

**THE ACQUISITION OF TRANSLATION COMPETENCE IN WRITTEN TRANSLATION. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY IN AN EMPIRICAL-EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH PROJECT**

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**I. PACTE GROUP'S RESEARCH INTO THE ACQUISITION OF TRANSLATION COMPETENCE**

1. Research objectives.
2. Translation competence: Definitions and theoretical model
3. Translation competence: Research design.
4. Results obtained.

**II. DESIGNING PACTE'S EXPERIMENT TO STUDY THE ACQUISITION OF TRANSLATION COMPETENCE**

1. Hypotheses
2. What type of study?
3. Who is observed?
4. What is observed?
5. How is the data collected?
6. How is the data represented?
7. How is the data analysed?

**III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

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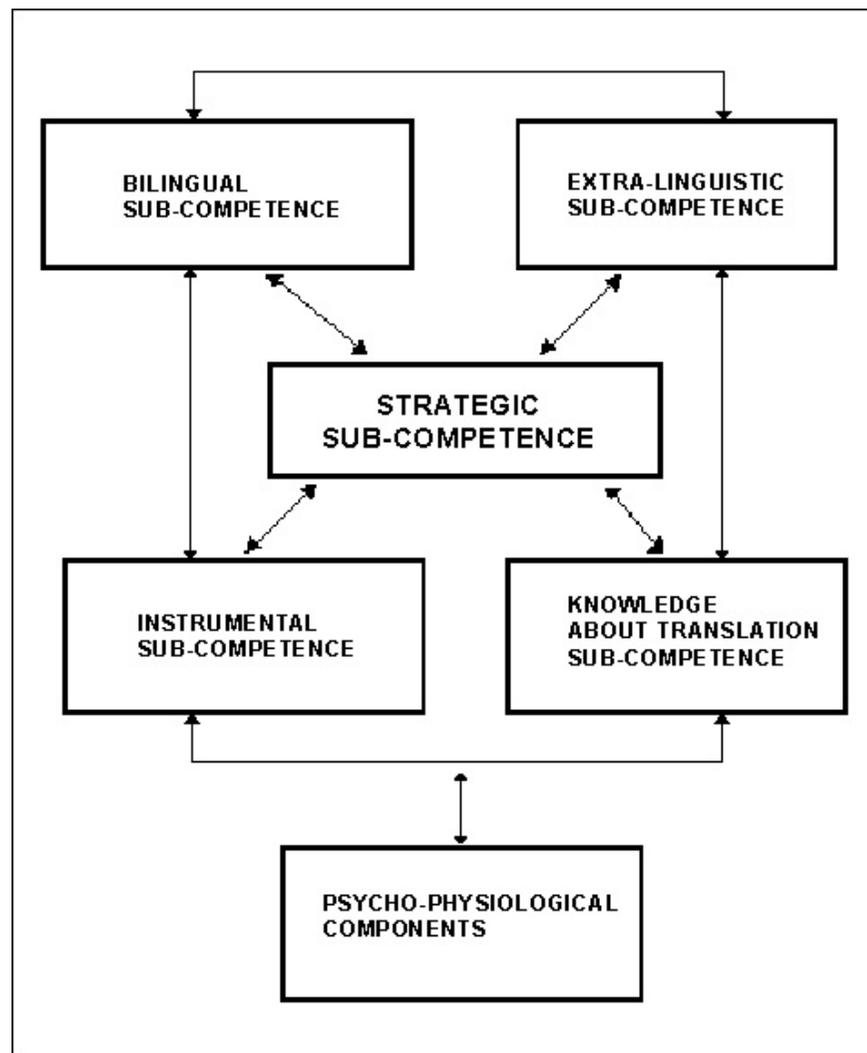
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## TRANSLATION COMPETENCE MODEL (PACTE 2003)



**TRANSLATION COMPETENCE:** Translation competence is the underlying system of declarative and predominantly procedural knowledge required to translate. It comprises a number of interrelated subcompetences.

**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-domain 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 about professional translation practice (the work market, types of translation briefs, target audiences, etc.)<sup>1</sup>.

**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 subcompetences 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-competences 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 about 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.

<sup>1</sup> Other aspects intervene, such as: knowledge about translation associations, tariffs, taxes, etc.

**DEPENDENT VARIABLES**

(adaptation of PACTE 2005a, 2005b)

<b>KNOWLEDGE ABOUT TRANSLATION</b> Related to the <b>knowledge about translation sub-competence</b>	
CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION	The subject's knowledge about what translation is and how it works and aspects of the translation profession
INDICATORS	Dynamic index and coherence coefficient
INSTRUMENTOS	Questionnaire on knowledge about translation
DATA SOURCE	Subjects' answers to the questionnaire
<b>EFFICACY OF THE TRANSLATION PROCESS</b> Related to the <b>strategic sub-competence</b>	
CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION	Optimum relationship between time taken to complete a translation task and the acceptability of the solution
INDICATORS	Total time taken; time taken at each stage of the translation process (orientation, development, revision; Jakobsen 2002); acceptability
INSTRUMENTS	Translations, direct observation chart, PROXY and Camtasia recordings.
DATA SOURCE	Total time taken and time taken at each stage of the translation process in relation to the acceptable and partially acceptable results obtained
<b>DECISION-MAKING</b> This is the most complex variable. It provides data on subjects' procedural behaviour Related to <b>strategic and instrumental sub-competences</b>	
CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION	Decisions made during the translation process which involve the use of automatized and non-automatized cognitive resources (internal support) and the use of different sources of documentation (external support) (Alves, 1995, 1997)
INDICATORS	Sequences of actions; acceptability
INSTRUMENTS	Translations, direct observation charts, PROXY and Camtasia recordings
DATA SOURCE	Sequences of actions leading to results that are acceptable, partially acceptable and unacceptable in relation to "rich points" (specific source-text segments that contained translation problems).
<b>TRANSLATION PROJECT</b> Related to the <b>strategic sub-competence</b>	
CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION	The subject's approach to the translation of a specific text and of the units it comprises
INDICATORS	Dynamic index in the overall translation project and that of each Rich Point; coherence between the overall translation project and that of each Rich Point; acceptability.

INSTRUMENTS	Translation problems questionnaire and retrospective interview
DATA SOURCE	Elements taken into account by the subject in relation to the translation brief
<b>IDENTIFICATION AND SOLUTION OF TRANSLATION PROBLEMS</b> Related to the <b>strategic sub-competence</b> and to the <b>knowledge about translation sub-competence</b>	
CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION	Difficulties encountered by the subjects when carrying out a translation task
INDICATORS	Coefficient of perception of the overall difficulty of the text; subjects' identification of Rich Points; characterisation of Rich Points identified by subjects; coefficient of subjects' satisfaction with the solution found for each Rich Point; type of internal support used to solve each Rich Point; acceptability
INSTRUMENTS	Translation problems questionnaire and retrospective interview
DATA SOURCE	Problems identified and subjects' comments
<b>USE OF INSTRUMENTAL RESOURCES</b> Related to the <b>instrumental competence</b>	
CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION	Strategies used when consulting documentary resources in electronic format (webs, dictionaries and encyclopaedias in CD-ROM)
INDICATORS	Variety of resources, number of searches, time spent on searches (total and for each phase)
INSTRUMENTOS	Proxy/Camtasia recordings, Catalogue of searches
DATA SOURCE	Phase(s) of the search/es; Time spent (initial/final); Categories of resources (type, sub-type); Number of resources (variety of searches); Number of searches (quantity of searches)