

# Evaluating Different Levels of Translation Competence.

## The EACT Project

«Evaluación en la Adquisición de la Competencia Traductora (EACT)»,

Ministerio de Ciencia, Innovación y Universidades, PGC2018-094275-B-I00

October 2019 – December 2022

<https://webs.uab.cat/eact/es/>

### **EACT team. Speakers:**

Elsa Huertas Barros, University of Westminster

Amparo Hurtado Albir, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Elizabete Manterola Agirrezabalaga, Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea

## RESEARCH TEAM

### **Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona**

Amparo Hurtado Albir (principal investigator)

Laura Asquerino Egoscozábal

Anabel Galán-Mañas

Lourdes Gay Punzano

Sonia González Cruz

Gabriele Grauwinkel

Ane Irizar Melero

Olga Jęczmyk

Patricia López García

Christian Olalla-Soler

### **Universidad de Granada**

María del Mar Haro-Soler

Guadalupe Soriano Barabino

Catherine Way

### **Universitat Jaume I**

Rosa Agost Canós

Cristina García de Toro

### **Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea**

José Tomás Conde Ruano

Elizabete Manterola Agirrezabalaga

### **Universidade de Vigo**

Lara Domínguez Araújo

Ana Luna Alonso

### **University of Westminster**

Elsa Huertas Barros

⇒ Need to advance towards a translation common European framework of reference (comparable to the CEFR) and its certification via translation level tests

⇒ Lack of agreement on and empirical validation of translation competence level tests

- EACT is a continuation of PACTE NACT project on written translation
  - NACT proposal includes a 3-level scale and 5 descriptive categories (2018, 2019, 2022)

COMPETENCES TRANSLATION LEVELS	Language	Extralinguistic	Instrumental	Service provision	Translation problem solving
C	...can do...			...can do...	
B2		...can do...			...can do...
B1	...can do...				
A2		...can do...		...can do...	
A1	...can do...		...can do...		

► The aim of the EACT project is to establish **assessment procedures** for each level of acquisition of Translation Competence (TC) in the framework of translation degree programmes in Spain

The project focuses on:

- - Translation from DE, FR and EN into CA, ES, EU, GL
- Translation between two L1s (ES-CA, ES-EU, ES-GL)

### Objectives:

1. **To describe** the current assessment status of translation degree programmes in Spain and identify existing problems
2. **To design** assessment procedures for translation levels A1, A2, and B1 (the levels of translation degree programmes in Spain)
3. **To evaluate** the proposal

## ► Qualitative and quantitative methods

Two **empirical** studies:

- **1**: A survey on the current status of assessment in Spanish translation degree programmes, aimed at translation teachers
- **2**: Evaluation of the assessment procedures developed, collecting data from translation students and teachers

► **T**ranslation students and teachers from 5 translation training centers in Spain: UAB, UGR, UJI, UPV/EHU and UVigo

▶ Description of the current trends in assessment practices on undergraduate degrees in TI in Spain

▶ Aims:

- **To investigate** tutors' assessment perceptions and practices
- **To collect** data on assessment procedures & practices used on practical translation modules (e.g. assessment criteria, type of tasks, use of grading scales, rubrics)
- **To identify** current issues and main challenges on translation evaluation

Survey completed by 97 translation tutors

- ▶ Assessment is a very important aspect of tutor's teaching and practice.
- ▶ Tutors attach practically the same importance to the translation process and the end product.
- ▶ Most respondents use different types of tasks depending on the competence(s) being assessed and the level of the module.
- ▶ The assessment procedures are in most cases based in professional practice.
- ▶ Assessment practices differ according to language directionality but not the language pair(s) involved.
- ▶ Source texts are mainly selected on the basis of authenticity, relevance for the competence being assessed, and an appropriate level of difficulty.
- ▶ Tutors use both grading scales and rubrics, with the former being the most common instrument.
- ▶ Most tutors revamp assessment tasks regularly, but assessment criteria are not revised as frequently.
- ▶ Tutors seem to be adapting to new realities and embedding new approaches into their teaching practice but have mixed feelings about their satisfaction with assessment methods.

## ► Dissatisfaction

### ■ Two main factors:

- **Subjectivity** generally inherent to any assessment (71.4%)
- The **assignment of a numerical mark** (71.4%)

⇒ Need to refine assessment instruments, methods, and practices to make them more valid and reliable for students and tutors.

► Need for clearer, more coherent, and more explicit assessment criteria

► Need to embed assessment literacy into course design to ensure the reliability of professional judgment

### ■ Other reasons (57.1%):

- Lack of standardisation of the assessment procedures and criteria.
- Difficulty involved in making the assessment process transparent.
- Heterogeneity of translation students.
- Complex nature of translation
- Lack of teacher training in assessment.



- ▶ Description of the current trends in assessment practices on undergraduate degrees in TI in Spain bring to the fore the need to:
  - **Make progress** in objectivity and standardisation of assessment criteria and methods
  - **Create** assessment procedures and criteria to identify levels of performance
  - **Refine** assessment grading scales and rubrics
  - **Bring** the reality of professional practice closer to the classroom
- ⇒ Feeds directly into the design of assessment tasks for different levels of translation competence

► **TESTS FOR DIFFERENT TRANSLATION LEVELS**

- **To design** tests for translation levels A1, A2 and B1:
  - Assessment tasks
  - Correction scales for translations
  - Rubrics to assess tasks
- **To assess** the proposal:
  - Students take the tests
  - Translation tutors mark the tests taken by students
  - Both students and tutors complete a survey
    - Pilot study: 48 students and 9 tutors
    - Implementation: 103 students and 42 tutors

	A1	A2	B1
Characteristics	Non-specialized text in standard language	Non-specialized text with problems of register	Simple semi specialized text
Genre	<b>Bibliographical encyclopaedia entry</b>	<b>Tourist brochure</b>	<b>Website content (Ecology)</b>
Number of words	250	300	350

- ✓ Total score: 100 points
- ✓ Each task has a %
- ✓ The translation of a text has a higher %
- ✓ Each task is evaluated out of 10
- ✓ Minimum score to obtain the required translation level
  - 50 points +
  - 5/10 Translation of a text

	A1	A2	B1
<b>PREVIOUS TASKS TO TRANSLATION</b>			<b>25 %</b>
Search for parallel texts.			10 %
Production of a bilingual glossary and documentation resources.			15 %
<b>TRANSLATION OF A TEXT</b>	<b>60 %</b>	<b>60 %</b>	<b>50 %</b>
Resolution of prototypical translation problems.	30 %	30 %	30 %
Translation of the rest of the text.	20 %	20 %	20 %
Adequation of the translation to the requirements of the assignment.	10 %	10 %	
<b>TASKS RELATED TO THE TRANSLATION OF A TEXT</b>	<b>30 %</b>	<b>30 %</b>	<b>15 %</b>
Identification of difficulties of translation.	15 %	15 %	5 %
Documentation resources.	15 %	15 %	
Characteristics of the translation assignment.			10 %
<b>Technological requirements</b>	<b>10 %</b>	<b>10 %</b>	<b>10 %</b>

A1	-0,25	-0,5	-0,75	-1
A2	-0,25	-0,5	-1	-1,5
B1	-0,5	-1	-1,5	-2
	<b>MEANING:</b> - Not the same sense <b>IN TARGET LANGUAGE:</b> - Accentuation - Typography - Punctuation - Editing - Lexicon (regionalisms, use of inadequate or imprecise terms, of inadequate register to that of the rest of the text, <b>inadequate terminology</b> )	<b>MEANING:</b> - False meaning (FM) - Addition (AD) - Deletion (DEL) -Extraling. ref. wrongly solved (EXT) - Inadequate register (REG) <b>IN TARGET LANGUAGE:</b> - Spelling - Grammar (GR) - Textual (T) - Conventions of textual genre (TG) - Style (ST) - Errors related to accentuation, typography, punctuation and editing that affect a relevant part of the text; same recurring error - Prominent or recurring lexical errors or <b>inadequate terminology in relation to the main theme of the text</b>	<b>MEANING:</b> ▪ FM, AD, DEL, EXT, REG that affect: - key ideas of the text - relevant parts of the text - important segments of the text (complete sentence) ▪ Same recurring misunderstanding (with the same element of the ST) ▪ Opposite meaning (OM) ▪ Nonsense (NS) <b>IN TARGET LANGUAGE:</b> ▪ Linguistic errors of GR, T, TG, ST that affect: - a key idea of the text - a relevant part of the text ▪ Same recurring linguistic error of GR, T, TG, ST	▪ OM, NS that affect: - key ideas of the text - relevant parts of the text - important segments of the text (complete sentence) ▪ recurring C, NS (with the same element of the ST) ▪ DEL of a very important segment

## DESIGNING TESTS: RUBRICS. EXAMPLE (A2)

DOCUMENTATION RESOURCES (15 %) A2							
Number of quality resources identified (33,3 %)		10 points 5 or more resources	8 points 4 resources	6 points 3 resources	4 points 2 resources	2 points 1 resources	0 points 0 resources
Relevance of the <b>resource</b> to solve the textual element (33,3 %)	1 point (per resource) The resource is entirely adequate in terms of its quality and reliability to solve the textual element.	0,5 points (per resource) The resource is adequate to solve the textual element but lacks quality and reliability.	0 points The resource is not suitable to solve the textual element // No resource identified.	Adequacy of justification (33,3 %)	1 point (per resource) The quality of the resource is very well justified, explaining all the relevant aspects that prove its reliability and usefulness for translating this element of the text.	0,5 points (per resource) Only some aspects of the quality of the resource and its reliability and usefulness to translate this element of the text are justified.	0 points No justification //Aspects of the quality of the resource and its reliability and usefulness for translating this element of the text are poorly justified// No resource identified.
	Prom (1)						
	Prom (2)						
	Visitor-friendly (1)						
	Visitor-friendly (2)						
	Wales (1)						
	Wales (2)						
	The Maritime Quarter's LC (1)						
	The Maritime Quarter's LC (2)						

## **1. SURVEYS**

Questionnaires to assess the test filled in by students and tutors (Lime Survey)

Open and closed questions

Assessment of evaluation tasks

- Adequacy to the level
  - Problems encountered
  - Usefulness of tasks
- + Assessment of rubrics (questionnaires completed by tutors)

## **2. GRADING TESTS**

Tutors mark the translation tests using the rubrics provided (in Excel format) → scores for each task and assessable aspect

- **Comparison of the results obtained in the 3 levels**

TRIANGULATION OF:

1. SURVEY RESULTS	A1		A2		B1	
	Prof.	Est.	Prof.	Est.	Prof.	Est.
OVERALL RESULT (MEAN)	3.5	3.4	3.7	3.4	3.4	3.4

2. GRADING TESTS	A1	A2	B1
FINAL AVERAGE MARK	6.2	6.4	6.3

BY COMPETENCE	A1	A2	B1
Linguistic	6.3	6.8	7.9
Extralinguistic	7.6	6.1	8.0
Instrumental	7.0	7.4	7.7
Service provision	6.5	7.7	6.4
Translation problem-solving	5.9	5.9	5.5



## **1. INSTRUCTIONS FOR SOME TASKS**

- Clearer definitions of problem categories and addition of examples in the task *Difficulties of translation* (according to the level)
- Clearer explanation of the task *Documentation resources* and modification of the examples of resources according to the level

## **2. REFINEMENTS OF SOME RUBRICS**

- Assessable elements and weighting

## **3. NEW TRANSLATION EVALUATION INSTRUMENT**

- Rubric for each level

## **4. TECHNOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Introduction of more complex requirements for each level

➤ **Need to continue to advance towards a reference framework for translation (comparable to the CEFR) and its certification via translation level tests**



- Replicate the EACT study in other European contexts
- Validate on a large scale
- Develop tests with other language combinations
- Develop tests for the remaining translation levels (B2, C1, C2)
- Design other assessment tasks for each level

### ⇒ Emergence of AI

- Changes to the translation process and translation competence
- Increased importance of the instrumental competence
- Influence in the entire evaluation process

### ➤ Limitations of our study:

- Rapidly advancing technologies
  - Differences according to language combination (disadvantaging minority languages)
- ⇒ Further research in future projects

### ↳ Need to:

- Further studies on criteria and procedures to evaluate instrumental competence
- Develop new evaluation procedures that include the use of AI: not only the final product but use of prompts, critical evaluation of AI-generated outputs, etc.
- Training the trainers

## MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

### - **ARTICLES (Study 1)**

- “Translation tutors’ assessment perceptions and practices in Spain: results from the EACT project”. Huertas Barros, E.; Dominguez Araujo, L. *Hermeneus. Revista de Traducción e Interpretación*, 26 (2024): pp. 253-282.
- “Assessment procedures in translation degree programmes in Spain. Results of the EACT project”. Gay-Punzano, L.; Hurtado Albir, A. *Meta*, 69-3 (2025). In press.
- “The Effect of Teacher Experience and Training on Translation Assessment: Results from the EACT Project”. Conde Ruano, J.T.; Olalla Soler, Ch. (under revision).

### - **A MONOGRAPH IN PROGRESS:** *La evaluación en la adquisición de la competencia traductora. Resultados del proyecto EACT*. Hurtado Albir, A. (ed.), in progress

### - **EACT WEBSITE:** <https://webs.uab.cat/eact/es/>

# Thank you very much for your attention!

## The EACT team