

**Hurtado Albir, Amparo (ed.) (2017). *Researching Translation and Interpreting Competence by PACTE Group*. [Benjamins Translation Library, 127]. Amsterdam-Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 401 pp.**

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The notion of “translation competence” (TC), the underlying knowledge system needed to translate (PACTE 2005), has been for over three decades a core issue in Translation Studies (TS). Institutions of higher learning, where TS researchers are based, have always been interested in the type of knowledge and skills shared by professional translators that bilingual or novice trainees do not possess. Thus, it is often conceptualized as the main component of translation education (Deslisle 1980). Over the years, a number of scholars and research groups have proposed more or less detailed theoretical models of translation competence from both cognitive and didactic perspectives (Deslisle 1980; Bell 1991; Pym 2003; Hönig 1995; Kiraly 1995, 2012; Shreve 1997; Neubert 2000; Kelly 2005). Nevertheless, as the introduction to this volume indicates, when the PACTE group of the Autonomous University of Barcelona started their research on this topic “there was no generally accepted TC model that has been validated empirically” (PACTE 2017: xxvi). To date, only two research groups have engaged in empirical research in order to validate the proposed models: the large-scale efforts of the collective behind this volume, the PACTE group led by Amparo Hurtado, and the smaller-scale publications of the TRANSCOM group led by Susanne Göpferich (Göpferich 2009; Göpferich *et al.* 2011).

The book *Researching Translation and Interpreting Competence by PACTE Group* is a compendium of the research efforts of the PACTE group since 1999 (Hurtado Albir 1999), and represents, without any doubt, the most comprehensive, up to date and large-scale effort to systematically, empirically and solidly offer a global and holistic approach to the study of the notion of translation competence. The objectives of the volume are to “present the results of our research on Translation Competence (TC)” in terms of the identification of “the characteristics specific to TC”, and of how to “develop and test the instruments [...] capable of measuring the specific characteristics of TC”, as well as to “show that TC [is] qualitatively different from bilingual competence” (PACTE 2017: xxv). These objectives, after the reader reaches the end of the book and has been taken through a detailed exposition of the entire research cycle of this group over 17 years, are quite successfully achieved. The project is grounded on Cognitive Translation Studies approach, and it conceptualizes translation competence as expert knowledge that is not possessed by all bilinguals; it is mostly procedural or operative knowledge (knowing how to do things) as opposed to declarative knowledge (knowledge about something).

As a whole, the book provides the first outstanding overview of a comprehensive research agenda into TC. It delves in great detail into the sound development, implementation, restructuring, testing and analysis of a proposed research model of translation competence, from the theoretical underpinnings and their evolution over time, the operationalization of all variables and subcompetences, the pilot studies, experimental studies with cohorts of students, professionals and bilingual school teachers, their analysis and the future efforts in the study of the interrelated notion of “Translation Competence Acquisition”.

The book contains 400 pages, nineteen chapters and it is divided in four parts. It includes a glossary, an invaluable and large number of appendices with all the instruments, statistical analyses, data, etc. as well as a comprehensive list of references. In a discipline where replication of studies and the development of common instruments that can be used across the board are rare, this comprehensive and detailed compendium of instruments provides an exceptional platform for anyone attempting to delve into empirical research into translation competence. The detailed treatment of the hypotheses, and the operationalization of all the dependent variables across each chapter on Part 3 (knowledge of translation, translation project, identification and solution of translation problems, decision making, efficacy of the translation process and use of instrumental resources), allow for future studies to attempt to replicate all or any of the hypotheses with similar or different populations in other language combinations (other than German, French and English into Catalan and Spanish).

Part 1 of the book includes the introduction and conceptual background, including the theoretical underpinnings of the notion of translation competence, and a description of the current version of the classic PACTE model of translation competence. This description includes earlier models and the reasons behind the evolution in order to let readers understand both the dynamic and cyclical research process and the bidirectional interaction between theoretical and empirical research across time. Although this part can be found in multiple earlier publications authored by this group, it is a key point of departure for the monograph. This part also contains a chapter on methodology and the design of a line of research.

Part II includes four chapters devoted to the design of the research and data analysis. More specifically, it incorporates exploratory and pilot studies that offer an outstanding insight into the difficult path the PACTE research group started, and also the development of the final testing instruments after the initial stages of experimentation with pilot studies. It also clearly and succinctly presents the global experimental study with a description of hypotheses, variables, tasks, instruments and tools (all included in the appendixes). The chapter by Ana Kuznik provides a detailed description of the sample, and the process of data collection and analysis. The same is true for all and each of the chapters, where the description of the empirical study goes in extreme detail, thus, as previously indicated, allowing for possible replication of studies since the book provides a set of variables and instruments that can be customized or used in future studies.

Part III contains the actual results of the studies by the PACTE group, including the analysis of each of the variables, the data compiled, the statistical analyses, and so on. Each chapter devoted to the testing of a specific variable skillfully ends with a brief summary of the findings that allows the reader, after the detailed description of variables, testing, statistical analyses, etc. to extract the main conclusions, that is, the differences between professionals and advanced bilinguals for each variable. The results, while sometimes predictable, are often surprising, such as the fact that professional translators use more resources to solve problems than advanced bilinguals, but this additional time devoted to the use of instrumental resources results in higher quality of the translations. Similarly, the acceptability of translations in the inverse directionality is quite similar between the two populations, and this is partly explained by the more active use of the B language in advanced bilinguals (language teachers in the study), as opposed to professional translators that tend to work towards their A language and have a less developed active competence in that language. The PACTE study involves a process-based approach, but this part is complemented by an additional chapter by Patricia Rodríguez-Inés, who presents a product, corpus-based analysis of the two textual populations, the translations by the professional translators and the language teachers. The combination of product and process based study is currently one of the main projected lines of research in Translation Studies (Muñoz Martín 2014; Halverson 2016), a topic that was the focus, for example, in the last 2017 conference on Methodological Advances in Translation Studies held in Ghent University. Therefore this latter chapter cleverly moves the research of PACTE in this necessary direction. The results of the corpus study showed some differences in between the products produced by the two groups of subjects, primarily in terms of the use of calques, but also in term of the level of adhesion to the source text, the importance of context or the critical use of dictionaries. Some differences were also observed from a product perspective depending on the language combination. This is the case when the study of translations is carried out comparing variables such as the level of translation competence of samples or different language combinations (all into Spanish or Catalan).

A comprehensive summary of results is the aim of Part 4. This part offers a chapter on the identified features of top translators and a concise summary of the defining features of translation competence. Thus it can be considered a standalone chapter for anyone interested in a quick overview of the results obtained by the PACTE group, as well as in the observed differences between professionals and bilinguals in terms of translation competence. It is worth noting that chapter 18 includes the methodological contributions of the overall PACTE project to the wider research community interested on process-based research, and more precisely research into translation competence. The part ends with a projection towards the future and the study of “translation competence acquisition”, a notion that is even more scarcely researched in TS (i.e. Shreve 1997; Göpferich 2009) and in which the work by the PACTE group can be considered groundbreaking and of the utmost interest for the discipline.

In all, this much needed monograph, offers a unique glimpse into the first large-scale effort to develop, validate, and empirically test the notion of translation competence. It offers not only the theoretical and empirically tested results, but also an empirically tested componential model of translation competence that can be used in Applied Studies (Jiménez-Crespo 2013), making the transfer from the Pure branch of TS to its Applied branch a reality in tune with many others similar disciplines.

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