Section A				Section B		
	EPT	TMT			EPT	TPT
16	45	15		16	41	10.5
17	52	16		17	35	9
18	55	15		18	43	11.5
19	42	8		19	43	15.5
20	40	12		20	28	13.5
21	39	12		21	41	10
22	29	14		22	30	6.5
23	50	12		23	28	10
24	42	13		24	29	16.5
25	37	11		25	35	17
26	49	19		26	34	15.5
27	52	14		27	27	12.5
28	26	9		28	22	11
29	46	13		29	30	8
30	49	15		30	29	18.5
31	35	15		31	29	13.5
32	48	19		32	23	13
33	35	8		33	52	10
34	46	16		34	36	17
35	44	14		35	25	12
36	32	10		36	54	19
37	36	12		37	47	17
38	43	13		38	41	10
39	31	8		39	41	16
40	39	15		40	39	12.5
41	52	13		41	35	10
	r = 0.41				r = 0.11	

6. Newmark, p. 1981. Approaches to Translation. Prentice Hall, UK. pp. 13-18.

7. Nida, E. & Charles Taber. 1974. The Theory & Practice of Translation. Brill , Leiden. pp. 163-173.

8. Snell - Hornby, M. 1989. Translation Studies, An integrated Approach John Benjamins Publishing co. pp. 69-81.

9. Stansfield, C. et . at . 1991. The Measurement of Translation Ability. paper presented in the Conference on

testing in Washington, May 1991. (Available from ERIC Clearinghouse). 1-26.

Appendix 1

	Section A				Section B	
	EPT	TMT			EPT	TPT
1	44	7		1	32	12.5
2	28	11		2	33	10.5
3	45	19		3	36	10.5
4	49	10		4	32	14.5
5	42	10		5	27	10
6	32	15		6	22	16.5
7	40	11		7	32	13
8	40	11		8	31	12
9	31	5		9	38	17
10	42	14		10	35	15.5
11	38	12		11	27	3
12	52	11		12	41	10
13	51	12		13	41	12.5
14	34	13		14	18	6]
15	34	12		15	35	13

2. A translation multiple choice test measures competence, whereas a translation production test measures performance. Therefore they cannot substitute one another, but have to be used together to provide a reasonable assessment of translation ability.

3. Foreign language proficiency correlates higher with a TMT than with a TPT.

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1. Arjuna - Tseng, E. 1984. Testing & Evaluation of Interpreter Performance. In Mcintire, M. (Ed.). proceedings of the Fourth Annual CIT Conference. Silver Springs: Conference of Interpreter Trainers. 111-139.

2. Arjuna - Tseng, E. 1985. The Court Interpreters Test Design. In Olivares, Elias, et al. (Eds.), Spanish Language Use in the U.S.A. Mouton Press 1985. 181 - 200.

3. Arjuna - Tseng, E. 1993. The Psychometric Selection of Student Interpreters in Taiwan. In : Perspectives, Studies in Translatology, University of Copenhagen, 1993. pp. 91-104.

4. Birjandi , P. et al. 1994. Language Skills Testing , From Theory to Practice. SAMT Publishing CO. Tehran, Iran. pp. 66-77 & 83-100.

5. Farahzad, F. 1992. Testing Achievement In Translation Classes. In: Teaching Translation and Interpreting, Papers Dollerup & Anne Loddegaard (de.). John Benjamins Publishing Company. pp. 271 - 8.

additional insights into developing translation tests:

1. A translation multiple choice test and a translation production test measure two different but related constructs. The former measures competence, whereas the latter measures performance. Therefore the design of screening and achievement tests of translation needs to incorporate production sections along with multiple choice sections.

2. Foreign language proficiency correlates higher with a TMT than with a TPT. This might be due to the fact that in a TMT the translator carefully examines the four given choices; the analysis of each choice not only serves as a clue to what the correct choice is expected to contain, or be, but also helps the translator recall the scattered pieces of his knowledge which would not otherwise be recalled. In other words the framework is already provided for the translator.

On the other hand, in a TPT the translator has to develop his own translation. There is nothing to help him, no clues. He has decide about the meaning of each word its function in the text and its translation equivalent, without any clues. He has to develop his own framework.

CONCLUSION

The results provide the following answers to the questions which inspired this research:

1. Foreign language proficiency is a necessary but not sufficient requirement for translating efficiently.

ii) The scoring system was designed to suit the TPT as a criterion referenced test. The underlying assumption was that senior students of translation, who are very likely to work as translators after they graduate, have already received all the necessary training and should therefore be judged as translators, not as trainees. The scoring system therefore allowed for almost no negligence on the part of the subjects. They had to translate everything accurately and appropriately. Lack of mastery of any one of the translation techinques would reduce thier scores. This strict scoring system required the translators to possess a level of native language mastery beyond that of the average native speaker of Persian.

iii) In order to be able to produce adequate translations, the subjects had to transfer their competence into performance. At numerous instances, examining the subjects' translations revealed that they had comprehended the source text, but had failed to put what they had comprehended into proper words, or to arrange them in proper order, which damaged either accuracy or appropriateness and deprived the subjects of the allocated scores.

As a result the low correlation between the EPT and the TPT shows that:

Foreign Language mastery is a necessary but not sufficient requirement for translating.

Comparison of the two correlation coefficients provides

they can transfer their knowledge into actual practice. It can therefore measure only part of translation ability.

ii. The EPT is also a recognition test, and therefore is presented in the same form as the TMT. In both cases the subject does not produce anything, but is merely required to recognize and select the correct choice. This uniformity of format in the two tests might have contributed to the raise of the correlation between the EPT and the TMT.

As a result, the high correlation between EPT and TMT can only indicate that:

Those students of translation who have a better command of the English Language, seem to possess a higher translation competence, which does not mean that they are able to produce better translation.

On the other hand, the low correlatin between the EPT and the TPT suggests that those who have a better command of the English language do not necessarily produce better translation. Here again few considerations have to be made:

i) The TPT was designed to assess translators' performance and their ability in the actual practice of translating. It was therefore a criterion referenced mastery test.[1] Thus the subjects had to be very skilled in analysis, synthesis and the production processes of the two linguistic systems. They also were expected to have mastery of translation techniques required to produce efficient translations.

1. Farahzad, F. 1992. Testing Achievement In Translation Classes. In: Teaching Translation and Interpreting, Papers from the first language International Conference. Cay Dollerup & Anne Loddegaard (ed.). John Benjamins Publishing Company. pp. 271-8.

and the scores on section B was computed. The results are shown in the table below:

TESTS	CORRELATION
EPT & TMT	0.41
EPT & TPT	0.11

E) Analysis:

the rationale for computing the correlation coefficient was to check the relation between English Language Proficiency and translation ability.

The high correlation between the EPT and the TMT suggests that those who have a better command of the English Language score higher on Translation Multiple Choice Tests in which English is the source language. However , two considerations have to be made:

The TMT served merely as a recognition test , which by nature differs form a Test production. In a TMT each sentence is followed by four choices, of which only one is an adequate translation. The only thing the subjects have to do is to "distinguish" the adequate from the three inadequate translations. So they are engaged in a sort of editing rather than translating. Marking the correct choice does not mean that they would necessarily produce the same translation presented as the correct choice. A multiple choice test of translation is a test of "recognition" and therefore a test of competence, which can assess how much the subjects know, but not how well

simple sentence of the English texts: one for accuracy and one for appropriateness and coherence (see Arjuna Tseng[1] 1993 , pp. 91 - 104 and Farahzad [2] 1992, PP. 271-8). Compound sentences received the same two scores for each verb appearing in the source text sentence. Complex sentences received the same two scores for each verb which appeared in the main clause and subordinate clause(s) of the sources text sentence. For example, a complex sentence of the source text which was made up of one main clause and two sub - clauses and thus contained three verbs, was considered to form three units of translation, and was assigned six scores, two for each of these units, i.e. the the translation of each unit received one score for accuracy and one score for appropriateness and coherence.

This scoring system was designed and adopted because the TPT was supposed to serve as a criterion referenced test.

C) Organizing the data:

Each of the 82 subjects had two differnet scores, one for the EPT and one for either the TMT or the TPT. These scores were arranged in two sections. Section A was made up of the EPT and TMT scores and section B was made up of EPT and TPT scores (see Appendix1).

D) Computation: [3]

The correlation coefficient between scores on section A

1. Arjuna - Tseng, E. 1993. The Psychometric election of Student Interpreters in Taiwan. In: Perspectives, Studies in Translatology, University of Copenhagen, 1993. pp. 91-104.
2. See. Farhady, H. , A. Jafarpour & P. Birjandi. 1994. Language Skills Testing : From theory to practice. SAMT, Tehran. Iran. pp. 66-77.
3 . Arjuna - Tseng, E. 1984. Testing & Evaluation of Interpreter Performance. In Mcintire, M. (Ed.). Proceedings of the Fourth Annual CIT conference. Silver Springs: Conference of Interpreter Trainers. 111 - 139.

otherwise the TMT would measure subjects' command of vocabulary instead of translation ability.

Therefore the test was thoroughly and repeatedly examined and edited before the pre - final form of the TMT was ready for administration.

5) The pre- final form was then administered as a pre - test to 83 senior students of translation at Azad University in Tehran.

6) The results of the pre- test were then tallied to check choice distribution and item difficulty. Thus the choices which were selected and marked by less than 10% or more than 70% of the subjects were altered because they were found to be either too difficult or too easy. Thereupon 26 choices were altered and the final form of the test was developed.

The pilot study not only helped us in developing the final form of the TMT, but also indicated that the time needed for taking this test was 60 minutes.

PROCEDURE

A) Administration:

The EPT was administered in Allameh Tabataba'i and in Kashan Universities. One week after its administration, the TMT and the TPT were administered. Out of the 82 senior students of translation who took the EPT, 41 took the TMT and the other 41 took the TPT.

B) Scoring:

The EPT and the TMT were objectively scored since they were multiple choice tests. However, scoring the TPT proved to be rather complicated. To score each of the four texts, the "sentence" was taken as the unit of translation ane the "verb" was taken as the marker for each sentence.

Two scores were allocated to the translation of each

different translations were selected for each sentence, of which only one was supposed to serve as the adequate translation equivalent.

4) The next step was to arrange the choices with regard to test writing principles. This in itself gave rise to the following problems:

● Lexical Inconsistency, which emerged because each translation choice was extracted from among the 53 different translations. Putting all these different pieces together created a mess, in that for example, the choices which followed sentence 2 were not necessarily taken from the same translations from which the choices for sentence 1 were extracted. This meant that the adequate choices for sentences 1 and 2 sometimes appeared to be incoherent when read together to form a whole text.

Varieties of word Order: Persian is scrambled in that it allows changes of word order, and thus different arrangements of sentence elements at the sentence level. Such changes do affect the focus in sentences, but usually do not alter the meaning. It was therefore extremely difficult to arrange the word order within the choices with regard to test writing principles.

● Lexical Equivalence :[1] Many of the words which served as translation equivalents in any one of the four choices had to be repeated in the other choices in order to ensure lexical consistency. In addition translation equivalents had to be given for many of the words,

1. Nida, E & Charles Taber. 1974. The Theory & Practice of Translation. Brill , Leiden. pp. 163-173.

management, since translating long texts requires more time and makes test administration difficult. After long discussions, we decided to give four brief informative texts.[1] These texts were rated for difficulty level in terms of length, number of sentences, and concepts. Their difficulty level corresponded to that of the reading comprehension passages given in EPT.

Second, we had to decide about the unit of translation. Following the general rule, " sentence" was taken as the unit of translation, except in few cases where few phrases were found to be functionally as significant as the sentence. Thus, in the test, each passage first appeared as a whole text, and then each one of its sentences appeared as a stem, followed by four translation choices.

Third , we had to arrange the choices in such a manner that only one out of the four would serve as the adequate translation equivalent.[2] Here adequacy was defined as both accuracy and appropriateness. The greatest problem now was to write the adequate and inadequate translation choices.

At this stage a pilot study[3] was carried out:

1) The four texts were arranged in the form of a Translation Production Test. This was given to 50 Junior students of translation at the undergraduate level for two different purposes:

● To elicit the adequate and inadequate translation choices;

● To decide about the period of time needed for taking the test in its final administration.

2) In addition, the test was also given to 3 colleagues who teach translation courses in the same Universities and also work as translators, this time in order to elicit the adequate translation equivalents.

3) The 53 papers were then carefully examined and four

1 . Newmark, p. 1981. Approaches to Translation. Prentice Hall, UK. pp. 13-18.

2. For an elaborate discussion of equivalent in translation see: Snell - Hornby, M. 1989. Translation Studies, An Intergrated Approach. John Benjamins Publishing Co. Amsterdam. pp. 6981.

3. The pilot study was inspired by : Arjuna - Tseng, E. 1985. The court Interpreters Test Design. In : Olivares, E. (ed.) Spanish Language use in the USA. Mouton press 1985. pp. 181-200.

3) Translation Production Test (TPT) : The TPT consisted of the same four texts given in TMT. The subjects who took this test were required to translate these texts from English into Persian.
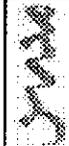
SUBJECTS

The subjects were selected from among The undergraduate students of translation at Allameh Tabataba' i, AZad , and Kashan Universities. They had passed 80 to 120 credits, which meant that they had taken all the required Englsih Language courses and at least five translation courses.

TEST DEVELOPMENT[1]

In developing the battery certain considerations were made:

a) The EPT was designed to measure the subjects' mastery over the English Language. It followed the design of TOEFL except for the cloze part. It was later used to decide about the degree of correspondence between FL proficiency and translation ability.

b) The TMT which was rather unprecedented in the undergraduate Program, was designed to measure the subjects, translation ability. It was a multiple choice test. Constructing the TMT proved to be extremely difficult. First, few texts had to be chosen, which would be appropriate in terms of translatability, and time

1. For furthur information see: Farhady, h.,A. jafarpour & P. Birjandi. 1994. language Skills Testing : From Theory to Practice. SAMT, Tehran. Iran. pp. 83-100.

DESIGN

A battery of three tests was developed as follows:

1) English proficiency Test (EPT) : The EPT was designed to measure the subjects' command of the English language. It followed the design of TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) , in most parts, except that it included in addition , a cloze test which was designed to measure the overall language Proficiency level of the subjects. The EPT consisted of the following sections:

● Structure and Written Expressions, consisting of 20 multiple choice items.

● Vocabulary , consisting of 20 multiple choice items.

● Reading and comprehension, consisting of 5 brief (70-150 words) informative texts followed by 15 multiple choice questions.

● Cloze , consisting of cloze passage with 15 words deleted. The deletion rate was 8 ,i.e. every eighth word was deleted, while one sentence at the beginning and another at the end of the text remained untouched in order to provide context. For each of the 15 blanks, four choices were given, which would all fit into the sentence. The subjects were required to mark those choices which would render the whole text both meaningful and coherent.

The EPT Consisted of 70 questions altogether.

2) Translation Multiple Choice Test (TMT)[1] :

The TMT consisted of 4 brief (70-150) informative texts in English. Each text was broken up into its component sentences. Each sentence was then used as a stem, and four different Persian translations were given for it. The subjects were required to choose the most accurate and natural translation equivalent for each sentence from among the given choices with due regard to coherence.

1. Stansfield, C. et al. 1991. The Measurement of Translation Ability. paper presented in the Conference on testing in Washington, May 1991.(Available from ERIC Clearinghouse). 1-26.

(see Sonja Tirkkonen Condit 1986) and Thinking Aloud Protocols, also known as TAPs (see Dechert and Sandrock 1986). However , most of these researches yielded in general insights, rather than answers which would bear directly on either theory or even ordered application (see Toury 1995 : 239).

The present study thus falls into the category of Descriptive Translation Studies, since it attempts to throw some light on the nature of translation competence and its relation to foreign language proficiency and bears pedagogical implications for both translator trainers and trainee translators.

The Research

Translators and translation scholars unanimously agree that efficient translators must have a good knowledge of the SL , the TL, and the content. The present paper attempts to explore the relation between foreign language proficiency and translation ability.

To explore the issue, a research was carried out with undergraduate students of translation at Allameh Tabataba' i, Azad , and Kashan Universities in Iran.
The research addressed the following questions:

1. What is the relation between foreign language proficiency and translation ability?

2. Does foreign language proficiency correlate higher with translation multiple choice tests or with translation production tests?

3. Does a multiple choice test of translation function as well as a production test of translation in assessing translation ability?

In this research "foreign language" was used to refer to the nonmother tongue in the language pair , and English was taken as both the foreign language and the source language.

Translation Studies in its modern sense is a phenomenon of the past four decades. It developed first as an area of applied linguistics (see Nida 1965 , Nida & Taber 1974, Catford 1965, Newmark 1980, Snell - Hornby 1989 , and many others) and later as an interdisciplinary field of study (see Snell Hornby 1989, Gill 1993, and others).

However, to establish itself as an independent empirical discipline, Translation studies was later found to need to conform to the requirements of empiricism, which in turn called for the establishment of a descriptive branch within this new discipline (see Holmes 1972, and Toury 1985 & 1995). This was how Descriptive Translation studies (DTS) came into being.

DTS was first introduced as a branch of pure Translation Studies by James S. Holmes in 1972 and later elaborated by Toury in 1985 and also later in 1995. It is designed to encourage the application of empirical research procedures and methods in Translation Studies, and focuses on addressing translational phenomenon through production process , and function - oriented approaches. DTS as discussed by Toury (1995) attempts to:

a) supply exhaustive descriptions and explanations of actual behaviour and regularities of behaviour in translation;

b) formulate a series of coherent laws which would state the inherent relations between all the variables found to be relevent to translation;

c) provide grounds for the evolutionary process of gradual transition from partial theories to a general theory of translation. see (Toury 1995: 16)

The DTS trend has inspired several experimental researches in Translation Studies since 1980 . S, in the form of Cloze Test (see Snell - Hornby), Questionnaires

Foreign Language Proficiency
and Translation Ability

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Abstract

This article reports a research project, carried out at Allameh Tabataba'i University with undergraduate students of translation , aimed at assessing the degree of correspondence between foreign language proficiency and translation ablility. For this project a battery of three tests was developed: an English proficiency Test (EPT), a Translation Multiple Choice Tests (TMT) , and a Translation Production Test (TPT).

The results of the final administration of the battery indicate that a TMT measures translation competence, not performance, and therefore correlates higher with an EPT, which itself assesses foreign language competence, where as a TPT which measures production, shows less correlation with EPT. It is thus concluded that foreign language proficiency is a necessary, but not sufficient, requirement for translating efficiently. The article further provides insights into developing translation production tests.