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FIRST RESULTS OF PACTE'S RESEARCH ON THE AQUISITION OF TRANSLATION COMPETENCE:

THE ACQUISITION OF DECLARATIVE KNOWLEDGE OF TRANSLATION

Group PACTE

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Introduction and Research Objectives

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

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- – TC Exploratory Studies (June 2000 – January 2001)
- – TC Pilot Test (February – April 2004)
- – TC Experiment (October 2005 – March 2006)

- – ATC Pilot Test (June 2011)
- – ATC Experiment (November 2011)

Translation Competence Research: Definitions and Theoretical Model

TRANSLATION COMPETENCE

The underlying system of knowledge required to translate

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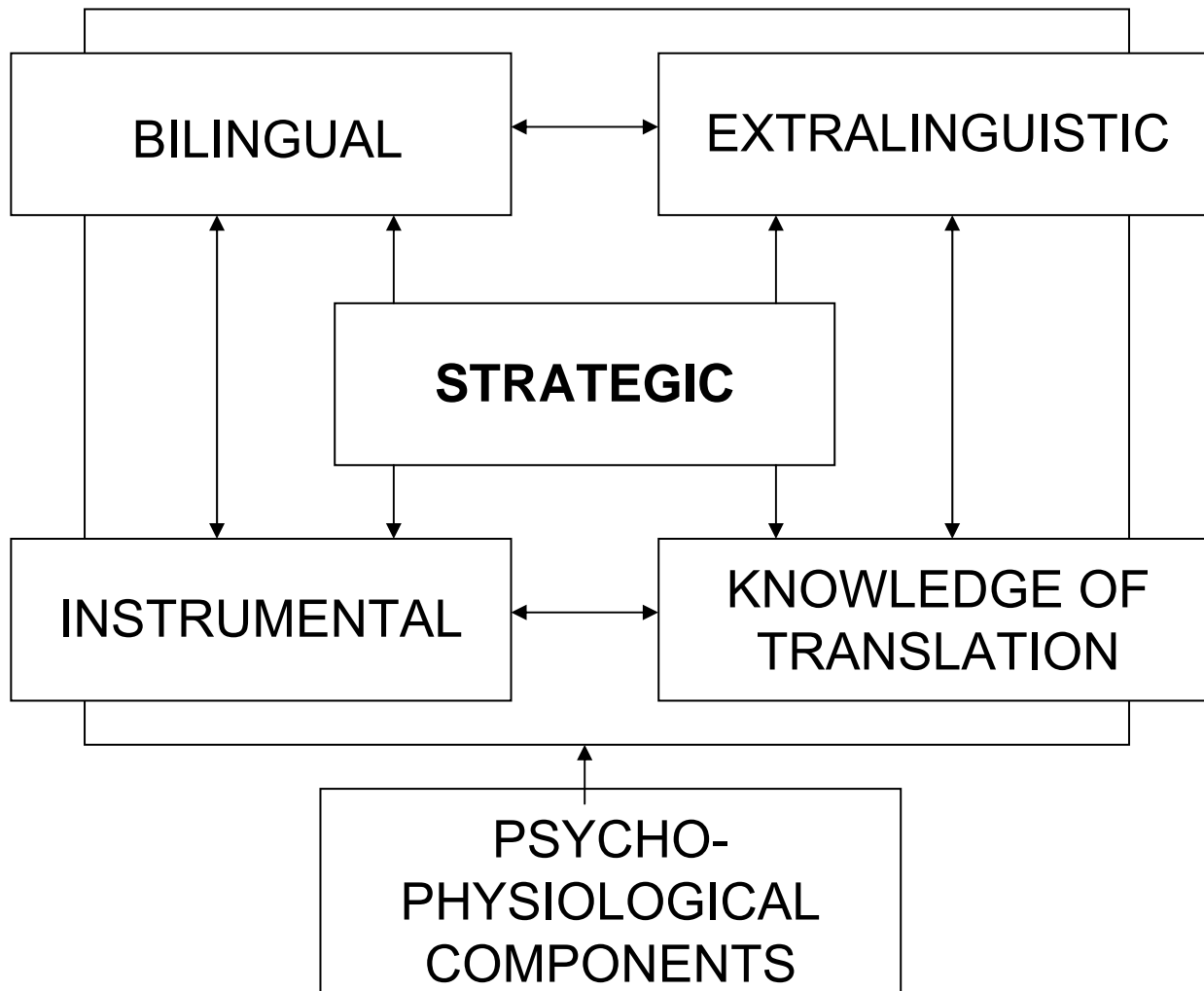
TC Research design

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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

20 INDICATORS

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EXPERIMENTAL UNIVERSE

✓ Professionals working with foreign languages

SAMPLE

✓ Professional translators (35)

✓ Teachers of foreign languages (24)

INSTRUMENTS

✓ Proxy and Camtasia <u>></u>

✓ Direct observation of subjects

✓ Texts and translations

✓ Questionnaires and interview

   ✓ **Knowledge of Translation Questionnaire**

Results from the TC Experiment have been published (PACTE 2008, 2009, 2011a, 2011b & in progress). Our written document refers to a couple of results related to the purpose of this presentation:

1. **Acceptability Results for Translators (0.73) and Teachers (0.49) in the Direct Translation Task.** P.6 table 2

2. **Some methodological results that validate the experimental design.** P. 7: tables 7 & 8

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Acquisition of Translation Competence Research:

Definitions and Theoretical Model

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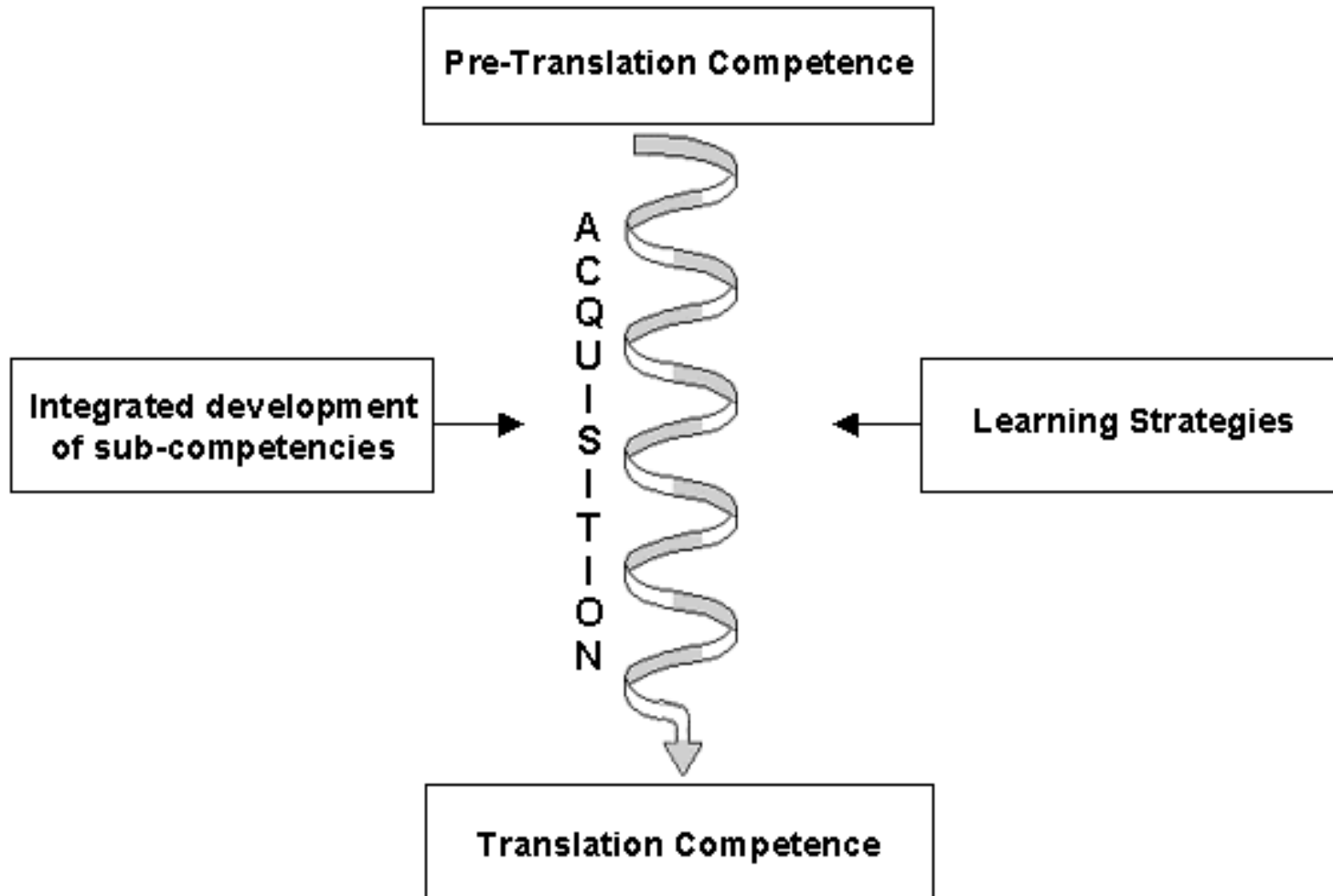
GENERAL HYPOTHESIS

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

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 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

✓ Experience in translation (six categories):

- Novices

- Second year students

- Third year students

- Fourth year students

- Recent graduates

- Professional translators (From the TC Experiment)

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DEPENDENT VARIABLES (as in the TC experiment)

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

**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

SIMULATION 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

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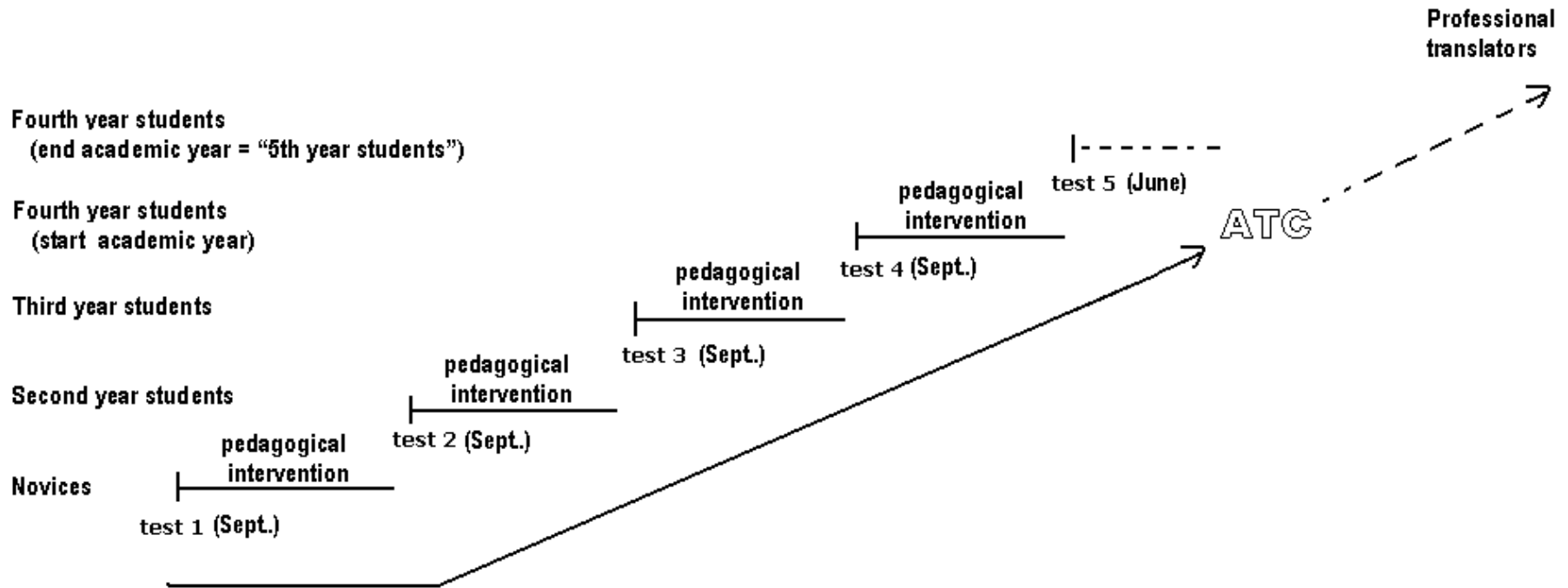
SAMPLE

✓ 130 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 passed the filter, 5 groups of 30 were randomly selected from each year

CONTROL GROUP

✓ The 35 professional translators from the TC experiment

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EXPERIMENTAL TASKS (as in the TC experiment)

- Completion of a questionnaire on knowledge about translation

- 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

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
- ✓ Corpus software
  - WordSmith Tools

NEW INSTRUMENTS FOR THE ATC EXPERIMENT

- ✓ Questionnaires
  - Selection Questionnaire
  - Personal Information Questionnaire

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Declarative Knowledge of Translation

Subjects' knowledge of the principles of translation

❑ Indicators:
- ✓ Dynamic index
- ✓ Coherence coefficient

❑ Instrument:
- ✓ Questionnaire on Knowledge about Translation
  - ▪ Categories:
    - ✓ Dynamic: textual, communicative and functionalist concept of translation
    - ✓ Static: linguistic and literal concept of translation

Long process of development and validation
(See Neunzig & Kuznik 2007; PACTE 2008 & in progress)

– Pilot Test (35 UAB/FTI Students)

– In the CT Pilot Test (3 Translators & 3 Teachers)

– Validation Test (10 Translation users)

→ Final Questionnaire (27 Items)

Questionnaire Items Analyzed

	Dynamic questions	Static questions
1st Pair FUNCTION OF BRIEF AND TARGET AUDIENCE	**Item 3** The client conditions the way the translator translates.	**Item 24** When you translate a text, you should not be influenced by the target reader.
2nd Pair METHODS REQUIRED	**Item 10** A text should be translated in different ways depending on who the target reader is.	**Item 4** The aim of every translation is to produce a text as close in form to the source text as possible.
3rd Pair METHODS REQUIRED	**Item 23** 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.	**Item 11** All translated texts should maintain the order of the sentences and the paragraphs of the source text.
4th Pair METHODS REQUIRED	**Item 14** When translating a technical text, complicated vocabulary is not the main problem.	**Item 5** Most translation problems can be solved with the help of good dictionaries.
5th Pair METHODS REQUIRED	**Item 27** 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	**1 Item 6** 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

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Dynamic Index (-1/+1)	Mean
All Translators	0.273
Best Translators	**0.36**
Language Teachers	0.088
Translation Users	-0.200

RESULTS:
TC COHERENCE COEFFICIENT

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COHERENCE COEFFICIENT (0/1)	Mean
All Translators	0.37
Best Translators	**0.50**
Language Teachers	0.27
Translation Users	0.05

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ATC Knowledge of Translation

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ATC	Mean (-1/+1)
1st Year	0.10
2nd Year	**0.33**
3rd Year	0.37
4th Year	0.36
Graduates	0.41

DYNAMIC INDEX RESULTS: Comparing ATC and TC

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ATC	Mean (-1/+1)
1st Year	0.10
2nd Year	**0.33**
3rd Year	0.37
4th Year	0.36
Graduates	0.41

Mean (-1/+1)	TC
0.27	Translators
0.09	Teachers
- 0.20	Users
0.36	Best Translators

COHERENCE COEFFICIENT RESULTS:

ATC	Mean (0/1)
1st Year	0.16
2nd Year	**0.42**
3rd Year	0.42
4th Year	0.39
Graduates	0.41

COHERENCE COEFFICIENT RESULTS: Comparing ATC and TC

ATC	Mean (0/1)
1st Year	0.16
2nd Year	**0.42**
3rd Year	0.42
4th Year	0.39
Graduates	0.41

Mean (0/1)	TC
0.37	Translators
0.27	Teachers
0.05	Users
0.50	Best Translators

- Dynamic Index & Coherence Coefficient

  - Based on 5 pairs of opposing items from the 27 items in the Questionnaire
    - All 5 items show change from 1st to 2nd Years
    - **INVESTIGATE OTHER ITEMS**
  - Based on Likert scale of 4
    - I strongly disagree/I disagree/ I agree/I strongly agree
    - **CONVERT TO BINARY OPTION (NO/YES)**

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ITEMS WHERE NOTHING VERY INTERESTING HAPPENS

Item 19 (Dynamic)

When you translate you should be aware of the characteristic norms of the text that you have to produce in the TT language

	NO	YES
1st Year		**100%**
2nd Year		**96%**
3rd Year	**10%**	**89%**
4th Year	**3%**	**96%**
Graduates	**18%**	**81%**
Translators		**97%**

ITEMS WHERE NOTHING VERY INTERESTING HAPPENS

Item 8 (Dynamic)

If the characteristics of the source text are very different in the target culture (e.g. instruction manuals, commercial letters, etc.) you should adapt the translation.

	NO	YES
1st Year	8%	91%
2nd Year	4%	96%
3rd Year	7%	92%
4th Year	16%	83%
Graduates		100%
Translators	2%	97%

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ITEMS THAT INDICATE GROWING DYNAMISM

Item 12 (Static)

The main difficulty when translating lies in the idiomatic expressions of a language.

	NO	YES
1st Year		**100%**
2nd Year	**20%**	**80%**
3rd Year	**14%**	**85%**
4th Year	**36%**	**63%**
Graduates	**27%**	**68%**
Translators	**57%**	**42%**

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ITEMS THAT INDICATE GROWING DYNAMISM

Item 10 (Dynamic)

A text should be translated in different ways depending
on who the target reader is.

	NO	YES
1st Year	37%	62%
2nd Year	4%	96%
3rd Year	7%	92%
4th Year	16%	83%
Graduates	18%	81%
Translators	20%	80%

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ITEMS THAT REFLECT FORMAL TRANING AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Item 10 (Static)

As no one can know all the words, the best aid to translate well is a bilingual dictionary.

	NO	YES
1st Year	4%	95%
2nd Year	36%	64%
3rd Year	50%	50%
4th Year	66%	33%
Graduates	86%	9%
Translators	51%	48%

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ITEMS THAT REFLECT FORMAL TRANING AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Item 16 (Static)

As soon as you find a word or expression you don't know the meaning of, you should look it up straightaway in a bilingual dictionary

	NO	YES
1st Year	29%	70%
2nd Year	68%	28%
3rd Year	82%	17%
4th Year	80%	16%
Graduates	68%	31%
Translators	54%	45%

TC Experiment Results:

- **A dynamic concept of translation is a characteristic of TC** (PACTE 2011a & in progress)
    - This conclusion was reached using the Knowledge about Translation Questionnaire

- **A dynamic concept of and approach to translation is a characteristic of TC** (PACTE 2011a & in progress)
    - This conclusion was reached by calculating the Dynamic Translation Index: Knowledge about Translation (declarative) + Translation Project (procedural)

- **There is a correlation between the Dynamic Translation Index and Acceptability**
    - This conclusion was reached by triangulating the Dynamic Translation Index + Acceptability

This finding validates other theoretical models: Nida 1964; Seleskovitch 1968, Seleskovitch and Lederer 1984; Reiss and Vermeer 1984, Nord 1991; Hatim and Mason 1990, etc.

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The Dynamic Translation
Index

=

Knowledge about Translation

(declarative knowledge)

+

Translation Project

(procedural knowledge)

Triangulating the Dynamic
Translation Index +
Acceptability showed:

A dynamic concept of translation

↕

A dynamic approach to the
translation of a specific text

↕

A dynamic approach to
translation problems posed in the
text

↕

The acceptability of the solutions
found to these problems

ATC EXPERIMENT RESULTS:

- **The progression from a static to a dynamic concept of translation is a characteristic of the ATC**

QUESTIONS:

- **When** and **How** do students integrate declarative and procedural knowledge and develop a dynamic approach to translating a specific text and to finding acceptable solutions to translation problems?

NEXT STEPS:

- Analyze the Translation Project variable (procedural knowledge) needed for the **ATC Dynamic Translation Index**
- Analyze the **Acceptability** Indicator
- Triangulate data to see if there is correlation between the two