Contributions of the theory of multiple intelligences to the assessment of students' production in translator training courses *

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Abstract

This article argues for an approach to the assessment of students' translation assignments that is informed by the theory of multiple intelligences proposed by Howard Gardner in 1983 and expanded in his later work. This approach is based on two main strategies: (i) diversity of forms of assessment, offering learners the opportunity to have their performance assessed in ways which are compatible with their more developed intelligences, and (ii) interaction and negotiation between not only teacher and learners, but also among peers, to allow for the interchange that different proposed meanings and solutions require. It is now being tested in the undergraduate translator training program at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and the preliminary results indicate that it may successfully help develop and assess students' different intellectual potentials.

Keywords: *Translator training. Evaluation/assessment. Theory of multiple intelligences; Howard Gardner.*

Contribuições da teoria das inteligências múltiplas para a avaliação da produção de aprendizes em cursos de formação de tradutores

Resumo

Este artigo esboça uma metodologia para avaliar a produção de aprendizes de tradução baseada na teoria das inteligências múltiplas proposta por Howard Gardner em 1983 e posteriomente expandida. Essa metodologia se fundamenta em dois

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princípios básicos: (i) diversidade de formas de avaliação, ao oferecer aos aprendizes a oportunidade de receber uma avaliação do seu desempenho que considere os tipos de inteligência que mais se sobressaem individualmente, e (ii) interação e negociação não só entre professores e aprendizes mas também entre estes, de modo a permitir o debate em torno de diferentes construções de sentido e soluções tradutórias. A presente proposta está sendo testada em turmas do Bacharelado em Letras – Tradução da Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil - e os primeiros resultados parecem confirmar sua capacidade de ajudar a explorar e avaliar as diferentes potencialidades intelectuais dos aprendizes.
Palavras-chave: Formação de tradutores. Avaliação. Teoria das inteligências múltiplas. Howard Gardner.

Contribuciones de la teoría de las inteligencias múltiples para la evaluación de la producción de aprendices en cursos de formación de traductores.

Resumen

Este artículo esboza una metodología para evaluar la producción de aprendices de traducción basada en la teoría de las inteligencias múltiples de Howard Gardner propuesta en 1983 y posteriormente expandida. Dicha metodología se fundamenta en dos principios básicos: (i) diversidad de formas de evaluación, al ofrecer a los aprendices la oportunidad de recibir una evaluación de su desempeño que considera los tipos de inteligencia que más se sobresalen individualmente, (ii) interacción y negociación no sólo entre profesores y aprendices sino también entre éstos, de modo que se haga posible el debate sobre distintas construcciones de sentido y soluciones de traducción. La presente propuesta se está aplicando en grupos de la graduación de la Facultad de Letras – Traducción -de la Universidad Católica de Río de Janeiro, Brasil - y los primeros resultados confirman su capacidad de ayudar a explorar y evaluar las diferentes potencialidades intelectuales de los aprendices.
Palabras-clave: *Formación de traductores. Evaluación. Teoría de las inteligencias múltiples. Howard Gardner*

The purpose of this article is to argue for an approach to the assessment of students' translation assignments based on the theory of multiple intelligences. Such an approach – not only to evaluation but naturally to translator training proper –challenges the notion of objectivity implicit in the criteria that teachers in general tend to use in their search for fair and accurate evaluation. The method we propose is built on variety as well as interaction and negotiation, so

as to draw upon learners' predominant type(s) of intelligence. Also, from a wider perspective, this approach challenges long-established notions of intelligence and translational competence.

One of the outcomes of the disciplinary status that Translation Studies has acquired in the last three decades or so is an increased interest in the formal training of translators. Much attention and research effort is now being channeled to curriculum and syllabus design, although the pedagogical approach that has prevailed in translator training courses around the world is still mostly characterized by the central position occupied by the teacher (who takes on the roles of client, target public, and critic); lack of familiarization with the wide range of learning styles and methods that are associated with human intellectual potentials; and, finally, the minor role played by evaluation in teachers' pedagogical concerns.

The most traditional translator training method involves the discussion of translations previously made by the students and presented (and compared) in class. The discussions are led and managed by the teacher, who labels as "correct" ("right", "good") or "incorrect" ("wrong", "bad", "faulty") the various solutions proposed. This pedagogy is now being revised, as it will be discussed later, but is still quite popular. A few years ago, Don Kiraly (2000, p. 15), one of the most prestigious scholars specializing in translator education, pointed out that "the conventional, teacher-centered translation exercise class [is] the primary didactic event in numerous programmes for the training of professional translators". He believes that such a setting is hardly the ideal one "for the development of a professional self-concept, the conceptualization of oneself as a professional translator" (2000, p. 15). It is also his contention that this traditional "instructional performance", which he views as a "still ubiquitous technique", derives from what has been called by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993, p. 188) a "common-sense epistemology", and seems very much consistent with a positivist or objectivist pedagogical epistemology, which sees the teacher as the possessor and distributor of knowledge. Such classroom interaction naturally implies continual assessment, although of a more informal nature than that which results from formal situations as tests and exams.

This type of approach, focusing mostly on the product rather than the process of translating (MARTINS, 1993), and viewing teachers as the "designated distributors and arbiters of truth" (KIRALY, 2000, p. 18), may not give students the necessary opportunity to justify their choices, i.e., to try to present and explain the different motivations that brought such choices about. Since solutions to translation problems are rarely a case of "right" versus "wrong", as Christiane Nord (1997, p. 74) points out, or of "binary choices", as Anthony

Pym (1993, p. 102) describes situations which involve a choice between a right and a wrong possibility, if the teacher does not have an insight of the students' motives, it will be difficult for him/her to evaluate the adequacy or the inadequacy of the solutions proposed.

However, new winds have begun to blow, and the last decades have brought new epistemological and psychological perspectives which are having a great impact on all levels of education. As far as pedagogy is concerned, and translator training in particular, some theorists have been arguing that the traditional roles of teacher and learner must be redefined. Rosemary Arrojo (1993, 1996), drawing on post-structuralist epistemology, and Don Kiraly (2000), informed by socioconstructivist thinking, are among the contemporary Translation Studies scholars to promote the reorganization of the conventional teacher-centered classroom into "a forum for authentic and interactive learning", promoting the learning of translation skills through collaboration in an authentic setting (Kiraly 2000, p. 4). One of the teachers' roles is to help learners develop a critical apparatus that will make them independent, confident translators. To reach this goal, it is imperative to create situations liable to shift to learners part of the responsibilities that teachers tend to take on. Within this perspective, teachers share with learners the various stages that make up the routine of a translator training course: text selection (genres, subjects, authors); the definition of both the source-text production context and the translated-text reading context (purposes of both texts, target audience, medium); the justification of choices made (arguing for the adequacy of different readings, phrases, and lexical items); and the evaluation of translated texts (criticism, grades). In this way, teachers who favor this pedagogy believe they are valuing the plurality of readings and styles, encouraging the awareness of the translators' active role as producers of meaning, as well as their self-confidence.

Translation evaluation

As regards formal evaluation, one of the most common methods in translator training university programs has been the translation of a short text in class, resorting or not to dictionaries and glossaries, and sometimes still using pen and paper (either for security reasons or lack of the necessary technology). The resulting text is then graded by the teacher with little room for negotiation; few or no questions are asked about the individual intellectual processes that may have determined the final products.

As far as accreditation and other national or international exams are concerned, the situation is quite similar. For example, to be eligible for the ATA certification, implemented in 1973 and a widely recognized measure of *competence in translation, translators must pass the ATA Certification Exam held by the American Translators Association (ATA). According to information found on the ATA website (www.atanet.org), candidates work with a handwritten translation, instead of a word processor, which may call for a different way of thinking. For example, it is not as easy to insert, delete or reshuffle words, phrases, or even paragraphs, so they must think their choices through before writing them. They are allowed to bring dictionaries of their choice to the exam sitting. On the ATA website it is possible to learn that the primary reason for not using computers for the exam is*

> *a combination of practicality and fairness. With exam sittings held all over the country, and increasingly around the world, it would be a logistical nightmare for the certification program to provide appropriate computers for all exam candidates. Allowing some candidates to use laptops would give them an advantage over candidates who don't. Finally, if any candidates used computers, the issue of exam security would require the certification program to change passages much more often. Because passage selection and preparation is both difficult and time-consuming, it's possible that the quality of the passages would suffer (ATA, 2011).*

However, the inadequacy of the procedure is acknowledged by the ATA: "the Certification Committee is looking to the future and investigating ways to overcome these obstacles" (ATA, 2011).

The exam is "a no-comment, no-return exam" (ATA, 2011), graded according to a point marking system in which the grader identifies errors by category according to the long-established Framework for Standardized Error Marking. According to the Association's website, errors generally fall into one (or more) of the following categories: incomplete passage, illegible text, misunderstanding of original text, mistranslation into target language, addition or omission, terminology/word choice, register, excessively free translation, too literal/word-for-word translation, false cognates, indecision (more than one option is given), inconsistency (same term translated differently), ambiguity, grammar, syntax, punctuation, spelling, accents and other diacritical marks, case (upper/lower), word form, usage, style.

According to the ATA, the certification examination tests the language skills *(my italics) of a professional translator, which comprises: comprehension of the source-language text, translation techniques and writing in the target language. It is possible to imply from this claim that, for the Association, translator competence is limited to language skills, a view that a great number of Translation Studies scholars certainly do not endorse.*

As to the nature of the exam, there are three passages about 225–275 words each, the level of difficulty of which is comparable to the level that professional translators would expect to see in their daily work. A candidate should complete only two passages: a mandatory general passage, a general text written for the educated lay reader in expository or journalistic style, and one of the two elective passages, one from the domain of science/technology/medicine and one from the domain of law/business/finance. Candidates will be notified only whether they pass or fail; if they pass, they will not see their exam, but if they fail, the Certification Review process allows them to see their exam and the marked errors.

The Associação Brasileira de Tradutores *(ABRATES), ATA's Brazilian counterpart, also holds a Certification Exam in similar conditions, as many translators association in several countries: handwritten, no-return, graded according to a fixed marking system. Dictionaries and reference books can be used; electronic devices are not allowed (ABRATES, 2009)*[1]*. Candidates must choose three out of five 300-word texts to translate: one from the domain of science/medicine, one from the domain of law/business, one technical, one general and one literary or journalistic, depending on the translation orientation.*

The exam is graded following the criteria of general appropriateness and errors of three types: translation, Portuguese and terminology. Grades are just "Pass" and "Fail", and to succeed in the exam candidates must be awarded a "Pass" grade in each of the three translated passages. For grading purposes, there are two categories of errors: serious errors and light errors, according to criteria defined by graders. A candidate will fail the exam if his or her translations contain more than one serious error, or one serious and more than three light errors, or more than six light errors, in one passage.

As can be noted, major exams in the field still have the situational and conceptual features of a traditional assessment environment. However, translator training institutions are becoming increasingly aware that assessment should not be seen as the end of a process, nor should it be reduced to the reporting of simple marks; it is rather a multi-faceted picture of a relationship between the evaluator, the student and the scholastic environment as seen from the teacher's perspective (KIRALY, 2000). Besides, as Kiraly wonders, can the translation of a single text without advance preparation, without access to the tools and reference works one may have at one's workstation and "without the chance to negotiate with a client really tell us anything credible at all about a translator's competence?" (KIRALY, 2000, p. 156).

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[1] "As provas serão feitas com caneta e não será permitido o uso de lápis nem de qualquer meio eletrônico de processamento de textos. Durante a prova o candidato poderá consultar quantos dicionários julgar necessário desde que tenham sido levados ao local da prova pelo próprio candidato. Não será permitida a consulta a dicionários de outros candidatos, computadores e outros dispositivos eletrônicos, nem o uso de telefones celulares e outros dispositivos de comunicação eletrônica" (ABRATES, 2009, não paginado).

Susanne Lauscher (2000, p. 150) states that

> *despite the increased interest in evaluation among translation scholars, especially since the mid 1990s, academic approaches to translation quality assessment are still widely criticized by both translation theorists and practitioners for [...] neglecting the requirements of various evaluation scenarios.*

In the last decade, research into evaluation in Translation Studies has increased, as the number of articles in journals, book chapters, and conference papers may well show, but far from the booming scale of research into other aspects of translation or translator training. Here are a few articles on evaluation: "Translation Quality Assessment. Strategies, Parameters and Procedures" (AL-QINAI, 2000), "Different Methods of Evaluating Student Translation: The Question of Validity", (WADDINGTON, 2001) and "Testing and Evaluation in the Translation Classroom", (Goff-Kfouri, 2004). "Assessing Assessment: Translator Training Evaluation and the Needs of Industry Quality Assessment" (ARANGO-KEETH; KOBY, 2003). But it very auspicious to note that in 2007, in the Newcastle University Conference on Interpreter and Translator Training there were 23 papers on translator education, almost 50% of which also tackled evaluation (NEW CASTLE UNIVERSITY..., 2007).

In tune with this shift from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered pedagogy, it is to be expected that the evaluation of translations has also started taking into account the learners' purposes and motivations in each translation task. As in all educational environments, "the periodic as well as terminal (end-of-program) determination of students' progress toward learning goals is a major concern for translator education institutions" (KIRALY, 2000, p. 140). According to Kiraly, in the literature on translation studies most contributions dealing with assessment have focused specifically on the evaluation of information "about whether or not students produce good (faithful, accurate, functional, etc.) renderings of source language texts in a target language" (KIRALY, 2000, p. 141). Kiraly notes that while these words – assessment and evaluation – are quite familiar to all teachers, the meanings attributed to them varies considerably. He uses assessment *"to refer to the process of gathering information about the quality of students' emerging competence", whereas* evaluation *is understood as "the process of attributing meaning to the information gathered" (KIRALY, 2000, p. 140). He advises that*

> *if we expect our assessments, marks and evaluations to provide valuable information about students' learning progress to teachers, future employers and the students themselves, then our assessments (i.e. information collection) procedures must be 1) demonstrably based on deep and extensive*

> *observation of students' performance; 2) representative of the conditions and standards under which our graduates can expect to work professionally; and 3) equitable and collaborative, with students taking an active, empowered role in the assessment process. (KIRALY, 2000, p. 141).*

We strongly support Kiraly's views, as well as Goff-Kfouri's (2004) comments that

> *[i]nstructors and curriculum designers today seem to be convinced that a more learner-centered, creative and flexible teaching system motivates students. They also see the necessity to adapt testing methods to the revised curricula and methodologies. Peer correction, self- and portfolio evaluation are becoming common in even the most traditional university settings.*

Maria Julia Sainz (1994), a researcher in Translation Studies with special focus on translation assessment, proposes a student-centered approach to correction of translations. Learners have to fill in a 4-column correction chart in which they must point out their mistakes individually, provide a possible correction, inform the correction source (e.g. themselves, the teacher, their peers), and classify each mistake according to previously defined categories. They are also required to assess their performance on a scale ranging from +3 to -3, thus fostering self-assessment and raising self-awareness (SAINZ, 1996). In Kinga Klaudy's view (KLAUDY, 1996), this student-centered approach is human-rights based: it makes it clear the evaluation system used in class and provides feedback on errors in a less stressful way than the traditional method of writing the correct translation on the student's sheet.

It is our contention, however, that even this shift towards learner-centered assessment is not enough to do justice to multiple variations in individual learning styles. To do so, it is necessary to understand better such differences, which have not been the focus of research into translation education, but were the object of a groundbreaking study in the area of cognitive psychology that resulted in the theory of multiple intelligences (also referred to as M.I. theory). It first appeared in full form in 1983, as proposed by Howard Gardner in his seminal work Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. It was designed to provide a model of the different intellectual strengths displayed by human beings. Gardner's theory challenges "the classical view of intelligence that most of us have absorbed explicitly (from psychology or education texts) or implicitly (by living in a culture with a strong but possibly circumscribed view of intelligence)" (GARDNER, 1983, p. 5). The concept of intelligence he* *posits is wider and more pragmatic than the traditional one; to him, intelligence can be determined by the ability to solve problems and to create products in natural and diverse settings. On the basis of the argument that "there is persuasive evidence for the existence of several* relatively autonomous *human intellectual competences" (GARDNER, 1983, p. 8), he initially grouped them in seven categories or "intelligences". His original listing was later revised to include an additional intelligence, and since then there has been a great deal of discussion as to other possible candidates for inclusion (GARDNER, 1999).*

As he points out,

> the conviction that there exist at least some intelligences, that these are relatively independent of one another, and that they can be fashioned and combined in a multiplicity of adaptive ways by individuals and cultures, seems to me to be increasingly difficult to deny (GARDNER, 1983, p. 8-9).

The eight human intellectual competences Gardner has identified so far are:

- *(a) linguistic intelligence (ability to use oral and written language effectively for communicative and expressive purposes);*
- *(b) logical-mathematical intelligence (ability to use numbers effectively and to handle skillfully long chains of reasoning);*
- *(c) spatial intelligence (ability to perceive the visual world accurately, to perform transformations and modifications upon one's initial perceptions, and to be able to re-create aspects of one's visual experience);*
- *(d) bodily-kinesthetic intelligence (ability to use one's body in highly differentiated and skilled ways, for expressive as well as goal-directed purposes);*
- *(e) musical intelligence (ability to produce and appreciate pitch, rhythm and timbre in individual tones or phrases as well as to appreciate different forms of musical expression);*
- *(f) intrapersonal intelligence (ability to perceive one's range of affects or emotions as well as awareness of one's own strengths and weaknesses);*
- *(g) interpersonal intelligence (ability to notice and make distinctions among other individuals and, in particular, among their moods, temperaments, motivations, and intentions);*
- *(h) naturalist intelligence (ability to distinguish between members of the same species, to acknowledge the existence of related species, and to map the relations between several species).*

Other possible intelligences to be included are: spiritual intelligence, existential intelligence, and moral intelligence, but Gardner and his colleagues have not reached a consensus about them yet (SMITH, 2008).

It is important to note that each type of intelligence has its own symbolic or notational system. Oral and written languages, for example, are the symbolic system of the linguistic competence, a role played by computer languages in the case of logical-mathematical competence (ARMSTRONG, 2001, p. 16).

To support his assertions, Gardner claims to have reviewed evidence from a large "group of sources: studies of prodigies, gifted individuals, brain-damaged patients, idiots savants, *normal children, normal adults, experts in different lines of work, and individuals from diverse cultures" (GARDNER,1983, p. 9). A preliminary list of candidate intelligences was bolstered by converging evidence from these different sources. He also defined certain basic "tests" to verify if an ability could really be considered a full-fledged intelligence rather than simply a talent, or a gift, or an ability.*[2]

The essence of M.I. theory, as described by Gardner (apud ARMSTRONG, 2001, p. vi), is to respect the many differences among individuals, the multiple variations in their learning styles, and the nearly infinite number of ways each individual can make a difference.

According to Gardner's theory, every person has a number of "domains of potential intellectual competence which they are in the position to develop, if they are normal and if the appropriate stimulating factors are available" (GARDNER, 1983, p. 284). As Gardner (1983, p. 278) explains,

> *owing to heredity, early training, or, in all probability, a constant interaction between these factors, some individuals will develop certain intelligences far more than others; but every normal individual should develop each intelligence to some extent, given but a modest opportunity to do so.*

This means that teachers can now add a new role to their traditional ones: to help activate the less developed types of intelligence in each learner as well as to optimize and draw upon those types that are already active, in order to enhance students' educational opportunities and options.

Rethinking evaluation on the basis of M.I. theory

The impact of the ideas described above on pedagogy in general has been significant (although in different degrees), causing many teachers to redesign their teaching methodologies, classroom strategies, and evaluation criteria (ARMSTRONG, 2001); FROTA; MARTINS, 1996; MARTINS; SOUZA, 2001). The

[2] See Gardner (1983) and Armstrong (2001) for a full description of such tests.

application of M.I. theory to education fulfills Howard Gardner's expectations; as he points out, his 1983 book has "a number of other, and not wholly subsidiary, purposes, besides making the case for the existence of multiple intelligences" (GARDNER, 1983, p. 9). One of such purposes is "to examine the educational implications" (GARDNER, 1983, p. 10) of the theory he put forth.

As far as pedagogy and evaluation are concerned, Gardner holds that learners must be capable of showing competence in a given topic, area, domain or ability in any of the several forms possible. And just as M.I. theory claims that any instructional objective can be taught in at least eight different forms, it also suggests that the learners' emerging competence in diverse subjects and abilities can be assessed in as many forms (ARMSTRONG, 2001, p. 124), through the particular symbolic or notational system of each type of intelligence. In Gardner's view, the approach to evaluation which stems from M.I. theory deals with processes as much as with final products; provides information that is useful to the learning process; evaluates on a continual basis and with multiple assessment tools, thus offering a more accurate picture of learners' achievements; involves creating, interviewing, demonstrating, problem-solving, thinking critically, designing, debating and several other active learning tasks; emphasizes learners' strengths; and, last but not least, shows what they can do and what they are trying to do, rather than their weaknesses or what they cannot do (it is important to pinpoint weaknesses to help learners overcome them, not for punitive purposes) (ARMSTRONG, 2001). If, for example, the teaching of a given subject draws mostly upon intrapersonal intelligence, the assessment of the learning of this subject could be based on self-evaluation, which requires an awareness of one's own strengths and weaknesses. By the same token, if the main focus is the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, learning assessment can accordingly involve mime and dramatization. The whole idea is not to base learning and assessment on linguistic and logical-mathematical capabilities only. As already mentioned, students should have the opportunity both to take advantage of their most pre-eminent capabilities and to stimulate their less developed types of intelligence.

As regards translator education, which aims to train professionals to carry out an activity of a predominantly linguistic nature, it is not difficult to envisage some possible applications of M.I. theory to traditional methodological approaches so as to make room for non-linguistic ways to enhance linguistic (and other) competence(s). In their article "Aplicações da teoria das inteligências múltiplas ao ensino da tradução" Martins and Souza (2001) attempted to show how the awareness of multiple intelligences can (and should) change translator education.

Thomas Armstrong's book is particularly inspiring to teachers who share Gardner's view of intellectual capacities (GARDNER, 1983) and are willing to *change their pedagogy (which, as far as translation education is concerned, is most likely oriented towards linguistic capabilities). Applying Armstrong's suggestions to translator training, one could think of teaching strategies and activities that encourage co-operative learning, pair work, group work, brainstorming sessions (all of them interpersonal capabilities), as well as independent (individual) study, self-access centers, target-setting sessions, journal-keeping (all intrapersonal competences). In order to assess translation competence focusing on musical intelligence, teachers could offer learners the choice of translating a recorded passage, rather than a printed one, or ask them to associate a given text to a song to illustrate its rhythm, syntactic patterns, and even its "mood". A teacher could also assign the translation of a poem and then ask students to individually read aloud the translated version as the teacher simultaneously reads the original aloud, the two voices (and versions) together, hopefully in unison. Features such as rhythm, musicality, verse length, meter, rhyme (if applicable), and stress pattern in the target language could then be assessed drawing on an additional capability, besides the ever-present linguistic intelligence.*

The approach outlined here is based on two main strategies: (i) diversity of forms of assessment, offering learners the opportunity to have their performance assessed in ways which are compatible with their more developed intelligences, and (ii) interaction and negotiation between not only teacher and learners, but also among peers (when peer evaluation is required), to allow for the interchange that different proposed meanings and solutions require.

As Armstrong (2001, p. 121) notes, an important pre-requisite for "authentic evaluation" is observation. According to Gardner, teachers should observe their students as they make use of the symbolic systems of each competence. To observe learners solving problems, making decisions or creating products in natural settings not only provides a clear picture of their different competences but can also help develop assessment tools that take such competences into account. In the process, teachers will certainly get to know themselves (and their own capabilities) better. Evaluation methods and tools should thus include self-evaluation, peer evaluation and teacher evaluation (emphasizing the assessment of learners' technical and creative skills and their ability to benefit from self-analysis and from other people's constructive criticism).

As already noted, M.I. theory expands assessment so as to include a wide variety of possible settings and situations in which learners can show their competence in a given domain. This framework assumes, for example, that if a learner whose competence is mostly bodily-kinesthetic is asked to demonstrate his/her knowledge on a particular subject by way of a written test, he/she will *probably fail to show everything he/she knows (GARDNER, 1983, p. 127). Armstrong provides some hints and suggestions about how to assess learners' knowledge and performance in order to draw upon the whole gamut of intelligences and to help them find out in which area(s) they are most successful (ARMSTRONG, 2001). He suggests, for instance, that learners choose the form(s) of assessment they prefer. Teacher and learner could draw up and sign an agreement specifying how the latter wish to be evaluated (ARMSTRONG, 2001, p. 127). This agreement, if applied to a translator training situation, could be as follows:*

AGREEMENT

To show that I can translate properly a text with the following features:

____

____

I would like to:

1. make a translation in class using a computer and on-line research tools
2. make a translation in class using paper and ink and several dictionaries
3. translate the passage at home
4. tape-record the final version of my translation
5. translate the passage in class jointly with a classmate
6. read aloud the final version of my translation
7. hand in the translated passage to my classmates and discuss it with them
8. other: ____________________________

Brief description of what I intend to do:

Students' signature:

Teacher's signature:

Date:

Figure 1. Agreement.

In the undergraduate translator training program at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, this agreement – or slightly adapted versions thereof – has been used in courses which focus on the translation of technical and scientific texts. It enables teachers to share with learners the choice of assessment procedures and help them find ways to draw upon their different intellectual capabilities. It turns out that most of the answers tend to favor *linguistic, intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences, suggesting, for instance, activities such as self-evaluation (intrapersonal), teamwork and peer evaluation (interpersonal). However, other ideas are gradually starting to come up. For instance, some students have been asking to read aloud the translated text for the teacher alone or before their classmates, in order to be able to "perform" the translated text and better convey what they had in mind with the help of reading patterns, stress, pitch, and body language. Others agree that productivity should be taken into account when assessing translator competence, and suggest that it be measured by keeping a log of the students' production in terms of words or characters and the time spent on each task. This ratio will help them give estimates to clients, decide whether they are capable of handling a particular translation job and determine their potential earnings; after all, as Kiraly (2000) notes, student translators must also learn how to act in a professional manner, to construct consensual patterns of professional behavior. Here, it is the logical-mathematical capability that is in use, together with the linguistic, the intrapersonal and the interpersonal (when negotiating deadlines and fees, or when arguing for their translation strategies and choices).*

It is important to note that this agreement and the assessment procedure(s) chosen are not supposed to exclude others; the whole idea is to provide the process with the necessary variety, rather than to substitute one alternative for another. As Don Kiraly (2000, p. 159) points out when discussing translation quality evaluation, "different forms of assessment need to be developed to complement each other and provide useful information on various levels about students emerging competence". It is also quite obvious that this agreement can be used only in particular circumstances, since it implies grading processes and products that may be different for each student, yet may have the same weight in the computation of final scores. As it is, grades usually result from the same tasks or assignments, in order to ensure fair evaluation in apparently equal conditions. Besides, it has to be further tested and improved in order to be a consistent assessment procedure, one that meets the requirements of validity and reliability.

Although this article will not engage in a detailed discussion of the agreement concept due to space constraints, we feel that the idea of an agreement, complex and yet to be refined as it is, should be brought up here, for its potential to give teachers some food for thought.

Concluding remarks

The implementation of this pedagogy and evaluation is no simple matter. The theory of multiple intelligences has never, to our knowledge, been applied to translator training. While both Gardner (1983) and Armstrong (2001) focus the application of the theory on elementary and secondary students, who are children *and adolescents, translation students are mostly adults (18 or older). Also, as previously remarked, translating is generally seen as a predominantly linguistic activity, while elementary and secondary schooling potentially covers a wider range of activities. Thus the approach outlined here is just tentative and certainly needs further reflection and testing. Data have been collected in classes of 15-20 undergraduate students of technical translation at PUC's translator training program; some evaluation strategies are currently being tested and analyzed. We expect that this novel approach to evaluation in translator training courses may bring a least a few benefits to all the parties concerned: to students, whose intellectual potentials may be more effectively developed and assessed, and who will be encouraged to think critically about teaching and learning; to teachers, whose role as educators may be more successfully fulfilled as they share with students the responsibility for performance assessment, besides enabling them to raise their self-awareness and develop their autonomy; and to the translation job market, since new professionals will hopefully be equipped with the wide range of skills, the knowledge and translator competence required to meet the needs of a demanding language mediation trade.*

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