

Assessing Translation Students in a Brazilian University*

*Evaluación de estudiantes de traducción
en una universidad brasileña*

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ABSTRACT

From a Translation Studies perspective, translation assessment is gradually becoming more popular thanks to increasing academic interest in translator education. In fact, we believe that evaluation should be more deeply explored in order to systematise and consolidate how it is carried out, especially in a particular Brazilian context. As we still witness an unwelcome focus on *summative* assessment of students with little room for constructive feedback from educators, the purpose of this article is to discuss ways to assess translation students that move beyond traditional approaches. The focus here is on *formative* assessment, whose emphasis on feedback better suits the dynamic nature we believe translator education should have. Furthermore, we shall review the concepts of *translation competence* and *translation error* as important elements within translation evaluation, as well as *peer* and *self-assessment*, which promote a more student-centered and participatory environment.

Keywords: *formative assessment, translation assessment, translation competence, translator education.*

RESUMEN

Desde una perspectiva traductológica, la evaluación de la traducción se está haciendo más popular gracias al aumento del interés académico por la formación de traductores. Creemos que esta evaluación debe explorarse con detalle para sistematizar y consolidar la forma en que se realiza, especialmente en un contexto brasileño en particular. Dado que todavía hay un enfoque excesivo en la evaluación *sumativa*, esto deja poco espacio para el feedback constructivo de los educadores, por esto el objetivo de este artículo es, por lo tanto, discutir formas de evaluar a los estudiantes de traducción que van más allá de los enfoques tradicionales. El enfoque aquí presentado es la evaluación *formativa*, cuyo énfasis en el feedback se ajusta mejor a la naturaleza dinámica que creemos que debería tener la formación del traductor. Además, se discutirán conceptos como la *competencia traductora* y los *errores de traducción*, así como la *evaluación por pares* y la *autoevaluación*, que promueven un ambiente más participativo y centrado en el alumno.

Palabras clave: *competencia traductora, evaluación de la traducción, evaluación formativa, formación de traductores.*

MOTIVATED BY INCREASING ACADEMIC INTEREST in translator education¹ (see Echeverri, 2015; Fernandes, 2007; Giaber, 2018; Huertas Barros & Vine, 2017; Hurtado Albir, 2015a, 2015b; Kelly, 2005, 2007; Kiraly, 2012; Loguercio & Silva, 2020; Schäffner, 2000), herein using the operational definition proposed by Echeverri (2015):

Translator education is normally used to refer to the kind of instruction that students receive in the larger social contexts of universities. This kind of instruction is integral and offers students the possibility to see translation as an activity linked to societal and humanistic issues. In contrast, the concept of translator training refers to the kind of translation instruction that tries to conform to the specific demands of the profession. (p. 323)

In this article we look at translation assessment, one of the topics discussed in this specific area of knowledge. Martínez Melis and Hurtado Albir (2001) point out that there are at least three relevant elements when assessing translation; (I) published translation, which refers to translation of literary and sensitive texts; (II) professional translation, which refers to translator competence; and (III) translation teaching, which refers to students' translator competence, study plan and programs. This article focuses on the latter, more specifically on teachers' approaches to the assessment of translations produced by students as we are interested in finding out how this assessment can become more effective in helping students to develop into more competent translators.

¹ For a comprehensive list of works on the topic of translation assessment see Franco Aixelá (2001-2020).

We are not oblivious to the fact that the industry requires translators who can deliver translations that fit their expectations, and that translators are constantly assessed for their performance. Gouadec (2007), for example, presents a translation contract that makes this unambiguous: «an overall quality grade will be awarded to each job of work you do for us [...]. We give priority to those who are awarded the highest assessment grades» (p. 322). However, educators cannot assess students' translations with the sole objective of giving them grades. Instead, *formative assessment*, which stands mainly on feedback, should be more widely used, being *peer* and *self-assessment* important elements in the evaluative process as, together, they can provide a more comprehensive approach to translator assessment. Such model of assessment does not ignore the demands of the real world and it can indeed contribute towards translators getting used to different means of evaluation, thus making assessment less stressful and better preparing them to justify their choices. By understanding what needs to be improved in the translations they do, as well as in their overall performance as translators, they will be better prepared to achieve the results the industry demands.

According to Kelly (2005), current approaches to assessment tend to focus more on the product rather than on the process of translation. For her, the lack of clear criteria for assessing translation students' work leads teachers to evaluate their work very negatively, which obscures its positive aspects. The most important aspect of student assessment, continues the author, is the fact that it should be linked to the objectives or intended outcomes;

if we set out to help students attain certain outcomes, then assessment is the instrument we use to check whether they (and we) have succeeded or not, and indeed to generate

proposals for solving problems where our programme has not succeeded. (Kelly, 2005, p. 133)

Although Hurtado Albir (2015b) acknowledges that assessment includes both process and product, the evaluation model she presents focuses on the former, thus looking at assessment not just as a qualification system, but primarily as a learning tool. In addition to the use of a variety of assessment tools and activities to gather information about challenges that were identified and how to solve them, she provides insightful comments on teacher assessment and student self-assessment, to which we shall return later in this article.

Drawing mainly on scholars who write from a curriculum design stance (Hurtado Albir, 2015a, 2015b; Kelly, 2005), we shall discuss how translation students can be more comprehensively evaluated by looking at concepts such as *diagnostic*, *summative* and *formative assessment*, *feedback*, and *peer* and *self-assessment*. Based on our experience as educators in an institution that offers a postgraduate degree in Translation Studies (TS), we then bring the Brazilian context of assessment into discussion and draw some conclusions that, although specific to that context, can be extended to different cultural settings. However, before addressing these concepts we will take a brief look at *translation competence* (TC), a concept which we understand to be key to students achieving intended outcomes, followed by the notion of *translation error*, whose relevance seems to shift depending on the type of assessment to which one is committed.

TRANSLATION COMPETENCE

The concept of translation competence — also known as translation ability, translation skills, translational competence, translator's competence and translation expertise (Hurtado

Albir & Alves, 2008, p. 63) — has been widely discussed and criticised by scholars in the disciplinary field of TS (see Eskelinen & Pakkala-Weckström, 2016; Hurtado Albir, 2015a, 2015b; Kelly, 2005; Pym, 2003; Schäffner, 2000). According to Kelly (2005), for instance, TC can be viewed as «the term used in TS to describe the set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and aptitudes which a translator possesses in order to undertake professional activity in the field» (p.162). For the Pacte research group², TC is defined as «the underlying system of knowledge and skills needed to be able to translate» (Orozco & Hurtado Albir, 2002, p. 376). The two Barcelona-based authors note that such definition is completed by four main premises:

(I) translation competence is actualised in different ways in different situations, (II) it consists basically of operative [procedural] knowledge, (III) strategies play a basic role in translation competence and (IV) as in any kind of expert knowledge, most translation competence processes are automatic. (Orozco & Hurtado Albir, 2002, p. 376)

Schäffner (2000), in turn, describes TC as

a complex notion which involves an awareness of and conscious reflection on all the relevant factors for the production of a target text (TT) that appropriately fulfils its specified function for its target addressees. Such a competence requires more than a sound knowledge of the linguistic system of L1 and L2. (p. 146)

2. Currently, the Pacte (Procés d'Adquisició de la Competència Traductora i Avaluació) project is directed by Hurtado Albir at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Its focus is on the process of *translation competence* acquisition and evaluation.

By comparing these definitions, important and complex issues related to the notion of competence in translation can be observed. One interesting point of convergence in the definitions is that TC goes beyond linguistic knowledge, as professional translators need a wide array of different types of knowledge, skills and attitudes to maintain themselves in a competitive position in the job market. Orozco and Hurtado Albir (2002) and Schäffner's (2000) definitions, however, differ from each other at least in one aspect, namely automatic vs. conscious awareness. Schmidt (1990), who discusses the role of consciousness in second language learning, draws from a series of theories, one of which is Baars' theory of consciousness. For Schmidt (1990), the vital element in Baars' theory is «his emphasis on the point that conscious experience is always informative, and that conscious events trigger adaptive processing in the nervous system» (p. 138). This theory emphasizes that

learning begins with the realization that something is to be learned, progresses through a series of stages that establish a context for understanding new material, and concludes with the new material fading out of consciousness as it becomes itself a part of the unconscious context that shapes the interpretation of future events. (Baars, 1988, cited in Schmidt, 1990, p. 138)

Translators may use their competence in an automatic manner as Orozco and Hurtado Albir (2002) state; however, before becoming automatic, TC requires a level of consciousness so that translators can have a basis on which they can justify their decision-making processes. Also translators today have more freedom to perform their work, and translations are no longer blindly attached to the source text, translators need to be prepared to discuss their translation choices with any player in the translation process (e.g. the target audience, the client

who requested the translation), which makes consciousness not only an advantageous state to possess but also a vital one. As educators, our aim is to make the educational stage the period in which translation students mostly acquire and develop TC, making it into the ideal period for students to make use of, in Schäffner's words (2000), «awareness and conscious reflection» to produce their translations. Table 1 shows some of the (sub-)competences some scholars have listed as being the most relevant for translators to develop in order to carry out their tasks. These models were chosen because of the authors' curriculum design stance, which has a direct impact on the teaching of translation.

TABLE 1. *Models of translation competence.*

Kelly's model (Kelly, 2005)	Schäffner's model (Schäffner, 2000)	Pacte's model (Pacte, 2009)
language competence	linguistic competence	bilingual sub-competence
cultural competence	cultural competence	extra-linguistic sub-competence
instrumental competence	textual competence	knowledge about translation
Professionalization	domain/subject specific competence	instrumental sub-competence
interpersonal competence	(re)search competence	strategic sub- competence
subject area competence	transfer competence	psycho-physiological components
attitudinal competence		

Source: own elaboration.

(Sub)competences such as linguistic, cultural, and instrumental (knowledge related to the use of documentation resources and information and communication technologies applied to translation) appear either in all three models or at least in two of them, which is an indication that they may be indispensable translation competences to be developed by the would-be translator. Under the Pacte's model, the *strategic sub-competence*, which guarantees the solution of problems encountered, is considered to be essential to control the translation process. According to the group,

its function is to plan the process and carry out the translation project (selecting the most appropriate method); evaluate the process and the partial results obtained in relation to the final purpose; activate the different sub-competences and compensate for any shortcomings; identify translation problems and apply procedures to solve them. (Pacte, 2009, p. 209)

For Schäffner (2000), in addition to specific competences translation students need to have knowledge of basic concepts and approaches to translation. She explains that «if they can learn very explicitly, from the very beginning of their studies, what translation is and what translation competence includes, this knowledge will help them to make informed decisions in producing target texts» (p. 155). She also argues that they need to develop awareness of translation strategies in order to apply them to different text types and domains for a variety of purposes. Moreover, because the translator is no longer a lonely professional who works from home only accompanied by a set of good dictionaries and reference books, interpersonal skills is an added advantage for translators to develop (this aspect is contemplated in Kelly's model under *interpersonal competence*).

Kelly (2005) suggests that such a skill can be developed in the classroom by means of collaborative work. However, the author warns that teachers must be aware that organising students into groups is not enough to develop the ability to work in a team, as «specific skills need to be acquired consciously through practice and reflection» (p. 76).

TRANSLATION ERROR

Although paying too much attention to errors may be counterproductive when assessing translation students —especially when addressing motivation issues as already investigated in the area of English Language Teaching (see, for example, Han et al., 2019)— it is extremely important to make students aware of inadequacies so that they can place themselves in their own learning map and also find more appropriate solutions to the task at hand. Nevertheless, in order to avoid excessive error marking, teachers may want to focus on what the target text should convey instead of making students too attached to the source text.

According to Nord (1997), «if the purpose of a translation is to achieve a particular function for the target addressee, anything that obstructs the achievement of this purpose is a translation error» (p. 74). She notes that for the purpose of translation training, this functional definition of translation error may be advantageous to students, who do not have full command of either source or target languages at early stages of their learning process. In order to keep on track of the purpose, she suggests that the translation brief can be formulated in such a way that students can be able to perform a translation task despite deficiencies in terms of translation competence. The author defines *translation briefs*

the communicative purpose for which the translation is needed. The ideal brief provides explicit or implicit information about the intended target-text function(s), the target-text addressee(s), the medium over which it will be transmitted, the prospective place and time and, if necessary, general style conventions, measurement conventions, translation conventions. (Nord, 1997, p. 137)

The author adds that when students receive clear instructions of what is expected from their texts, they tend to make fewer linguistic mistakes. To our own experience, students feel less anxious when they produce a text that is evaluated in terms of how well it works in the target language. Therefore, we see the positive aspect of working through the concept of *brief* with them. It is not the case that by doing so any sort of translation is acceptable, but by following a brief different translations can achieve the purpose therein set, which can be indeed a very enriching experience for students.

Although Nord (1997) argues for a less rigid approach to evaluation at early stages of training, she presents a translation error classification to guide teachers in later stages when more objective criteria may be necessary. Hurtado Albir (2015b) also presents a list of translation errors that should be considered during correction. Table 2 shows some of the errors that these two authors list.

TABLE 2. *Translation errors.*

Hurtado Albir	Nord
1. Errors that affect the meaning of source text (ST), such as wrong meaning, addition, omission, inadequate register.	1. Pragmatic errors: inadequate solutions to problems such as lack of receiver orientation.
2. Errors that affect the expression of the target language: spelling, lexical, textual, cohesion/coherence, style.	2. Cultural errors: inadequate decision regarding reproduction/adaptation of culture-specific conventions.
3. Pragmatic errors.	3. Linguistic errors: inadequate translation when the focus is on language structure.
	4. Text-specific errors: related to a specific translation problem. It can usually be evaluated from a functional or pragmatic point of view.

Source: own elaboration. Adapted from Hurtado Albir (2015b, pp. 20-21) and Nord (1997, pp. 75-76).

Nord (1997) notes that although pragmatic errors are not difficult to solve once they are detected, they are very serious because «receivers tend not to realise they are getting wrong information» (p. 76). Moreover, continues the author, «pragmatic errors cannot be detected by looking at the target text only (for instance, by a native-speaker revisor) unless they really produce incoherence in the text» (p. 76).

Hurtado Albir (2015b) further proposes a scale of grade reduction. For serious errors (e.g. wrong meaning, grammar or stylistic errors), the author suggests that 2 points be deducted, and for less serious errors (e.g. spelling, graphic accents and typos), 0,5–0,25 points deducted. However, the author observes that it is essential that students are able to detect the errors by themselves and find the best solution to fix them. Thus, teachers

should, instead of giving them the right solution, guide them to the identification of errors. It is important, therefore, for students to be familiar with errors and also learn how to deal with them. The author suggests that the use of abbreviations after a given error facilitates its identification (e.g. *SP* for spelling, or *WO* for wrong order). According to Hurtado Albir (2015b) by doing so, students can redo the translation without the identified errors.

We look next at the three types of assessment that, together, offer a more holistic approach to assessing translation students, followed by the concepts of *peer* and *self-assessment* as additional evaluation tools.

DIAGNOSTIC, SUMMATIVE AND FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Martínez Melis and Hurtado Albir (2001) point out that in the pedagogical context, evaluation has traditionally been equated with measuring in order to judge; according to this perspective, the evaluator is therefore a judge, while the person evaluated has to submit to the evaluator's authority, which is not always either just or objective. (p. 275)

The authors remind us, however, that such a scenario has been gradually shifting to one where examinations and objects of knowledge give place to the subjects (both trainer and the trainee) in a more equitable relationship in which students are encouraged to take a more active role towards their own learning. In this sense, Angelelli (2018) argues that we should move beyond traditional methods of assessment in which test results are the only basis for assessing students' performance. The author calls for a broader approach to assessment combining students' test results with «evidence of quality of performance and achievements gathered through, for example, observations,

portfolios and group work» (p. 436). In this new setting, formative assessment has been gaining momentum, pushing summative assessment away from center stage.

As Kelly (2005) indicates, summative assessment involves a grade or an accreditation. Under this, which is normally done in examination conditions, as the author reminds us, the teacher sets a task, which is then marked to establish whether or not students reached the level required to pass to a higher level or receive a diploma. Formative assessment, on the other hand, is «any marking, correction or comment which gives students feedback on their learning precisely in order to help them learn more, or better» (p. 133). However, the author notes that summative assessment can have a formative function when final exams are marked and returned to students with feedback on how to improve their translation tasks.

According to Kelly (2005), in a student-centered scenario, there is no place for norm-referenced assessment, which is based on «typical» or compulsory statistical distributions of grades (e.g. A = the top 10%, B = the following 25%). The author defends a criterion-referenced assessment, in which grading is attached to the idea of learning and is «based on the degree of attainment of the intended outcomes which form the basis of the entire teaching and learning process» (p. 141). The author explains that this type of assessment is more qualitative in nature and is normally expressed in letters or in descriptive terms; however, grades can be expressed in figures if this is the requirement. She gives the example of a brief-oriented translation task in which students are asked to identify cultural differences between source and target readership, and then to propose appropriate solutions for these problems. The text difficulty should take into account students' level of competence. She adds that, with regard to assessment, the combination of students' actual

translation and the comments should make it relatively simple to establish whether or not the intended outcome has been achieved. Regarding grades, the author suggests the following:

- » **Excellent**, when all cultural differences have been identified, and appropriate solutions have been proposed in all or almost all cases;
- » **Very good**, when almost all the cultural differences have been identified, and appropriate solutions have been proposed in almost all cases;
- » **Good**, when most of the cultural differences have been identified, and appropriate solutions have been proposed in a significant number of cases;
- » **Satisfactory**, when a significant number of cultural differences has been identified, and appropriate solutions have been proposed on occasion;
- » **Unsatisfactory**, when no significant number of cultural differences has been identified, and when appropriate solutions have been proposed they are not dealt with in an appropriate fashion following the translation brief (Kelly, 2005, p. 141-142).

Kelly (2005) goes on to explain that even when teachers prefer/have to convert qualitative grades into quantitative, they should allow «lower earlier grades to be discarded or given much less weighting» (p. 142) so that students' progress can be also taken into account. To our understanding, however, evaluation, either by using adjectives or grades, should be followed by detailed comments directly aimed at individual students.

In addition to summative and formative assessment, another form of evaluation that has been receiving more attention in translation education is *diagnostic assessment*, also known as *needs analysis* or *initial diagnosis assessment* (Kelly, 2005).

This type of evaluation, based on a set of questions, is used to identify students' strengths and weaknesses when they join a given module, which is a valuable tool for teachers to better plan their lessons and choose adequate material that considers students' needs. The answers to the questions can be gathered in a variety of ways, such as short essays on motivation and expectations, translation exercises, class debate on expectations, or as part of a questionnaire, usually applied on the first day of class. Some helpful questions to gather information on students' requirements are³:

- » What do students know when they join the module?
- » What modules have they taken previously?
- » What modules are they taking simultaneously?
- » How old are they?
- » Are they full-time or part-time students?
- » Do they have any special needs?
- » What kind of teaching and learning environment are they accustomed to?
- » What learning styles do they prefer?
- » Why are they taking this module?
- » What do they expect to learn?

Kelly (2005) also draws attention to the fact that we live in a society in which students know more about computers and technology in general, and also have more hands-on experience of the world, be it through the internet or traveling, which has been made more accessible because of cheaper flights, for instance. On the other hand, as university education is opening to larger sections of society (which happens to be the case of Brazil), the proportion of students with considerable prior knowledge and

3 Adapted from Kelly (2005, p. 43).

those with less prior knowledge has been gradually changing. With this greater diversity, it is difficult to plan lessons that cater to individual student needs. Thus, the author says that it is paramount to find a «happy medium» during the planning stage and to be flexible at the implementation stage.

Another aspect worth reflecting on during the *diagnostic assessment* stage is that of learning styles. Kelly (2005) focuses on three important premises related to them. First, and most importantly, the fact that not everyone learns in the same way. The author observes that although researchers do not believe learning styles to be unchangeable, they are deeply rooted, thus, difficult to change. Second, from a constructivist point of view, learning happens «when changes or additions are made to pre-existing knowledge and understanding, constituting a process of individual transformation» (p. 47). A social constructivist approach has a more collective view of learning, that is, the exchange of experience and knowledge among students also contributes to their transformation. In fact, experience, which is presented by Kelly (2005) as the third premise, be it acquired individually or collectively, is a major factor in learning, as we learn through experience, gained in different ways and contexts. The author subscribes to current research suggesting that students tend to reach higher levels of learning when they are encouraged to actively participate in realistic activities, when they exercise independence, as well as when they work collaboratively.

Kiraly (2012), whose work is built around the notion of collaborative translation task, sees the classroom as a place where students should first experience the real challenges of their future career:

The translation student, in my view, should have plenty of opportunities to actively, viscerally and collaboratively

experience the challenges, quandaries and pressures, and the often contradictory allegiances and unexpected pitfalls to which translators are subjected – during their studies and not only after their completion. This is embodied cognition, an essential feature of professional education. (p. 84)

We discuss *peer* and *self-assessment* in the next section, practices that we believe to be key in promoting a more student-centered and participatory environment. Although assessment is normally carried out by teachers, in a formative assessment environment, these alternatives can be explored.

PEER AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

Peer assessment is carried out by other students from the same group or level. Rollinson (2005), who writes on peer feedback in ESL writing class, notes that students may feel that classmates are not qualified enough to judge their work, and are, therefore, a poor alternative to teacher assessment. The author laments such perceptions, as they may prevent teachers from using what he calls «a highly profitable interaction on many counts» (p. 23), which presents a few advantages over teacher assessment, as it can be «less threatening, less authoritarian, friendlier, [and] more supportive» (p. 24). Such a view can perfectly be applied to feedback on translation, especially because it also entails writing in its process. For Kelly (2005), peer assessment has the added advantage of benefiting all students «by developing the ability to evaluate, to justify decisions and comment, and to revise translations» (p. 143). Rollinson (2005) notes that studies conducted by Caulk (1994), Berg (1999) and Chaudron (1984) show that peer feedback is different from that of the teacher. While the latter is more general, the former is more specific and, therefore, can be seen as complementary.

Although peer feedback seems to bring many benefits to students, it will be most valuable if it is properly implemented in the sense that the role of the teacher as the oracle be replaced by that of facilitator. In a study conducted by Heine (2019) with 19 undergraduate students in an L2 web-based communication course, the author points out the need for discussion about it before and after its implementation, because, although students have a good understanding of the assessment they receive, especially if it comes from the teacher, they are unsure whether the feedback they provide will be carried out by their peers, therefore, they do not know of the relevance of their feedback. Heine (2019) highlights that the focus of Translation Didactics agenda is on «feedback training to help developing students' capacity to make qualitative judgments – as will be required from them in the profession» (p. 353).

With regard to *self-assessment* (see Kelly, 2005; Pakkala-Weckström, 2019; Li, 2018), it is carried out by students themselves on their own work and progress. Kelly (2005) notes that this type of evaluation is important in any profession and in translation it is perhaps more so for future freelance translators. It is, however, a difficult skill to acquire, and the author points out that teachers often choose to introduce self-assessment once students have carried out peer assessment.

At the end of each unit of Hurtado Albir's (2015b) book, the author includes a self-assessment form with open questions so that students can reflect on what they have learnt regarding the learning objectives of a particular unit. The last unit is dedicated to a more comprehensive self-assessment, in which students are asked to reflect on topics such as previous knowledge and expectations; conception of translation; translation competencies acquired throughout the course and so on. While Table 3 shows an example of open questions on students' conceptions of

translation, Table 4 shows a multiple-choice form of assessment in the same subject. Hurtado Albir (2015a) also proposes that students create a reflective diary in which they can report their experience regarding the learning process, both inside and outside the classroom, as well as regarding the teaching (e.g. contents, material used by the teacher, methods). Additionally, they may also add information on translation reports and translations they have reviewed.

TABLE 3. *Self-assessment form (open questions).*

My conception of translation

1. Answer the following questions:

1. What is the most difficult aspect of translating?
2. How do you define translation? (maximum of three lines)

Source: own elaboration.

TABLE 4. *Self-assessment form (multiple choice questions).*

2. Review your ideas on translation

1. The way the translator does his/her translation is determined by who commissioned the job.
I agree () partially () considerably () totally () I do not agree
2. The aim of every translation is to produce a text whose form is as close as possible to the source text.
I agree () partially () considerably () totally () I do not agree
3. Most of the translation problems can be solved with the help of good dictionaries
I agree () partially () considerably () totally () I do not agree
4. A text should be translated in different ways according to the target text readers
5. I agree () partially () considerably () totally () I do not agree

Note: own translation. Adapted from Hurtado Albir (2015b, p. 239).

Kelly (2005) suggests that teachers also need to go through this process. Regardless of the assessment criteria put in place by institutions, the author proposes that individual teachers should implement «their own formative assessment techniques in order to have feedback from students and colleagues from which to learn and introduce improvements» (p. 146). According to the author, techniques such as questionnaires, debates, interviews, although popular, should be left to the end of the term so that students feel more comfortable answering the questions, which minimizes the pressure to «please» the teacher.

Another example of self-assessment is the one proposed by Pakkala-Weckström (2019) which suggests the use of a *student self-evaluation grid*. According to the author, this tool provides a structured framework for evaluating both one's translation process and the translation product. By way of conclusion, the author states that the use of the grid as a tool for *self-monitoring* and *quality-control* can help students to «conduct detailed retrospective analysis of their strengths and weaknesses in translating» (p. 281), despite the fact that the students' responses tend to be subjective to a certain extent. In this sense, the author stresses that careful instructor's monitoring would be required as previously suggested by Kelly (2007).

In the next section we finally look at our own Brazilian context, which has been gradually incorporating assessment forms other than the summative option.

OUR SPECIFIC BRAZILIAN CONTEXT

There are currently a number of public and private institutions that offer BA programmes in translation in Brazil, federal universities such as Universidade de Brasília (UNB), Universidade Federal da Paraíba (UFPB), Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto (UFOP), Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS),

and Universidade Federal de Uberlândia (UFU), among them. However, our discussion is based on our experience as educators in an institution that offers only postgraduate degree in TS, where the undergraduate students are language students who have the TS module for three semesters (*Introduction to TS* in the first semester; TS I in the third semester, and TS II in the fourth semester)⁴. Many students, however, do not intend to become teachers and they see translation as a possibility for their future career. In fact, we have been witnessing students' growing interest in translation in the language and literature classroom.

A study conducted by Collet and Emmel (2014) with undergraduate language students corroborates this increase in interest in translation. The authors note that during the period included in the study, 2010 to 2014, of a total of 67 undergraduate dissertations⁵, 26 were in the field of translation, which amounts to 38% of the total number of dissertations. In the English program alone, this percentage is of 33% (7 out of 21).

For the authors, the results indicate that the increase in interest happened after students had completed their three compulsory translation modules, and they strongly believe that students would choose the optional modules to give continuation to their education. It seems that the experience these students had with TS was a key factor to their interest. We believe that the way students are taught and assessed may play a vital role in triggering their interest.

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- 4 The university informing our discussion is Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC) and in addition to the three semesters mentioned, there are other modules in translation offered to the English language undergraduate students: Special topic in translation (36hrs.); TS: writing and revision (36hrs.); TS: translation lab (72hrs.), TS in English I (36 hrs.), and TS in English II (72h).
- 5 Including all the languages on offer, namely English, German, Spanish, Italian, and French.

Students enter the language program still very much influenced by a series of misconceptions about translation and the translator's role. A number of negative reviews of translated work, which often blame translators for everything they deem to be «wrong», unsurprisingly wither their enthusiasm for the profession. Who has never heard comments about how badly translators translate film titles when, in fact, translators have little or no say in the translation of these elements? Dealing with such misconceptions requires teachers to present translation in earnest and to develop students' translation competence and critical thinking (Chen, 2019). Although the practice is not the centerpiece of the TS modules, we strive to make room for it so that students can properly consolidate learning following exposure to key theoretical concepts discussed in TS.

With regard to evaluation, although summative assessment is an institutional requirement, formative assessment is used too, especially by means of feedback, collaborative work, with which students also have the opportunity to exercise peer feedback, and questionnaires at the beginning and end of the semester. For example, at the beginning of the term students are usually asked to write a paragraph on their conception of translation, which is then shared with the class. At the end of the semester, they are asked to review their text and either complement it or write a new one. It is interesting to see how they broaden their conception of translation and how critical they become.

Regarding teacher feedback, we try to give feedback as timely as possible, either face-to-face or in writing (both handwritten and computerised). Peer assessment, on the other hand, is still seen with mistrust, especially by novices, who prefer to receive feedback from someone they see as an «expert». Therefore, students still need to be made aware of the importance of assessing and being assessed by their peers. As for self-assessment,

it is still in its embryonic state at the classroom level. We notice that at times students feel anxious to assess their own progress not only for not being used to doing so but also for fear of bias. Overall, we note that students are still hesitant to assume a more active role when it comes to assessment. Therefore, it is of vital importance to keep encouraging them to evaluate their peers and their own work and, most importantly, to give them guidance on how to do it.

In our Brazilian context, teachers often have to follow their institution's assessment criteria, which are often focused on summative assessment; however, we suggest that formative assessment be used throughout the semester, which can be used either for learning purposes only or translated into grades. Whatever teachers choose to do, they need to keep it consistent and inform students from the beginning how they/their work will be assessed. But whatever form of assessment is used, it is essential to have students' development as the main objective. From our experience, students feel more confident when their translations are evaluated based on their functionality in relation to the target reader. Although linguistic errors should be pointed out to students, reducing their grades based on such errors may be counterproductive, as the text as a whole may compensate for specific errors. We need to avoid the adoption of a criterion heavily based on grading so that translation evaluation can mirror that of the language teaching setting, where formative evaluation has been discussed for some time now (Nunan, 1988).

Although students may still be concerned with grades at the end of the semester, we note their growing sense of pride for producing texts they and their peers consider being of good quality. Such a positive response is especially noticed when translations produced by students are openly discussed in the classroom. This kind of activity generates lively debates

in which, between praise and constructive criticism, students exchange ideas; suggest different translation strategies; alternative vocabulary and so on. It is very rewarding to see that students are normally very keen on having their texts evaluated in these classroom activities. Such exercises are very positive for everybody involved, and that is when the teacher's mediation is of great value because while students who have produced a below expectation translated text need to feel that errors are very much part of the process and that their texts can be further improved, students who have produced good texts need to be encouraged to keep on producing texts of quality. As expected, these students additionally learn a great deal when presented with a number of possible translations of the same source text. This is a beneficial activity not only because of its pedagogical potential but also because students hardly realize that they are both assessing and being assessed.

With regard to teacher assessment, teachers can create their own system for this type of activity to award points towards active participation at the end of the semester, for example, leaving the comments raised during the activity as part of formative assessment. In our particular case, we believe that by encouraging students to talk about translation we are helping them to demystify translation and the translator's role and develop their confidence as future translators. By doing so, whatever the grade they may obtain at the end of the term is of secondary importance.

FINAL REMARKS

This article addressed some points related to the assessment of translation students, which has been attracting more academic interest in the last few years. Translation feedback, translation error and translation competence (Hurtado Albir, 2015b; Nord,

1997; Schöffner, 2000), key concepts in translation assessment, were briefly discussed, and some aspects of models designed by authors (Hurtado Albir, 2015a; Kelly, 2005) whose works focus on translation education were also presented. Most importantly, these authors agree that we need to look at translation student assessment in a more holistic manner, making use of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment. However, there is consensus that formative assessment is the form of evaluation educators should mostly use; especially because of the importance it places on feedback, which should be seen as a path to strengthen and consolidate learning. Feedback can be given by the teacher to students or by students to their peers; however, our experience shows that students still rely a great deal on feedback from the teacher. Besides feedback, students and teachers can evaluate their own performance by means of self-assessment, advantages of which are still to be gained in the particular context here discussed due to lack of practice.

By bringing our own classroom experience, we acknowledge that there is still some way to go before achieving the holistic assessment that some translation scholars propose. The perpetuation of misconceptions about translation and the translator's role is a common scenario in Brazil, and it is not different among novice students. Therefore, at the same time that teachers strive to implement formative assessment they need to overturn these misconceptions. We are, nevertheless, confident that we are on the right path when we encourage students to talk about translation and to practice it in a participatory environment where formative assessment is carried out through feedback from all players involved. When properly used, feedback can become a powerful tool for students' development as a would-be translator. Furthermore, its regular use can make students more receptive to assessment, which is an element

that is part of the profession. As translation students, they are going to benefit from the feedback provided by teachers and peers, which in turn will prepare them to cope with the demands of the industry as professional translators. Hence, they will be able to deal more successfully with either negative or positive feedback provided by all the stakeholders in the working environment. Therefore, we see formative assessment, with its powerful/empowering combination of peer, teacher and self-assessment, as capable of equipping students to justify their translation choices whenever questioned.

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