A retrospective view of PACTE's research into translation competence and its acquisition

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http://grupsderecerca.uab.cat/pacte/

PACTE

1. Empirical and experimental research on translation competence and its acquisition in written translation

2. Curriculum design in translation training

3. Use of empirical and experimental methodology in translation studies

4. Use of ICTs applied to translation research

Research interests

PACTE

| Process research (cognitive) | Product research (discourse analysis) | Technologies applied to translation research |

Empirical and experimental methodology in translation research

Translation competence

Acquisition of translation competence

Competences levelling

Didactic applications: training and assessment
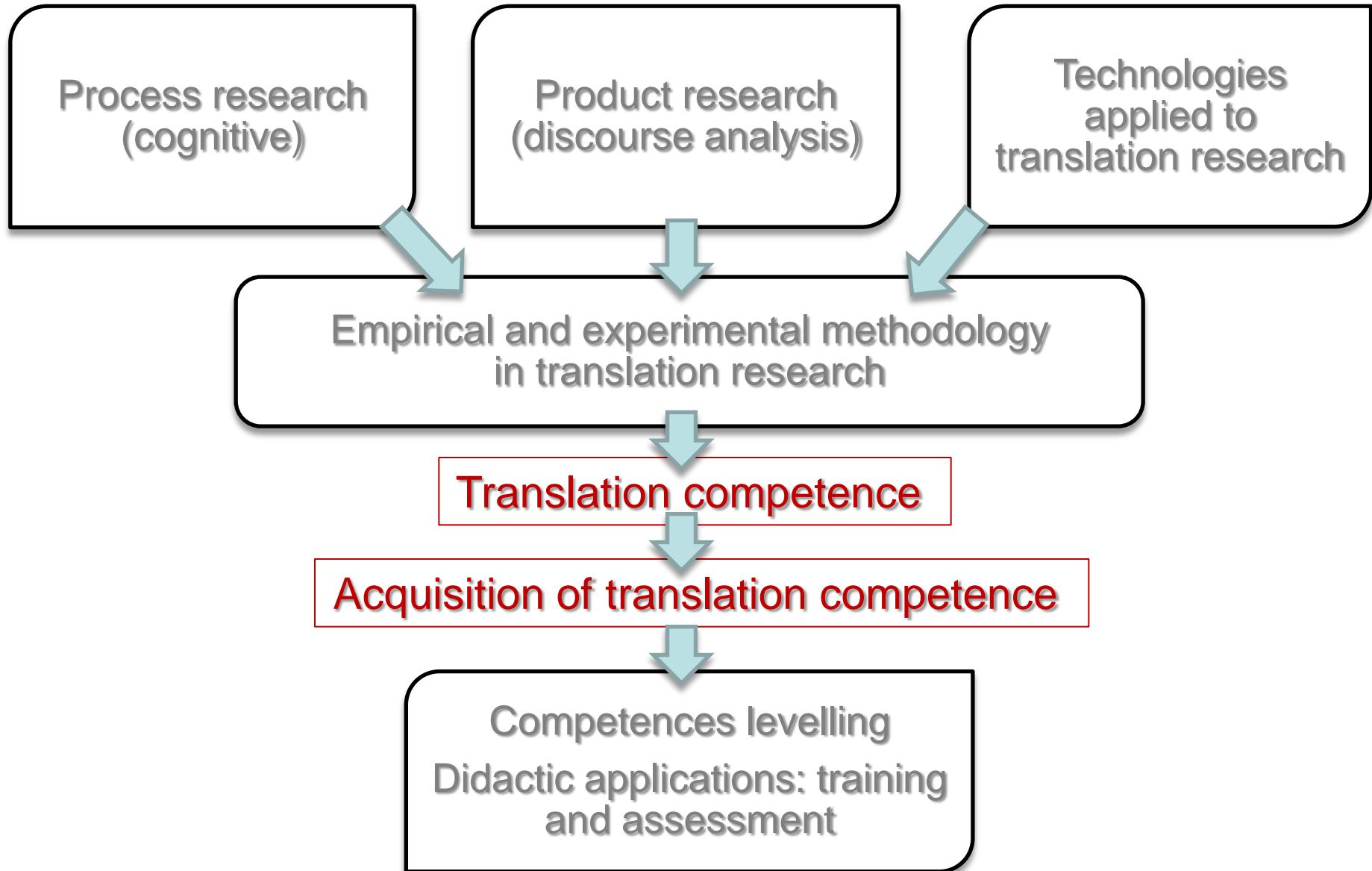
1997

Aim

To carry out empirical research into the acquisition of translation competence (ATC)
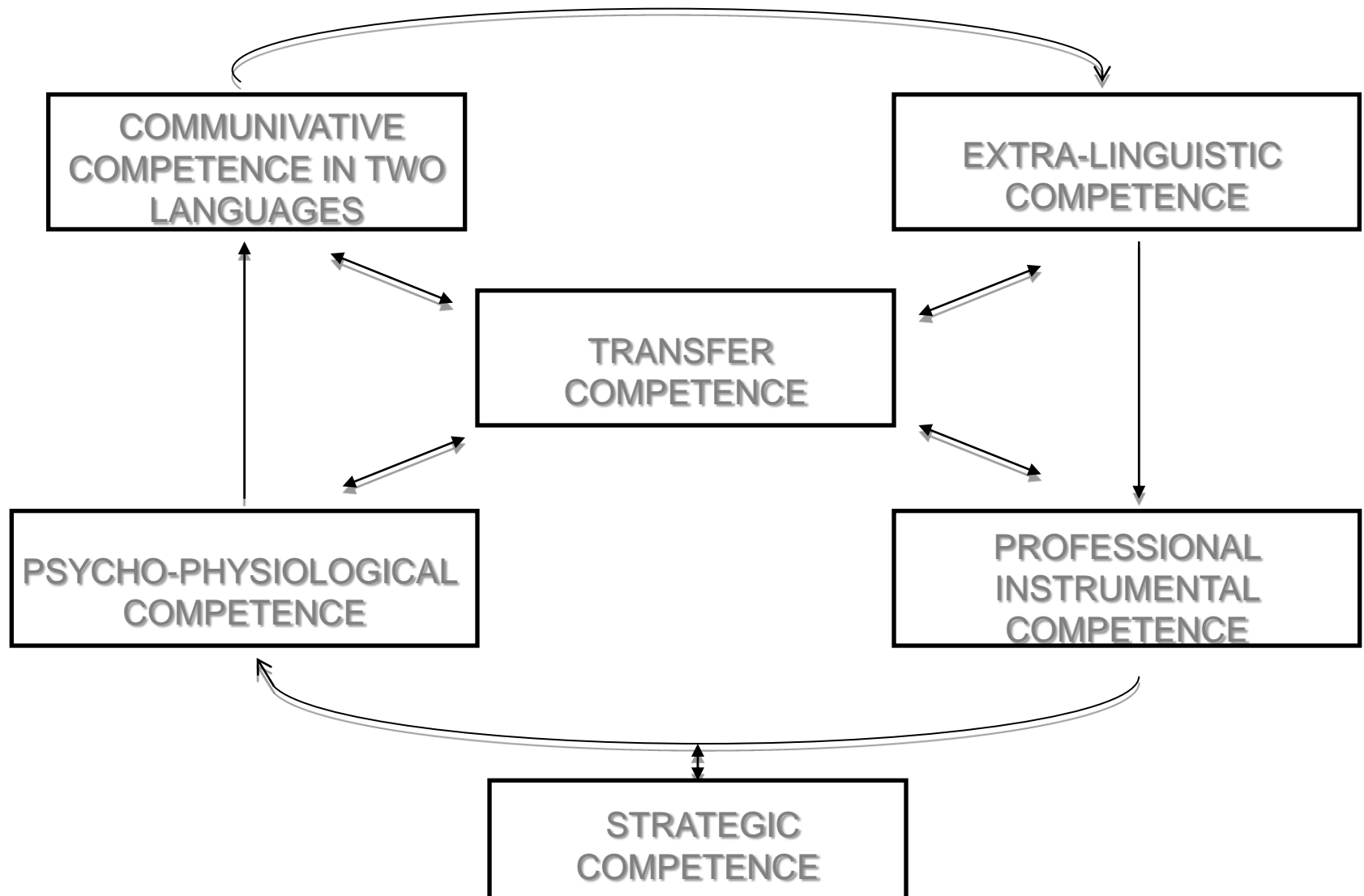
Founding members

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O. Fox, A. Hurtado Albir, N. Martínez Mélis, W. Neunzig, M. Orozco, M. Presas

1st Translation competence (TC) model & Acquisition of translation competence (ATC) model

# 1998-2000

(1) TC is qualitatively different from bilingual competence

(2) TC is an expert knowledge

(3) TC is predominantly a procedural knowledge

(4) TC is the underlying system of knowledge, abilities and attitudes required to be able to translate

(5) TC is a system of competences that interact in every translation act and are hierarchical

(6) TC competences are subject to variation according to directionality (direct or inverse translation), language combinations, specialisation (literary, legal, technical translation, etc), the translator's experience or the translation context (translation brief, time available, financial conditions, etc.)

ATC model (PACTE 1998, 2000)
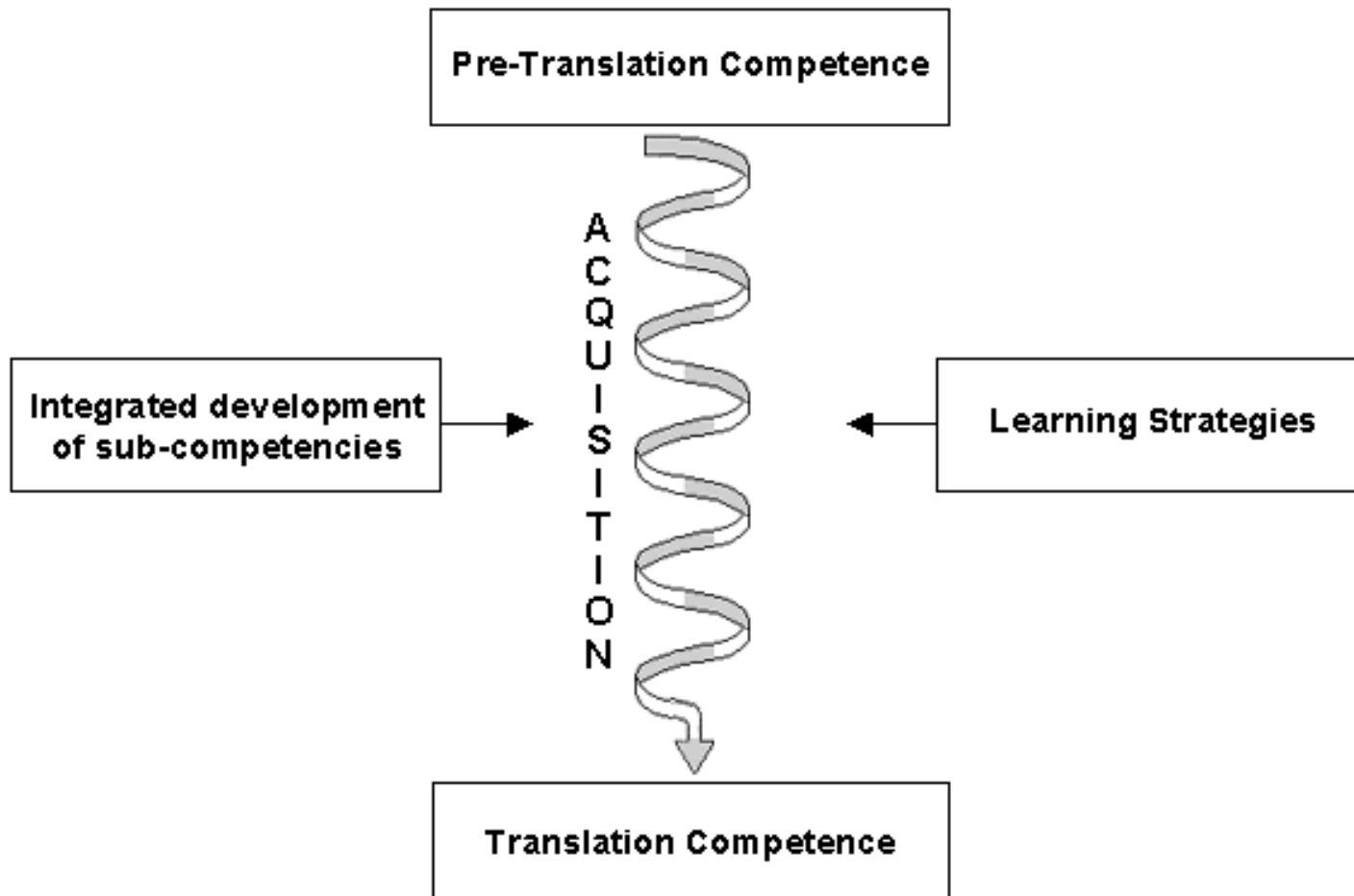
2000-2001

PACTE

June 2000 - January 2001

Participants: 6 professional translators

Design of first instruments:

- Texts (translation into L1 and L2) with competence-linked indicators

- Questionnaires: information about the subjects; translation problems; concerning the test setting
- Direct observation chart
- Proxy
- Retrospective and dialogued TAP (whilst viewing the recording of the subject's translation process by Proxy)

Main results (PACTE 2002a, 2002b, 2003):

- Catalogue of the translator's observable activities
- The need to redefine the 1998 TC model

Exploratory studies on TC

Catalogue of the translator's observable activities (PACTE 2002a, 2002b, 2003)

DIRECT OBSERVATION	RECORDED IN *PROXY*
First reading of the source text	Immediate solution
Re-reading of the source text	Not immediate solution
Revising the target text	Pause (longer than 5 seconds)
Underlining	Postponed solution
Making notes	Solution of a postponed solution
Comparing source text and target text	Provisional solution
Consultation of printed material	Solution of a provisional solution
	Text processing
	Consultation of electronic material
	Corrections

New model of TC based
on the results of the
exploratory studies

2002
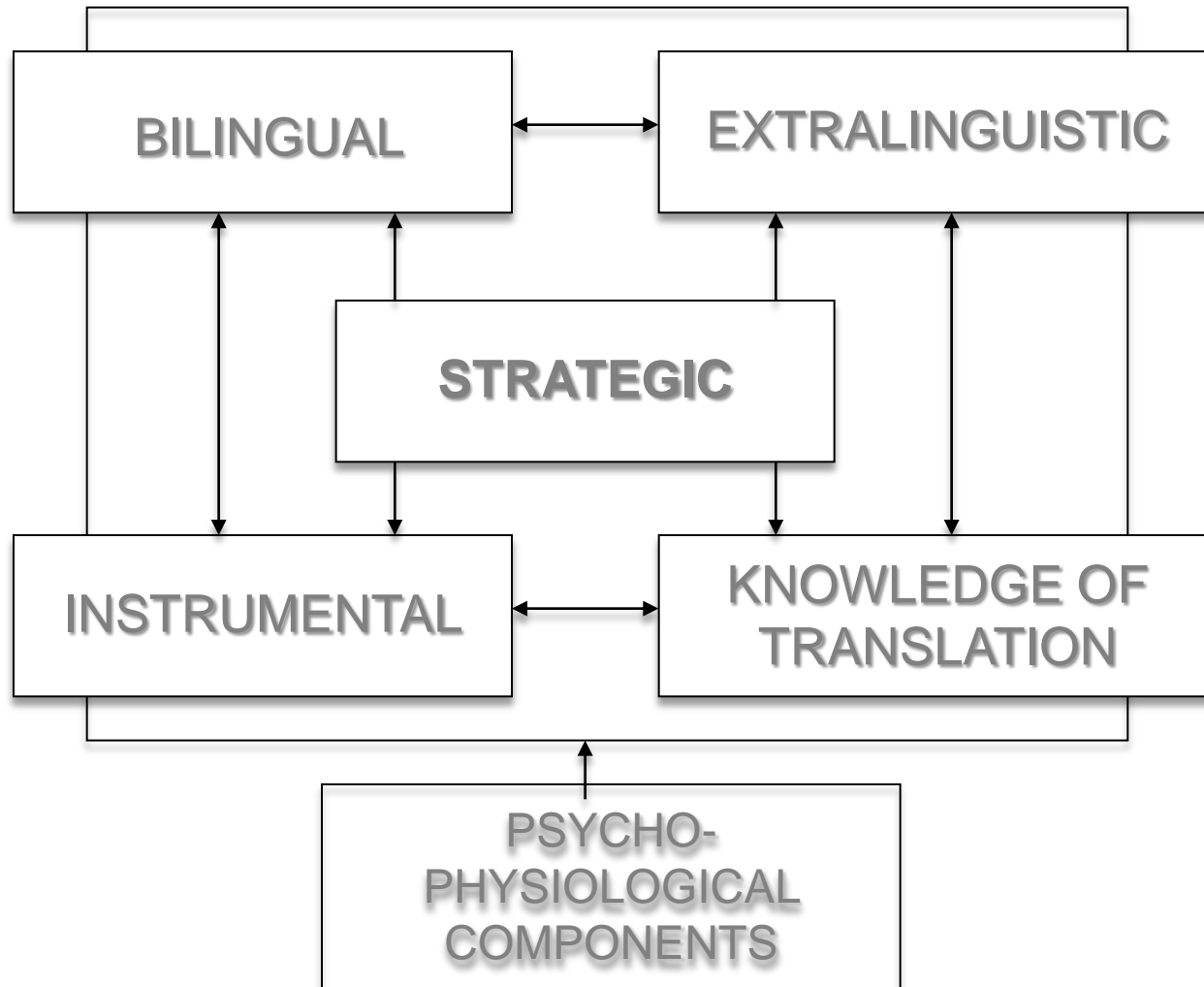
2004

February – April 2004

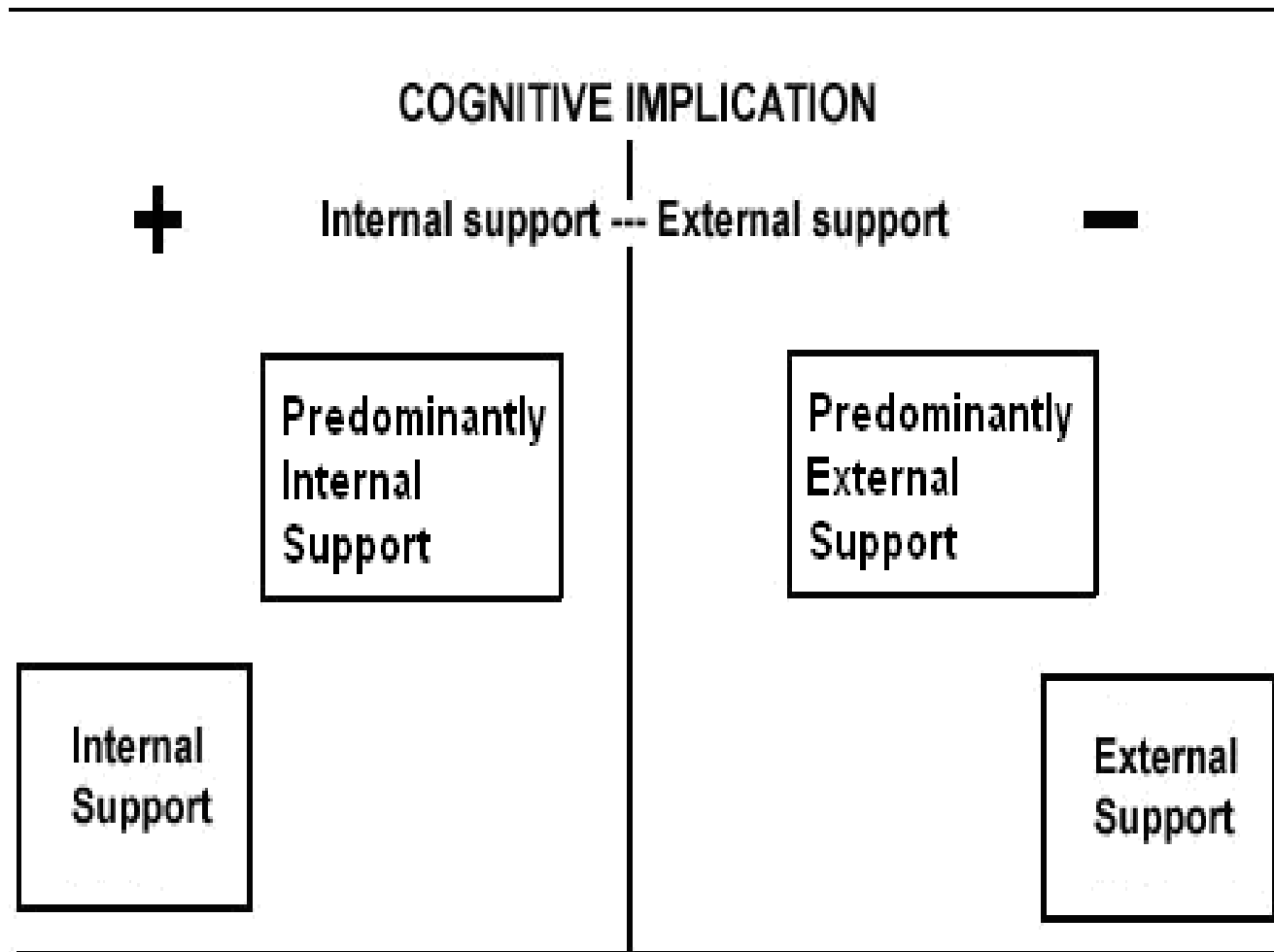Participants: 3 professional translators and 3 foreign language teachers

- Review of instruments

- Introduction of translation knowledge questionnaire

PACTE

Instruments and tools:

- Texts (translation into L1 and L2), including prototypical translation problems

- Questionnaires: participants (review); translation problems (review; selection of 5 translation problems); knowledge of translation

- Direct observation chart and categories of searches chart

- Proxy

- Retrospective interviews (whilst viewing the recording of the subject's translation process by Proxy) focused on long pauses (with no external support) and most complex problem found by participant

Main results:

- Review of instruments and experimental tasks

- Refinement of hypothesis and redefinition of study variables

- Introduction of Rich Points

- Establishment of categories for acceptability and detection of first tendencies

- Detection of types of searches

- Detection of 5 sequences of actions and first tendencies of use

- First data triangulation: sequences of actions and acceptability

COGNITIVE IMPLICATION

+   Internal support --- External support   **—**

Predominantly Internal Support

Predominantly External Support

Internal Support

External Support

2005-2006

PACTE

October 2005 - January 2006
Participants: 35 professional translators and 24 foreign language teachers

Dependent variables

- Knowledge of translation

- Translation project

- Identification and solution of translation problems

- Decision-making

- Efficacy of the translation process

- Use of instrumental resources

20 indicators

- Acceptability (transversal indicator)

Instruments and tools:

 - Texts (translation into L1 and L2) including Rich Points

- Initial questionnaire to select subjects; translation problems;

knowledge of translation

- Direct observation chart (focus on pauses and external searches)

- Guided retrospective interview (about Rich Points)

- *Proxy* and *Camtasia*

- Electronic corpora

Variables, Indicators and Instruments (PACTE in progress)

Please click here to access table

Data analysis and publication of
partial results from TC experiment

2007-2011

- Acceptability

- Knowledge of translation

- Translation project

- Identification and solution of translation problems

- Decision-making

- Efficacy of the translation process

- Use of instrumental resources

Main results: all translators & top 9 translators (*experts*):

Top 9 translators: those with the highest acceptability scores (0,9-1) in direct translation.

Analysis of the top 9 translators confirms the characteristics of TC identified in the experiment

Please click here to access table

Differences in the translations carried out:

- Translators produce higher quality translations

- Tendencies in the use of certain linguistic elements

- Degree of similarity among translations

- TC can be acquired through experience

- Relevance of the strategic, instrumental and knowledge about translation sub-competences

- Interrelation between sub-competences and relevance of strategic sub-competence: translators combine cognitive and external resources in an efficient manner

- Relevance of instrumental sub-competence: translators spend more time on searches, perform more, more varied and more complex searches and use more and more varied resources

- Relevance of the dynamic concept of and approach to translation

Main results TC (PACTE in progress)

- Lesser degree of automatization than in other kinds of procedural expert knowledge: ↔ use of instrumental and knowledge about translation sub-competences

- Presence of subjectivity: ↔ psychophysiological components

- Differences between direct and inverse translation

Main results TC (PACTE in progress)

Distinguishing features of TC:

- To solve translation problems with acceptable solutions *STRATEGIC*

- To have a dynamic and coherent concept of translation (declarative

  knowledge) *KNOWLEDGE OF TRANSLATION*

- To have a dynamic approach to translation (procedural knowledge)

  STRATEGIC

- To combine cognitive resources (internal) and documentary resources

  (external) in an efficient manner *STRATEGIC + INSTRUMENTAL*

- To use automatized (due to experience) and non-automatized cognitive

  resources in an efficient manner *STRATEGIC + KNOWLEDGE OF*

  TRANSLATION

- To use instrumental resources in an efficient manner *INSTRUMENTAL*

2011

ATC pilot study
June 2011
Participants:12 4th-year translation trainees

ATC experiment
November – December 2011
Participants: 130 translation trainees from 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th year of the B.A in Translation and recent graduates

- 6 dependent variables (as in the TC experiment)

- A simulation of a longitudinal study

- Adaptation of instruments used for TC experiment

- *Camtasia*

- Electronic corpora

Simulation of a longitudinal study

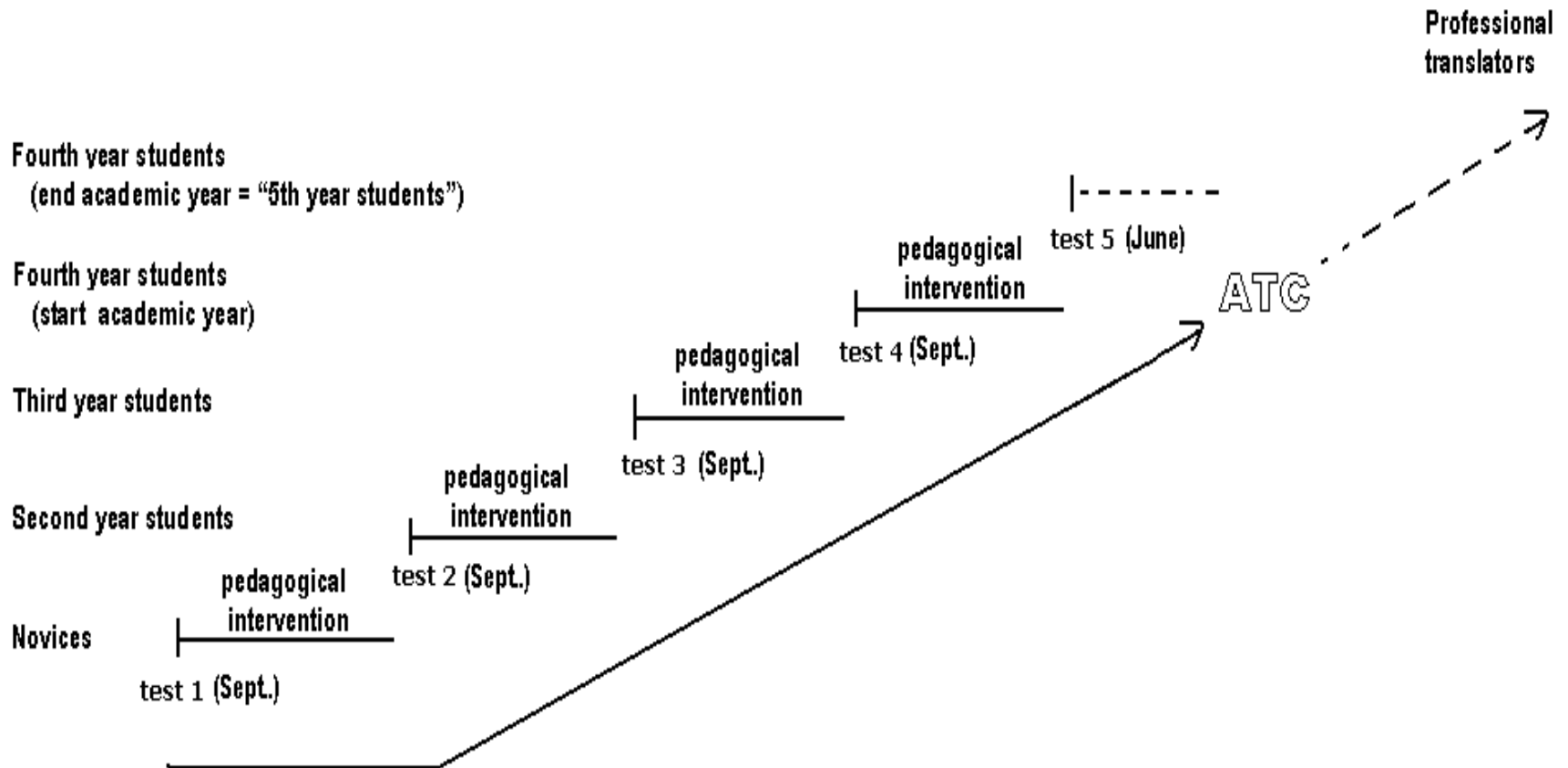**Longitudinal study with repeated measurements?**

Repeated measurements taken from one sample of students over 5 years
- Technical problems
  - ✓ 5 years needed to collect the data
  - ✓ Parallel instruments needed for each measurement (texts, questionnaires, etc.)
- Difficulties associated with the control of extraneous variables

Simulation of a longitudinal study

Measurements from samples of first-year, second-year, third-year and final-year students
- Advantages
  - ✓ Data collected in one year
  - ✓ Validated instruments available from the TC experiment

Professional translators

Fourth year students
(end academic year = "5th year students")

Fourth year students
(start academic year)

Third year students

Second year students

Novices

pedagogical intervention
test 5 (June)

pedagogical intervention
test 4 (Sept.)

pedagogical intervention
test 3 (Sept.)

pedagogical intervention
test 2 (Sept.)

pedagogical intervention
test 1 (Sept.)

ATC

TC experiment final results and book ATC experiment data analysis

2012-2013

TC experiment final results and book:

- *Researching translation competence. PACTE group* (in progress)

ATC experiment data analysis:

- "First Results of PACTE Group's Experimental Research on Translation Competence Acquisition: The Acquisition of Declarative Knowledge of Translation" (submitted)

FUTURE

- Competence levelling
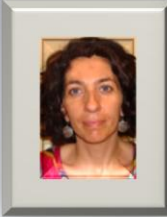- Didactic applications: training and assessment

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PACTE

THANK YOU