

Autonomous U. of Barcelona Proposes Translation Training Standards

A research team led by the UAB has carried out a project to advance in the evaluation of translation training in the Universities offering these studies. The experts propose criteria and procedures for a more systematic evaluation of the different levels of translation competence acquired by students.

The team, formed by 19 researchers from five Spanish Universities offering translation training representing different linguistic and geographical contexts and one British University, has been working for the past three years on the project "[Evaluation in the Acquisition of Translation Competence \(EACT\)](#)" with the aim of making progress in the evaluation of translation training at national and European level.

"Unlike other disciplines, what we see in the case of translation is that there are no level tests that have been empirically validated and agreed-upon. This means that there may be students from one country with the same academic degree but different levels of competence acquisition and even, at European level, that a master's degree from a given country accredits a lower level than a bachelor's degree from another country", explains Amparo Hurtado, professor at the UAB and main researcher of the project.

To respond to this situation, researchers from the UAB, Universidad de Granada, Universitat Jaume I, Universidad del País Vasco/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea and Universidade de Vigo, as well as the University of Westminster (UK), have established what they consider as necessary evaluation criteria and evaluation procedures based on two empirical studies carried out among teachers and students from the participating Spanish Universities

The first study was carried out among one hundred tutors teaching translation from and into the mother tongue at different levels and language combinations. The work enabled them to ascertain the current

situation of assessment in translation degrees in Spain and has highlighted the need to make progress in the objectivity and unification of assessment procedures and criteria, to develop criteria and procedures for identifying levels, to improve translation grading scales and assessment rubrics, and to come closer to the professional reality of translation.

The second study consisted of designing tests for translation levels A1, A2 and B1, for introduction to translation and introduction to the fields of specialised translation (which would correspond to the levels of the different degree courses), described in a previous project of the UAB's PACTE (Process of Acquisition of Translation Competence and Evaluation) research group: the [NACT project](#) (Establishing Competence Levels in the Acquisition of Translation Competence in Written Translation).

Designed in different language combinations (Spanish, German, French and English as source languages and Catalan, Galician, Spanish and Basque as target languages), the tests include various assessment tasks to collect information on the descriptors of the level of each competence. The researchers also designed translation grading scales and rubrics for each assessment task. The proposal was submitted to the assessment of one hundred translation students and forty teachers. The results are currently being analysed.

Once the project is completed, the researchers' objective is to disseminate the results in the academic context, but above all to raise awareness among interested agents and society in general in Spain and in Europe of the need to unify evaluation criteria in translation training.

"We have established criteria and proposed tools, but their implementation is no longer in our hands", says Amparo Hurtado, who believes that "a more standardised system of evaluation in translation would result in a fairer system for students and an improvement in the service offered to the public, as it would guarantee better quality translations and greater recognition of the profession".

The project "[Evaluation in the Acquisition of Translation Competence \(EACT\)](#)" was carried out with funding from the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation.

