

MTI Students' Competency: Teamwork in Trados-aided Translation Projects

Ling Yang

College of Arts and Sciences

Shaanxi University of Science & Technology, SUST
Xi'an, China

Wenmin Li

College of Arts and Sciences

Shaanxi University of Science & Technology, SUST
Xi'an, China

Jingjing Wang

College of Arts and Sciences

Shaanxi University of Science & Technology, SUST

Abstract—Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI), starting from 2007 with the current total of 246 degree granting units in China, aims to meet the educational objective of advanced, practical and professional talents. As is required, translation internship is the key and the first step for MTI students to get out of “ivory tower”. This paper, based on the competency model in Trados-aided translation projects with the case study of the translation internship of MTI students from Shaanxi University of Science & Technology (SUST), focuses on the comprehensive competency consisting of learning competency, translation competency, cooperation competency, emotion competency, and cognition competency. With BEI analysis, competency-concerning problems are found in the process of the internship and solutions are put forward to help strengthen MTI students’ core competition by developing competency in translation practice. It also concludes how challenging and important it is for MTI students to develop competency in their translation practice guided by the model. Thus, no matter what kind of translation texts they are, well qualified trainees can manage with internalized competency.

Keywords—MTI students; translation internship; off-campus internship; on-campus internship; Trados-aided translation projects; competency model

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Brief introduction to MTI

The year 2006 saw only 3 universities as the first batch of pilots for bachelor degree of translation major in China. Fifteen universities or colleges established the professional degree of MTI after the birth of National MTI Education Supervisory Committee in 2007. Till now, there are altogether 246 universities and colleges with MTI students of 52 thousand in total from 2007, which vary from 2 to 3 years with 38 credits required, one research paper published, and amount of 150,000 words translated for MTI students’ graduation. The objective of MTI is to train professional translators and interpreters with comprehensive development both in physical and mental terms, so that they can meet the need of improving country’s competitiveness amid global economic integration and can contribute to the development in aspects of economy, culture

This paper is financed by research program named Construction of “3F” model: MTI professional Internship (project number MTIJZW201818)

and social progress. Taking their own distinctive features into consideration, universities and colleges establish their own specific training methods for MTI students. MTI in Shaanxi University of Science and Technology (SUST) is a case in point. MTI education in SUST lasts 3 years with the first year as the school year of courses. Professional internship for MTI students in SUST includes two parts, namely on-campus internship (2 months) and off-campus internship (4 months). Apart from MTI students’ thesis, CATTI (China Accreditation Test for Translators and Interpreters) certificate is increasingly getting focused, for it is, to some degree, an advantage as one’s professional qualification. In SUST, CATTI certificate or that of LASCAT (Language Service Competence Assessment and Training) is also a prerequisite for MTI students in SUST.

B. Requirements for translation internship to MTI students in SUST

Being different from the academic MTI students, the professional ones focus more on practice [3]. Therefore, off-campus internship in translation companies is indispensable. Only in this way can MTI students be efficient to improve their translation skills and know about translation industry by their own involvement in translation practice. Besides, with the boom of computer-aided translation, MTI students, well equipped with new translation technologies, can qualify themselves so much in translation projects so as to strengthen their core competitiveness in future translation market.

However, some of so-called translation internship bases cooperating with the universities fail to meet those requirements for MTI students by the National MTI Education Supervisory Committee. Some are not translation companies which are not able to support the MTI students, that is to say, the trainees, with rich source of translation projects, and some others are so small sized translation companies’ lack of professional translation supervisors that they are unable to guide the trainees with credit of quality even offering enough translation tasks to them [1]. Thus, it’s key to standardizing the translation internship bases with an occupied area of 200 square meter and 15 professional translators who are vacancy for each trainee and experienced with more than 5 years professional translating and translation technology. The

translation internship bases are expected to carry out periodic tests for MTI students, providing criteria for both the quality and quantity. What's more, the feedback from clients in project-based translation is another indicator for the quality of translation, while the trainees' ability of cooperation in teamwork-based translation practice matters in evaluating their performance during their internship period.

MTI students from SUST are required to accomplish translation task amounting to 200,000 words in target language in a 6-month experience of translation internship, which includes 4-month off-campus internship in Rui'en Translation Company and 2-month on-campus internship which is considered as the best way for MTI students to finish their translation task by real translation projects. For off-campus internship, Rui'en Translation Company provides each trainee with one or even two experienced professional translators, creating more opportunities for the trainees to experience and learn from the skilled. Accomplishing the translation task with 160,000 words the least in amount during the off-campus internship, they get to know more about translation and enhance their comprehensive competency at teamwork through practice of translation projects. The other experience of 2-month workshop (off-campus) internship on campus is based on online communication. In this period, the trainees receive translation tasks on line and do translation under the online guidance of their professional supervisors. They learn to cooperate on line with their peers and their professional supervisors even they are away from each other doing the assignment, for each of them is an indispensable part of the team. Their competency in translation will be further strengthened.

II. CONSTRUCTION OF COMPETENCY MODEL IN TRANSLATION INTERNSHIP

A. Competency Model

As is defined on line from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, competency means something different from competence. "A competency is a set of defined behaviors that provide a structured guide enabling the identification, evaluation and development of the behaviors in individual employees." while "Competence is the demonstrable characteristics that enable performance of a job, for properly doing the job, the individual requires skills and knowledge essential for the set duties." Competency model to be discussed are based on the process of MTI students' internship. Occupational competency refers to changing from traditional competency in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes to specific self-image, values, traits, and motive dispositions (i.e. relatively enduring characteristics of people) that are found to consistently distinguish outstanding from typical performance in a given job or role [5]. Based on that, the authors discuss competency that a trainee needs in Trados-aided translation internship. As CAT (Computer-aided Translation) tools are more popular, project-based software-aided translation will be the major form for translation companies. Based on the model, some problems are found in translation training of MTI students from SUST and suggestions are further put forward based on their translation internship.

B. Competency model in Trados-aided translation projects

Competency model is constructed in specific way with regard to certain aspects or fields. So is it in Trados-aided translation projects. One of the requirements for professional MTI students' education, as is mentioned, is to practice, which centers on translation in companies involving translation projects such as in translation companies with which many of the MTI's cooperate as a practice base. With ever increasing development of MTI, the project-based translation will be more popular for MTI students in translation internship [4].

There are altogether 29 trainees from 2 sessions of MTI students in SUST. For each, they were divided into three groups according to 3 departments in the company. They were asked to have the same working hours as employees there. And weekly reports were required by the MTI center of SUST, including their summary of translation, detailed description of translation projects and what they felt about their translation task. All reports were demanded to hand in to the MTI Center of SUST.

Rui'en Translation Company adopts Trados-aided translation projects, which closely moves toward the trend of translation development. Project-based and Trados-aided translation epitomizes general translation that consists of preparation of translation, translation and submission which can be hardly accomplished without well-organized teamwork of competent trainees. To achieve profit maximization for the company, labor division is a necessity. In Rui'en Translation Company, the process of the translation project involves several steps conducted by several groups. Mostly the task in the first step is often done by the professional keyboarders. Sometimes translators need to type in PDF documents themselves. Then each supervisor divides the whole translation project into several parts and assigns them to the team members. Occasionally, the translation project will be accomplished under the cooperation of the two or three departments in Rui'en Company if the task is urgent or burdensome. The team members finish their own task, but they must keep the consistency in terminology and style with their peers. Type-set in PDF is asked after the translation task is finished. And the last but not the least step is to deliver the translation project finished to the client. Teamwork and cooperation are needed in labor division of project translation mentioned above. Translation internship must be efficient with competency model set up in Trados-aided translation projects, according to the translation internship of MTI students from SUST, which mainly consists of translation competency, cooperation competency, learning competency, emotion competency and cognition competency.

BEI (Behavioral Event Interview) can be an effective way to evaluate the trainees' competency during their internship in Rui'en. BEI, as its full name tells, is often used for competency assessment through interview. Three or four successful events are adopted to show how competent the interviewees are in their experience. It is now adopted for reflecting characteristics of competency in Trados-based translation projects according to the trainees' weekly reports in their internship in Rui'en, for weekly reports record what they think and do in 4-month off-campus internship. As the major source, it includes self-

introduction, work experience, behavioral event and others' feedback and conclusion. It is the basis and major sources for building the competency model in Trados-aided translation projects by summarizing internship feelings and corresponding suggestions for improvement. By adopting the BEI, the authors make the following pyramid to show the importance of each competency (top to the bottom). Comparative analysis between two sessions of MTI students gives suggestions for improvement, which is further illustrated in findings and solutions. See Fig. 1.

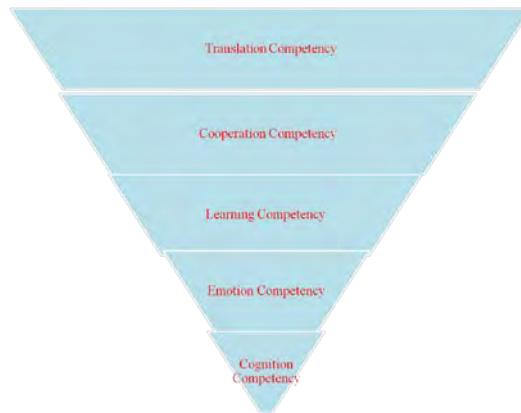


Fig. 1. Competency Model in Trados-aided Translation Projects

III. ELEMENTS OF COMPETENCY MODEL IN TRADOS-AIDED TRANSLATION PROJECTS

There are mainly five elements in the competency model concerning Trados-aided translation projects. They are translation competency, cooperation competency, learning competency, emotion competency and cognition competency. Each element in the competency model is not independent, but interconnected together in Trados-aided translation process. That process begins with translation preparation including converting PDF files into editable word files and then sdxliff files for Trados projects. The trainees should take responsibility to be honest to the original texts in this stage. Some differences between the type-in documents and source texts are caused by carelessness and sometimes original documents themselves are not well-articulated. Supervisors can receive corresponding quantity of sdxliff files owing to good cooperation of the whole group on the bases of translation competency, emotion competency and cognition competency. Internship in Rui'en mainly covers nonliterary translation, and mastery of professional knowledge of science and engineering including terminology is helpful to the exact translation.

Terminology accounts for the most in nonliterary translation. X-bench is an ultimate step for checking the conformity of all terms extracted in one group and sometimes in one project which requires translation technology under cooperation of all the group members. MTI students are required to learn MemoQ and Déjà Vu as well as Trados for all these software are used both in bases and at MTI Center in SUST. So learning competency and cooperation competency are very important to be developed in Trados-aided nonliterary translation in Rui'en Translation Company.

In the following, three major elements of the competency model are discussed in detail. Based on internship practice of the trainees from SUST, these three are found to be the top factors in building the competency model.

A. Translation competency

Translation competency, as the top of the model, talks about delivery of the quality translation work. In the competency model, it holds relatively the largest percent. Though great disparities between literary translation and non-literary translation, translation competency is a base for both kinds.

Translation is the basic task the trainees should complete in each translation job. Different from traditional translation, Trados-based translation improves efficiency for trainees because of terminology management and translation memory. But it also increases the workload of unifying terms, revising and composing. CAT translation requires more for trainees. So there are higher requirements for translation competency of MTI students in the new era. Translation of quality which results from translation competency communicates well. In the process of translation projects, translation competency is therefore the most fundamental and important one in the model.

B. Learning competency

Learning competency ranks the second in the competency model. It covers two parts of learning: professional knowledge and translation technology.

For new interns, mastery of computer-aided translation technologies is a helper for using Trados quickly. Inadequate professional knowledge and lack of new technology are problems that many of the trainees from SUST face. Learning competency is instrumental because trainees will be out without the occupation of ever upgraded translation technology and ignorant without professional knowledge in the new era in which permanent learning is the approach to survival in future translation market.

Generally speaking, many of the trainees from SUST are poor at professional knowledge. All translation documents in Rui'en are from mechanical engineering, IT, government documents, law and medicine. However, nearly 85% MTI students in SUST are from majors of English or translation, so they have no professional background to help judge whether translations are professional. Even for other 15% students, they cannot master professional knowledge in 2 to 3 fields. The fields of source texts are not always the same with their majors, which will be one of our findings. This is also a general problem for all trainees. Thus, more professional knowledge is needed to help them understand the source texts and revise translation better. And knowledge of new technology is also important for the trainees to be efficient in translation practice.

C. Cooperation competency

Cooperation competency is of great importance in teamwork of translation projects and also a good mastery of emotion competency enables trainees a steady performance in cooperation with both the teamwork and the team members.

As is mentioned, cooperation competency lies in the whole process of translation. It ranks the third in the competency model of Trados-aided Translation Projects. Trados-aided translation projects consist of type-in, translation, checking and composing. In this process, cooperation is a must. In Rui'en, there are altogether three departments of translators. One project is often assigned to several groups and the group members are responsible for their own parts. As such, cooperation is seen to be important. As interns in Rui'en Translation Company, MTI students of SUST were all mainly working as translators. Sometimes, they were required to type in files, check punctuation and compose. Besides, urgent documents would be subdivided to members in the same team. They cooperated in unifying terms, sentence patterns and text styles and sometimes checking and composing translation work of other team members. Although work was divided before, temporary changes also required each member to cooperate with others and provide qualified translation to clients on time. Based on sources and feedback from the company, nearly 93% MTI students of SUST behave well in this aspect. They work actively in Trados-aided translation teamwork in order to deliver translation by the deadline.

IV. SOLUTIONS & FINDINGS

In a 4-month off-campus internship, problems are found as follows.

According to the weekly reports, most of the trainees from SUST were not good at cognition competency. Actually they knew little about themselves concerning translation practice, and they knew little about the importance of good cooperation with other group members in translation internship, which cause worries and confusion about translation job. But at the end of the internship, 90% students turn from lower level of cognition to medium level. For example, they can establish good relationship with their supervisors and partners, and they are more willing to communicate and discuss in translation. They can objectively summarize losses and gains in internship and analyze their own shortcomings and merits as well.

SUST has its features in light industry. However, the Rui'en Company mainly covers fields including mechanical engineering, IT, government documents, law and medicine. They don't match concerning the MTI students' research field: light industry and Silk Road culture. So the function of sharing corpus isn't maximized. Thus, suggestions are as follows:

As SUST has set translation technology classes in the second semester of the first year, 95% students can handle with Trados in Rui'en. They use less than one week to master Trados, more specifically, the whole process of Trados-aided translation project. And they finish delivery on time in each cooperation and endeavor to work as a whole, showing good consciousness of team work. Besides, terminology is an overtur of starting translation. It requires students to search on the Internet and make sure that the terms are correct because other team members will use these terms directly, without further searching in order to improve efficiency. In this aspect, responsibility, part of cognition competency, matters the most, and MTI students in SUST are qualified. Thus, such classes shall be continued and strengthened.

As the difference of text types, SUST shall introduce project-based translation into the model of existing workshop. These translation materials must be true. Meanwhile, cooperation between the school and the translation company need to be promoted. Supervisors from both the school and the internship company shall guide their students/trainees with the translation so as to make students know the translation market and learn to combine translation theories with practices.

For the company, it has no division of fields so that students can't choose certain aspect(s) to enhance their translation skills. Students can't always focus on one aspect, like law, to accumulate translation methods. That is an obvious problem according to the feedback of MTI students' internship in SUST. Such classification of translation can help optimize labor division and maximize the profits. Then, the efficiency of group translation can be further improved. And in this process, the competency of every student can be improved in a targeted way.

What's more, it is found that students who have higher level of emotion competency and cognition competency are likely to behave well in other four kinds of competency according to the feedback. In their weekly reports, students who are more active are getting progress at a faster speed. That also means each student has an exclusive competency model. Competency model maximizes the effective distribution of all talents. The goal is to make the model balanced and completed. For example, the following figure shows two groups of trainees. July is a start for internship. According to their weekly reports, the first group (No.1 to 4) showed higher emotion competency. They are likely to gain more progress on translation speed. In contrast, the second group (No.5-8), as described in weekly reports, felt negative in facing non-literary translation works and had slow development in translation speed. See Fig. 2.

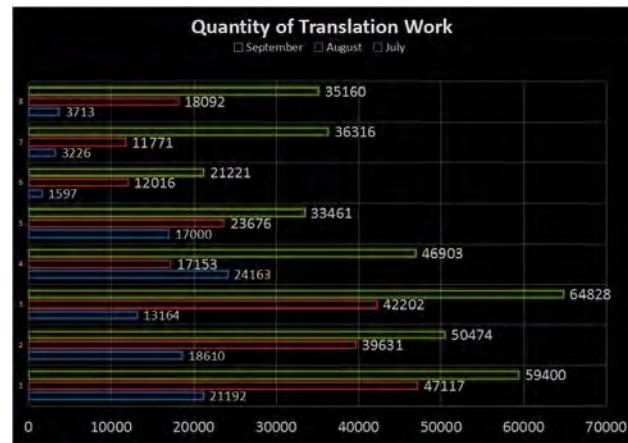


Fig. 2. Comparison of Translation Quantity

Overall, MTI universities and colleges need to set up practical translation training courses. For example, university-enterprise cooperation need to be started as earlier as possible, providing undergraduates and masters chances to learn from translation market in project-based or teamwork-based ways. Then, students have both theoretical and practical guidance from two supervisors [2]. And such cooperation can solve the problem of inconsistency in terminology by the shared data

between the company and the university. In that training process, all competencies can be further improved. Then, internship will continue to strengthen these kinds of competency, thus meeting the exact requirements of cultivating advanced, practical and professional talents.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Each MTI student has the competency model as mentioned above. But proportion of each element in the competency model varies. It is a helper for reasonable labor division and a criterion for evaluating one student and a benchmark for improving oneself. Besides, internship is the key to promoting all parts in the competency model. In doing translation, transforming between two languages constitutes one aspect, like a tip of the iceberg. The authors, based on 4-month off-campus internship, discuss the competency model in Trados-aided translation projects and describe functions of the three main elements in the competency model in detail. As for all problems met in the internship, corresponding solutions are also put forward in the article. More cooperation between the school and translation companies and more feedback from both companies and students can help build a virtuous circle.

It's expected that no matter how difficult the translation work is, translators can handle them with internalized competency and they can improve their competency in all rounds. Close cooperation between company and translators can serve clients qualified translation while friendly cooperation between the company and school can provide opportunities for MTI students. Mutual learning can not only

meet the requirement for training of MTI students but also maximize the profit of the company.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thanks are due to MTI students of 2016 and 2017 from SUST for assistance with the weekly reports, to my supervisor Wenmin Li for her instruction, and to SUST and Rui'en Translation Company for assistance with internship opportunity.

REFERENCES

- [1] Dong Hong xue, Zhang Qing. Thoughts on the Innovative Model of MTI Practice Bases for Engineering-oriented Universities in China, No. 162. Shanghai: Technology Enhanced Foreign Language Education, 2015, pp. 30 - 34 + 46. (In Chinese)
- [2] Liu Dongbiao, Ren Hongchuan. Thoughts about the Education of MTI Students, No. 5. Beijing: Chinese Translators Journal, 2011, pp. 47 - 49. (In Chinese)
- [3] Mu Lei, Wang Weiwei. MA and MTI in Translation Education: Divergent Goals, Differentiated Curricula, No. 2. Beijing: Chinese Translators Journal, 2011, pp. 29 - 32 + 95. (In Chinese)
- [4] Wang Chuanying, Yan Lili. Management of Translation Projects and Translator Training, No. 1. Beijing: Chinese Translators Journal, 2011, pp. 55 - 59. (In Chinese)
- [5] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Competence_\(human_resources\)#McClelland_and_occupational_competency](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Competence_(human_resources)#McClelland_and_occupational_competency)
- [6] Weekly reports of two sessions of MTI students from SUST during the 4-month off-campus internship and 2-month internship in Rui'en Translation Company