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M.A. (HONOURS) TRANSLATION

# TRANSLATION QUALITY ASSESSMENT

BY

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## ABSTRACT

As yet, few explicit, practical and easy to implement marking scales for evaluating the quality of translations have been proposed . The purpose of this study is to introduce a new marking guide for making quantitative assessments of the quality of non-literary translations, and to test its practicality through a case study . On the basis of the results, I aim to make some generalizations about translation and translation quality assessment .

In chapter I I will introduce our proposal and mention the reasons for doing such a study .

Chapter II presents a definition of the notion of translation, and a brief review of the literature on translation quality assessment . In this review, we will discuss the early treatments which dealt with the evaluation of translations, showing their merits and defects .

In chapter III we will develop our marking guidelines . Firstly, we will describe the marking procedures. Secondly, we will classify errors and give examples for each type . Thirdly, we will present the guidelines for the holistic subjective assessment . Finally, we will evaluate the marking guidelines and then discuss the outcome .

Chapter IV contains a summary of the proposed model, and some general conclusions about translation quality assessment .

# Transcription used for Arabic letters

| Transcription | Arabic symbol |
|---|---|
| ? | ء |
| b | ب |
| t | ت |
| t̲ | ث |
| j | ج |
| h | ح |
| x | خ |
| d | د |
| d̲ | ذ |
| r | ر |
| z | ز |
| s | س |
| s̲ | ش |
| ṣ | ص |
| ḍ | ض |
| ṭ | ط |
| ẓ | ظ |
| ' | ع |
| g | غ |
| f | ف |
| q | ق |
| k | ك |
| l | ل |
| m | م |
| n | ن |
| h | ه |
| y | ي |
| aa | و |
| ii | ي |
| uu | و |

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

Evaluating the quality of translations remains one of the most difficult areas in the study of translation . This is due to the fact that there are no absolute standards for the quality of translations .

Many translation theorists have tried to solve this problem by presenting certain models or criteria to assess the quality of translations, but most of these criteria have failed either because of their impracticality or because the assessments obtained are not reliable .

This has prompted me to carry out this study in the hope that it will assist translation teachers and translation examiners in giving reliable evaluations of students' or candidates' translations .

The main aim of my study is to present practical and reliable marking guidelines . Therefore, our marking guide will be guided by two criteria . The first criterion is to identify individual errors and to deduct marks according to the effect of the error on the phrase, sentence or the whole text ; the second one is to evaluate the overall performance of the student or candidate .

This process of marking translations will eliminate the problem of discrepancy among the awarded marks in case the translation is marked by more than one examiner, since a specific number of marks will be deducted for making a specific kind of error . At the same time this process will establish a strong basis for the teachers' or examiners' judgments . Moreover, translation teachers can use these marking guidelines to identify students' weaknesses and then work on improving them .

# CHAPTER 2

# REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON TRANSLATION QUALITY ASSESSMENT

## 2.1 Introduction

In this review I will discuss a number of theoretical and experimental studies on translation quality assessment, and we will investigate some of the existing marking guidelines, showing their defects and merits . However, before starting the review, I will first define the notion of translation .

Usually, translation is defined as a process of transferring a text from one language into another. This process involves the establishment of equivalence between the source language text and the target language text .

The above mentioned definition has been refined and described in different ways . Some people consider translation as an innovative process, not a process of simply transferring a word or a linguistic structure from one language into another . Al-Talisi (1991:55) expressed this when he defined translation as follows : " translation is a creative process ......, when I translate, I look for my creativity in others' works . I translate as an amateur translator who found what he wants to express in others' works " (my translation ) .

Others describe the translation process as one of establishing functional equivalence or an equivalent effect between the source language text and the target language text. House (1977:29-30) defines translation as a "replacement of a text in the source language by a semantically and pragmatically equivalent text in the target language".

Zhongying (1990:99) describes the translation process in different terms : " in doing translation, one has to re-express in the target language what has been said in the source language, so the receptor of the reproduced message can get more or less the same impression as the receptor of the original gets from the source message " .

For our purposes, we consider the translation process as a process which involves the transference of the stylistic, semantic and pragmatic features of the source language text into the target language text . But since every language has its own characteristics such as the grammatical structure, culture-specific terms and style ( repetition in Arabic is very common while it is not in English ), it may not be possible to transfer all the features of the source language text, and therefore, one has to reproduce a text in the target language which is different in some way or another from the original text . This difference should be determined only by the following two factors :

1- The intended purpose of the translation, and

2- The intended readership .

For example, if we are translating a medical text from English into Arabic, we should consider the following before translating the text :

a - Is the translation aimed at the public or at health professionals ?

b- Is the intended purpose of the translation to inform, instruct, explain ..... etc ?

If the intended readership is the public, the use of difficult medical jargons should be very limited and simple explanatory terms should be used to enable us to get the message across to all people . However, if the intended readership is a health professional, then we can use technical language .

If the purpose of the translation is to inform, for instance, accuracy is the first priority and readability comes second .

However, if we are translating a text from Arabic literature, and the intended purpose of the translation is to show the characteristics of Arabic literature, we should do our best to reflect the stylistic features of the text, and the accuracy of information comes second . The level of the language used in this translation will depend on the intended readership . But, due to the fact that there are no absolute standards or specific rules to follow when we translate a text from one language into another, the problem of assessing translations still presents itself .

One of the main problem areas in the scientific study of translation is the difficulty of assessing its quality .The reason for this problem is that there are no absolute standards for the quality of translations. Wilss (1988:13) expresses this as follows :

> owing to its structure , it is more difficult for the science of translation than for the more strongly system oriented linguistic discipline to acquire an epistemological foundation and arrive at a description of translation which adequately deals with the problem involved .

Consequently, one finds that examiners differ in the way they assess translations. Some of them lean towards giving qualitative assessments, while others prefer to give quantitative assessments .

Qualitative assessments are kinds of assessments where a description of the quality of a translation is given in impressionistic terms such as excellent, very good, good, bad or poor .

Quantitative assessments are kinds of assessments where a mark is given to describe the quality of a translation .

Often, qualitative assessments do not reflect the exact quality of the translation, because impressionistic terms such as good or bad are not precise enough to show the real quality of the translation. A good might be extremely good or could be just good. In addition, qualitative assessments ignore all the other factors which are involved in the translation process . Sager (1989:98) expressed this as follows : "evaluation can be qualitative or quantitative, purely qualitative assessment ignores time, cost and other factors relevant to industrial process and product ".

Quantitative assessments of translations also raise various problems. The most important one is the difficulty of justifying the number of marks that should be deducted for this or that kind of error. However, quantitative assessments can overcome the problem associated with the making of qualitative assessment , that is the inability to show the exact quality of the translation. This can be achieved if we can justify the number of marks that should be deducted for each error .

Since there are no absolute standards for the quality of translations, we find most examiners are in favour of giving qualitative assessments rather than quantitative assessments. This is due to the fact that translation tests are of the free-response type, and giving a grade such as good or bad can help in avoiding the problem of making precise assessments for translations ; what is considered to be an error by one examiner might not be the case with another especially if there are no guidelines to control the taste of each examiner or the style he / she prefers.

However, if we can develop a quantitative model for assessing the quality of translations which can justify the act of deducting a specific number of marks for a specific kind of error, we will be able to give more precise and reliable assessment.

## 2.2 Theoretical and Experimental Studies :

After establishing the need for making quantitative assessments instead of qualitative assessments, we will go through some of the theoretical and experimental studies which have attempted to deal with the evaluation of translations, and we will review some of the quantitative models and then introduce our marking scales .

Many theorists have attempted to deal with the evaluation of translations. Traditionally, this was often done in terms such as faithfulness and readability , but currently the dominant concept is that of equivalence. However, in order to be able to employ such a concept to assess translations, we need to explain it and define it .

Zhongying (1990:99) defines a good translation as follows :

> in doing a translation , one has to re-express in the target language what has been said in the source , so that the receptor of the reproduced message can get more or less the same impression as the receptor of the original gets from the source . If the impression obtained by the receptor from the reproduced message is more or less the same as the, or similar to , what the receptor of the original gets from the original message , it is a good or fairly good translation .

Zhongying's definition is based on the receptor's response which might be different from one receptor to another according to the taste and knowledge of that receptor, and consequently, it might misrepresent the quality of the translation . In addition, behavioral criteria are not reliable for evaluating translations because it is very difficult to measure receptors' responses in a real-life situation .

Newmark (1988:18) is sceptical about an objective approach to evaluation in translation . He states that "translation shares with the arts and other crafts the feature that its standard of excellence can be determined only through the informed discussion of experts or exceptionally intelligent laymen ....... After mistakes have been ' proved ' by reference to encyclopedias and dictionaries , experts have to rely on their intuitions and taste in preferring one or two or three good translations as a sentence or paragraph. Their final choice is as subjective as the translator's choice of words, but they must be ready to give reasons for their choice" .

Forster (1958:6) describes a good translation as " one which fulfils the same purpose in the target language as the original did " .

It is well known that the main aim of any translation is to fulfil the same purpose in the target language as the original did in the source language . But how can we know that we have achieved that ; is it by studying the receptor's response, or by assessing the readability of the translation, or by assessing the faithfulness of the translation or by answering all the above questions ? .

Nida and Taber (1982) suggest three criteria for assessing translations :

1- The correctness with which the receptors understand the message of the original ,

2- The ease of comprehension ,

3- The involvement a person experiences as the result of the adequacy of the form of translation .

Theoretically, most of the above-mentioned criteria are good for assessing translations, but in real life these criteria do not work properly unless they are defined. Anyone can describe a good translation in vague or general terms, but this is not what is needed. What is needed is a well defined and detailed model based on the analysis of both the source language text and the target language text. This analysis should tackle the linguistic, stylistic and the referential aspects of both the translation and the original. After that , a comparison between the content of both should be done, and then the final judgment should be made according to the number and the nature of the errors made .

As a final comment on the theories which deal with translation quality assessment , it is worth mentioning what Nehru said :

" The distance between theory and practice is similar to the distance between dreams and reality ". Theories will remain theories until their practicality is tested in a real life situation .

Having reviewed some of the theoretical studies on translation quality assessment , we shall move on now to study a number of the experimental studies .

Nida and Taber (1982:168-172) have sugested several practical tests to evaluate translation , and they are :

> 1- The cloze technique : it is suggested that the reader is provided with a translation in which every fifth word is deleted and a blank space is left in its space . The reader is then asked to fill in those words which seem to fit the context best . The greater the number of correct guesses , the easier the text is to comprehend , for the greater is its predictability .

House (1977:11-12) pointed out some of the limitations of this test :

> a- It may be extremely difficult to analyse the results of such a test , i.e., to find out exactly why incorrect guesses were being made ..........;
> b- For detailed qualitative judgment of a translation's benefits deficiencies, the cloze technique seems to be too rough an instrument , it only attempts to measure intelligibility or ease of comprehension .... criteria which can not necessarily be equated with the overall quality of the translation .
> c- The test can not be used to make judgments about the intelligibility of a translation vis a vis its source text, but can only be used for comparative judgments.
>
> 2- The second test is the elicitation of respondent's reactions to several translation alternatives. The investigator presents two or more sentences in two or more different versions, and asks questions such as: "Which way sounds the sweetest?", " Which is the plainer ? " , " What words will be easiest .........to understand ? .

The limitations of this test are :

a- The test depends completely on the respondent's knowledge rather than the adequacy of translation .

b- Since resident might have different levels of knowledge and different taste, it might be difficult to agree on one version because every respondent prefers his / her own style .

> 3- This test suggests that the translation text be read out to some other person who will be asked to explain the contents to several other individuals who were not present at the first reading of the text .
>
> The primary purpose of this test is to find out how well the meaning comes across , both in terms of the total contents and in terms of the correctness of understanding .

The limitations of the this test are almost the same as the previous test , because it depends entirely on the individual who is asked to report on the translation rather the translation itself . Moreover, it is not necessarily true that ease of comprehension means that the translation is good .

There is another method suggested by Miller and Beef - Centre (1958) . This method suggests that if people can perform bodily responses or movements after having been exposed to either source or target language instructions, and if the results of the bodily movement criterion are similar across all respondents, then the original and its translation must be equivalent .

The limitations of this test are :

a- This test is limited to material which can be examined through bodily movements .

b- This test ignores the stylistic features of the language .

c- This test is based on the receptor's response which might not represent the quality of the translation .

d- This test is a time - consuming one .

House (1977) suggests another model for assessing the quality of translations :

> the model is set up on the basis of pragmatic theories of language use .The basic requirement for equivalence of a given textual pair (ST and TT) is that TT should have a function ... consisting of two functional components , the ideational and the interpersonal .... which is equivalent to ST's function , and that TT should employ equivalent pragmatic means for achieving this function . In this model , ST and TT are analyses in the same manner , and the resulting textual profiles are compared for their relative matching .

I consider this model as the best of all because it is based on a comparative analysis between source language text and target language text. This comparison is able to identify the shortcomings in the translation in a more detailed way. However, in a real-life situation, it is very difficult to apply such a model because it is a time-consuming process. In addition, since the final judgment is a qualitative statement, it might not reflect the exact quality of the translation. Therefore, the need for quantitative scoring still exists .

Having reviewed some of the qualitative theoretical and experimental methods for assessing the quality of translations , I shall now review two of the quantitative models .

Despite the fact that quantitative marking methods for translations are more difficult than qualitative methods , there are many theorists and institutions that have confidence in quantitative assessments .

Most of the methods used are successful to some extent, and have the practicality to assess students' or candidates' translations in a minimum time and at minimum cost. However, often they fall short when it comes to the reliability of their scores .

One of these quantitative models as suggested by Shouyi (1990 : 46-48) is a statistical method and it is based on the theory of fuzzy logic. The suggested criteria for assessing the quality of translations are :

> 1- Determine the degree of faithfulness of the central message , to see if there is any gain or loss in the global information content of a given unit of translation .
>
> 2-Determine the degree of faithfulness of the accompanying message , to see if the translated text is stylistically appropriate and effectively properly motivated .
>
> 3- Determine the degree of faithfulness of the structural message , to see if the adaptation of the original message to the structural patterning of the target language in any way effects a significant change of meaning in the three aspects as stipulated in the subcriteria . Each of the above mentioned criteria have 2 to 3 subcriteria .
> The mathematical model is based on the general principles of the fuzzy subset theory . The results can be obtained by counting the number of excellents , goods , fairs and poors given by a judge for a given number of randomly selected sample units of translation (normally sentences) . The final result will be arrived at by doing some mathematical operations .

The limitations of this model are :

a- It is a cumbersome and time consuming process .

b- It is based on a particular expert system, which may or may not be valid.

The second marking model is the one used in Australia by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI). This marking model as described in the Markers Guide is a quantitative procedure used to give some weight to a qualitative judgment. Markers make their general assessment of the translation and then they carry out a quantitative marking by deducting marks for any shortcomings in the translation .

Scoring is carried out by allocating each of 2 passages of 250 words long 50 marks for level 3 and 40 marks for level 4. Then deducting marks for various shortcomings in the translation. Marks are deducted as follows:

| | **Level 3** | **Level 4** |
|---|---|---|
| "- Serious distortions of meaning | 8 -10 | 3 -5 or more |
| - Significant errors affecting meaning | 5 - 7 | - |
| - Infelicity of style or unnaturalness of expression ; instances of obvious non-idiomatic usage . | 3 - 4 | 0.5 - 2 |
| - Spelling and punctuation errors | 1 - 2 | 0.5 - 2 |

Level 3 examiners can add or deduct a maximum of 5 marks as a discretional mark .

The pass mark is 70 out of a possible 100 , providing that no single passage has been awarded a mark less than 32.5 .

Each passage of translation is assessed by at least 2 examiners , who work independently in the first instance , and then discuss their assessments to arrive at a joint assessment ."

Wakabayashi and Sadler (1990:4-18) from the University of Queensland have tested the reliability of these marking scales by asking a number of examiners to mark a number of texts using the NAATI marking guidelines and arrived at the following results :

1- There are no guidelines for marking repetitive errors at level 4 .
2- Some examiners refused to give a mark according to the guidelines and instead awarded a mark which they felt reflected the true proficiency of the candidate .
3- There was a considerable difference between the awarded marks .
4- There was a high degree of instability in the interpretation of the level 4 guidelines .
5- There are no guidelines for the holistic subjective assessment .

I believe that NAATI marking scales are practical and can assess candidates' translations in a short time and can give an assessment which is acceptable to some extent. However, there are some important problems in these guidelines that cannot be ignored. The first problem is that these guidelines are open to various interpretations by examiners, and the second is that there are no guidelines for the holistic subjective assessment . These two problems are serious and can cause not only a discrepancy between exsaminers, but also can give the examiners considerable freedom to give their assessments according to what they think constitutes a good translation. Consequently, their assessments could be different, and could cause misunderstanding between the examiners themselves on the one hand, and between the examiners and the candidates on the other hand. Therefore, in the next chapter I will develop a new marking guide by adapting NAATI's guidelines in a different way in an attempt to eliminate the above mentioned problems .

# CHAPTER 3
# DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARKING GUIDE

## 3.1 General Description :

Before describing our proposed marking guidelines, it is useful to discuss the reasons for adapting NAATI's marking guidelines in a different way . NAATI's marking guidelines are one of the most practical guidelines for making quantitative assessments for the quality of translations. However, there are some problems with those guidelines such as the instability in the interpretations which can create the problem of discrepancy between examiners. Furthermore, errors are not detailed well enough to enable both the examiner and the examinee to know clearly and exactly the number of marks that will be deducted for this or that error and what exactly is the kind of error .

Moreover, candidates who take NAATI tests are often critical of their examiners, especially those who are unsuccessful in obtaining the required marks to pass the test. Usually, they claim that some examiners are not qualified to mark their papers because they are linguistically incompetent . NAATI NEWS (1991:7-9) .

However, regardless of the degree of the truthfulness of the examinees' claims, I propose to work on establishing clear and well defined marking guidelines in an attempt to eliminate any misunderstanding between the examiners and the examinees, so that whoever does the marking, a practising translator or an academic, the outcome will be optimally clear for both the examiner and the examinee . My marking guidelines will be based on the classification of errors in a detailed way, and the marks that should be deducted for each error will depend on the extent of its effect on the sentence or the whole text . This will enable the examinees to have a good idea of how many marks they are going to lose for making a specified kind of error and the reason for any failing mark on the one hand ; on the other hand the examiners will be able to identify clearly the weaknesses as well as the strengths of the translator and then give their marks according to those weaknesses or strengths .

Besides, due to the fact that each error corresponds to the deduction of a specific number of marks, the problem of discrepancy between examiners should be eliminated .

Due to the fact that most criteria which are used to assess translations have some associated problems,I have taken into account the questions suggested by Alderson (1985:93-105) before introducing my new method for marking translations, and these questions are :

1- Does the innovation better predict what it is supposed to predict ?
2- Does the innovation agree more closely with acceptable external criteria of performance, if such criteria exist ?

3- Does it have a better effect on the teaching or the learning ?
4- Does it have a better effect on the attitudes and motivation of the learners and the teachers, at the least ?
5- Is it more acceptable to experts ( theorists and professionals in teaching and testing ) and also to the lay public ?
6- Does the innovation result in a more accurate, more usable identification of problems ?
7- Is it more efficient ..... does it give the same or similar results with less effort, or with less time or money devoted to administration or scoring ?
8- Is it easier to administer or do students find it clearer ?
9- Does it involve less training, fewer specialists to produce, administer, score and interpret, less time and effort by the development and administration staff in matters such as training, production, administration, scoring and interpretation of results ?

After considering Alderson's questions, I have adapted NAATI's marking guidelines so we can keep the practicality of some of these guidelines on the one hand, and on the other hand I add other elements in order to make our criteria clearer and easier to implement . To this end, I have classified errors in a detailed way, and have added a marking sheet which can show the marks that should be deducted for each error, the number of errors made, the effect of each error, the total mark and the name of the examiner .This marking sheet can save time and increase scoring accuracy at the same time, and it does not need a long time to be reviewed in case of such a request .

In addition, these guidelines can be used by translation teachers to assess students' translations and to identify their needs . The classification of errors can help teachers to identify students' weaknesses, and then work on improving that specific area . For example, if the student is making too many grammatical, punctuation or spelling errors, this could mean that he / she needs to improve their knowledge of the target language system . However, if the student is making too many mistranslation errors, this could mean that the student needs to improve his / her knowledge about the target language culture .

## 3.2 Marking Guide

1- Examiners should bear in mind that the purpose of this assessment is to give an overall indication of the candidate's competence as a translator .

2- A number of 50 marks will be allocated for each of two passages approximately 250 words long . Candidates must obtain a minimum of 50 out of possible 100 marks for the test, providing that no single passage has been awarded a mark less than 15 .

3- Examiners should use the following symbols ( Adapted from NAATI Markers' Guide ) to identify errors, which may be divided into two categories :

**A**- Serious errors affecting the whole sentence or paragraph may be indicated by wavy underlining .

**B**- Errors affecting a phrase or a minor part of a sentence may be indicated by underlining with a straight line ______________ .

In case of an Unjustified Omission use the symbol : $\wedge$ .

After underlining errors, circle one of the corresponding stars on the Marking Sheet .

4- Deducting marks for repetitive errors will be as follows :

- Wrong spelling of words which do not affect the meaning of the text such as names, should be penalised once even if repeated .

- Wrong translations of words which affect the meaning of the text should be penalised each time they occur .

5- Finally :

Examiners should :

a- Do the holistic Subjective Assessment .

b- Add all the marks that are deducted, and subtract them from the 100 allocated marks and then give the total mark .

### 3.2.1 Classification of Errors

Errors can occur for different reasons in a translated text . Therefore, in order to be able to deduct the correct number of marks, a basic distinction must be made among the errors which are caused by inadequate competence in the linguistic, referential and stylistic aspects of the target language . In addition, it should be determined whether the error is affecting a phrase, sentence, or the whole text, and according to that effect, a specific number of marks will be deducted . Therefore, in my model of assessment, translator's errors are classified on three structural levels : word / phrase level, sentence level and text level ( see Table 1 ) .

At the same time, I suggest that errors can occur in three different areas : The stylistic area, where translators may produce text in inappropriate style ; the referential area, where mistranslation of the semantic content of the source text may occur ; and the linguistic area, where translators may make mechanical language errors .

The diagnostic power of the marking guide can be boosted if errors are identified according to a matrix in which the three-structure levels intersect with the three areas . The matrix is shown in Table number 1, where examples of the main error types are shown in each cell .

| AREA | LEVEL: TEXT | SENTENCE | WORD / PHRASE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **STYLISTIC**<br>( INAPPROPRIATE )<br>(STYLE) | INCONSISTENCY<br>OF STYLE<br>ACROSS TEXT | INAPPROPRIATE<br>COLLOCATIONS | INAPPROPRIATE<br>VOCABULARY |
| **REFERENTIAL**<br>( MISTRANSLATION ) | INCORRECT<br>INTERPRETATION | INVERSION OF<br>MEANING<br>DEVIATION OF<br>MEANING | UNJUSTIFIED<br>OMISSIONS<br>ADDITIONS |
| **LINGUISTIC**<br>( INCORRECT<br>LANGUAGE ) | INCORRECT<br>REPRODUCTION | INCORRECT GRAMMAR<br>INCORRECT<br>PUNCTUATION | WRONG VOCABULARY<br>WRONG SPELLING |

( Table 1 )

Word / Phrase Level Errors :

Errors which could happen on this level are :

Unjustified Omissions and Additions :

Example :

| | |
|---|---|
| Original : | *Yajibu ?an la tatanaawala ?al-taa'ama ba'da ?assa'a'ati as-saabi'ati masaa?an.* |
| Suggested translation : | You must not eat after 7.00 pm . |
| Omission : | You must not eat in the evening . |
| Addition : | You must not eat or drink after 7.00 pm. |

One should be aware that there are many justified additions and omissions. Therefore, it might be necessary to make some omissions and additions to be able to produce a good translation. Nida and Taber (1982:165-168) identified these additions and omissions as expansions and reductions and they included :

1- Expansions : expansions are divided between syntactic and lexical expansions .

Syntactic expansions : the most common expansions required by the syntactic structure of the receptor language include :

a- Identification of the participants in events ,
b-Identification of objects or events with abstracts ,
c- More explicit indication of relationals , and
d- Filling out of ellipses , which may involve any type of syntactic structure .

Lexical expansions : The most common lexical expansions consist of :

a- Classifiers ,
b- Descriptive substitutes , and
c- Semantic restructuring .

2- Reductions :

a- Simplification of doublets, e.g., " answering he said, " becomes " he answered " ;

b- Reduction of repetitions, e.g., " verily, verily, " must in some languages be reduced to one " verily," for repetition does not convey the same meaning that it does in Greek ;

c- Omission of specification of participants, e.g., the overabundant use of "God" as subject of so many sentences in the first chapter of Genesis ;

d- Loss of conjunctions, when hypotactic structures are reduced to paratactic ones ;

e- Reduction of formulas, e.g., " for His name's sake " may be changed to " for His sake " ;

f- More extensive ellipsis than may be typical of the Greek or Hebrew ;

g- The simplification of highly repetitious style, often associated with stateliness of form and importance of the theme, e.g., the first chapter of Genesis ."

Inappropriate Vocabulary : These errors can be divided into three areas :

1- Area of application : This is the kind of error where although the basic meaning of the source and the target language words correspond, the area of application of the target word is incorrect .

Example :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *'uquuba* : | punishment = | moral offence . |
| | penalty = | legal technicality . |

While *'uquuba* can be translated as punishment or penalty ,to write parking punishment would involve the wrong area of application .

2- Formality : This is the kind of error where the degree of formality of the original text has not been transferred .

Example :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| should not | : | formal . |
| shouldn't | : | informal . |

3- Cultural Words : This is the kind of error where a word in the source language does not exist in the target language or does not have an exact equivalent , and has been mistranslated .

Example :

| | **English** | **into** | **Arabic** |
|---|---|---|---|
| a - | Uncle Sam | : | *?al-'amm Sam* = Father's brother. |
| | | : | *?al-xaal Sam* = Mother's brother. |

***Xaal*** is a term which does not have a matching term in the English language. Therefore, we need to know if **Uncle Sam** is the father's brother or the mother's brother's before translating the term **uncle** into Arabic .

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| b - | Lady Diana Fraser | : | *?aanisa* | = single |
| | | : | *sayyida* | = married . |

We can use **lady** in English to refer to a woman's social status while it is neutral as to marital status . However, in Arabic ***?aanisa*** and ***sayyida*** are used to indicate social status. Therefore, when translating from English into Arabic we should know the social status of Diana Fraser before translating the title **lady** .

Wrong Vocabulary : These are kinds of errors where a wrong word has been used .

Example :

Original : *ṣariba ḥasanu ?aṣ-ṣawraba* .

Incorrect Translation : Hassan drank the soup .

Suggested Translation : Hassan ate the soup .

Wrong Spellings : These are kinds of errors where a word has been misspelt :

Deducting marks for repetitive errors will be as follows :

- Wrong spellings of proper names should be penalised once .
- American, Australian or British spellings should not be penalised if they are used consistently .
- Wrong spellings of words which affect the meaning should be penalised as often as they occur :

Example : affect and effect .

**Word / Phrase Level Marks:**

Marks are deducted as shown below :

| | A<br>serious errors | B<br>minor errors |
|---|---|---|
| UNJUSTIFIED OMISSIONS / ADDITIONS | 4 | 1.5 |
| WRONG / INAPPROPRIATE VOCABULARY | 2 | 1 |
| WRONG SPELLING | 1.5 | 0.5 |

## Justification of Deductions of Marks :

Unjustified Omissions and Additions : we consider these kinds of errors as serious ones because by adding to or omitting from the meaning of the original message, the translator will be distorting the ideas of the writer . In addition, if the translator was able to convey the whole meaning of the original message and reproduced incorrectly the linguistic or the stylistic features of the original text (we are not speaking here about obligatory grammatical and stylistic shifts), this will misrepresent what was intended in the original message when it was written . Therefore, 4 marks should be deducted for serious omissions and additions, and 1.5 marks should be deducted for minor errors which do not have a major effect on the sentence or paragraph .

Wrong / Inappropriate Vocabulary : Since the main errors of wrong / inappropriate vocabulary are linguistic and stylistic errors which do not affect the meaning of the intended message in a serious way, and because they are errors of reproduction and not misinterpretation, 2 marks should be deducted for serious errors and 1 mark for minor errors .

Wrong Spelling : Due to the fact that there are different spelling conventions in the English Language, and because experience shows that errors of spelling are rare because computers make it easy for translators to check the spelling of the whole translation by pressing just one button, American, Australian or British spellings will not be penalised if one system is used consistently . The marks to be deducted are 1.5 marks for serious errors especially if the misspelling is not a name and has an effect on the meaning of the intended message, and 0.5 for minor errors which are usually misspellings of names of people with whose names we are unfamiliar, or names of places of which we have not heard, and where the errors do not have an important effect on the meaning of the intended message .

Sentence Level Errors :

Inversion of Meaning :

This is a kind of error where the translated sentence means the opposite of the original .

Example :

Original : I bought a **priceless** oil painting .

Suggested Translation : *?iṯtaraytu lawḥatan zaytiyyatan* ***la tuqaddaru bi- ṯamanin*** .

Having a value beyond all price .

Incorrect Translation : *?iṯtaraytu lawḥatan zaytiayytan* ***la qiimata laha*** .

With no value .

Deviation of Meaning :

It is a kind of error where the message of the original has been changed .

Example :

| | |
|---|---|
| Original | : minor curves may **<u>only</u>** need watching during the growth period . |
| Incorrect Translation | :*qad yaḥtaaju ?t-taqawwusu ?l-basiiṭu faqaṭ ila ?al-mulaaḥaẓati ?ṯnaa?a fatrati ?an-numuwwi* . |
| Back - translation | : minor curves only, may need watching during the growth period . |
| Suggested Translation | *: qad yaḥtaaju at-taqawwusu ?al-basiiṭu ila ?l-mulaaḥaẓati faqaṭ ?ṯnaa?a fatrati ?n-numuwwi* . minor curves may only need watching during the growth period . |

Incorrect Grammar : These are kinds of errors where :

1- An obligatory grammatical shift in the structure of the sentence has not been made, or an adverb, noun, adjective, verb, or preposition has been placed in the wrong position in the sentence ( Wrong Word Order ) :

1- Example :

| **English** | | | **Arabic** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | V | O | V | S | O |
| Hassan | ate | the apple | *?akala* | *ḥasanu* | *?at-tuffaaḥata* |

2- Example : **English** **Arabic**

| **English** | | **Arabic** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Red | car | *sayyaaratun* | *ḥamraa?* |
| | | ( car ) | ( red ) |
| Adjective before Noun | | Adjective after Noun | |

An obligatory shift should be made when we translate either from Arabic into English or from English into Arabic .

2- Concord Errors :

a- Gender and Verbs :

Example :

| **English** | **Arabic** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dr B. Tawbi | : *ductuur* | = | Male . |
| | : *ductuura* | = | Female . |

Before translating the title **Dr.**, we should know if B. Tawbi is a male or female doctor . In Arabic we do not have a neuter gender . In addition, in English, verbs do not change with gender, while in Arabic verbs do change .

Example :

| **English** | | **Arabic** |
|---|---|---|
| The man **laughed** | = | *ḍaḥi* ***ka*** *?ar-rajulu* |
| The woman **laughed** | = | *ḍaḥika* ***t*** *?almar?atu* |

b- Lack of agreement between verbs and subjects :

Example:

**Arabic**

*Lam yakun ?aḥadun min ?ar-rijaali muta'aaṭifun ma'anaa .*

**English**

Neither of the men **were** very sympathetic to us .

The verb should be in the singular ( **was** ) because the subject is in the singular .

3- A wrong tense has been used :

| Example : | **English** | **Arabic** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Hassan **ate** the apple | ***ya'kulu*** *ḥasanu ?at-tuffaaḥata* |
| | (past tense) | (Present tense) |

The Verb should be kept in the same tense if possible .

Incorrect Punctuation : These are kinds of errors where a punctuation mark has been placed in the wrong position, or not placed at all .

Example:

| | |
| --- | --- |
| Original | : *salaka ?al-musaafiruuna ?al-laḏiina 'arifuu bisa?ni ?l-fayaḍaanaati ?aṭ-ṭariiqa ?al-?aaxara .* |
| Incorrect Translation | : the travellers, who knew about the floods, took another road . |

In this translation we have a defining relative clause, which defines or limits the noun travellers . This sentence therefore tells us that only the travellers who knew about the floods took the other road, and implies that there were other travellers who did not know and who took the flooded road .

Suggested Translation : The travellers who knew about the floods took another road .

Inappropriate Collocations : These are kinds of errors where a wrong collocation has been used .

Example :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Original | : | *?irtakaba ḥasanu galtatan faẓii'atan* . |
| Incorrect Translation | : | Hassan committed a horrible mistake . |
| Suggested Translation | : | Hassan made a horrible mistake . |

**Sentence Level Marks :**

| Marks are deducted as shown below : | **A** | **B** |
|---|---|---|
| | serious errors | minor errors |
| DEVIATION/INVERSION OF MEANING | 5 | 3 |
| INCORRECT PUNCTUATION | 3 | 1 |
| INAPPROPRIATE COLLOCATIONS | 3 | 1 |
| WRONG GRAMMAR | 3 | 1 |

Justification of Deductions of Marks :

Deviation / Inversion of Meaning : Errors of deviation and inversion of meaning are kinds of referential errors where the translator translates the intended message into an opposite of the original and changes the intended message . In other words, this is an error of misrepresentation of facts and ideas about real life . Therefore, 5 marks should be deducted for serious errors, and 3 marks should be deducted for minor errors because they do not have an effect on the whole message of original.

Wrong Grammar : Grammatical errors are kinds of errors where a breach of the target language system has occurred .The translator has made this kind of error because of inadequate knowledge of the target language system, and it can have two different effects on the translation . The first effect is a minor one and has a slight effect on the sentence, and the second effect is a serious one and has an important effect on the whole sentence . But these minor and serious effects do not change the whole meaning of the intended message . 3 marks should be deducted for serious errors and 1 mark for minor errors .

Incorrect Punctuation : Punctuation errors can have two effects on the message of the original. A punctuation mark placed in the wrong position might change a part of the intended meaning or may have a minor effect on it . Therefore, 3 marks should be deducted for serious ones because they have an important effect on the sentence, but not important enough to change the whole intended message, and 1 mark should be deducted for minor errors, because they do not have an important effect on the intended message .

Inappropriate Collocations : Since most of these errors are errors of using the wrong register or style, they usually do not have an effect on the meaning which means that the message is still there . Therefore, 3 marks should be deducted for serious errors which affect the whole sentence, and 1 mark for errors which usually affect a part of a sentence in an unimportant way .

### 3.2.2 Holistic Subjective Assessment :

The purpose of this kind of assessment is to give an additional subjective evaluation for the overall quality of a translated text, "based on the premise that a whole has characteristics not present in the individual parts and that proficiency is indivisible " ( Baker ,1989 , 66 ) . This evaluation will allow markers to add or deduct up to 9 marks according to the overall performance of the translator .

Since the holistic subjective assessment has been criticized as "intuitive" and "unscientific" because of fallibility of examiners, which usually happens because they give their assessment according to what they think constitutes a good translation, and because of the lack of external control in the form of guidelines, a new set of criteria has been developed with the aim of assisting examiners to avoid any major discrepancy among the awarded marks .

In addition, these criteria will not only provide a sound basis for examiners' judgements, but also will enable them to identify and describe the weaknesses as well as the strengths of the translation .

Due to the fact that the holistic subjective assessment is given for the overall performance , the criteria will assess the translated text as a whole , without ignoring individual errors. Therefore, the translation will be assessed on three main areas :

1- The language use area which will assess grammar, spelling , punctuation and vocabulary .

2- The referential area which will assess the translator's interpretations of the ideas of the original text .

3- The stylistic area which will assess the consistency between the style of the original text and the translated text .

In assessing these three main areas : linguistic, referential and stylistic, examiners will be able identify the weaknesses as well as the strengths of the translation .

How this can be done ?

<u>Language Use :</u>

This point will assess the translator's ability to reproduce a linguistically correct text. The main concern here is to see if the translator is breaching the target language system, such as cases of ungrammaticality i.e., breaches the language system, and cases of dubious acceptability i.e., breaches the norms of usage. This kind of assessment can be carried out by counting the number of errors of spelling, grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. If the number of serious and minor errors combined is more than 3 , 2 marks should be deducted, while if the number of serious and minor errors combined is 3 or less , 2 marks should be awarded .

Mistranslations :

On this point, examiners will assess the translator's correct / incorrect interpretations of the ideas of the original text . The main concern here is to assess the translation of facts and propositions not words . This assessment can be carried out by counting the number of errors of deviation / inversion of meaning and unjustified omissions / additions . If the number of serious and minor errors combined is more than 2, 5 marks should be deducted . While if the number of serious and minor errors combined is 2 or less, 5 marks should be awarded .

Style :

On this point, examiners should determine if the translator was able to preserve the style and the register of the original text . This assessment can be carried out by counting the number of errors of :

1- Wrong Vocabulary : This falls into three categories :

a- Formality : This category will help to identify if the translator was able to maintain the degree of formality of the original text .

b- Cultural Words : This category will help to identify if the translator was able to preserve the sociolinguistic features of the original text .

c- Area of Application : This category will help to identify if the translator was able to reflect in the translation the same register as the original text .

2- Inappropriate Collocations : This point will help to identify if the translator was able to reflect the register of the original text .

If the number of serious and minor errors combined was more than 3, 2 marks should be deducted .

While if the number of serious and minor errors combined was 3 or less, 2 marks should be awarded .

STYLE :

Inconsistency ........................................................................ -2

Consistency ........................................................................ +2

INCORRECT LANGUAGE :

Correct Reproduction ........................................................ +2

Incorrect Reproduction ...................................................... -2

MISTRANSLATION :

Correct Interpretation ........................................................ +5

Incorrect Interpretation ...................................................... -5

## Justification of Deduction of Marks :

If we look at the marks that should be awarded or deducted for the holistic subjective assessment, we will find that for "mistranslation" the marks deducted are higher than those specified for the stylistic and linguistic points . The reason for this is that if the translator omits from or adds to the intended message of the original, or does not have the ability to understand the intended message and convey at least the idea, then there is little point in assessing the linguistic and stylistic sides of the translation . Peter Newmark (1988:189-190) has expressed this :

> In the real world, referential errors are both more important and potentially more dangerous than linguistic errors ......they reveal the ignorance of the translator, or worse, of the writer, which the translator has "copied".

In addition, these days many linguistic errors such as spelling, vocabulary or punctuation errors, can be avoided by using modern technology .

The final marking form would look like the following :

# MARKING SHEET

Candidate's Name/No. :  Date of Test :

Examiner's Full Name :  Mark :

---

| | | SERIOUS | MINOR | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Circle a star for every error | | |
| INVERSION/DEVIATION OF MEANING | 5 | * * *<br>* * * | * * *<br>* * * | 3 |
| UNJUSTIFIED OMISSIONS/ADDITIONS | 4 | * * *<br>* * * | * * *<br>* * * | 1.5 |
| INAPPROPRIATE COLLOCATIONS | 3 | * * *<br>* * * | * * *<br>* * * | 1 |
| WRONG GRAMMAR | 3 | * * *<br>* * * | * * *<br>* * * | 1 |
| INCORRECT PUNCTUATION | 3 | * * *<br>* * * | * * *<br>* * * | 1 |
| WRONG / INAPPROPRIATE VOCABULARY | 2 | * * *<br>* * * | * * *<br>* * * | 1 |
| WRONG SPELLING | 1.5 | * * *<br>* * * | * * *<br>* * * | 0.5 |

## HOLISTIC SUBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT

STYLE :

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| * Inappropriate Collocations | Consistency | +2 | Circle 1 |
| * Inappropriate Vocabulary | Inconsistency | -2 | |

LANGUAGE USE :

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| * Wrong Spelling / Grammar | Correct Reproduction | +2 | Circle 1 |
| * Wrong Vocabulary / Punctuation | Incorrect Reproduction | -2 | |

MISTRANSLATION :

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| * Inversion / Deviation of Meaning | Correct Interpretation | +5 | Circle 1 |
| * Unjustified Omissions / Additions | Incorrect Interpretation | -5 | |

Add all the marks that should be deducted, subtract them from the allocated marks and give the total mark .

Total Mark = 100 - Deductions + Additions

## 3.3 Evaluation of the Marking Scheme :

Since our focus is on the reliability of translation test scores and not on the validity of tests, we did not pay a great deal of attention to the difficulty of the selected texts or to the effect of text difficulty on the translation . The aim of our case study was to evaluate the reliability of our marking guidelines, especially from the point of view of cross-marking .

### 3.3.1 Methodology :

Harris (1969:15-16) suggests a number of ways to estimate the reliability of tests, and they are :

> a - The simplest technique is to retest the same individuals with the same test . If the results of the two administrations were highly correlated, we would assume that the test had temporal stability .
>
> b - A second method of computing reliability is with the use of alternate or parallel forms .
>
> c - A third method for estimating the reliability of a test consists in giving a single administration of one form of the test and then, by deciding the items into two halves, obtaining two scores for each individual . By such " split - half " procedures, one obtains, in effect, two parallel forms the results of which may be compared to provide a measure of the adequacy of the sampling .
>
> d - Rational equivalence : As in the "split - half " method, reliability is estimated from a single administration of one form of the test . But in this case we are cocerned with inter-item consistencyas determined by the proportion of persons who pass and the proportion who do not pass each item .
>
> e - Scorer reliability : If test scoring is done by two or more raters, the reliability of their evaluations can easily be checked by comparing the scores they give for the same student responses .

Since most translation tests are of the free-response types, we find the latter method, scorer reliability, as the most suitable method to estimate the reliability of our marking guidelines. Therefore the evaluation was conducted as follows : The test consisted of two passages .The samples of the study were 8 English / Arabic translation papers by university students of translation .

Scoring was carried out by allocating each passage 50 marks, then deducting marks for translation errors . In addition, examiners were allowed to deduct or add marks for the holistic assessment .

The papers were cross-marked by three professional translators who have NAATI Level 3 accreditation and who are translation researchers at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur .

Markers were asked to rate each passage according to two criteria as specified in the marking guidelines : The first one is to identify individual errors in a detailed way and to deduct marks according to the seriousness of the error . The second is a holistic assessment and it is given for the overall performance of the translator .The latter assessment is carried out by using individual errors to identify the major weaknesses and strengths of the translator, and according to these weaknesses and strengths, markers can add or deduct up to 9 marks .

The passages were photocopied and given to the markers at the same time, to make sure that none of the markers saw the scores of the other markers.

### 3.3.2 Results :

In order to determine the reliability of the marking guide, a comparison between the awarded marks has been carried out and the results are shown below in table number 2 :

CANDIDATE 1

| EXAMINER | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| PASSAGE 1 | - 44 | - 42.5 | - 40.5 |
| PASSAGE 2 | - 39.5 | - 37.5 | - 38.5 |

CANDIDATE 2

| EXAMINER | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| PASSAGE 1 | - 40 | - 38 | - 39 |
| PASSAGE 2 | - 37 | - 36 | - 35 |

CANDIDATE 3

| EXAMINER | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| PASSAGE 1 | - 35 | - 34 | - 32.5 |
| PASSAGE 2 | - 30 | - 28.5 | - 28.5 |

CANDIDATE 4

| EXAMINER | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| PASSAGE 1 | - 20 | - 17 | - 19 |
| PASSAGE 2 | - 19 | - 18 | - 18 |

Table (2)

Candidate 1 :

- Passage 1 : For passage 1, marker number 1 deducted 44 marks, marker number 2 deducted 42.5 marks and marker number 3 deducted 40 marks .

The differences between these scores came as a result of the following :

a- Marker number 1 deducted 1.5 marks for what he considered to be an unjustified omission, while it was allowed by markers 2 and 3 .

b- Markers number 1 and 2 deducted 2 marks for what they considered to be an incorrect lexical item, while marker number 3 allowed it .

- Passage 2 : For passage 2, Marker number 1 deducted 39.5 marks, marker number 2 deducted 37.5 marks and marker number 3 deducted 38.5 marks .

The differences between these scores came as a result of the following :

a- Marker number 1 deducted 1 mark for what he considered to be an incorrect lexical item , while it was allowed by markers number 2 and 3.

b- Markers number 1 and 3 deducted 1 mark each for what they considered to be a punctuation error, while it was allowed by marker number 2 .

Candidate 2 :

- Passage 1 : For passage 1, Marker number 1 deducted 40 marks, marker number 2 deducted 38 marks and marker number 3 deducted 39 marks .

The differences between these scores came as a result of the following :

a- Marker number 1 deducted 1 mark for what he considered to be an incorrect lexical item , while it was allowed by markers number 2 and 3.

b- Markers number 1 and 3 deducted 1 mark for what they considered to be an incorrect lexical item , while it was allowed by marker number 2.

- Passage 2 : For passage 2, marker number 1 deducted 37 marks, marker number 2 deducted 36 marks and marker number 3 deducted 35 marks .

The differences between these scores came as a result of the following :

a- Marker number 1 deducted 1 mark for what he considered to be an incorrect lexical item , while it was allowed by markers number 2 and 3.

b- Markers number 1 and 2 deducted 1 mark for they considered to be an incorrect lexical item , while it was allowed by marker number 3 .

Candidate 3 :

- Passage 1 : For passage 1, marker number 1 deducted 35 marks, marker number 2 deducted 34 marks and marker number 3 deducted 32.5 marks .

The differences between these scores came as a result of the following :

a- Marker number 1 deducted 1 mark for what he considered to be an incorrect lexical item , while it was allowed by markers number 2 and 3.

b- Markers number 1 and 2 deducted 1.5 marks for what they considered to be an unjustified addition, while it was allowed by marker number 3 .

- Passage 2 : For passage 2, marker number 1 deducted 30 marks, marker

2 deducted 28.5 and marker number 3 deducted 28.8 marks .

The differences between these scores came as a result of the following :

a- Marker number 1 deducted 1.5 marks for what he considered to be an unjustified omission, while it was allowed by markers number 2 and 3 .

<u>Candidate 4 :</u>

- Passage 1 : For passage 4, marker number 1 deducted 20 marks, marker number 2 deducted 17 marks and marker number 3 deducted 19 marks .

The differences between these marks came as a result of the following :

a- Marker number 1 deducted 2 marks for what he considered to be an incorrect lexical item, while marker number 3 deducted 1 mark for the same error and marker number 2 allowed it .

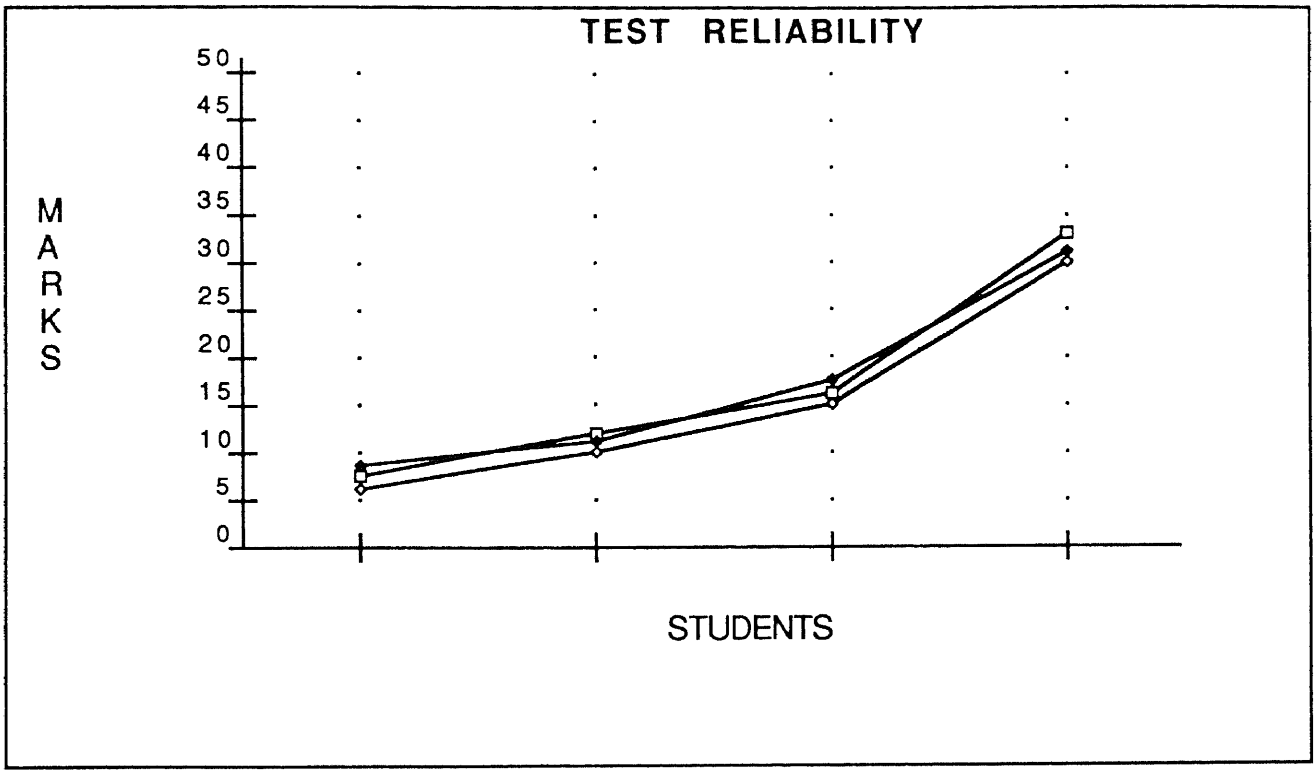
- Passage 2 : For passage 2, marker number 1 deducted 19 marks, markers number 2 and 3 deducted 18 marks each .

The differences between these marks came as a result of the following :

a- Marker number 1 deducted 2 marks for what he considered to be an incorrect lexical item , while markers number 2 and 3 deducted 1 mark each for the same error .

In the holistic subjective assessment there was no discrepancy because most of the differences among the scores were in the areas of wrong vocabulary and unjustified omissions / additions, and the specified marks were already deducted .

The following chart shows the correlation between the awarded marks :




After speaking with the examiners, the following advantages and disadvantages were pointed out :

1- Advantages :

a- Translation papers were marked in a minimum time .

b- The criteria used were able to identify students' weaknesses and strengths.

c- Examiners found the marking guide easy to administer and that it involved little training .

d- The problem of discrepancy among the awarded marks was reduced .

e- The awarded marks reflect the quality of the translations .

2- Disadvantages :

a- The distinction between serious and non-serious errors still depends on the examiners' interpretations of the translation .

b- The distinction between wrong and acceptable vocabulary is governed by the examiners' taste .

### 3.3.4 Suggestions for Improvement :

The efficiency of these marking scales can be improved if we develop guidelines for distinguishing serious from non-serious errors, and wrong from acceptable vocabulary. This will enable us to reduce inter-scorer discrepancy to the lowest possible level on the one hand, and to establish a good basis for examiners' judgments on the other hand . Furthermore, if we can study the effect of text difficulty on the translator's performance, then we will be able to develop valid translation tests which, if used in conjunction with our marking scales, can test and assess the ability of translators to carry out realistic tasks .

# CHAPTER 4

# CONCLUSION

In this study I attempted to develop new practical, reliable and easy- to-implement marking scales for assessing the quality of translations . My main aim was to produce a set of criteria which can eliminate the problems that exist in the other marking scales such as the room for different interpretations of the guidelines and the discrepancy among the awarded marks in case the translations were marked by more than one examiner .

In addition, by developing such a model we will be able to control examiners' unjustified markings on the one hand, and establish a strong basis for their judgements on the other hand . Moreover, this model can be used by translation teachers to identify students' weaknesses and strengths and then work on improving them .

Therefore, our marking guide included two criteria . The first criterion is employed to identify individual errors, and the second is used to assess the overall performance of the translator .

In the first criterion, errors were classified and a basic distinction was made between the linguistic, stylistic and referential errors .

In the second criterion, individual errors were used as a guide to make an overall evaluation of the main weaknesses and strengths and according to those weaknesses and strengths, a number of marks were specified to be added or deducted .

Errors were classified on three levels :

1- *Text level errors :*

a- Inconsistency of style across text .

b- Incorrect interpretations or mistranslations .

c- Incorrect reproduction or incorrect language use .

2- *Sentence level errors :*

a- Inappropriate collocations .

b- Inversion / deviation of meaning .

c- Incorrect punctuation .

3- *Word / phrase level errors :*

a- Inappropriate vocabulary .

b- Unjustified omissions / additions .

c- Wrong grammar .

d- Wrong vocabulary .

e- Wrong spelling .

The marks were designed to be deducted according to the effect or nature of each error . The marks which were deducted for making referential errors were higher than those which were deducted for making linguistic or stylistic errors, because referential errors are mistranslations of ideas and facts about the real world, and therefore, have the most serious effect on the text. In addition, a marking sheet showing candidates' name / number, examiner's name, date of test, kinds of errors made, number of errors, marks which are deducted for each error and the total mark, has been designed to help markers save time and to increase scoring accuracy . In order to determine the reliability and practicality of the marking guide, it has been trialled on a corpus of eight English / Arabic translation papers and the papers were cross-marked by three translators / translation researchers . The obtained results were good enough to prove that these marking scales can assess students' or candidates' translations in a minimum time and that the obtained scores reflect the real quality of the translations .

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