A Comparative Study of Five Accreditation Tests for Translators At Home and Abroad

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Abstract: This paper makes a comparative study of five accreditation tests, namely "China Accreditation Test for Translators and Interpreters"(CATTI), "English Test for International Communication"(ETIC), Test of American Translators Association (ATA), "Diploma in Translation" (Dip Trans) of the UK and National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) of Australia from the perspectives of the similarities and differences in design, assessments and grading, and also provides a qualitative study of Chinese candidates attending CATTI. It is hoped that the study can provide useful explorations for the integration of applied translation teaching and professional accreditation.

1. Introduction

Driven by the wave of globalization and the flood of information technology, the scope of translation industry continues to expand, with translation services as the core, covering businesses such as localization services, language consulting, language training, etc., and prompting the transformation of the traditional translation practice into a language service industry. At the same time, society has put forward requirements for the professionalization and specialization of translation practitioners, as well as for the training of high-quality foreign language talents. One of the main objectives for the education in application-oriented universities is to foster professional translators who can quickly adapt to the needs of positions, and are oriented to small and medium-sized enterprises and flexible employment. In order to better control the quality of talent training, it should be a priority option under the current employment situation to integrate the export standards for application-oriented translation talent training with the professional accreditation of the translation industry both at home and abroad.

Based on the above considerations, this paper compares the five accreditation tests for translators, with the aims to clarify the training direction of application-oriented translators, improve the pertinence of teaching, and provide a reference for the reform of the domestic translation accreditation.

2. Designs of Five Accreditation Tests for Translators

In order to select talents, the American Translators Association has implemented the ATA test since 1971. It has been half a century since it is a test with a long history and mature design. The

ATA test is divided into different language pairs and translation directions. Currently, it provides tests for rendering into English from ten languages, including Arabic, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish; as well as tests for rendering from English into the following 14 languages, namely Chinese, Croatian, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Swedish and Ukrainian.

As a melting pot, Australia is home to immigrants from all over the world. Different cultural backgrounds, ethnic identities, and customs have made cross-language and cross-cultural communication the most basic requirement for multi-ethnic groups. The Australian government established the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) test in 1977. It aims to set professional standards for translators of different levels, establish a national registration and issuance qualification system.

The British Diploma in Translation (Dip Trans) test, also known as the "Advanced Translation Diploma", is a program launched in 1989 by the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL). The certificate of Dip Trans is regarded as the "golden diploma" in the international translation industry. The Royal Institute of Chartered Linguists has set up examination centers around the world and holds examinations in late January each year.

The "China Accreditation Test for Translators and Interpreters"(CATTI) is a national-level professional qualification examination commissioned by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and managed by the China Foreign Language Publishing and Distribution Bureau. The accreditation is to evaluate and certify the bilingual inter-translation ability and level of the participants in interpretation or translation. The test started in December 2003, and since 2008 the second and third-level interpretation and translation tests in 7 languages including English, French, Japanese, Russian, German, Spanish, and Arabic have been promoted nationwide.

The "English Test for International Communication"(ETIC), is a proficiency accreditation test system launched by the China Foreign Language Assessment Center of Beijing Foreign Studies University in April 2016. The two categories ---- "ETIC: Superior" and "ETIC: Translation" involve the accreditation of translation, especially the latter being widely praised. At present, the main purpose of English examinations in China such as CET Band 4 and 6 is for teaching inspection and assessment for further studies (Yu & Yan 2016), while the ETIC aims to evaluate and recognize the candidates' language proficiency in international workplace activities. At present, the ETIC has set up five categories: "Basic", "Intermediate", "Advanced", "Superior" and "Translation", according to the different needs of job positions for talent selection. In this paper, we mainly discuss the "Superior" and "Translation", as both involving translation accreditation, especially the latter being divided into three categories: translation, consecutive interpretation and simultaneous interpretation, providing professional and authoritative translation accreditation for the practitioners and college students.

3. Assessments of Five Accreditation Tests for Translators

The ATA tests usually last 3 hours and are conducted as a proctored open-book test. The test usually consists of three passages, the length of each being about 225-275 words. Among those, Passage A is the required translation, and Passage B and C are optional ones. Passage A is usually a general article that expresses a point of view, argument, or a new idea, such as an editorial in a newspaper, essays, non-fiction literary works, etc. Passage B is often a technical, scientific, or medical article, with the author being an expert in these fields and the target readers being ordinary people. Passage C is of a financial, political or legal nature, similar to Passage B in view of the authors and target readers. Passage B and C will not appear too difficult technical terminology, and the medium-difficulty terminology dictionary can generally be solved. Each original text of the

ATA is accompanied by clear translation instructions, explaining the source of the article, translation purpose, target readers and medium, etc. There are often special instructions such as "please translate it into American English" to imitate the customer's requirements in the reality.

The NAATI test is composed of two parts: a written test and an oral one. Taking Chinese-English translation as an example, the written test includes two modules: English-Chinese translation and Chinese-English translation. The test time for each module is 3 hours with two articles of 250 words each being required to be rendered. Meanwhile, the NAATI test also contains questions about professional ethics. The full score of the test is 100 points, of which 90 points are for article translation, 10 points for professional ethics and 70 points for passing. Candidates can bring their own dictionaries. Since November 2001, NAATI tests allow the use of electronic dictionaries. The oral test includes two tasks: dialogue translation and consecutive translation. Usually, there are two dialogue translations, each with about 375-400 words. There are also two consecutive translations, one in English translation and one in Chinese translation, each with approximately 300 words. The full score of the oral test is 100 points, of which 50 is divided into dialogue translation, 30 is divided into consecutive translation, 10 is divided into professional ethics, 10 is divided into social and cultural issues, with the passing points of 70.

The British Dip Trans lasts for 7 hours and consists of 3 parts. The first part is a non-professional text, about 600 words, with the second and third parts each containing three semi-technical texts, each about 450 words. To be specific, the second part mainly involves the three professional directions of technology, business and literature, and the third focuses on the three directions of science, social science and law. It should be pointed out that candidates can choose to complete the above three parts of the exam within one year or within a few years. The order of selection is not specified.

The CATTI is divided into two directions: translation and interpretation. Taking the Level 3 CATTI as an example, the test has two modules: "Comprehensive Competence in Translation" and "Practice in Translation". The test time for the former is two hours and the latter 3 hours. The interpretation also contains two modules: "Comprehensive Competence in Interpretation" and "Practice in Interpretation", with the former taking 60 minutes and the latter 30 minutes. Specifically, in the Level 3 CATTI test, "Comprehensive Competence in Translation" mainly examines objective questions such as vocabulary and grammar, reading comprehension, and cloze. Among them, vocabulary and grammar questions include vocabulary selection, word substitution, and error correction. The Translation Practice consists of two parts, one for English-to-Chinese and one for Chinese-to-English, each with a maximum score of 50 points. The English-Chinese texts are mainly selected from foreign newspapers and magazines such as The New York Times and The Economist, while the Chinese-English translations mainly use speeches of leaders and government work reports as the source materials. At present, all CATTI texts in China have been completed on line.

The test of ETIC: Superior is used to evaluate and confirm the ability of candidates to use English for professional work in high-level international communication activities. The Superior test is composed of two parts: oral communication and written communication. And in the oral part, the Task 3 is a consecutive interpretation, while in written part, it is about document translation. The test of ETIC: Translation is used to evaluate and confirm candidates' competence to translate professional texts such as science and technology, law, business, economics and trade, as well as translation of general documents of various international conferences. The ETIC: Translation (written) consists of four tasks including the English-Chinese translation and Chinese-English translation of thematic documents and official documents; and the continuous and simultaneous interpretation is used for evaluation and identification of candidates in conferences and talks. The ability of consecutive interpreting in the occasion consists of two tasks: English-Chinese translation

and Chinese-English translation. The above-mentioned two types of exams for national talents are both adopted as remote computer-assisted exams.

4. Grading of Five Accreditation Tests for Translators

The ATA test has a variety of scoring methods, such as sub-item scoring, overall impression scoring, and error deductions. Xiao (2012) pointed out that "the ATA exam mainly uses the error deduction method. Two reviewers mark errors in the candidate's translation according to the regulations. If the total error score reaches or exceeds 18 points, it is considered a failure. If the opinions of the two reviewers cannot be unified and cannot be judged as passed or not at the same time, a third reviewer is required."

The NAATI includes five approaches to achieve the certificate, as long as the candidate meets any one of them, he or she can be assessed as suitable. The first approach is to pass the designated exam. Take the Level 3 translation test as an example. It consists of two parts, namely the professional translation test (total score is 90 points) and the professional ethics test (total score is 10 points), with a total of 70 points passing. All examinations are judged by two to three judges in accordance with the unified standards set by NAATI. Any questions about grading must be addressed directly to the office in Canberra; any improper use of words, punctuation errors, grammatical errors, spelling errors, semantic distortions and improper stylistics will be deducted, and the number of deductions will be determined by the judges. The second approach is to complete the study courses of relevant Australian institutions or universities accredited or designated by NAATI, such as those offered by Western Sydney University, University of Queensland, and Macquarie University. The third is to complete relevant professional qualifications and certificates from overseas institutions or universities recognized by NAATI, such as a bachelor and master degree in English from Beijing Foreign Studies University. And the fourth is candidate providing an internationally certified translation association membership certificate, while the fifth providing a certificate of advanced translation level.

Mu(2006) pointed out that "The grading standard of Dip Trans divides translations into four levels: excellent, qualified, pass, and fail. The four levels are based on five criteria: understanding of the original text; accuracy and decentness of the translation; connection, coherence and organization; technical points; notes and explanations".

All topics of Comprehensive Competence of Translation in CATTI are multiple-choice questions, and the grading standards are relatively objective; while translation practice questions are highly subjective, and the grading standards are divided into three levels: high, intermediate, and low. Among them, the score of advanced translation is between 40 and 50. The translation is required to be faithful to the original text, able to accurately translate more than 80% of the key test points, accurately and fluently, concise text, proper use of words, basically no grammatical errors, basically no typos and punctuation The symbols are used correctly. The intermediate score is between 30 and 39. The translation is basically faithful to the original and can accurately translate more than 60% of the key test points. The text is basically correct, the words are basically appropriate, and there are a few grammatical errors, typos and punctuation errors. The low-level score ranges from 0 to 29. The translation has serious mistranslations and missed translations. Only less than 60% of the key test sites can be translated. The original text is affected, improper use of words, and more grammatical errors, typos and punctuation errors. Practical questions adopt a deduction system: wrong translation, missing translation, grammatical error, 3 points for each; serious mistranslation (error of view), 5 points for each; inaccurate words, 1 point for each, follow-up Continuous deduction for repeated use in a sentence; spelling errors, 1 point deduction for each place; logic failure, incoherent sentences or translation, 2 points for each place as appropriate; grammatical deduction points such

as tense and voice errors, 2 deductions for each place Points; The special sentence pattern in the article should be translated strictly according to the sentence pattern. If it is translated in other sentence patterns, no matter whether it is correct or not, 2 points will be deducted for each sentence, such as emphasizing sentence patterns, apposition clauses, etc.

Luo and Han (2018) once claim that the ETIC generally includes automatic scoring and manual double-evaluation methods, that is, tasks of choice are automatically scored by a computer, while the tasks of limited production and extended production both use the manual double-assessment method. Due to the different scoring methods, the scoring standards are also different. The constructive tasks with limited production are handled in a way similar to the "right or wrong" method of choice tasks because the candidates' answers can be "exhausted". For constructive oral or written tasks with extended production, the ETIC has developed sub-item scoring standards. Among them, the oral communication task is divided into five score files and two scoring dimensions (topic elaboration/task completion, language expression), and the written communication task is also divided into five score files and three scoring dimensions (including content, structure, language) . The scoring dimension is directly related to the task requirements. The dimension of "topic description" refers to the considerations of whether the answer content being closely related to the topic, whether the task requirements being completed, whether the organization being clear, whether the description being sufficient, etc. The dimension of "language expression" refers to the consideration of pronunciation that whether the language is clear, whether the language flow is coherent, whether the vocabulary and/or grammar is accurate, whether the sentence structure is flexible, whether the expression is appropriate, etc. The dimension of "content" refers to whether the answer is closely related to the task theme and whether the task requirements have been completed, whether there is detail supporting, etc.

5. Evaluations of Domestic Test-Taker Towards Catti and Our Suggestions

In the process of writing this paper, the authors used interviews to investigate the evaluations of several domestic test takers of CATTI. John is one of them, who at present is a master's degree candidate majored in English Linguistics. He has already passed the CATTI Level 2 test (written). In the interview, he believes that CATTI is currently the most recognized translation professional proficiency test in the country. Many schools that enroll MTI require students to take CATTI Level 2 during their studies. When enrolling graduate students, especially during the re-examination, schools are more inclined to students with CATTI qualifications. The CATTI certificate proves the basic ability of a student in the field of translation. If you can obtain a third or even second level certificate during the undergraduate course, it will definitely be a great impetus for retesting and adjustment. As for work, John believes that CATTI is a stepping stone. If you have a CATTI certificate, you can undoubtedly give yourself a lot of points on the road to professional translation.

After years of teaching practice, we believe that candidates should pay special attention to some details when preparing for CATTI. The following recommendations are summarized by us and have been proven to have good guiding value.

When taking the CATTI written translation test, candidates should i) Must bring a dictionary and the correct dictionary. It is recommended to use the "English-Chinese Dictionary" edited by Lu Gusun and the "Chinese-English Dictionary" edited by Huiyu. These two dictionaries have the characteristics of large and complete vocabulary coverage; ii) When translating, it is necessary to judge the type of the text, and confirm whether the text belongs to the political and economic category, literature or report, etc., because different texts will have different writing and selection. Word style; iii) It is necessary to distinguish the logic of the article, find the meaning group, and complete the split or combination of the sentence through logic, and then translate it according to

the flow of meaning, not just word-for-word; iv) After the translation is completed, Be sure to reread the translation. Many problems in English can be found when rereading, so as to avoid errors in low-level grammar and common sense and cause loss of points; v) Finally, pay attention to the allocation of time and not waste too much time on English-Chinese translation. Speed up the answering speed, and don't end up in a situation where you can't finish the answer.

When taking the interpretation test, candidates should i) print out the admission ticket on A4 paper, and the preparation paper may not be enough when taking notes, because the invigilator may not have more spare manuscript paper to provide, then the admission ticket can provide help ii) When interpreting, you should avoid tension, set the speed to a moderate level, and speak clearly, sometimes even if others have finished speaking, you have to confidently finish your own speaking; iii) If you are not confident in your own spoken language If yes, you can consider following the teacher to learn pronunciation methods first, which will help the construction of language and sense of language; iv) Pay attention to details, because many detailed information points are points, such as numbers, organization names, etc.; v) Finally, you must maintain self-confidence, believe in your own past efforts, do not create a situation of blank mind, based on loyalty, smoothness as the foundation, and faithfulness as the goal!

6. Conclusion

This paper compares and introduces the five accreditation tests for translators held in the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom and China, and analyzes the design and scoring of the tests and the evaluations of CATTI domestic test-takes with the purposes of providing useful explorations for the integration of applied foreign language translation teaching and professional qualification certification.

Acknowledgment

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