The PIE method (Preselected Items Evaluation): an innovative approach to translation evaluation in translator training

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Keywords: translation evaluation, translation testing, translator training, PIE, feedback

Preselected Items Evaluation (PIE) is a criterion- and norm-referenced item-based analytical translation evaluation method which guarantees a high degree of objectivity, viz., a more evaluator-independent evaluation (Anckaert and Eyckmans 2007:54; Segers and van Egdom 2018:75).

PIE is made up of five phases (Segers et al. 2018:41-42; Tijtgat and Segers 2019:322-323): (1) the selection of a set number of items in the source text based on the curriculum covered and the intended learning outcomes, (2) the categorisation of translation solutions for each item as correct or incorrect, (3) the calculation of the raw scores, (4) the calculation of the item difficulty (p-value) and discrimination index (d-index) of each item, and (5) the recalculation of the scores based on the items within the defined p-value and d-index ranges. The first two phases are criterion-referenced, while the last two are norm-referenced.

PIE tests enable lecturers to focus on specific course contents, e.g. specialised terminology, and objectively compare the students' scores through basic statistical measurements. The evaluation is based only on the preselected items and the dichotomous categorisation of translation solutions in the pre-testing phase, making it less time-consuming than other evaluation methods. Given the time constraints in translator training, this is a major asset. In addition, if multiple evaluators jointly preselect the items and categorise their possible translations, PIE has a high inter-rater reliability.

PIE is particularly useful in translator training as it allows lecturers and students to identify the item categories they need to focus on. PIE tests can help keep track of the students' ability to translate specific item categories, individually and as a group, and monitor the evolution of their scores. These insights can be used to provide targeted feedback and tailor the course to the students' needs.

The use of PIE will be illustrated by means of a translation experiment involving 30 students in the final year of a three-year Bachelor programme in Applied Linguistics, with Dutch as their first language and English as their second language.

References

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