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Assessor-centered translation quality assessment : a theoretical model and a case study

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Chapter II

Toward Designing an Assessor-Centered Model for Translation Quality Assessment

The subjectivity in translation quality assessment has always been a source of complaint for many translation scholars. Some of them find the root of the problem in the ambiguity of terminologies and the instability of notions such as *value*, *quality*, *measurement* and *judgment* (e.g. Maier 2000, p. 137, and Campbell & Hale 2003, p. 206); some blame the multiplicity of theoretical approaches and different assessment purposes (e.g. Arango-Keeth & Koby 2003, p. 119); and others identify the uncertainty in the definition of the very process of assessment itself as the main source of confusion (e.g. McAlester 1999, p. 169, and Brunette 2000, pp. 169-70).

With a closer look at various sources of confusion identified by different scholars in the discussion about translation quality assessment, we can see that they could be classified into ambiguities related to the definition of the process of translation quality assessment itself and those related to the three key components of this process, i.e. 1) the object of assessment (WHAT is being assessed), 2) the method of assessment (HOW assessment is done), and 3) the objective of assessment (WHY assessment is done). This chapter aims at developing an alternative model for translation quality assessment step by step through disambiguating the vague terms and concepts related to translation quality assessment and its key components and offering clear definitions for them.

2.1. Toward a Definition for Translation Quality Assessment

Translation studies is a relatively young discipline, only a few decades old; therefore, it is not much surprising to see that the use of terminology in this discipline is not so coherent. Marco (2009, p. 65) enumerates three main reasons behind the terminological “chaos” haunting translation studies as follows: 1) the weak epistemological status of Translation Studies as a discipline which does not favor consensus among specialists, 2) conceptual similarities which are clouded by terminological differences, and conceptual differences which hide behind apparent synonymy, and 3) terminological practices being school-specific and rooted in different national traditions. The chaotic situation in the use of terminology in translation studies also holds true for the discussion about translation quality assessment. Few translation scholars, even among those who are particularly concerned with translation quality assessment, give a clear definition of the very act of assessment or other such terms as evaluation, criticism, revision, and analysis etc. In fact, it is as if the majority of scholars do not find it necessary to define these terms, presumably because they take them for granted. The absence of clear definitions for different evaluative practices has given rise to a situation in which either the same terms are used for referring to different evaluative practices or, conversely, different terms are used interchangeably for the same evaluative practices (the terms are considered synonymous).

To resolve the confusion resulting from the abovementioned situation, some scholars have attempted to define the terms used in the field of translation assessment more clearly. McAlester (1999), for example, distinguishes between the terms translation *assessment*, translation *evaluation*, translation *criticism*, and translation *analysis* within the context of translator education and accreditation. He proposes that *translation evaluation* be used in the sense of placing value on a translation, *translation criticism* in the sense of stating the appropriateness of a translation, and *translation analysis* in the sense of explicating the relationship between the target text and the factors involved in its

production, including the source text, without making any judgment. He then proposes that the term *translation assessment* might be used as a cover term to include all three procedures. McAlester (1999) believes that in the process of translation assessment there is directionality between the three procedures: “evaluation presupposes criticism, and criticism analysis” (p. 169). It should, however, be noted that McAlester’s proposed terms are meant for educational assessment, the ultimate objective of which is to measure the professional translation competence of the future translators rather than the quality of the translation itself as a product. One of the common mistakes many translation scholars make in the discussion about translation assessment is conflating the *translation competence* assessment with *translation quality* assessment. To avoid such a misunderstanding, Arango-Keeth & Koby (2003) propose the application of the terms *assessment* and *evaluation* in a sense that is completely different from what McAlester (1999) means. Arango-Keeth & Koby (2003) use the term *evaluation* to refer to the process of evaluating a translation for didactic purposes (i.e. translation competence assessment) and the term *assessment* to verifying the suitability of a translation as a product to be submitted to a client (i.e. translation quality assessment) (p. 119).

Brunette (2000) also notices the considerable inconsistency in the way the term *translation assessment* is interpreted by different translation scholars, depending on their theoretical standpoints; however, she believes that such inconsistency is not so unusual, taking into account the degree of subjectivity that is present in any kind of human judgment (p. 169). Insisting on the necessity of distinguishing between assessing the quality of translation as a product and the evaluation of the translation process, Brunette (2000) identifies five different assessment procedures currently used in evaluating translation: pragmatic revision, translation quality assessment, quality control, didactic revision, and fresh look (p. 170).

According to Brunette (2000, p. 173), *didactic revision* (also known as formative revision or training revision) is a stage in the translation process in which the entire text of translation is carefully compared with its original by translation instructors. The main purpose of this procedure is to help trainee translators improve their translation skills. Brunette (2000) defines *translation quality assessment* as a management term which refers to “determination of the quality of a translated text or a check after the fact for management purposes, i.e. measuring the productivity of translators and the quality/price ratio of translations” (p. 173). She defines *quality control* again as a management term which refers to verification of the compliance of a sample part of translation with predefined criteria in order to save time and resources. Unlike translation quality assessment, this assessment procedure does not necessarily involve comparing the translation with its original. According to Brunette (2000), the quality control of a translation can range from a partial monolingual reading to a bilingual revision of sample segments of the translation. Similarly to didactic revision, Brunette’s *pragmatic revision* involves careful comparison of the translation with its original, the difference being that the main purpose of pragmatic revision is to improve the translated text, while in the case of didactic revision the purpose is to improve the translation skills of the translators/translator trainees. And finally, she defines *fresh look* as an independent reading of the target text to make sure that it conforms to the requirements of the initiator of the translation.

As Brunette (2000) mainly focuses on drawing borders between different assessment procedures by enumerating the similarities and differences between them, she does not offer much detailed description of each individual procedure as to exactly what constitutes their key components and how they are exercised. She also fails to treat the measurement of translation quality and the measurement of translators’ productivity separately and places both procedures under the same category of translation quality assessment. As I have pointed out previously, there is a fundamental difference between translation quality

assessment and translation competence assessment and they should not be conflated with each other. Whereas the main purpose of translation quality assessment is to make a judgment about the quality of the translated text, in translation competence assessment the translated text serves merely as an assessment tool which helps the assessor make a judgment about the abilities of the producer of the translated text and not so much the text itself.

Taking into consideration the terminological confusion that exists in translation studies when it comes to the definition of assessment, quality and other related notions, I believe it will be useful to look for a broad and general definition of assessment in other disciplines like educational sciences, in which lots of research has been done on assessment as an indispensable part of teaching and learning processes, and adopt it to define translation quality assessment. Among different definitions that are offered for assessment within the context of education, I find the one by Airasian (1997, p. 4) especially suitable for the purpose of the current research because it clearly and concisely specifies the key elements of any sort of assessment, including the method and the purpose of assessment: “Assessment is the process of collecting, synthesizing, and interpreting information to aid in decision making”. The definition clearly indicates HOW and WHY assessment is done. According to this definition, the process of assessment has three stages of 1) data collection, 2) synthesis of information, and 3) interpretation of information, and the ultimate purpose of it is to make a decision. I adopt this definition as a basis to define translation quality assessment as follows:

The process of collecting, synthesizing, and interpreting information to aid in decision making about the quality of translation.

In the following I will try to give a detailed description of what I deem to be the key components of translation quality assessment, i.e. the object of assessment, the method of assessment, and the objective of assessment.

2.2. The Object of Assessment: What Is being Assessed?

As mentioned earlier, one of the sources of confusion concerning the discussion about translation quality assessment is the ambiguity as to what exactly constitutes the object of assessment. If we agree on “translation quality” as the object of assessment as proposed in the previous section, we need to clearly define what is meant by the terms *translation* and *quality*. I would like first to deal with the term translation.

2.2.1. What Is Translation?

One of the problematic issues with the application of the term *translation* is that it is used to refer both to the product and the process of translation (i.e. translating); the use of the term *translation assessment* to refer to the process of evaluating *the translator’s competence* further complicates the problem. Ironically, the object of assessment in many of the assessment models that are allegedly called ‘translation’ assessment models is not translation as a product, but translation as a process or even the competence of translators. The current research aims at devising a model to assess the quality of translation as a product independent of the process through which it is produced or the translator(s) who has produced it; therefore, the object of assessment in such a model will be exclusively the quality of a text in written form which is called a translation.

Even the definition of translation as a product is not clear. There seems to be little consensus among different translation scholars about what counts as a translation. Those translation scholars who base their theoretical models on the concept of equivalence, such as Catford (1965), Nida & Taber (1974), and House (1977), stipulate the existence of a kind of equivalence relationship between the target and the source texts if the target text is going to be granted the status of a translation; otherwise, it will be considered not as a translation but as an adaptation or a version (in House’s terminology) and thus not eligible to be assessed under their models of translation assessment/analysis. Target-

oriented translation scholars like Toury (1995) and Chesterman (1997) show considerably more flexibility and grant the status of translation simply to every text that is accepted as a translation by the target society. In my view, for the purpose of assessment the target text does not have to necessarily meet the conditions just mentioned above, i.e. observance of equivalence or endorsement by the target society as a translation. As a translation instructor, in my classroom experience, it has frequently occurred to me that some weak students rendered translations that, as far as I was concerned, hardly showed any similarity whatsoever to the source text that I had administered them to translate, and yet I had no other option but to accept them as translations in order to evaluate them. Although, from my point of view, they were very poor translations, I had to admit that even poor translations were still translations. Therefore, it seems that just a claim that a text is a translation is enough to make it eligible to be assessed as a translation. To sum up the discussion, I am going to define the term *translation* for the purpose of current research as follows: “*Any target text which is presented to the assessor as a translation to be assessed*”. However, since the model of translation assessment in the current research will partly rely on the comparison of translations with their source texts, translations inevitably has to be presented with their source texts for the purpose of the viability of the assessment.

2.2.2. *What Is Quality?*

According to Harvey & Green (1993, p. 11), despite the large volume of material published about quality control, assurance, management, assessment, policy etc. in education, little has been written on the concept of quality itself. The same holds true in the context of translation studies. Ironically, even in the books and articles which deal specifically with the subject of translation quality, such as House’s (1998) entry on ‘Quality’ in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* or Brunette’s (2000) article titled ‘Toward a Terminology for Translation Quality Assessment’ in the special issue of *The Translator* which

is devoted to evaluation and translation, there is hardly any reference to what quality itself is. Here, I do agree with Nightingale & O'Neil's (1994, p. 8) point that there is little to be gained in a discussion of quality if it is not clarified what is meant by the term; therefore, I think it would be extremely useful to clearly define the term 'quality' before embarking on any discussion about translation quality assessment.

Quality is an extremely relative term which can mean different things to different people and, as Carey & Lloyd (2001, p. 4) assert, even the quality experts do not agree on a consistent definition of quality. Harvey & Green (1993, p. 11) attempt to make sense out of the chaotic situation concerning the definition of quality by grouping different conceptualizations of it into the following categories: 1) quality as exceptional, 2) quality as perfection (or consistency), 3) quality as value for money, 4) quality as transformative, and 5) quality as fitness for purpose.

According to Harvey & Green (1993), there are three variations of the exceptional notion of quality: "First, the traditional notion of quality as distinctive, second, a view of quality as embodied in excellence (that is, exceeding very high standards) and third, a weaker notion of exceptional quality, as passing a set of required (minimum) standards" (p. 12).

The traditional notion of quality considers it as something special which is essentially unattainable for most people. This elitist view of quality emphasizes the distinctiveness and inaccessibility of quality; therefore, it does not introduce any criterion against which quality could be judged, nor does it even attempt to define quality at all (Harvey & Green 1993, p. 12). This approach toward quality seems to closely correspond to the interpretation of quality in the prelinguistic and Romantic approaches to translation that underpin the concept of untranslatability and the impossibility of achieving the quality of the original (which is considered axiomatically unattainable) for a translation. A good example for this approach to quality could be seen in the context of the

translation of holy books such as the Bible or Koran in the Middle Ages, where the original is deemed to be of such extremely high quality that it is practically impossible to replicate in translation.

The second view of quality as exceptional, i.e. quality as excellence, is defined by Harvey & Green (1993, p. 12) in terms of “high standards”. Contrary to the traditional view in which components of quality were not defined, the notion of quality as high standards identifies the requirements for excellence; still, similarly to the traditional view, these requirements are almost unattainable. This notion of quality is again elitist because it implies that only the best one can (if ever) reach the high standards. Quality as excellence seems to be the prevalent conception of quality in the early linguistic theories of translation such as Catford’s (1965) and Nida & Taber’s (1974), in which achievement of the full equivalence of some sort is set as the ultimate standard for making a judgment about the quality of translation. The ‘best’ translation in these approaches, therefore, is something like “the *closest* natural equivalent of the source-language message” (Nida & Taber 1974, p. 12, my emphasis in italics) or the one that has the *greatest* number of situational features common to the contextual meaning of the source text (Catford 1965, p. 49).

According to Harvey & Green (1993), the third view of quality as exceptional is a weak version of the view of quality as excellence (high standards). In this view quality is seen as passing a set of quality checks that, unlike high standards, are based on attainable criteria. ‘Quality’ is thus attributed not just to the best item but to a whole range of items that pass the minimum standards that are supposedly objective and static (p. 14). House’s (1977) model of translation quality assessment could be a good example of this view of quality in translation studies. House (1977) sets the source text profile which characterizes the function of the source text on Crystal & Davy’s situational dimensions as a standard against which the quality (adequacy) of the target text will be measured: “The degree to which TT’s profile and function match or do

not match ST's, is the degree to which TT is more or less adequate in quality" (House 1977, p. 245). The interpretation of quality as checking standards is also prevalent in the target-oriented approaches such as Toury's (1995), in which target norms serve as a set of standards for assessing the quality (i.e. degree of acceptability) of translation.

Harvey & Green (1993) introduce the notion of "quality as perfection" as an emulator for the notion of quality as excellence. Quality as perfection takes the traditional concept of quality as exceeding high standards and redefines it as conformance to a particular specification. Harvey & Green (1993, p. 16) emphasize the difference between specification and standard, saying that "the specification is not itself a standard nor is it assessed against any standards". The main difference between quality as perfection and the traditional view of quality as excellence is that in the perfection view the exclusivity of quality is subverted and changed from something special and hard to achieve into something everybody can achieve depending on how the specification is defined. The DIN 2345 Translation Quality Standard could be a good example of this notion of quality. According to Bass (2006, p. 91), DIN 2345 is less a quality standard than a set of expectations the fulfillment of which could certainly have a positive impact on the quality of translation. These expectations concern specific features of translation such as completeness, terminology consistency, correct grammar and appropriate style, and adherence to an agreed-upon style guide.

The third conceptualization of the notion of quality in Harvey & Green's (1993) categorization is *quality as value for money*. In this view, quality is directly related to the cost-effectiveness of the product or the service. Here the quality is defined from the perspective of a buyer for whom the satisfaction of his requirements at an affordable price is the most important factor. However, Harvey & Green (1993, p. 23) warn that the notion of quality as value for money does not necessarily mean that the more expensive products automatically have

higher quality. To my knowledge, this extremely market-oriented interpretation of quality has not been paid so much attention in academic discussions about translation, probably because it reduces translation just to a commodity which is offered for sale. However, some translation theorists who adopt a more practical approach in theorizing about translation, such as Samuelsson-Brown (2010, p. 39), have addressed the expectations of the buyers of translation services regarding the value of the service they receive in return for the money they pay when they discuss the quality of translation.

Another conceptualization of the notion of quality in Harvey & Green's (1993) categorization is *quality as transformation*. This notion of quality is particularly applied to education. Harvey & Green (1993) see education not as a service for a customer but as an ongoing process of transformation of the participant. They claim that a quality education is the one that transforms the participants and enhances them. It also gives power to participants to influence their own transformation (p. 26). In the context of translation, I would argue that the notion of quality as transformation is only applicable to assessment in the context of translation pedagogy and translator training.

The last conceptualization of quality in Harvey & Green's categorization is quality as fitness for purpose. In this view, quality is defined functionally in terms of the extent to which the object of assessment fits its purpose. According to Harvey & Green (1993, p. 18), unlike the exceptional notions of quality that are exclusive, the notion of quality as fitness for purpose is inclusive, meaning that every product or service has the potential to fit a purpose and thus be a quality product or service. Harvey & Green (1993) distinguish between two variations of this view of quality, depending on whose purpose is going to be set as the basis for defining quality: the customer-oriented view, which sees quality as conformance to the customer's specifications and requirements, and the producer-oriented view, which perceives quality as fulfillment of the producer's self-defined mission of production (pp. 18-21). However, some scholars such as

Mukherjee (2006) seem to disagree with Harvey & Green (1993) over the definition of quality as fitness for purpose when it comes to determining whose purpose should be set as the basis of judgment about quality. Mukherjee (2006) adopts a completely customer-oriented position and believes that a quality product or service should serve the purpose for which it is *used* rather than the purpose for which it is *designed*. He argues that if a product does not serve the intent for which it is to be used, no matter how well it is designed, it cannot be of good quality. Mukherjee (2006) illustrates his view by means of an old story of a woodcutter who has been given an axe made of gold instead of steel. He explains that the axe does not have good quality since it does not serve the purpose of the woodcutter. Accordingly, Mukherjee (2006, p. 33) defines quality as follows: “the totality of the features or state of the products and/or services that satisfies the stated and implied need of the customer”.

In the context of translation studies, fitness for purpose is the main concern of skopos-oriented and functional translation theories. Functional approaches see the intended function or purpose of the target text as determined by the communicative needs of the initiator (i.e. the company or individual that needs translation) or commissioner of translation (i.e. the one who contacts the translator) as the most decisive factor in the process of translation. It is the translator then who, as an expert, has the competence to decide how, i.e. by which procedures and techniques, the translation which the commissioner or initiator asks for could be best done (Nord 2010, p. 187). Functionally speaking, in the eyes of a professional translator, quality is what the client (initiator or commissioner of translation) has stated in his commission, which could enormously facilitate the process of decision-making for the translator (Stolze 2011, p. 196). However, I think it is very important to remember that translation and assessment are two separate and different processes, each pursuing their own specific ends; therefore, when it comes to assessing the quality of translation, quality should be defined **not** from the perspective of the translator but from the perspective of the assessor. Functional translation theorists have

always insisted on the possibility of translating a text for purposes other than the one it was originally written for; consequently it is quite possible for a translation to be evaluated against a purpose which is completely different from the one it was originally produced for. Of course, it is probable that a translation will be assessed for the same purpose it was first produced for (e.g. when the initiator/commissioner of the assessment is the same as that of the translation), but it is just one possibility among many others. To sum up the discussion, I would like to offer my assessor-oriented definition of translation quality, which is based on the concept of quality as fitness for purpose as follows:

*“The extent to which the totality of the features of the translated text meets the stated and implied requirements for the fulfillment of **the assessment skopos** as set by the **initiator/ commissioner** of the assessment and understood by the **assessor**”.*

As is implied in the above definition, the assessment skopos, i.e. the purpose for which the translation being assessed is going to be used, serves as a guideline that directs all the decisions made during the process of assessment at different levels; a clear description of the assessment skopos thus is a prerequisite in every functional model of translation assessment.

2.3. The Method of Assessment: How Is Assessment Done?

According to Fawcett (1981), “translation quality assessment proceeds according to the lordly, but completely unexplained, whimsy of ‘It doesn’t sound right’” (qtd. in Baker 1992, p. *xii*). I think that this is largely true. Any assessment procedure inevitably starts with the identification of problematic areas of some sort in the translated text under assessment where ‘it does not sound right’, but at the same time, at first glance, it is not exactly clear how or why the individual assessing the translation arrives at such a judgment. It is the task of researchers who work in the field of translation assessment to provide an answer to the question as to how and why something in the

translated text seems problematic in the eyes of the assessor by describing the process through which he or she has come to such a conclusion.

There is an exhaustive literature about descriptive or prescriptive methodologies in different schools of translation studies for the process of translation assessment which were discussed in the previous chapter and I am not going to repeat them here again. Instead, I am going to propose my own methodology to explain how assessors evaluate the quality of translation. To do this, I have to return to the definition that I proposed for the process of translation quality assessment earlier in this chapter: *The process of collecting, synthesizing, and interpreting information to aid in decision making about the quality of translation*. In the following sections, I will try to elaborate more on different stages of the process of translation assessment, i.e. 1) collection and synthesis of data, and 2) interpretation of data.

2.3.1. Collection and Synthesis of Data

The process of assessment often starts with a critical reading of the translated text in light of the overall assessment skopos and various influential factors (including the source text) to identify apparently problematic features that seem to challenge the fitness of translated text for the skopos of assessment or, as Chesterman (1997, p. 121) puts it, “anything in the form of the translated text that triggers a critical reaction” in the assessor. The identified problematic features in the translated text will then make up the raw data for the process of assessment which need to be carefully described and analyzed to see if they are indeed at odds with the skopos of assessment. To this end, it would appear extremely helpful to design a theoretical framework to categorize the problematic textual evidences in the first place.

2.3.1.1. Categorization of the Problematic Textual Features

Creating a well-defined linguistic framework on which assessors can map the problems they identify in translations being assessed, will undoubtedly make it

easier for them to describe the exact nature of the problems more objectively. The apparently problematic textual features may initially be divided into two major groups: those which are related to structural properties of the translated text and those which are related to its lexical and stylistic properties. In Table 2.1 I have tried to list all the possible structural properties which the problematic features identified by the assessor in the translated text might correspond to. Since the intended end users of the assessment model are not necessarily supposed to be professional linguists, caution have been exercised not to employ excessively technical terminology to describe different structural categories in the table.

Order of textual material	Syntactic structure	morphological, phrase, clause, and sentence structures	
	Information structure	old/given vs. new information, focus/ stress and topic marking	
Grammatical function of the textual material	Syntactic categories (parts of speech/ word classes)	verb, noun, pronoun, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction, the interjection	
	Inflective forms	Verb	voice, mood, aspect, person, number, gender, etc.
		Other word classes	
Grammatical and lexical cohesion between the textual material	Cohesive devices	e.g. reference, ellipsis, substitution, pronominalization, repetition, use of connectors, etc.	
Grammatical complexity of sentences	simple, compound, and complex sentences, sentence length		
Spelling	e.g. Archaic/modern spellings, misspellings (typos), etc.		
Punctuation	e.g. period, ellipsis, colon, semicolon, comma, hyphen, dash, question mark, exclamation mark, quotation marks, parentheses, brackets, apostrophe, oblique, etc.		
Formatting and Layout	e.g. font (type, style, size), paper size, indentations, margins, references, spaces, tables, figures, illustrations... etc.		

The categorization of the structural properties of the translation in Table 2.1 is inspired by the way linguistic rules and structures are typically presented in English grammar books and writing style guides. The contents of these books are usually comprised of the following components: grammatical functions of syntactic categories, structural rules governing the combination of linguistic units to form larger units, sentence patterns, rules governing the use of cohesive devices, rules governing punctuation marks and typographical devices, and formatting and layout conventions. It should be noted, however, that **not** all the structural properties listed in Table 2.1 are universal; some of them are language-specific and differ from one language to another.

Table 2.2 (see next page) lists the possible lexical and stylistic properties of the translated text which might match with the problematic feature identified by the assessor at both micro and macro-textual levels.

To categorize different kinds of meaning at the micro-textual level in Table 2.2, I have adopted Leech's (1981) classification, but with small modifications. Leech (1981, pp. 1-23) originally categorizes different types of meaning into three main classes of conceptual, associative, and thematic meanings. He defines the conceptual meaning of a textual item as its logical, cognitive, or denotative content. What makes associative meaning different in essence from conceptual meaning is that the latter is substantially part of the 'common system' of language shared by members of a speech community, whereas the former is less stable and varies with the individual's experience (p. 19). Thematic meaning refers to "what is communicated by the way in which the message is organized in terms of order and emphasis" (p. 23). I have not included the thematic meaning in the categorization of different types of meaning in this research, because it seems to have more to do with the structure of the textual items than the semantic content of them; in other words, the thematic meaning is primarily a structural feature with semantic consequences. The thematic structure of the textual items is then sufficiently covered in Table 2.1 under the 'order of textual material'.

Micro -Level	Meaning	Conceptual (denotative, referential)		
		Associative	Connotative	
			Situational	Dialect (geographical), Time (Archaic, old, contemporary, temporal dialect), register (technical terminology), social status (level of formality)
			Reflective	
			Collocative	
			Figurative	Idiom, Metaphor, Metonymy, Synecdoche, Irony, myth, etc.
Co-occurrence of Lexical items	Statistical Collocation			
Macro-Level	Logical/Pragmatic Coherence and Consistency	Continuity of sense	Configuration of Concepts and Relations	
			Interaction with the Prior Knowledge of the World	
	Intentionality and Acceptability	Meaning (at the level of sentence)	Locutionary Meaning (Literal Meaning)	
			Illocutionary Meaning (Pragmatic Meaning)	
	Informativity	Information Quantity		
	Situationality	The Subject Matter		
Intertextuality	Style of Writing	Individual	e.g. Shakespeare's or Hemingway's style of writing	
		Generic	Literary	e.g. stories, poems, novels, plays, etc.
			Non-Literary	e.g. scientific, journalistic, legal, etc.

Leech (1981) further breaks up the associative meaning into five subcategories: 1) connotative meaning, 2) social meaning, 3) affective meaning, 4) reflective meaning, and 5) collocative meaning. According to Leech (1981, p. 12), the *connotative meaning* of a textual item is its communicative value by the virtue of what it refers to. It reflects the real world experience which is associated with a word or expression; for example, the word 'woman' may be associated with attributes such as 'gentle', 'compassionate', and 'sensitive'.

Leech defines the *social meaning* as what a textual item conveys about “the social circumstances of its use” (p. 14). ‘*Domicile*’, ‘*residence*’, ‘*abode*’ and ‘*home*’, for example, are almost synonymous in terms of their conceptual meaning, but they differ in terms of their social meaning and thus they are used in official, formal, poetic, and general social circumstances respectively. I have renamed the category of *social meaning* as *situational meaning* in Table 2.2 in order to extend its usage to cover various situations (not just social situations) in which a word or expression might be used. Similarly to Leech (1981), I have used Crystal and Davy’s (1969) system of situational dimensions to classify the subdivisions of the situational meaning; however, I left out the dimensions of modality and singularity, because I take these dimensions to be primarily relevant only at the macro-textual level. Leech (1981, p. 15) defines *affective meaning* as a kind of associative meaning which conveys the feelings and attitudes of the writer or speaker; for example, when speakers use interjections such as ‘*Aha!*’ or ‘*Yippee!*’, they clearly communicate their feelings. However, Leech himself admits that affective meaning is mainly a parasitic category, because, in order to express their feelings and emotions, writers often resort to other categories of meaning (e.g. conceptual, connotative, or stylistic). For this reason, I did not deem it necessary to include the category of *affective meaning* in my model assuming that it will be covered by other categories, but I kept the categories of *reflective* and *collocative* meanings. According to Leech (1981, p. 16), the *reflected meaning* is the meaning which arises in the case of polysemic words such as ‘*drug*’ or ‘*intercourse*’, when the other sense(s) forms part of the reader’s response to the primary sense in which the word is used. And finally, he defines *collocative meaning* as the meaning that a word acquires as a result of occurring with other words in its environment; for example, the word ‘*heavy*’ acquires different meanings depending on the other words it is used with: ‘*heavy smoker*’, ‘*heavy news*’, ‘*heavy schedule*’, ‘*heavy traffic*’... etc. I have added the category of *figurative meaning* to Leech’s classification of associative meaning

to cover a kind of associative meaning which is an extension or alternation of the conceptual meaning of a word or an expression.

The other textual parameter at the micro-textual level that has been addressed in Table 2.2 is the statistical collocation, or the syntagmatic relationship between lexical items. Van Roey (1990, p. 48) defines statistical collocation as a “linguistic phenomenon whereby a given vocabulary item prefers the company of another item rather than its ‘synonyms’ because of constraints which are not on the level of syntax or conceptual meaning but on that of usage”. According to Jackson & Ze Amvela (2007, p. 131), collocation could happen between **words** either in a specific syntactic construction (e.g. Verb + Object, or Adjective + Noun), or across sentence boundaries. They explain that collocation is a relative relation and ranges from the slightest to a very strong degree of possibility of co-occurrence or fixed collocations (pp. 132-34). It should be noted that there is a basic difference between the statistical collocation and the semantic collocation or collocative meaning which was discussed earlier under different kinds of meaning at micro-textual level. Whereas from a semantic perspective, collocation is defined as an abstract relationship between words, without reference to frequency of occurrence or probability, from a statistical perspective, the emphasis is shifted from the potential combinability of the lexical items and collocation is defined in terms of the textual co-occurrence of the lexical items concerned (see Gledhill 2000, pp. 7-9).

The second part of Table 2.2 deals with the lexical and stylistic features of the translated text at the macro-textual level, i.e., at or above the level of the sentence. I found de Beaugrande & Dressler’s (1981) seven standards of textuality, i.e. cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, and intertextuality, particularly suitable (because of its communicative approach) as a basic framework for categorizing the problematic features at the macro-textual level.

The first standard, *cohesion*, which concerns the grammatical dependencies between the textual components, is already covered in Table 2.1. The second standard is *coherence*. This concerns “the ways in which the components of the textual world, i.e. the configuration of concepts and relations⁵ which underlie the surface text, are mutually accessible and relevant” (de Beaugrande & Dressler 1981, p. 4). According to de Beaugrande & Dressler (1981), a text makes sense by the interaction of text-presented knowledge with the reader’s stored knowledge of the world (pp. 6-7). A mismatch between the configuration of concepts and relations expressed in the translated text and what the assessor perceives to be the targeted audiences’ knowledge of the world could be one of the factors that might cause a critical reaction in the assessor.

The third and fourth standards of textuality are *intentionality* and *acceptability*, which concern the text producer’s intention of producing the text and its relevance or use for the text receiver respectively (de Beaugrande & Dressler 1981, p. 7). I have included these two standards in a single category in Table 2.2 and brought ‘meaning of the utterances at the level of sentence’ as a textual feature under it. In classification of different types of meaning at the level of sentence, I have followed Austin’s (1962) Speech Act Theory and his well-known distinction between the locutionary meaning (i.e. literal meaning or propositional content) and illocutionary meaning (i.e. function or intended effect) of utterances.

Another textual feature that, depending on the assessment skopos and other influencing factors, may trigger a critical reaction in the assessor at the macro-textual level is the *informativity* of the translated text. Informativity is the fifth standard of textuality introduced by de Beaugrande & Dressler (1981) and refers to “the extent to which the occurrences of the presented text are expected vs.

⁵ de Beaugrande & Dressler (1981, p. 5) define *concepts* as configurations of knowledge which can be activated with consistency in the mind, and *relation* as the links between concepts.

unexpected or known vs. unknown/[un]certain” (p. 9). Translation assessors usually have certain expectations about the proportion of new vs. old information in the translated text; texts that have particularly low informativity may cause boredom in recipients and excessively overloaded texts in terms of informativity may surpass the information processing capacity of the readers and endanger the fulfillment of the requirement for the assessment skopos.

The sixth standard of textuality, situationality, concerns the factors which make the text relevant to the situation of occurrence (de Beaugrande & Dressler 1981, p. 163). If the assessor’s expectations or prior knowledge about how the ‘*real world*’ should be organized are in contrast with what is presented in the translated text, it may cause the assessor to start doubting about the appropriateness of the text for the purpose it is going to be used for in terms of its situationality. Since many situational factors at the micro-textual level are already covered in the first part of Table 2.2 under the category of situational meaning, I have limited the situational factors in the second part of the table to those that are concerned with overall content or subject matter of the text at macro-textual level. The area of situationality which is meant to be covered in this section very closely coincides with Crystal and Davy’s (1969) dimension of “province” or Halliday’s (1978) dimension of “field” (both at macro-textual level).

The last standard of textuality is *intertextuality*. According to de Beaugrande & Dressler (1981, p. 10), intertextuality concerns “the factors which make the utilization of one text dependent upon knowledge of one or more previously encountered texts”. They claim that the evolution of text classes with typical patterns of characteristics is a result of intertextuality (ibid). Depending on the assessment skopos, assessors often expect a certain degree of similarity between the style of writing of the translated text and that of particular texts they have previously read with similar subjects or functions, or from the same authors or publishers; as a result, if the style of writing of the translated text deviates from the expectations of the assessors, it may trigger a critical reaction in them. In

Table 2.2 the style of writing, as one of the textual features of the translated text, is divided into two subcategories of ‘*individual styles*’ which refer to the specific style of writing of particular authors or publishers, and ‘*generic styles*’ which refer to the general style of writing of a group of texts with the same subject or function. The former category, i.e. individual styles, almost coincides with Crystal and Davy’s (1969) dimension of singularity, covering the stylistic peculiarities of the texts produced by a specific author or publisher, for example Shakespeare’s style of writing. The latter category, i.e. generic styles, coincides with Crystal and Davy’s (1969) dimension of modality and represents different conventional genres. Shaffner (2002) defines genres as “global linguistic patterns which have historically developed in a linguistic community for fulfilling specific communicative tasks in specific situations” (p. 3). I have followed the historical distinction between literary vs. non- literary genres in categorizing different kinds of genres in Table 2.2. Different kinds of literary types such as stories, poems, novels, plays, etc. and their specific literary and artistic features and organizations will come under the literary genres and everyday speech genres such as scientific, legal, and journalistic genres come under category of non-literary genres.

The process of data collection and synthesis in translation quality assessment is twofold. As mentioned earlier, the first step of the process involves the identification, description, and categorization of problematic areas in the translated text. The next step in the process of data collection and synthesis which will be discussed in the following subsection is the description of the frustrated expectations lying behind the problematic areas.

2.3.1.2 Interpretation of the Data: Description of the Frustrated Expectations

An assessor has certain expectations in his mind about the formal features of a translated text before he embarks on evaluating it in practice as an object of assessment. These expectations are directly determined by the overall skopos of assessment which is often explicitly specified by the commissioner of the

assessment⁶. Presumably, the commissioner of the assessment is rarely aware of the requirements for the fulfillment of the assessment skopos; therefore, to make a decision about a given translation, he has to *trust* the assessor as a professional who has the expertise to determine whether or not the translation will bring the desired results as required by the skopos of assessment. In order to comply with the requirements for fulfillment of the skopos of assessment, a translation is expected to induce desired reactions in certain readers whose opinion is decisive in the realization of the purpose for which the translation being assessed is going to be used. Therefore, a problematic area in translation is where the expectation of the assessor is frustrated; i.e., where he thinks the reaction of the influential readers is not in line with what he expected, taking into account the requirements for the fulfillment of the assessment skopos.

Making an accurate prediction about the possible reactions of the readers to a given translation in a specific situation is one of the most demanding tasks in the process of assessment, for it requires the assessor to have a profound knowledge of the social and linguistic settings of the recipient society as well as the critical ability to interpret them. Awareness of the *norms* functioning within the recipient society could be particularly helpful, because most of the time readers' reactions to a translation are regulated by them. Norms convey the socially shared knowledge about the appropriateness of behaviors in particular situations (see Toury 1999, p. 14; Shaffner 1999, p. 5). As regards the readers' reactions to a translation as a textual behavior, there are two main ways through which readers acquire norms: either they acquire them directly from their social/textual environment by observing actual instances of behaviors practiced in the society or they acquire them indirectly by following the lead of the "norm authorities", i.e. those people within the recipient society who have the power to prescribe certain types of behavior as norms for other

⁶ It is, however, possible that the commissioner of the assessment and the assessors are the same person.

people. Cialdini *et al.* (1990, p. 1015) refer to norms acquired through observation as “descriptive norms” and those acquired through norm authorities as “injunctive norms”. Usually, injunctive and descriptive norms overlap and the distinction is practically impossible. However, in some contexts there may be a conflict between them; for instance, while in many English grammar books grammarians, as norm authorities, prescribe the use of a subject pronoun if it is going to be used in the place of subject complement (e.g. *It's I*), in practice an object pronoun is commonly used by the majority of English speakers (e.g. *It's me*). At the time of conflict between injunctive and descriptive norms, it is the responsibility of the assessor to predict the readers' reaction as to which norm they will probably subscribe to, based on the requirements for fulfillment of the assessment skopos and his or her prior familiarity with the audience and the recipient society.

Injunctive and descriptive norms regulate the expectations and thus reactions of readers to a translation regarding its relationships with the source text, the target literary system and the target society. There is a great diversity in readers whose reactions could be potentially influential in fulfilling the requirements of the skopos of assessment. The norms governing the relationship between the translation and its source text only affect the behavior of a relatively small but often powerful sub-group of readers such as critics and translators who are familiar with the source language and potentially have access to the source text. These norms are either acquired descriptively, through prior experience of observing regular patterns of correspondence between actual instances of translated texts and their source texts, or injunctively, through following the prescriptions of norm authorities such as critics, writers, translation theorists, and so forth. Contrary to the norms governing readers' expectations about the relationship between translations and their source texts, which often affect only a very limited bilingual audience, the norms regulating the expectations concerning the relationship between translation and other texts within the target literary system affect the

behavior of the full spectrum of readers. Similarly, these norms stem from two main sources: either they are acquired descriptively, through the experience of reading both parallel and non-parallel texts in target translated or non-translated literatures, or injunctively through following the prescriptions of norm authorities such as grammarians, and literary figures and teachers as set, for example, in grammar books and editorial style manuals. The last group of norms that regulate the expectations relating to the relationship between the translation and the target society originate in a wide variety of different factors within the target society, including ideological, socio-cultural, political, and economic factors, so on. Table 2.3 summarizes the mechanisms of acquisition and sources and areas of coverage of the norms affecting readers' response to translations.

Mechanism of Acquisition	Descriptively: Direct observation		
	Injunctively: Following the prescriptions of the norm authorities		
Source and Area of Coverage	Relationship between the translation and the source text		
	Relationship between the translation and the target literary system	Translated Literatures	Parallel
			Non-parallel
		Non-translated Literatures	Parallel
			Non-parallel
	Relationship between the translation and the target society	Ideological Factors	
		Socio-cultural Factors	
		Religious Factors	
		Political Factors	
		Ethical Factors	
		Factors related to Power-relations	
Historical Factors			
Logical Factors			
Economic Factors			
Aesthetic Factors			

Translation quality assessment is all about making a prediction as to whether or not the totality of features of translation fits the assessment skopos, i.e. the purpose for which it is going to be used. The skopos of assessment will only be fulfilled if the translation being assessed induces desired reactions in its intended readers. To make a prediction about a given translation, assessors are deemed to be capable of anticipating the possible reactions of readers and then verifying if there is any problematic area in the translation where they think the possible reactions of influential readers are not in line with the overall assessment skopos. Knowledge of norms regulating the behavior of readers makes it possible for assessors to anticipate the reaction of readers to a given translation; however, this process is not as simple as it may first appear. One of the things that make the prediction of the reactions of readers complicated is the variability of norms among different groups of readers. Norms are not always the same among different groups of readers in the recipient society; as a result, one and the same translation may invoke completely different reactions in different groups of readers. If the norms regulating the reactions of readers to a translation are conflicting among different groups, the assessor has to decide which norm will best serve the assessment skopos. In order to make such a decision, the assessor has first to identify the readers who can potentially influence the achievement of the assessment skopos and then prioritize them according to their power of influence. Obviously, at the time of conflict between norms, priority is expected to be given to those norms which regulate the behavior of more influential readers. The existence of competing parallel norms functioning within the same group of readers makes the prediction of the responses of readers even more complicated. In case there is more than a single norm regulating readers' behavior, a successful assessment is not always possible simply through blind subscription to mainstream or dominant norms. In such cases, the assessment skopos will again serve as a guideline for the assessor to decide which norms should be given priority.

The fact that the majority of influential readers usually exhibit a normative behavior does not necessarily mean that the requirements of the assessment skopos are fulfilled only when the translation tallies with their normative expectations. The desired reactions that the assessor expects to be induced in readers are sometimes created if the expectations of readers are surprised rather than met. For example in the process of evaluating a translated literary text, if creating a sense of foreignness in readers is deemed as one of the requirements for fulfillment of the assessment skopos, then the assessor might expect the translation to deviate from readers' expectations by breaking certain target language linguistic norms to induce the desired reaction in readers. Therefore, every instance of deviation from norms should not be automatically considered problematic in translation quality assessment; they are problematic only when they are deemed by the assessor not to be in line with the overall skopos of assessment.

Finally, one thing to bear in mind is that not all readers respond normatively to translated texts. Taking into account the requirements for the fulfillment of the assessment skopi, special attention should be paid to individual and idiosyncratic expectations of those readers who have the power to influence the accomplishment of these skopi.

2.4. The Objective of Assessment: Why Is Assessment Done?

At end of the day, assessors are supposed to aid their clients (commissioners of assessments) to make a decision about the translation by reporting the results of their assessments in a comprehensible manner to them. The results of the assessment of a translation might be reported numerically, for example on a scale from 0 (poor) to 10 (excellent), or descriptively as follows, for example:

1. The translation readily fits the purpose it is going to be used for.
2. The translation fits the purpose it is going to be used for after minor revisions.
3. The translation fits the purpose it is going to be used for after major revisions.
4. The translation does not fit the purpose it is going to be used for (rejection).

The assessors may be expected to provide reasons for the strong and weak points identified and to offer solutions to the problems they identify in the translated text upon request to improve its quality.

According to al-Qinai (2000), the complexity of the process of translation and interpreting the intention of the source text author, as well as the variability of available tangible tools for translation assessment turn the standardization of quality into a fuzzy grey area (p. 498). One should never expect hundred percent objectivity to be observed in results of assessments of the same text performed by different assessors, since, as stressed throughout this chapter, the process of assessment heavily relies on the critical abilities of assessors to conduct different steps in the assessment, such as identification and description of problematic items and data collection, as well as their analytical skills in interpreting the data and making a prediction about the fitness of translation for the purpose it is expected to be used for (assessment skopos). Therefore, subjectivity is always an inherent part of the process of translation quality assessment. The considerable discrepancies sometimes observed in the results of assessments of the same texts might be related to one of the following reasons:

1. Difference in the nature of the requirements for the assessment skopi
2. (even if the skopi are the same) Disagreement over requirements for achieving the assessment skopi
3. Difference in assessors' analytical skills and abilities and knowledge of norms and requirements for achieving assessment skopi
4. Difference in systems of reporting the results/scoring of translations and determining the gravity of errors.

2.5. Role Players in the Process of Assessment

In the course of the theoretical discussion in this chapter, I have defined translation quality assessment as a complex decision-making process which entails collection, analysis, and interpretation of textual data. The definition

highlights the central role of the assessor as the person who is responsible for conducting different steps of the process of assessment and making a decision about the quality of translation. The role of the assessor in the process of assessment has been often neglected by earlier researchers in their assessment models, possibly because they presume that in this way the subjectivity factor could be minimized. The responsibility of the assessor in these models (e.g. equivalence-based models) is simply reduced to performing a perfunctory comparison of the textual features of the translated text against a set of allegedly universally valid criteria which invariably ends in fixed results irrespective of the assessment skopos and many other influential variables. An attempt to completely eliminate the role of the assessor from the assessment model, however, is just dodging the problem instead of solving it. One should not forget that, in the end, the assessment models alone, no matter how well-designed, are **not** capable of interpreting the textual data in numerous different contextual situations and making a judgment about the quality of translation. Contrary to the above-mentioned assessment models, an assessor-centered model, such as one I have put forward in the current chapter, merely serves as an apparatus to systematically and objectively collect data and leaves the responsibilities of interpreting the data and decision making entirely to the assessor. The assessor is given absolute freedom to make a decision about the quality of translation, but he is held accountable for his decision and its consequences. Professional translation assessors and copy editors in translation or publishing companies often put their reputation and professional prestige at stake to guarantee the accuracy of their judgments about the quality of a translation. Table 2.4 (see next page) summarizes the fundamental differences between an assessor-centered model of translation quality assessment in contrast with the majority of other models.

Table 2.4. A Comparison of the Assessor-centered Model of TQA with Other Models

	Criteria for Assessment	The Role of the Assessor	The Results of the assessment
The Assessor-centered Assessment Model	Flexible Assessor-decided	Dynamic decision making Active Responsible for the results	Vary depending on the assessment skopi (and the assessor's skills) Low intersubjective reliability
The Majority of Other Assessment Models	Fixed Pre-established in the model	Mechanical comparison with a benchmark Passive	High intersubjective reliability is aimed at

To perform their role, professional assessors are expected to have certain knowledge and skills that are in many ways quite similar to those required for competent translators. These skills are as follows: 1) language skills, i.e. profound knowledge of the grammatical and the lexical systems of the source and target languages and preferred syntactic and morphological conventions; 2) textual skills, i.e. discourse proficiency, the knowledge of types or genres of text; 3) subject skills, i.e. “the familiarity with what constitutes the body of knowledge of the area the translation is about”; 4) cultural skills, i.e. the familiarity with the source and target cultural patternings; and 5) transfer skills, i.e. the knowledge of the tactics and strategies of converting texts in one language into texts in another language (see Neubert 2000, pp. 6-10). There is obviously one fundamental difference: while translators put this knowledge and these skills into practice to select between different textual options and create a new target text, assessors use them passively to make judgments about the appropriateness of already made textual decisions in a translated text. The

reason why assessors are often selected either from among professional translators or translation experts at universities is that the former are supposed to have acquired the necessary interpretive skills to perform the task of assessment through experience, the later through education.

In addition to the assessor, other major role players in the process of the assessment are the commissioner of the assessment and the prospective readers (users) of the translation being assessed. Commissioners of assessments are usually legal persons (e.g. publishing houses, translation companies, or news agencies ... etc.) who for some specific reason need the assessments. They play a crucial role in the process of assessment because they define the overall assessment skopi which, in turn, affect all the decisions that assessors make during the process of assessment. The skopos of assessment, i.e. the purpose for which the translation being assessed is going to be used, is in fact the most important factor in the process of translation quality assessment. It controls the expectations of the assessors as to how the relationships between the translation and the source text, the target literary system, and the target society should be and thus dictates how different stages of the process of assessment, i.e. collection, synthesis and interpretation of data have to be conducted. The skopos of assessment is decided by the commissioner of the assessment and determines the final application of the translated text. The skopos of assessment is not necessarily the same as the one which the translation being assessed was originally produced for, meaning that one and the same translation might be assessed quite differently for different purposes, irrespective of the original purpose of translation. The translation of an old treaty between two countries, for example, might be assessed to see if it is fit to be used as a historical document in history textbooks in educational institutions, as a legal document to resolve a border dispute, or as a literary piece with focus on the language and style of writing, and in each case the assessor probably will have completely different expectations about textual features of the translated text. As one can see, the number of specific skopi for

which translations might be assessed is indeed infinite; however, it is possible to summarize more general applications of translation into broad categories. Samuelsson-Brown (2010), for instance, proposes a list for common applications of translation of non-literary texts which includes the following:

1. For information, i.e., for extracting specific or complete information, or abstracting;
2. For publication;
3. For advertizing and marketing;
4. For producing further translations;
5. For localization; and
6. For legal purposes such as notarization or certification.

The list, although it may seem too reductionist and not comprehensive, practically covers a wide variety of common purposes for which non-literary translations might be used.

Unlike translation competence assessment, which is interested in reconstructing the process of decision making in translation and retrospective investigation of the reasons behind translators' particular decisions and choices, translation quality assessment is not so much interested in investigating the translational behavior of translators but rather in the prospective examination of the degree of compliance of a translation as a final product with the skopos of assessment, irrespective of the intentions of their translators.

The decisions made by the assessors are also affected prospectively by the readers of the translation under assessment. These readers might include an intended general audience as well as specific groups of readers (e.g., translators, editors, teachers, critics, politicians, etc.) who are involved in or connected with the reception of the translation and, because of their significant social status, can potentially influence the fulfillment of the assessment skopi.

2.6. Conclusion

The general image that most people have in mind when they think of the process of translation quality assessment is simply setting the translated text against a number of fixed standards to evaluate it. In this chapter, I have attempted to change this image by demonstrating the complexity of translation quality assessment as a very complicated process of decision-making; I have also highlighted the difficult interpretive role of the assessors. The chapter began with a discussion about the great amount of confusion that exists in the usage of terminologies relating to the area of translation quality assessment; I sought to disambiguate and (re)define key terms that are often taken for granted, such as translation, assessment, and quality. The chapter then dealt with developing a theoretical model to explain different stages of the process of translation quality assessment, i.e. collection, synthesis, and interpretation of data, with an emphasis on the significance of the role of assessors in the process. The theoretical model put forward in this chapter incorporates useful descriptive and analytical features of different approaches discussed in the first chapter and also encompassed different socio-cultural and ideological factors which might affect the process of evaluation. Similarly to the equivalence-based/linguistic approaches, the assessment model in this chapter has applied a rigorously scientific methodology for describing the textual features of the identified problems; It has also borrowed the concept of norms from target-oriented approaches and incorporated it into its analytical tools for interpreting the textual data and describing the frustrated expectations of assessors; and finally, it has used the skopos theory in defining the skopos of the act of assessment.

Toward the end of the chapter (Section 2.5), the primary focus of attention was shifted to the role of assessors and the importance of the assessment skopos, i.e. the purpose for which the translation being assessed is going to be used, in the process of translation quality assessment. In general, theoretical models of assessment seem to be, at best, just analytical tools for collecting data, so the presence of knowledgeable and skillful assessors is always necessary to

successfully apply them and interpret the data. What may make the methodology proposed in this chapter innovative and rather distinct from its previous counterparts, then, is the step in which the assessor's own perspectives are incorporated into the model, rather than assuming that a quality assessment model can be applied without taking the contingencies of the assessment exercise itself into consideration. The case study in the following chapters will be an attempt to investigate different aspects of the behavior of different assessors during the process of translation quality assessment, hoping to find a way to explain how they actually assess translations. Since the case study was conducted in the specific context of Iran, the next chapter is devoted to an introduction to the status of translation in this country from historical, socio-cultural, and educational points of view.