An Investigation of Final Tests of Translation as Practiced in Iranian Undergraduate English Translation Program: The Instructors' Perspective

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Abstract : The present study investigated in depth the way translation teachers design and develop final tests as measures for checking on the quality of students' academic translation in Iranian context. To achieve this goal, thirty experienced male and female translation teachers from the four types of the universities offering the program were invited to an in-depth 30-minute one-session semi-structured interview. The responses provided showed how much discrepancy exists among the Iranian translation teachers (as developers of final translation tests), who are least informed with the current translation evaluation methods. It was also revealed that the criteria they use for developing such tests and scoring student translations are not theory-driven but are highly subjective, mainly based on their personal experience and intuition. Hence, the quality and accountability of such tests are under serious question. The results also confirmed that the dominant method commonly and currently practiced is the purely essay-type format. To remedy the situation, some suggestions are in order. As part of the solution, to improve the reliability and validity of such tests, the present summative, product-oriented evaluation should be accompanied with some formative, process-oriented methods of evaluation. Training the teachers and helping them get acquainted with modern principles of translation evaluation as well as the existing models, and rating scales does improve the quality of academic translation evaluation.