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COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH
TO TRANSLATION COURSE DESIGN: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS
Yugianingrum

Abstract
This paper focuses on the problems and solutions in designing a translation course, with competency-based approach, for post-graduate students. It starts with some background information about the idea, then describes the tentative translation course design and explains the objective of using competency-based approach in the design. The discussion of the expected advantages and disadvantages of the idea is put forward before the identification of the problems and the solutions. The problems deal largely with the learning orientation and the assessment. It is argued that learning to translate, despite the competency-based approach it employs, has to do with text production. Therefore, the translation course should focus on both the product (text) and the process (production). Accordingly, the design should integrate product and process oriented learning as well as criterion-referenced tests and portfolios. At the end of the paper, the conclusion summarizes what has been discussed.

Key Words: competency-based approach, translation course design, learning orientation, assessment

INTRODUCTION
Competition-based approach
In language teaching, “approach” has been defined as “different theories about the nature of language and how languages are learned” (Richards, et al., 1989: 15). Similarly, in translation teaching, “approach” refers to different theories about the nature of translation and how translation is learned. The term “approach” in translation teaching at least has been used by Don Kiraly (qtd. in Rosas, 200: 3) when her “Social Constructivist Approach to Translator Education” is discussed, by Daniel Gile (1995: 10) when he writes about “the process-oriented approach in Interpreting/Translation training”, and by Christiane Nord (in Dollerup and Lindegaard, eds., 1994: 65) when she describes “the functional approach in translation teaching”. In this paper, the term “competency-based approach” means an approach in translation teaching which focuses on developing translation competence as something far more complex than simply improving performance.

Definition of translation
Christina Shaffner (1998, qtd. in Karoubi, no date) states that “translation is conceived primarily as a process of intercultural communication, whose end product is a text which is capable of functioning appropriately in specific situations and context of use”. This definition has emphasized “function” and is similar to the definition of translation by Christiane Nord (1999: 1): “Translating means producing a functional text in a language culture T (=target text) that is needed for specific communicative purposes by processing the information given in a previous text produced in a different language culture S (=source text)”. Both definitions pay attention to “process” and “product” and are in line with what Arnt Lykke Jakobsen (in Dollerup and Lindegaard, eds., 1994: 145) says: “Translation is a type of text production”, which explains that translation should be concerned about both product (text) and process (activity/production).

Traditional translation teaching
Traditionally, translation teaching in Indonesia is regarded as merely a component of foreign language training. The translation syllabus is designed chiefly to enhance students’ foreign language proficiency. Moreover, translation teaching tends to be based on translation assignments which are assessed by comparing them with the teacher’s version of correct translation. This practice is mentioned by Arnt Lykke Jakobsen (in Dollerup and Lindegaard, eds.,1994: 143). She reports that she used to do the following: (1) give students a source text; (2) instruct them to go home and translate it for next week; and (3) collect the work the week after, correct it and return the corrected work after a week’s time. As the traditional methods of translation teaching are only meant to support foreign language training, it is obvious that the methods are not appropriate for preparing students/participants to be professional translators.
Changes in education
However, great changes have taken place in education philosophy, which unavoidably affect translation teaching. The principles of translation have shifted from prescriptive to descriptive (Bernadini, 2000: parag. 1), and from “cottage industry” to “global industry” (Rogers and Korkas, no date: parag. 2). Students are encouraged to be autonomous and independent, classes are more learner-centered, and collaborative learning, scaffolding, critical thinking and professional competence become pedagogical trends. These ideas are supported by Kiraly (qtd. in Translation Services USA, no date: 6, and qtd. in Rosas, 2004: 2), who also argues that “translation classes should be made similar to real translation workshops in order for the students to feel the real situation of the workplace”.

Based on the discussion above, it can be said that the traditional teaching of translation in Indonesia seems to be inadequate. Translation teaching now should be able to respond to the demands of globalization of communication and the internationalization of business. To overcome the problem, a new translation course which aims not only to enhance students’ language proficiency but necessarily also to provide them with translation competencies should be designed.

TRANSLATION COURSE DESIGN

Why competency-based approach?
The course design presented in this paper aims to match the changes in the principles of translation and translation teaching. The first notion in designing the course is that it should employ a competency-based approach because the course aims at preparing students or participants to be professional translator. In other words, a competency-based approach cannot be separated from professionalism. This is supported by the following quotations:

In any professional environment, performance is judged according to certain clearly defined objectives and needs, which demand a specific type of competence—the translation environment should be no exception.

Aims and objectives, as well as program structure and content, should be designed in such a way that the demands of the profession are fully met.

(Schaffner and Adab, eds., 2000: xiv)

In order to design a translation course that applies a competency-based approach, therefore, the concept of translation competence needs to be defined first. This will assist in determining what areas need to be included in the course.

What is translation competence?
The shortest definition of translation competence is “the underlying knowledge and skills needed to be able to translate” (PACTE Group, 2000, qtd. in Translation Services USA, no date: 2). Further, according to Albrecht Neubert (in Schaffner and Adab, eds., 2000: ix), translation competence has five sub-competences or parameters: “language competence, textual competence, subject competence, cultural competence, and transfer competence”.

However, there are other definitions of translation competence. Tinsley Jr.’s definition (qtd. in Translation Services USA, no date: 3) includes “writing ability in target language (TL), common sense/intelligence, subject matter, tools, research skills, and business acumen”. Liu Miqing (qtd. in Translation Services USA, no date: 3) states that translation competence comprises “linguistic analysis and manipulation competence, cultural interpretation and representation competence, aesthetic sensitivity and representation competence, code switching free from interference, and logical analysis and editing competence”.

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Unlike the above authors, Jean Vienne (in Schaffner and Adab, eds., 2000) and also Pym (2003: 7) argue that there are only two translation competencies. Vienne’s are (1) “the ability to analyze a variety of translation situations to produce a specification of the strategy to be pursued to achieve the desired outcome”, and (2) “the ability to decide on a strategy for resource research adapted to translation situation, as well as the ability to evaluate and exploit the resources necessary to carry out the assignment received”. Pym’s, on the other hand, include (1) “the ability to generate a series of more than one viable target text (TT1, TT2, ...TTn) for a pertinent source text (ST)” and (2) “the ability to select only one viable TT from this series, quickly and with justified confidence”.

From all the definitions above, it seems that Pym’s translation competencies have covered most of the skills or competencies mentioned by the other authors, with the exception of Tinsley Jr.’s business acumen, which refers to money making. It is also interesting to note that in the same article Pym intentionally quotes Robinson’s (1997) description of translation competencies, which leads to some “real-world necessities”, such as good typing speeds and Internet discussion groups. Pym considers these things to be peripheral.

What is the course like?
This is a post-graduate translation course which is designed within the context of English education and translation training in Indonesia. Intentionally, the course is for post-graduate students because to produce professional standard translations the participants should be at least proficient in English. Anderman (1998, qtd. in Schaffner and Adab, eds., 2000: 144) compares teaching translation competence to undergraduate students with “trying to make them run before they can walk”. Graduates from non-English departments who are interested in this field will also be accepted provided their English proficiency meets the course prerequisite.

The curriculum focuses on written translation and the emphasis is on providing participants with knowledge about translation process and strategies, theories, skills and experience to become professional translators. In addition, after passing all the examinations, the participants will have to work as interns for two months at a professional translator’s office. The following points are presented to describe the curriculum.

(1) Purpose of the course
The course aims at preparing participants to become translators who after an internship in the field will be ready to work professionally.

(2) Duration of the course
The course, which contains 9 subjects, is designed for two semesters, each consists of sixteen-week classes. A participant graduates after passing all the 9 subjects and working for two months as an intern for a professional translator (4 credits).

(3) The criteria for the selection of students
Students or participants qualify for admission to the course in two ways, depending on their education background: (a) an S1 degree from an English department, or (b) an equivalent degree in another discipline with TOEFL score=> 500 or IELTS score=>6. In all cases, an interview on the reasons for applying for the course and an entrance test on translation competence are required.

(4) The subjects offered
There are 9 subjects offered to provide participants with effective skills, practical knowledge about translation process and strategies, theories and experience to produce professional standard translations of different text types and genres.

Description of the subjects
In semester 1, there are five subjects, each has four credits. Participants have to pass all the subjects in semester 1 before they take the subjects in semester 2. For those who fail in the examinations, a short term is offered to improve their scores.
Semester 1
Language Consolidation (4 credits)
This subject aims at providing participants with practical grammatical knowledge as well as direct applications in various situations requiring different language skills, particularly reading and writing. The main emphasis of this subject is to improve the participants' accuracy and fluency in using English.

Linguistics for Translators (4 credits)
This subject is to provide participants with theories of linguistics particularly semantics, pragmatics, register analysis and intertextuality. The focus is to enable participants to use the theories to solve problems in translation.

Cross-cultural Understanding (4 credits)
The aim of this subject is to provide participants with materials containing information about English/American culture as well as a contrastive analysis of norms and values in the source and target cultures.

Practice of Translation: (a) English-Indonesian (4 credits)
(b) Indonesian-English (4 credits)
These subjects aim at providing participants with practices on general translation from English into Indonesian and vice versa. The focus is to enable participants to produce professional standard translations of general texts, including texts from newspapers, magazines, popular books, etc.

Semester 2
Business Translation (4 credits)
This subject aims at providing participants with practice on business translation from English into Indonesian and vice versa. The focus is to enable participants to produce professional standard translations of authentic business texts.

Technical Translation (4 credits)
This subject aims at providing participants with practices on technical translation from English into Indonesian and vice versa. The focus is to enable participants to produce professional standard translations of authentic technical texts.

Scientific Translation (4 credits)
This subject aims at providing participants with practices on scientific translation from English into Indonesian and vice versa. The focus is to enable participants to produce professional standard translations of authentic scientific texts.

Literary Translation (4 credits)
This subject aims at providing participants with practices on literary translation from English into Indonesian and vice versa. The focus is to enable participants to produce professional standard translations of authentic literary texts, which include texts of the canon as well as pop literature.

Internship (4 credits)
As has been mentioned previously, after passing all the examinations a participant has to work as an intern for a professional translator for two months.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES
It is argued that "knowledge acquisition does not guarantee the successful application of that same knowledge" (Everwijn, et al., 1993: 1). Yet, in the same article, it is also said that "the ultimate goal of education should be to teach students to learn to apply knowledge". Therefore, education should be able to provide knowledge and skills that students can apply in different contexts. In translation education, a competency-based approach to translation course design similar to what has been
discussed in this paper could be an answer to the challenge. Some advantages of using this approach are:

1. It can bridge the gap between theory and practice so that the course is able to prepare the participants to be professionals.
2. The subjects taught in the course with this approach reflect the competencies needed in authentic translation business; accordingly, the graduates will be able to fulfill the market demand.
3. Graduates have some experience of working in authentic translation business, which will enable them to start their own professional business.
4. The course can stimulate the development of translation industries so that more information in English can be translated into Indonesian and more Indonesian texts can be translated into English, which is good for education and for cross-cultural understanding.

At the same time, a competency-based approach to translation course design may be a disadvantage if the economic situation of our country does not support translation industries. If this is the case, the professional translators produced by the course will only add to the unemployed, and the time, energy, and money that have been spent in the course will be in vain.

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS
A competency-based translation course must require considerable funding. Therefore, the basic problem in applying competency-based approach to translation course design is finance. Indeed, this kind of course needs to finance necessary things like teaching materials and equipment, competent teachers, and—sooner or later—technology. This problem can only be solved if the institution has support from industries, the government, NGOs and international organizations. It is hoped that they will be willing to be involved in providing such essential requirements.

However, when funding is no longer a problem, social and education issues may be problems. There is still a question whether in Indonesia people with bachelor degrees are motivated to pay for the costly course if the certification of professional translators is not respected in the industries. Soon, it is hoped, this social problem will disappear when Indonesia’s economic crisis is over and translation industries develop. Meanwhile, up to the present time, education problems that deal largely with the learning orientation and the assessment of translation have been a serious challenge for teachers of translation. The next section will elaborate these problems.

Learning orientation
When a competency-based approach is used in designing a translation course, people will immediately relate the approach to the performance of a professional translator. Deceptively, it seems normal for them to think about implementing the product-oriented learning for the course. In this learning, theoretical work is rarely included. On the contrary, students are given a lot of assignments, the results of which will be discussed and corrected by using the teacher’s version of appropriate translation. The emphasis of the learning activities is on evaluating students’ translations the way the translation industry expects, and not on other things. This is similar to what Roger Chriss (no date: 1-2) states about academic translation training, which—in his opinion—rarely includes any theoretical work and content courses, and pays no attention to the development of students’ writing skills and cultural sensitivity.

Obviously, product-oriented learning cannot provide students with idea development, which is necessary for translation problem solving. The main concern of the learning activities is the final piece of translation, for which student translators are taught prescriptively. This means that (1) they depend on the teacher’s guidance; (2) the learning activities are mainly in the form of doing translation assignments; and (3) the classroom atmosphere is rather oppressive.

Where product-oriented learning focuses on the final piece of translation, process-oriented learning pays more attention to how students do the translation. In other words, the emphasis is on the development of ideas, which leads to problem solving. In the learning activities, stages of translation
process are employed to see how students’ initial idea grows and finally reaches a more appropriate form. Thus, when students are facing translation problems—either similar or not to their previous ones—they will not use merely the old strategies they have learned before, but they will refine the strategies to achieve a better product of translation. This is similar to the ideas of Zamel (1982, qtd. in Taghvaipour, 1988: 3) about the process-based approach to teaching writing.

In DOPLA Module 15 – Translation as a Learning Process in the Internet (no author, no date), translation as a learning process is classified into L2 > L1 translation and L1 > L2 translation. In L2 > L1 translation, some important points of the learning process are listed: (1) “setting, context and audience”; (2) “importance of reading phase”; (3) “reconstruction of meaning”; (4) “translation dossiers”; (5) “annotated translation”; and (6) “correcting translation”. Yet, the learning process in L1 > L2 translation is not the same. First, parallel texts are used as examples. Students will do a contrastive analysis of L1 and L2 by focusing on differences. Then after the L2 text is removed, they will translate the L1 into L2, compare two L2 versions and discuss the difference. The module also suggests that during the learning process, students should work in groups so that they can learn from one another. It should be noted that students do not immediately translate the text given to them but they will have to work through different phases of the process.

Nevertheless, Daniel Gile (in Dollerup and Lindegaard, eds., 1994: 107) criticizes both kinds of learning orientation. On the one hand, he states that the product-oriented approach cannot easily integrate theory into practice in which the teacher’s version of appropriate translation is used to correct the students’ assignments. Moreover, he says, students who do not like to be criticized may reject the teacher’s correction and this is not good for the learning process. Yet, Gile (p.112) also contends that a process-oriented approach “is definitely not a sufficient teaching tool for students whose motivation is weak and for those whose linguistic norms in the target language are poor ...”, and he concludes that “… the approach is very useful in the first part of course, but that product-oriented teaching must follow”.

There is apparently a dilemma concerning these two kinds of learning orientation. If only product-oriented learning is employed in the translation training, the graduates may be skillful in translating certain texts but they will lack theories and creativity needed in their work when translation is regarded not only as a craft, but also a science and an art. Conversely, if only process-oriented learning is chosen for classroom activities, students will lack translation skills that should be learned through doing a large number of assignments with guidance and control.

To address these problems, teachers should integrate product- and process-oriented learning in their translation teaching. In this particular competency-based approach to translation course design, the curriculum is divided into two semesters. In the first semester students learn about theories and strategies for doing translation, and they are taught to pay attention to how they develop their ideas to refine their own strategies for solving the translation problems. Through this way they will learn to apply process-oriented learning to their translation work. Next, in the second semester they will do translation after translation, deal with authentic materials, and apply their skills, theories, as well as refined strategies to produce better and better results. The activities are seen as a combination of process- and product-oriented learning because students should pay attention not only to how a professional translator works, but also to what a professional translator produces.

**Assessment**

Rogers and Korkas (no date: 115-121) present a discussion on a process-oriented approach to translation assessment. They argue that “assessment that is based on the finished translation according to stated criteria such as fitness for purpose” is “not appropriate to the assessment of translation software use”. Some authors agree that it is not appropriate either to the assessment of conventional translation. Chriss (no date: 6), for example, even refuses “graduation exams” when he says, “To deny a student a certificate or diploma based solely on his or her performance on one graduation exam seems unfair and counter productive”. He prefers that the students should undergo “nothing more than the routine testing that comprises a natural part of all formal education”.

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On the other hand, Hasnah Ibrahim (in Dollerup and Lindegaard, 1994: 151-156) writes, "The assessment (that is, differentiation) of product types implies that there are various strategies leading to different acceptable product types: there is a spectrum of possibilities". Thus, it can be concluded that the idea of producing one appropriate translation for different periods of time, different places and purposes should be rejected.

Problems of translation assessment in a competency-based approach to translation course design are not only a matter of approving one appropriate translation version or more, or using routine testing instead of a graduation test to certificate students, but they are also about choosing the types of assessment. Will conventional testing be used to grade the students? Or, are there better ways to certificate the students? Possible answers to the questions are presented in the following paragraphs.

Most people would agree that the subjects offered in semester 1 are necessary to support translation skills. Therefore, before assessing students' translation work, a teacher should first test the students' skills and theoretical background. Theories can be assessed through criterion-referenced testing. This means that "a standard or criterion is defined a priori—before the test is administered—and any candidate reaching that standard is considered to have passed" (Alderson, et al., 1995: 157).

However, students' translation should not be assessed in the same way. Instead, candidates should show their readiness to enter the profession through their portfolios. When discussing the use of portfolios in teacher training colleges, Cristina S. Banfi (2003: 35) quotes Brown and Wolfe-Quintero (1997), who define the teaching portfolio as "a purposeful collection of any aspect of the teacher's work that tells the story of the teacher's efforts, skills, abilities, achievement, and contributions to his/her students, colleagues, institution, academic discipline or community". It is useful to transfer the definition to translation portfolio so that translation portfolio is defined as a purposeful collection of any aspect of the student translator's work that tells the story of the student translator's efforts, skills, abilities, achievement, and contributions to his/her teacher, colleagues, institution, academic discipline or community.

The main aim of using portfolios in assessing students' translation is to integrate and apply the theories and skills students have acquired and developed, and at the same time to guide them to the necessary knowledge and skills that are less familiar. It is expected that students will achieve their most appropriate translation after they prepare certain items for the portfolio. The teacher, according to Banfi (2003: 40), will not give scores to students' work, but will provide students "with extensive feedback on each component of their portfolio, as well as the portfolio as a whole". However, scores will be given to a student's whole portfolio including the final product at the end of the semester.

In summary, the discussion above indicates that students' translation should not be assessed through either a graduation exam or routine testing that reflects prescriptive norms, but through the assessment of work developed over the semester with the support of teacher's scaffolding and feedback on work in progress.

CONCLUSION
This paper has discussed several issues concerning competency-based approach to translation course design. The focus of the discussion has been on the problems and solutions in the application of this approach in the Indonesian setting. Although in the first instance the main problem is funding, and there is also social problem concerning the status of translators in the industries, this paper has discussed the education problems concerning translation learning orientation and assessment.

In the curriculum, the subjects in semester 1 are intended to provide students with skills and knowledge to support students' translation skills. The subjects of translation practice in semester 2 focus on process-oriented learning approach, which encourages students to be autonomous, independent, active, creative and critical, and hence more effective professional translators. Product-
oriented learning is also employed through some assignments, just to make sure that students have acquired skills for translating certain texts.

To grade students, the assessment consists of two kinds. Criterion-referenced testing is used to test the theoretical subjects, while portfolios and final products are evaluated to assess students' translation performance. After grading students by using criterion-referenced testing and portfolios as well as final products assessment, certification is provided only after students have finished their internship at a professional translator’s office.

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