Translation quality in an error-annotated translation learner corpus

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Two seemingly obvious assumptions in translation competence (development) are (i) that a good translation does not contain errors and (ii) that trainees make fewer errors in translation products after a certain amount of training (cf. the hypotheses in the PACTE model, Orozco/Hurtado 2002:388). The theoretical basis of the present paper are first the importance of an acceptable—read: error-free—translation and second models of translation competence (development) designed by e.g. the PACTE group (cf. e.g. PACTE 2000, 2003, 2008, 2009, 2011), Göpferich (2009, 2013), Bergen (2009), Kiraly (2013), Kumpulainen (2016) and Cheng (2017). This paper, though, mainly aims at modelling—based on empirical findings from the error-annotated Translation Learner Corpus KOPTE (FR–DE)—(A) certain aspects of translation competence for groups of trainees and (B) some timeline effects in translation competence development, such as (fewer) errors and (more) good solutions. The aim of the paper is first to compare translation quality for groups of translator trainees with different backgrounds (stay abroad, media consumption) and performance levels (measured with grades for translation tasks and frequencies of evaluation criteria) and second to test if there are significant differences, and with which effect sizes, in translation quality and quantity before and after an intensive training unit.

The paper gives insights into possible differences in translator groups and training stages with unknown population distribution, based on a theory of translation competence (development) and assumptions derived from teaching, but without knowing anything about real differences, effects, population parameters and necessary sample sizes to establish effects in a statistically sound way. However, it can serve as basis for further studies determining such effects in carefully designed populations, corpora and statistical analyses. It will, additionally, contribute to the description of the translation product according to some aspects of translation competence development. It can also help to understand the limited scope of target text assessment with regard to translation competence evaluation in its full extent.

References

Cheng, Si. 2017. Translation Competence Development among Learners: A Problem-Solving Perspective. A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities.
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