

Call for Abstracts: *Language Testing* “Floating” Special Issue 2029

Assessing translation and interpreting: Issues, practices, and advances

Guest editor

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Translation and interpreting (T&I) assessment has a distinctive identity and history within the broader field of language testing and assessment (LTA). Historically, T&I has been viewed as a particular form of language activity for assessment (Bachman, 2011, as cited in Chen, 2011). Across a wide range of multilingual communication settings, from everyday cross-linguistic interaction in business, healthcare, and public services (Valero-Garcés, 2014, 2019) to highly institutionalized mediation in bi/multilateral forums such as the United Nations and the European Union (Prieto Ramos, 2022), translators, interpreters, and other language professionals play a crucial role in bridging linguistic and cultural gaps. From this perspective, T&I has often been described as a “fifth skill” that complements the four traditional language skills of reading, listening, writing, and speaking (Colina & Lafford, 2017). This broader understanding is also reflected in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which places T&I within the domain of mediation, including the translation of simple everyday words, signs, and phrases, and links such activities to the development of plurilingual and pluricultural competence (Council of Europe, 2020).

Accordingly, T&I has been integrated into assessment practices in translator and interpreter training (Setton & Dawrant, 2016), professional certification and licensure (Hlavac, 2010), and second/foreign language proficiency testing (Sun & Cheng, 2013). Language testing scholars have also examined certification testing and related assessment issues in T&I (e.g., Buck, 1992; Elder, Knoch, & Kim, 2016; Stansfield & Hewitt, 2005; Zhao & Gu, 2016). Nevertheless, despite these developments, T&I assessment remains comparatively underrepresented in the LTA literature and underexplored relative to its growing importance in education and professional practice (Han, 2022). One reason might be the perceived scope of the field. That is, there is still not always consensus on whether T&I assessment should be fully recognized as part of LTA. This uncertainty is especially evident when language assessment is framed primarily within second language (L2) assessment, focusing on individual language skills in a given target language (i.e., reading, listening, writing, and speaking), whereas T&I is viewed mainly as interlingual transfer between two languages. Such a view, however, is not fully consistent with more recent work in applied linguistics and T&I studies, which has increasingly emphasized that multilingual communication is often characterized by the flexible use of multiple languages and semiotic resources (Angelelli, 2016; Ortega, 2013), albeit under different labels, such as translanguaging practices (García & Li, 2014), multilingual

mediated communication ([Muñoz Martín & Halverson, 2021](#)), and multilingual (audiovisual) translation ([Muñoz-Basols, 2019](#)). The issue, then, may not be simply whether T&I belongs within LTA, but rather whether prevailing conceptions of language ability in LTA are broad enough to accommodate different forms of multilingual mediation.

Admittedly, T&I assessment and L2 assessment might involve different score inferences and test use contexts, and the associated assessment questions may also differ. Even so, the two areas of research arguably share more similarities than differences, particularly in their major research topics, data sources, and analytical approaches. For example, research in both domains has examined rater-mediated assessment extensively, including how rating scales and rubrics are developed and validated ([Han, Jiang, & Chen, 2026](#); [Knoch, Deygers, & Khamboonruang, 2021](#)), which cognitive processes and behavioral patterns underlie raters' scoring performance ([Lee, 2019](#); [Winke & Lim, 2015](#)), and how rater characteristics, rating scales and rater effects interact in affecting assessment outcomes ([Li, Liao, & Jia, 2025](#); [O'Grady, 2024](#)). Methodologically, both T&I assessment and L2 assessment rely on rater-generated scores as a primary data source, which are then often modeled using such approaches as many-facet Rasch measurement ([Linacre, 1994](#)) and generalizability theory ([Brennan, 2001](#)). In addition, both domains have drawn on process data to investigate raters' scoring behavior, including think-aloud protocols ([Li, Yuan, & Xu, 2025](#); [Sahan & Razi, 2020](#)) and eye movement ([Han, Chen, & Jia, 2025](#); [Winke, Yan, & Lee, 2024](#)). These topical and methodological parallels suggest that T&I assessment and L2 assessment are closely connected domains of inquiry and that stronger dialogue between them could be mutually beneficial.

Most recently, both T&I assessment and L2 assessment have experienced rapid changes in the constructs and methods of assessment, driven by technological advances, particularly in natural language processing and generative AI. First, the target language use (TLU) domains of assessment are changing. Contemporary T&I increasingly involves multilingual, multimodal, and multiagent practices ([Han, 2025](#)), such as human translation augmented by machine translation ([O'Brien & Rossetti, 2020](#)), interpreting supported by automatic speech recognition and live captioning ([Cheung et al., 2026](#)), and multimodal T&I performances such as subtitling and signed-language interpreting ([Pedersen, 2017](#); [Wang et al., 2015](#)). A similar trend can be observed in LTA ([Yu & Clark, 2025](#)), where growing attention has been paid to constructs such as integrated language skills and multimodal performances ([Batty, 2025](#); [Brunfaut & Kormos, 2025](#)). Together, these developments raise new questions about how constructs should be represented and how tasks should be designed to assess the target constructs across different modalities and settings.

Second, the approaches to T&I assessment are also changing. Alongside traditional human scoring, T&I assessment increasingly involves manual (i.e., human), automated (i.e., machine), and hybrid scoring approaches ([Han, 2026](#); [Wang & Wang,](#)

2025). A comparable development can be seen in LTA, where automated scoring and hybrid scoring of writing and speaking have attracted substantial scholarly attention (Davis & Papageorgiou, 2021; Zechner & Evanini, 2020). While these approaches may enhance scalability and efficiency, they also make it more pressing to establish rigorous evidence for reliability, validity, fairness, and transparency.

Against this background, this special issue aims to provide a dedicated venue for high-quality scholarship on T&I assessment. Specifically, it seeks to: (a) stimulate meaningful debate on how T&I assessment should be conceptualized and positioned within the broader field of LTA; and (b) foreground current issues, practices, and innovations related to T&I assessment.

We welcome original manuscripts, including empirical studies, theoretical articles, and systematic reviews that examine different aspects of T&I assessment. Submissions may address, but are not limited to, the following broad topics:

- Task design and implementation for T&I assessment;
- Human, automated, and hybrid scoring of T&I performance;
- Test-taker response processes in T&I assessment (e.g., response data collected through keystroke logging, eye tracking, screen recordings, etc.);
- T&I performance product in assessment contexts (linguistic, paralinguistic, or multimodal characteristics).

In addition to original manuscripts and systematic reviews, we also welcome proposals for other article types, such as Brief Reports, Test Reviews, and Viewpoint, in accordance with *Language Testing's* submission guidelines (<https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/LTJ#ArticleTypes>).

Guidelines for authors

To be considered for this special issue, please email a title and an abstract of up to 500 words (as an attachment) by 15 November 2026 to chaohan@nus.edu.sg.

Full manuscripts invited for submission should follow *Language Testing's* author guidelines and journal policies, available at <https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/LTJ>. Full manuscripts must comply with the word limits specified for the relevant article type in the journal's submission guidelines. Authors should also disclose any use of generative AI in the submission process in compliance with the journal's generative AI guidelines.

We appreciate your interest and look forward to receiving your abstracts.

Potential timeline for Special Issue publication

Month	Tasks
15 August 2026	Release call for papers (open call), provide deadline for submission of abstracts to consider for selection
15 November 2026	Abstract submission deadline
31 December 2026	Invite selected authors to submit full manuscripts and provide submission guidance
1 June 2027	Full manuscripts due (submitted via online system)
1 August 2027	Internal review: Special issue editor reads submissions and provides initial feedback to authors.
1 October 2027	Revised manuscripts due
1 November 2027	Round 1 peer review begins (send to external reviewers)
1 February 2028	Round 1 reviews due
15 March 2028	Round 1 decisions sent (Revise & Resubmit / Reject)
1 June 2028	Revised manuscripts due
15 July 2028	Editorial evaluation and targeted second review if needed
15 September 2028	Round 2 reviews due (for papers sent out)
15 November 2028	Final revisions due
December 2028	Final decisions and acceptances
April 2029	Special Issue published in print