

# Examining the Acquisition of Translation Competence: Dynamicity and Translation Quality as Indicators

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Received: December 22, 2023      Accepted: February 16, 2024      Online Published: March 2, 2024

doi:10.5539/ijel.v14n2p35      URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v14n2p35>

## Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine translation competence acquisition using dynamicity and translation quality as indicators. The researcher adopted a mixed methods research design using a closed-item questionnaire, translation tasks, and semi-structured interviews to collect data from undergraduate translation students, translation instructors, and employers of translators. One hundred fifty-eight undergraduate translation students completed the questionnaire, and 50 undergraduate translation students completed the translation tasks. The researcher interviewed four translation instructors and four employers of translators. Statistical and qualitative analyses revealed that the undergraduate translation students sampled in the study have not acquired translation competence successfully as shown by the absence of statistically significant differences in the dynamic/static views of translation knowledge among them in addition to the nondiscriminating translation performance of the students on the translation tasks as well as the feedback obtained from the instructors and employers in the interviews. Due to their significance to translator training, the findings of the study may contribute to the design and development of translation programs and curricula—in pedagogical settings—and professional development and on-the-job training programs—in professional settings.

**Keywords:** dynamicity, mixed methods research, translation competence, translation competence acquisition

## 1. Introduction

Translation competence (TC) has been of interest to researchers concerned with translation pedagogy and the training of translators since the 1980s (e.g., Hurtado Albir, 2015). The attention awarded to TC has sparked several attempts to identify its components, or, in other words, to determine the skills and knowledge translators need to practice translation professionally. These attempts have led to the proposal of a number of TC models (e.g., EMT, 2017; EMT Expert Group, 2009; Göpferich, 2009; PACTE Group, 2000, 2003). Following the development of such models, interest among the translation research and pedagogical communities shifted to examining translation competence acquisition (TCA) (e.g., Kiraly, 2015; PACTE Group, 2014).

In addition to examining the components of TC, researchers have also investigated the notion from different perspectives. For instance, Ghaemi and Sadoughvanini (2020) found that there is a statistically significant correlation between TC and higher-order thinking skills among undergraduate translation students. On the other hand, another study examining TCA among university-level translation students, found no significant difference between advanced and beginner translation students in different aspects of strategic competence, which is one of components of TC (Gregorio Cano, 2023).

In the context of translator training, the development and measurement of TCA is at the core of all translator training programs. Any program that aims to produce translators who are capable of functioning professionally and efficiently in the job market is simply seeking to develop TC. This in turn entails developing methods and means to measure TCA for diagnostic, formative, and summative purposes. The need to measure TCA has encouraged many attempts to develop methods to assess and evaluate the outputs of translator training programs (e.g., Orozco & Hurtado Albir, 2002; Ünal & Çoban, 2022). The current study aimed to measure TCA among a group of undergraduate translation students in the Saudi context to determine whether the training these students receive is effective in developing the skills and knowledge they require to practice translation professionally.

To achieve the aim of the study, the researcher adopted the view of the PACTE Group on the dynamic-static

conception of translation knowledge as a main indicator (Hurtado Albir, 2017a). The PACTE Group is a research group that was established in 1997 at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain (Hurtado Albir, 2017b). The founding members of the Group were translator trainers working as faculty members at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, and they were also professional translators. Since its establishment in 1997, the Group has been investigating TC and TCA by conducting empirical studies. The Group's initial goal was to produce an empirically based model for TC. The model is composed of six components (See Figure 1 for details). After the model was formulated, the attention of the Group shifted to the study of TCA (See Hurtado Albir, 2017b; PACTE, 2005; PACTE, 2008; PACTE, 2011a; PACTE, 2011b, for more details on the work of the PACTE Group). Since 2015, the PACTE Group has been working on a project that aims to establish levels for translation competence and develop the descriptors for such levels (Hurtado Albir & Rodríguez-Inés, 2023).

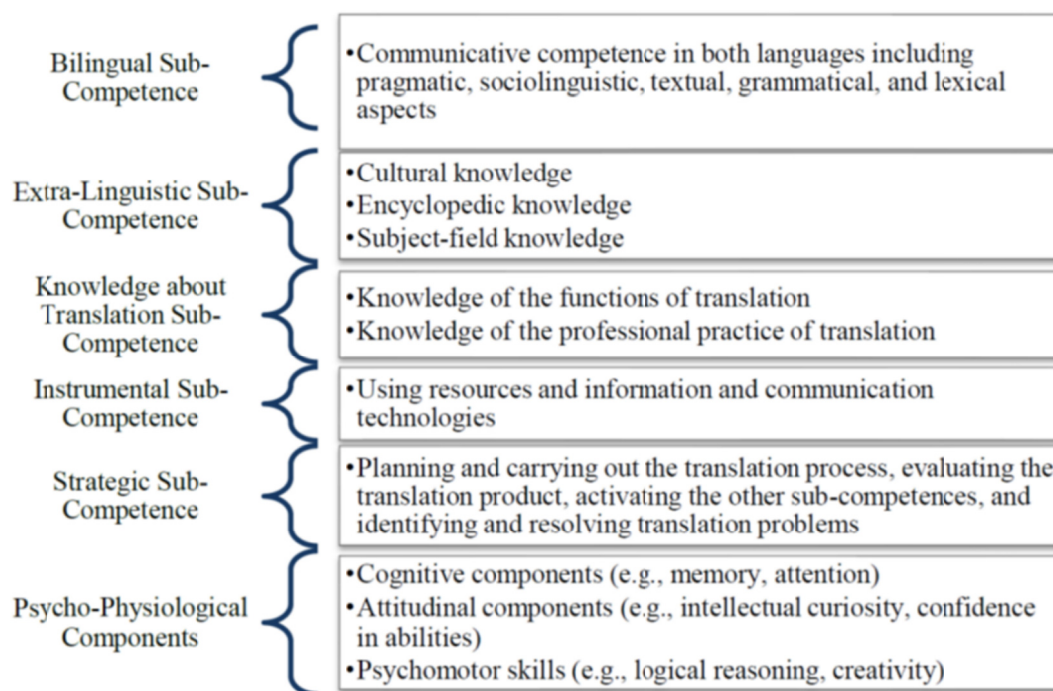


Figure 1. Components of the PACTE Group's TC model (2003)

Source: Salamah, 2021.

The dynamic-static distinction of translation knowledge was introduced to TCA research by the PACTE Group (Hurtado Albir, 2017a). A dynamic perspective to translation entails possessing “a textual, interpretive, communicative, and functionalist conception of translation” (Hurtado Albir, 2017a, p. 4), while a static perspective to translation means having “a linguistic and literal conception” (Hurtado Albir, 2017a, p. 4). The PACTE Group concluded that the dynamic-static distinction of translation knowledge is linked to translation experience (PACTE Group, 2017) after the Group conducted a series of empirical studies. In other words, the PACTE Group determined that individuals who are more experienced in translation possess a more dynamic perception of translation in contrast to individuals with less translation experience who have a static perception of translation. Based on this conclusion, the dynamic-static distinction can be associated with TCA by assuming that individuals with more developed TC possess a dynamic perception to translation, while those with underdeveloped TC possess a more static view. This assumption motivated the researcher to examine dynamicity as an indicator of TCA by attempting to prove the following hypotheses:

- Advanced undergraduate translation students have a more dynamic perception towards translation knowledge than beginner undergraduate translation students.
- Beginner undergraduate translation students have a more static perception towards translation knowledge than advanced undergraduate translation students.

Since dynamicity is associated with TCA, proving the study's hypotheses will determine whether TC has been

acquired by advanced students as opposed to beginners. The assumption upon which the study was built is that advanced students who have a more dynamic perception of translation have a more developed TC and have attained TCA through the training they received at their undergraduate translation programs. Furthermore, possessing a static view of translation among beginner undergraduate translation students when compared to their advanced peers supports the achievement of TCA through training at undergraduate translation programs.

The following section presents the study's methodology inclusive of data collection, sampling, and data analysis. The results of data analysis are presented after the methodology section followed by a discussion of the findings and the conclusion.

## 2. Method

The study adopted a mixed methods approach through the collection of qualitative and quantitative data. The main data collection tool was a questionnaire that measures dynamic and static tendencies among the main population of the study (i.e., undergraduate translation students). In addition to the questionnaire, translation tasks were used to gain further insights on TCA among the study population. The translation tasks provided information on the degree of TCA among the population of the study using translation quality and translation speed as indicators of TCA. Interviews were also conducted with translation instructors and employers of translators to gain further insights on the development of TC among the main population of the study. A detailed discussion of data collection, sampling, and data analysis is presented below.

### 2.1 Data Collection and Sampling

#### 2.1.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire that targeted the population of undergraduate translation students was used as the main data collection tool. The questionnaire was adapted from one developed and used in Hurtado Albir (2017b). The researcher modified the original questionnaire after it was reviewed and piloted. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined by calculating the value of Cronbach alpha, and it was found to have a high degree of internal consistency with a value of 0.745.

The questionnaire aimed to determine whether undergraduate translation students have developed a dynamic perception of translation as an indicator of TCA. The questionnaire is composed of two parts. The first part collects background information about the participants (i.e., their gender, age, and university level), while the second part comprises 27 items in closed-item format to measure the participants' degree of agreement using a 5-point Likert Scale (i.e., from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree). These items were grouped under the two dimensions of dynamic and static to reflect both perceptions of translation knowledge (See Table 1). The items addressed different aspects of the translation process including the problems and phases of translation, translation strategies, and translation functions.

The researcher employed a purposive non-probability sampling technique for the questionnaire sample since the questionnaire targeted participants with particular characteristics who were willing to participate (Dörnyei, 2007; Mellinger & Hanson, 2017). The questionnaire received a total of 158 responses. The majority of the participants were females (73.4%). Their ages ranged between 20 and 25 years. The participants were enrolled in different undergraduate translation programs in public universities in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and they were at different levels of study. The beginners accounted for 38.6% of the participants, while advanced students accounted for 61.4%. To distinguish between beginner and advanced students in the sample of the questionnaire for the purpose of the current study, the researcher classified any student in his/her first two years of study as a beginner, and any student in his/her final year as an advanced student.

Table 1. Questionnaire items classified as dynamic and static

Dynamic	Static
1. Problems of Translation	
17) One of the biggest problems when translating a novel is cultural references (e.g., institutions, traditional food, etc.).	5) Most translation problems can be solved with the help of a good dictionary. 9) Since you cannot be expected to know every word of a language, a good bilingual dictionary is the best way to ensure a good translation. 12) Idiomatic expressions are the biggest problem in translation. 14) When translating a technical text, terminology is the biggest problem. 26) The same translation problems come up in every text.
2. Phases of Translation	
1) As you read the source text, you are already thinking about how you are going to translate it. 19) When you translate, you must bear in mind the text features of the target language.	7) In order to understand the source text, the most important thing to do is to solve vocabulary problems. 13) The best way to translate is to concentrate on the words and sentence structure of the original and then reproduce them in the target language. 18) When you translate, you concentrate on one sentence and translate it, then the next, and so on until you have translated the whole text. 25) The best way to translate a text is to translate sentence by sentence.
3. Translation Methods and Strategies	
8) If the characteristics of the source text are very different from those of the same text type in the target culture (e.g., business letters, instruction manuals, etc.), you should adapt the target text accordingly. 10) A text should be translated in different ways depending on who the target reader is. 23) If you begin translating a text with certain criteria (e.g., respecting the format of the original, adapting the text to the target reader, etc.), these criteria should be maintained throughout the translation. 27) If you find a word you do not understand in a text, you should first try to work out or guess its meaning from the context.	4) The aim of every translation is to produce a text as close in form to the original as possible. 11) All translated texts should keep the same paragraphs and order of sentences in the target text as in the original text. 15) With the exception of proverbs, idioms, and metaphors, literal translation is always the best way to translate. 16) As soon as you find a word or expression you do not know the meaning of, you should look it up in a bilingual dictionary. 22) When a cultural reference from the source culture is used in a text (e.g., traditional food), you should try to find a similar reference in the target culture.
4. Translation Concept and Functions	
3) The client controls how the translator translates a text. 6) When you translate a text, the most important thing is to satisfy target reader expectations. 21) When you translate a text, you must ensure that target readers are affected by the translated text in the same way source text readers were affected by the source text.	2) You always lose something in translation since words do not normally mean exactly the same in the source language as in the target language. 20) It is enough to know two languages well to be able to translate well. 24) When you translate a text, you should not be influenced by the target reader.

### 2.1.2 Translation Tasks

Two translation tasks were also used to collect data. Translation Task 1 was an Arabic newspaper article to be translated into English, while Translation Task 2 was an English newspaper article to be translated into Arabic. The two articles were on the same topic and of comparable length. The tasks were completed online, and the participants were allowed to access resources, such as dictionaries and the Internet, as they translated. In addition, the translation sessions were recorded to document translation speed which is an indicator of the development of TC (Tassini, 2012).

To examine the development of TC as a result of the instruction and training students receive in their programs of study, the researcher employed a cross-sectional sampling approach for the translation tasks which is a suitable approach when it comes to inferring development at different stages for a particular target population (Duff, 2008). Accordingly, the sample of the translation tasks consisted of two groups of students from the target population of undergraduate translation students. The first group included beginners who had completed an introductory course on the theory of translation and at least one practical translation course. The second group of participants, on the other hand, was composed of advanced translation students who were in their final year of study. The sample was composed of 50 participants who were all female undergraduate translation students

enrolled in an English translation program at a Saudi public university. Each task was completed by 25 participants as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Sample of the translation tasks

Task	N	%
Translation Task 1		
Beginners	15	60
Advanced	10	40
Translation Task 2		
Beginners	15	60
Advanced	10	40

### 2.1.3 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with translation instructors and employers of translators to explore their perceptions regarding TCA among undergraduate translation students in Saudi Arabia. The translation instructors were invited to describe the TC of undergraduate translation students in the programs in which they teach, while the employers of translators were asked about the TC of the graduates of undergraduate translation programs based on their experience as recruiters. The interviews were held over a three-week period to accommodate the scheduling preferences of the interviewees. The duration of translation instructor interviews averaged 40 minutes, while the duration of employer interviews averaged 55 minutes.

As in the sampling of the questionnaire, purposive non-probability sampling was employed for the samples of both interviews since willingness to participate was a crucial element in selecting participants (Dörnyei, 2007; Mellinger & Hanson, 2017).

The sample of the translation instructors' interview consisted of four translation instructors who had between 6 and 15 years of experience teaching translation in undergraduate translation programs. Three of the instructors were females and one of them was male. The sample of the employers' interview also consisted of four employers who were all males. The employers had between 4 and 11 years of relevant experience. Three of the employers worked in the private sector, while the fourth employer worked in the semi-government sector. The fourth employer, however, had previous experience in both private and government sectors.

## 2.2 Data Analysis

### 2.2.1 Questionnaire

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data collected using the questionnaire. In addition, the Independent-Samples t-test was applied to the questionnaire data to determine the participants' tendencies in terms of dynamicity.

### 2.2.2 Translation Tasks

To analyze the data collected using the translation tasks, the researcher assessed the performance of the participants by evaluating the quality of their translations. The researcher evaluated the quality of each translated text out of 20 points using a rubric adapted from the Framework for Standardized Error Marking for the American Translators Association Certification Program (American Translators Association, 2020). To ensure the reliability of the researcher's evaluation, interrater reliability was established by asking another translation instructor to evaluate the translation tasks using the same rubric. Inter-rater reliability was calculated using Pearson's correlation test and it was found to be high; since ( $r = 0.724$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) for the correlation between the two raters for Translation Task 1 ( $n = 12$ ) and ( $r = 0.775$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) for the correlation between the two raters for Translation Task 2 ( $n = 13$ ).

### 2.2.3 Interviews

Data obtained from the instructor and employer interviews were analyzed qualitatively. To report the results of the analysis while maintaining anonymity, codes were used to refer to participants. Each code consisted of an abbreviation indicating the participant's category and a number to refer to the interviewee. The abbreviations TI and E were used for translation instructors and employers, respectively. Therefore, TI3 refers to translation instructor 3, E2 refers to employer 2, and so on.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Questionnaire

For a summary of the questionnaire responses refer to Table A1 in the Appendix.

To determine whether the two groups of undergraduate students were inclined to a dynamic or static concept of translation, the researcher analyzed their degree of agreement for the questionnaire's dynamic and static statements (See Table 1). This was accomplished using the Independent-Samples t-test. The difference in the mean score of the dynamic dimensions for both advanced and beginner students was ( $P > 0.05$ ), which indicated that there is no statistically significant difference in the dynamic view of translation between the two groups, since the overall mean scores of the dynamic dimensions for beginners and advanced students were (4.0362) and (4.0541), respectively, which is a very small mean difference of (0.01792) in favor of the advanced students with a p-value of (0.795)  $> 0.05$  (See Table 3).

Table 3. Differences in the dynamic perception of translation between advanced students and beginners

Group	n	M	SD	Mean Difference	t	p
Problems of translation						
Beginners	61	4.0492	0.86460	-0.04360	-0.316	0.752
Advanced students	97	4.0928	0.83019			
Phases of translation						
Beginners	61	4.1721	0.68851	-0.13199	-1.317	0.190
Advanced students	97	4.3041	0.56160			
Translation methods and strategies						
Beginners	61	4.0492	0.52205	0.04403	0.510	0.611
Advanced students	97	4.0052	0.53275			
Translation concept and functions						
Beginners	61	3.8743	0.59989	0.05988	0.632	0.528
Advanced students	97	3.8144	0.56718			
Overall dynamic						
Beginners	61	4.0362	0.43073	-0.01792	-0.261	0.795
Advanced students	97	4.0541	0.41393			

Independent-Samples t-test scores of the differences in the mean scores of the static dimension for both groups indicated that the beginners had a higher mean score in all dimensions and that they had an overall static tendency. However, the mean differences between the beginners and advanced students were not statistically significant with ( $P > 0.05$ ). This means that there was no statistically significant difference in the static view of translation between beginners and advanced students, since the overall mean scores of the static dimensions for beginners and advanced students were (3.2635) and (3.1576), respectively, with a small mean difference of (0.10592) in favor of beginners with a p-value (0.200)  $> 0.05$  (See Table 4).

Table 4. Differences in the static perception of translation between advanced students and beginners

Group	n	M	SD	Mean Difference	t	p
Problems of translation						
Beginners	61	3.3836	0.63066	0.03309	0.353	0.725
Advanced students	97	3.3505	0.46729			
Phases of translation						
Beginners	61	3.2377	0.93811	0.11657	0.800	0.426
Advanced students	97	3.1211	0.81339			
Translation methods and strategies						
Beginners	61	3.1705	0.72649	0.12513	1.129	0.261
Advanced students	97	3.0454	0.64647			
Translation concept and functions						
Beginners	61	3.2623	0.68344	0.14889	1.367	0.174
Advanced students	97	3.1134	0.65597			
Overall static						
Beginners	61	3.2635	0.56966	0.10592	1.287	0.200
Advanced students	97	3.1576	0.45747			

### 3.2 Translation Tasks

The scores of the translation tasks are presented in Table A2 in the Appendix.

To compare the performance of the two groups on the translation tasks, the Mann-Whitney Test was used due to the small sample size since each group was composed of less than 30 tests. Table 5 shows that the advanced students ( $n = 10$ ) had the highest mean score on Translation Task 1 with a mean of 10.19 and standard deviation of 3.91, while the beginners ( $n = 15$ ) had a lower mean with a value of 8.63 and standard deviation of 2.71. Furthermore, in Translation Task 2, the advanced students ( $n = 10$ ) had the highest mean score with a mean of 12.28 and standard deviation of 2.45, while the beginners ( $n = 15$ ) had a mean of 12.02 and standard deviation of 1.91.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of translation task scores

	n	M	SD	Std. Error Mean
Translation Task 1				
Advanced	10	10.19	3.91	1.24
Beginners	15	8.63	2.71	.70
Translation Task 2				
Advanced	10	12.28	2.45	.78
Beginners	15	12.02	1.91	.49

The Mann-Whitney Test was also used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the performance of advanced and beginner students in the same task. The result for the mean scores for both groups on Translation Task 1 was ( $P = 0.181 > 0.05$ ), which means that there is no statistically significant difference between the performance of advanced and beginner students in Translation Task 1. However, the overall mean score of the group of advanced students is slightly higher than that of the beginners (See Table 6).

Table 6. Mann-Whitney Test results for Translation Task 1

Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Advanced	10	15.40	154.00	51.000	0.181
Beginners	15	11.40	171.00		

Similarly, the Mann-Whitney Test result for the mean scores for both groups on Translation Task 2 was ( $P = 0.657 > 0.05$ ), which means that there is no statistically significant difference between the performance of advanced and beginner students in Translation Task 2. However, the overall mean score of the group of advanced students is slightly higher than that of the beginners (See Table 7).

Table 7. Mann-Whitney Test results for Translation Task 2

Group	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Advanced	10	13.80	138.00	67.000	0.657
Beginners	15	12.47	187.00		

Another aspect that was taken into account in relation to the translation tasks was translation speed (i.e., time to complete the translation). Based on the recordings of the translation tasks, average translation speed varied slightly among the participants. The advanced students took more time to complete Translation Task 1, while the beginners took more time to complete Translation Task 2. However, there was only a slight difference in the average duration of task completion between the two groups in Translation Task 1, while there was a 14-minute difference in the average of the two groups in Translation Task 2 (See Table 8).

Table 8. Translation speed in the translation tasks

Task	Average Time to Complete Task (in minutes)
Translation Task 1	
Advanced	56.60
Beginners	54.47
Translation Task 2	
Advanced	43.60
Beginners	57.47

### 3.3 Interviews

#### 3.3.1 Instructors' Interview

When asked to describe their idea of a competent translation graduate, the four instructors agreed that language proficiency is the main competence translators need. TI2 added linguistic and cultural awareness and sensitivity to texts and contexts. However, when the instructors were asked to describe the competence of senior translation students based on their experience teaching them, they generally agreed that most students were average or weak, lacking the language proficiency needed to become competent translators. TI3 commented on the students' lack of motivation towards translation by mentioning that many of them only want to find a job when they graduate even if it is not related to translation.

The data obtained from the instructors' interview revealed that undergraduate translation students generally suffered from weak language proficiency. TI2 stressed that linguistic competence is the key to TCA since with good language proficiency, translation students can be trained on translation techniques and strategies. TI2 also believes that the students' weak language skills drive instructors to choose simpler texts and assessments which leads to inflated grades. This view was echoed by TI3 who felt that the role of a translation instructor has been limited to that of a language teacher due to the weak language proficiency of some students. TI3 explained that translation instructors are too busy correcting their students' language mistakes which prevents them from focusing on developing their translation strategies and techniques. TI3 also believes that students' grades are inflated, which gives them a misguided sense of confidence in their abilities and makes them think they are good and need no further improvement. In addition, she believed that more training on job-market skills should be incorporated into the preparation of translators by including training on translation technologies, project management, and professional communication.

#### 3.3.2 Employers' Interview

When asked to describe the graduates of undergraduate translation programs in Saudi Arabia based on their experience recruiting translators, E2, E3, and E4 commented that graduates need more training on job-market skills and requirements because they think there is a gap between the job market and university education. E2 believes there may be issues with how translation is taught and assessed at universities because some applicants lack basic translation skills. In fact, he also reported that—on average—only 20% of the applicants to translation jobs in the company where he works pass their employment translation test even though the pass mark is 65 out of 100 and the test is from English into Arabic (i.e., into the applicants' native language). E3 believes that graduates are concerned with translation quality at sentence level rather than focusing on the cohesion of the text as a unit. He too linked this to the way translation is evaluated at universities. E4 suggested using authentic texts to train students to simulate the job market (e.g., memoranda of understanding, contracts, legal decisions).

## 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The current study set out to examine TCA among the population of undergraduate translation students in Saudi Arabia using dynamicity towards translation knowledge as the main indicator for measuring TC development among advanced and beginner students. To do so, the researcher posited the following two hypotheses:

- Advanced undergraduate translation students have a more dynamic perception towards translation knowledge than beginner undergraduate translation students.
- Beginner undergraduate translation students have a more static perception towards translation knowledge than advanced undergraduate translation students.

The researcher conducted a mixed methods study and used a questionnaire, translation tasks, and interviews to collect data that were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The findings of the study, however, did not support the two hypotheses since statistical analysis of the questionnaire data revealed that the advanced students did not have a more dynamic perception of translation compared to the beginners, and the beginners did not have



a higher static tendency (See Tables 3 and 4). Data obtained from the translation tasks and interviews supported the statistical findings of the questionnaire data. Analysis of the performance of undergraduate translation students in the translation tasks indicated that no improvement was detected in the performance of the advanced undergraduate translation students in comparison to the beginners. Even though there was a slight difference in the mean scores of the advanced and beginner students on both translation tasks to the advantage of the advanced students, statistical analysis revealed that this difference was not significant. Another indicator of the participants' underdeveloped TC was the time it took them to complete the translation tasks (i.e., translation speed). The data on translation speed were inconclusive, since, on average, advanced students took more time to complete Translation Task 1, but less time to complete Translation Task 2 (See Table 8). This means that the degree of TC development among the students sampled in the current study was not reflected in their translation speed although experience is one of the factors that affects a translator's speed in completing a translation task (Tassini, 2012).

This conclusion contradicts the findings of the PACTE Group's (2015) experimental study on TCA which concluded that advanced translation students have a more dynamic conception of translation than beginner translation students. This contradiction may be attributable to several reasons. For instance, the population of the current study is typically not required to undergo an admission exam or to provide proof of language proficiency by way of standardized testing before enrolling in the translation training program. On the other hand, the sample of the PACTE Group's study was controlled in such a way that only students who "had passed at least 80% of the previous year's subjects (including translation and L1 and L2 subjects)" were selected (PACTE Group, 2015, p. 34). Such a restriction was not enforced when conducting the current study. Thus, controlling the sample in the PACTE Group's study ensured that only students of a certain degree of competence were included, which may have influenced the findings.

Nevertheless, the findings of the current study are in agreement with Al-Faifi (2000), who found that translation students' performance in translation tasks was "below the level of acceptable quality" (2000, p. 171). He also found that students lacked awareness of the use of translation strategies. In addition, his sample showed a lack of awareness of the different stages of the translation process. Furthermore, Gregorio Cano (2023) also found that translation trainees did not exhibit development in the ability to recognize and differentiate translation problems as a result of the training they received at university. These two skills are components of strategic competence which is one of the components of TC.

The conclusions above were supported by the interviews conducted with instructors. In fact, the interviewees reported that their students' language proficiency was weak to the extent that their roles have been transformed into language instructors. This poses a particular challenge for translation instructors since they cannot focus on developing students' translation ability due to their weak language proficiency. Moreover, the instructors revealed that the translation skills of many students were also average or weak. This indicates that advanced translation students lacked many of the skills and competences needed to become competent translators. The instructors interviewed by Al-Faifi (2000) agree with this observation as he found that the majority of the instructors he surveyed attributed the weak performance of translation students to poor language proficiency in both source and target languages. This finding, however, contradicts Alenezi (2015) as 76% of the translation instructors in his study think translation students are ready for the job market, which he seems to think is inaccurate because he attributed this evaluation to the instructors' inability to accurately assess their students' performance, since most of them lack a background in translation.

The employers interviewed in this study shared the instructors' views regarding the competence of undergraduate translation students, which is a very significant finding since employers are the evaluators of the graduates of translation programs and are, therefore, a valuable source of feedback for program development (Schnell & Rodríguez, 2017). Employers also reported that some applicants, who graduated from Saudi undergraduate translation programs, were weak and lacked basic translation skills when given translation employment tests.

Thus, for the sample of the current study, the researcher found that training at an undergraduate translation program has not contributed to TCA among the participants as measured by the lack of a significant difference in the dynamic/static view to translation between beginners and advanced students. This finding was also supported by the students' performance in the translation tasks and the interviews with instructors and employers.

The findings of the study have significant implications on the training and professional development of translators. Since weak language proficiency was cited by the interviewed translation instructors as the most significant obstacle in the development of TC among translation trainees, course and program developers in pedagogical settings may emphasize the enforcement of strict language proficiency requirements to ensure that

the inputs of translator training programs at higher education institutions have the linguistic competence necessary to ensure the development and acquisition of TC. Enforcing such requirements, whether in the form of entrance exams or standardized language proficiency test scores, helps filter applicants by excluding those who do not meet the minimum language proficiency requirements of the relevant program. Filters may also be enforced at a pre-determined early exit point in the program. This involves assessing students after they complete a certain number of credits or courses to evaluate their linguistic competence, which enables program administrators to identify students who possess the competence required to progress to higher levels of study. A suggested early exit point framework is illustrated in Figure 2.

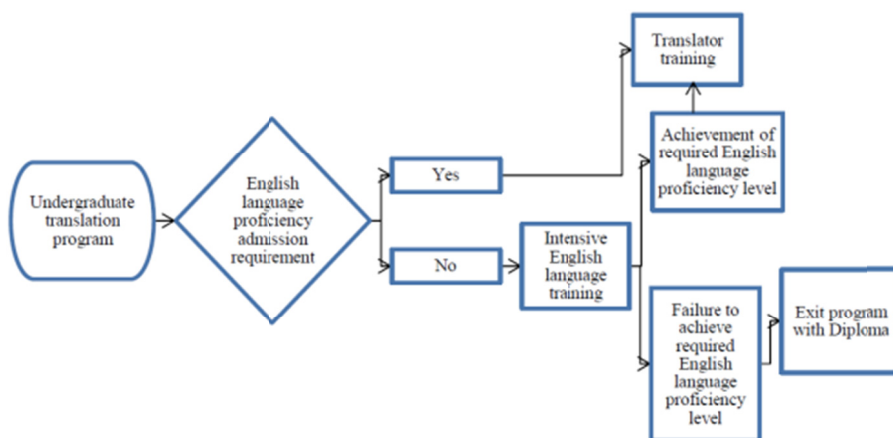


Figure 2. Proposed early exit framework for undergraduate translation programs

Administrators at translator training programs may also consider varying the teaching and assessment methods and strategies used to teach translation as well as introducing new and authentic methods to train students, such as project-based learning or any other form of collaborative learning strategies. The use of authentic texts and tasks is also recommended to help develop the skills of translation trainees. In this regard, Table 9 includes some proposed courses and training activities for translator training programs based on the components of the PACTE Group model (2003) (See Figure 1). A discussion of the table is presented below.

Table 9. Proposed courses and training activities for undergraduate translator training programs

Component	Proposed Courses and Training Activities
Bilingual sub-competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language courses in both source and target languages</li> <li>• Introduction to linguistics</li> </ul>
Extra-linguistic sub-competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target language culture courses</li> <li>• Field-specific practical translation courses</li> </ul>
Knowledge about translation sub-competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courses and/or topics on the professional practice of translation</li> </ul>
Instrumental sub-competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research skills for translators</li> <li>• Practical training on translation technologies</li> <li>• Resources for translators</li> </ul>
Strategic sub-competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field-specific practical translation courses</li> <li>• Text analysis for translation purposes</li> <li>• Revision, editing, and proofreading courses and/or activities</li> <li>• Translation quality assessment</li> </ul>
Psycho-physiological components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising students’ awareness of the translation profession</li> </ul>

Bilingual sub-competence may be developed through intensive language training in both source and target languages. In addition, introductory courses to linguistics may be offered to introduce students to the main fields of linguistics. Specialized linguistics courses that address the sub-fields of linguistics (e.g., semantics, pragmatics, morphology, and syntax) may not be necessary since undergraduate translation students may be incapable of relating the content of such courses to translation rendering them irrelevant. Even when such courses are designed with the objective of developing TC, which is usually the case, the lack of faculty members who are specialized or experienced in translation makes it difficult to transfer these objectives to students.

Extra-linguistic sub-competence may be developed through courses that familiarize students with the culture of the target language. These courses can include training on the translation of culturally specific terms as well as other cultural expressions, such as idioms, proverbs, and signs and public notices. This sub-competence can also be developed through field-specific practical translation training that aims to meet the needs of the job market (e.g., translating advertisements, localization, audiovisual translation).

Knowledge about translation sub-competence may be developed through courses or topics that deal with the professional practice of translation. This includes internships or field training modules and/or courses that target the professional skills required for translators, such as professional communication, business skills for translators, and translation ethics. Courses on translation theories and strategies are also especially important in developing this sub-competence.

Instrumental sub-competence may be developed through courses that emphasize the research skills of translators whether that is to understand a topic or concept, look for an equivalent term, or look for appropriate usage. Practical training on translation technologies should also be incorporated into the training of undergraduates since it is gaining popularity among employers. Training on other resources, such as dictionaries, parallel texts, and corpora, should also be part of instrumental sub-competence training. Finally, basic training on IT skills such as using word processors and other basic applications, must not be ignored.

The final sub-competence, strategic sub-competence, is central to the translation process since it activates all the remaining sub-competences. Thus, it is developed through field-specific practical translation courses, as well as courses that train students on analyzing texts for translation purposes. Other courses or activities that train students on translation-related tasks (e.g., revision, editing, proofreading, localization) as well as translation quality assessment also feed into strategic sub-competence.

On a professional level, the findings of the study may also be used to inform professional development and on-the-job training programs for translators who are entering or have recently joined the job market. These two categories of translators need to continue to develop their skills and knowledge, translation-related and otherwise, to become active and productive members of the translation industry.

To conclude, the researcher acknowledges the limitations of the current study and cautions against generalizing its findings and conclusions beyond its scope. Furthermore, the findings may be considered preliminary and further investigation of the relationship between dynamicity and TCA is encouraged with a larger sample and different populations, and in different contexts.

#### **Acknowledgments**

Not applicable.

#### **Authors' contributions**

Dr. Dania Adel Salamah was responsible for all the phases of the study and the preparation of the manuscript.

#### **Funding**

Not applicable.

#### **Competing interests**

The author declares that she has no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

#### **Informed consent**

Obtained.

#### **Ethics approval**

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Canadian Center of Science and Education.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

### Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

### Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

### Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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## Appendix

Table A1. Summary of questionnaire responses

Item		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	n	3	7	14	65	69
	%	1.9	4.4	8.9	41.1	43.7
2	n	1	15	32	79	31
	%	0.6	9.5	20.3	50.0	19.6
3	n	11	24	47	50	26
	%	7.0	15.2	29.7	31.6	16.5
4	n	16	30	27	46	39
	%	10.1	19.0	17.1	29.1	24.7
5	n	15	44	47	39	13
	%	9.5	27.8	29.7	24.7	8.2
6	n	3	14	40	61	40
	%	1.9	8.9	25.3	38.6	25.3
7	n	4	14	27	60	53
	%	2.5	8.9	17.1	38.0	33.5
8	n	2	10	35	76	35
	%	1.3	6.3	22.2	48.1	22.2
9	n	2	12	37	75	32
	%	1.3	7.6	23.4	47.5	20.3
10	n	1	14	24	56	63
	%	0.6	8.9	15.2	35.4	39.9
11	n	37	53	30	26	12
	%	23.4	33.5	19.0	16.5	7.6
12	n	3	18	35	72	30
	%	1.9	11.4	22.2	45.6	19.0
13	n	16	29	35	44	34
	%	10.1	18.4	22.2	27.8	21.5
14	n	3	11	34	58	52
	%	1.9	7.0	21.5	36.7	32.9
15	n	41	43	31	30	13
	%	25.9	27.2	19.6	19.0	8.2
16	n	7	27	39	58	27
	%	4.4	17.1	24.7	36.7	17.1
17	n	-	9	23	73	53
	%	-	5.7	14.6	46.2	33.5
18	n	32	45	30	37	14
	%	20.3	28.5	19.0	23.4	8.9
19	n	1	3	11	75	68
	%	0.6	1.9	7.0	47.5	43.0
20	n	20	38	29	43	28
	%	12.7	24.1	18.4	27.2	17.7
21	n	3	1	17	47	90
	%	1.9	0.6	10.8	29.7	57.0
22	n	5	19	48	56	30
	%	3.2	12.0	30.4	35.4	19.0
23	n	1	7	45	65	40
	%	0.6	4.4	28.5	41.1	25.3
24	n	21	70	34	18	15
	%	13.3	44.3	21.5	11.4	9.5
25	n	29	51	29	35	14
	%	18.4	32.3	18.4	22.2	8.9
26	n	24	64	44	20	6
	%	15.2	40.5	27.8	12.7	3.8
27	n	-	-	14	76	68
	%	-	-	8.9	48.1	43.0

Table A2. Scores of the translation tasks

Translation Task 1		Translation Task 2	
Participant	Score	Participant	Score
Advanced Students			
T1_ADV1	10.75	T2_ADV1	11.88
T1_ADV2	11.50	T2_ADV2	13.88
T1_ADV3	3.00	T2_ADV3	11.50
T1_ADV4	12.25	T2_ADV4	13.00
T1_ADV5	10.25	T2_ADV5	9.25
T1_ADV6	12.75	T2_ADV6	8.50
T1_ADV7	14.75	T2_ADV7	10.38
T1_ADV8	4.38	T2_ADV8	15.75
T1_ADV9	14.00	T2_ADV9	15.50
T1_ADV10	8.25	T2_ADV10	13.13
Beginner Students			
T1_BEG1	4.00	T2_BEG1	15.25
T1_BEG2	12.50	T2_BEG2	15.25
T1_BEG3	8.25	T2_BEG3	13.00
T1_BEG4	8.25	T2_BEG4	11.25
T1_BEG5	8.25	T2_BEG5	12.13
T1_BEG6	10.75	T2_BEG6	10.75
T1_BEG7	11.00	T2_BEG7	10.00
T1_BEG8	10.75	T2_BEG8	11.50
T1_BEG9	8.63	T2_BEG9	12.75
T1_BEG10	8.25	T2_BEG10	9.25
T1_BEG11	5.25	T2_BEG11	11.50
T1_BEG12	8.13	T2_BEG12	12.25
T1_BEG13	13.50	T2_BEG13	8.88
T1_BEG14	7.00	T2_BEG14	12.5
T1_BEG15	5.00	T2_BEG15	14

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