phenomenon, this research is closest to the perception of Geertz (2000), as it presents culture as a force that is acquired within the specific context of a society. Indeed, just like other human beings they interact with during their activity, translators acquire culture in society through civilization and social organisation. Thus, this opinion by Geertz clearly proves that culture is an unavoidable issue when it comes to analysing translator training, given its central position in the realisation of man and the construction of his identity. Furthermore, from the author's definition of the notion of culture, one can perceive the essential role of culture in human communication and mutual understanding which are the ultimate goals of translation. In other words, since culture is capital to man, it is therefore capital for translators and consequently, for their training. To further examine the concept of culture, it is important to investigate some of the different ways it is understood as well as the various levels around which it could be organised.

2.2 New Cultures: A Perspective Inspired by the Translation Market

Many authors discussed types of cultures and proposed different categorisations varying according to their perceptions and areas of expertise. From the anthropological to the ethnographical perspectives, culture was given a particular definition and several typologies were established. In 1964, Nida brought out a typology of culture including five types: ecology, material culture, social culture, religious culture and linguistic culture. Then, Newmark (1988) comes out with a categorisation of types of culture that is

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based on an adaptation of Nida's typology. Newmark distinguishes four types of culture including ecology, material culture, social culture and gestures and habits. Years later, Molina (2001) brings a different typology which comprises natural environment, cultural patrimony, social culture and linguistic culture. Hussain (2021) joins the debate and brings a striking two-sided typology of culture including popular culture and mass culture where he distinguishes culture that is liked and accepted by the major part of a society (popular culture) and culture produced and distributed at mass scale (mass culture). Among these typologies, there is a big similitude between the proposals of Nida, Newmark and Molina whereby culture is understood as a product of the different environments surrounding human beings.

In Translation Studies, the relevance of culture in translation has been stressed due to the intertwined link between language and culture. Ultimately, drawing from Katan's Levels of Culture (1999), it has been established that the concept of culture comprises different levels among which is capabilities. This particular level as well as cultural competence models, led to the revelation that culture in Translation Studies also means a certain knowledge, certain skills, and certain strategies required to exhibit certain behaviours as a translation professional. In other words, culture in this context may be understood as the set of knowledge, skills and competences required by translators to ensure high standard translation services. Thus, based on this view, several capabilities have been identified to be underrepresented in translator training curricula in general although they are crucial for trainees' continuous growth in the profession and in translation industry. This study has called them "new cultures" because most of them have emerged in recent years due to technological development and the rise of artificial intelligence. These are either already established areas of specialisation in the translation market or proposed areas that may stand out in the upcoming years, following the constant efforts made by professional associations to enhance the prestige of the profession. These cultures are discussed in this study with the aim to provide a list of cultural competence components that are still to be included in TTPs. This will prevent trainees from experiencing a disillusion once they step into the field as they would notice, for instance, that a high number of recruiters need translators to perform tasks which they have not been trained in. Perhaps, they would just face long-term difficulties to earn a living from their training in translation because they would not have received the cultures required to cease the many job opportunities involving the specialised fields that overflow the translation market. Here, it is argued that translator training stakeholders should take measures to save trainees from this professional drowning.

2.3 Description and Composition of Cultural Competence in Translation

The term "cultural competence" is used to refer to all the aspects of the translator's cultural knowledge and the strategies he or she uses to transform the cultural dimension of the source text into an appropriate target text (TT) (Eyckmans, 2017:3). Given the crucial status of cultural competence in translator's performance, many scholars proposed models of cultural competence, including Witte (2000), PACTE (2003) and Bahumaid (2010).

Witte (2000: 172) considers cultural competence as a translation-specific competence which is based on conscious efforts to learn more about a pair of cultures and the ability to use the acquired knowledge to help people from different cultural groups communicate with each other. Witte thus argues that cultural competence comprises two subcompetences, namely general cultural competence and specific cultural competence. By general cultural competence, the author assumes that the translator should be aware of the problems caused by the differences in terms of behaviour in inter- and intracultural communication and the conditions that motivate these differences. The other competence, described as the main competence, is said to be acquired according to a specific pair of cultures and languages, even though it can be applied to other cultures.

Three years after Witte (2000), the PACTE group proposed a different conception of cultural competence. The group conceives cultural competence as an integral part of "extralinguistic competence" within TC, which they describe as "predominantly declarative knowledge, both implicit and explicit, about the world in general and special areas". Therefore, PACTE presents cultural competence as being situated somewhere within: (1) bicultural knowledge (knowledge about the source and target cultures); (2) encyclopedic knowledge (knowledge about the world in general); (3) subject knowledge (in specific areas) (PACTE, 2003: 58-59). What the author understands by subject knowledge is otherwise referred to as "the translator's knowledge of the material being translated" (Stitt, 2016). Stitt further explains that this expertise involves, for instance, having the understanding and expertise in the American and Arabic legal system before translating legal documents from English into Arabic. Therefore, the author distinguishes three types of subject expertise: Academic (when the translator possesses an academic level of the subject matter such as an advanced degree in the field); experiential (having work experience in the field and understanding the subject matter excellently, as it is the case of retired experts who work in translation part-time); and performance-based knowledge (when the translator currently works in the field and is up-to-date on all aspects of the field such as practice, procedure, terminology, and regulations). However, within the framework of this study, emphasis is laid only on bicultural knowledge and subject knowledge. Moreover, it is a broad concept and the parameters that break it down so as to guide a detailed study on it were not found in the existing literature. In contrast, it was possible to collect such elements about the concept of bicultural knowledge through the works of Molina (2001) and Nida (1964). As for subject knowledge, just like PACTE (2003), the researcher conceives it as a parameter of cultural competence which focuses on translation-based specialisations including all sectors of activity where translation services are needed in the society. These include, for instance, health, law, education, computer science, etc. Therefore, subject knowledge

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is cultural knowledge that is restricted to a specific field and can be acquired either through academic studies in the so-called field or/and through professional practice in that field. As such, from the researcher's perspective, it is important to address it as part of the cultural competence components that make up the professional profile of a translator.

Next, Bahumaid (2010: 570) brings a new composition that is closer to that of Witte (2000). He argues that cultural competence involves six elements which he groups into three categories: (1) encyclopedic knowledge of the source and target cultures, (2) cultural awareness and (3) specific translation skills. In the first category involving encyclopedic knowledge, the author includes two items: knowledge about historical, geographical, political, economic, social, cultural, educational, legal, administrative aspects and aspects in the countries of both source and target languages. Cultural awareness, the second category, also comprises two items: awareness of the relation between language and culture with all its ramifications and implications for the translator and awareness of cultural similarities and, perhaps more importantly, differences between the cultures of both source and target languages. Then, the third category, includes three items, namely: expertise in the translation strategies that should be employed in handling culture-laden texts; acquisition of adequate skills in rendering culture-bound terms that occur in various genres and text types; and expertise in the translation procedures that are used in rendering CBTs. It is worth explaining that what Bahumaid (2010 :571) calls "culture-bound terms" (CBTs), which are also referred to as culture-specific terms, follows the definition given by Harvey (2003: 2) cited by Bahumaid (2010: 571) as follows: "concepts, institutions and personnel, which are specific to the SL culture". Culture-bound terms are defined by Gambier (2004:159) as culture-specific references which connote different aspects of everyday life such as education, politics, history, art, institutions, legal systems, units of measurements, place names, foods and drinks, sports and national pastimes, as experienced in different countries and nations of the world. Therefore, culture-bound terms are representatives of the special realities and usages of restricted geographical areas. So, CBTs do not give an account of the peculiarities related to one language or another, but CBTs rather reflect what is found in a community, a group of people, a country, as there are languages such as English, French and Spanish that are spoken in more than one country, but used within different continents. These terms are otherwise called *culturemes*. Gambier (2004) refers to them as cultural elements (*éléments culturels*) while Ballard (2005: 126) calls them cultural designators (*désignateurs culturels*). Ballard literally perceives the concept of *culturemes* as : « Les désignateurs culturels, ou *culturèmes*, sont des signes renvoyant à des référents culturels, c'est-à-dire des éléments ou des traits dont l'ensemble constitue une civilisation ou une culture » (idem). [Cultural designators, or *culturemes*, are signs referring to cultural referents, i.e. elements or features that collectively constitute a civilisation or culture] (My translation).

Culture-bound terms are words and expressions which carry a lot of symbols and referents that give account of cultures and the underlying cultural differences between the source and target communities.

Following the above review of cultural competence models, it was noted that PACTE and Bahumaid's models are pretty similar. Both of them distinguish three components in cultural competence, yet their perceptions of these components are different. First, what PACTE (2003) refers to as "bicultural knowledge" is indeed what Bahumaid (2010) calls "encyclopedic knowledge", that is knowledge about the source and target cultures involved in a translation task. Furthermore, it was noticed that PACTE Group (2003) and Bahumaid (2010) give a different message in the definition of the concept of "encyclopaedic knowledge". PACTE conceives the latter as involving knowledge about the world in general whereas Bahumaid restricts it to knowledge of the two cultures involved in a translation process. It is worth highlighting this distinction here. It is important here to point out that it is Bahumaid's encyclopedic knowledge that will be examined in this study as a component of cultural competence, as it was not possible to gather elements in the existing literature that break up the concept of encyclopaedic knowledge, especially as concerns Translation Studies. However, in this study, it shall be referred to as "bicultural encyclopedic knowledge" in order to highlight the cultural meanings that it contains and stress that it involves the domains of culture, which are relevant for general translation. It is the subject knowledge component proposed by PACTE that will insist on in-depth knowledge about specialised fields of translation. Apart from encyclopedic knowledge, Bahumaid proposes two other components of cultural competence: cultural awareness and specific translations skills. Here, it is important to note that subsequent PACTE' studies showed that specific translation skills are indeed one of the capacities that constitute the translator's cultural competence, as stated by Olalla-Soler (2015).

At this juncture, the present researcher retains as components of cultural competence in this study: Bahumaid (2010)'s three components of cultural competence, and PACTE (2003)'s subject knowledge. More specifically, the components that are considered part of cultural competence in the experimental study that follows include: bicultural encyclopedic knowledge, cultural awareness, specific translation skills and subject knowledge. It is hoped that these elements can provide a complete view of a translator's cultural competence. These elements also served as parameters in assessing the teaching of cultural competence in translator training institutions in Cameroon.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used triangulation, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative methods (document analysis and interviews) explored curriculum content and stakeholder perspectives using phenomenological and narrative approaches. Quantitative methods (structured questionnaires) measured prevalence and distribution of views across trainees, trainers and professionals. The phenomenological approach on one hand helped investigate the success of programmes, that is, the achievement

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of their objectives by describing and interpreting past or current experiences of participants as far as translator training is concerned. On the other hand, the narrative approach made it possible to obtain useful information through scrutinising the stories to have a clearer understanding of participants' ideas and true perceptions of the core issue.

3.1 Population and Sample

The population of this study includes four groups of participants. The first involves practising translators who graduated from translator training institutions based in Cameroon. The second group comprises teachers of the said institutions. The third group involves trainee translators, who are students of translation programmes during the period of study and the fourth group involves programme developers or coordinators. Both male and female participants were included to reflect gender representation across stakeholder groups.

Each of the four groups brought something relevant and peculiar to the study:

- Practising translators: this group brought alumni perspective and labour-market evidence.
- Trainers (or lecturers): they implement curriculum delivery and pedagogy.
- Trainees: they have hands on student experience and exposure.
- Programme coordinators: they particularly intervene at the level of policy or design rationale.

3.2 Sample Size

The sample size for this study is calculated based on the estimated 500 candidate-respondents identified through WhatsApp forums of practising translators holding an M.A in translation coupled with an estimation of lecturers from the eight translator training programmes investigated, namely the Advanced School of Translators and Interpreters (ASTI) of the University of Buea, the Pan African University Translation, Interpreting and Intercultural Communication (PAUTRAIN), the professional Master's programme in translation of the University of Yaounde I, the professional Master's programme in Translation and Interpretation of the University of Dschang, the Master's programme in translation, Interpretation and Chinese of the University of Douala, the Department of translation of the Protestant University of Central Africa, the Master's programme of the University of Bamenda Language Centre (UBALAC) and the Master's programme of the Higher Institute of Translation, Interpretation and Communication (ISTIC).

Data was thus collected from 122 participants including trainees, practising translators and lecturers of these eight institutions. The varying nature of the total number of students enrolled from one institution to another made it impossible to set a specific number of respondents by institution. For this reason, the main goal was to have all translator training programmes and institutions represented in the sample, even though there was finally much more data from graduates of some institutions like ASTI, ISTIC and PUCA than from other programmes like UBALAC and the universities of Douala and Dschang. This situation was due to the very small number of students enrolled in these schools, with a number of enrolled students ranging from one to eight students.

3.3 Sampling Technique/*-

Given the involvement of several subgroups within the study population, including trainees, practising translators and lecturers, stratified random sampling was used to ensure that each subgroup or stratum that made up the target population was adequately represented. Indeed, sampling of the population resulted in three different kinds of strata or subgroups. The first was based on the graduating school (any of the eight translator training programmes presented in the previous section of this thesis) and helped restrict the sample to students, professionals and lecturers of translator training programmes based in Cameroon and eliminate students trained in programmes outside Cameroon as well as lecturers teaching in the other programmes, even though these two groups of people are Cameroonians. The second subgroup was based on the academic level of participants, that is participants with a Master's in translation. The third subgroup was established based on occupation. These respondents were practising translators with at least one year of experience or simultaneously practising translators with the same level of experience and lecturers in any of the seven institutions under study.

3.4 Ethical Issues

The data collection process of our research was conducted based on a specific code of conduct which involves a set of principles guiding research designs and practices. These principles ensure protection of the rights of research participants, enhancing research validity and maintaining scientific or academic integrity (Bhandari, 2022). They include the following ethical issues which may sometimes overlap: voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, potential for harm, and results communication. Thus, this research work complied with the requirements of each of the above issues.

Before data collection, a research authorisation was collected at the researcher's school for field visits and attached to the data collection requests submitted to translator training institutions. This research authorisation ensured the researcher's scientific integrity and credibility while facilitating the data collection process both with questionnaires and interviews. It was a proof that this researcher is concerned with the protection of participants' rights and complies to ethical standards.

The first issue, informed consent of participants, led the researcher to make participants aware of the purpose, benefits, risks and funding of this study, before they agreed or declined the investigation. Following the prescription of the Economic and Social

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Research Council (ESRC), participation in this study was made voluntary and the participants 'consent was sought before they provide their contribution. In other words, a participant did at no point feel compelled to participate in the study.

Besides, the anonymity of respondents of questionnaires and interviews were kept, as there was no risk of harm for any participant. Indeed, the researcher did everything in their power to protect study participants. For this purpose, no participant was requested to reveal his/her identity or provide any confidential information. In order to respect the anonymity principle, every personal information known or found on participants prior or during the research work was hidden from everyone else in such a way that it was not possible to link data to a participant. Furthermore, personally identifiable data was anonymised to prevent anyone else from linking that data to other data.

Additionally, the researcher kept any potential for harm to a minimum level. In other words, all possible sources of harm to participants were identified and measures were taken to prevent any harm (including physical, social, psychological or legal harm). Results communication, the last ethical principle which guides this research led the researcher to communicate the results in a transparent manner, that is with honesty, reliability and credibility. As a result, the researcher actively avoided plagiarism and research misconduct in all forms to ensure the accuracy and originality of results.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Three instruments were used for this experimental and exploratory study, namely corpus, questionnaires and interviews. These are described in the following paragraphs with specifications on their goal(s), their structure and the conditions under which they were used to collect data from the target population.

3.5.1 Corpus Study

Translation texts from the past academic years were collected from graduate students of the seven translator training programmes investigated within this study. These texts were given to these students in the form of classroom exercises, continuous assignments or end of semester examinations. They were analysed by means of an analysis grid drafted by the researcher on the basis of the literature available on the cultural competence components. The grid contains five items which helped to determine the level of implementation of culture in teaching. The items are as follows:

- i. **Excerpt number:** Here, the position of the excerpt in the series of grids is stated.
- ii. **Form of culture:** After indicating the components of cultural competence involved, the specific category of culture too, is indicated. Indeed, a review of the literature on the types of culture made it possible to discover that cultural words could belong to different categories (of culture) involved.
- iii. **Element of interest:** This is where the excerpt or cultureme extracted from the corpus is mentioned.
- iv. **Source text language:** This category informs the reader on the language in which the excerpt is written, as both English and French texts were included in the corpus.
- v. **Geographical location involved:** This item seeks information about the address or origin of the excerpt. This is known through the stories told or the locations mentioned in the text.
- vi. **Source of the element of interest/ Training institution:** The name of the translator training programme where the text containing the excerpt was found.
- vii. **Context of production:** Here, information about the main topic discussed in the origin text is provided as well as the type of text involved, if necessary.
- viii. **Author's intention:** The intention of the author is disclosed in this section.
- ix. **Description of the element of interest:** An explanation or definition of the term analysed is provided.
- x. **The cultural nature of the element of interest:** The reasons for establishing the excerpt as a cultureme are indicated.
- xi. **Cultural item involved:** The corresponding category of culturemes or cultural words is indicated. It provides specific information on the form of culture as was explained in the conceptual review section of this research work. For instance, if the form of culture involved in an excerpt is "social culture", this parameter made it possible to indicate whether the excerpt pertains to conventions and social habits or social organisation.
- xii. **Explanation of the cultural item involved:** A definition of the category of culturemes involved is provided.
- xiii. **Component of cultural competence:** this item helped to determine which component of cultural competence is involved. The excerpts identified are classified either as bicultural encyclopedic knowledge or subject knowledge, which are the two elements studied in this work, given that they are the only CC components involved in the corpus study. The assessment of the teaching of the other two components of cultural competence including cross-cultural awareness and specific translation skills (PACTE, 2003; Bahumaid, 2010) is made via questionnaires. Evaluating cultural awareness and specific translation skills through a corpus study would have required different research instruments and procedures involving, for instance, a corpus of classroom target texts translated by students instead of source texts as is the case in the current study. The evaluation of cultural awareness and specific translation skills using a corpus study within the current work would have required carrying out two distinct corpus studies, an initiative that would have extended this research work beyond the PhD thesis volume requirements.

Table 1: Example of Filled Analysis Grid

Excerpt No. 10		Form of culture: Cultural Patrimony
A	Source Text	Last Friday, we announced how we will develop the next generation of combat aircraft hand-in-glove with Italy and Japan.
B	Element of interest	Combat aircraft hand-in-glove
C	Source text language	English
D	Geographical location involved	United Kingdom, Europe
E	Source of the element of interest/Training institution	the Master's programme in translation, Interpretation and Chinese of the University of Douala
F	Context of production	The element of interest has been extracted from an excerpt of the Foreign Secretary's speech at the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office on 12 December 2022.
G	Author's intention	The whole speech is about the Foreign Secretary's vision for UK foreign policy. In the utterance extracted, the writer states that UK is standing beside Ukraine to help her resist the Russian invasion and reinforce their military power by developing a new generation of war aircrafts.
H	Description of the element of interest	Combat aircraft hand-in-glove: With Volodymyr Oleksandrovytch Zelensky as full name, he is the president of Ukraine since 20 May 2019. He is renowned for leading the country's resistance against Russia's invasion.
I	The cultural nature of the element of interest	What makes "Combat aircraft hand-in-glove" a cultural element are its special attributes as an expensive asset at war.
J	Cultural item involved	Armaments
K	Explanation of the cultural item involved	Armament refers to any weapon or equipment that builds up the capacity of a military unit. This includes bombs, fighter jets, tanks, assault rifles, combat aircrafts, etc.
L	Component of cultural competence involved	Bicultural encyclopedic knowledge

3.5.2 Interviews

This activity was carried out using an interview guide comprising seven questions. The questions followed the order of the study's research questions and basically sought to answer the second and third research questions, namely the level of implementation of relevant forms of culture in the respondents' translator training programmes on the one hand, and measures that could be taken to ensure full introduction of these forms of culture in the curricula of those programmes on the other hand. Participants were programme coordinators of master's programmes in translation or heads of department of translation, depending on the appellation used in the institutions visited. Overall, eight (8) programme coordinators were interviewed. The researcher went to the different institutions and sought authorisation to collect data through interviews with the persons concerned. Once the appointment was taken with the programme coordinator, the researcher showed up accordingly to conduct the interview, following the interview guide prepared in advance. The same interview guide was used for all the eight interviews. Most interviews were conducted in person, but one was conducted remotely, using the online meeting app *Zoom*. Whether in person or remotely, the interviews were recorded by the researcher through a mobile phone or a laptop, for the online interview. Then, the recorded interviews were transferred to the researcher's laptop and organised in a folder. Thereafter, the recordings were transcribed to form a written data sheet of each of the interviews from which respondents' answers and comments could be identified and analysed in a comprehensive manner with a view to finding answers to the research questions addressed.

3.5.3 Questionnaires

Three questionnaires of 37 questions (excluding 6 questions relating to demographic information) were drafted and intended for trainees, practising translators and lecturers. Among these items, 35/37 were closed-ended questions whereas 2/37 were open-ended questions. It should nevertheless be indicated that in almost all the questions, the opportunity was given to respondents to share their

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personal views when it was not included in the set of choices proposed. This was done to obtain data that the researcher could have forgotten.

Questions were drafted based on the research questions of this study which involved three objectives, namely identifying all the forms of culture that are relevant to the training of competent translators in Cameroon, determining the source of the differences observed in translator training programmes in Cameroon with respect to the inclusion of culture in their curricula, and proposing ways to integrate all the relevant missing forms of culture in translator training programmes in Cameroon. For the last objective, the researcher drew inspiration from the most selected answer in order to provide practical solutions to the problem of differences in the course content of TTPs with respect to components on culture.

As concerns the method of administration, questionnaires were distributed online as a Google forms link on the one hand and handed physically on the other hand. Online questionnaires were distributed to the three subgroups on WhatsApp forums and chats as well as in email accounts whereas the hard copies were distributed in schools and offices. The response rate varied by group but there was a higher number of responses were received from trainees and practicing translators.

3.6 Pilot Study

To prepare the investigation of the teaching of cultural competence in translator training programmes (TTPs), ensure the feasibility of the study and state research hypotheses which resemble the reality, a visit was made to translator training institutions to collect copies of their syllabuses or list of courses and examine the inclusion of cultural competence components. The objective was to have an insight into the efforts made in the schools to address cultural competence. This investigation was carried out in most of the translator training programmes found in Cameroon, namely six of the eight existing. These institutions include:

- the Advanced School of Translators and Interpreters (ASTI) of the University of Buea;
- the Professional Master's Programme in Translation of the University of Yaounde I;
- the Professional Master's Programme in Translation and Interpretation of the University of Dschang;
- the Master's Programme in Translation, Interpretation and Chinese of the University of Douala;
- the Department of Translation of the Protestant University of Central Africa (PUCA);
- the Higher Institute of Translation, Interpretation and Communication (ISTIC);
- the University of Bamenda Language Centre (UBALAC) and
- the Pan African University Translation, Interpretation, Transborder Languages and Intercultural Communication Programmes (PAUTRAIN) in Buea.

The analysis of the course content of these schools led to the following remarks as concerns the forms of cultures taught:

- 0/6 translator training institutions in Cameroon made language courses compulsory in their curriculum, especially in the two main working languages of trainees;
- 1/6 has them as electives;
- 0/6 translator training institution included courses on ethnography in their curriculum;
- 3/6 TTPs included managerial culture in their curricula;
- 6/6 TTPs included technological culture in their curricula;
- 5/6 TTPs included courses on research skills in their curricula;
- 5/6 TTPs included culture of specialised field in their curricula;
- 0/6 TTP included courses on deontology and ethics of the profession in their curriculum;
- 1/6 TTP included translation from/into African languages in their curriculum.

These remarks revealed several inexplicable disparities among the programmes as well as the existence of arbitrary course design decisions. Indeed, even though all these translator training schools concur in the duration of the programme, namely two academic years; the observation of their course content revealed several unjustified disparities, either at the level of the nature of courses taught or at the level of the volume of teachings provided on the course in classrooms. In other words, some programmes are vague, if not superficial, in the way they address certain skills. This is the case for specialised skills whereby ASTI's M.A programme, for instance, would offer a "Specialised Translation" compulsory course in English and another one in French, whereas ISTIC would offer distinct specialised courses like "Traduction juridique" (Legal Translation), "Traduction économique" (Economic Translation), and "Traduction audiovisuelle" (Audiovisual Translation) with a compulsory status. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that an ASTI trainee may happen to benefit from some of the above specialised translation courses from ISTIC, but this can happen under two conditions: the first is if the teachers of Specialised Translation choose to teach one of these areas of specialisation (legal translation, economic translation, etc.), the second condition is if the trainee chooses "Audiovisual Translation" as an elective course, instead of the other elective courses offered. Among these elective courses, there is Translation from/and into African languages which is another important area of translation for Sub-Saharan Africans whose 10% out of the 2,000 existing languages, are reported to be likely to disappear in the next 100 years (UNESCO, 2008). At this level, the question that could be asked is why Audiovisual Translation and Translation from/into African languages are categorised as elective courses at a time when audiovisual content is increasingly produced in the world and local languages appear to be in the spotlight in Cameroon.

Assessing the Teaching of Cultural Competence in Translator Training: Research Design and Assessment Parameters

Furthermore, the absence of major forms of culture in the list of courses offered by the above-mentioned programmes was noticed, deontology and ethics, managerial skills and linguistic culture is incomprehensible. As concerns deontology and ethics for instance, if it is agreed that any genuine profession has a set of rules and norms. The necessity to include deontology and code of ethics of the translation profession in the course content should be obvious. Hence, it is evident that courses on deontology and the ethics of the profession of translator in TTPs highlight and consolidate the status of translation as a profession. However, from the above-mentioned set of shortcomings and disparities found in the courses taught in translator training programmes, it is obvious that the training of translators in Cameroon in particular needs close attention. More specifically, it appears interesting to find out whether cultural competence is effectively factored in translator training institutions in Cameroon.

3.7 Data Processing and Analysis Procedures

As mentioned in the section entitled 'Research design', data originated from both quantitative and qualitative methods which respectively involved interviews and questionnaires. The analysis of data was conducted based on one of the aspects of the CIPP evaluation Model: the context. As for the corpus study, the data consisted of translation texts collected from students of the eight translator training institutions investigated in this research work. Given that all schools do not give students the same volume of exercises and assignments each year, the number of texts collected from each institution was not the same. The cultures identified in the texts were described in turn using the analysis grid presented above.

Data were equally obtained through questionnaires. After collection, data obtained using printed questionnaires were entered on Google forms. Then, the corresponding Excel spreadsheets were exported from the platform and organised in tables and charts using statistical data analysis software. This statistical data was afterwards commented on and analysed using descriptive analysis. Later, the results obtained were interpreted to produce findings in relation to the research questions.

Additionally, data collected through interviews were also processed. The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and, where necessary, translated into English for analysis. Then, transcriptions were anonymised and examined to extract relevant information that could constitute answers to the research questions. Thematic analysis was used to analyse both qualitative and quantitative data.

4. ASSESSMENT PARAMETERS

The themes or topics obtained following the organisation of data according to thematic analysis principles gave birth to parameters for assessing the teaching of cultural competence in translator training. We argue that these parameters may be used to assess the teaching of cultural competence in any translator training programme. These parameters tackle each of the cultural competence competences and topics, making them detailed and sufficiently comprehensive to have an insight into the teaching material received by students during training as regards this crucial competence. The parameters include the following:

- Presence or absence of cultural competence components in the curriculum
- Inclusion or exclusion of cultural competence in translator training curricula
- Number of cultural competence topics missing in the curriculum
- Cultural competence topics missing in the curriculum
- Volume of teaching received/given in encyclopedic knowledge
- Volume of teaching received/given in cultural awareness
- Volume of teaching received/given in specific translation skills
- Volume of teaching received/given in subject knowledge
- Volume of teaching received/given in the new cultures

4.1 Presence or absence of cultural competence components in the curriculum

This parameter enables to obtain a general insight about the presence of cultural competence components in the programmes through the experiences shared by trainees and professional translators. This general idea was obtained through a Yes/No question aimed at finding out whether all cultural competence components were addressed in the curriculum. The result of that question informs the researcher about the component(s) which was/were either totally or partially left out of the programmes. On the other hand, this parameter directs the researcher on gaps to be filled in the curriculum as concerns the teaching of cultural competence.

4.2 Inclusion or exclusion of cultural competence in translator training curricula

This parameter is based on the opinions of programme coordinators which were collected during interviews. It helps to generate information about the integration of cultural competence in the curriculum of trainee translation from the perspective of programme coordinators. Integrating this parameter would also enable the discovery of courses, among the ones existing in the course contents, which address cultural competence issues. As a matter of fact, this parameter helped to reveal in the researcher's study that most cultural competence topics were addressed without any course exclusively dedicated to cultural competence matters.

4.3 Number of cultural competence topics missing in the curriculum

The number of cultural competence components missing in the curriculum will help to quantitatively determine the level of effectiveness of cultural competence teaching in translator training programmes. This level is calculated based on the number of cultural competence topics of each component reported by participants as not addressed in their curriculum.

4.4 Cultural competence topics missing in the curriculum

This parameter is more specific and helps to inform the researcher on the various cultural competence topics that are not addressed in the curriculum. As each cultural competence component comprises different topics, it is compelling to deepen the investigation in order to obtain information about the topics that teachers failed to address during trainees' training. This particular information would facilitate the now necessary revision of the curriculum and direct teachers and/or programme coordinators on the specific adjustments to be made.

4.5 Volume of teaching received/given in encyclopedic knowledge

Encyclopedic knowledge being the first component of cultural competence, this parameter would enable the researcher to find out how much about encyclopedic knowledge the students received and teachers shared with students during training. This rating is based on the evaluation of the volume of teaching received by trainees and professional translators. In order to stress the teacher's perspective in the study, this parameter also addresses the volume of teaching teachers themselves report to have transferred to trainees on encyclopedic knowledge. This rating will therefore be done on topics including the following:

- Linguistic culture ;
- Social culture ;
- Cultural patrimony;
- Natural environment
- Specialised domain cultures.

This last form of culture involves the forms of culture generated through individual knowledge of certain specialised or technical fields of translation or through exposure to these fields during training.

4.6 Volume of teaching received/given in cultural awareness

In line with the previous parameter, this one will address topics relating to cultural awareness. These include two topics:

- The relation between language and culture as well as its ramifications and implications for the translator;
- Cultural similarities and differences between the cultures of both the source and target languages.

4.7 Volume of teaching received/given in specific translation skills

The volume of teaching received or given on specific translation skills will require to rate three different aspects:

- Expertise in the translation strategies that should be employed in handling culture-laden texts;
- Acquisition of adequate skills in rendering culture-bound terms that occur in various genres and text types;
- Expertise in the translation procedures that are used in rendering culture-bound terms.

4.8 Volume of teaching received/given in subject knowledge

Subject knowledge is rated according to three topics, too. These include:

- Recommending the acquisition of either academic knowledge or professional experience in a field before specialising in it;
- Helping trainees acquire academic knowledge in a chosen specialised field because it is possible to specialise in a field without prior academic knowledge or professional experience in it;
- Teach in several areas of specialisation, the related translation methods and tools required to handle translation tasks in several areas of specialisation such as law, medicine, finance, computer science, etc.

4.9 Volume of teaching received/given in the new cultures

Having established that certain activities and services existing in the translation market and industry should be considered as cultures in the translation field, these activities should be included in the assessment tasks to ensure a complete and comprehensive assessment. The new cultures which should be rated by study participants are five in number as follows:

- Machine translation;
- Postediting;
- Transcreation;
- Translation quality assessment;
- Terminology management.

5. CONCLUSION

Assessing the Teaching of Cultural Competence in Translator Training: Research Design and Assessment Parameters

This paper achieved the objectives of presenting the conceptual framework, the research design and assessment parameters for any assessment of cultural competence teaching in translator training. The review of literature done established that culture is an ambiguous concept as its meaning varies according to disciplines and communicational settings. It was also suggested that cultural competence should also involve the new cultures, that is activities and services that are prevailing in the translation market and are crucial for trainees' continuous growth in the profession and in translation industry. Moreover, the research design proposed for assessing cultural competence followed a mixed method that merges both qualitative and quantitative methods in a view to including the opinions of all translator training stakeholders in the investigation. Thus, the assessment parameters proposed in this paper as guidelines directing the assessment of cultural competence in translator training are novel ideas that would adequately guide the development or revision of translator training programmes in the world to match the current expectations and demands of the field.

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