A Comparative Study
on the translation Method in the East and West Languages

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Abstract

Translation evaluation has repeatedly been criticised for having a subjective nature. In fact, objectivity and marking in translation evaluation have always been considered as challenging issues. The present study tries to present practical models for translation quality evaluation. First, some general approaches and purposes for making such an evaluation will be briefly mentioned. Secondly, some theoretical concepts and factors especially useful for educational settings and related to carrying out a translation evaluation will be discussed. Then, based on text-typology, the researchers will introduce three practical models or point-scoring methods for translation evaluation. Then, a survey study will be done in order to explore the ideas of some translation teachers about the proposed models. Thus, this study contributes to carrying out a more objective and systematic method for translation evaluation of the text types presented here.

Our models were two-dimensional; meaning and form were chosen as the main criteria in them. The marks given to these criteria and their factors were based on the importance of them in the text of the models. In order to explore the ideas of translation teachers about the models, we did a survey study and it became

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clear that 60 percent of the teachers agreed with them; so, it was supported that the models are useful for translation evaluation and

majority of translation teachers have a strong favour to use them.
Keywords: Translation Evaluation, Meaning, Form, Practical Models, Metrics, Text Typology.

1. Introduction

The present study deals with one of the most controversial issues in translation studies, i.e., translation quality evaluation. It is debatable because both ideas of quality and evaluation models themselves are not objective. Quality in translation as Newmark (1988) claims is "relative". On the other hand, any model(s) used for translation evaluation is/are based on different theories and factors which are different in other models so the outcome of translation evaluation will vary based on the model used for such purpose and the evaluation results will not be fixed.

There is no doubt in the role of evaluation and assessment in any fields of science and it can be said that there could be no science without measurement. Therefore, apart from the debate over the case that translation is an art or a science, it can be claimed that evaluation is also important in translation whether we call it an art or a science.

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998: 128) states that "evaluation involves making judgments which means that we must have criteria… if there is no clear objective for a particular activity or material, how can its success be measured?" Regarding the mentioned quotation, we should have objective and clear criteria in order to measure or evaluate the quality of any translation.

Thus, the study here aims at proposing practical models to evaluate the quality of any translation. First, some general points related to translation quality evaluation will be discussed. Then some theoretical concepts and factors related to this case will be mentioned. Finally, three practical models which are based on text typology will be presented. These models will show us how to mark different translated

texts.

2. Translation Quality

According to Cary and Jumpelt (1963) defining the quality of translation was first discussed in the third conference of the International Federation of Translators on Quality in 1959. So far, within the field of translation studies, translation evaluation has received much attention and there have always been some efforts to investigate the issue both in theory and practice.

As House (2001) puts forward:

> Translation quality is a problematical concept if it is taken to involve individual and externally motivated value judgment alone. Obviously, passing any "final judgment" on the quality of a translation that fulfils the demands of scientific objectivity is very difficult indeed. (p.255)

The bottom line here is that despite the existing difficulties in determining scientific factors and objective criteria for translation evaluation on the one hand and the inevitable subjective part of any translation evaluation by human on the other hand as House (2001) himself mentions should not make this assumption that inquiry in the field of translation evaluation is worthless.

Bearing this in mind, it can be interesting to point that a considerable number of scholars have worked in this field. Lauscher (2000; as cited in Manafi Anari, 2004: 33) puts forward that "translation scholars have tried to improve practical translation quality assessment by developing models which allow for reproducible, intersubjective judgment" (e.g. Reiss, 1972: 12-13; Wilss, 1977: 251; Amman, 1993: 433-34; Gerzymisch-Abrogast, 1977). Lauscher (2000, ibid) claims that "they [the translation scholars] hoped to achieve this goal [improving a practical translation quality assessment] by building their models on scientific theories of translation, which can provide a yardstick, and by introducing a systematic procedure for evaluation." Besides this, House (2001) presents a similar viewpoint where he claims that translation quality assessment requires a theory of translation.

Similarly, in the context of translation teaching some scholars have also introduced some proposals for translation evaluation (e.g. Delisle,

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1993; Hurtado, 1995; Nord, 1988 and 1996; Kussmaul, 1995; Pym, 1996; Gouadec, 1981 and 1989; Presas 1996).

3. Approaches in Translation Quality Evaluation

House (1998; as cited in Baker, 2000: 197-8) introduces three translation quality approaches: **anecdotal** and s**ubjective approaches**, **response-oriented approaches** and **text-based approaches**. House (ibid) maintains that:

> Text-based approaches may be informed by linguistics, comparative literature or functional models. In linguistically-based approaches, pairs of source and target texts are compared with a view to discovering syntactic, semantic and pragmatic regularities of transfer.

Therefore, this approach is based on comparison between the source and the target texts. On the other hand, according to Reiss (1971) in text-based approaches the source text is of prime importance and the text type determines the kind of translation strategy. Reiss (1971) herself introduced a systematic approach to translation quality assessment which was text-based too.

Related to this text-based approach for translation quality evaluation, four different approaches can be introduced: a source-language-oriented approach, a target-language-oriented approach, a translation-effect-oriented approach, and a top-down or a bottom-up approach. These four approaches will be briefly explained below:

3.1. A source-language-oriented approach

Here, the emphasis is both on the source text and on the concept of equivalence. In this approach, evaluation will be made based on the type of the source text which itself determines the translation strategy and the equivalence.

3.2. A target-language-oriented approach

Here, the emphasis is on the naturalness of the translated text in comparison with the similar texts existing in the target language.

3.3. A translation-effect-oriented approach

Here, the emphasis is on the effect of the translated text on the teacher, on the critic, on the client, or generally on the reader of the translation. This approach is similar to Nida's dynamic equivalence.

3.4. A top-down or a bottom-up approach

In a top-down approach, translation evaluation is based on holistic and general factors and in a bottom-up approach; the evaluation is based on details.

The first three approaches mentioned above are also illustrated in chapter 5 of Chesterman (1997).

4. Some Theoretical Factors Related To Translation Evaluation

Before introducing any factors related to translation evaluation, first we should determine why we want to evaluate a translation or what our purpose for evaluating a translation is. According to Tajvidi (2003; as cited in Farahzad, 2004: 104), the purposes for the evaluation of translation fall into the following categories: evaluation for educational goals, evaluation for employing a translator (something like a job interview), and evaluation for the purpose of criticizing.

In sum, it can be helpful to determine the purpose(s) of our translation evaluation and then try to judge the quality of that translation.

In the present study, the purpose is to propose practical models useful for educational purposes and goals so the theoretical factors mentioned here are basically related to educational setting and environment. The factors are listed below:

1. Our translation evaluation approach;

2. Text-typology and some other textual features such as the level of text difficulty, etc;

3. The purpose of translation;

4. The competence of translators (especially in educational setting and among translation students);

5. The efficiency of educational system;

6. The readers of the translation;

7. The expectations of translation students. This factor is related to the needs analysis of the students.

The application of all of these theoretical factors in designing any practical model for translation evaluation might be difficult; however, in the proposed models, we have tried to include as many factors as possible.

5. Practical Models for Translation Evaluation

Throughout history, there has always been a debate between the

importance of meaning and form in any kind of translation. According to Newmark (1988), the real intention of translation is to transfer the meaning of the source language (SL) to the target language (TL). However, this meaning is constant because after getting the meaning of the SL, the translator should convey it into the form of the TL so the form certainly differs. Considering these two factors (meaning and form), we can say that there are two kinds of translation. Larson (1984) calls these kinds as meaning-based translation and form-based translation.

Farahzad (2004: 81) claims "Translation is traditionally understood as the transferring of meaning". Therefore, in the process of translation, it can be said that meaning is the key factor; it's constant and it is the form which differs and is at the service of meaning.

The proposed models are two-dimensional and are based on text typology. In these models, meaning and form are the main criteria for translation evaluation and the point-scoring method is out of 20.

Meaning itself includes four subcategories, which are: 1. meaning transferring, 2. source theme/concept, 3. cohesion/coherence, 4. terminological consistency. Meaning transferring of three elements are important here, which are: 1. key words, 2. secondary words, 3. cultural load. Form includes four subcategories too, which are: 1. style, 2. register, 3. addition/deletion/punctuation, 4. audience/time/place.

As mentioned before, the proposed models are based on text-typology. Three kinds of texts have been covered here, which are: 1. general texts, 2. literary texts, 3. technical texts. Based on the importance of each criteria and factors in any kinds of these texts, the criteria and factors will receive a special mark.

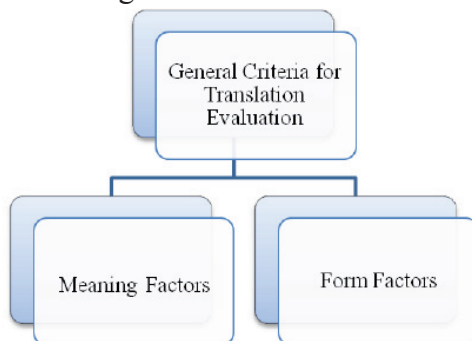Figure 1 illustrates the general criteria for translation evaluation.

Figure 1. Translation Evaluation Criteria.

In the following tables, three different models will be presented and they show these criteria in detail. **Note**: in all of these figures, **m** stands for marks.

Table 1. Evaluation Criteria for Translation of General Texts

Criteria for Evaluation of General Texts									
Meaning Factors (12 m)						Form Factors (8 m)			
Meaning Transferring									
Key Words	Secondary Words	Cultural Load	Source/ Theme/Concept	Cohesion/ Coherence	Terminological Consistency	Style	Register	Addition/ Deletion/ Punctuation	Audience / Time/ place
(5)			(4)	(2)	(1)	(2.5)	(2)	(1)	(1.5)
(2.5)	(1)	(1.5)							

As it is shown in table 1, in our translation evaluation of general texts, the mark given to meaning factors is 12 and the mark given to form factors is 8. Among the meaning factors, meaning transferring has the highest mark, which is 5. Among the form factors, the highest mark is given to style, which is 2.5.

Table 2 shows the general criteria for translation evaluation of literary texts. As it is shown, the general criteria and factors are the same as what were considered in table 1. However, the marks given to them differ; for example, the mark given to meaning is 9.5 and to form is 10.5. Here, among the meaning factors, again the highest mark, which is 5, is given to meaning transferring. Among the form factors, both the style and register have the highest mark, which is 3.

Table 2. Evaluation Criteria for Translation of Literary Texts

Criteria for Evaluation of Literary Texts									
Meaning Factors (9.5 m)						Form Factors (10.5 m)			
Meaning Transferring									
Key Words	Secondary Words	Cultural Load	Source/ Theme/Concept	Cohesion/ Coherence	Terminological Consistency	Style	Register	Addition/ Deletion/ Punctuation	Audience / Time/ place
(5)			(2)	(1.5)	(1)	(3)	(3)	(2)	(2.5)
(2)	(1)	(2)							

Table 3 shows the general criteria for translation evaluation of technical texts. Again here, the general criteria and factors are the same as what were covered in the previous tables. However, like the previous ones, the marks, which are given to meaning and form factors, are

different. Here, the marks given to meaning and form factors are 14 and 6, respectively. Among the meaning factors, the highest mark, 7, is given to meaning transferring. Among the form factors, the highest mark, 2, is given to register.

Table 3. Evaluation Criteria for Translation of Technical Texts

Criteria for Evaluation of Technical Texts									
Meaning Factors (14 m)						Form Factors (6 m)			
Meaning Transferring									
Key Words	Secondary Words	Cultural Load	Source/ Theme/Concept	Cohesion/ Coherence	Terminological Consistency	Style	Register	Addition/ Deletion/ Punctuation	Audience/ Time/ place
(5)	(7) (2)	(zero)	(4)	(2)	(1)	(15)	(2)	(15)	(1)

6. A Survey Study

Bowker (2000) states that "in a translation classroom, efforts must be made to develop an approach to translation evaluation that enables evaluators to provide objective and constructive feedback to their students." As mentioned earlier, the purpose of this article is to propose practical models useful for educational settings; therefore, In order to explore the ideas of some translation teachers about the proposed models discussed in this article, we did a survey study. The survey study was an attempt to answer these questions: to what extent were these models acceptable for translation teachers? And if they didn't agree with them, what was the main reason for their disagreement? The subjects of this study were 40 translation teachers who were randomly selected and asked to fill in a questionnaire which was designed by the researchers to identify their ideas about the models.

6.1. The 1st Question Answer

Out of these 40 participants, 24 subjects agreed with the models which equals to 60 percent; 14 subjects didn't agree with it which equals to 35 percent and finally 2 teachers didn't have any idea about it which equals to 5 percent.
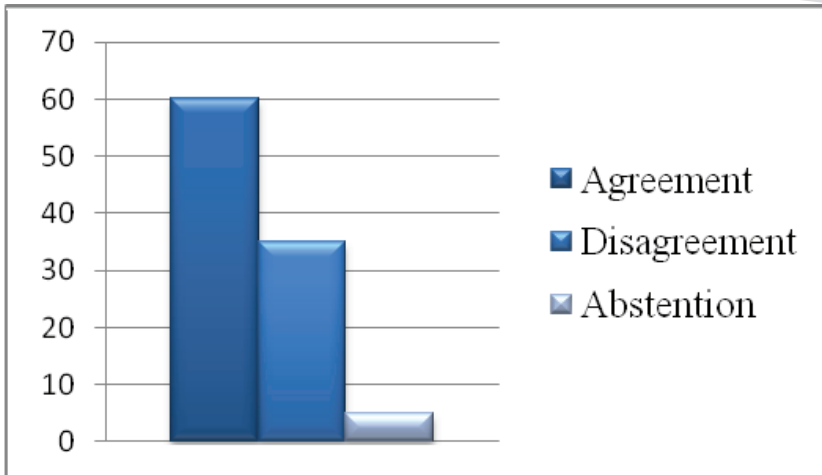
Figure 2 represents the data.

Figure 2. Translation Teachers' Views.

6.2. The 2nd Question Answer

To find an answer to the second question, the researchers included three reasons in the questionnaire. These reasons were:

1. Disagreement with the general criteria,
2. Disagreement with the factors,
3. Disagreement with the point-scoring method.

As mentioned earlier, 14 subjects disagreed with the models. Among them, 6 subjects chose the first reason, 3 subjects chose the second reason and 5 subjects chose the third one.
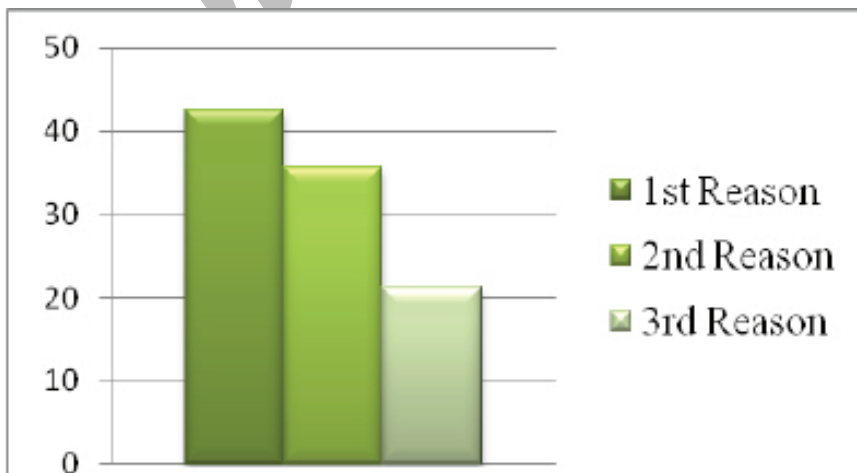
The result is represented in figure 3.

Figure 3. The Reasons of Disagreement

6.3. Discussion of the Survey Study

The data gathered in this survey study shows that 60 percent of translation teachers agree with the models proposed here so the models can be used for evaluating translated texts. However, some teachers disagreed with the models and the data showed that the main reason for their disagreement was the general criteria chosen in the models.

7. Conclusion

The present study was an attempt to propose practical models for translation evaluation. Based on text-typology, we introduced three different models. Our models were two-dimensional and meaning and form were chosen as the main criteria in them. The marks given to these criteria and their factors were based on the importance of them in the text of the models. In order to explore the ideas of translation teachers about the models, we did a survey study and it became clear that 60 percent of the teachers agreed with them so it was supported that the models are useful for translation evaluation and majority of translation teachers have a strong favour to use them. Finally, as Colina (2008), claims the existing approaches to translation quality evaluation have some deficiencies so the models presented in this article are no exceptions and they may have some weaknesses too.

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