

# Quality Perceptions and Professional Status in Translation

## *Percepción de la calidad y el estatus profesional en Traducción*

**Tabea DE WILLE and Montserrat BERMÚDEZ BAUSELA**

*University of Limerick y Universidad Alfonso X el Sabio*

Tabea.DeWille@ul.ie / mbermbau@uax.es

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**Abstract:** While there is a large body of knowledge on quality in translation and localisation, the question of how quality is *perceived* based on extrinsic factors has so far not been widely investigated. This paper is focused on how information on the professional status of translators can change the participants' perception and what attitudes and opinions they have towards a translation based on extrinsic information. This paper provides an overview of translation quality from the academic and industry perspective and offers a detailed description of the experiment carried out. In it, we could observe that those participants with higher levels of expertise were less influenced by extrinsic information than those with lower levels of expertise. We present our results against the background of existing literature on how translation is regarded as a profession and reflect on the connection between this and how quality is perceived in translation and localisation.

**Key words:** quality; perception; translation; professional status; localisation; extrinsic factors.

**Resumen:** Si bien es cierto que el conocimiento existente en torno a la calidad en traducción y localización es muy amplio, la cuestión de cómo se *percibe* esta en

relación con factores de tipo extrínseco no lo es tanto. Este artículo se centra en observar cómo la información que se ofrece a los participantes sobre el estatus profesional de los traductores puede cambiar su percepción respecto a la calidad de la traducción, así como en el estudio de las actitudes y opiniones que estos poseen acerca de la traducción a partir de la información de carácter extrínseco proporcionada. En este artículo se repasan algunos de los estudios en torno a la calidad en el ámbito de la traducción desde un punto de vista académico y profesional, y se ofrece una descripción detallada del experimento llevado a cabo. En él, se pudo observar que los factores extrínsecos no influyeron de igual manera en aquellos participantes con más experiencia. Presentamos nuestros resultados en relación con los estudios existentes sobre la percepción de la traducción como profesión, y reflexionamos sobre la conexión entre este hecho y la percepción de la calidad en traducción y localización.

**Palabras clave:** calidad; percepción; traducción; estatus profesional; localización; factores extrínsecos.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A central issue in the translation process is that quality is not produced in a vacuum, but for a customer who needs to be convinced that they are getting good value for the money they are spending. A common challenge here is the information asymmetry in the seller-buyer relationship, where the seller knows more about the quality of the product than the buyer. In his seminal and Nobel-prize winning work on the effects of quality uncertainty and information asymmetry, Akerlof (1970) described the detrimental effects quality uncertainty can have on the seller-buyer relationship. Prices decrease to the point at which low quality products drive the good quality products out of the market (Akerlof 1970, 490).

In the context of translation and localisation, efforts towards producing greater quality could be considered wasted if the decision-making buyer is not able to distinguish the higher-quality product from the lower-quality one and is therefore not willing to pay for a higher quality output. Without being able to evaluate intrinsic product attributes, a customer then has to rely on extrinsic information (Golder, Mitra, and Moorman 2012).

In our research we have applied these concepts to the translation process by examining the effects of extrinsic cues (specifically, translator's professional background) on the decision making of individuals with high, medium or low measurement knowledge.

In order to understand the importance of quality and how it is perceived, we offer an overview of the main approaches and studies that have been conducted to try to define it.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Academia and industry do not always agree on the criteria used to define quality. While Translation Studies tend to focus more on theoretical aspects and the process of translation, professional translators are also concerned with practical and result-oriented issues such as cost-effectiveness or client relationship. However, the concern for this issue is common in both.

In this review, we first introduce the issue of quality from a more academic perspective, based primarily on the concept of «equivalence». We secondly introduce the concept of *perceived quality* and its relationship to intrinsic and extrinsic cues.

### 2.1. Academic approaches to translation quality

Ever since Translation Studies was established as a discipline of its own, translation quality has been an object of debate, and lack of objectivity is at the core of the dilemma. As House (2015, 8-9) acknowledges, translation will never be such a neutral and objective discipline as a scientific experiment is. Also, there does not seem to be a standard approach agreed upon and no single objective way to measure quality. This is so because quality views are strongly linked with the vision that different theoretical approaches have of translation.

For example, for linguistically-oriented approaches, equivalence would consist in the reproduction of both form and content of the source text (ST) (Vinay and Darbelnet 1958, Catford 1965, Newmark 1991).

A different approach is based on pragmatic and communicative factors, and focusses on describing the nature of translation, not on prescribing how one should translate: proponents of this approach are interested in the norms that intervene in the production and reception of translations (Hermans 1985, 10-11) and suggest target-oriented models that lay their emphasis on the target text (TT) recipient and the function that the text should accomplish in its new context of reception.

The study of norms that govern the translation process is paramount to assess the quality of a translation as they are guidelines and conventions accepted by a specific community (Toury 1978, 84). They regulate the relationship between the original and the translation and the global strategy to follow (Toury 1978, Lambert and Van Gorp 1985, Lefevere 1992, Chesterman and Wagner 2002). In this context, what allows defining a TT as a «good» translation is precisely its acceptability on the part of the target system's recipient.

Within the framework of the functionalist approaches, *Skopostheorie* claims that the overall frame of reference for the translator should not be the original and its function, as equivalence-based translation theory would have it, but the function the TT is to

achieve in the target culture. The intended target function sets the standard for any decision the translator is to take in the course of the translation process and, therefore, determines the quality of the final product (D'Hulst 1997, Reiss and Vermeer 2013). Evaluating a «good» translation depends on the communicative function it is supposed to achieve (Nord 2018).

For text and discourse-oriented approaches, equivalence needs to be achieved not only by reproducing the same propositional content (semantics), but also the illocutionary force (pragmatics) of the text (Neubert and Shreve 1992, 76). For them, a translation is determined by its rhetorical purpose. Like this, equivalence cannot only be established through a one-to-one correspondence between the structures of the ST and the TT, but according to the analysis of the discourse structure on the textual level and the identification of patterns that help us recognize the overall rhetorical purpose of the text. In the same way, equivalence is not sought on a word level, but on a textual level. Choosing a pragmatic equivalence or a referential equivalence depends on cultural, linguistic and textual factors (Baker 1992). Translation involves negotiation of meaning since all texts are evidence of a communicative translation in a particular social framework (Hatim and Mason 1997).

According to House (2015) it is vital to preserve in the translation the illocutionary force of the original, as well as reflect the ideational and interpersonal components. Those translations that succeed will be able to be qualified as good translations. She identifies equivalence with the preservation of meaning through two different languages and cultures. By following the analysis suggested by Halliday (1989) to which she adds the study of genre and the use of corpus, she tries to make her model more objective. The concept of equivalence, which, as we have seen, involves establishing the relationship between the ST and the TT, implies the need to talk about the quality of a translation.

Also interesting is Williams's (2009) argumentation-centred approach to TQA, which tackles some of the problems that deal with quality from a discourse analysis approach. Williams (*ibid.*: 5) ponders some of the problems when designing and applying a TQA model, such as the linguistic or subject-field knowledge of the evaluator, the seriousness of errors, levels of errors, multiple levels of assessment, or TQA purpose, among other aspects. Continuing within the textual analysis approach, we would also like to mention Al-Qinai's empirical model for TQA based on objective parameters of textual typology, formal correspondence, thematic coherence, reference cohesion, pragmatic equivalence and lexico-syntactic properties (2000, 497). According to Al-Qinai, what is normally perceived is the final product, while no attention is given to the process and it is precisely in the process where the objectivity of TQA lies.

In socio-cultural approaches (Bassnet 2013), the focus is on translation as cultural transfer and the way in which culture can limit translation. Translation is considered a rewriting process (Lefevere 1992) in which the translation can differ from the original

and the translator can even improve it. Furthermore, translation can manipulate the image of the source culture (Berman 1985, Venuti 1998, Spivak 2004). What all the cultural theories have in common is the inclusion of the socio-cultural framework to the process of translation. Translation is conceived as cultural transfer in which the text is inseparable of its cultural background. These scholars usually focus on reception factors of translation, tightly linked with ideology.

As we can see, the way that the term «equivalence» has evolved goes hand in hand with translation quality and its evolution from a static and prescriptive approach (which supports loyalty and faithfulness to the ST) to a descriptive and dynamic one (that contemplates other possible relationships between the ST and the TT).

## 2.2. *Perceived Quality*

In this paper we focus on perceived quality, distinguishing between intrinsic product attributes and extrinsic cues.

Intrinsic attributes are product-specific, cannot be changed without changing the nature of the product itself (Zeithaml 1988, 6-7) and provide intrinsic cues regarding the composition of the product (Sirohi, McLaughlin, and Wittink 1998, 226). In translation, examples include faithful conveying of meaning, correct grammar and adherence to customer requirements like maximum character counts for localisation strings. Academic definitions of translation quality primarily focus on such intrinsic attributes.

However, products and services generally also carry extrinsic cues like price, brand name and level of advertising (Zeithaml 1988, 6; Sirohi, McLaughlin, and Wittink 1998, 226; Vantamay 2007, 114;).

Extrinsic cues commonly support the quality evaluation process, by giving a buyer clues as to whether a product is of high quality, in particular if the customer is not in a position to evaluate the intrinsic attributes of a product sufficiently (Golder, Mitra, and Moorman 2012). In translation, a buyer might assume that an expensive translation is of higher quality than a cheaper one, possibly due to extra time spent, additional quality checks or a higher level of expertise on side, although the link between external cue of «price» and quality is generally weak and unreliable.

Our research focuses on measurement knowledge as a determinant of how strongly an individual is influenced by extrinsic cues. Measurement knowledge refers to the individual's ability to assess attribute performance with minimal bias or variance relative to more objective measures. However, in real-life scenarios, measurement motivation (the desire to assess attribute performance, depending on level of interest or time to evaluate a product) as well as emotions come into play (Golder, Mitra, and Moorman 2012).

## 2.3. The Translation Profession

### 2.3.1. Translation as a «Failed» Profession

One extrinsic cue of particular interest in the context of translation is whether someone should be considered a «professional translator». However, since the translation field is relatively weakly protected and institutionalised, it is unclear whether a «professional» translator for example needs to have training or formal qualifications or whether it is sufficient to merely earn a living with translations (Paloposki 2016, 16). As a result, anyone who wishes to do so could theoretically call themselves a «professional translator» and attempt to earn money with translations, regardless of whether they are sufficiently skilled, trained and experienced to provide adequate results (Chesterman 2001, 146).

This is furthered by the increasing internationalisation of the translation market, free online machine translation, and increased electronic communication. Complications in form of difficulties with checking credentials and the fact that through machine translation, everyone can produce «something that looks like a translation» have been introduced (Pym, Orrego-Carmona and Torres-Simón 2016, 36). Further complications may arise from the high rate of freelance translators in the industry (Kushner 2013, 1248; Koskinen and Dam 2016, 259) and their global distribution, as well as segments of the market coming from volunteers (or amateurs/non-professionals) (Jimenez-Crespo 2013, 24; Pym, Orrego-Carmona and Torres-Simón 2016, 36).

### 2.3.2. Quality and «professional» translation

One central question here has yet to be addressed: Even if it was possible to clearly demarcate translation «professionals» from «non-professionals», would this distinction actually be a reliable indicator of quality that can be expected and hence serve as a suitable extrinsic cue? After all, the argument could be made that translation capability primarily requires an individual to be bilingual with monolingual communicative and linguistic abilities (Pérez-González and Susam-Saraeva 2012, 150). Also against the background of the vast amounts of bilingual speakers (European Commission 2012, 12) it would then be possible to argue that professional translation is the exception rather than the non-professional (Pérez-González and Susam-Saraeva 2012, 157), while others draw the line between the professional and the non-professional based on remuneration (Pérez-González and Susam-Saraeva 2012, 151; Orrego-Carmona 2016, 3), which would indicate little quality difference between the two groups.

Yet, several suggestions have been made why a «professional» translator might be able to provide better quality than a «non-professional». These include among others

a code of ethics. Professional translators must not only strive for excellence, fairness, truthfulness, trustworthiness, empathy, courage and determination (Chesterman 2001, 146), but also be able to find and evaluate alternatives during translation through language skills (contrastive linguistic and cultural), technical and research skills (Chesterman 2001, 147). Competencies suggested for professional translators include translation pedagogy, translation quality assessment and criticism, professional ethics and norms (Pérez-González and Susam-Saraeva 2012, 150), as well as «linguistic, extralinguistic, instrumental, and strategic knowledge about translation», which is not knowledge possessed by all bilinguals (Jiménez Crespo 2013, 26).

However, researchers have also acknowledged that while «training, expertise, association or a combination of these criteria can work as a signal of trustworthiness and could be used to distinguish between professional and non-professional translators» (Orrego-Carmona 2016, 2), it is not clear how and to what extent any of these signals are linked to quality of the individual's output.

Added to this is the lack of clarity regarding whether or not translator training is necessary for being a professional translator or whether experience might have more market value than academic qualifications (Koskinen and Dam 2016, 258-259).

In fact, Pérez-González and Susam-Saraeva (2012) suggest that non-professionals may have an advantage, since due to their lack of training they are able to innovate rather than being «indoctrinated» with the need to stay close to the TT and are part of the audience in many cases (158). On Facebook, in some cases crowdsourced translators outperformed the professional translators due to knowledge of the Facebook interface (O'Hagan 2009, 113-114). In addition, in the area of fan translations, fans might also have knowledge that compensates for their lack of professional experience, like linguistic, pragmatic and discursive features that the professional might lack (Jiménez Crespo 2013, 26).

With this discussion, it is not our intention to suggest that there is no difference in the quality a «professional» translator will be able to provide, compared to a «non-professional». However, as Neather (2012) states, «who qualifies as an expert and in what sense often depends on where one is standing and with whom one is interacting» (265-266). If the assumption is that the translator's status sends a set of signals to indicate relative trustworthiness (Pym, Orrego-Carmona and Torres-Simón 2016, 33) and is therefore used as an extrinsic cue for perceived quality judgments, then the fact that the definition of «professional translator» vs. «non-professional translator» as well as associated capabilities is fuzzy suggests that the individual calling themselves «professional» and the individual using this declaration as a cue might associate different features and capabilities with this short-hand. This suggests that the reliability of this extrinsic cue is questionable at best.

## 3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

### 3.1. Overview and Experiment Design

We have tested the impact that the extrinsic cue «professional status» has on groups of different levels of measurement knowledge to determine how strongly each group would be influenced.

Based on literature, our hypothesis was that quality evaluators with greater measurement knowledge would be influenced by the extrinsic cues less strongly than those with less measurement knowledge, given the same task and instructions.

#### 3.1.1. Experiment design

In order to test this hypothesis, we asked different groups of participants, with different levels of measurement knowledge, to select their preferred version out of three translations (one from each translator group) offered alongside the English source text. 12 scenarios of varying lengths, with pre-test condition and two test conditions were presented to all participants.

- Pre-test condition: No information on the source of the translations (**NoInfo**).
- Test condition 1: Correct information on the professional status of the translator (novice, trained or expert). No additional explanations of the meaning of these labels were provided (**GoodInfo**).
- Test condition 2: As Test Condition 1, but here **incorrect** information on the professional status of the translator was provided (**BadInfo**).

Lines were assigned to each variable using a random number generator and for each, translators were alternated. All NoInfo scenarios were presented in one block (pre-test condition), followed by a block that contained GoodInfo and BadInfo scenarios in random order (test condition).

For students, the experiment was done in a controlled-environment context in the translation laboratory, with the researcher in the same room. Lecturers, on the other hand, completed the experiment in their own time.

This experiment was accompanied by a questionnaire in which participants were asked for opinion on the connection between the professional status of a translator and quality; they were asked to describe what in their own words defines a localisation or translation professional, and to provide a definition of quality.

In the next sections we include the demographics of participants and questions on the connection between professional status and quality.



## 3.2. Experiment participants

The data for this study was collected from translation students of different levels and lecturers at the Universidad Alfonso X el Sabio in Spain.

While there is an element of variability, by asking students and lecturers to participate, it was possible to estimate their level of translation/reviewing expertise relatively precisely. This allowed us to control the «measurement knowledge» variable to a large degree by collecting data from this group.

### 3.2.1. Demographics

Participants were grouped into three categories, based on their level of training received at that point and their working experience (Table 1).

Participant grouping	Numbers	Percentage
Novice participants (1st/2nd year students)	11	23%
Trained participants (3rd/4th year students)	21	43.70%
Expert participants (Lecturers)	16	33.30%

Table 1: Grouping of Participants at UAX

43 of 48 respondents self-identified as native speakers of Spanish, the remaining five were also included in the results as they were proficient enough to have been enrolled in the translation course.

None of the novice participants (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students) had professional translation experience, and the category «less than 12 months of experience» was selected primarily by trained participants (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students), while those who had selected 5 to 30 years or up to 5 years of experience were predominantly part of the expert (lecturer) respondent group. Some of the expert participants also had extensive training in translation, specialist knowledge in linguistics, and 79% of them had received training in conducting reviews (academic or non-academic).

## 3.2. Text and translation of the text

### 3.2.1. Text selection

The text used for the experiment had been created by one of the authors of this paper and proofread by a native speaker who was trained and experienced in editing texts. Its features were:

- No previous translation was available.
- 13 short paragraphs (two to three sentences each) with individual headings (between two and 13 words each) to avoid as far as possible issues with missing references, context or consistency that may arise from segmenting longer sections.
- General subject matter without requiring high levels of specialisation.

### 3.2.2. Text translation

The text was then independently translated by six Spanish translation students and lecturers (two from each group). The groups were:

- **Novice translators:** first-year translation students who had not yet received training in translation.
- **Trained translators:** fourth-year translation students who had received in-depth training in translation but had not gained real-life translation experience.
- **Expert translators:** lecturers at the University Alfonso X el Sabio in Madrid. Both had many (25 and 15 respectively) years of teaching experience in the translation degree and were trained and experienced in judging language quality.

All translators were told that their translations would be used for an experiment but not what the exact nature of the experiment was. The translations were evaluated (but not edited) by the researchers to ensure a minimum quality level required so that they were valid for the experiment.

### 3.3. Data analysis

Analysis included:

- Frequency analysis for selection of each translation by participant group, cross-tabulated with information on the translators' status given (NoInfo, GoodInfo, BadInfo).
- Mean standard deviation for each individual scenario and types of scenarios (all NoInfo, all GoodInfo, all BadInfo). This was conducted in order to show how strong the agreement was within participant groups. Greater standard deviation indicates higher levels of agreement.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. *The Language Professional and Quality*

Respondents were asked whether they thought that someone being a professional translator was a deciding factor in the quality one could expect. No definition of what was meant with a «professional» translator was provided.

60.4% of the respondents thought there was such a connection in most cases, 27.1% in some cases, and only a combined 10.5% thought the connection was present only sometimes or not usually.

«Yes, in most cases» was selected primarily by expert (11) and trained participants (14). Novice participants were less certain of the connection between quality and whether a translator was a professional (Figure 1).

Due to the low numbers of those who thought that the connection between professional status and quality was present only sometimes or not usually, we did not include analysis based on this question in the experiment analysis for this paper.

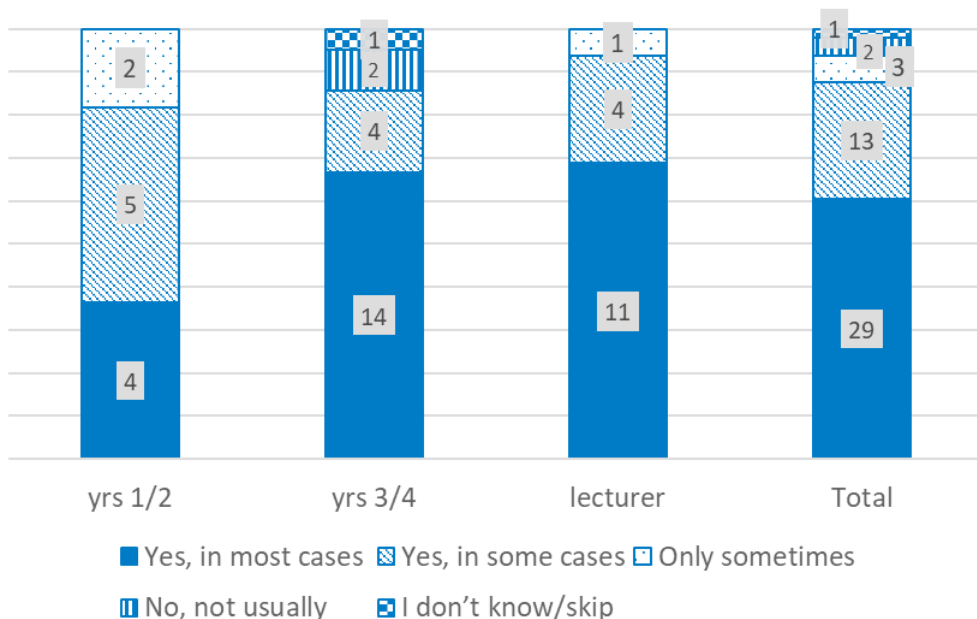


Figure 1: *Link between Professional Status and Quality, Break-down by Sub-groups*

Respondents were then asked to describe what in their own words defines a localisation or translation professional. This question was placed after the opinion question on whether a translator being a professional was a deciding factor in quality in order to get the most impulsive, initial responses prior to asking the participants to

describe and, thereby, think about the concept of a translation professional in more detail. We obtained 48 responses providing a description (Figure 2).

The resulting unstructured, text-based data was coded by the researchers into themes (Table 2) that emerged from the responses. The majority of respondents offered one (15) or two (26) aspects to define what described a translation or localisation professional, while seven respondents outlined three or four aspects. After a first round of inter-coder agreement calculation and subsequent adjustment of categories, inter-coder reliability based on a random sample of 15% of the lines was 0.989 (Cohen's Kappa).

Code	Definition	Example
Culture knowledge	Mentioning knowledge of cultural aspects related to the translator.	It's a person who has a perfect knowledge of the other language and of its culture.
Experience	Mentioning experience with translation.	Qualification, work experience.
Gets paid	Mentioning finances, livelihood or, generally, getting paid.	A person who works as a translator on a regular basis and charges for it.
Language knowledge	Mentioning linguistic knowledge, either general knowledge of language or specific aspects.	It's a person who has a perfect knowledge of the other language and of its culture.
Tech knowledge	Mentioning knowledge of technology, technical skills or techniques for translation and localisation.	A person who has studied not only languages, but translation techniques to deliver the same message and effect than the original text.
Training	Mention of any type of translation related studies, whether formal, informal or unspecified.	Qualification, work experience.

*Table 2: Common Labels Emerging from Definitions of the Translation Professional Status*

The most common aspect was «language knowledge», which is quite interesting since knowledge of a language is one of the factors that would not serve, in an obvious manner, to distinguish a professional translator from any other bilingual or multilingual individual. In second position were mentions of «training», some of which explicitly specified a form of formal training, while the rest remained generic or explicitly stated that training does not have to be formal.

After that, participants specified technological skills. «Experience» was only in fourth position, after which came «cultural knowledge»; while references to finances and livelihood («Gets paid») were the least associated with the status of a translation professional.

Some attributes like language knowledge, training and cultural knowledge were relatively equally distributed among the different respondent participant groups, while trained and expert groups also mentioned getting paid and technical knowledge (aspects that were not mentioned by novice participants), as well as placing a heavier focus on experience than the novice group.

### Aspects defining language professional; Students and lecturers UAX

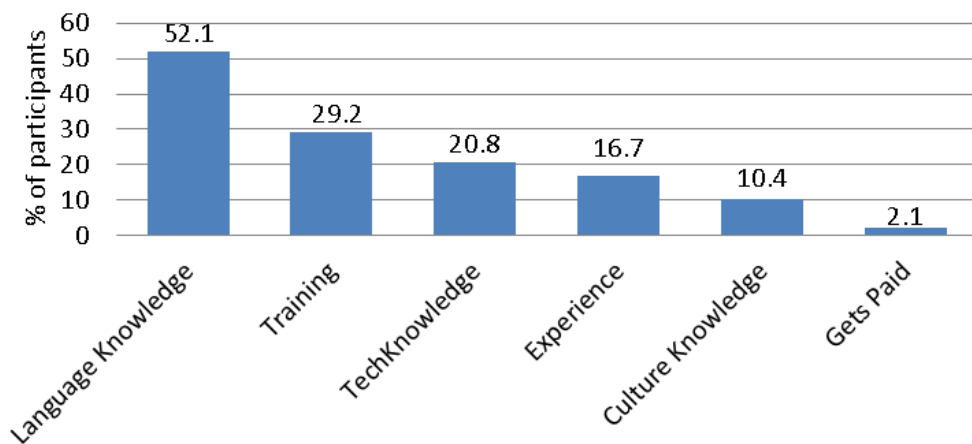


Figure 2: Aspects Defining a Translation Professional

## 4.2. Experiment results

### 4.2.1. Frequency of selection

Figure 3 shows the mean values for selection per translator and participant group.

**NoInfo** - Given no information on the professional status of the translator, the expert translator was selected frequently (44.1%), but not exclusively as the best translation.

Expert participants selected the expert translator’s version most frequently (mean: 53.2%), while only a mean of 12.5 % of them chose the novice translations.

When it comes to trained participants, we obtained that a mean of 46.1 % chose the expert translations, and a much lower percentage, a mean of 23,5 %, chose the novice translations. We could observe more confusion in the choices made by trained participants compared to the ones made by expert participants over the translation that they thought was best.

However, the opposite pattern was found among novice participants, as only a mean of 27.3% selected the expert translation, while it is interesting noting that their preferred translations were those performed by novice translators with an outstanding mean of 45.5 %.

Overall, we see an inclination for the expert translations, except for novice participants, as we have seen. However, our expectation was that the percentage would be much higher, and it is not. When we analyse the different responses by groups of people, we find that the professional background of the participants does make a difference.

**GoodInfo** - Given good information on the professional status of the translator, the expert translation was selected more frequently (mean: 70.8%) and the novice translation least frequently (mean: 12.8%, down from 24.9% in NoInfo).

A mean of 87.5% of the expert participants chose the expert translations (relative to NoInfo, experts had a 33.8% increase in the selection of the expert translation), while they only selected trained translations a mean of 9.4%, and novice translations a mean of 3.1%. Experts were quite decisive regarding their choices and there did not seem to be much confusion.

Trained participants went also from 46.1% in NoInfo to 65.0% in GoodInfo in their choice of the expert translations, while 17.5 % went for the trained translations, and 17.5% for the novice translations.

The same pattern could be observed among novice participants. While 56.8% of the participants chose the expert translations (more than double in relation to the NoInfo scenarios!), 25.0% of them chose the trained translations, and 18.2% chose the novice translations.

We were somehow surprised that students did not select more the expert translations. Also, novice participants were the only group that selected a trained translation most frequently in a GoodInfo scenario.

**BadInfo** - When wrong information on the professional status of the translator was provided, the mean expert selection dropped to 39.1% from 44.1% in NoInfo scenarios and a mean standard deviation in figure 4 highlights that agreement was lower for BadInfo scenarios than for NoInfo ones.

Expert and trained participants selected what was actually the expert translation (but labelled otherwise: BadInfo\_Truth) slightly more often than what was incorrectly labelled as the expert translation (BadInfo\_Lie). The only group that picked BadInfo\_Lie over BadInfo\_Truth more often were the novice participants (mean: 45.5%).

Indeed, participants were more prone to choose the «so-called» expert translation (BadInfo\_Lie) than any other translation, with the exception of novice participants, as we have seen. Therefore, there certainly is a relation between the preferences of the participants and their professional background. The professional status of the translator does make a difference. The more experienced or trained the participant, the less influenced they were by the information provided, especially in BadInfo scenarios.

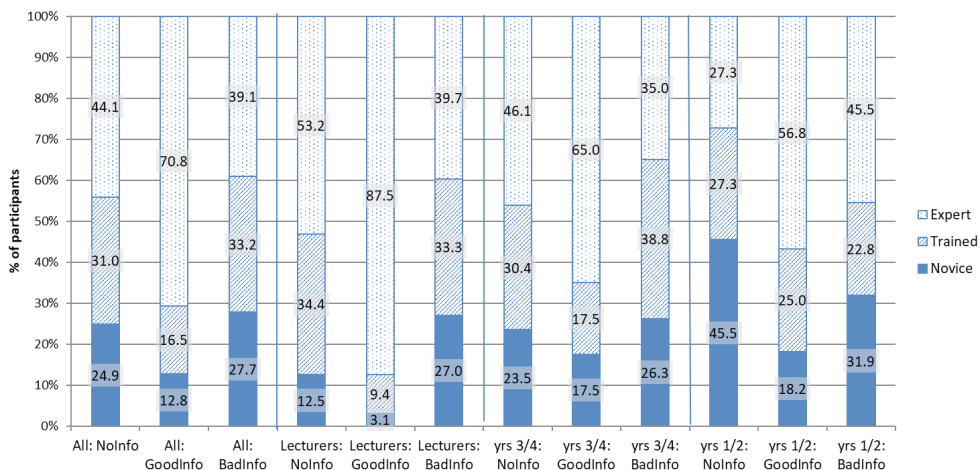


Figure 3: Mean Values for each Scenario Type Selection, by Participant Group.

#### 4.2.2. Level of agreement

Agreement among the expert participants on which translation was the best version was overall strong, and it was especially high for GoodInfo scenarios.

Trained participants' agreement levels were relatively weak. Most notably, while agreement was lower in BadInfo scenarios compared to NolInfo, providing correct information on professional background of the translators increased agreement only slightly.

For novice participants, agreement was strongest for the GoodInfo scenarios, and nearly half that for BadInfo, with NolInfo situated in the middle. Overall, there was slightly less agreement on which translation was best in this group compared to the participants as a whole (Figure 4).

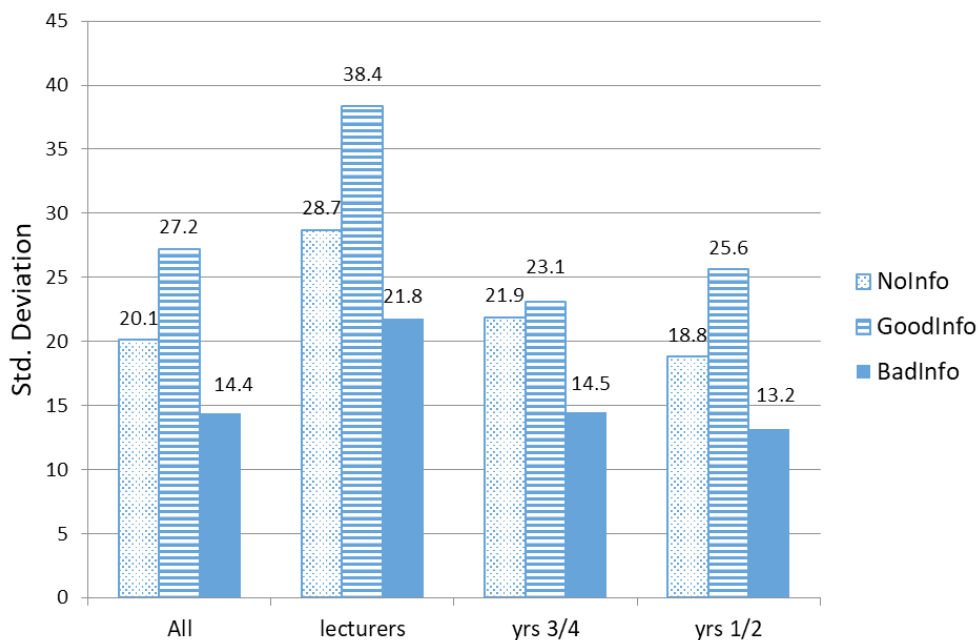


Figure 4: Mean Standard Deviation for all Participant Groups

#### 4.2.3. Performance and agreement relative to word counts

In order to investigate the impact the amount of intrinsic information provided for each scenario would have, we related word counts to the experiment results.

When considering agreement levels next to word counts of the scenarios, results vary depending on group.

##### 1. Expert participants:

- In NoInfo, no firm pattern between word count and the level of agreement between participants could be observed. Two scenarios with low word count resulted in a high and low level of agreement each, as did the two scenarios with high word count.
- In GoodInfo, a correlation between word count and level of agreement could be observed. Two scenarios with low word count also showed lower levels of agreement among participants on which translation is the best, while the two scenarios with high word count showed higher levels of agreement.



- Finally, in BadInfo, these correlations were reversed. Two scenarios with high word count showed less agreement than the two scenarios with low word count. Here, the scenario with the highest word count was also the one with the greatest level of disagreement.
2. Trained participants:
    - In NolInfo, a correlation between word count and levels of agreement could be observed. For scenarios with low word count, higher levels of agreement were achieved than for scenarios with high word count;
    - In GoodInfo and BadInfo, no clear patterns could be observed.
  3. Novice participants:

For this respondent group, no correlation between word count and levels of agreement could be observed for any of the scenario types.

Finally, we also related the performance of each translation within a group to the individual translators who had provided each scenario translation, which showed no trends or strong correlations.

## 5. CONCLUSION

For this study, our hypothesis that quality evaluators with greater measurement knowledge would be influenced by extrinsic cues less strongly than those with less measurement knowledge was confirmed. Further, we found that the extrinsic cue of professional status had overall strong influence on participants, to differing degrees.

Expert participants (high measurement knowledge) overall trended towards selecting the expert translation, and agreed most strongly. They considered both, extrinsic cues and intrinsic attributes, especially when their observation of one supported the other. When they observed a discrepancy, they generally relied on extrinsic cues less than the other participant groups.

Trained participants (medium measurement knowledge) were situated in the mid-range in terms of reliance on extrinsic cues. They selected the expert translator less frequently, and their increase when extrinsic cues and intrinsic attributes matched was lowest of the groups. This suggests that while their translation studies had equipped them with a greater ability to evaluate quality, relative to novice participants, there was a greater element of disagreement. This may indicate that certainty in evaluation is linked to experience levels.

Finally, novice participants (low measurement knowledge) were heavily influenced by extrinsic cues. This was especially evident from the fact that this was the only group that picked the incorrectly-labelled expert translations more often than the actual expert translator when extrinsic cues and intrinsic attributes did not match, as well as from the observation that there was no correlation between the amount of intrinsic attributes

and levels of agreement for any of the scenario types. Further, agreement levels were lowest for this group. Surprisingly, in the questionnaire this group was less certain about the link between quality and a translator being a professional than the other two groups.

Limitations for this study primarily relate to relatively small participant groups and the inherent differences in measurement knowledge between the participants and translation buyers. While participating evaluators were all fluent in Spanish, this is unlikely to be the case for translation buyers. While they may have non-linguistic measurement knowledge (processes, quality evaluation tools etc.), their overall measurement knowledge, as well as their measurement motivation, are likely to be lower.

The effects of client education will be evaluated in a future study.

We are also interested in studying what evaluators *actually do* when they evaluate. For this, a forthcoming paper will report on an experiment using eye-tracking technology to determine the participants' focus and attention on the texts when they are evaluating. We believe that this methodology will also give us some hints on the translation process in itself.

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