

AN EMPIRICAL-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF TRANSLATION COMPETENCE

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 - Total time, acceptability, and chains of actions

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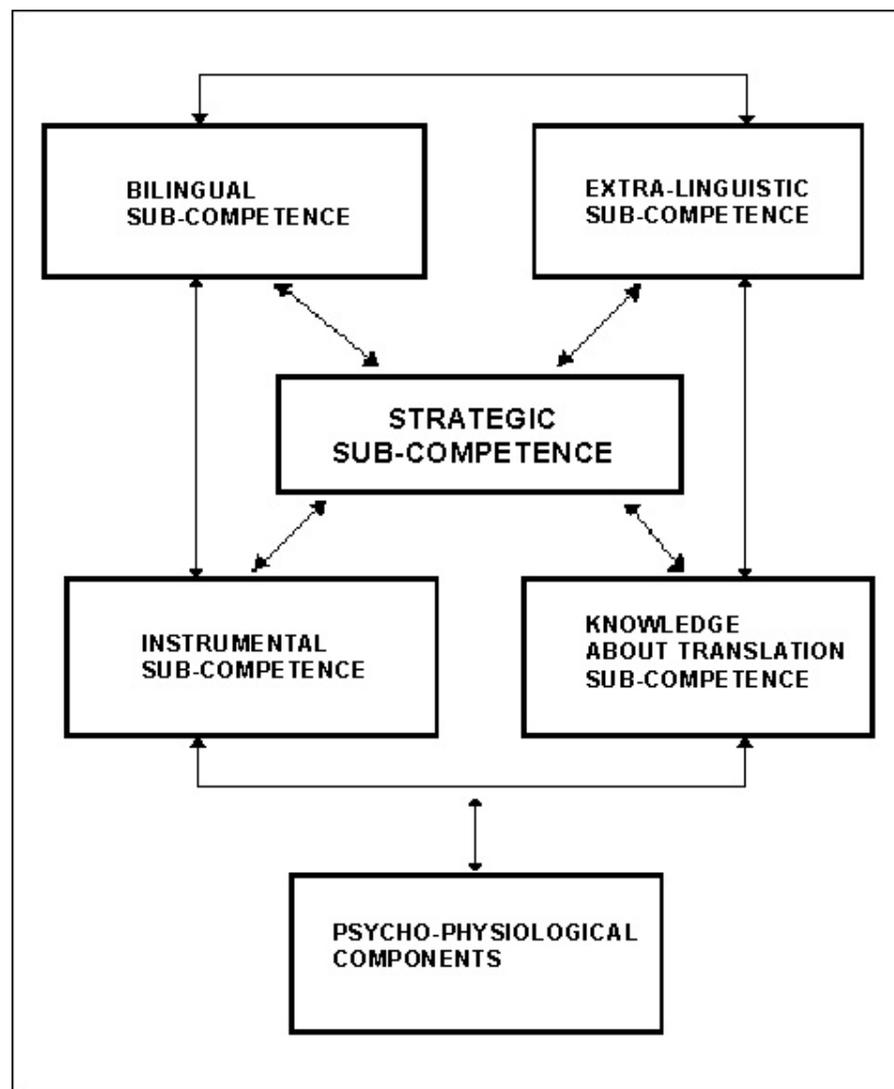
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TRANSLATION COMPETENCE MODEL (PACTE 2003)



TRANSLATION COMPETENCE: Translation competence is the underlying system of declarative and predominantly procedural knowledge required to translate..

Bilingual sub-competence. Predominantly procedural knowledge required to communicate in two languages. It comprises pragmatic, socio-linguistic, textual, grammatical and lexical knowledge.

Extra-linguistic sub-competence. Predominantly declarative knowledge, both implicit and explicit, about the world in general, and field-specific. It comprises bicultural, encyclopaedic, and subject knowledge.

Knowledge about translation sub-competence. Predominantly declarative knowledge, both implicit and explicit, about translation and aspects of the profession. It comprises knowledge about how translation functions (translation units, processes required, methods and procedures used and types of problems); and knowledge of professional translation practice (the work market, types of translation briefs, target audiences, etc.)¹.

Instrumental sub-competence. Predominantly procedural knowledge related to the use of documentation resources and information and communication technologies applied to translation (dictionaries of all kinds, encyclopaedias, grammars, style books, parallel texts, electronic corpora, search engines, etc.)

Strategic sub-competence. Procedural knowledge to guarantee the efficiency of the translation process and solve problems encountered. This is an essential sub-competence that affects all the others since it creates links between the different sub-competences as it controls the translation process. Its function is to plan the process and carry out the translation project (selecting the most appropriate method); evaluate the process and the partial results obtained in relation to the final purpose; activate the different sub-competencies and compensate for any shortcomings; identify translation problems and apply procedures to solve them.

Psycho-physiological components. Different types of cognitive and attitudinal components and psycho-motor mechanisms. They include: cognitive components such as memory, perception, attention and emotion; attitudinal aspects such as intellectual curiosity, perseverance, rigour, critical spirit, knowledge of and confidence in one's own abilities, the ability to measure one's own abilities, motivation, etc.; abilities such as creativity, logical reasoning, analysis and synthesis, etc.

¹ Other aspects intervene, such as: knowledge of translation associations, tariffs, taxes, etc.

DEPENDENT VARIABLES
(adapted from PACTE 2005a, 2005b)

DECISION-MAKING	
The most complex variable. Related to strategic and instrumental sub-competencies, and provides data on subjects' procedural behaviour	
CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION	Process during which TC subcompetencies are activated when carrying out a translation task. Both internal and external support is involved (Alves, 1995, 1997)*. Internal support: use of automatic and non-automatic cognitive resources. External support: use of any source of documentation
INDICATORS	Types and sequences of actions; acceptability of results
INSTRUMENTS	Translations, direct observation charts, PROXY recordings, retrospective interviews, charts for registering types of actions and consultations carried out. "Rich points" in the ST and criteria for the acceptability of results
DATA SOURCE	Sequences of actions leading to results that are acceptable, partially acceptable and unacceptable in relation to "rich points".
IDENTIFICATION OF TRANSLATION PROBLEMS	
Related to the sub-competence 'knowledge of translation'	
CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION	Difficulties encountered by the subjects when carrying out a translation task
INDICATORS	Nature of problems identified, conceptualization of problems, subcompetency activated, subject's degree of satisfaction with the solution found, degree of difficulty of the text
INSTRUMENTS	Translation problems questionnaire, retrospective interview
DATA SOURCE	Problems identified and subjects' comments

* ALVES, F. (1995): *Zwischen Schweigen und Sprechen: Wie bildet sich eine transkulturelle Brücke? Eine Analyse von Übersetzungsvorgängen zwischen portugiesischen und brasilianischen Übersetzern*, Hamburg, Dr. Kovac.

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TRANSLATION PROJECT	
Related to the strategic sub-competence	
CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION	Mental representation or expectations of what the translation of a given text should be like.
INDICATORS	Degree of elaboration and coherence of the translation project
INSTRUMENTS	Translation problems questionnaire and retrospective interview
DATA SOURCE	Elements taken into account by the subject in relation to the translation project
KNOWLEDGE OF TRANSLATION	
Related to the sub-competence 'knowledge of translation'	
CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION	The subject's implicit knowledge of the principles of translation and aspects of the translation profession
INDICATORS	Dynamic index and coherence coefficient
INSTRUMENTS	Questionnaire about knowledge of translation
DATA SOURCE	Subjects' answers to the questionnaire
EFFICACY OF THE TRANSLATION PROCESS	
Related to the strategic sub-competence	
CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION	Optimum relationship between time spent on the completion of a translation task and the acceptability of the solution
INDICATORS	Total time spent; time spent on each stage of the translation process (orientation, development, revision); acceptability of the results
INSTRUMENTS	Translations, direct observation chart, PROXY recordings. Criteria for the acceptability of the results.
DATA SOURCE	Total time, and time spent on each stage of the translation process, in relation to the acceptable and partially acceptable results obtained

* Based on the distinction made by Jakobsen (2002): "Orientation, Segmentation, and Revision in Translation". In Hansen, G. (ed.) *Empirical Translation Studies: Process and Product. Copenhagen Studies in Language Series 2*. Copenhagen, Samfundslitteratur, pp.191-204

CHAINS OF ACTIONS
(from PACTE 2005a, 2005b)

1. **Internal support.** No external support is used. The Definitive Solution (SD) is reached by using internal support alone.
2. **Internal support predominant, with recourse to external support (ISD).** Complex documentation searches are made, but these do not lead to a definitive solution. The Definitive Solution is the result of internal support.
3. **Balanced interaction between internal and external support (IS-ES).** Both internal and external support is used and the Definitive Solution is the result of interaction between both.
4. **External support predominant, combined with internal support (ESD).** Complex consultations are the basis for a Definitive Solution which is the result of external support.
5. **Simple External Support (ES).** Bilingual dictionaries are consulted and the solution provided is accepted. The Definitive Solution is the result of external support alone.

