
Quality Assessment of English-into-Persian Translations of Tourism Management Academic Textbooks

Amirhossein Imanizadeh¹, Mir Saeed Mousavi Razavi^{2*}

¹ MA Student of the Department of Foreign Languages, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

² Assistant Professor of the Department of English Translation Studies, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran

Received: 02 September, 2019

Accepted: 15 December, 2019

Abstract

This paper addresses the quality of the Persian translations of 32 English tourism textbooks. The quality was assessed at sentence-level and page-level by the researchers and from the viewpoint of a tourism management student. In Phase 1, the quality of one randomly selected sentence from each textbook was assessed applying Hurtado Albir's analytical model; two were acceptable and 30 unacceptable. The dominant error types according to her model were also identified. In Phase 2, the quality of one randomly selected page from each textbook was assessed applying Waddington's Method C, which is a holistic model; on average, the quality proved to be inadequate. In phase 3, the opinion of one end-user regarding the overall quality of the translation of six sentences and six pages from the whole corpus was elicited. To her, the overall quality was adequate at the sentence-level and inadequate at the page-level. It can be concluded that the quality of the translated textbooks is unacceptable and that they fail to serve the intended purpose.

Keywords: Academic textbooks; Tourism management; Translation quality assessment

INTRODUCTION

The main concern in the present research is the quality assessment of the English-into-Persian translations of tourism academic textbooks. English is the lingua franca of science, and Persian is the official language of three countries: Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan, with more than 100 million speakers. There is a huge number of Persian-speaking students and academicians who read translated textbooks, most of which are translations from English into Persian. The readership of these translations base their knowledge on them; therefore, if these translations are of poor quality, the readers do not perceive the subjects properly and their understanding will be distorted.

Translation quality assessment (TAQ) is both intriguing and demanding, and there is no single unanimously-accepted approach to it. TQA is a tricky domain since translation quality (TQ) is perceived in accordance with how we understand translation. In other words, it is the translation theory we subscribe to that determines how we perceive and judge the quality of a translation (House, 2018).

There are a large number of Iranian students, faculty members, lecturers, and industry activists, who need to read academic material. These individuals acquire a great part of their knowledge through reading translated material. Most importantly, as academic textbooks encompass the scientific breakthroughs and the accepted body of theory in any science, and as they set the cornerstone

*Corresponding Author's Email:
s.mousavi@atu.ac.ir

for future research (Kuhn, 1970), students, lecturers and researchers have daily and lifelong encounters with them. Whilst it is essential that the quality of the translated textbooks be of high quality, based on the researchers' experience, the translated academic material are abound with translation errors of various types. There are many poor versions replete with errors, which students have to read during their careers. Thus, it would be fruitful to examine the quality of translated textbooks in the field of tourism management and to discover the pattern of translation errors. If we know where the major problems lie, we may, then, be able to propose appropriate solutions. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first paper that investigates the quality of the translations of English tourism management textbooks into Persian.

Not only was the quality of the translations assessed from the point of view of the researchers by applying two types of TQA models—one analytical: Hurtado Albir (2015), one holistic: Waddington (2001)—but the assessment was also triangulated by the opinion of a real end-user. The assessment shed light on where translation errors lie most, and consequently helped us better understand the situation. The findings might be of use to translators, translation students and translation teachers.

It is known that to translate technical texts, besides having the necessary knowledge of translating, the translator must be familiar with the subject of the text and the terms used in the field (J. Williams & Chesterman, 2014). It follows logically that the TQ assessor also needs to enjoy mastery over the subject matter. This condition was met in this study as the first author of the present paper has done a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in tourism management in addition to a master's degree in translation studies.

Research questions

- (1) Of what quality are English-into-Persian translations of tourism textbooks at sentence-level?
- (2) What is the pattern of errors appearing in English-into-Persian trans-

lations of tourism textbooks at sentence-level?

(3) Of what quality are English-into-Persian translations of tourism textbooks at page-level?

(4) To the end-user, of what quality are English-into-Persian translations of tourism textbooks at both sentence-level and page-level?

Theoretical background

Holmes' map of translation studies illustrates different segments and sub-segments of the field. The main division in Holmes' map is between pure and applied translation studies (Chesterman, 2009; Toury, 2012). Translation Criticism appears under the applied branch, and it has four sub-categories: revision, editing, reviews, and evaluation (assessment) (Munday, 2012).

Informative texts. Academic textbooks are a typical example of informative texts. Texts fall into three general types: Informative, Expressive, and Operative (Reiss as cited in House, 2018). An informative text's main function is to transmit referential content; it represents objects and facts, and is content-focused (Munday, 2012).

Translation quality assessment.

Translation quality assessment is the term for referring to the stage in translation process, during which translation errors are counted and classified (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014). Translation quality assessment has been performed for centuries (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014; M. Williams, 2001). Nevertheless, it has been neither researched nor discussed sufficiently (Hatim & Mason, 2005).

TQA approaches. Different approaches to TQA have been proposed. For example, J. Williams and Chesterman (2014) distinguish source-oriented assessment, target-oriented assessment as well as assessment methods considering translation effects. House (2001, 2018) elaborates on three approaches: psycho-social, response-based, and text-and-discourse-based.

M. Williams (2001) divides TQA models into two main categories: quantitative and non-quantitative.

METHODS

This research had three phases: In Phase 1, the quality of 32 translations was assessed at sentence-level; one randomly selected sentence from each book was assessed analytically using Hurtado Albir's (2015) model. In Phase 2, a semantic whole as long as one to two pages was assessed holistically (page-level assessment) using Waddington's (2001) Method C. In the first two phases, our assessment was based upon a comparison between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) with a linguistic orientation, rather than social judgement (House, 2001). In Phase 3, translation quality was looked at from the viewpoint of a real end-user: six sentences from Phase 1 and six pages from Phase 2 were given to a student majoring in tourism management, and her opinion was sought out.

TQA models used in Phase 1 and Phase 2

Hurtado Albir's analytical model. Hurtado Albir's TQA scheme was first introduced in French (1995), in which she "distinguishes source text comprehension from target text expression" (Hatim & Mason, 2005, p. 168). Hurtado Albir (2015) ascribes errors to three categories; she identifies 8 types of errors related to the meaning of the original text, 5 types of errors related to expression in the target language, and considers pragmatic errors the third category. Hurtado Albir (2015) provides the corresponding translation assessment rubric to the three error categories. Likewise, Pragmatic Errors correspond to the level of communication of the target text. The severity of errors is heeded in her model:

The seriousness of an error depends on its significance in relation to the text as a whole (it may affect a key idea or a large section of the text); its significance in terms of textual coherence (it may cause a high degree of incomprehensibility, for example); and the extent to which it changes the

information contained in the original text. (Hurtado Albir, 2015, p. 273)

Waddington's holistic model.

Waddington (2001) proposes four TQA methods; his third scheme (Method C) is of a holistic approach: "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" (p. 314).

The analytical and holistic models used in this paper are a good fit. Importantly enough, Waddington's Method A (2001) is based on Hurtado Albir's work (1995). In his study, Waddington concludes that "all the systems, whether based on error analysis or a holistic approach, prove to correlate significantly" with translation competence (2001, p. 311).

Corpus

Out of the total of 61 English-into-Persian translations of tourism management textbooks found at the library of the Faculty of Management and Accounting of Allameh Tabataba'i University, 32 were selected to constitute the corpus of the study. It is worth mentioning that the Faculty of Management and Accounting of Allameh Tabataba'i University is the oldest tourism school in Iran and logically has a library very rich, if not the richest, in the field of tourism management.

Translation Selection Criteria. The criteria observed for selecting the 32 translations were (a) diversity in readership (those studied for Iran's national entrance tests to MA and PhD programs (*Konkur*) and those studied as the textbook for a module in tourism management BA, MA, or PhD curricula); (b) diversity with regards to covering different subfields; and (c) diversity with regards to the year of publication.

STs and TTs assessed. The corresponding author can be contacted for accessing the full information on the titles, the names of the author(s) and translator(s), as well as publication dates of both ST and TT of the 32 translations selected for quality assessment, and also the remaining 29 books excluded from the 61 translations available at the library.

Phase 1: sentence-level assessment by the researchers

Sampling. All the textbooks were examined for translation quality at sentence-level. From each source text, one page was selected randomly. Then after counting manually the number of sentences present in the page, again one sentence was picked randomly. To generate a random number, Google Random Number Generator or Research Randomizer (Social Psychology Network, 2018) was utilized. Afterwards, the rendering of the selected sentence was found in the translation. The original sentences and their translations were tabulated and aligned for the purpose of assessment.

Analytical framework. Hurtado Albir's (2015) analytical TQA model was selected and modified to assess the quality of the translations at sentence-level.

The category of Pragmatic Errors was excluded from our assessment since the translations are all academic textbooks – hence the harmony between the pragmatics of the STs and the TTs. Also, in one case, we could not attribute an error to any of the predefined types in the model; therefore, the category OTHER was added. In addition, the percentages attributed to each aspect were removed.

Considerations in assessment.

- Although the unit of translation was sentence in Phase 1, we assessed the quality of translation of each sentence considering the wider context of the sentence at least at the paragraph level in both ST and TT.
- For each item of either aspect of translation quality, errors were divided into major or minor. Penalty marks were given to each error proportionate to the severity of the error; a major error received -30 and a minor error received -10 marks.
- A threshold of 30 penalty marks was set as the borderline of the failure of the translation at sentence-level.
- Whenever an ST sentence was found to have not been translated altogether, it was pointed out as a deletion, and then

a new sentence was reselected randomly and assessed.

- Each sentence was examined at least three times.

Phase 2: page-level assessment by the researchers

Sampling. One to two pages—depending on the coherence of the content—was selected randomly from each textbook; first, a page was selected randomly, then, by looking at the text, a number of correlated paragraphs were chosen. The figures and tables present in the middle were also examined.

Analytical Framework. Waddington's (2001) holistic Method C for TQA was applied for assessing the translations at page-level. It ought to be mentioned that although his model deals with texts translated from Spanish into English, we used the model for translations from English into Persian. In addition, the model is primarily to assess student translations, but we used it to assess translations of published academic textbooks. This is because it is a general-purpose model and unlimited to any specific language-pair or setting.

Considerations in assessment. Wherever, a deletion—so long that contains the whole randomly selected page—was observed, a new sample was randomly reselected. This process continued until there was finally an ST-TT pair to assess.

Phase 3: end-user's perspective

Participant. As a pilot study, in this phase the opinion of one tourism management student (who finished a Bachelor's in 2018 and started her Master's immediately) was sought out. The 24-year-old student is a studious one; her BA average is 17.88 (out of 20). She was admitted to MA directly at the same university where she studied her BA (Allameh Tabataba'i University) since she was among the best students in her class.

Sampling. A portion of the previously assessed TT sentences and pages was selected. The end-user's opinion was sought out via email, the Telegram Messenger, on the phone and face-to-face.

Sentence-level assessment by end-user. Six translated sentences out of the whole corpus were selected randomly (Simple Random Sampling with replacement) for the end-user interview: Books 31, 29, 14, 1, 23, and 10.

Page-level assessment by end-user. Six translated pages were selected by using Purposive Random Sampling method. First we made groups according to the TL marks. Six homogenous groups were made. Then we randomly selected one translation from each group. The six translations selected were Books 2, 32, 19, 18, 3, and 20.

Further correction criteria

Orthography. The Persian Orthography (Academy of Persian Language and Literature, 2003) and Persian Words Spelling Dictionary (Sādeqi & Zandimoqaddam, 1394), both approved and published by the Academy of Persian Language and Literature, were used as the standard of conventions of written Persian (orthography and typography).

Lexical items. The *1000-word collection of tourism and hospitality approved terms* (Academy of Persian Language and Literature, 1396) was used as the main reference. However, it was not used as the always-necessary-to-obey standard. For example, the approved equivalent for *pro-poor* in the term *pro-poor tourism* is *faqrzodā* (literally ‘poverty-removing’), but Book 27 at sentence-level (Musāpur & Morādi, 1394, p. 475) renders it into

hāmi-ye foqarā (literally ‘in support of the poor’), which is not semantically wrong, and therefore was not considered an error.

Statistical software

The software Microsoft Excel 2013 was used to concentrate and analyze the data of each phase. As needed, the mean, standard deviation, and correlation were calculated for reporting the results. In addition, where appropriate, diagrams were generated by this software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Phase 1: Sentence-level assessment by the researchers

Discussion. Overall, there were 259 errors (201 Majors and 58 Minors) in our corpus of 32 sentences extracted from the 32 translations. The average of error occurrence in each sentence was 8.1 (6.3 for Majors and 1.8 for Minors). Obviously, Major errors were more frequent and influential than Minor errors.

Each sentence on average received -207 penalty marks (-162 for Majors and -45 for Minors). The standard deviation of the penalty marks of the sentences was 169, which reflects a large amount of variation. However, considering the penalty mark -30 as the borderline for the TQ to be acceptable, two translations were acceptable and 30 translations were unacceptable. Figure 1 shows the absolute value of the penalty marks received by each sentence.

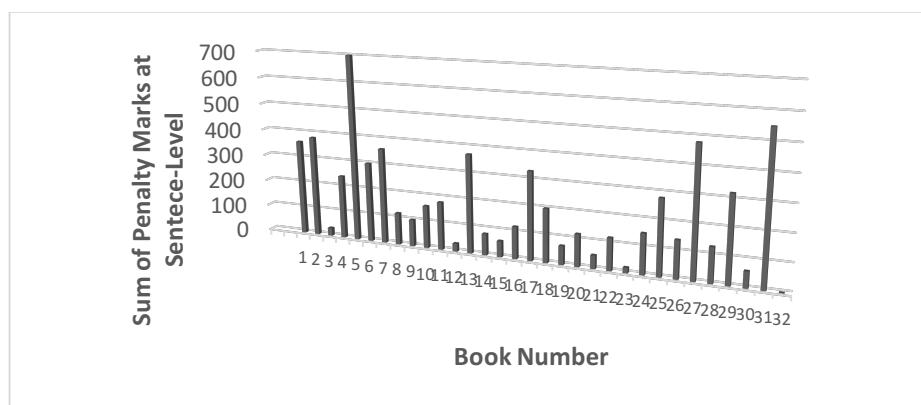


Figure 1. Absolute sum of penalty marks for each sentence from each book.

The sentence from Book 32 contained no errors and received no penalty marks. On the other hand, Book 5 received the most penalty

marks (-700), having 24 errors in total, composing of 23 Majors and one Minor.

In terms of composition of the TL, Orthographic and Textual errors were the most frequent. The Orthographic errors were mostly Minors, with a total average of 1.1 while the Textual errors were mostly Majors, with a total average of 0.9. More precisely, there were one major and 36 minor Orthographic errors, whereas there were 29 major and one minor Textual errors. By giving the weight -30 to major errors and -10 to minor errors, the more detrimental errors turned out to be the Textual errors.

As to the transference of the meaning of the source text, Wrong Sense, Omission, and Nonsense (with total averages of 2.1, 1.4 and 1.1 respectively) were the dominant errors. There were 66 Wrong Sense (all major), 45 OM (39 major, 6 minor), and 34 NS (all major) errors. Strikingly,

the sum of the penalty marks received by WS errors was -1980, which had a notable distance from those of Omission errors (-1230) and Nonsense errors (-1020). Addition and Slightly Different Sense (SDS) were the next noticeable errors, with a total occurrence average of 0.6 per sentence. There were 19 Addition (14 major, 5 minor) and 17 Slightly Different Sense (9 major, 8 minor) errors. There were four more errors: three major Poorly Resolved Extralinguistic Reference (EXT) errors, plus one major error which was put in the category of OTHER. No Opposite Sense or Register error was observed. Figure 2 shows the absolute sum of penalty marks appointed to major and minor errors of the different types observed in the assessment of the 32 sentences.

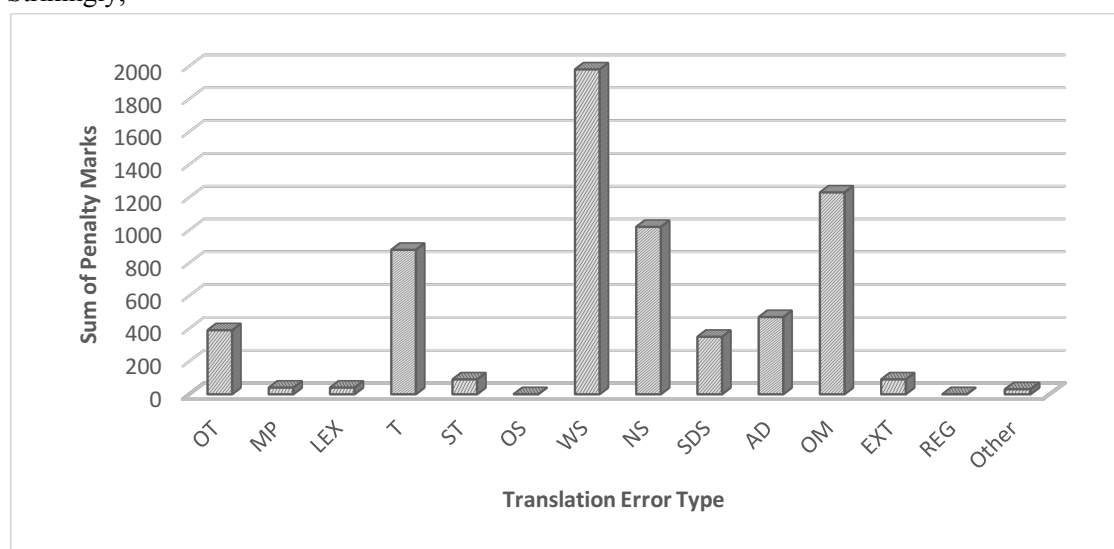


Figure 2. Pattern of translation errors occurred at sentence-level. OT = Orthographic and typographic; MP = Morphosyntactic; LEX = Lexical; T = Textual; ST = Stylistic; OS = Opposite Sense; WS = Wrong Sense; NS = Nonsense; SDS = Slightly Different Sense; AD = Addition; OM = Omission; EXT = poorly resolved extralinguistic reference; REG = inappropriate Register.

Attention must be paid to the fact that the cases of complete deletion of a sentence were excluded from our data. Had they been included as Omission errors, this kind of error would be the most frequent. Deletions occurred in seven books at sentence-level, which made us do the sampling again and again until an ST sentence which had a rendering in the TT was found.

Specious Renderings at sentence-level. Comparing the two aspects of TQ helped discover an interesting phenomenon, for which we propose the title “Specious Renderings”

(smooth appearance, yet flawed interior). There were cases where the TT looked flawless and smooth—therefore, giving the false impression that it was a high-quality rendering—but, in fact, much of the meaning of the ST had been lost or distorted.

In the sample, at sentence-level, the average rate of error occurrence in terms of Composition in the Target Language was 2.3, while the average rate of error occurrence regarding Expression of the Meaning of the Original Text was 5.8, which means that there were thrice as many errors in

meaning transference as errors in TL expression. In other words, there were many cases where the TT seemed to be a good translation, but, in fact, it was a poor one since a considerable portion of the meaning of the ST had been lost or distorted. The correlation between the numbers of errors in TL quality aspect and ST meaning aspect was +0.38, which means that generally although there is an uphill (positive) linear relationship between them, this relationship is weak. There were cases which showed a wide gap between the aspects. For example, the sentences from Book 1 and Book 7 had no errors in TL language aspect but had respectively 14 and 12 errors in ST meaning transference. The sentence from Book 5 was another striking example; it contained 5 TL quality errors and 19

ST meaning transference errors.

In four cases, however, the opposite was observed; there were more TL quality errors than ST meaning transference errors. This was observable in Books 12, 13, 16, and 19 where the differences in numbers of occurrence were -1, -5, -2, and -1 respectively. Nonetheless, obviously this kind of difference is far less big in comparison with what happened in Specious Renderings.

Figure 3 shows the penalty marks received by each aspect of translation quality separately at sentence-level; the phenomenon of Specious Rendering is notable, and, as said above, there are also few cases where exactly the opposite is seen. There were, of course, some cases where both aspects of quality were almost in harmony, all in translations with a small number of errors.

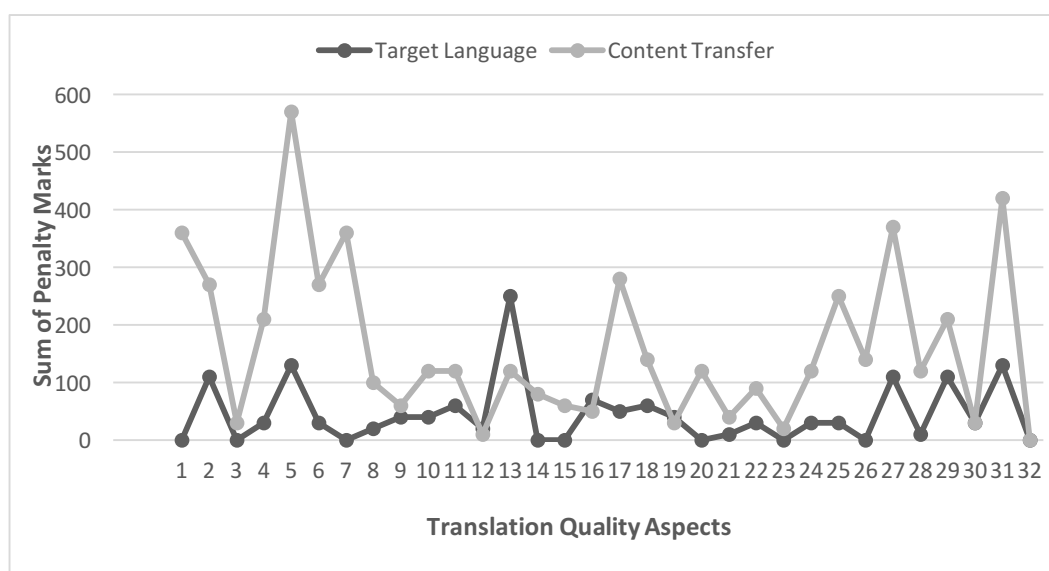


Figure 3. Sum of penalty marks given to each aspect of translation quality at sentence-level, showing the phenomenon of Specious Rendering (a serious gap between the quality of target language expression and success in transferring the source text meaning).

This phenomenon has been known for at least two decades in the field: “smooth delivery may create the false impression of high quality when much of the message may in fact be distorted or even missing” (Shlesinger, 1997 as cited in Kurz, 2001, p. 403). We argue that this is a serious pitfall for the translator, the readership, and the assessor. When a translation is poorly written and contains mechanical errors, those “identifiable without viewing source text” (American Translators Association, 2009), the

shortcomings act as an alarm to the audience that there must be a problem. Nevertheless, when there is no trace of an error in a TT full of hidden meaning transfer errors, the audience might most probably be deluded into believing that they are reading a good translation which offers the same content as that of the ST.

Error type. There are some cases where the assessors faced the possibility of assigning a particular error to more than one type, as in the sample of Sharpley (2009, pp. 195-197). This

problem with TQA has been long known; it has been explicitly stated by Pym (1992):

Although it is relatively easy to produce a terminological system of three or seven or perhaps twenty odd types of translation error and then find examples to illustrate the phenomenal level and presumed causality of each, it is quite a different matter to classify errors as they actually appear in translated texts, where *elements of different types are perpetually mixed and numerous cases straddle the presupposed distinctions* [emphasis added]. Such classifications will always have either too few or too many terms, at least for as long as there is no clear awareness of why translation errors should be classified in the first place. (p. 282)

Hurtado Albir (2015, p. 273), also, refers to such border cases: “Combinations of errors are common (for example, lexical and morphosyntactic errors, or a wrong sense or nonsense stemming from poor expression).”

That being said, it is necessary and fruitful to try to categorize translation errors so that we can

cope with them more effectively. Facing border cases, one can content themselves with more general classifications of error types instead of more delicate ones.

Phase 2: Page-level assessment by the researchers

Discussion. The average mark of the quality of expression in TL of all the 32 translation pairs was 6 out of 10, which according to Waddington’s Method C (2001) is at Level 3 and is considered Adequate. However, the average mark of the accuracy of transference of ST content was 2.7, which according to the model is placed at the lowest level (Level 1) and is Totally Inadequate. No translation received the full mark 10 as to the quality of expression in TL or the transfer of the meaning of the ST. As for TL expression, the highest mark was 8 (nine books) and the lowest was 3 (three books). As to content transfer mark, the highest was 7 (only one book) and the lowest was 1 (eight books). Combining the TL mark and the ST content yielded a relatively different outcome; Figure 4 shows the mean of the TL and content marks for each book.

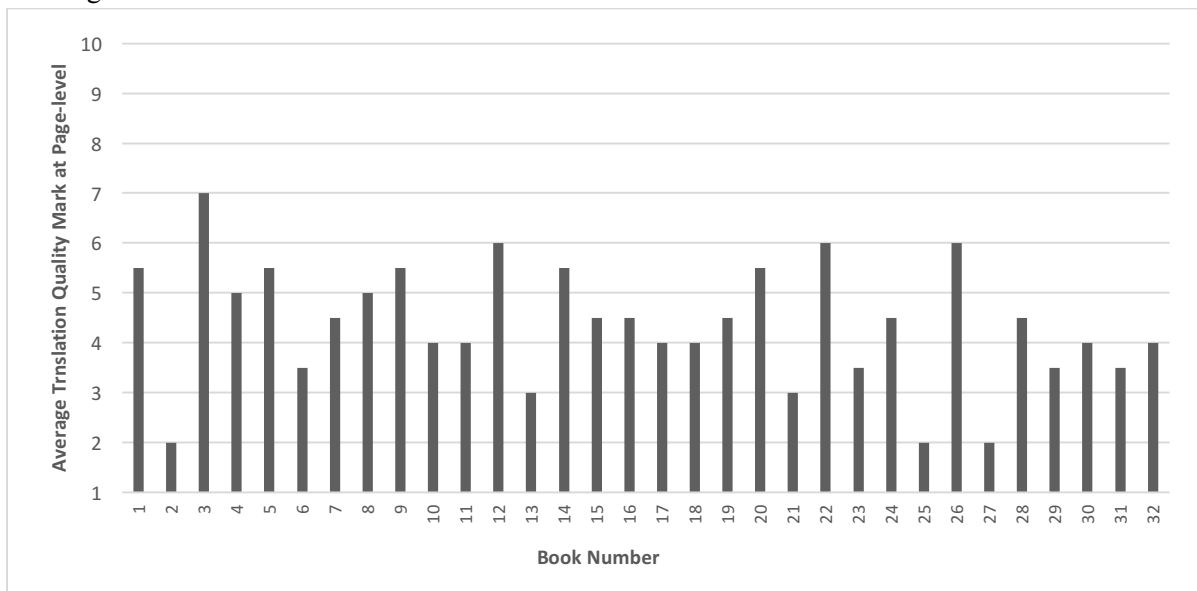


Figure 4. Mean of Target Language and Content Transfer marks for each book at page-level.

The average of the means of these two aspects was 4.4, which according to the model is at Level 2 and considered Inadequate. The marks are startlingly not even close to the expected

levels of Successful or Almost Completely Successful. Table 1 shows the data of the TL marks and the Content mark of our sample at page-level.

Table 1.
Target Language and Source Text Content Transfer marks at page-level

	Target Language Mark	Level	Content Transfer Mark	Level	Average	Descriptor
Book 1	8	4	3	2	5.5	Adequate
Book 2	3	2	1	1	2	Totally inadequate
Book 3	7	4	7	4	7	Almost completely successful
Book 4	6	3	4	2	5	Adequate
Book 5	8	4	3	2	5.5	Adequate
Book 6	4	2	3	2	3.5	Inadequate
Book 7	7	4	2	1	4.5	Inadequate
Book 8	6	3	4	2	5	Adequate
Book 9	8	4	3	2	5.5	Adequate
Book 10	5	3	3	2	4	Inadequate
Book 11	6	3	2	1	4	Inadequate
Book 12	7	4	5	3	6	Adequate
Book 13	4	2	2	1	3	Inadequate
Book 14	6	3	5	3	5.5	Adequate
Book 15	8	4	1	1	4.5	Inadequate
Book 16	8	4	1	1	4.5	Inadequate
Book 17	6	3	2	1	4	Inadequate
Book 18	6	3	2	1	4	Inadequate
Book 19	5	3	4	2	4.5	Inadequate
Book 20	8	4	3	2	5.5	Adequate
Book 21	4	2	2	1	3	Inadequate
Book 22	8	4	4	2	6	Adequate
Book 23	6	3	1	1	3.5	Inadequate
Book 24	8	4	1	1	4.5	Inadequate
Book 25	3	2	1	1	2	Totally inadequate
Book 26	8	4	4	2	6	Adequate
Book 27	3	2	1	1	2	Totally inadequate
Book 28	7	4	2	1	4.5	Inadequate
Book 29	6	3	1	1	3.5	Inadequate
Book 30	5	3	3	2	4	Inadequate
Book 31	4	2	3	2	3.5	Inadequate
Book 32	4	2	4	2	4	Inadequate
Mean	6	3.2	2.7	1.7	4.4	Inadequate

Specious Renderings at page-level. Like what was observed at sentence-level, the comparison between the TL mark and the Content mark at page-level further supported the existence of the phenomenon of “Specious Renderings”. Figure 5 clearly shows the significant difference between the TL mark and ST Content mark for all the pages. In this respect, Book 3 and Book 32 are exceptions, where the mark of both aspects are the same. The average TL mark

was 6 (Adequate), while the average Content mark was 2.7 (Totally Inadequate); hence the TL mark was roughly twice as better as the Content mark. And, the mean difference between the two aspects was 3.3, meaning that the gap is as wide as two levels according to the model. Ergo, the TL could be misleading. Statistically speaking, the correlation between the two aspects is +0.19, which is interpreted as almost no linear relationship.

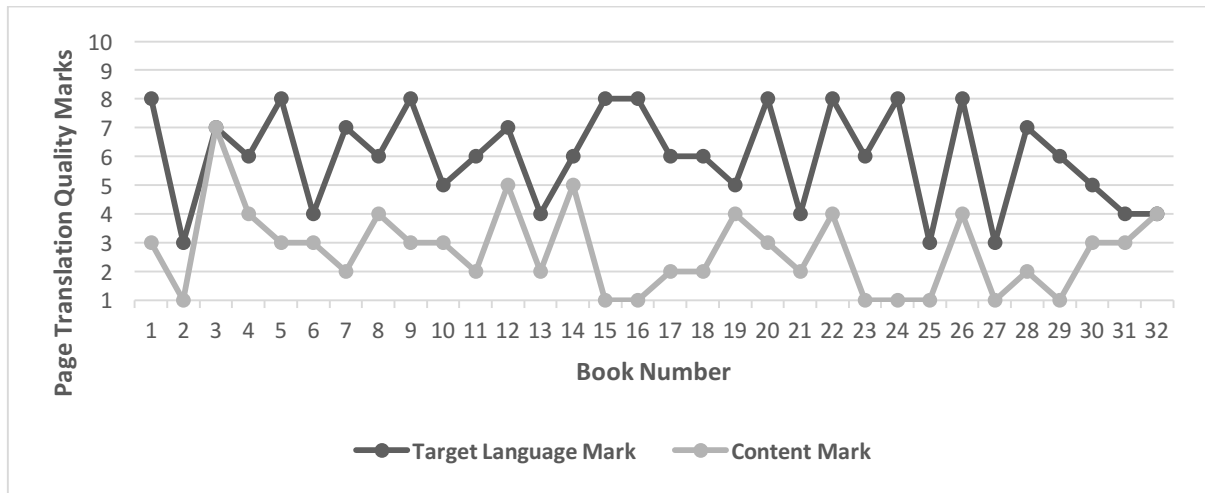


Figure 5. Comparison between the Target Language quality mark and the Source Text Content Transfer mark at page-level.

Curiously, there was not even a single case where the mark of the TL was less than that of the Content.

Phase 3: End-user's perspective

At sentence-level. Table 2 shows the marks given by the end-user to each of the six sentences of the sample.

The mean mark given to the six sentences of the sample was 6.6; if we interpreted this mark according to Waddington's (2001) Method C, on average the TQ of the sample would be at Level 3 and considered Adequate. Of course, attention must be paid that the student was not given the model and not asked to use it.

Interestingly, on the whole, the correlation between the marks given by the student and the penalty marks given by the researchers is +0.81; therefore, there is a strong uphill linear relationship denoting a remarkable agreement between the researchers' assessment and that of the end-user.

Table 2.
Quality marks given by the student to the sample sentences

Sentence	End-user Assessment
Book 31	3
Book 29	7.5
Book 14	9
Book 1	6
Book 23	9
Book 10	5

Note. Marks range from 1 (the worst) to 10 (perfect).

At page-level. The marks given by the student to the sample pages are shown in Table 3. The average mark given to the six books was 4.8 (with a standard deviation of 2.2). Although the student was not given Waddington's (2001) holistic Method C, if we interpreted her grading according to this model, the quality of the sample would be classified at Level 2 as Inadequate. The mark is very close to mark 5, which is Level 3 and is interpreted as Adequate. However, it is far away from what is expected—i.e., mark 9 or 10 (Level 5: Successful).

Table 3.
Quality marks given by the student to the sample pages

Page	End-user Assessment
Book 2	5
Book 32	6
Book 19	1
Book 18	7
Book 3	3
Book 20	6.5

Note. Marks range from 1 (the worst) to 10 (perfect).

The average mark given to these six books by the researchers was 5.5, which is classified under Level 3 as Adequate—the difference between the means of the student's marks (4.8) and that of the researchers is interestingly marginal.

Other findings

Whilst “omissions can be employed as legitimate translation strategies in certain circumstances” (Kim, 2009, p. 135), there is also “the inappropriate use of omissions by nonprofessional translators, who leave out parts of the source texts out of neglect or because they cannot understand certain meanings” (Dimitriu, 2004, p. 174). Omissions are “deletions that cause significant loss of meaning from the source message” (Russell & Malcolm, 2009, p. 375). In Phase 1, we only considered the omission of units shorter than a sentence. We refer to these substantial omissions (at least as long as a whole sentence) as deletions. Whenever there was a deletion, we had to resample. In Phase 1, in seven books (Books 8, 17, 22, 24, 25, 29, and 31) we had to resample as the translation of the selected ST sentence was missing. In Phase 2, this happened in eight books (Books 1, 10, 13, 16, 20, 24, 25 and 32).

The length of deletions ranged from one sentence to paragraphs, boxes of case-studies, figures, subchapters, the appendices section, and to 18 chapters out of a 28-chapter-long book.

We identified two types of deletion and, named them as stealthy versus undeclared deletions. In stealthy deletions, nowhere in the translation was it stated that a part of the source text had been left untranslated, whereas in declared deletions, the fact that certain parts of the ST had been left out was made explicit in the preface, usually along with providing unpersuasive reasons.

Limitations and future research

Whilst 32 translations out of the 61 translations present at the library were assessed, it is suggested that the quality of the other 29 translations be assessed.

Each phase of the research deserves further work. In Phase 1 and Phase 2, the translations were assessed only by the authors of the present paper. As this study was unfunded, to hire other experts to perform the assessment was unaffordable. Although reaching “complete consistency between testers in the way the parameters are attributed and the gravity of an error is evaluated” (Hatim & Mason, 2005, p. 168) is impossible, it is suggested that more

evaluators, at least three, perform the assessment so that inter-rater reliability can be calculated.

Furthermore, assessing more samples from each book to achieve more generalizable results is suggested.

The TQA models used in this research ignore appreciating excellent renderings. Including bonus marks renders the TQA more complicated, but it is worthwhile since it can provide fairer results. It is therefore suggested that the research be replicated with a model which heeds great renderings.

In Phase 3, as a pilot study, one student’s opinion was elicited. Obviously, a single participant’s opinion is not generalizable. Eliciting the comments of more end-users with different characteristics—and thereby, reaching more generalizable results—is necessary.

Finally, following the approach of translator studies (Chesterman, 2009, pp. 13-14), investigating the translators themselves (their motivations, characteristics, backgrounds, and so on) is suggested.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the three phases of this research corroborated each other: the quality of the translations was unacceptable. The first research question addressed the quality of English-into-Persian translations of tourism academic textbooks at sentence-level. That 30 out of 32 translations were of unacceptable quality is worrisome. It means that the translators have had serious problems doing their job even when translating sentences—considered the main unit of translation (Farahzad, 1992, p. 276; Huang & Wu, 2009; Xazā’ifar, 2012, p. 33).

The second research question dealt with the pattern of error types at sentence-level. In terms of the target language, Orthographic errors were the commonest, whereas Textual errors were the most detrimental—meaning that the translators have had difficulties producing a comprehensible text even at sentence-level. That said, target language quality was overall better than source-text content transfer. With regard to the transfer of source text meaning, the dominant errors were Wrong Sense, Omission, and Nonsense, which means that the translators’ English is flawed.

The third research question concerned the quality of the translations at page-level. The mean of the average marks of the two translation quality aspects was 4.4, which—according to the model—is far from the ideal mark 9-10 (Successful) or the tolerable mark of 7-8 (Almost completely Successful). At page-level, in contrast to Phase 1, no rendering was completely successful. The average mark for success in transferring source text meaning resides at the lowest level, interpreted as Totally Inadequate. This suggests that translators have had yet bigger difficulties dealing with longer translation units; the bigger the unit of assessment, the poorer the quality of the translations turned out to be.

At both sentence-level and page-level, the phenomenon of Specious Rendering was notable. This is shocking since in reading translated textbooks, the user's main expectation is to receive accurate information; a translation of an informative text must transfer referential content (Munday, 2012, p. 112). Provided that the meaning is transferred accurately, minor flaws with regard to the quality of TL expression is tolerable. Regardless, it was observed that there were many cases where the appearance of the target text was misleading.

The fourth research question was about how a real end-user thought of the overall translation quality of the samples. On the whole, the opinion of the tourism management student—who was by no means an expert in translation—showed that she was unhappy with the quality of the

translations. Poorly translated textbooks provide the students with distorted knowledge preventing them from actualizing their potentials efficiently. Pseudoscience is perilous as the adage goes: “The greatest obstacle to discovery is not ignorance—it is the illusion of knowledge.”

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study could be beneficial to translation teaching and curriculum design. Overall, the target language expression was in a better state than the source text meaning transference; however, the main problem with the TL quality stemmed from neglecting Persian orthography guidelines. As ignoring the proper use of zero-width non-joiners was the dominant TL error, the rules of how and when to use them should be taught to students. In addition, Textual errors (lack of coherence leading to incomprehensibility) were the second most frequent errors. This means that translators have had difficulty presenting the message clearly and coherently in Persian. Therefore, translators' Persian writing skills ought to be improved. As to source text meaning transference, the dominant errors were Wrong Sense, Nonsense and Omission; this means that the translators' knowledge of English must be enhanced. Students should also learn about translation ethics—including the translator's obligation to translate accurately by preserving “the meaning, style and register of the source document” (Multi-Languages Corporation, 2018, para. 3).

References

- Academy of Persian Language and Literature. (1396). *A Collection of Tourism and Hospitality 1*. Tehran, Iran: Našr-e Farhangestān-e Zabān va Adab-e Fārsi.
- Academy of Persian Language and Literature. (2003). *dastur-e xatt-e fārsi [The Persian orthography]*. Tehran, Iran: Našr-e Farhangestān-e Zabān va Adab-e Fārsi.
- American Translators Association. (2009). Flowchart for error point decisions. Retrieved from http://www.atanet.org/certification/about_exams_flowchart.pdf
- Chesterman, A. (2009). The name and nature of translator studies. *HERMES-Journal of Language and Communication in Business*, 22(42), 13-22.
- Dimitriu, R. (2004). Omission in translation. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, 12(3), 163-175.
- Farahzad, F. (1992). Testing achievement in translation classes. In C. Dollerup & A. Loddegaard (Eds.), *Teaching translation and interpreting: training, talent, and experience* (Vol. 5, pp. 271-279). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Hatim, B., & Mason, I. (2005). *The translator as communicator*. Abingdon, England: Taylor & Francis e-Library.
- House, J. (2001). Translation quality assessment: Linguistic description versus social evaluation. *Meta*, 46(2), 243-257.
- House, J. (2018). *Translation: The Basics*. Abingdon, England: Routledge.
- Huang, H., & Wu, C. (2009). The Unit of Translation: Statistics Speak. *Meta*, 54(1), 110-130.
- Hurtado Albir, A. (1995). La didáctica de la traducción. Evolución y estado actual. *Perspectivas de la traducción*, 49-74.
- Hurtado Albir, A. (2015). The acquisition of translation competence. Competences, tasks, and assessment in translator training. *Meta*, 60(2), 256-280. doi:10.7202/1032857ar
- Kim, M. (2009). Meaning-oriented assessment of translations: SFL and its application to formative assessment. In C. V. Angelelli & H. E. Jacobson (Eds.), *Testing and assessment in translation and interpreting studies* (pp. 123-158). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1970). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.
- Kurz, I. (2001). Conference Interpreting: Quality in the Ears of the User. *Meta*, 46(2), 394-409.
- Multi-Languages Corporation. (2018). Translator's Code of Ethics. Retrieved from https://multi-languages.com/translations-shtml/translators_ethics-shtml/
- Munday, J. (2012). *Introducing translation studies: Theories and applications* (3rd ed.). Abingdon, England: Routledge.
- Musāpur, P., & Morādi, G. (1394). *gardešgari va pāydāri: tose'e, jahānišodan va turism-e jadid dar kešvarhā-ye jahān-e sevvom [Tourism and sustainability: Development, globalisation and new tourism in the Third World countries]*. Rašt, Iran: Jahād-e Dānešgāhi, Pažukeškade-ye Mohit-e Zist.
- Pym, A. (1992). Translation error analysis and the interface with language teaching. In C. Dollerup & A. Loddegaard (Eds.), *Teaching translation and interpreting: training, talent, and experience* (Vol. 5, pp. 279-289). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Russell, D., & Malcolm, K. (2009). Assessing ASL-English interpreters. In C. V. Angelelli & H. E. Jacobson (Eds.), *Testing and assessment in translation and interpreting studies* (pp. 331-376). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins
- Sādeqi, A., & Zandimoqaddam, Z. (1394). *farhang-e emlāyi-e xatt-e fārsi [Persian Words Spelling Dictionary]*. Tehran,

- Iran: Našr-e Farhangestān-e Zabān va Adab-e Fārsi.
- Saldanha, G., & O'Brien, S. (2014). *Research methodologies in translation studies*. Manchester, England: St. Jerome.
- Sharpley, R. (2009). *Tourism development and the environment: Beyond sustainability?* London, England: Earthscan.
- Social Psychology Network. (2018). Research Randomizer. Retrieved from <https://www.randomizer.org/>
- Toury, G. (2012). *Descriptive Translation Studies and beyond: Revised edition* (Vol. 100). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Waddington, C. (2001). Different methods of evaluating student translations: The question of validity. *Meta*, 46(2), 311-325.
- Williams, J., & Chesterman, A. (2014). *The map: a beginner's guide to doing research in translation studies*. Manchester, England: St. Jerome.
- Williams, M. (2001). The application of argumentation theory to translation quality assessment. *Meta*, 46(2), 326-344.
- Xazā'ifār, A. (2012). *tarjome-ye motun-e adabi [The translation of literary texts]*. Tehran, Iran: SAMT.

Biodata

Mr Amirhossein Imanizadeh has recently completed his master's degree in translation studies at Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. He has also obtained an MA in tourism management with a concentration on marketing as well as a BA in tourism management, both from Allameh Tabataba'i University. Among his works is a translation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism into Persian. He has taught translation skills since 2012. His research interests, in the field of TS, include quality assessment, translator training, and linguistics. He is keen on interdisciplinary questions.

Email: imanizadeh.authorship@gmail.com

Dr Mir Saeed Mousavi Razavi is an assistant professor of translation studies at the Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran. He has been teaching translation-related courses at ATU as a part-time lecturer since 2010, and as a permanent faculty member since 2015. His research has embraced translation/interpreting pedagogy, translation evaluation, translation criticism, and research methodologies among other areas and he has published books and papers on these topics. He has also been working as a professional English-Persian interpreter in Iran since 2007.

Email: s.mousavi@atu.ac.ir