

**RESULTS OF PACTE'S EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH ON  
TRANSLATION COMPETENCE ACQUISITION,  
KNOWLEDGE OF TRANSLATION  
AND TRANSLATION PROJECT**

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **OVERALL OBJECTIVE**

Acquisition of Translation Competence

## **PHASES**

1<sup>st</sup> Translation Competence (TC) (2000-2006)

2<sup>nd</sup> Acquisition of Translation Competence (ATC) (2011)

## **RESEARCH**

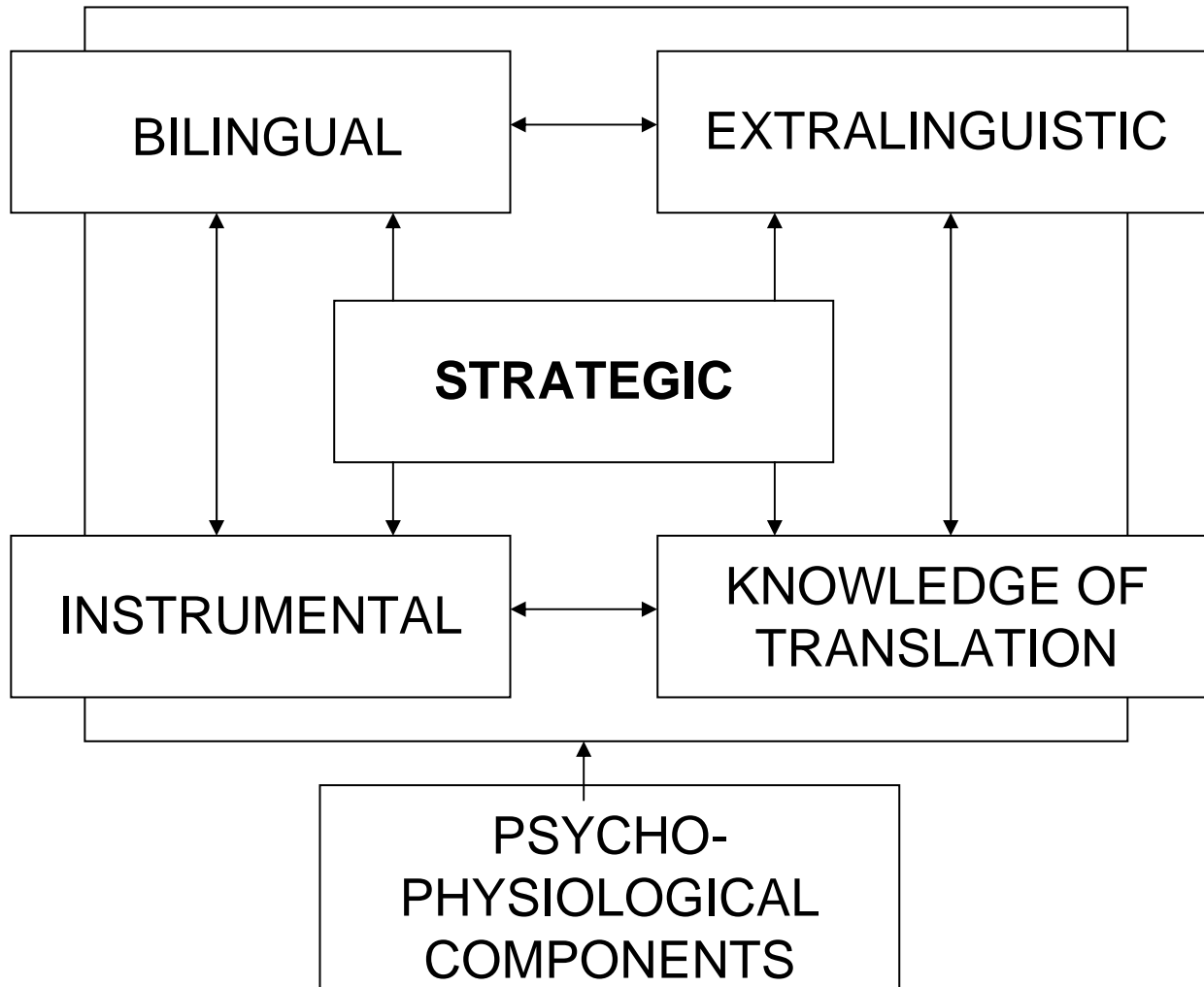
Empirical-experimental

Process and product

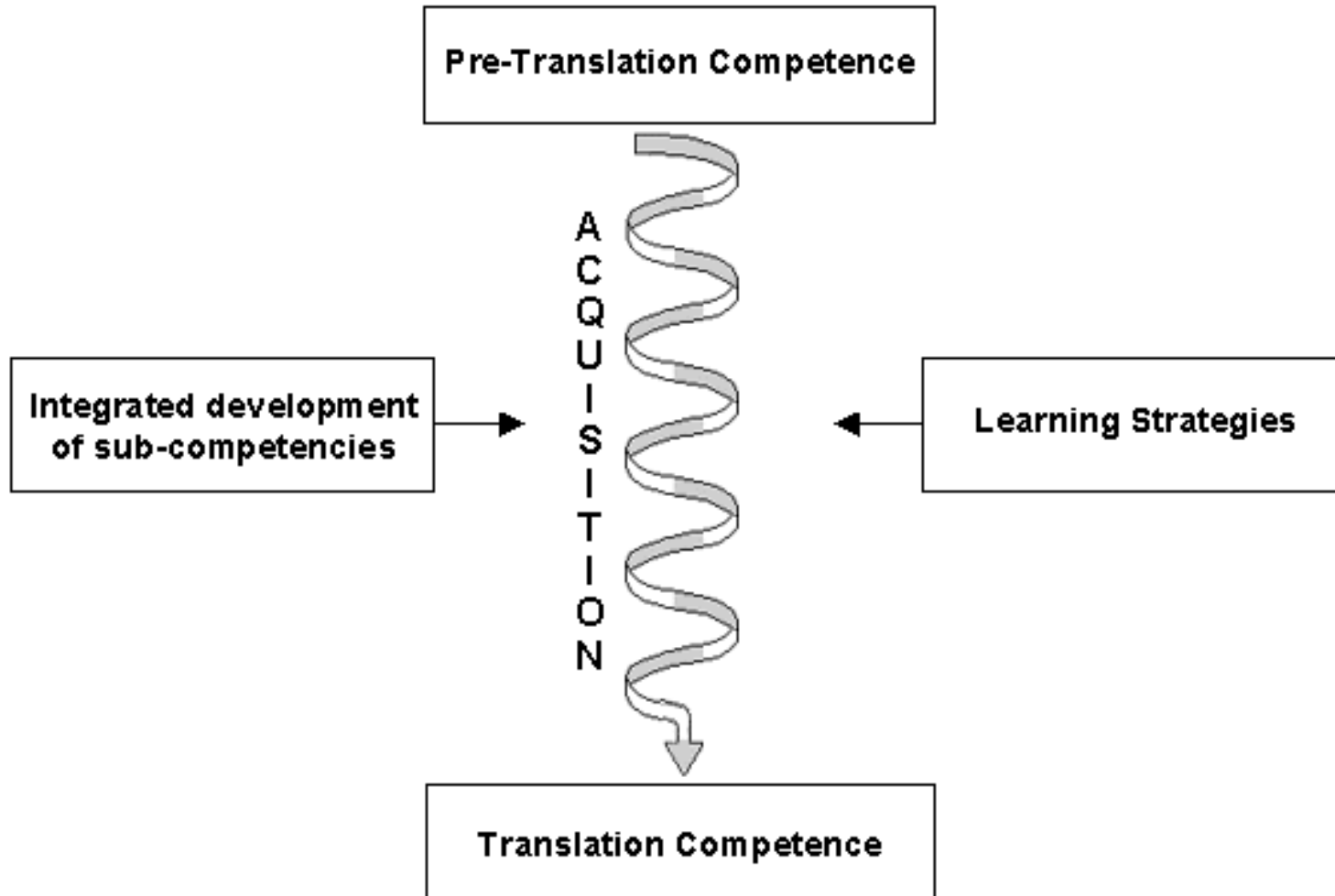
## **6 LANGUAGE COMBINATIONS**

The underlying system of knowledge required to translate

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



**II. ACQUISITION OF TRANSLATION  
COMPETENCE: THEORETICAL MODEL  
AND RESEARCH DESIGN**



**General hypothesis:**

Translation competence is acquired as a result of a process of development and restructuring of different sub-competences.

**Operational hypotheses:**

1. Translation competence comprises several inter-related subcompetences.
2. The development of the strategic, instrumental, and knowledge of translation sub-competences is of particular importance de traducción, instrumental y estratégica.
3. Not all sub-competences 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.



### INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

- Degree of experience in translation:
  - Novices
  - Second year students
  - Third year students
  - Fourth year students
  - Recent graduates
  
  - Professional translators

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

- **Knowledge of Translation**
- **Translation Project**
- Identification and Solution of Translation Problems
- Decision-Making
- Efficacy of the Process
- Use of Instrumental Resources

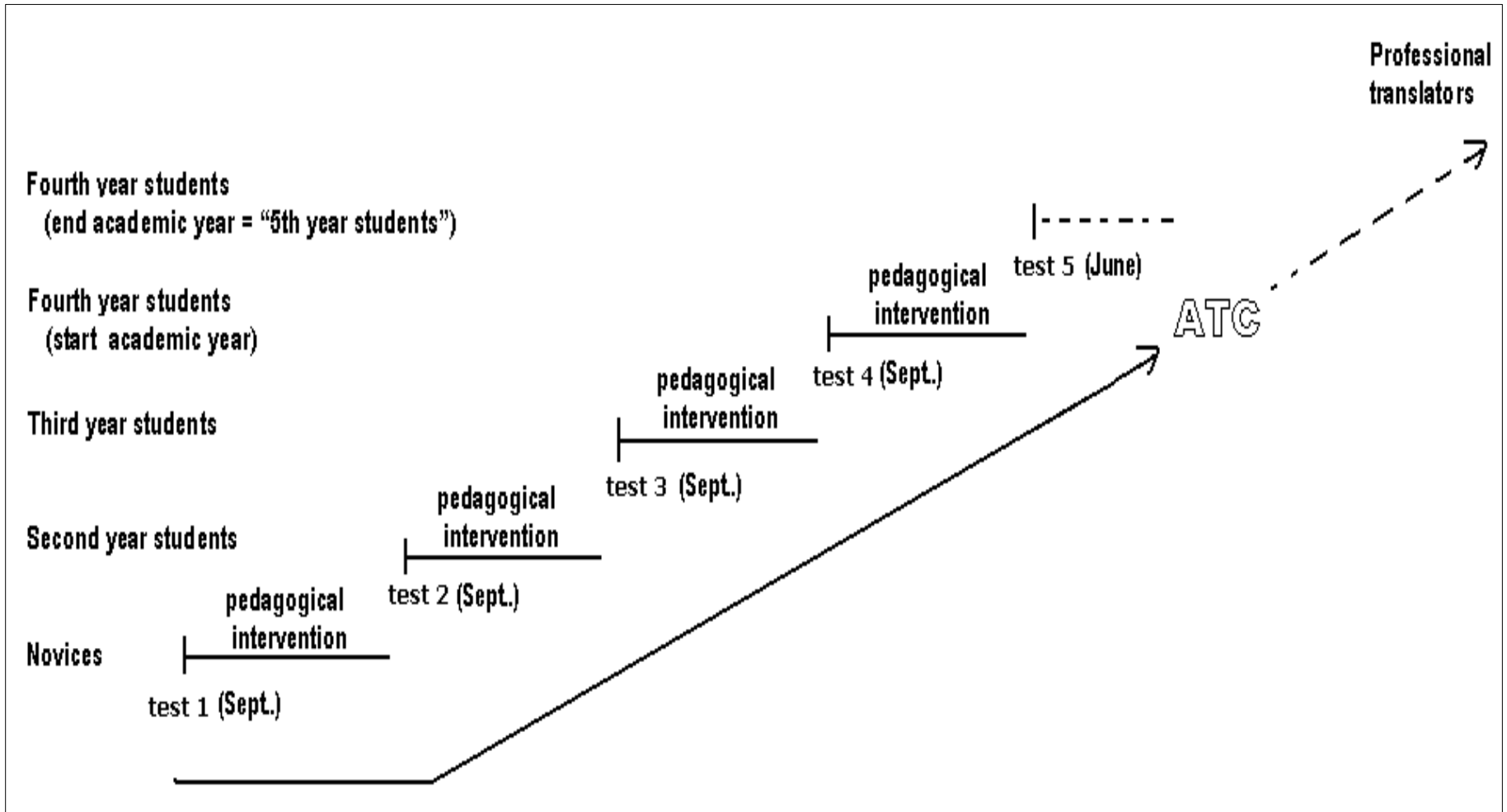
20 indicators

- Acceptability as a transversal indicator

Measurements from cohorts of 1<sup>st</sup> year, 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 3<sup>rd</sup> year  
and final-year students

- Advantages
  - Data collected in one year
  - Validated instruments available from the TC experiment

### Simulation of a longitudinal study



### **EXPERIMENTAL UNIVERSE**

- Students from different years in the FTI/UAB Degree in Translation and Interpreting
- 6 language combinations (as in the TC experiment)

### **SELECTION PROCESS**

- Pre-selection questionnaire
- 5 cohorts of approx. 30 subjects each

### **SAMPLE**

130 subjects

### **CONTROL GROUP**

- 35 translators from the TC experiment

### Instruments validated in the TC experiment:

- Observation: on-screen real-time recordings  
*Camtasia*
- Questionnaires:
  - Knowledge of Translation Questionnaire
  - Translation Problems Questionnaire (revised)
- Texts:
  - Rich Points
  - Criteria for acceptability
- Corpus of electronic texts  
*WordSmith Tools*

- Direct translation
- Completion of a questionnaire on the translation problems encountered
- Inverse translation
- Completion of a questionnaire on the translation problems encountered
- Completion of the Translation Knowledge Questionnaire

**III. KNOWLEDGE OF TRANSLATION**  
**DECLARATIVE KNOWLEDGE**



*Subjects' implicit knowledge of the principles of translation*

### ❑ Indicators:

- ✓ Dynamic index of Knowledge of Translation
- ✓ Coherence coefficient of Knowledge of Translation

### ❑ Instrument:

- ✓ Knowledge of Translation Questionnaire
  - Categories:
    - ✓ Dynamic: interpretative; textual, communicative and functionalist concept of translation
    - ✓ Static: linguistic and literal concept of translation

# **PACTE** TRANSLATION KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONNAIRE

Developed and validated over time:

*(Neunzig & Kuznik 2007; PACTE 2008 & in progress)*

- Pilot Test (35 UAB/FTI students)
  
- TC Pilot Study (3 translators & 3 teachers)
  
- Validation Test (10 translation users)
  
- Final Questionnaire (27 items)
- 5 pairs of contrastive items analysed

	<b>Dynamic</b>	<b>Static</b>
<b>Pair I</b>	<p><b>Item 3</b></p> <p>The client conditions the way the translator translates.</p>	<p><b>Item 24</b></p> <p>When you translate a text, you should not be influenced by the target reader.</p>
<b>Pair II</b>	<p><b>Item 10</b></p> <p>A text should be translated in different ways depending on who the target reader is.</p>	<p><b>Item 4</b></p> <p>The aim of every translation is to produce a text as close in form to the source text as possible.</p>
<b>Pair III</b>	<p><b>Item 23</b></p> <p>If you begin to translate a text using certain criteria (e.g. respecting the format of the original text, adapting the text to target readers, etc.) these should be kept to throughout the text.</p>	<p><b>Item 11</b></p> <p>All translated texts should maintain the order of the sentences and the paragraphs of the source text.</p>
<b>Pair IV</b>	<p><b>Item 14</b></p> <p>When translating a technical text, complicated vocabulary is not the main problem.</p>	<p><b>Item 5</b></p> <p>Most translation problems can be solved with the help of good dictionaries.</p>
<b>Pair V</b>	<p><b>Item 27</b></p> <p>If there is a word in a text that you don't understand, first of all you try to work out its meaning from the context</p>	<p><b>Item 6</b></p> <p>As soon as you find a word or expression you don't know the meaning of, you should look it up in a bilingual dictionary</p>

<b>ATC</b>	Mean (-1/+1)
1 <sup>st</sup> year	<b>0.10</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	<b>0.33</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	<b>0.37</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> year	<b>0.36</b>
Graduates	<b>0.41</b>

<b>ATC</b>	Mean (0/1)
1 <sup>st</sup> year	<b>0.16</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	<b>0.42</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	<b>0.42</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> year	<b>0.39</b>
Graduates	<b>0.41</b>

**IV. TRANSLATION PROJECT  
PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE**

*Subjects' approach to the translation of a text and the units it comprises*

### ☐ Indicators:

- ✓ Dynamic Index of the overall Translation Project (TP)
- ✓ Dynamic Index of the Translation Project for Translation Problems (Rich Points)
- ✓ Coherence Coefficient of the Translation Project

### ☐ Instrument:

- ✓ Translation Problems Questionnaire

*What was your priority when translating the text ? (overall TP)*

*What was your priority when translating the underlined segments of the text? (TP for each Rich Point)*

**Dynamic (D) answers:**

- *Adapt the text to meet target readers' expectations*
- *Communicate the meaning of the source text*

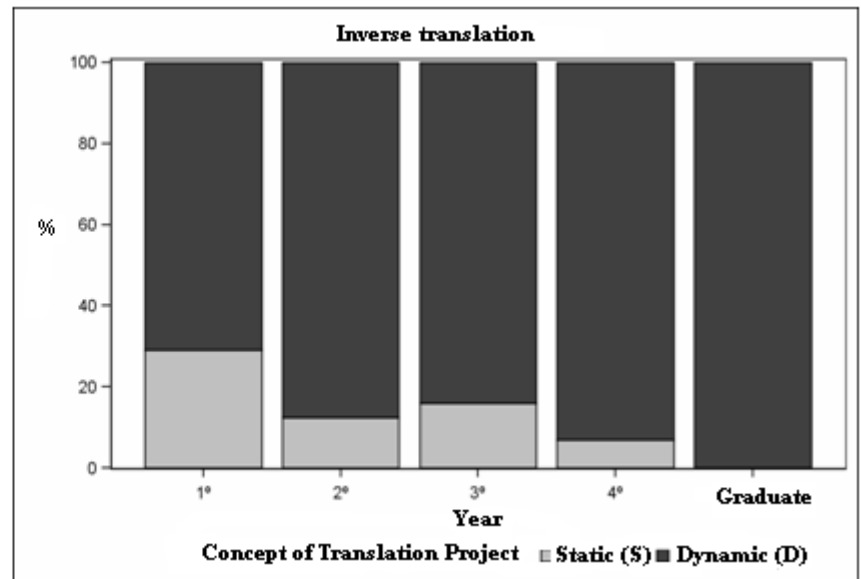
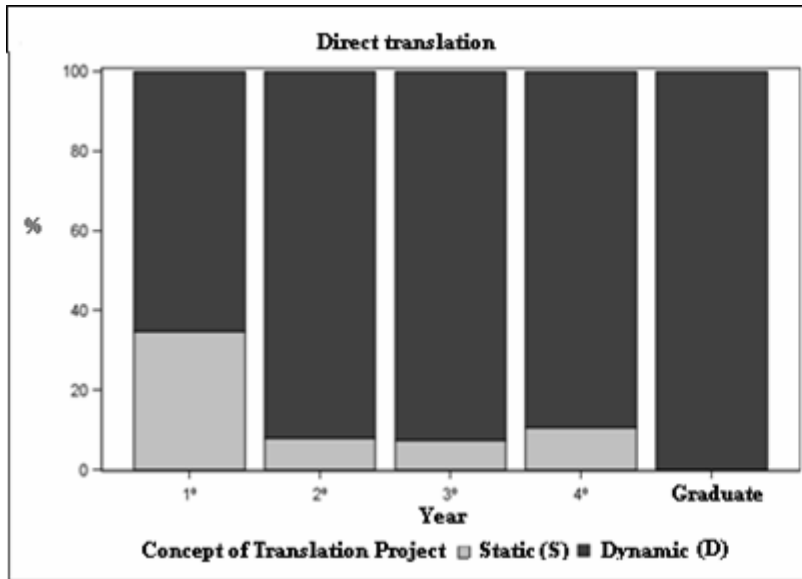
**Static (S) answers:**

- *Reproduce the lexis and morphosyntax of the source text*
- *Reproduce the same structure and formal aspects of the source text*

**None (NT) answer:**

*I had none*





- In direct and inverse translation, all groups showed a mostly dynamic approach to their translation project
- There would appear to be a difference between subjects in their first year of study and others

Obtained by collating the overall Dynamic Index for both direct and inverse translation and measured on a scale of -1, 0, +1.

Direct translation	Inverse translation	Overall TP	Dynamic Index
D	D	Dynamic	+1
S	S	Static	-1
D	S	Inconsistent	0
S	D	Inconsistent	0

<b>ATC</b>	<b>Mean</b> (-1/+1)
1 <sup>st</sup> year	<b>0.35</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	<b>0.79</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	<b>0.83</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> year	<b>0.85</b>
Graduates	<b>1.00</b>

		<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>Pr</b>	<b>Sig</b>
<b>Compared of cohorts</b>	<b>Total Dyn. Index</b>	<b>16.31</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.0026</b>	<b>**</b>

Statistically highly significant differences ( $p=0.0026$ ) were observed between cohorts. The Dynamic Index for the overall TP increased from the 2nd year onwards.



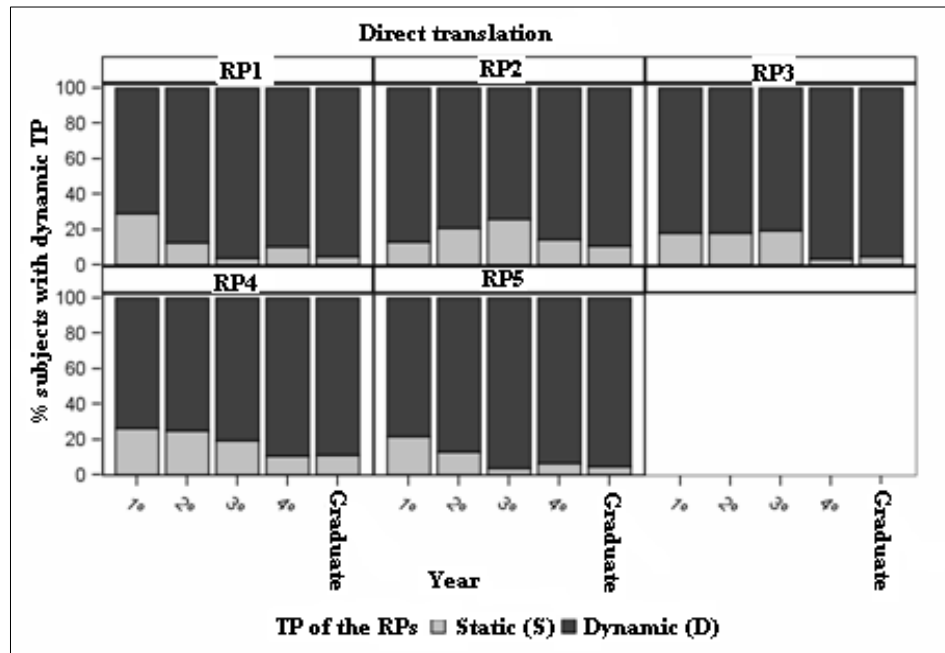
# DYNAMIC INDEX OF THE TP FOR TRANSLATION PROBLEMS

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To measure this index, dynamic responses were divided into 3 categories and a scale of measurement -1, 0, +1 used :

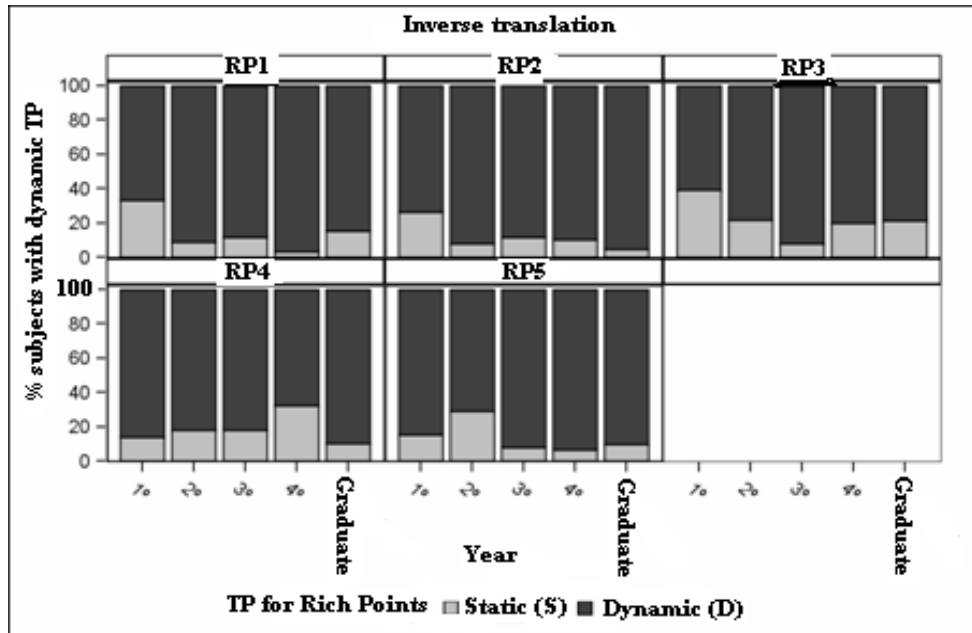
<b>Dynamic TP for more than 75% of Rich Points</b>	<b>+1</b>
<b>Dynamic TP for 25%- 75% of Rich Points</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Dynamic TP for fewer than 25% of Rich Points</b>	<b>-1</b>

# DYNAMIC INDEX OF THE TP FOR TRANSLATION PROBLEMS: *DIRECT TRANSLATION*



→ RP1 and RP 5 were the Rich Points that would appear to show some difference between cohorts

→ There is no evidence of statistically significant differences between cohorts for any Rich Point in direct translation



→ **RP 3 is of linguistic nature (not taken into account)**

→ Statistically significant differences ( $p = 0.0342$ ) may be observed between cohorts in the Dynamic Index for RP1. This Dynamic Index increased from the second year onwards.

**Both direct and inverse translation**

<b>ATC</b>	<b>Mean (-1/+1)</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> year	<b>0.54</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	<b>0.72</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	<b>0.85</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> year	<b>0.93</b>
Graduates	<b>0.91</b>

Statistically  
significant  
differences  
(p= 0.0239)  
may be observed  
between cohorts

<b>ATC</b>	<b>Mean (0/1)</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> year	<b>0.76</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	<b>0.88</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	<b>0.90</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> year	<b>0.93</b>
Graduates	<b>0.95</b>

No statistically significant differences may be observed between cohorts



## **V. DYNAMIC TRANSLATION INDEX**

**Dynamic Translation Index =**

*Average of*

*Dynamic Index of Knowledge of Translation*

**+**

*Dynamic Index of the overall Translation Project*

**+**

*Dynamic Index of the Translation Project for Translation Problems*

# **PACTE** KNOWLEDGE OF TRANSLATION - TRANSLATION PROJECT

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- Three categories were established. A scale of measurement -1, 0, +1 used for purposes of statistical analysis.

## **Static (-1)**

Knowledge of Translation (S) + Translation Project (overall/Rich Points) (S)

## **Inconsistent (0)**

Knowledge of Translation (D)+ Translation Project (overall/Rich Points) (S)

Knowledge of Translation (S)+ Translation Project (overall/Rich Points) (D)

## **Dynamic (+1)**

Knowledge of Translation (D)+ Translation Project (overall/Rich Points) (D)

<b>ATC</b>	<b>Mean (-1/+1)</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> year	<b>0.33</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	<b>0.62</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	<b>0.69</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> year	<b>0.72</b>
Graduates	<b>0.77</b>

Statistically significant differences ( $p= 0.0003$ ) may be observed between cohorts

# **CONCLUSIONS**

- **Continuous progress from a dynamic concept of and approach to translation (declarative and procedural knowledge) is a characteristic of the process of Acquisition of Translation Competence**
- **Dynamic Index is always higher in procedural knowledge (Translation Project) than in declarative knowledge (Knowledge of translation)**

### **NEXT STEP:**

- **Compare results of variables with those obtained for the indicator Acceptability**

# PACTE

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**Thank you!**

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