

Is Theory of Translation Needed to Build Students' Translation Competence?

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Abstract

This article presents the importance theory of translation in translation training to build translation competence in revitalizing the teaching of translation. Firstly, the translation competence is defined. Then, six sub-competences of translation competence are described and materials given in the translation subject to build students' competence are presented. This competence builds students' awareness in detecting translation problem and finding the strategy to solve it. Some strategies applied by the translator in his translation (translation technique) are presented. These techniques are implemented to solve untranslatability. By introducing these techniques, the students improve their translation competence, especially in translating untranslatable words or expression. Students' responses on the materials related the translation theory are also presented. This will be useful input for future improvement for the translation subject.

Key words: translation theory, translation competence, problem-based solving

A. Introduction

Translation is one of the competences provided to the English department students in various universities in the world. This skill helps the students to be able to transfer messages from a foreign language (source language) to local language (target language) or vice versa. This subject provides activities of translating text from English into Indonesian and vice versa. The activities require the students to discuss their translation guided by the lecturer.

However, translation is not an easy task; it is not a simple activity of finding the meaning of a word in the dictionary. There are many requirements that must be considered to produce a good translation, such as, type of text, cultural context, and the word itself has a bundle of meanings which should be suited to its context. Therefore, many experts have proposed some theories about how to produce a good translation. They indicate that theory of translation must be provided in the training of translation. Related to this condition, translation competence and comprehension on the text being translated are needed to produce a good translation (PACTE, 2005 dan 2000; Nababan, 2003; Gile, 1995). By having a good translation competence, a translator could choose the best way to solve the problem in translation (Ardi, 2010a; 2010b).

In fact, teaching theory of translation has also argued for a long time. Many teachers or lecturers thought that the theory of translation is not needed since the learners can learn indirectly from the practice or the activity of translation. Actually, there are some reasons of those for reluctance the material related to theory of translation (Fawcet, 1981). For instance, Fawcet (1981) stated that the nature of the published material, the breadth of background knowledge need, the apparently unsatisfactory state of translation theory at the present time, pedagogical uncertainty discourage trainer to include theory of translation as material in their translation training.

Based on this condition, we need to revitalize the way of teaching translation by conducting a study on materials of translation subject and what materials should be involved. Therefore, this paper will discuss about model of teaching translation and what thing that must be given to the students to build their translation competence to produce a good translation. Firstly, the concept of translation competence is defined. Then, model of translation training that emphasizes on the theory of translation and translation problem (untranslatability)-based model in teaching translation subject is presented.

B. Review of Related Studies

Teaching and learning process mostly related to the development of three domains (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor). Similarly, the translation learning process is also related this domain of learning. Fawcet (1981) proposed that the teaching of translation theory should consider the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domain. Moreover, Fawcet (1981) proposed some objective for every domain: 1) Affective domain: In the affective domain, some objectives that will be achieved are: (a) awareness of the complexity of the translation process, (b) awareness and tolerance of ambiguity, connotation, and register, (c) awareness of and willingness to use the whole spectrum of translation strategies and techniques, (d) willingness to indulge in lateral thinking, to use yes-no-po and to be discontent with intuition that have not been systematically validated, (e) willingness to insist or precision in the thinking of those who correct their translation. Then, 2) Cognitive domain: it covers defining the knowledge to be acquired and the actual writing of the objective. The materials that must be taught are: (a) applied translation theory, (b) specific translation theory (application of the result of general theory to specific language pairs and text types), (c) general translation theory (model, translatability, strategies and technique, text linguistics, equivalence).

Principally, the learning of translation is to prepare or train the students to be a professional translator; therefore, this subject must provide some related skill to help students to be a good translator. Recent studies propose that to create a good translation, one must have a good translation competence. However, Translation Studies have not yet given a generally accepted definition and model of what translation competence itself is (Orozco & Albir, 2002). The problems related to the definition start with denomination of the theories given. There are various terms used by translation experts, such as, *transfer competence* (Nord, 1991: 161), *translational competence* (Toury; Hansen; Chesterman in Orozco & Albir, 2002), *translator competence* (Király in Orozco & Albir, 2002), *translation performance* (Wills in Orozco & Albir (2002), *translation ability* (Lowe, 1987: 57; Pym, 1993: 26; Stansfield, Scott & Kenyon in Orozco & Albirm 2002) and even *translation skill* (Lowe in Orozco & Albirm 2002). It shows that those experts use different terms for such similar concept. A comprehensive research related to the ability to produce a good translation is conducted by PACTE, a group translation studies consists of some prominent experts in translation.

Moreover, Bell (1991: 43) says that translation competence is the knowledge and skills that the translator must possess in order to carry out a translation. It indicates that translation competence related to any knowledge and skills required to do and produce a good translation. Then, in more comprehensive definition PACTE (2000) defines translation competence as “the underlying system of knowledge and skills needed to be able to translate.” This definition is completed with four affirmations, namely that (i) translation competence is actualized in different ways in different situations, (ii) it consists basically of operative knowledge, (iii) strategies play a basic role in translation competence and (iv) as in any kind of expert knowledge, most translation competence processes are automatic (2000).

This competence is actualized in different ways in different situations. This concept is borrowed from the idea of linguistic competence. Moreover, PACTE (2000) states that if translation competence is made up of inter-related sub-competencies, then its acquisition is a dynamic process of building new knowledge on the basis of the old. The development of translation competence could be defined as the stage when the sub-competencies have been acquired, at least partially, but they do not interact with each other. Moreover, Pacte (2000) indicates that in order to acquire translation competence, the student in translation training should also develop a learning competence that includes the specific learning strategies that make this and any learning process possible.

Model of translation competence was firstly presented by PACTE in 1998 and it was remodeled in 2000. In this model, TC is considered to be the underlying knowledge system needed to translate. It has four distinctive characteristics, they are (1) it is expert knowledge and not possessed by all bilinguals; (2) it is basically procedural knowledge (and not declarative); (3) it is made up of various interrelated sub-competencies; (4) the strategic

component is very important, as it is in all procedural knowledge. The TC model proposed is made up of 5 sub-competencies and psycho-physiological components (PACTE 2003).

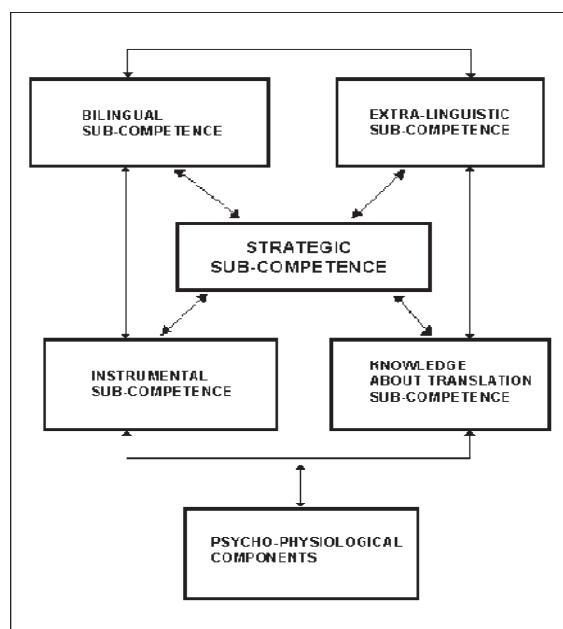


Figure 1: Translation Competence (Pacte, 2000)

Pacte group (2005) explains that bilingual sub-competence is made up of pragmatic, socio-linguistic, textual and lexical-grammatical knowledge in each language. The extra-linguistic sub-competence is made up of encyclopaedic, thematic and bicultural knowledge. The translation knowledge sub-competence is knowledge of the principles that guide translation (processes, methods and procedures, etc.) and the profession (types of translation briefs, users, etc.). The instrumental sub-competence is made up of knowledge related to the use of documentation sources and information technologies applied to translation. The strategic sub-competence is the most important, as it is responsible for solving problems and the efficiency of the process. It intervenes by planning the process in relation to the translation project, evaluating the process and partial results obtained, activating the different sub-competencies and compensating for deficiencies, identifying translation problems and applying procedures to solve them. The psycho-physiological components are cognitive and behavioural (memory, attention span, perseverance, critical mind, etc.) and psychomotor mechanisms. The relation among sub-competence can be seen in picture 1

Then, related to the way of teaching and learning of translation subject, Orozco & Albir (2002) say that there are three dependent variables that might be involved. They are (i) translation **problems**, (ii) translation **errors** and (iii) **general notions** about translation. According to Nord (1991: 151), a translation problem is “*an objective problem which every translator (...) has to solve during a particular translation task.*” This quotation indicates that, all translation problems at least have three characteristics that make them reliable indicators of progress in acquiring translation competence: a translation problem may appear at any stage of the translation process; it is observable, and in solving translation problems, subjects certainly show their ability to use translation strategies, which is a relevant element of translation competence.

Moreover, a translation error is usually a translation problem that has not been solved or has not been appropriately solved (Nord 1996: 96-100). Again, this element can be observed, it can take place at any stage of the translation process and it is also an indicator of a subject’s use of translation strategies and thus of the subject’s translation competence. Translation errors

therefore present the same three qualities as translation problems. Finally, general knowledge of translation or notions of translation, determine the students' whole process of translation, since, depending on the students' ideas about translation, they will have a particular purpose for a particular translation task, and this will determine their solution of translation problems throughout the process of translation.

Meanwhile, Baker (1992) gives more specific strategy training. The strategy is focused on the following three translation problems (Baker 1992): (1) No lexical correspondence at word level between the source text and the target text, (2) No lexical correspondence above word level: collocations, idioms and fixed expressions (3) Textual equivalence: coping with cohesion and coherence.

Then, the strategies to solve the problem in translation are varying. Baker (1992: 26-42) identifies there are at least 6 strategies used by professional translators. They are: (1) translating by using more general word, (2) translating by more neutral word, (3) translating by cultural substitution, (4) translating by a loan word/loan word plus explanation, (5) translating by paraphrase using related words, (6) translating by paraphrase using unrelated words, (7) translating by omission, (8) translating by illustration.

In more comprehensive details, Molina & Albir (2002) propose 18 techniques (strategy that has been applied in the translation product) which usually used by the translators. These techniques are also clarification of previous classification of strategy, procedure, and technique of translation. The translation techniques are: (1) adaptation, (2) amplification, (3) borrowing, (4) calque, (5) compensation, (6) description, (7) discursive creation, (8) established equivalent, (9) generalization, (10) linguistic amplification, (11) linguistic compression, (12) literal translation, (13) modulation, (14) particularization, (15) reduction, (16) substitution, (17) transposition, and (18) variation (see Molina & Albir, 2002: 509-511).

C. Discussion

The translation competence is, actually, a combination of various skills that have been learned by the students in English Department. As stated by Pacte group (2005) the first sub-competence that must be owned is bilingual sub-competence which is made up of pragmatic, socio-linguistic, textual and lexical-grammatical knowledge in each language. This sub-competence is the performance of their previous subjects in English Department. If they do not have good bilingual which is supported by the mastery of English language skills, such as, reading, writing, and also language component (grammar, vocabulary) and linguistic competence, they will not have a good translating ability.

Moreover, extra-linguistic sub-competence is made up of encyclopaedic, thematic and bicultural knowledge (Pacte, 2005). This sub-competence is built in Cross Cultural Understanding and their general knowledge about the text being translated. Sometimes, students have lack of experience in the area of being translated. It will drive them stress and stuck during the process of translation. It mostly happens in engineering, medical, or technological text. This competence might be built by reading the information of the text in such similar material in their first language.

Moreover, Pacte (2005) states that translation knowledge sub-competence is knowledge of the principles that guide translation (processes, methods and procedures, etc.) and the profession (types of translation briefs, users, etc.). To support this knowledge, of course, translation subject must be supported by translation theory. In some institutions, this material is given in special meeting or credit. Providing students with a comprehensive information about concept of translation. It will build their awareness that translation is not a simple activity of changing words.

Then, the next sub competence of translation is instrumental sub-competence which is made up of knowledge related to the use of documentation sources and information technologies applied to translation (Pacte, 2005). It is related to the use documents, facilities, and ICT to support the translation process. The purpose is to give more information the translator about the text being translated.

Next, Pacte (2005) says that strategic sub-competence is the most important, as it is responsible for solving problems and the efficiency of the process. It intervenes by planning the process in relation to the translation project, evaluating the process and partial results obtained, activating the different sub-competencies and compensating for deficiencies, identifying translation problems and applying procedures to solve them. Of course, this strategic sub-competence can be achieved if the students have been supported with the knowledge of translation and translation strategy to solve the problems. The awareness of cultural differences will also influence the translator in strategic sub-competence as they need it to build translators' awareness in detecting problems that might come from cultural differences.

Finally, psycho-physiological components consists of cognitive and behavioral (memory, attention span, perseverance, critical mind, etc.) and psychomotor mechanisms (PACTE, 2005). This sub-competence related to the memory, time limit to pay attention, critical mind of the translators to anticipate the text being translated. It is also related to psychomotor to write or type the translation efficiently.

The translation competence should be built to develop students ability to produce a good analysis, aware the translation problem, and try to solve it. Should they decide to solve it, it is because they want the target readers to understand or receive the target text in a certain way, and this is only possible if they have a particular concept of translation in the back of their minds. It is the task of the lecturer to guide them and help the students if they cannot detect the problem to get the equivalent message both in source and target language. If this concept did not exist, then there would not be an objective to achieve. In this case, errors (and/or unsolved problems) can be caused by this "lack of knowledge" of general translation concepts.

Sub-competence of knowledge of translation plays an important role to build students' awareness about what they should do and be responsible in the process of translation. The topics for the translation theory to build their awareness can be, for instance: definition of translation, processes of translation, methods and procedures of translation, equivalence, untranslatability, concept of meaning etc., and the profession (types of translation briefs, users, etc.). In the writer's class this theory is given as part of the meeting since the students are not given special subject about translation theory. Therefore, in Translation subject, the activity will be in form of presentation about the theory and then translating activity as the practice to build their psychomotor domain. Providing alternative solution to solve the problem and activity that stimulate the students to detect the problem will build students' translation competence.

Moreover, based on the result of questionnaire given to the students, it is also discovered that untranslatability and culture, and translation technique to solve the translation problem are considered as the most important information for the students that must be included in the material of translation theory. Next, the students also say that this theory make them realize that there are many translation problems that should be considered and solved in translation activity. Then, there are also some strategies, techniques, method, to solve those translation problems. Based on that condition, it can be concluded that theory of translation is important to build students' translation competence related to sub-competence translation knowledge.

In order to help the students to choose the best solution to solve the problem of untranslatability, they may choose the strategy that suitable to the context and type of text. Strategy is a kind of a way to solve the translation problem while the translator conducts the translation process. The strategy of the translator can be seen in his translation in form of translation technique (strategy implemented in the product of translation). There are at least 18 techniques that might be chosen by the students to solve the translation problems (Molina Albir, 2002; Ardi, 2010a; 2010b), here some of the technique which can be implemented to (written) translation:

1. **Adaptation;** This technique replaces the cultural element of the source text (ST) with one of the element in the target language which is similar (Molina & Albir, 2002). The purpose

of this technique is to have the same response of the reader although the literal meaning might not be the same. For example in the translation of Grave's book into Indonesia, the word change of *settlement* for *luhak* in Minangkabau. Although *settlement* can be translated into "pemukiman" but in Minangkabau context, it would be described well into "luhak" since it brings historical and cultural value of the situation described in the text (Ardi, 2010a; 2010b).

2. **Amplification;** Amplification is the technique of introducing the details that are not formulated in the ST: information, explicative paraphrasing, e.g., when translating from Arabic (to Spanish) to add *the Muslim month of fasting* to the noun *Ramadan* (Molina & Albir, 2002). The implementation of this technique can be put into text directly, such as, whose occupation is being given is the "father" or the "mamak" is amplified into *yang dinyatakan sebagai kepala keluarga itu adalah "ayah" atau "mamak"* the bold type expression is actually not mentioned in the ST but it was amplified to give a clear information. The amplification can also be implemented in brackets, square brackets, and foot note (Ardi, 2010a; 2010b). This technique is effective to avoid ambiguity in the target text.
3. **Addition;** Molina & Albir (2002) said this technique is, actually, a kind of amplification. However, we need to differentiate between amplifying implicit information into explicit and adding information that is not available in the source text even implicitly. Therefore, the information is totally given by the translators. In my opinion, this technique should be differentiated in the translation studies. Amplification makes implicit information become explicit, meanwhile addition is totally new information given by the translator to enrich the target text. Of course the effect of this addition will be a new 'thing' that should be discussed. This technique is similar with 'addition' given by Delisle, but not the 'addition' defined by Nida (Ardi, 2010a; 2010b).

Here the example of addition in one of translation text: ST: One was the nephew of a penghulu (his son in turn became a trained economist and was governor of West Sumatra between 1966 and 1978). This text is translated into the following text and followed by a footnote that is an addition of information to enrich reader's knowledge. TT: Satu orang diantara mereka adalah kemenakan seorang penghulu (anak itu itu kemudian malah menjadi ekonom yang terpelajar dan pernah menjadi Gubernur Sumatera Barat antara tahun 1966-1978).^{9*}

^{9*}) Tokoh yang dimaksud ialah Harun Zain, putra St. Mohammad Zain, seorang tokoh Minangkabau ahli bahasa Melayu (Indonesia) terkemuka asal Pariaman, penerjemah).

In example above, the translator also stated that the information is pure given by translator by marking it 'penerjemah'. However, sometimes the translator does not mark it.

4. **Implication;** Implication is a technique that makes stated information (explicit) in the ST become implicit therefore no message is gone. Molina and Albir (2002:10-11) call this technique as reduction technique which is the opposite of amplification. However, if we see the phenomenon in the translation, the implementation of this technique would be more appropriate if the technique is referred to as implication (Ardi, 2010a; 2010b). This is done to avoid redundancies (Newmark, 1988; Baker, 1992) because the components have been implied in the target text. ST: "He thus denied admission to pupils from Benkulen, Lampung, Palembang, and [...]" and it is translated into TT: "Karena itu dia menolak murid-murid dari Bengkulu, Lampung, Palembang dan [...]". In the example, the word "*admission*" is reduced. The phrase "dia menolak" has implied the thing refused is "*admission*" of students from other regions. Based on the example, the message is not lost because it means the message has been delivered. In principle, this technique does not remove information from ST.
5. **Omission;** Omission is seen whenever no translation of the message in the source text implied in the translation even in another translation unit. This technique is actually in accordance with the omission technique introduced by Delisle (in Molina and Albir, 2002), but the technique is different from reduction techniques defined by Molina and Albir

- (2002). Reduction associated with the disappearance of message on TT. Therefore, this technique needs to be distinguished because the application and its purpose is different (Ardi, 2010a; 2010b). For example, ST: [...] the coffee cultivation system directly affected the hill villages more than plains. TT: [...] sistem penanaman kopi lebih memengaruhi secara langsung nagari-nagari di daerah dataran rendah. From the example, it can be seen that some message in ST is missing.
6. **Description;** This technique replace a term or expression with a description of its form or/and function in the ST message to make it clear in the target text (Molina & Albir, 2002; Ardi, 2010a; 2010b). For example. ST: male clubhouse is translated into “tempat berkumpul para pemuda”
 7. **Discursive Creation;** This technique is implemented by finding a temporary equivalence that is totally unpredictable out of context, e.g., the Spanish translation of the film *Rumble fish* as *La ley de la calle*. (Molina & Albir, 2002). This technique is usually applied in translating the title.
 8. **Established Equivalence;** This technique is also known as *recognized translation/accepted standard translation* (Newmark, 1988) or “*terjemahan resmi*” (Hoed, 2006; Suryawinata & Hariyanto, 2003). The implementation is by using common term which has been stated in the dictionary or it has been used in the society.
 9. **Generalization;** Generalization technique is applied by using a more general or neutral term, e.g., to translate the French *guichet*, *fenêtre* or *devanture*, as *window* in English (Molina & Albir, 2002). Another example is seen in the following text: ST: [...], young boys could no longer sleep in their mother’s house but rather went to the surau at night. TT: para pemuda tak lagi dapat tidur di rumah orang tuanya, tetapi justru tidur ke surau pada malam harinya. In the example, Grave (the author), used the phrase “*mother’s house*” however, it was changed into a neutral or more general term of ‘parent’ that is “rumah orang tuanya” (Ardi, 2010a; 2010b).
 10. **Calque;** Literal translation of a foreign word or phrase; it can be lexical or structural, e.g., the English translation *Normal School* for the French *École normale*. This corresponds to SCFA’s acceptance (Molina & Albir, 2002).
 11. **Literal Translation;** Literal translation is to translate a word or an expression word for word e.g., *They are as like as two peas* as *Se parecen como dos guisante*, or, *She is reading* as *Ella está leyendo* (Molina & Albir, 2002) .
 12. **Modulation;** This technique is implemented by changing the point of view, focus or cognitive category in relation to the ST; it can be lexical or structural. For example, ST: [...], the coastal districts often present only a dim reflection of the highland adat style. This text is translated into: TT: [...], nagari-nagari di kawasan pantai ini seringkali hanya mencerminkan sosok yang kabur dari gaya hidup adat Minangkabau di pedalaman.
 13. **Borrowing;** Borrowing technique is implemented by taking a word or expression straight from another language. It can be pure (without any change), e.g., to use the English word *lobby* in a Spanish text, or it can be naturalized (to fit the spelling rules in the TL). Naturalized borrowing can be seen in the example of translating law term “*permanent vassalage*” become “vazal yang setia”. Moreover, pure borrowing is seen in this example: TT: [...] they were usually forced to accept the fait accompli though [...]. this text is translated into: TT: [...] mereka biasanya dipaksa menerima fait accompli, walaupun [...] (Ardi, 2010a; 2010b).
 14. **Particularization;** This technique is applied by using a more precise or concrete term in the translated text (Molina & Albir, 2002). For example: TT: working in gold is translated into “mendulang emas”.
 15. **Transposition;** Transposition is implemented by changing a grammatical category (Molina & Albir, 2002). For example, ST: the Dutch honor the traditional lines of chieftaincy [...] is translated into “penghormatan Belanda kepada garis keturunan bangsawan [...]”.
 16. **Correction;** It is different from amplification which has the purpose to explain the the ambiguos information in the text, meanwhile correction is conducted to correct or clarify a

wrong information in the ST. It may only happen in translating scientific text. For example, it can be seen in this translation ST: The nearby village Koto Tuo, reputedly an historic offshoot of Kota Gedang and hence subordinate to it, became a Paderi center fairly early. TT: Nagari tetangga Koto Gadang, yaitu Koto Tuo, dikenal sebagai bagian dari Koto Gadang dan menjadi pusat gerakan kaum Paderi yang mula-mula.^{8*)}. Then, this translation is followed by a footnote below:

^{8*)} Graves, penulis buku ini, keliru menyebut Nagari Koto Tuo dekat Koto Gadang sebagai pusat gerakan Paderi yang mula-mula. Dalam sejarah Minangkabau, pusat Paderi yang mula-mula sebetulnya berada di Koto Tuo, Ampek Angkek, dekat Candung. Kedua nagari itu memiliki nama yang sama dan sama-sama berada di daerah Agam (catatan penerjemah).

To build the translation competence, the process theory of translation can be firstly presented by the lecturer. Then, in the next meeting, ask the group of students to make a presentation about the topics given by the lecturer. This will be useful. The lecturer needs to provide such example or implementation of theory given, therefore, the theory will be more practical that can be used by the students in translation process. As the students really need the material about how to solve untranslatable thing in the ST, it might be useful to put the techniques identified above as long as they do not change the message of the ST.

After presenting the theory, follow the learning process by practicing. Give a text to be translated. It will be better if the text has been given a week before. Then, discuss the students' translation in the classroom. Vary the activity, in pair, group, and classical. Encourage students to detect any problem. All the translation problems which came up during the course are discussed. Possible solution and strategies to solve the problems are analyzed by discussing the effect toward translation quality. Different solutions are accepted for the same problematic segment if they are considered to be adequate. After peer and peer/teacher discussion and, if necessary, consultation with a field specialist can be done. By doing so, it will help students to open their mind and learning to listen other's ideas.

Finally, to train students' awareness in detecting the translation problems might be given by including the texts that have some sources of untranslatability term. These terms might come from cultural terms as stated by Newmark (1988), such as, ecology, material culture (artefact), social culture (work and leisure), organization –customs, activities procedure, concept), and gesture and habits. By including this terms in students translation exercise will give more chance to the students how to solve some translation problems effectively.

D. Conclusion

Based on discussion, it can be concluded that in the translation subject, the activity of learning should provide theory of translation to the students. This theory will support the students to build their translation competence especially the sub-competence of knowledge of translation and strategic sub-competence. This translation competence is needed to produce a good translation. It can be done by giving special subject on translation theory in the curriculum, or it may be given inclusively in the translation practice. Moreover, problem-based translation model will build students' awareness on how to solve the problem of untranslatability. By finding specific and suitable strategy will give a better technique in solving the translation problem. Moreover, by using translation seminar might create sensitivity and ability in transferring the message appropriately into the target language.

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