

Appendix E

Evaluation of practical translations: post-graduate students

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Dept of Linguistics (Translation Studies)
University of South Africa

1. Introduction

The practical side of translation work consists of two main processes, namely the **decoding** (i.e. interpretation and analysis) of the source text and the **encoding** (i.e. expressing in the target language and target culture) of the source text into the target language version; these two processes together make up the translation.

The underlying assessment principle is to recognise, in practical terms as well as in the context of the tasks set in the assignments, what constitutes a professionally acceptable standard in **decoding the source text** and **encoding the target language version**. By 'professionally acceptable' we mean a translation which would be of a standard acceptable for submission to a client.

Decoding the source text requires:

- accuracy of translation, i.e. the correct transfer of information and evidence of complete comprehension;

whereas **encoding** the source text in the target language requires:

- appropriate choice of vocabulary, idiom, terminology and register;
- cohesion, coherence and organisation;
- technical aspects relating to grammar, spelling, accentuation, punctuation and the transfer of dates, names and figures.

2. Marking system

The Department wishes to ensure that students graduating from the course are able to translate accurately and professionally. Translations should be of a standard acceptable to a client. It is also important that translators trained at different institutions be graded uniformly. Our marking system (which originally comes from the University of Westminster, U.K.) has therefore been set up in collaboration with other SA trainers.

All the practical translation work will be evaluated according to a five-point scale which divides translation skills according to five categories:

(1) Accuracy

Both *minor* and *major* inaccuracies lead to information being conveyed incorrectly at several points.

Minor errors include:

- ! *mistranslation*, in which the meaning of a word is lost;
- ! *omission* of words that contribute only slightly to meaning;
- ! *inclusion of translation alternatives* where the translator should have made a choice.

Major errors include:

- ! *misinterpretation/ gross mistranslation*, in which the meaning of e.g. a paragraph is lost altogether;
- ! *omission* of vital words or other information;
- ! *insertion* of information not contained in the original.

(2) Choice of vocabulary, terminology and register

(3) Cohesion, coherence and organisation

(4) Grammar, spelling and punctuation

(5) Annotations for an annotated translation or comments on translation problems.

This allows students to monitor their progress in the practical work. Each category requires a mark on the scale detailed below.

CATEGORY 1: ACCURACY OF TRANSLATION

(Transfer of information, including dates, names, figures etc.)

GRADE		POINTS
A	Translation shows excellent command of text with totally accurate transfer of information. This grade requires a PERFECT translation.	+8
B	Good command of text: no mistranslations; no more than 3 minor shifts or changes in emphasis (+7 to +6 for less than 2, +5 to +4 for more than 2 such shifts).	+7 → +4
C	Adequate command of text. No serious errors or omissions. Minor inaccuracies or mistranslations may be present (+3 for 1 mistranslation, +2 for 2 mistranslations etc.).	+3 → 0
D	Some understanding of text, but a number of inaccuracies and occasional serious error or omission.	-1 → -4
E	Inadequate grasp of information, major misinterpretations leading to false transfer of information. Serious omissions - more than 5% of ST omitted.	-5 → -8

CATEGORY 2: VOCABULARY, IDIOM, REGISTER

GRADE		POINTS
A	Language and register entirely appropriate to subject matter and intention of original.	+6 → +4
B	Vocabulary, terminology and idiom are appropriate throughout. Register is mostly appropriate.	+3 → +1
C	Broadly appropriate. Some peculiarities but will not impair overall acceptability of text. Some incorrect choice of register and idiom.	0
D	Some inappropriate renderings which impair or distort the message.	-1 → -3
E	Number of clumsy or inappropriate renderings which seriously impair/distort the message. Little/no sense of register.	-4 → -6

CATEGORY 3: COHESION, COHERENCE, ORGANISATION

GRADE		POINTS
A	Reads naturally in target language. Structure, links and discourse organisation are all entirely appropriate to TL.	+6 → +4
B	Well-organised with good structure and coherence. Not perfect.	+3 → +1
C	Structure is sound, but there may be some awkwardness.	0
D	Inappropriate structural features. Some incoherence, may be too close to original resulting in a stilted translation.	-1 → -3
E	Does not read like an original. Stilted/incoherent/too literal rendering of structure of SL which is inappropriate for TL. Far too literal.	-4 → -6

CATEGORY 4: TECHNICAL POINTS
(presentation, grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.)

GRADE		POINTS
B	Faultless.	+4
C	Less than 2 minor technical errors.	+2
D	Correct in major technical elements but more than 2 spelling or punctuation errors.	0
E	Some major errors making translation less acceptable.	-2
	A number of faults making the translation unacceptable in professional terms.	-4

CATEGORY 5: ANNOTATED TRANSLATION
(discussion of translation problems)

GRADE		POINTS
A	Informed observations of problems. Ability to solve problems demonstrated by appropriate explanations.	+6
B	Understanding of problems with more or less appropriate explanations.	+5 → +3
C	General understanding of problems with adequate explanations.	+2 → 0
D	Comments show lack of awareness of nature of problems.	-1 → -3
E	Few difficulties picked out. Not explained or solved satisfactorily at all.	-4 → -6

3. Marking sheet

The markers evaluate translations according to the above marking system. The marks are then recorded on a marking sheet which is attached to the assignment. Below is a sample marking sheet:

CATEGORY 1: ACCURACY OF TRANSLATION

A (+8)	B (+7 → +4)	C (+3 → 0)	D (-1 → -4)	E (-5 → -8)

CATEGORY 2: VOCABULARY, IDIOM, REGISTER

A (+6 → +4)	B (+3 → +1)	C (0)	D (-1 → -3)	E (-4 → -6)

CATEGORY 3: COHESION, COHERENCE, ORGANISATION

A (+6 → +4)	B (+3 → +1)	C (0)	D (-1 → -3)	E (-4 → -6)

CATEGORY 4: TECHNICAL POINTS

(grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.)

A (+4)	B (+2)	C (0)	D (-2)	E (-4)

CATEGORY 5: ANNOTATED TRANSLATION (translation problems)

A (+6)	B (+5 → +3)	C (+2 → 0)	D (-1 → -3)	E (-4 → -6)

4. Determining the final mark

- The number of points obtained for each category is indicated on the marking sheet.
- The points are added together and converted to an overall percentage according to the formulae below.
- If a candidate obtains marks in the E grade for more than two categories, the candidate will automatically fail the translation.

Non-annotated translation (Categories 1-4):

$$\frac{x + 24}{48} \times 100\%$$

Conversion table for non-annotated translation:

-5 = 40%	+1 = 52%	+7 = 65%	13 = 77%
-4 = 42%	+2 = 54%	+8 = 67%	14 = 79%
-3 = 44%	+3 = 56%	+9 = 69%	15 = 81%
-2 = 46%	+4 = 58%	10 = 71%	16 = 83%
-1 = 48%	+5 = 60%	11 = 73%	17 = 85%
0 = 50%	+6 = 63%	12 = 75%	18 = 88%

Annotated translation (Categories 1-5):

$$\frac{x + 30}{60} \times 100\%$$