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

PACTE group
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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
RATIONALE BEHIND PROJECT

- 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
RATIONALE BEHIND PROJECT

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
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
OBJECTIVES

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
DESIGNATOR SCALES:
LEVEL DESCRIPTION (vertical)

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)
DESCRIPTOR SCALES: DESCRIPTIVE CATEGORIES (horizontal)

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)
### DESCRIPTOR SCALES: LEVEL A

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level A1</th>
<th>Linguistic competence</th>
<th>Extralinguistic competence (basic cultural knowledge)</th>
<th>Knowledge of translation (concept of translation)</th>
<th>Instrumental competence (basic resources)</th>
<th>Problem-solving competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level A2</td>
<td>L2 reading comprehension level: B1 (minimum) / B2</td>
<td>Type of knowledge</td>
<td>Type of knowledge</td>
<td>Types of resources and level of use</td>
<td>Types of problems solvable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L1 written expression level: C1</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Text genres**

(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

**Global scale**

(S)he is able to:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level B1</th>
<th>Level B2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Linguistic competence</strong></td>
<td><strong>Extralinguistic competence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge of translation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Instrumental competence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem-solving competence</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L2 reading comprehension level: C1</th>
<th>Type of knowledge</th>
<th>Types of resources and level of use</th>
<th>Types of problems solvable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1 written expression level: C2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Text genres**
(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)

**Global scale**
(S)he is able to:
### LEVEL C1, C2: COMPETENCES CORRESPONDING TO EACH PROFESSIONAL PROFILE (consolidation in fields of specialization in translation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Linguistic competence</th>
<th>Extralinguistic competence (field-specific knowledge for each professional profile)</th>
<th>Knowledge of translation (related to each field of professional practice)</th>
<th>Instrumental competence (resources used in each field)</th>
<th>Problem-solving competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 reading comprehension level: C2</td>
<td>Type of knowledge</td>
<td>Type of knowledge</td>
<td>Types of resources and level of use</td>
<td>Types of problems solvable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 written expression level: C2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Text genres

(S)he is able to translate:
- C1: somewhat complex specialized text genres
- C2: complex specialized text genres

### Global scale

(S)he is able to:
METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH STAGES: FIRST STAGE (underway)

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
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)

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
METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH STAGES: SECOND STAGE (2017)

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
METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH STAGES:
THIRD STAGE (2018)

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!

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