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## Translation services — Evaluation of translation output — General guidance

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## Foreword

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The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO ~~documents~~document should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC\_37, *Language and terminology*, Subcommittee SC\_5, *Translation, interpreting and related technology*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

Globalization, the accompanying growth of the translation market, the professionalization of translation services and the growing availability of online machine translation tools have driven the demand for standardized and harmonized principles and procedures for the evaluation of translation output.

In an industrial world in which products have to comply with legal regulations and client specifications, translation output has to be regarded as a product that has to fulfil certain requirements. The systematic comparison of a target language content with the source language content giving regard to the translation project specifications provides the means to arrive at a valuable and objective judgement of achievement.

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# Translation services — Evaluation of translation output — General guidance

## 1 Scope

This document gives guidance on the evaluation of human translation output, post-edited machine translation output, and unedited machine translation output. It also provides guidance on the qualifications and competences of evaluators. The role of sampling is also discussed in this document.

This document ~~foeusses~~**focuses** on an analytic translation evaluation approach using error types and penalty points configured to produce an error score and a quality rating.

A further focus is the human evaluation of translation output only ~~and~~. **This document** follows an approach designed to reflect minimum complexity. The rationale behind this approach is to keep this document applicable for as many users as possible in the translation sector.

The guidance provided in this document can also support the evaluation of source texts intended for translation.

This document is applicable to translation service providers (TSPs), including individual translators, translation companies or in-house translation services, their clients and other interested parties in the translation sector, such as translator education and training institutions.

This document does not apply to related elements such as the processes of assuring the quality of translation output and corrective actions.

This document does not apply to interpreting.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 20539, *Translation, interpreting and related technology — Vocabulary*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 20539 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- —ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>~~https://www.iso.org/obp~~
- —IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>~~https://www.electropedia.org/~~

### **3.2.3.1 General concepts**

#### **3.1.1**

##### **translate**

render *source language content* (3.1.6)(3.1.6) into *target language content* (3.1.7)(3.1.7) in written form or signed language

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:2019/2023, 3.1.68]

#### **3.1.2**

##### **translation**

set of processes to render *source language content* (3.1.6)(3.1.6) into *target language content* (3.1.7)(3.1.7) in written form

Note 1-to-entry:-A translation can refer to formats other than text-based formats (e.g. an audio file, image), etc.).

[SOURCE: ISO 17100:2015, 2.1.2, modified — “may” has been changed to “can” in Note 1 to entry.]

#### **3.1.3**

##### **revision**

bilingual editing

examination of *target language content* (3.1.7)(3.1.7) against *source language content* (3.1.6)(3.1.6) for its suitability for the agreed purpose

[SOURCE: ISO 17100:2015, 2.2.6, modified — “bilingual examination” has been replaced by “examination in the definition and” Note 1 to entry has been changed to into an admitted term.]

#### **3.1.4**

##### **evaluation of translation output**

evaluation

bilingual examination of *target language content* (3.1.7)(3.1.7) against *source language content* (3.1.6)(3.1.6) while classifying any *errors* (3.4.1)(3.4.1) with respect to *translation evaluation specifications* (3.3.5)(3.3.5) and for the purpose of reaching a *quality rating* (3.3.10)(3.3.10)

Note 1-to-entry:-The term “assessment” is frequently used as a synonym for evaluation. While both involve inspection, “evaluation” is the preferred term, since formally there are some differences. Evaluation is product-oriented and judgmental (to accept or reject a product), whereas assessment is process-oriented and diagnostic (to provide feedback on how to improve the process used to produce the product). The preference for “evaluation” is also to avoid the confusion that the abbreviated term “QA” gives rise to, mostly referring to quality assurance.

#### **3.1.5**

##### **corrective action**

action taken to eliminate the cause of nonconformities or *errors* (3.4.1)(3.4.1) during *translation* (3.1.2)(3.1.2) or in *target language content* (3.1.7)(3.1.7)

Note 1-to-entry:-Corrective action involves an investigation to identify what went wrong and what action can be taken to ensure that it does not happen in the same way again.

[SOURCE: ISO 17100:2015, 2.5.5, modified — Plural has been deleted in “nonconformity” and “in the translation process” changed to “during translation”.]

#### **3.1.6**

##### **source language content**

language content to be *translated* (3.1.1)(3.1.1)

[SOURCE: ISO 17100:2015, 2.3.2]

### 3.1.7

#### target language content

language content *translated* (3.1.1)(3.1.1) from *source language content* (3.1.6)(3.1.6)

[SOURCE: ISO 17100:2015, 2.3.3]

### 3.1.8

#### translation output

~~result of translation~~ (3.1.8)

*result of translation* (3.1.2)

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:2019]2023, 3.3.3]

### 3.1.9

#### client-TSP agreement

arrangement between a client and a translation service provider (TSP) which specifies the conditions of a *translation service* (3.1.10)(3.1.10)

Note 1-to-entry:- This can take the form of a contract, memorandum of understanding, oral agreement, email, etc. Oral agreements can be documented in writing.

### 3.1.10

#### translation service

production and delivery of *target language content* (3.1.7)(3.1.7) according to a *client-TSP agreement* (3.1.9)(3.1.9)

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:2019, 3.3.4, modified — “~~specifications issued by a client-specification”~~ has been changed to “client-TSP agreement”.]

### 3.1.11

#### segment

unit of text produced for a computer application to facilitate *translation* (3.1.2)

Note-1-to-entry:- A segment can be a sentence, heading or other unit of text, such as phrase, word or a single character.

[SOURCE: ISO 18587:2017, 3.2.9]

## 3.3.2 Concepts related to the people involved in the evaluation process

### 3.2.1

#### evaluator

person who performs *evaluation of translation output* (3.1.4)(3.1.4) in accordance with the *translation evaluation system* (3.3.4)(3.3.4) of the *evaluating entity* (3.2.2)(3.2.2)

### 3.2.2

#### evaluating entity

person or group of people who determines a *translation evaluation strategy* (3.3.3)(3.3.3)