

## ***“COMPETENCE LEVELS IN TRANSLATION: WORKING TOWARDS A EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK”***

### **PACTE group**

Anabel Galán-Mañas, Amparo Hurtado Albir, Anna Kuznik,  
Christian Olalla-Soler, Patricia Rodríguez-Inés, Lupe Romero

Principal investigator: A. Hurtado Albir  
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

**Speakers:** A. Galán-Mañas, A. Hurtado Albir



Current research project:

“Establishing Competence Levels in Translation  
Competence Acquisition in Written Translation”

Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad (FFI2013-42522-P)

Establishing performance levels in translation competence acquisition in written translation

1. To describe the specific competences involved in translation competence acquisition
2. To define the specific competences of different fields of specialization in translation
3. To describe each level's learning outcomes

Continuation of two of PACTE's previous experimental research projects:

- Translation Competence (TC): 35 professional translators, 24 foreign-language teachers
- Translation Competence Acquisition (TCA): 130 trainee translators (undergraduate degree)

→ Validation of TC and TCA models

- No common framework of performance levels (comparable to the CEFR) in translation
- No standard criteria or levels in translator training centres (undergraduate and master's degrees)
- No specific training in some countries

### → NEED TO STANDARDIZE CRITERIA:

- Different performance and specialization levels in the translation market (professional and non-professional translators of various kinds and at various levels)
- Different professional profiles
- Translation market globalization
- Different levels of translator training in universities and the non-academic arena
- Increasing academic and professional mobility
- Requirements for academic standardization in the EHEA

### **A COMMON FRAMEWORK (comparable to the CEFR):**

- Would facilitate comparison between different grading systems
  
- Would serve as a guide for:
  - creating translation study programmes
  - issuing official certificates
  - recognizing and validating academic qualifications
  - establishing professional and academic profiles
  - designing assessment procedures (exams, formative and diagnostic assessment)
  - producing textbooks and teaching materials
  - establishing professional quality control criteria

**Participation:** 18 translator training centres from 13 European countries

- FINLAND

Filosofinen tiedekunta, Itä-Suomen Yliopisto, University of Eastern Finland

- FRANCE

Ecole Supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs, Université Paris III

- GERMANY

Institut für Übersetzungswissenschaft und Fachkommunikation, Universität Hildesheim

- GREECE

Σχολή Ιστορίας & Μετάφρασης – Διερμηνείας, Ιόνιο Πανεπιστήμιο, Ionian University

- ITALY

Dipartimento di Interpretazione e Traduzione, Università di Bologna

Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici, Università del Salento

Scuola Superiore di Lingue Moderne per Interpreti e Traduttori, Università degli Studi di Trieste

- POLAND

Wydział Filologiczny, Uniwersytet Wrocławski

# PACTE

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- PORTUGAL

Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade Nova de Lisboa

- ROMANIA

Facultatea de Litere, Universitatea Alexandru Ioan Cuza

- SLOVENIA

Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani

- SPAIN

Facultat de Traducció i d'Interpretació, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Facultad de Traducción e Interpretación, Universidad de Granada

Facultat de Ciències Humanes i Socials, Universitat Jaume I

- SWEDEN

Tolk-och översättarinstitutet, Stockholms universitet

- SWITZERLAND

Faculté de traduction et d'interprétation, Université de Genève

Institut für Übersetzen und Dolmetschen (IUED), Zücher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften

- UNITED KINGDOM

Languages and Translation Studies, School of Languages, Aston University



**To provide a common framework for academic and professional activity in Europe**

↳ Establishing scales of performance level descriptors (progression)

**Each level's description should include:**

- Descriptive categories (horizontal)
- Level descriptors (vertical)

**+**

Text genres liable to be translated at each level

### ESTABLISHING A 3-LEVEL GLOBAL SCALE:

- **Level A**

Basic translation competence levels: introduction to translation (*general translation*)

- **Level B**

Basic specialized translation competences: introduction to fields of specialization in translation (*general translator*)

- **Level C**

Competences corresponding to each professional profile: consolidation in fields of specialization in translation

Profiles:

- Legal translation
- Sworn translation
- Economic and financial translation
- Technical translation
- Scientific translation
- Literary translation
- Audiovisual translation (dubbing, subtitling, voice-overs)
- Accessibility
- Localization (websites, software, videogames)

**EACH LEVEL SHOULD INCLUDE:**

- Linguistic competence:
  - L2 reading comprehension level (according to CEFR global scale)
  - L1 written expression level
  
- Extralinguistic competence:
  - Cultural knowledge
  - Field-specific knowledge
  
- Knowledge of translation:
  - Knowledge about how translation functions (main principles)
  - Knowledge of the profession

- Instrumental competence:
    - Knowledge, use and evaluation of software related to the translation process
    - Knowledge, use and evaluation of documentation resources
  
  - Strategic competence: ability to solve translation problems (types of problems)
- +
- Text genres corresponding to each level (highly relevant category)

**LEVEL A1, A2: BASIC TRANSLATION COMPETENCES (introduction to translation: *general translation*)**

Level A1 Level A2	Linguistic competence	Extralinguistic competence (basic cultural knowledge)	Knowledge of translation (concept of translation)	Instrumental competence (basic resources)	Problem-solving competence
	L2 reading comprehension level: B1 (minimum) / B2 L1 written expression level: C1	Type of knowledge	Type of knowledge	Types of resources and level of use	Types of problems solvable
<b>Text genres</b>	(S)he is able to translate: - A1: non-specialized text genres in standard language and of different types (narrative, descriptive, expositive, argumentative, instructive) - A2: non-specialized text genres with different registers (tone, mode, style) and of different types				
<b>Global scale</b>	(S)he is able to:				

LEVEL B1, B2: BASIC SPECIALIZED TRANSLATION COMPETENCES (introduction to fields of specialization in translation)					
<b>Level B1</b> <b>Level B2</b>	Linguistic competence	Extralinguistic competence (complex cultural and basic field-specific knowledge)	Knowledge of translation (basic professional knowledge)	Instrumental competence	Problem-solving competence
	L2 reading comprehension level: C1 L1 written expression level: C2	Type of knowledge	Type of knowledge	Types of resources and level of use	Types of problems solvable
<b>Text genres</b>	(S)he is able to translate: -B1: non-specialized text genres from different fields (administrative, legal, economic, scientific, technical) - B2: simple specialized text genres from different fields (administrative, legal, economic, scientific, technical)				
<b>Global scale</b>	(S)he is able to:				

**LEVEL C1, C2: COMPETENCES CORRESPONDING TO EACH PROFESSIONAL PROFILE (consolidation in fields of specialization in translation)**

<b>Level C1</b> <b>Level C2</b>	Linguistic competence	Extralinguistic competence (field-specific knowledge for each professional profile)	Knowledge of translation (related to each field of professional practice)	Instrumental competence (resources used in each field)	Problem-solving competence
	L2 reading comprehension level: C2 L1 written expression level: C2	Type of knowledge	Type of knowledge	Types of resources and level of use	Types of problems solvable
<b>Text genres</b>	(S)he is able to translate: - C1: somewhat complex specialized text genres - C2: complex specialized text genres				
<b>Global scale</b>	(S)he is able to:				

**Production of a preliminary version of each level's descriptors**

Based on:

- 1.** Data from the results of PACTE's previous experimental research on TC and TCA
- 2.** An analysis of 18 European translator training centres' undergraduate and master's degree programmes: creation of a database





## METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH STAGES: FIRST STAGE (underway)

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DATABASE (undergraduate and master's degrees)

Information related to translation curriculum and subject design (L2 English and Spanish):

- L2 level at beginning of training
- Translation subjects taught (compulsory and optional)
- Specific and general competences
- Learning objectives
- Content
- Text genres translated  
(etc.)

→ Progression involved



## METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH STAGES: FIRST STAGE (underway)

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DATABASE (undergraduate and master's degrees)

### **16 undergraduate degrees**

11 worth 180 ECTS credits; 5 worth 240 ECTS credits

→ 106 subjects analysed

### **26 master's degrees (17 analysed)**

6 worth 60 ECTS credits; 2 worth 90 ECTS credits; 18 worth 120 ECTS credits

1 general programme

4 general programmes with specialized modules or courses

12 specialized programmes

→ 132 subjects analysed

**Verification of proposed level descriptors (based on *expert judgement*)****1. Professional opinions**

Representatives of Europe's professional translation sector:  
professional associations, active translators with different profiles, employers

**2. Academic opinions**

Representatives of Europe's academic translation sphere:  
curriculum supervisors, teachers of direct and inverse translation at different levels

- Two questionnaires (one for each group of experts) and guided interviews for:
- correcting descriptors and giving opinions on them
  - identifying descriptors that are especially clear, useful and appropriate
  - determining each descriptor's degree of difficulty
  - categorizing descriptors according to competence and level
  - identifying level boundaries

**Questionnaire data analysis and proposal review**

→ Creation of a database for the purpose of analysing the data obtained



Production of final proposal

## ➤ A FIRST STEP...

### **Subsequent tasks:** validate the proposal

- Test the scale's accuracy and the descriptors' suitability with students and groups of examiners
  - ↳
    - analyse the work of sample groups of students in relation to the descriptors
    - evaluate the descriptors
- Develop assessment instruments for each level

## Thank you!

**PACTE group**

**Anabel Galán-Mañas, Amparo Hurtado Albir, Anna Kuznik,  
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**Principal investigator: Amparo Hurtado Albir**

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**[cg.didtrad.pacte@uab.cat](mailto:cg.didtrad.pacte@uab.cat)**