



Waddington's model of translation quality assessment: a critical inquiry

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ABSTRACT

To assess a translated work, just like marking a translation, is a highly subjective task. There is not any objective index according to which, reviewers can assess or mark a translation. So, many reviewers employ a holistic approach to translation quality assessment. Although, there are some models like Waddington's (2001), which are less subjective, and translation is assessed according to some pre-set criteria. In this paper, Waddington's model (2001) was applied on the Persian translation of George Orwell's 1984, by Baluch. Twenty paragraphs were chosen randomly and compared and contrasted precisely with their parallel translations to assess the quality of translation. By close investigation of the model, Waddington's model turned to be incomplete, regarding translation shifts and additions. Besides, the holistic method proved not to be sufficient as it should be and the model is more of academic contexts, rather than appropriate for general use for Translation Quality Assessment.

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Introduction

"What is a good translation?" should be "one of the most important questions to be asked in connection with translation" (House, 1981, p. 127), "it is notoriously difficult to say why or even whether, something is a good translation" (Halliday, 2001, p. 14). From the beginning of practice of translation, there have been always some evaluators, to assess (or even mark) the translations. All of these evaluators (or scholars) employed a holistic approach, to Translation Quality Assessment (TQA), until recent years, some scholars of translation raised the notion of 'equivalence' in translation. As Halliday (2001, p. 15) states, this is "the central organizing concept" of translation. But this concept is a controversial one, as Kenny (1998, p. 77) asserts "In the English-language scholarship criteria of translation, the concept of (translational) equivalence is 'central' but 'controversial'"

But what is equivalence and how important it is? According to Koller (1995, p.197), it "merely means a special relationship—which can be designated as the translation relationship—is apparent between two texts, a source (primary) one and a resultant one." Or as Nord (1997, p.36) defines it "a static, result-oriented concept describing a relationship of 'equal communicative value' between two texts or, on lower rank, between words, phrases, sentences, syntactic structures and so on (In this context, 'value' refers to meaning, stylistic connotations or communicative effect)"

The controversial nature of 'equivalence' is obviously highlighted in the following quotation from Kenny:

Some theorists define translation in terms of equivalence relations (Catford, 1965; Nida and Taber, 1969; Toury, 1980; Pym, 1992, 1995; Koller, 1995) while others reject the theoretical notion of equivalence, claiming it is either irrelevant (Snell-Hornby, 1988) or damaging (Gentzler, 1993) to translation studies. Yet other theorists steer a middle course: Baker [(1992:5-6)] uses the notion of equivalence "for the sake

of convenience—because most translators are used to it rather than it has any theoretical status." (Kenny, 1998, p.77)

In recent years, more and more TQA models have employed the notion of 'equivalence' and thus, have reduced the high subjectivity of the task of translation quality assessment. The scholars have tried to set some criteria for evaluating the translation of an original work. They deal, more or less, with equivalence at 'word-level'. One of these models is the Waddington's model (2001).

According to Waddington (1995) most of the works in the field of translation quality assessment, were theoretical and descriptive. Some scholars like Darbelnet (1977) and Newmark (1991) sought to set the criteria for a good translation. Some other scholars like House (1981), Nord (1993) and Gouadec (1981) wanted to define the nature of translation errors. Again, House (1981) was for building a bridge between quality assessment and text linguistic analysis. Larose (1989) shared similar views to those of her. Scholars like Dancette (1989) and Larose (1989) put their emphasis on textual levels and were seeking to relate these hierarchical levels to the mistakes made during translation. The Psycholinguistic theory of 'scenes and frames' was introduced into the field of translation, by Dancette (1992) and Snell-Hornby (1995), which was a theory, related to translation quality assessment.

As you see, all of these models and theories were so abstract that one may face some problems, applying them in the real world. They all, described the states of translation, regarding TQA, which to date, had become a controversial notion in translation studies. But none of them had proposed some applicable and feasible solutions to the problem of translation assessment.

In 90's, some scholars like Campbell (1991) and Stanfield (1992), conducted some empirical studies on TQA, in a field which was starving for that. Campbell (1991), emphasized on

translation competence, rather than mere comparison between source and target texts. He concluded that there are three kinds of competence: a) lexical coding of meaning, b) global target language competence, and c) lexical transfer competence. His work drew on works of Seguinot (1989) who observed translation processes in translation quality assessment of a translated work and examined mistakes. Campbell examined other aspects as well, but again his work was on the linguistic level and he too, ignored above-linguistic levels.

Stanfield (1992) defined variables that constitute translation ability. One was 'accuracy' which was the degree to which, the translator transfers the content of ST accurately. The other one was 'expression, which was the quality of expression of that content. Waddington's (2001) work was different in that, his work is summative.

In order for Waddington's model to be analyzed, it should be applied to some text, in real conditions, so as to test the reliability and validity of his model, and to see what weak-points and merits it has, regarding TQA. Before doing that, let us have a close look at Waddington's model (2001). Here, a brief description of this model and some keywords are provided for the attention of those who are not familiar with the model.

Method A

Method A is the work of Hurtado Albir (1995); she draws up a list of possible errors which are divided into three categories:

- (1) Inappropriate renderings which affect the understanding of the source text; these are divided into eight categories: contresens, faux sens, nonsens, addition, omission, unresolved extralinguistic references, loss of meaning, and inappropriate linguistic variation (register, style, dialect, etc.).
- (2) Inappropriate renderings which affect expression in the target language; these are divided into five categories: spelling, grammar, lexical items, text, and style.
- (3) Inadequate renderings which affect the transmission of either the main function or secondary functions of the source text.

In each of the categories a distinction is made between serious errors (-2 points) and minor errors (-1 point). There is a fourth category which describes the plus points to be awarded for good (+1 point) or exceptionally good solutions (+2 points) to translation problems. In the case of the translation exam where this method was used, the sum of the negative points was subtracted from a total of 110 and then divided by 11 to reach a mark from 0 to 10 (which is the normal Spanish system) (Waddington, 2001, P. 3).

For example, if a student gets a total of -66 points, his result would be calculated as follows: $(110-66=44)/11=4$ (which fails to pass; the lowest pass mark is 5).

Method B

Method B is also based on error analysis and was designed to take into account the negative effect of errors on the overall quality of the translations (Cf. Kussmaul, 1995, p.129, and Waddington, 1997). The corrector first has to determine whether each mistake is a translation mistake or just a language mistake; this is done by deciding whether or not the mistake affects the transfer of meaning from the source to the target text: if it does not, it is a language error (and is penalised with -1 point); if it does, it is a translation error (and is penalised with -2 points). However, in the case of translation errors, the corrector has to judge the importance of the negative effect that each one of these errors has on the translation, taking into consideration the objective and the target reader specified in the instructions to the

candidates in the exam paper. The final mark for each translation is calculated in the same way as for Method A: that is to say, the examiner fixes a total number of positive points (in the case of method B, this was 85), then subtracts the total number of negative points from this figure, and finally divides the result by 8.5. For example, if a student is given 30 minus points, his total mark would be 6.5 (pass): $85-30 = 55/8.5 = 6.5$.

Method C

Method C is a holistic method of assessment. Although, in the survey mentioned above, the teachers who answered were requested to send a brief description of the method of assessment they applied, I only received three descriptions of holistic methods. In addition to this, all three methods based their scales on the requirements of professional translation and were consequently of little use for judging the quality of translation into the foreign language. As a result, I had to design the following holistic method myself. The scale is unitary and treats the translation competence as a whole, but requires the corrector to consider three different aspects of the student's performance, as shown in the table below. For each of the five levels there are two possible marks, so as to comply with the Spanish marking system of 0 – 10; this allows the corrector freedom to award the higher mark to the candidate who fully meets the requirements of a particular level and the lower mark to the candidate who falls between two levels but is closer to the upper one.

Method D

Method D consists of combining error analysis Method B and holistic Method C in a proportion of 70/30; that is to say, Method B accounts for 70% of the total result and Method C for the remaining 30%.

Method

In this paper, the researcher will use a comparative approach to evaluating translation quality of George Orwell's much famous novel, 1984, by H.R Baluch. In fact, the errors, according to categorization of Waddington, were analyzed. Twenty paragraphs were chosen randomly alongside with their parallel translations. Both original texts and their translations were analyzed carefully and precisely for errors. The results are given in some tables, in data analysis section.

The frequency of each error category was provided for getting to the results and these results were discussed.

Data analysis

In order to analyze, first the original text and its translation is presented, then, the above mentioned 3 categories of errors are investigated for each paragraph separately. Regarding the problem of space, all the paragraphs will not be presented, but 20 percent of the collected data would be presented in the appendix. Finally, the researcher demonstrates the results, obtained from all paragraphs in a single table.

To clarify the above mentioned points, the following paragraph and its translation seem to be in order.

Paragraph no.1

The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it a coloured poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to the wall. It depicted simply an enormous face, more than a meter wide: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features. Winston made for the stairs. It was no use trying the lift. Even at the best of times it was seldom working, and at present the electric current was cut off during daylight hours. It was part of the economy drive in preparation for Hate Week. The flat was

seven flights up, and Winston, who was thirty-nine and had a varicose ulcer above his right ankle, went slowly, resting several times on the way. On each landing, opposite the lift-shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption beneath it ran.

در راهرو، بوی کلم پخته و حصیر کهنه می آمد. بر روی دیوار راهرو، پوستر رنگی بزرگی نصب شده بود که برای چنین فضایی نامناسب می نمود. تصویری عظیم، به پهنای بیش از یک متر، که چهره ی مردی تقریباً "چهل و پنج ساله، با سیل های کلفت سیاه رنگ و جذائیتی خشن را نشان می داد. وینستون به طرف پله ها رفت. زحمت امتحان کردن آسانسور را به خود نداد، چون در بهترین شرایط هم به ندرت کار می کرد، چه رسد به حالا که جریان برق، به منظور صرفه جویی برای استقبال از «هفته ی ابراز تنفر»، در ساعاتی از روز قطع بود. آپارتمان وینستون در طبقه ی هفتم قرار داشت، و او اگرچه سی و نه سال بیشتر نداشت ولی چون بالای قوزک راستش دچار زخم واریسی بود، آهسته بالا می رفت و چند بار نیز در بین راه نفس تازه کرد. در همه ی طبقات، رویروی آسانسور، همان پوستر با چهره ی بسیار عظیمش به دیوار آویخته شده بود و به آدم، خیره نگاه می کرد. چشمهایش طوری به تصویر کشیده شده بود که انگار آدم را تعقیب می کرد. شرح زیر تصویر چنین بود: برادر بزرگ مراقب توست.

ST	TT	ERROR
Indoor display	فضایی	Faux sens
Face	تصویری	Faux sens
Heavy mustache	سیبیل کلفت	Faux sens
And at present	چه رسد به حالا	Faux sens
Who	هر چند	Faux sens
The caption beneath it ran	شرح تصویر چنین بود	Faux sens
End	-----	Omission
Simply	-----	Omission
Features	-----	Omission
Hate week	هفته ابراز تنفر	Addition
Gazed	به آدم خیره نگاه میکرد	Addition
Lift-shaft	آسانسور	Unresolved linguistic reference
it was no use trying the lift	زحمت استفاده از آسانسور را به خود نداد	Loss of meaning

Results

Regarding the occurrences of errors, the high frequency of two categories is significant. Addition and Faux Sens, with Addition constituting 30.5% of errors and Faux Sens constituting 24.2% of them. Omission is another prevalent error, made by the translator, with 19.7% of errors. The other categories are not statistically significant, except for Loss of meaning, which constitutes 5% of errors and Grammar errors with 9.5% of errors. The frequencies of errors are provided in the table 4.1, for analyzing and elaboration.

As the table 2 shows, the translator has not made any mistakes, regarding the Text and Style errors. Another important result obtained, is the high frequency of errors regarding the understanding of the source text, which constituted about 77% of errors, while errors of expression in the target language constituted only 13% of whole errors. One could get to the result that, Persian translators make more linguistic mistakes, rather than translational mistakes, which is the main concern of Method 'B'. In this method, the translation and language mistakes are analyzed in order for evaluation. In this study, the researcher found out that about 80% of errors made, were just language errors and didn't affect the transference of meaning, and only 20 percent of errors were translation errors, which made the translation difficult to understand and led to misunderstanding. Considering holistic method 'C', this translation is placed in the fourth level 'i.e., the transfer is almost complete, but it needs certain amount of revision. It reads

like originally written in Persian, and the translation is almost completely successful'. Method 'D' is a summative method, which shows some characteristics of both methods 'B' and 'C'. if applied to this translated work, the researcher should state that, this work is an appropriate translation, taking into account, the method 'D'.

Discussion

As it was mentioned before, this study sought to investigate the reliability and validity of Waddington's model, through applying it to a translated work. Four critiques could be mentioned about this model. First of all, this model is highly academic-bound and cannot be applied to real cases of translation evaluation, outside the academic context. As you see, most of the times, Waddington talks about numerical values, calculations, and marking, while most of the times, an evaluator is not to mark a translation. So, this model is more useful in academic contexts and cannot be easily distributed to general translation evaluation. Another critique upon this model is its ignorance toward translation shifts. As Catford (1965) notes, languages operate at different levels and ranks. When it comes to textual equivalence and particular ST-TT pairs, sometimes there occurs a divergence between the pair of languages. When the two concepts diverge, a translation shift occurs, and this can be either a level shift (1965, p. 73) or a category shift (1965, p. 75-82). As Catford himself defines it, translation shifts are "departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from the SL to the TL" (Catford, 1965, p. 73). So, translation shifts are inevitable as the structures of the languages differ, regarding their levels and ranks. So it is important to take into account this very important and controversial notion of translation. Because mostly, the structures of Persian and English languages are not the same, the Persian translation has to go through many translation shifts, in order to transfer the intended meaning. Most of the times, this shift is inevitable, and the Persian reader or better say, evaluator, considers it an appropriate strategy. But, Waddington has not paid any attention to this important and inseparable part of translation, not placing translation shifts, neither in error categories, nor in positive actions, taken by the translator. In this case study, the translator has widely used translation shifts, but the evaluator, is not certain if mark them as error or competence.

The third criticism against his model is related to holistic method C. Waddington's description of this method is so general, and leaves the evaluator in a vague situation. Although Waddington tries to propose an objective model for translation evaluation, this method seems to spoil his labor for objectifying the task. This holistic method shows high characteristics of subjectivity, since the evaluation is left alone to the evaluator, and judgment is different from evaluator to evaluator. Besides, one cannot go through a whole without passing through the details. In fact, if there are not details, there is not a whole. It is about the deduction\induction dichotomy. To get the result, one has to utilize either deductive or inductive approach. Both of these approaches deal with the details. The first one seeks to proceed from generalization to particular facts, while the other moves from particular facts to generalizations (Richards, 2002). So, when an evaluator states a translation as holistically good, he should have gone through some detailed features of translation strategies and competence, based on some details, and thus, the holistic method is somehow spoiled.

The last critique upon Waddington's model is that of addition, in Method A. The notion of explicitation in translation was first raised by Klaudy (1996). He believes that sometimes it is necessary (and not optional) to add some information to the concepts, or even grammatical structures, in order to make them more explicit and familiar to the eyes of the target reader. So, not only is not addition an error, but also it is a good means of conveying the desired meaning. It seems that Waddington is in favor of word-for-word translation, because he emphasizes that addition is an error, while in sense-for-sense approach, the transference of meaning is of prime importance. Addition adds some extra information to the meaning and as long as this information is not wrong, and it is in cohesive level, one could not deem it as an error. In fact, addition is a good aid for the translator to transfer the meaning, wherever it is not adequate. Of course, omission is an error in both approaches, where some parts of the meaning are deliberately omitted, though some scholars like Baker (1992), considers that as a strategy for translation, and places it as the seventh strategy among her eight strategies for translation in word level. But the author of this paper agrees that omission in any ways, is an error and should be avoided. Persian translators widely use addition, like the one in this study, that according to Waddington's model, this category constituted about 41% of errors. But not only were not some additions errors, but also they were some good strategies for transferring meaning and thus, should not be deemed as errors.

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هزار و نهصد و هشتاد و چهار، اورل، ج. ترجمه حمیدرضا ب لوج،
دب‌هگ تاراش‌تن (1383)

Appendix

Paragraph No.1

The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it a coloured poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to the wall. It depicted simply an enormous face, more than a metre wide: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features. Winston made for the stairs. It was no use trying the lift. Even at the best of times it was seldom working, and at present the electric current was cut off during daylight hours. It was part of the economy drive in preparation for Hate Week. The flat was seven flights up, and Winston, who was thirty-nine and had a varicose ulcer above his right ankle, went slowly, resting several times on the way. On each landing, opposite the lift-shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move. Big brother is watching you, the caption beneath it ran.

ST	TT	ERROR
Indoor display	فضایی	Faux sens
Face	تصویری	Faux sens
Heavy mustache	سبیل کلفت	Faux sens
And at present	چه رسد به حالا	Faux sens
Who	هر چند	Faux sens
The caption beneath it ran	شرح تصویر چنین بود	Faux sens
End	-----	Omission
Simply	-----	Omission
Features	-----	Omission
Hate week	هفته ابراز تنفر	Addition
Gazed	به ادم خیره نگاه میکرد	Addition
Lift-shaft	آسانسور	Unresolved linguistic reference
it was no use trying the lift	زحمت استفاده از آسانسور را به خود نداد	Loss of meaning

Some Eurasian prisoners, guilty of war crimes, were to be hanged in the Park that evening, Winston remembered. This happened about once a month, and was a popular spectacle. Children always clamoured to be taken to see it. He took his leave of Mrs Parsons and made for the door. But he had not gone six steps down the passage when something hit the back of his neck an agonizingly painful blow. It was as though a red-hot wire had been jabbed into him. He spun round just in time to see Mrs Parsons dragging her son back into the doorway while the boy pocketed a catapult.

ST	TT	Error
Evening	شب	Faux sens
Steps down	پیش نرفته بود	Faux sens
This happened	معمولا	Addition
Made for the door	بیرون آمد	Addition
As agonizing pain blow	درد کشنده ای در خود احساس کرد	Addition
Landing	طبقه	Lexical items
Jabbed into him	در گردنش فرو کرده بودند	Addition
Spun around	سریع برگشت	Addition
To be taken to see it	برده بود	Grammar
Was a popular spectacle	-----	Omission

ویدستون نمی تواند است به طور مشخص زمانی را به یاد بیاید که که شورش در حال جنگ نبوده باشد. اما معلوم بود که در زمان کودکی اش دورانی نسبتاً طولانی در صلح زندگی می کرده اند، زیرا یکی از قدیمی ترین خاطراتش مربوط به یک حمله ی هوایی اذتالاً زمانی بود که بمب می شد که برای هگان تعجب آور بود. اتمی را بروی کال چستر انداختند. او خود حمله ی هوایی را به یاد نمی آورد. ولی به یاد داشت که پدرش دست او را در دست داشت و با عجله از پلکانی مارپیچ که در زیر پایا جرق و جرق می کرد جبورپایین رفت و دزد و او آن قدر خسته شده بود که عاقبت م شدد بایستند و اسارتحت کنند. مادرش نیز با آن رفتار متین و پذیر خود به دنبال شان رفت. به بود خواه که وچکش در بغل مادر قط بسته ای پتور دست داشت. او و یا شاید هم مادرش بود تردید داشت که آیا در آن زمان خواهش متولد شده بود یا نه. سر انجام سر از یک ایستگاه مترو درآوردند که مکانی شلوغ و پرجمعیت بود.

ST	TT	Error
interval	دوران	Faux sesn
dreamy	دلپذیر	Faux sens
There had been a fairly long interval of peace during his childhood	اما معلوم بود که در زمان کودکی اش دوران نسبتاً طولانی در صلح زندگی می کرده اند	Addition
Which appeared	-----	Omission
Hi did remember	-----	Omission
Down,down,down	-----	Omission
Some place deep in the earth	-----	Omission
Round and round	-----	Omission
whimpering	-----	Omission
His sister had been born then	-----	Omission
Rang	جرق و جروق	Addition
Was following behind them	پشت سرشان آمده بود	Grammar
clutch	دست او را در دست داشت	Loss of meaning

ویدستون مقاله‌ی مشکل‌راه‌طورکامل‌خواند.به‌نظر‌می‌
ی‌برادر‌بزرگ‌پیش‌تر‌به‌تقدیر‌از‌رسید‌دستور‌روزانه
سازمانی‌به‌نام‌CCFF‌اختصاص‌داشت‌که‌تامین‌کننده‌ی
سایر‌وسایل‌آسایش‌ملوانان‌دژهای‌شناور‌بود.از
رف‌یقی‌به‌نام‌وای‌ترز‌که‌عضو‌برجسته‌ی‌کمیته‌ی‌مرکزی

حزب ب ود، در همین رابطه ت قدیر به عمل آمده ب ود و مدال درجه ی دوم
به او اهدا شده ب ود. «تقایلی»

ST	TT	Error
offending	مشکل	Faux sens
Singled out	-----	Omission
Special mention	-----	Omission
Conspicuous	-----	Omission
Inner party	کمیته مرکزی حزب	Addition

Table 1.: Scale For Holistic Method C (Waddington, 2001, p. 6)

Level	Accuracy of transfer ST content	Quality of expression in TL	Degree of task completion	Mark
Level 5	Complete transfer of ST information; only minor revision needed to reach professional standard.	Almost all the translation reads like a piece originally written in English. There may be minor lexical, grammatical or spelling errors.	Successful	
Level 4	Almost complete transfer; there may be one or two insignificant inaccuracies; requires certain amount of revision to reach professional standard.	Large sections read like a piece originally written in English. There are a number of lexical, grammatical or spelling errors.	Almost completely successful	
Level 3	Transfer of the general idea(s) but with a number of lapses in accuracy; needs considerable revision to reach professional standard	Certain parts read like a piece originally written in English, but others read like a translation. There are a considerable number of lexical grammatical or spelling errors	Adequate	
Level 2	Transfer undermined by serious inaccuracies; thorough revision required to reach professional standard.	Almost the entire text reads like a translation; there are continual lexical, grammatical or spelling errors.	Inadequate	
Level 1	Totally inadequate transfer of ST content; the translation is not worth revising.	The candidate reveals a total lack of ability to express himself adequately in English	Totally inadequate	

Table 2: The Frequency of Errors

Error	No. of Occurrence	Frequency (%)
Addition	48	30.5
Faux sens	38	24.2
omission	31	19.7
Grammar	15	9.5
Loss of meaning	8	5
Lexical items	5	3.1
Contresens	3	1.9
Inappropriate linguistic variation	3	1.9
Unresolved linguistic reference	3	1.9
Nonsense	2	1.2
Spelling	1	0.6
Text	-----	-----
Style	-----	-----
Total	157	100