

**Tamara Kavytska,
Andrej Kawicki**

**INSTRUMENTS TO ASSESS SKILLS OF
ACADEMIC TRANSLATION FROM
UKRAINIAN INTO ENGLISH**

Taras Shevchenko National
University of Kyiv, Ukraine

Brief overview of the study: pre-research findings

- Assessment in Translation Pedagogy is neglected;
 - What is assessed?
 - How is it assessed?
 - How is it tested?
 - What is the rater's profile?
 - Quantitative and *error-based* assessment schemes prevail.
 - Is it effective? In what contexts?
 - How practical is it?
 - Theoretical roots?
- The 2013 survey of Translation trainers *revealed* (n=65):
 - 88% - apply an error-based assessment;
 - 12% - assess TrC & the progress in its acquisition;
 - 75 % - admit they lack reliable techniques to assess students' TrC & have considerably undeveloped skills in testing and assessment.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY: Ukrainian Context

- *Research objectives:*
 - reconsider the approach towards translation quality assessment
 - develop & validate the instruments to measure skills of L2 academic translation;
- *Tools:*
 - L2 proficiency test; pre- and post-training test in translation skills; assessment scales; survey of translation teachers;
- *Participants of the study:*
 - Translation Majors, Master's program, n=33.
 - *2 groups of assessors:* 5 University translation trainers who applied the developed instruments; 5 experts (professional translators) who cross-assessed the quality of translation holistically.

Paradoxes of L2 Translation Teaching & Assessment

- Denounced by theory : : Accepted by industry;
- Native language : : Authentic translation;
- Translation Pedagogy : : Language Pedagogy;
- Quality requirements : : Quality needs (published translations, professional translation, translation teaching) .

Assessment of L2 Academic Translation

- **Theoretical background:** Beeby, 2000; Horton, 1998; House, 1997; Hurtado, 2002; Kussmaul, 1995; Pym, 1992; Shevnin, 2003, 2005, 2009; Waddington, 2001, 2004; Williams, 2013.
- *Depends on:*
 - **assessment context** (published translations, professional translation, translation teaching);
 - **object** (student translator competence, study plans and programs);
 - **type** (product, process or qualitative assessment); **function** (diagnostic, formative, summative);
 - **aim** (academic, pedagogical or speculative) and **means** (translations, evaluation criteria, grading scales, tests, observation reports etc).

Assessment Challenges

- Cognitively complex (reading - to writing+switching the language code);
- Time & effort-taking;
- Process or result-oriented?

Competence-oriented assessment

- **L2 Translation Competence: structure**
- ***Campbell (1991)***
 - *Textual*
 - Disposition
 - Proficiency
 - ***Pym (1998)***
 - Ability to generate several *TT options*
 - Ability to choose the most appropriate one

TC in L2 Translation: structure

- **1. Contrastive knowledge:**
 - **a) declarative** – knowledge of translation theory, text types/genres and their conventions in L1 and L2;
 - **b) procedural** - knowledge of strategies/techniques appropriate for translation of a certain text type.

TC in L2 Translation: structure

- **2. Abilities** (purposeful, complex, creative translation operations on the text level) to:
 - 1) define and transfer in TT particularities of the ST;
 - 2) identify functional markers of various genres in SL and TL;
 - 3) analyze and transfer in TT the macrostructure/ microstructure of the ST;
 - 4) **analyze comparable texts and use them for enhancing language authenticity;**
 - 5) paraphrase stylistically/ pragmatically;
 - 6) assess the quality and edit the TT;
 - 7) **assess the quality and edit the ST (if necessary).**
- **3. Capacity:** to choose and make use of proper external resources).

Assessment of TC in L2 Translation

- 3 structural components of TC – 3 *measuring instruments*
 - *Knowledge Measuring Instrument ;*
 - *Abilities Measuring Instrument;*
 - *Capacity Measuring Instrument.*
- *Criteria* – particular knowledge and abilities.
- *Test (3 Sections)* - the main testing tool within instruments.

I - Knowledge Measuring Instrument

- **Assesses students' knowledge** of text and discourse in L1 and L2 & the knowledge of translation theory.
- A **testing tool** of the instrument : a multiple-choice test.
- The **grading scale** of the instrument applies 2 criteria: 1) knowledge of translation theory; 2) knowledge of the theory of discourse/text.
- **Calculation technique** for both criteria relies on calculating the number of correct answers (every correct answer - 1 point; the total weight of the instrument - 20 points).

II – Abilities Measuring Instrument

- Assesses abilities to transfer textual characteristics of the ST in L2 translation.
- Relies on 3 criteria: 1) transfer of ST macro-structure; 2) transfer of ST micro-structure; 3) transfer of ST genre-related language particularities.
- *Criterion 1* : 1) composition and genre conventions; 2) content.
- *Criterion 2* : 1) TT coherence; 2) TT cohesion.
- *Criterion 3* : 1) vocabulary; 2) grammar; 3) style.

III - Capacity Measuring Instrument

- *Assesses the trainees' capacity to choose and make use of appropriate external resources in the process of L2 translation.*
- *The indicators of the scale:*
 - a bilingual dictionary;
 - a monolingual dictionary;
 - comparable texts;
 - parallel texts;
 - online-sources;
 - field experts.
- *Data collection within the instrument* - direct observations of the trainees' performance & testees' indications of the resources used.

The scoring procedure

- *Grading scales* - 10 criteria that weigh 10 points each. The total overall score: 100 (100%). 70 points (70%) – a satisfactory level of TC.
- The inter-rater reliability score - 89%. The teachers who combine teaching translation with TEFL - tougher assessors ("a teacher of FL view on assessment" in translation training; focus on the errors as items of the sentence level; assessing a students' language competence). The highest inter-rate reliability score (94%) - the teacher who combined teaching translation, teaching English and translation freelancing.
- Scale preferences: trainers vs professional translators.

Washback effect

- The research results have encouraged the teachers-participants to reconsider a traditionally accepted approach to assessing translation skills. As a result, three out of five trainers have switched from error-based to competence-oriented assessment

Thank you!

- kawicka_t@ukr.net