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# INVESTIGATING TRANSLATION COMPETENCE ACQUISITION

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

**OVERALL OBJECTIVE**

Acquisition of Translation Competence

**PHASES**

1st Translation Competence (TC)

2nd Acquisition of Translation Competence (ATC)
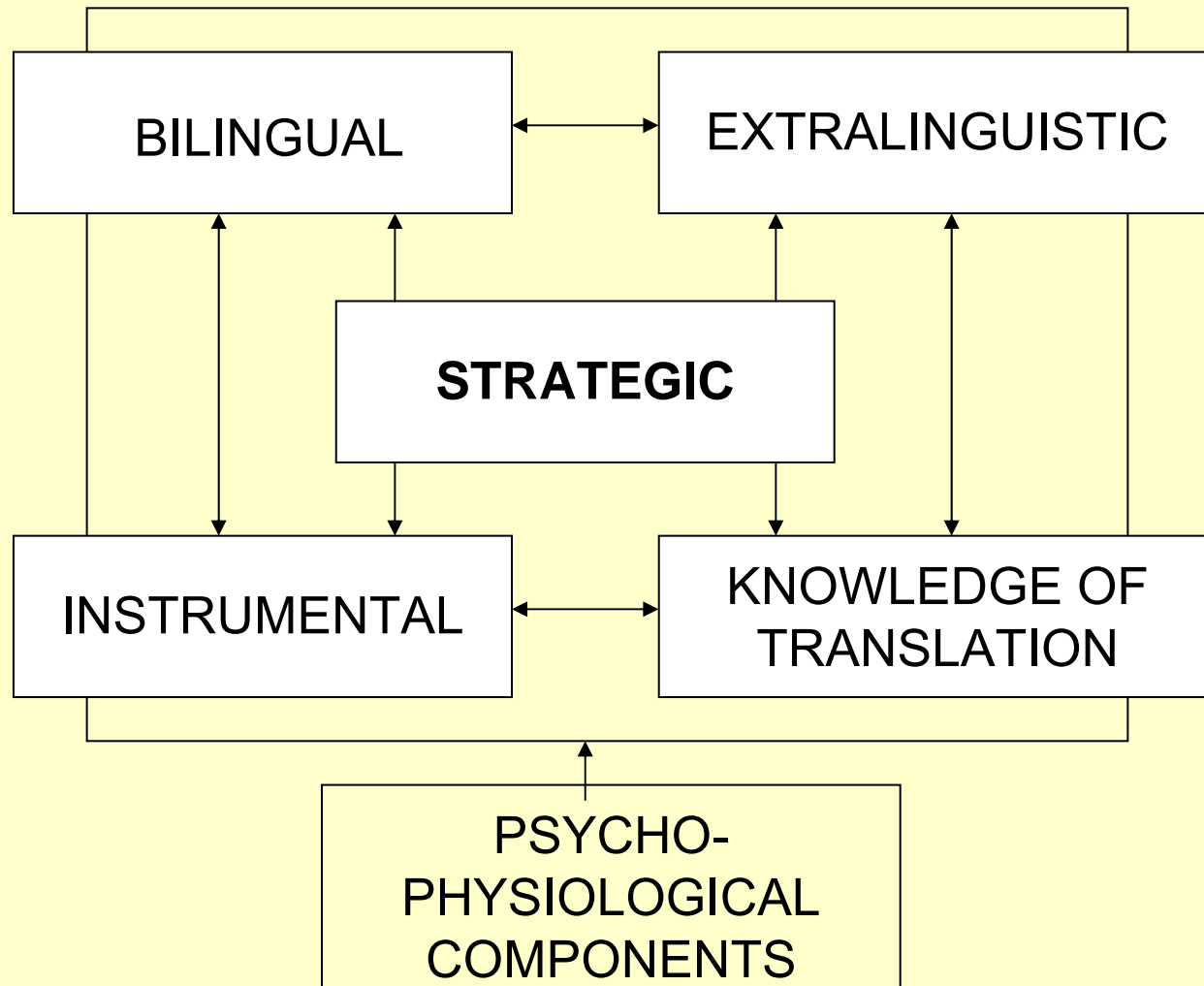
**RESEARCH**

Empirical-experimental

Process and product

**6 LANGUAGE  COMBINATIONS**

## TRANSLATION COMPETENCE

The underlying system of knowledge required to translate

- ✓ Expert knowledge
- ✓ Predominantly procedural
- ✓ Comprising different inter-related subcompetences
- ✓ Important strategic component

**INDEPENDENT VARIABLE**

✓ Degree of expertise in translation

**DEPENDENT VARIABLES**

✓ Knowledge of translation

✓ Efficacy of the process

✓ Decision-making

✓ Translation project

✓ Problem-solving

✓ Use of instrumental resources

**EXPERIMENTAL UNIVERSE**

✓ Professionals working with foreign languages

**SAMPLE**

✓ Professional translators (35)

✓ Teachers of foreign languages (24)

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## INSTRUMENTS

✓ Proxy and Camtasia >

✓ Direct observation of subjects

✓ Texts and translations

✓ Questionnaires and interview
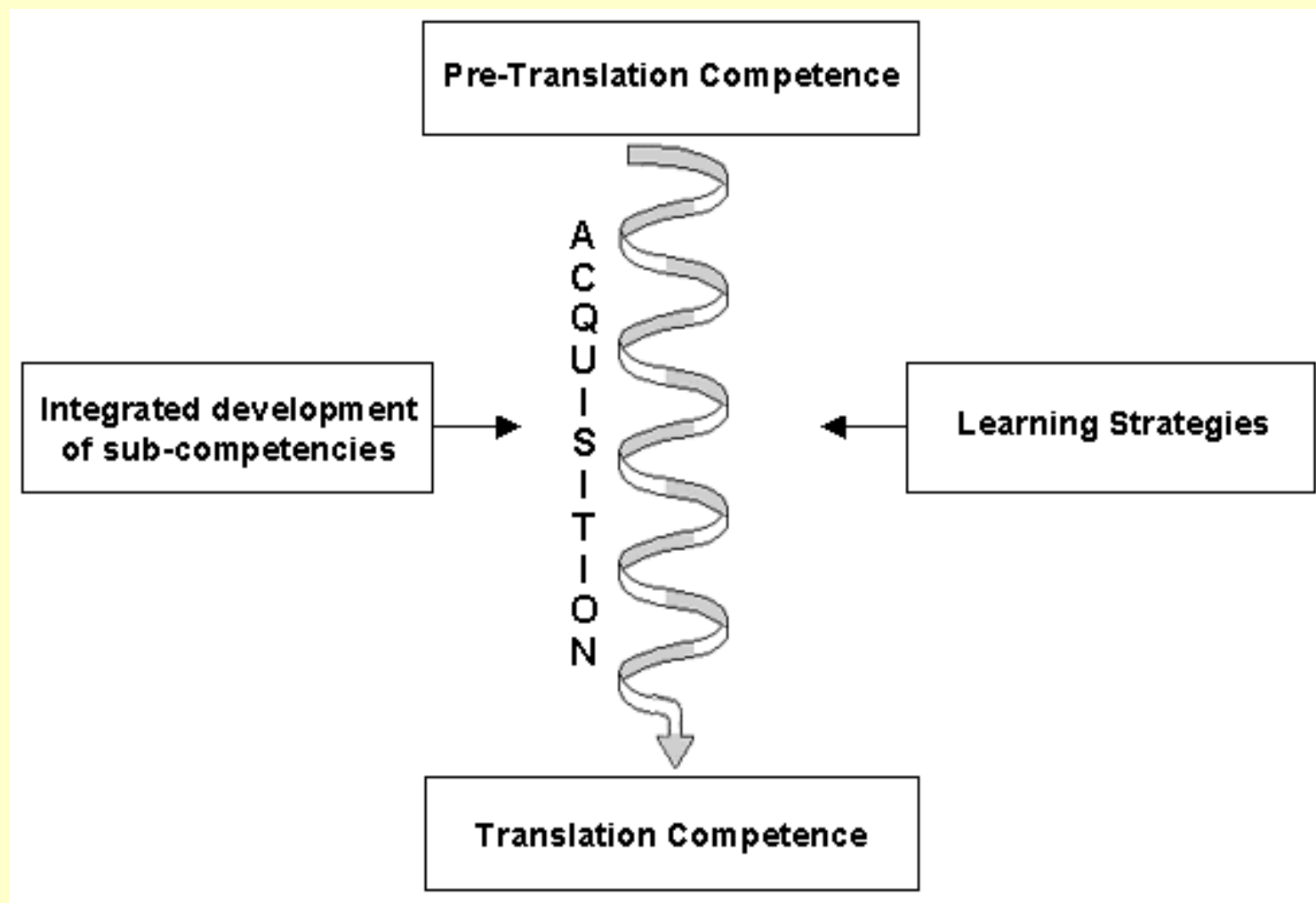
**PACTE (2008, 2009, 2011a, 2011b)**

**Results obtained have confirmed**:

- The relevance of the strategic, instrumental, and knowledge about translation sub-competences in translation competence
- The inter-relation between different sub-competences: translators use more (external) resources than teachers
- The relevance of the strategic sub-competence: translators combine cognitive and external resources in an efficient manner
- The smaller degree of automatization when compared with other kinds of procedural expert knowledge : ↔ use of instrumental and knowledge about translation sub-competences
- The presence of subjectivity: ↔ psychophysiological components
- The difference between translation competence in direct and inverse translation
- The fact that TC can be acquired through experience

**It was determined that the following sub-competences were required:**

- To solve translation problems with acceptable solutions: STRATEGIC COMPETENCE

- To have a dynamic and coherent concept of translation (declarative knowledge), but not the ability to explain the nature of problems: KNOWLEDGE ABOUT TRANSLATION COMPETENCE

- To have a dynamic approach to translation (procedural + conditional knowledge): STRATEGIC COMPETENCE

- To combine cognitive resources (internal) and documentary resources (external) in an efficient manner: STRATEGIC + INSTRUMENTAL COMPETENCE

- To use automatized (due to experience) and non-automatized cognitive resources in an efficient manner: STRATEGIC COMPETENCE

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

## GENERAL HYPOTHESIS

Translation competence is acquired as a result of a process of development and restructuring of different subcompetences.

## HYPOTHESES

1. Translation competence comprises several inter-related sub-competences.
2. The development of the strategic, instrumental, and knowledge about translation sub-competences is of particular importance.
3. Not all subcompetences develop in parallel, i.e. at the same time and at the same rate.
4. Learning-to-learn strategies must also be acquired.
5. The acquisition of translation competence is dependent upon directionality (direct/inverse translation), language pairs in use, the field of specialized translation (legal, literary translation, etc.) and the learning environment.

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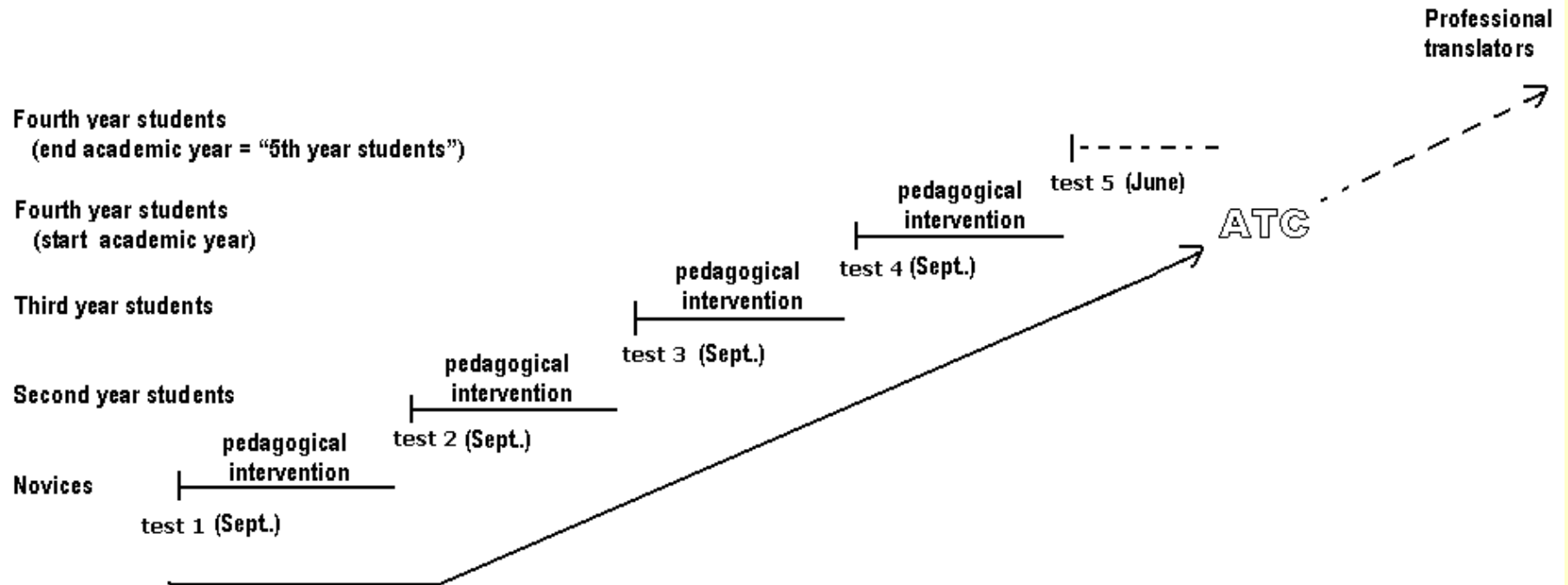**LONGITUDINAL STUDY WITH REPEATED MEASUREMENTS?**

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

**SIMULACRUM 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
- Technical problem
  - ✓ Comparability of students in each year

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 1 (Sept.)

pedagogical intervention
test 2 (Sept.)

pedagogical intervention
test 3 (Sept.)

pedagogical intervention
test 4 (Sept.)

test 5 (June)

ATC

**PILOT STUDY** - June 2011 (15 final-year students)

A pilot study will be carried out to prepare the ACT experiment and validate the instruments to be used.

**EXPERIMENTAL UNIVERSE**

✓ 150 students from different years in the FTI/UAB Degree in Translation and Interpreting

✓ 6 language combinations (as in the TC experiment)

**SAMPLE SELECTION**

✓ Initial questionnaire to act as filter

✓ Of those students that have passed the filter, 5 groups of 30 will be randomly selected from each year

**CONTROL GROUP**

✓ The 35 professional translators from the TC experiment

**INDEPENDENT VARIABLES**

✓ Experience in translation (six categories):

- Novices

- Second year students

- Third year students

- Fourth year students

- Recent graduates

- Professional translators

✓ Types of pedagogical intervention

**DEPENDENT VARIABLES** (as in the TC experiment)

- ✓　　Knowledge of translation
- ✓　　Efficacy of the process
- ✓　　Decision-making
- ✓　　Translation project
- ✓　　Problem-solving
- ✓　　Use of instrumental resources

**EXPERIMENTAL TASKS** (as in the TC experiment)

- Direct translation (B-A)

    ✓ Completion of a questionnaire on the translation problems encountered

- Inverse translation (A-B)

    ✓ Completion of a questionnaire on the translation problems encountered
    ✓ Completion of a questionnaire on  knowledge about translation

**INSTRUMENTS VALIDATED IN THE TC EXPERIMENT**

✓ Observation instruments

Software: Camtasia

✓ Questionnaires

Translation Problems Questionnaire (revised)

Knowledge of Translation Questionnaire

✓ Texts

Rich Points

Criteria for acceptable, semi-acceptable and unacceptable solutions

**NEW INSTRUMENTS FOR THE ATC EXPERIMENT**

✓ Questionnaires

Initial questionnaire

✓ Corpus software

WordSmith Tools

**QUESTIONNAIRES**

- ✓ Initial questionnaire
- ✓ Translation Problems Questionnaire
- ✓ Knowledge about Translation Questionnaire

**TEXTS**

- ✓ Rich Points

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## EMAIL VIRUS STRIKES IN NEW FORM

Computer users were warned last night to be on the lookout for an email virus that can steal confidential information and allow hackers to take control of infected machines. The virus, a new variant of the BugBear email worm that infected tens of thousands of computers around the world last October, began to spread rapidly from Australia to Europe and the USA at around 8am yesterday. According to MessageLabs, a **Cheltenham-based virus filtering firm** which reported about 30,000 infected messages in 115 countries, the **propagation rate** of BugBear.B almost **doubled** every hour throughout the morning. There was also a huge **surge** as US users came online. Like its predecessor, the variant spreads by sending itself as an attachment to every address in an infected machine's email address book. To disguise where it came from, it uses different subject headings. As well as searching for anti-virus software and disabling it, BugBear.B installs a **keylogger** to record what the user types, which may allow hackers to record confidential information such as credit card details and passwords. It also installs **a "Trojan horse" program which could allow a hacker to take remote control of infected machines**. [...]

*The Guardian* - Friday, June 6, 2003

- WURM IN DER LEITUNG
- BUGBEAR.B, LE VIRUS INFORMATIQUE QUI LIT PAR – DESSUS L'ÉPAULE DE SES VICTIMES

-Tastatureingaben von PC-Nutzern nach Kreditkartennummern und Ähnlichem überwacht
- Enregistrer les caractères tapés sur le clavier

- Schädling / E-Mail Würmer / Vorgängervariante
- Le ver / résurgence / ses congénères

- Download-Verzeichnis
- Édition de logiciels antivirus

- Dateien-Tauchbörse Kazaa
- Soumissions, des communications du virus

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## INDICATORS VALIDATED IN THE TC EXPERIMENT
(17 indicators)

- ✓ The transversal indicator of acceptability
- ✓ Types of actions
- ✓ Sequences of actions
- ✓ Index of dynamism
- ✓ Coefficient of coherence, etc.

## NEW INDICATORS FOR THE ATC EXPERIMENT

- ✓ Indicators based on corpus methodology to compare
  - ST and TT
  - TT from different language combinations
  - TT from students at different levels
  - TT by students and professional translators

**DATA ANALYSIS MODELS VALIDATED IN THE TC EXPERIMENT**

- ✓ Efficacy of the process: total time taken and acceptability (division of the sample)
- ✓ Knowledge of translation
- ✓ Translation project, etc.

**III.- EXPECTED RESULTS**

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**The study of translation competence acquisition will enable us to determine:**

✓The different stages of  the process of acquisition of translation competence

✓The characteristics of each of these stages

✓The behaviour of those students who obtain the best results at the different stages of acquisition of translation competence

⬇

**As a result, improvements may be made in curricular design for trainee translators in particular with regard to:**

✓ The progression established for the acquisition of translation competence: objectives and  levels of competence  at each stage

✓Assessment criteria for each stage: indicators, levels of acceptability, instruments and assessment criteria

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Thank you for your attention!

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