

Insights from the translation of relative clauses and the passive voice in translation-competency examinations

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Abstract

The passive voice and relative clauses are crucial aspects of grammar for students of translation. The passive voice is widely viewed as one of the ‘thorniest’ parts of English grammar to teach second language learners, and the comprehension of sentences containing relative clauses requires considerable effort. Moreover, translating the passive voice and relative clauses is one of the most difficult tasks for student translators. Observing how the passive voice and relative clauses are translated in translation competency exams can enrich our understanding of translators’ needs and practices. This study explored the strategies used by candidates in translation competency examinations. The relationship between the translation strategies and the overall performance on the translation exam was analysed. By comparing the performance of candidates in translation competency exams, trainers can introduce student translators to more diversified translation strategies and techniques, enabling the application of those strategies in different situations. Adequate translation of the English passive voice and relative clauses is expected to enhance the quality of student translations.