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The Construction of MTI Translation Evaluation Index System

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Abstract

Translation evaluation was essential to MTI training. In order to standardize, guide, diagnose, and regulate the process, the study firstly examined researches regarding translation competency both at home and abroad from 1970s till now; Then, based on the latest understanding of translation competency, with Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), a MTI Translation Evaluation Index System (MTI TEIS) was developed, aiming to digitally represent and assess the gradual progress of translator's comprehensive translation abilities on an objective basis. The MTI TEIS was translator-oriented and it emphasized individual difference. It may not only apply to MTI teachers who were in charge of evaluating and controlling the whole translation training process, but also to MTI candidates who expected to conduct self-evaluation regularly.

Key words: Index evaluation system; MTI; Translation competency; AHP

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INTRODUCTION

Since the implementation of the Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI) project in 2007 in China, 170 universities have been approved to set up MTI education centers by 2014. However, few of them have a digitalized system to assess the gradual progress of translation competency of MTI candidates (Wang, 2010). Most of the existed evaluation systems are of qualitative nature of MTI mentors giving each candidate an overall score from 1 to 100 based on their impression over their translation works. Such kind of assessment falls into the category of outcome evaluation, in which the subjective and personal impression of the evaluators counts a lot. Thus, naturally, the so-called halo effect cannot be avoided.

Though some schools have tried to design the so-called translation evaluation index systems, no agreement has reached yet over how to define the evaluation constructs, namely, translation competency, which should be the key in any kinds of translation assessment. Literature study shows that most current definitions of translation competency are expert-focused. They cannot be used to describe the status quo of translation-beginners, such as those MTI candidates. They are over-static and cannot reflect the dynamic progression of a translator's translating skills (Li, 2011). All in all, how to define translation competency has become a bottleneck on the way to developing a practical and objective translation evaluation index system.

However, the definition offered by Professor Li Ruilin sheds some lights over this issue. Professor Li synthesizes researches associated with translation capabilities and put forward a brand new construct---Translator Attainments (hereafter abbreviated as TA). The construct is able to reflect the dynamic and gradual development of a translator's translating abilities. Besides, it can also differentiate the individual difference between translators over their translating capabilities. What is worth mentioning is that it is more operable and can be employed as the theoretical basis of the MTI TEIS.

In order to make the MTI TEIS more hierarchical and objective, AHP method is adopted to offer weights to each level of indices, which makes the system both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Detailed information will be stated in the following sections.

1. THEORETICAL STUDY

TA is a construct coined by Professor Li Ruilin on the basis of the concept of Translator Competency (hereafter

abbreviated as TC). It is more comprehensive than the latter (Li, 2011). With TC as its core, TA actually includes a host of physiological, psychological, social and linguistic capabilities which are essential for a translator to complete his/her translation tasks.

TC refers to a series of higher-order thinking skills that are necessary for translators to solve Problems related to translation, which may help translators to analyze, synthesize, assess and create cognition regarding translation as well as interact with translation situation based on the existing static knowledge and experience of a translator.

According to Professor Li, in the process of translation, higher-order thinking skills are employed when defining translation problems, selecting translating strategies, evaluating translation works and constructing cognitive schemes, etc..

As TC is always in a state that is constantly changing and restructuring, generally, a translator's TA roughly goes through three stages, namely, the initial, intermediate and ultimate stages. In its initial stage, translators are only equipped with some static and discrete knowledge about translation. And their translation works are more like symbol converting, which are possibly full of negative transfer of source language and not very communicative. In medium stage, translators attempt to solve translation problems in a trial-and-error manner. Thus, it is exactly this period that translation teaching intervention may achieve its best results. In the ultimate stage, translators are able to gain in-depth understanding of translation and start to restructure their knowledge via higher-order thinking skills. Their translating activities are with more elasticity and tension, which characterizes their accomplishment in TA. Right in this stage, both the innovativeness and intelligent incremental level of a translator have reached the expert level (Li, 2011).

Professor Li points out that TA can be mainly indicated by a translator's accomplishments in language, knowledge, appreciation, strategy, as well as digital literacy and social achievement as well.

Analysis on Professor Li's explanation about TA reveals that language accomplishment refers to the abilities via which translators may conduct meaningful activities such as explaining, negotiating and expressing the target language based on source text in different contexts. Knowledge accomplishment is associated with the capabilities via which translators may obtain, process and restructure information regarding translation tasks. Strategy accomplishment can be reflected by the capabilities of identifying ill-structured problems, creating innovative solution and selecting appropriate translation strategies, etc.. Digital literacy may be represented by a translator's ability of employing modern digital technologies to complete translation tasks. Appreciation accomplishment can be seen from translators' capabilities to evaluate their own as well as others' translation works. Social accomplishment can be shown as a translator's capabilities to manage, coordinate and coordinate a translation project as well as their social and professional responsibilities and self-positioning within a translation team. Professor Li's effort in this respect has set a sound theoretical foundation for the establishment of indices at different levels in the MTI TEIS.

2. THE CONSTRUCTION OF MTI TEIS

2.1 The Establishment of Indices at Various Levels & the Hierarchical Structure of MTI TEIS

MTI TEIS is hierarchical in structure and consisted of three levels with level one being located at the top class and each lower level being subordinated to the higher level and logically related to it. Besides, each level has its particular indices. Since TA may better indicate the gradual and dynamic progression of translation competence of translators, it is decided that the key components of TA including language, knowledge, strategy, and appreciation accomplishments as well as digital literacy and social accomplishment are selected as level-one indices in MTI TEIS. When choosing level-two and level-three indices, the SMART principle is strictly observed. The acronym of SMART stands for specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound.

In addition, when designing level-two and level-three indices, the following information are also put into consideration, which is the training objectives of MTI, questions commonly encountered by translators, classical translation evaluation standards and related linguistic knowledge, etc..

To a large extent, the establishment of level two and three indices is aimed to be in line with actual translation situations and better reflect the creativity, problem-solving, decision-making and critical-thinking capabilities of MTI candidates. The established hierarchical structure of MTI TEIS is presented in Diagram 1 (see Appendix 1).

2.2 The Construction of Judgment Matrix and Consistency Test

A five-member panel was set up. It consisted of experts majoring in translation. Firstly, each expert was given a printed copy of Table 1, Weighing standards based on the relative importance of indices. Then, they were explained about how to weigh each index according to Table 1. Secondly, the five experts started to give weight to each index. The results were compared and discussed by the panel. Any dispute would lead to repeating discussion among experts, until consensus was reached.

Table 1
Weighing Standards Based on the Relative Importance of Indices

Implications	Weight
X_i is as important as X_j	1
X_i is a bit more important than X_j	3
X_i is more important than X_j	5
X_i is clearly more important than X_j	7
X_i is much more important than X_j	9
The importance of X_i over X_j is between every two levels mentioned above	2, 4, 6, 8

Based on the weight given by the 5 experts, 25 judgment matrixes were formed (see Appendix 2). WithMatlab7.0, the consistency of each matrix was tested. Due to the existence of subjective elements, the matrix consistency in this study was hard to achieve. Because of this, C.R. was introduced. C. R. was the quotient of C.I. (Consistency Index) and R. I. (Random Index). If C.R. of a matrix was less than 0.1, it indicated that all the indices within the matrix were consistent with each other in logic.

In this case, the relative weight of importance of the matrix could be gained. If not, the matrix had to be reconstructed.

2.3 The Complete MTI TEIS

After going through consistency test, the relative weight of importance of each index within the 25 matrixes were calculated, based on which a complete MTI TEIS was obtained (see Table 2).

Table 2
The Complete MTI TEIS

Level one index	Level two index	Level three index
Language accomplishment 0.0673	Pragmatics 0.8333	Negative transfer of source language 0.2722 Translationese 0.2722 Source text comprehension 0.0308 Grammatical mistake in translation 0.2722 Conciseness 0.0497 Accurate diction 0.0380 Excellent translation 0.0648
	Discourse 0.1667	Cohesion and coherence 0.25 Sign of restructuring in translated text 0.75
Knowledge accomplishment 0.0673	Cross culture knowledge 0.1250	Successfully solve cultural conflict 1
	Knowledge of related disciplines 0.8750	Know about technologies of related disciplines 0.25 Good at conducting multi-discipline learning 0.75
Strategy accomplishment 0.2611	Identification of ill-structured problems and putting forward corresponding solutions 0.1095	Identifying hidden translation problems 0.25 Creativity of the translation solution 0.75
	Selection of translation strategies 0.3090	Selecting appropriate translating strategy 0.75 Creativity of translating strategy 0.25
	Implementation of translation project 0.5816	Translation brief 0.8333 Vocabulary list 0.1667
Digital literacy 0.2818	Search engine employment 0.0572	Kinds of search engine 0.75 Selection of key words 0.25
	Corpus employment 0.1594	Kinds of corpus 0.75 Familiarity with the corpus 0.25
	Translation software employment 0.2839	Kinds of software 0.75 Familiarity with the software 0.25
	Employment of digital technologies 0.4994	Kinds of digital technology 0.0841 Familiarity with the digital technology 0.2109 Make reasonable decision based on higher-order thinking skills and wise judgment 0.7049
Appreciation accomplishment 0.3025	Appreciating translation works 0.8333	Reasonableness when commenting on translated works 0.1250 Make reasonable decision based on higher-order thinking skills and wise judgment 0.8750
	Self-assessment 0.1667	Reasonableness when commenting on self-translated works 0.75 Reasonableness when commenting on works translated by others 0.25
	Ethic managing competency 0.8750	Love the motherland, people and support the communist party 0.75 Like to serve others 0.25
Social accomplishment 0.0201	Managing social network 0.1250	Collaborative skills 0.1666 Project management capabilities 0.7396 Appropriate positioning within a project team 0.0938

CONCLUSION

MTI TEIS is a multi-source evaluation system. It is relatively more objective and reliable. It may reflect the development of a translator's translation attainments at different stages. With the help of AHP, system may control the subjective impact on translation evaluation process to a large extent, and be more fair and fine-grained. In addition, with TA as its evaluation construct, MTI TEIS may better fit the reality of MTI teaching practice in China. It is hoped that

MTI TEIS could be widely adopted and trialed in various MTI training centers. Constructive suggestions regarding the improvement of system are welcomed whole-heartedly.

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AAPPENDIX 1

The Hierarchical Structure of MTI TEIS

Level one index	Level two index	Level three index
Language accomplishment A	Pragmatics A1	Negative transfer of source language A11 Translationese A12 Source text comprehension A13 Grammatical mistake in translation A14 Conciseness A15 Accurate diction A16 Excellent translation A17
	Discourse A2	Cohesion and coherence A21 Sign of restructuring in translated text A22
Knowledge accomplishment B	Cross culture knowledge B1	Successfully solve cultural conflict B11
	Knowledge of related disciplines B2	Know about technologies of related disciplines B21 Good at conducting multi-discipline learning B22
Strategy accomplishment C	Identification of ill-structured problems and putting forward corresponding solutions C1	Identifying hidden translation problems C11 Creativity of the translation solution C12
	Selection of translation strategies C2	Selecting appropriate translating strategy C21 Creativity of translating strategy C22
	Implementation of translation project C3	Translation brief C31 Vocabulary list C32
Digital literacy D	Search engine employment D1	Kinds of search engine D11 Selection of key words D12
	Corpus employment D2	Kinds of corpus D21 Familiarity with the corpus D22
	translation software employment D3	Kinds of software D31 Familiarity with the software D32
	Employment of digital technologies D4	Kinds of digital technology D41 Familiarity with the digital technology D42 Make reasonable decision based on higher-order thinking skills and wise judgmentD43
Appreciation accomplishment E	Appreciating translation works E1	Reasonableness when commenting on translated works E11
	Self-assessment E2	Make reasonable decision based on higher-order thinking skills and wise judgment E21 Reasonableness when commenting on self-translated works E22
Social accomplishment Social accomplishment F	Ethic managing competency F1	Reasonableness when commenting on works translated by others F11 Love the motherland, people and support the communist party F12
	Managing social network F2	Like to serve others F21 Collaborative skills F21 Project management capabilities F22

APPENDIX 2

Judgment Matrix of Level-One Indices

	A	B	C	D	E	F
A	1	1	5	6	7	1/8
B	1	1	5	6	7	1/8
C	1/5	1/5	1	1	1	1/9
D	1/6	1/6	1	1	1	1/9
E	1/7	1/7	1	1	1	1/9
F	8	8	9	9	9	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Two Indices Subordinate to A

	A1	A2
A1	1	1/5
A2	5	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Two Indices Subordinate to B

	B1	B2
B1	1	7
B2	1/7	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Two Indices Subordinate to C

	C1	C2	C3
C1	1	3	5
C2	1/3	1	2
C3	1/5	1/2	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Two Indices Subordinate to D

	D1	D2	D3	D4
D1	1	3	5	8
D2	1/3	1	2	3
D3	1/5	1/2	1	2
D4	1/8	1/3	1/2	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Two Indices Subordinate to E

	E1	E2
E1	1	1/5
E2	5	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Two Indices Subordinate to F

	F1	F2
F1	1	1/7
F2	7	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Three Indices Subordinate to A1

	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15	A16	A17
A11	1	1	1/9	1	1/6	1/7	1/4
A12	1	1	1/9	1	1/6	1/7	1/4
A13	9	9	1	9	2	1	2
A14	1	1	1/9	1	1/6	1/7	1/4
A15	6	6	1/2	6	1	1	1
A16	7	7	1	7	1	1	2
A17	4	4	1/2	4	1	1/2	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Three Indices Subordinate to A2

	A21	A22
A21	1	3
A22	1/3	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Three Indices Subordinate to B1

	B11
B11	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Three Indices Subordinate to B2

	B21	B22
B21	1	3
B22	1/3	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Three Indices Subordinate to C1

	C11	C12
C11	1	3
C12	1/3	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Three Indices Subordinate to C2

	C21	C22
C21	1	1/3
C22	3	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Three Indices Subordinate to C3

	C31	C32
C31	1	1/5
C32	5	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Three Indices Subordinate to D1

	D11	D12
D11	1	1/3
D12	3	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Three Indices Subordinate to D2

	D21	D22
D21	1	1/3
D22	3	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Three Indices Subordinate to D3

	D31	D32
D31	1	1/3
D32	3	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Three Indices Subordinate to D4

	D41	D42	D43
D41	1	3	7
D42	1/3	1	4
D43	1/7	1/4	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Three Indices Subordinate to D5

	D51	D52
D51	1	3
D52	1/3	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Three Indices Subordinate to E1

	E11	E12
E11	1	7
E12	1/7	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Three Indices Subordinate to E2

	E21	E22
E21	1	1/3
E22	3	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Three Indices Subordinate to F1

	F11	F12
F11	1	1/3
F12	3	1

Judgment Matrix of Level-Three Indices Subordinate to F2

	F21	F22	F23
F21	1	5	1/2
F22	1/5	1	1/7
F23	2	7	1