

ESTABLISHING COMPETENCE LEVELS IN TRANSLATION

PACTE group

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

Principal investigator: Amparo Hurtado Albir
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Speaker: Amparo Hurtado Albir



Current research project:

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

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

1. Objectives
2. Rationale behind project
3. Participants
4. Conceptual framework
5. Methodology and research stages
6. Results so far

OBJECTIVES

Aim: 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



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

↳ Establishing scales of performance level descriptors (progression)

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

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

PARTICIPANTS

Participation: 23 translator training centres from 15 European countries

- BELGIUM

Vakgroep Vertalen, Tolken en Communicatie, Universiteit Gent
Faculteit Letteren en Wijsbegeerte, Universiteit Antwerpen

- 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

Faculty of Translation Studies, Linguistics and Cultural Studies, Johannes Gutenberg
Universität Mainz, Germesheim

- 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

- NETHERLANDS

Faculteit International Business and Communication, Maastricht

PACTE

- 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

School of Languages and Applied Linguistics , Open University

Department of Modern Languages and Cultures, University of Westminster

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1. Results from two of PACTE's previous experimental research projects:

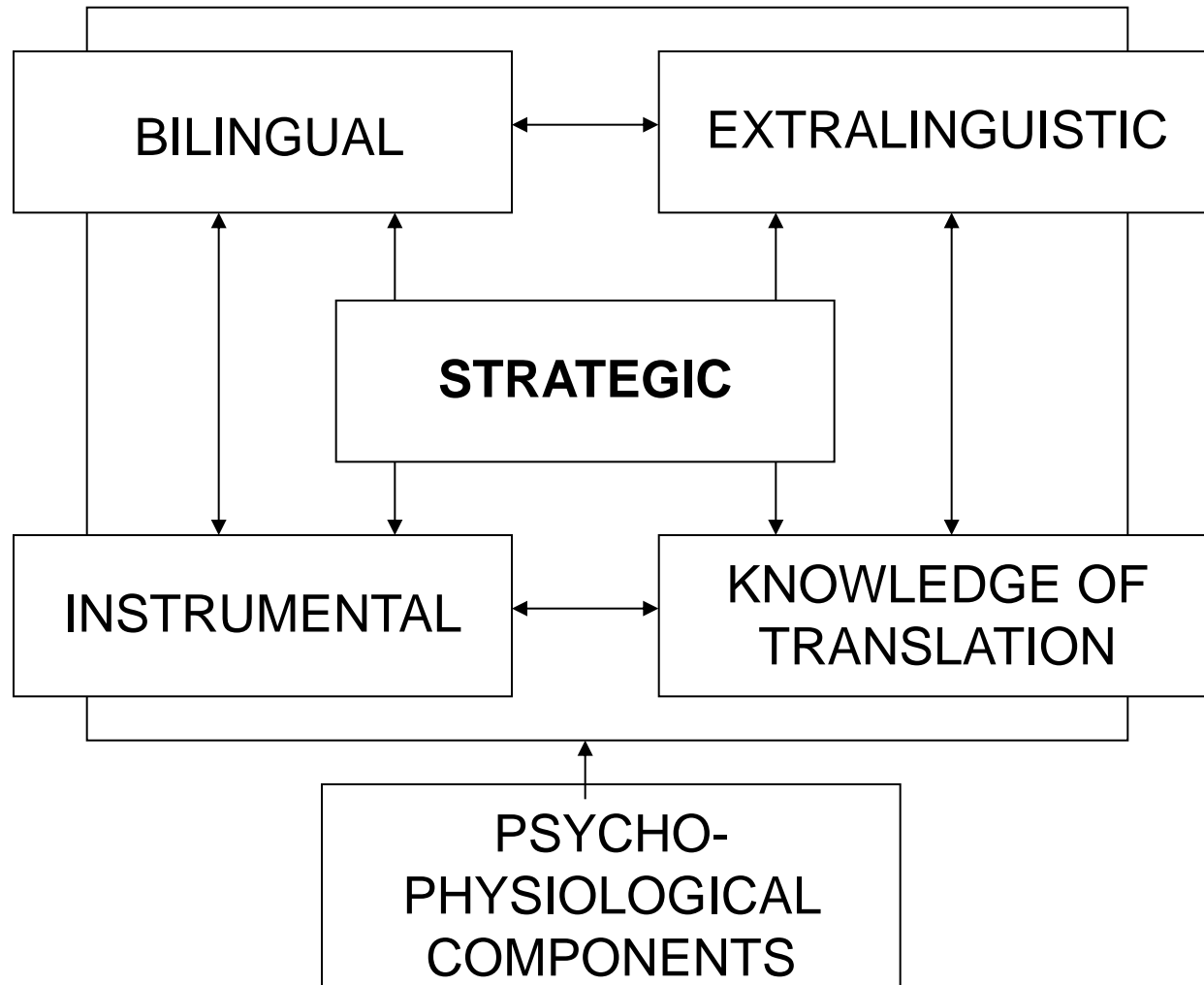
- Translation Competence (TC): 35 professional translators, 24 foreign-language teachers
- Translation Competence Acquisition (TCA): 130 trainee translators (undergraduate degree)

→ Validation of TC and TCA models

2. Research on descriptor scales (e.g. CEFR; NAATI)

TC: *the underlying system of knowledge, abilities and attitudes required to be able to translate*

- Translation competence involves declarative and predominantly procedural knowledge.
- It comprises five sub-competences (*Bilingual, Extralinguistic, Knowledge of translation, Instrumental and Strategic*) and activates a series of *psycho-physiological components*.



TESTS

- Exploratory studies on TC (June 2000-January 2001)
- Pilot test on TC (February-April 2004)
- Experiment on TC (October 2005-March 2006):
35 professional translators, 24 foreign-language teachers

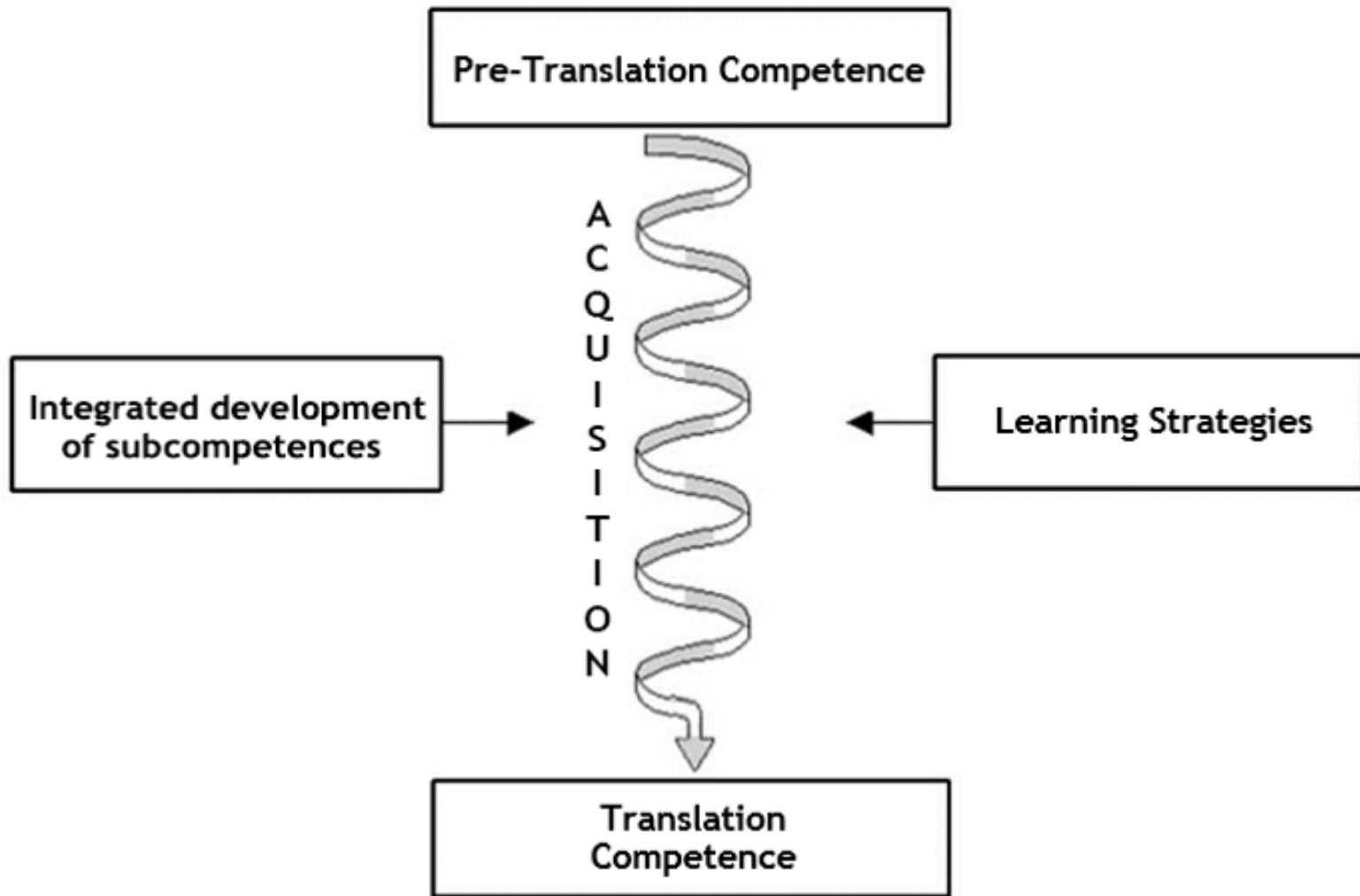
→ Validation of TC model

Our results corroborate the 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 the use of cognitive (internal support) and different types of documentary resources (external support) in an efficient manner *STRATEGIC + INSTRUMENTAL*
- To combine automatized and non-automatized cognitive resources (internal support) in an efficient manner *STRATEGIC + KNOWLEDGE OF TRANSLATION*
- To use instrumental resources in an efficient manner *INSTRUMENTAL*

TCA: *a spiral, a non-linear process in which novice knowledge (Pre-translation Competence) evolves into TC, involving the development of sub-competences and learning strategies*

- During the process, both declarative and procedural types of knowledge are integrated, developed and restructured.



- Pilot test on TCA (June 2011)
- Experiment on TCA (November 2011): 130 translation trainees

Simulation of a longitudinal study:

Measurements from cohorts of first-year, second-year, third-year, fourth-year students, recently graduates students

Advantages:

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

Our results corroborate:

1. TCA is a dynamic, non-linear, spiral process

Different types of evolution:

- *Non-evolution*: no difference in the values between successive groups between the first year and the end of training
- *Rising evolution*: values rise between the first year and the end of training, with each value between successive groups being higher than or equal to the previous one
- *Falling evolution*: values fall between the first year and the end of training, with each value between successive groups being lower than or equal to the previous one
- *Mixed evolution*: a combination of rising and falling evolution between the first year and the end of training

2. TCA involves an evolution

3. TCA is a process in which the development of procedural knowledge – and, consequently, of the Strategic sub-competence - is essential
4. TCA is a process in which the sub-competences of TC are developed and restructured
5. In TCA, the development of the Strategic, Instrumental, and Knowledge of Translation sub-competences is particularly important
6. In TCA, not all sub-competences develop in parallel, i.e. at the same time and at the same rate
7. TCA is dependent upon directionality (direct/inverse translation)
8. TCA is dependent upon the learning environment

Each level's description should include:

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

Table 1. *Common Reference Levels: global scale*

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

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 liable to be translated at each level (highly relevant category)

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)

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH STAGES

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

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

Undergraduate degree:

1. L2 Level at the beginning of the training

B2 (43.7%), B1 (12.5%)

It is not required or specified (31.25%)

2. Competence-based design (31.25%)

- Differences in the design: numbers (33, 27, 8, 5) and features; a 20% does not refer to them as “competences”
- Design of the competences’ learning results for each level (40%)
- Progression regarding the subjects’ specific competences (22.2%)

3. Information about the textual genres being used (33.3%)

Verification of proposed level descriptors (based on *expert judgement*)

1. Professional opinions

Representatives of Europe's professional translation sector

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) 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

RESULTS SO FAR

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
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:				

LEVEL B1, B2: BASIC SPECIALIZED TRANSLATION COMPETENCES (introduction to fields of specialization in translation)

Level B1 Level B2	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
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)

Level C1 Level C2	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
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:				

➤ OUR PROJECT: 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!

谢谢！

PACTE group

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

<http://grupsderecerca.uab.cat/pacte/es>

<https://www.facebook.com/didtrad.pacte>

cg.didtrad.pacte@uab.cat

- PACTE (2000) "Acquiring Translation Competence: Hypotheses and Methodological Problems in a Research Project". In: Beeby, A., D. Ensinger and M. Presas (eds.) *Investigating Translation*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, p. 99-106.
- PACTE (ed.) (2001) *La investigación empírica y experimental en Traductología, Quaderns. Revista de Traducció* 6, p. 9-60.
- PACTE (2001) "La Competencia traductora y su adquisición", *Quaderns. Revista de Traducció* 6, p. 39-45.
- PACTE (2002a) "Una investigación empírico-experimental sobre la adquisición de la competencia traductora". In: Alcina Caudet, A. and Gamero Pérez, S. (eds.) *La traducción científico-técnica y la terminología en la sociedad de la información*, Castellón de la Plana: Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I, p. 125-138.
- PACTE (2002b) "Exploratory tests in a study of translation competence", *Conference Interpretation and Translation* 4 (2), p. 41-69.
- PACTE (2003) "Building a Translation Competence Model". In: Alves, F.(ed.) *Triangulating Translation: Perspectives in process oriented research*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, p. 43-66.
- PACTE (2005a) "Primeros resultados de un experimento sobre la Competencia Traductora", *Actas del II Congreso Internacional de la AIETI (Asociación Ibérica de Estudios de Traducción e Interpretación). Información y documentación*, Madrid: Publicaciones de la Universidad Pontificia Comillas, p. 573-587. CD-ROM
- PACTE (2005b) "Investigating Translation Competence: Conceptual and Methodological Issues", *Meta* 50 (2) *Processus et cheminements en traduction et interprétation/Processes and Pathways in Translation and Interpretation*, p. 609-619.
- PACTE (2007a) "Zum Wesen der Übersetzungskompetenz. Grundlagen für die experimentelle Validierung eines Ük-Modells". In: Wotjak, G. (ed.). *Quo vadis Translatologie? Ein halbes Jahrhundert universitärer Ausbildung von Dolmetschern und Übersetzern in Leipzig. Rückschau, Zwischenbilanz und Perspektiven aus der Außensicht*, Berlin, Frank & Timme, p.327-432

- PACTE(2007b) “Une recherche empirique expérimentale sur la compétence en traduction. In: Gouadec, D. (ed.) *Actes du Colloque International : Quelle formation pour le traducteur ?*, Paris: Maison du dictionnaire, p.95-116.
- PACTE (2008) “First results of a Translation Competence Experiment: ‘Knowledge of Translation’ and ‘Efficacy of the Translation Process’”. In: , J. (ed.) *Translator and Interpreter Training. Issues, Methods and Debates*. London: Continuum, p. 104-126.
- PACTE (2009) Results of the validation of the PACTE Translation Competence model: Acceptability and Decision-making, *Across Language and Cultures* 10 (2), p. 207-230.
- PACTE (2011a) Results of the validation of the PACTE translation competence model: Translation project and Dynamic translation index. In: O’Brien, S. (ed.) *Cognitive Explorations of Translation*. London: Continuum, p. 30-53.
- PACTE (2011b) Results of the Validation of the PACTE Translation Competence Model: Translation Problems and Translation Competence. In: Alvstad, C., A. Hild and E. Tiselius (eds.) *Methods and Strategies of Process Research: Integrative Approaches in Translation Studies*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, p. 317-343.
- PACTE (2014) "First Results of PACTE Group's Experimental Research on Translation Competence Acquisition: The Acquisition of Declarative Knowledge of Translation." *MonTI*. special issue 1, p. 85-115.
- PACTE (2015) “Results of PACTE’s Experimental Research on the Acquisition of Translation Competence: the Acquisition of Declarative and Procedural Knowledge in Translation. The Dynamic Translation Index”. *Translation as a Cognitive Activity*. Special issue of *Translation Spaces* 4 (1), p. 29-53.
- HURTADO ALBIR, A. (in press) *Researching Translation Competence by PACTE Group*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins.