



# South African Translators' Institute

## ACCREDITATION EXAMINATIONS: *Guidelines on Marking*

Marking of SATI translation examinations is based on the concept of major and minor errors. These errors are defined as follows:

### **Major errors**

- *Gross mistranslation, in which the meaning of the original word or phrase is lost altogether*
- *Omission of vital words or other information*
- *Insertion of information not contained in the original*
- *Inclusion of alternate translations, where the translator should have made a choice<sup>a</sup>*
- *Any important failure in target-language grammar<sup>b</sup>*

### **Minor errors**

- *Mistranslation that distorts somewhat, but does not wholly falsify, the intent of the original*
- *Omission of words that contribute only slightly to meaning*
- *Presentation of alternate translations where the terms offered are synonymous or nearly so*
- *'Inelegance' of target-language grammar<sup>c</sup>*

### **Notes**

- a: In cases of real doubt the candidate should not provide an alternative translation, but should annotate the translation by means of a footnote or other note to explain the problem experienced in this regard
- b: These errors would obviously include gross errors such as concord, incorrect tenses, obvious problems with conjugations and declensions, etc. and also striking problems with prepositions. Obvious idiomatic infelicities would also classify under this heading.
- c: Such problems would include smaller instances of word order, spelling, punctuation, etc. This category would, in fact, include all those smaller errors that would contribute to a general sense of inelegance of style and expression.

Remember that this examination is intended to test COMPETENCE, not potential. Accreditation means that the translator should be able to produce a nearly flawless translation that a client or publisher would be able to use without any further editing or adjustment. It does not mean that you are simply able to convey the information contained in the text – the structure and language of the target text is also important.

Exams are marked on the basis of the following guidelines:

1. The candidate fails the exam if there are two or more major errors in the examination paper as a whole.
2. The candidate fails the exam if there is one (or more) major error and seven or more minor errors in any one question.
3. The candidate fails the exam even if there are no major errors but over 10 minor errors in any one question or over 20 minor errors in the examination paper as a whole.
4. The target text must be able to stand as a text in its own right, i.e. it should read like an original in the target language. It will obviously reflect any major problems in the structure of the source text, but large numbers of grammatical errors or infelicities or a text that sounds stilted and unnatural would render the translation unacceptable.
5. If marks were being allocated to these exams, candidates would need to pass with a mark of at least 90%.