The Effect of Academic Qualifications on the Translation Quality Assessment on Error Analysis Model based on Liao’s (2010)

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Abstract

How to assess the quality of the translation and what criteria to be used for evaluating it, has always been a problematic issue in translation studies. With the rise of Translation Studies as a new science, translation error assessment has moved toward more scientific approaches, and the related frameworks proposed for error identification and assessment are integrated more and more. Errors emerge as the result of some factors. Three main perspectives are involved in each translation which includes: culture, syntax and semantics. Therefore, translation errors occur as the result of incompetence in one or more than one of these categories. Given the importance and the precision required in the translation of religious texts, this research, aimed at the analysis of the type and frequency of the errors occurring in the English translation of Islamic texts by Iranian translators and analyze the possible cause of the errors. To this end, 9 Islamic texts and their English translations were selected. Then, using Morgan's sample selection table, The errors were categorized based on the classification of error types developed by Liao (2010).The results of the study revealed that the register category was the most frequent error area.

Keywords: translation error assessment, Liao (2010), Errors
Overview
Translation quality assessment is important in the context of both academic and non–academic translation, where it may be used for quality control in professional settings or in translator training, and academic translation, where it may be used by the developer or potential user to evaluate system performance. The assessment of translation quality has received much attention in the academic sphere (e.g. House 1997; Nord 1997; Lauscher 2000; Brunette 2000; Colina 2003). The focus here is not on the theory of translation quality assessment, nor on its implementation in translator training, but rather on the practice of translation quality evaluation in the professional sphere where translation quality is also ever topical and contentious. Nevertheless, translation quality remains an elusive concept with no one universal definition of quality or one generally accepted method for quality assessment. Quality assessment involves various aspects, such as accuracy (fidelity), fluency and fitness for purpose, and different aspects have been deemed important for different situations.

Theoretical framework
Translation quality remains an elusive concept with no one universal definition of quality or one generally accepted method for quality assessment. Quality assessment involves various aspects, such as accuracy (fidelity), fluency and fitness for purpose, and different aspects have been deemed important for different situations. The establishment of communication between people belonging to different speech communities has long been an important form of linguistic performance. In fact, translation is a kind of attempt to overcome barriers to international communication. Nowadays, it comes as no surprise that translation increasingly becomes important as a medium of the international communication. This development is favored by the circumstance that in spite of all its creative productivity, the era seems to be essentially one of reproducing, inventorying, processing, and conveying information. Still, there is no theory of
translation in the technical sense of a coherent set of general principles in understanding the nature of translation (Nida, 2001). However, these principles are stated in terms of how to produce an acceptable translation.

Liao (2010) reviews the error taxonomies in ATA and CTTIC exams and proposes a taxonomy in which errors are categorized into three genres in the first place. These include: rendition errors that happen when the translation failed to deliver the accurate meaning of the source text. Five errors types of rendition were identified by Liao (2010) rendition errors are shown in Table 1). Language errors are related to the problematic expression in target text. Liao also identified six errors of these types. And the last one is miscellaneous error that has been occurred when some parts of the source text were missed by rendering.

It is hoped that the findings from this study would highlight areas of development in order to eradicate errors. It might encourage and increase the equal distribution of educational resources without discrimination. This would also assist with the identification of the relevant and competent educators of English. It is also hoped that under qualified educators will receive assistance and be empowered in terms of how to teach syntax through departmental workshops. These workshops will again assist by making educators aware of the influence the media through advertisements and technology such as cellular phones impacts on English learning, especially when it comes to error analysis. It will also make educators aware of the fact that the English which learners learn, should be the English which they are supposed to write and ensure that they minimize errors as far as possible

Statement of the problem

Learning from errors is a crucial aspect of improving expertise. Translation quality can be evaluated with regard to different aspects, such as accuracy (fidelity), fluency and fitness for purpose. In translation procedure for information purposes, accuracy of semantic content is the
key aspect of quality. Automated quality metrics developed in the academic translation field have been criticized for conflating fluency of form with accuracy of content and for failing to provide any information on the types of errors in the translations. The current research aims to discover criteria for assessing translation quality specifically in terms of accuracy of semantic content in translation.

This study demonstrates how an error analysis with a view to identifying different error types in academic translations can serve as a starting point for such criteria. The error classification described focuses on mismatches of semantic components (individual concepts and relations between them) in the source and target texts. The researcher presents error analysis results, which show differing patterns both between academic and non-academic translators and academic translation systems on the one hand and two different kinds of translation systems on the other.

Comparing the error results show that this kind of error analysis can bring out interesting differences between translations produced by academic and non-academic translators. In this way, the error definition discussed forms the first step in developing a classification of errors and analyzing the connection between errors and meaning. In further studies, the central aspect will be determining how different error types truly affect the preservation of the source text semantic content.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study was motivated by the researchers’ goal to unfold the quality of the English translations and discover the most frequent error patterns the Iranian academic and non academic translators have committed in such texts.

The aims of the present pilot study was to identify the errors made by foreign language students during their translation classes, and establish the causes of error production in order to improve students’ translation skills.
**Research Question**

-**RQ**: What are the most frequent types of errors that students usually make in their translation tasks?

**Error analysis**

Error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. It consists of a comparison between the errors made in the target language (TL) and that TL itself. Pit Corder is the ‘Father’ of Error Analysis. It was in his article entitled ‘The significance of Learner Errors’ (1967) that Error Analysis took a new turn. Errors used to be ‘flaws’ that needed to be eradicated. Systematically analyzing errors made by language learners makes it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching (Corder, 1967).

**Error Classification**

In order to find the errors in a translation, it is useful to have one or more reference translations in order to contrast the output of the academic translation system with a correct text. However, as it is well known in the Academic Quality of Translation community, there are several correct translations for a given source sentence, which poses a difficult problem for automatic evaluation and comparison of Academic Translation systems. Therefore the use of these reference translations must be done with care.

Evaluation and error analysis of Academic Translation output are important but difficult tasks. In this article, we propose a framework for automatic error analysis and classification based on the identification of actual erroneous words using the algorithms for computation of Word Error Rate (WER) and Position-independent word Error Rate (PER), which is just a very first step towards development of automatic evaluation measures that provide more specific information of certain translation problems. The proposed approach enables the use of various types of linguistic knowledge in order to classify translation errors in many different ways.
Research Design

As shown by Kim (2013) various methods of assessing translations, which are commonly used in European, Canadian and Australian academic institutions, have proved to be valid and reliable, these methods consisting in error analysis proper or in its combination with the holistic method. However, in our country there are not enough studies dedicated to Iranian academic and non-academic translators of English from the perspective of error analysis, that is why our enterprise benefitted from the valuable contributions of a wide variety of researchers to error analysis, such as: Dušková (1969), who examined Iranian translators of English, Light and Warshawsky (1974), who studied errors of Russian learners of English, Guilford (1998), who investigated typical errors produced by French learners, Vassileva (1998), who explored the linguistic problems of German, French, Russian and Bulgarian learners, Yang and Huang (2004), who studied specific difficulties of Iranian EFL translators in acquiring English etc.

Qualitative approach as suggested by Liao (2010) was used in the study. The process included: collection of data, identification and classification of errors, quantification of errors, error source analysis and error remediation. Frequency counts and percentage were utilized to validate the data of translation errors committed.

Translation theory

Since all processes of data collection had to be based on a practical model, the researcher tried to apply the most in practice model from among the many available ones. Having this in mind the Liao`s error classification model (2010) was used as the base of comparative error analysis. The categorization of error types by Liao is mostly workable to classify errors of rendering means those errors related to the way a piece of writing is translated. Based on this model, errors are divided into three groups: rendition errors, language errors and miscellaneous errors.
Corpus
The population of the study was the group of 20 fourth year English major translation students, Department of Foreign Languages, Tuse University, Mashhad. At the time of the study, participants were studying “Translation practice 3” subject. Under the umbrella of this subject, students practiced translating texts at upper-immediate level focusing on such topics as agriculture, economy, politics, education, population and urban planning, etc. Also 20 IELTS students who didn’t have any academic translation training participated in this study. The sample comprised of just female learners.

Instruments
The major materials used in the study were excerpts of brochures which are given to learners to be translated in the classroom during the teaching session. Each session, usually one English and one Farsi passage were used for translation.

Procedure
The research reported here was an attempt to understand the nature of classroom translation problems of Iranian EFL learners. For this purpose, three cohorts of English Translation students taking introductory and advanced translation courses participated in the study in order to identify the sources of their translation problems. The texts used for translation in this thesis came from websites of popular travel agencies in the United States and the United Kingdom. The classroom translations of at least one English text into Farsi and vice versa were regular classroom practices during translation classes. They were asked to write their own translations. Each student produced his own version of translation for that text and these translations were collected at the end of each session for later analysis by the researchers.
Although the time allowance was set at 45 minutes, but more time could be given to the participants if needed in order that students would complete the whole text translation. The data were then classified into three groups of omission, rendition errors, language errors and miscellaneous errors.
based on the analysis model by Liao (2010). The errors under the category of rendition were classified into five sub-divisions named misinterpretation of text, insufficient rendering, excessive rendering, insufficient accuracy and misinterpretation of terms. The errors categorized under the second group, language errors, were divided into six groups: grammatical mistakes, awkward expression, inappropriate register, excessive literal translation, excessive free translation and inconsistency.

Results

To answer the research question-what are the most frequently occurring errors- the frequencies of the errors occurring in English translation of Persian Islamic books were determined separately. As the mentioned earlier, the committed errors by translators were collected based on Liao (2010) taxonomy, which is divided into three main categories including, rendition, language and miscellaneous errors. The subcategories of this error classification were also used to precisely identify the committed errors in English translation of each book as follows: Having found out the frequency of each category and subcategory, in the next step, the most frequently occurred errors are identified. To this end, total frequencies of each category are computed and then summarized in the table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content of translation error</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rendition</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>131</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in table 2, the most frequently occurring errors were form category of language (i.e., 131 errors out of 200). Miscellaneous errors ranked second (i.e. 10 errors out of 200) and rendition errors ranked third (i.e., 59 errors out of 200). To understand the results better, see figure 1.
Discussion

As stated by Jones et al. (1999), teaching of translations at an early stage should focus on the development of the concept before going to a higher level. In the study conducted, process skills and encoding were the most common errors. The students used the wrong procedure, did not perform the calculation process carefully and wrongly applied the manipulation. Hence, the students could not state the final answer correctly due to the problems encountered. Hence, there are many errors in the process skills and encoding. The levels of achievement contribute to the frequency of students making errors. The study found out that many errors were made by the students with low and medium levels of achievement. The students with medium level of achievement made the most errors. This finding agrees with the study conducted by Norasiah (2002) and Rahim (1997), in which the students have problems to convert translational problems into translational forms and they also have problems in understanding the specific terminologies that exist in translations. This failure may be due to the teachings by teachers, which lack of emphasis in understanding the language of translations. Therefore, teachers need to ensure that
each student master the basic skills and translational terminologies before they learn other topics of translation.

Conclusion
This research investigated the translation errors in the context of religious texts, other areas and genres lack practical backgrounds, therefore, further research might be conducted about the translation errors in literary texts, texts, and etc. One cannot argue definitely that a text with less error is favored more by readers and vise versa and from the reader’s viewpoint, it is not clear what effects each error category might have. That is, it is not determined what effect is aroused as the result of each error category or all the errors on the whole. The frequency of errors and their effect on and correlations to readers might be also the subject for further research.

References


