The Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) Level of Paraprofessional Translators

Allvian I. F. Susanto[a], Barans Irawan Palangan[b], Afi Normawati[c]

[a]English Education Department, Universitas Nasional Karangturi. allvian.susanto@unkartur.ac.id
[b]English Education Department, Universitas Nasional Karangturi. barans.irawan@unkartur.ac.id
[c]English Education Department, Universitas Tidar. afinormawati@untidar.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study investigated para-professional translators' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) level and its relation to their translations. The research design of this study is descriptive research. Twelve participants are participating in the research. The techniques of data collection employed in this study are questionnaires and tests. The results of the research show that : (1) The average ICC level of the para-professional translators is moderate level with a score of 3.0; (2) The average score of translation works from the participant with the lowest ICC level is 70; (3) the average score of translation works from the participant with the highest ICC level is 84.5; (4) the participant with the highest ICC level has a better score in the aspects of usefulness/ transfer, terminology/ style and idiomatic writing in their translation works.

Keywords: *ICC Level, Paraprofessional translators*

1. Introduction

The activity of translation started a thousand years ago. It started with the work which is so far considered the most ancient work of translation, *Rosetta Stone,* 3000 BC. Now, the translation practice has developed as a professional activity which has already been acknowledged by modern society. In general, it is a profession that involves transferring a text from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL) by the translator. Moreover, It has developed so fast to cover several fields of expertise in humanity, art, society, technology, mathematics, and other fields to give a solution for TL readers who cannot comprehend the text in SL (Saptaningsih, 2018). In translation practice, there must be a set of competencies mastered by translators to perform the translation practice well.

There are five competencies which must be mastered to become a translator. Those competencies are language (linguistics), textual, subject, transfer, and cultural competence (Sehan, 2010). The competence of linguistics relates to the mastery of the structural level (lexical to discourse) and language function both in SL and TL. The second competence is that a translator must know text conventions, genres, and types in SL and TL. Next, a translator must have the subject's competence in translating the text from SL to TL. The subject or discipline area of the text indeed requires a specific competence to translate, for example, the technical terms of a specific field text. The fourth is transfer competence. It deals with the translator's competence in communicating the message from SL to the TL. The last is cultural competence. It deals with the translator's competence in mastering the cultural values in the translated text from SL and TL.

The area of cultural competence is less explored when it comes to the description of the translator's competence in translation. Mostly, the focus is on identifying linguistics (grammar and lexical) competence like the studies conducted (Asiri & Metwally, 2020). Cultural competence is so
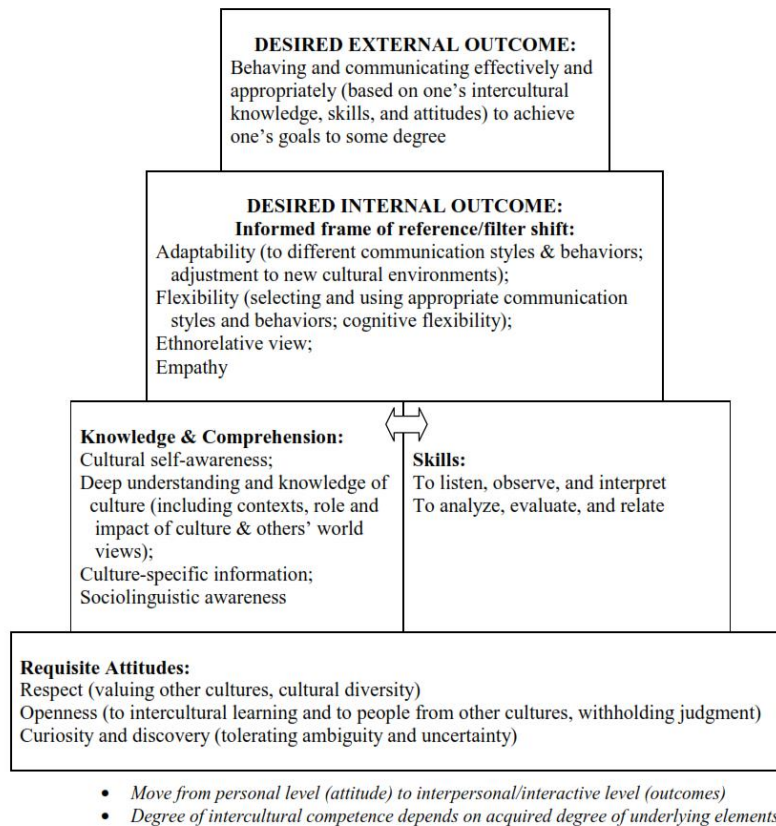
important to achieve the translation equivalence from SL to TL because of the significant contribution of the sociocultural systems, e.g. gender, cultural identity, and ideology, on the translation practice (Snell-Hornby, 1988). It supports the translators with the ability to comprehensively see the cultural values in the expressions in SL and transfer them equivalently to the TL. Moreover, language is a product of culture, and the activity of the SL to TL translation process also includes the transferring activity of cultural and art values with the purpose or target to make the text in TL understandable for the target readers (Cahyaningrum, 2018). In addition, Translation, an interlinguistic and intercultural enterprise, generates quality translation products portraying a suitable linguistic format and cross-cultural component carefully thought out by expert translators (Pollastri, 2021).

On the practical level, some expressions in SL probably have different ways to express in TL and *vice versa* because of the differences in the cultural values of the SL and TL. For example, translating from English to *Bahasa Indonesia*, the expression "*killing two birds with one stone*" into the literal expression "*membunuh dua ekor burung dengan sebuah batu*" will not accurately transfer a similar meaning to the target readers. That is because, in the socio-cultural setting of the TL, it has its idiomatic expression, namely, "*sekali mendayung dua tiga pulau terlampaui*" which equally transfers more accurate information to the target readers. The critical point is that translating idioms and proverbs from SL to TL is challenging for translators where the expressions contain specific cultural contribution; which are always tricky to get equivalent expressions from SL to TL (Masom, 2019).

Due to the significant role of cultural competence for translators, it is essential to get a clear description or profile of the translators' cultural competence through a specific term or a more specific one that can represent one's cultural competence. The search will go to intercultural communicative competence (ICC). It describes a skill utilized to interact in intercultural communication successfully (Bennett, 2008). In other words, the ICC is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately to achieve successful communication in a multicultural participant setting. Concerning the concept of ICC, the translation practice requires the translators' ICC. (Nguyen, 2021) urges that text, as the object of translation activity, both from SL and TL, contain with or are influenced by the socio-cultural norms, beliefs, and values. The presence of language proficiency for translators will not convey comprehensive meaning from SL to TL. They may fail to present top layers of meaning without having ICC.

Moreover, ICC has three main components: attitude, knowledge and skill (Byram, 1997). The ICC attitude component relates to the willingness of someone to respect and be open to other cultural perspectives and values. The second component, ICC knowledge, refers to comprehending other cultures' socio-cultural values and norms. Lastly, ICC skill is organizing intercultural knowledge to effectively and efficiently communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds.

In order to categorize the classification of one's ICC level, (Deardorff, 2004) introduces the pyramid model of four stages or levels of ICC. The model is illustrated in the following picture.

DESIRED EXTERNAL OUTCOME:
Behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately (based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes) to achieve one's goals to some degree

DESIRED INTERNAL OUTCOME:
Informed frame of reference/filter shift:
Adaptability (to different communication styles & behaviors; adjustment to new cultural environments);
Flexibility (selecting and using appropriate communication styles and behaviors; cognitive flexibility);
Ethnorelative view;
Empathy

Knowledge & Comprehension:
Cultural self-awareness;
Deep understanding and knowledge of culture (including contexts, role and impact of culture & others' world views);
Culture-specific information;
Sociolinguistic awareness

Skills:
To listen, observe, and interpret
To analyze, evaluate, and relate

Requisite Attitudes:
Respect (valuing other cultures, cultural diversity)
Openness (to intercultural learning and to people from other cultures, withholding judgment)
Curiosity and discovery (tolerating ambiguity and uncertainty)

- *Move from personal level (attitude) to interpersonal/interactive level (outcomes)*
- *Degree of intercultural competence depends on acquired degree of underlying elements*

Picture. 1. Deardorff's Pyramid model of ICC Level, (2004).

The first level is called the requisite attitudes. It is characterized by one's attitude toward respecting cultural diversity. It will be the first gate for someone to achieve the ICC. Respecting other cultural values and systems will enable them to move to the next or higher stage of ICC. The second stage is when one can own cultural self-awareness, a deep understanding of culture-specific information and sociolinguistics awareness. The last two stages are the desired internal and external outcome levels. One can communicate effectively and appropriately based on what one has mastered in the previous stages to achieve his or her communication goal.

The significant role of the ICC for translators promotes and requires further practical-level study in this area. So far, only a small number of research on this area have been conducted practically. For example, Nguyen (2021) explores the integration of ICC in the translation quality assessment from a functionalist perspective. This study focuses on collecting and comparing previous theories to display the critical role of ICC for translators and the need to combine ICC in translation quality assessment. In addition, Cranmer (2015) researches a project on "Promoting Intercultural Competence in Translators", but only those studies have investigated the practical level to identify the translators' ICC level and their translations' work. Therefore, a study on the practical level to investigate the profile and description of the translators' ICC level concerning their translation quality is needed.

The research questions
This research focuses on identifying the para-professional translator's ICC level and their translation

work about their ICC level. The research questions are mentioned as follows :
   a. How is the para-professional translators' ICC level?
   b. How are the translation works of the para-professional translators with the lowest and highest
       level of ICC?

2. Methodology

This descriptive research aims to investigate the profile of para-professional translators' ICC level and their quality of translation work. This study involves twelve participants of a boot camp translation training program. The participants are not yet professional translators and join the program to improve their translation competence. They are trained in a sixteen-meeting program practising translating texts from English to Bahasa Indonesia and *vice versa*. Their academic backgrounds majorly have degrees in English language teaching and English Literature.

The research instruments used in this research are a questionnaire and a test. The ICC questionnaire was developed by (Mirzaei & Forouzandeh, 2013) based on the ICC assessment model from Deardroff (2004). The instrument assesses three aspects or elements of ICC: ICC knowledge, attitude and skill. There are twenty-two items of the questionnaire, which are categorized into three different ICC elements, namely, ICC attitude (12 items), knowledge (3 items), and skill (7 items). At the end of the training program, the participants filled out the instrument. The questionnaire responses have averagely counted the score to find out the level of ICC. Moreover, the questionnaire identifies every aspect of the participant's ICC level: ICC attitude, knowledge and skill level. Table 1 describes the category or level of the ICC and its elements of the research participants, which will be used to classify the participants' level.

Table 1. The ICC Level Classification

No	Level	Score
1	High Level	$3.1 < M < 4.0$
2	Moderate Level	$2.1 < M < 3.0$
3	Low level	$1.0 < M < 2.0$

The second instrument of the research is the test. It is used to get the participants' translation work quality data. The test is in the form of the mid-term and final evaluation. It requires the participants to translate several texts from English to *Bahasa Indonesia* or vice versa. The scoring rubric is composed formally by the translation training institution which conducted the program. It is used to evaluate the participants' translation work, covering five aspects with five different scoring categories for every aspect. The description of the scoring rubric can be seen in table 2.

Table 2. The Scoring Rubric for Translation work

No	Aspects	Description	Score Category
1	Usefulness/ transfer	This aspect relates to the quality of the translation work, transferring the text's meaning from SL to TL.	The scoring category for every aspect: 1. Minimal category: score (1-4) 2. Deficient category: score (5-8) 3. Acceptable category: score (9-12) 4. Strong category: score (13- 16) 5. Standard category: score (17-20)
2	Terminology/ style	This aspect relates to the appropriateness of style or terminology used in the translation work in translating the test from SL to TL.	
3	Idiomatic writing	This aspect relates to the appropriate usage of words and idioms to translate the text from SL to TL.	
4	Target mechanics	This aspect refers to the appropriate usage of TL mechanics (spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.)	
5	Overall translation work	This aspect refers to the overall measurement of the appropriateness of translation work to be published for a specific professional purpose.	

The participants' final translation score was processed by scoring every aspect of the translation work. The next step of scoring is that the final translation work is counted by accumulating each aspect's score. From this process of the translation work evaluation, the highest and the lowest score of the participants can be identified.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Intercultural communicative competence level of the participants
In this subsection, the research data collected through questionnaires are presented. The first data presented is the ICC level of the para-professional translators. After that, the data on every element or component of the ICC gained from the questionnaire is presented, namely, ICC attitude, knowledge, and skill level.

- The ICC level of the participants
  The ICC questionnaire includes 22 items covering three elements or components of ICC. The score is gained from the average responses score of the questionnaire. The data on the participants' ICC level is presented in table 3.

Table 3. The ICC level of the participants

Participant	Score	Level
1	2.8	Moderate
2	3.0	Moderate
3	3.2	High
4	2.7	Moderate
5	3.1	High
6	2.9	Moderate
7	3.5	High
8	2.3	Moderate
9	2.9	Moderate
10	3.1	High
11	3.0	High
12	3.1	High
Average	3.0	Moderate

The data from the questionnaire show that overall the participants' ICC level is moderate. The average score is 3.0. The highest score of ICC is 3.5, and the lowest is 2.3. There is 0% at the low level, 50% (six participants) at the moderate level, and 50% (six participants) at the high ICC level.

● The ICC attitude aspect level of the participants
Twelve items of the questionnaire are used to measure the participants' attitude element of ICC. The result of the participants' responses is summarized in table 4.

Table 4. The ICC attitude level of the participants

Participant	Score	Level
1	3.0	Moderate
2	3.0	Moderate
3	3.5	High
4	2.6	Moderate
5	3.3	High
6	2.9	Moderate
7	3.5	High
8	2.2	Moderate
9	3.0	Moderate
10	3.3	High
11	3.2	High
12	3.3	High
Average	3.0	Moderate

The data collected from the questionnaire has shown six participants in the moderate-level ICC attitude aspect and six participants in the high-level ICC attitude element. In short, the

percentage of the low level of ICC attitude is 0% for low level, 50% for moderate level, and 50% for high level. The participants' average ICC level score is 3.0 (moderate level).

● The ICC knowledge level of the participants
Three items are composed in the questionnaire to identify the participants' ICC knowledge level. The result of the questionnaire for this ICC element is presented in table 5.

Table 5. The ICC knowledge level of the participants

Participant	Score	Level
1	2.0	Low
2	2.7	Moderate
3	2.7	Moderate
4	3.0	Moderate
5	3.0	Moderate
6	2.7	Moderate
7	2.3	Moderate
8	2.7	Moderate
9	2.7	Moderate
10	2.3	Moderate
11	3.0	Moderate
12	2.3	Moderate
Average	2.6	Moderate

The result of the questionnaire for this element has shown that there is one participant in the low level, 11 participants in the moderate level, and zero in the high level. The percentage of 0,83% low level, 91,7% moderate level, and 0% high level of ICC knowledge. The average level of this element for all participants is 2.6 or in the position of moderate level.

● The ICC skill level of the participants
The participants' ICC skill level is measured using seven questionnaire items. The result of the participants' responses is presented in table 6.

Table 6. The ICC skill level of the participants

Participant	Score	Level
1	2.7	Moderate
2	3.0	Moderate
3	2.9	High
4	2.7	Moderate
5	3.0	High
6	3.0	Moderate
7	3.9	High
8	2.3	Moderate

Participant	Score	Level
9	2.7	Moderate
10	3.1	High
11	2.9	Moderate
12	3.1	High
Average	2.9	Moderate

The results of the participants' responses show that there are zero participants in the low level, seven in the moderate level and five in the high level of ICC skill. The percentage of this element of ICC is 0% for low level, 58,3% for moderate level, and 41.7% for high level. The average score for this element is 2.9, which shows the participants' ICC skill is moderate.

3.2. Participants' translation works evaluation

This study further investigates the participants' translation work to identify the relationship between the ICC participants' level and their translation work. There is two participants' translation work taken as the sample. The first is the translation work from the participant with the lowest ICC score, and the second from the highest.

- The translation work of the participant with the lowest score in the ICC
  Table 6 presents the translation work score from the mid-term and final evaluation that the participant with the lowest ICC level has done in the translation training program. The summary of the data is displayed as follows.

Table. 7. The translation work score of the participant with the lowest score of ICC

Aspects	Mid Term Evaluation	Final Evaluation	Average Score
Usefulness/ transfer	Strong 16	Acceptable 12	Strong 14
Terminology/ style	Standard 18	Acceptable 11	Strong 14.5
Idiomatic writing	Strong 14	Acceptable 11	Strong 12.5
Target mechanics	Strong 16	Strong 13	Strong 14.5
Overall	Standard 17	Acceptable 11	Strong 12.5
Total Score	81	58	**70**

Based on the data presented in table 7, some important points can be concluded:
a. The usefulness or transfer aspect score shows that the participant's translation work is categorized in the strong level with an average score of 14. This score means that

the translation work has consistently transferred the meaning from the SL to the TL with few errors that have a minor effect on the meaning.

b. The score of the second aspect of evaluation, terminology or style, concludes that the participant's translation work is categorized as vital, with an average score of 14.5. That means the participants' translation work has few inappropriate terms, styles, or register choices. However, the errors only significantly affect the accuracy of the meaning transfer from SL to the TL.

c. The average score for the third aspect of idiomatic writing is 12.5, which belongs to the strong category. That means the participant's translation work only has a few errors in translating the idiomatic expressions, contributing only to the accuracy of the meaning transfer process from SL to the TL.

d. The average score for the target language mechanics aspect is 15.5, which is categorized as a strong category. It means that the participant's translation works have only a few spelling, grammar and punctuation errors. The errors do not contribute to a significant inaccuracy of meaning transferred from SL to the TL.

e. Overall, the translation work done by this participant is categorized as vital, with a score of 12.5. The translation works can be published and used for professional purposes with the help of a bilingual editor with excellent mastery of both SL and TL.

● The translation work of the participant with the highest score in the ICC

Table 8 presents the mid-term and final evaluation scores from the participant with the highest ICC score. The summary of the data in the table displays the score of the mid-term evaluation, final evaluation and the average score of every scoring aspect.

Table. 8. The translation work score of the participant with the highest score of ICC

Aspects	Mid Term Evaluation	Final Evaluation	Average Score
Usefulness/ transfer	Standard 18	Strong 16	Standard 17
Terminology/ style	Standard 19	Strong 16	Standard 17.5
Idiomatic writing	Strong 16	Standard 17	Standard 16.5
Target mechanics	Standard 17	Strong 14	Strong 15.5
Overall	Standard 20	Standard 16	Standard 18
Total Score	90	79	**84.5**

The detailed scores presented in table 8 display the description of every aspect of the participant's translation works as follows :

a. The usefulness or transfer aspect score shows that the participant's translation works averagely belong to the standard level with an average score of 17. The translation works have shown the appropriateness of meaning transfer from SL and TL. The translation works can be used for specific purposes requested or instructed.

b. The average score of the second aspect, terminology or style, concludes that the participant's translation works belong to the standard category, with an average score of 17.5. That means the participants' translation work has used the appropriate style and register for the specific context in transferring the meaning from SL to the TL.

c. The average score for the third aspect, idiomatic writing, is 16.5, categorized into a standard level. The participant's translation works only have shown the smooth transfer of meaning on the idiomatic expressions from SL to the TL so the reader of the TL.

d. The average score for the target mechanics aspect is 14.5, which is categorized as a strong category. It means that the participant's translation works have only a few spelling, grammar and punctuation errors in TL. Those errors do not contribute to a significant inaccuracy of meaning transferred from SL to the TL.

e. Overall, the translation works done by this participant are categorized as the standard category with a score of 18. The translation works can be published for specific professional purposes with a minor editing process.

3.3. The discussion of the research result

Based on the research data collected from the questionnaire and test, there are some essential points to discuss the research findings.

● The ICC level of the para-professional translators

The first finding is that the level of the para-professional translators participating in this research is average on the moderate level with a score of 3.0. The average for all aspects of ICC is the same. The position of every ICC aspect of the participants is moderate, with an average score of 3.0 for ICC attitude, 2.6 for ICC knowledge and 2.9 for ICC skill. That means that the participants of this study have intercultural awareness and knowledge that can be used in their translation practice.

The research results indicate that the para-professional translators must have already received enough exposure to the intercultural properties when they took their degree in English Language Teaching and English literature. That is in line with the result of the research conducted (SEVIMEL-SAHIN, 2020). The research results show a significant difference in the ICC development of the first-year students to the last-year students of the English Language Teaching (ELT) program. Last year students developed their ICC level

better than the first-year students. It means that the more and the longer exposure one receives on the other cultural values, norms, etcetera., can contribute to his or her ICC development level. It also works the same way where 75% of the participants' academic backgrounds are in the major of English Education and English Literature.

The other exposure can be from the activity of the participants as the para-professional translators are the activity of translation practice itself. Translating the text from SL to TL will expose them to their intercultural communicative competence. They have an open attitude toward intercultural values and learn the knowledge. In addition, the skill of intercultural communication in written mode by doing the translation process.

● The translation works of the para-professional translators

The second finding of the research shows that the participant with the highest ICC level scores better on his translation works than the participant with the lowest ICC level in the aspects of usefulness/ transfer, terminology/ style and idiomatic writing. The participant with the highest ICC level gets the average score for the usefulness/ transfer aspect (17), terminology/ style aspect (17.5), and idiomatic writing aspect (16.5). On the other hand, the participant with the lowest ICC level gets the average score for the usefulness/ transfer aspect (14), terminology/ style aspect (14.5), and idiomatic writing aspect (12.5). That finding clearly shows that the level of one's ICC can contribute significantly to their translation works.

Those findings are closely related to previous studies and theories showing the strong relation points between ICC and translation activity. The first obvious point in translation is when it comes to the facts that show that so many words have different meanings in different languages and cultures (Colina, 2015). The second is that many specific cultural items exist in a particular culture and do not exist in another culture (Maitland, 2017). The translators with a high level of ICC have a better chance to tackle the culture-related challenges successfully than those with a lower ICC level. Their ICC knowledge and skill are the distinguishing factors that make them have better scores for their translation work than those with a lower level of ICC. This research shows a relation between the translator's ICC level and the quality of translation. This result can answer the previous studies (Schaffner, 2003) that the intercultural and translation studies in different ways, where the first deals with natural communication and the second covers professional communication.

Moreover, (Daniel Tomozeiu, 2016) further explains that competent translators have a high level of intercultural knowledge, skills, attitude, and flexibility in professional engagement and are urged explicitly to input intercultural competence into the translator training. It supports the result of the study. Similarly, (Yarosh, 2015) supports this by providing the eight-factor model of competence associated with the objectives and learning level for translators' intercultural competence development.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that several essential points describe that the average ICC level of the research participants is in the moderate level, 3.0. In addition, The average score of translation works from participants with the lowest ICC level is 70, and the average score of translation works from participants with the highest ICC level is 84.5. The last is that the participant with the highest ICC level has a better average score better than the one with the lowest ICC level on the translation works in the aspects of usefulness/ transfer, terminology/ style and idiomatic writing.

From the research findings listed previously, there are two important implications. The first is that the average ICC level of the para-professional translators urges that exposure to diverse cultural interactions is needed for the pre-service translators. The consideration is that providing sufficient exposure toward other cultural systems, especially from TL, will be very helpful to improve their ICC to support their professional development.

The second implication is that the significant relationship between one's ICC level and his or her translation work urges the curriculum of training programs for translation should include or integrate the ICC into their curriculum or syllabus in their training program. The materials should accommodate the learning of attitude, knowledge, and skill in an intercultural communication setting.

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