Possible Criteria for Evaluating Students' Translation Errors

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Abstract

Although different criteria have been proposed in applied translation literature in order to eliminate the subjectivity of the evaluator, these attempts remain tentative and, consequently, evaluation is still an area of controversy. A sound evaluation should go beyond intuition to achieve objectivity and accuracy. In translation practice, however, the operation inevitably involves the making of personal judgments and cannot be a pure mechanical process. Most translation instructors would, however, opt for a quality assessment as translation involves a transfer of meaning which can be affected by the quality of the error rather than its quantity. Yet, a high distribution of an error can always alarm instructors and arouse their suspicion, especially when it is widespread among various students. The criteria for evaluating translation students' errors will contribute to the construction of systematic assessment processes. Instructors are required to seek a basis for informed judgment built upon both theoretical consideration and experimental criteria. In this respect, this paper attempts to discuss the main criteria of translation quality assessment to see how far they serve this purpose.

Keywords: criteria, translation, corpus, evaluation, students, errors.
1 Preliminary

Translation is as old as language itself. The first traces of translation dated from 3000 BC in the old kingdom of Egypt in which the discovery of the Rosetta stone is considered to be the turning point in the history of translation. Later on, in the ninth century, the West contacted Islam through Arabs in Muslim Spain where a continuous contact between Arabic and Indo-European languages was born. Although translation today is a very common practice little has been written about it. The importance of translation emerges from its vital role in transmitting meaning and culture, as language is probably the most important vehicle serving this purpose. The appropriateness of a translation can play a salient role in the enhancement as well as breakdown of international communication.

To this end, different translation models and approaches have sought to eradicate such translational misunderstandings, yet each of them has engendered more controversies than solving existing ones. Mistranslation and translational problems are a persistent obstacle to the translator and therefore for the instructor of translation. Instructors, in their turn, are frequently confronted not only with texts that are problematic owing to linguistic and/or socio-cultural boundaries between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) but also with the problem of teaching according to the needs of the different trainees concerned. The translation instructor's task is most often twofold: (i) to explain the linguistic difficulties embedded in the source texts, and (ii) to explicate the translation strategies required to render the source text (ST) into the target text (TT). For instance, if a SL text involves a cultural problem it would require first explanation of the cultural meaning of the lexical item concerned and then the finding of an equivalent meaning in the TL.

Error analysis offers in this case the appropriate tool to check upon the students' needs and relate them to translation theory. Translation instructors often rely on teaching models which anticipate the students' difficulties usually on the basis of a comparative analysis of both languages in question and in most cases; they depart from two languages to claim universality. That is, a translation theory or model, often assumed to apply to all sets of languages, is usually based on findings from a particular group of students or predictions of the theorist from his knowledge of a particular set of languages. Such translation models, although providing insightful methodological and pedagogical means for the instructor, are not always suitable for all groups of students and all types of language. This divorce between translation theory and the context of the teaching situation can be bridged through the discussion of the students' performance.

Error evaluation provides the instructor with the necessary feedback regarding the particularity of the group or individual students and the suitability of the instructor's methodology, information which translation theory alone fails to supply. In short, error evaluation provides the instructor with valuable information about trainees' areas of failure and the efficiency or inefficiency of teaching methods and practices. Errors should, therefore, be considered as an inevitable part of any learning or training situation which requires creativity or the ability to analyze and regularize (Tylor 1980).

However, assessing acceptability of texts is an important task especially in the process of educating translator trainees. In this respect Buraser (2013:128) explains that
we do not confuse acceptability of texts with the quality of translation, since the latter focuses on the aspects of accuracy and faithfulness between the ST and the TT, while the former emphasizes the link between the textual features displayed in similar texts of the same genre and the ones displayed in the translation text, which is no longer viewed by the target audience as translation, but simply as text.

This means that when evaluating the quality of translation, the evaluators are usually translation experts who identify the TT errors against the quality of the ST, whereas, assessing acceptability of texts is a different process which requires the involvement of the target audience, who need not be translation studies experts.

2. Possible Criteria for Evaluation

The domain of errors is a complex issue that requires a solid theoretical background before any attempt is made to induce or generalize conclusions about students (Elmgrab 2013:58). Although scholars have different views concerning the translation teaching process, they (Kussmaul 1995, Williams, 2004, Bogucki 2010) in general maintain almost similar methodological criteria. They suggest that a sound account of students’ errors should be organized in terms of certain procedural steps, namely identification of errors (discovering the deficiency), description of errors (looking at the symptoms), explanation of errors (diagnosing the reasons for the error), and evaluation of errors (assessing the gravity of the error and accordingly recommending the appropriate therapy). Thus, an effective evaluation, which is the main goal of this paper, cannot proceed without the apriori stages of identification, description and explanation.

2. 1. Identification of Errors

Translation instructors most often face some difficulties in identifying translation errors. The non-binary nature of translation errors makes the process of recognition a point of controversy among instructors. In this regard, Newmark (1988:6) points out that "satisfactory translation is always possible ... there is no such thing as a perfect, ideal or 'correct' translation". Translation quality assessment should then be performed in such terms rather than the right/wrong dichotomy. Satisfactory/acceptable translation is used here to indicate that the translated text cannot be judged as simply wrong or right as it is the case in monolingual statements such as: the earth is flat. A translation cannot be either rejected completely or taken for granted as right or wrong. For example, the Arabic expression:

(1) \( \text{Camaliyya ?istishha:diyya} \) 
(Martyr operation)

is often rendered into English as:

(1a) suicide attack

The reverse translation of the English text 1a will produce in Arabic a different meaning from the original text. This is likely to be because of a clash of cultures which is enacted in the two linguistic texts. In the Western culture such acts are often associated with violence, terrorism, and even fanaticism, whatever their reason or purpose. In the Arab-Islamic culture, however, such acts are a sign of self-sacrifice and courage especially when they are committed against a so-called enemy or occupier. However, despite the ideological shift in translation 1a, it cannot be judged as simply true because it deviates from the ST meaning or simply false.
because it has been managed in a manner that serves the TL reader's thought and therefore the communicative purpose of translation (Hatim 1990). To this effect, translation instructors may differ as to which translation can be considered acceptable/accurate or unacceptable/inaccurate and consequently as to what is to be regarded as erroneous. For instance, an error sanctioned by an instructor as serious may be overlooked by another provided that the meaning is still effected. Sentence 2 reads:

(2) The decree was signed by the president
(2a) wuqqiṣa al-marsuːm min qibal al-raʾiːs (literal translation)
(2b) waqqṣa al-raʾiːs al-marsuːm. (The president signed the decree)

Passivized forms like sentence 2 are acceptable in English, while the acceptability of the corresponding Arabic form in 2a varies according to the instructor and the context in which it occurs. This is because Arabic passives are typically agentless (Saad 1982). Translation 2a, however, is acceptable in media discourse which is more open to Western styles and structures. Disparity between instructors also arises when the error is due to cultural mismatch. For example, judgement of translation 3a as accurate or erroneous may depend on whether the translator intends to introduce the TL reader to the SL religious culture or simply has failed to observe the cultural demands of the TL:

(3) Jesus, Son of God
(3a) Ḷiːsa ?ibn Allah. (literal translation)

Nonetheless, not all translation failures can be clearly identified as either belonging to the category of mistake or error. For instance, it would be hard to tell whether the inappropriateness of 3a is due to the producer's (translator) lack of the necessary linguistic knowledge and therefore should be identified as a mistake; or whether it simply reflects a lack of the necessary translational skills to differentiate between a literal and dynamic (pragmatic) methods of translation according to situation and context, and should therefore be classified as an error. Only our feedback from the producer's linguistic knowledge may solve the confusion.

Having said this, a feedback from the students being assessed is still an essential component of a well-informed judgment of their errors. The instructor can have recourse to this type of feedback in the process of error detection in two different ways. In the case of an informal assessment process, the instructor may, if necessary, ask the students what they want to convey by the erroneous translation in question. This can pave the way to discovering whether the error can be traced either back to a misunderstanding of the ST or a lack of competence in the TL. In the former case, the instructor would be carrying out an authoritative interpretation of the student's erroneous translation (Corder 1981). The second type is often performed when no direct contact can be made with the student whose errors are studied. The instructor should, therefore, infer the student's intention whenever possible from his knowledge of the idiosyncratic style and the strategies used. This process is referred to as a plausible interpretation (ibid.).

In translation practice, however, some instructors tend to opt for a plausible interpretation of their students' translations given the negative pedagogical implications the authoritative interpretation may induce. Students often feel demotivated and may even develop lack of self-confidence if they are repeatedly pressed to explain their errors for which they may
feel embarrassed. Thus, I believe it is advisable that instructors should be lenient at this level of error evaluation, particularly at early training stages, in order to allow students to get to grips with practical translation skills and strategies.

2.2. Description of Errors

The description of errors is generally looked upon as the process of comparing between the student's translation and that of the instructor's reconstructed one. This process becomes a mere contrastive analysis in that they both have the methodology of a bilingual comparison. This evaluative procedure of contrasting the student's construction to an ideal reconstruction compared by the instructor is often performed, as Bassnet-Susan (1991) notes, from one of two standpoints: from the view of the closeness of the translation to the SL text or from treatment of the TL text as a work in its own language. Both views are, however, limited in scope. If the instructor describes the student's error merely on the basis of his reconstruction designed according to Bassnet-Susan's first view, i.e. the principle of equivalence of the TT to the ST, the instructor then overlooks the non-binary nature of translation which means that there are several possible translations of one ST. Therefore, while an instructor may describe a student's erroneous translation as serious on the basis that it is too distant from his own translation, the student's same translation can be closer to one of other possible reconstructions, and consequently less serious. The instructor is then required to have an open view of other translations and interpretations offered by the students themselves. The latter view observes the student's erroneous translation merely within the framework of the TL.

This approach also faces the same controversy among instructors. For example, a grammatical error may, according to one instructor, display incompetence and therefore is heavily penalized. The same error may be sanctioned more tolerantly by another instructor on the basis that, though grammatically incorrect, it makes sense within the context and does not distort the meaning intended in the ST. Consider the translations of sentences: 4, 5 and 6:

(4) al-ijra?a:n al-awwala:n  
(4a) The two first procedures  
(4b) The first two procedures  
(5) The lesson is not easy  
(5a) al-dars laysa sahl  
(5b) laysa al-dars sahl  
(6) Hope Hospital adopts a non-smoking policy  
(6a) tattabi C mustashfa: hub siya: sat C adam al-tadkhi:n  
(6b) yattabi C mustashfa hub siyasat C adam al-tadkhi:n

Erroneous translations such as 4a, 5a and 6a above may not be considered by some instructors as serious in so far as they do not affect the communicative meaning of the ST. Yet, other instructors may consider these errors as a reflection of the student's incompetence and seek, therefore, remedial teaching because, as Kussmaul (1995: 144) argues, "the more basic these errors are, the more heavily they are usually penalized". In addition, the view of assessing translation only within the TL framework borrows heavily from a purely monolingual position which ignores the role of the ST in the modeling of the translation before being rendered into
the TL and culture. Thus, any description of translation errors should take into account the ST as well as the TL and culture.

However, an instructor's task is not restricted to the description of errors. He should also discover the cause of the error in order to provide a solution. For instance, the instructor's description of the erroneous translation of 7a below by providing the appropriate translation in 7b is not adequate in determining or constructing a reteaching plan to enable students to avoid errors of the same type that are generally made by Arab students:

(7) dawr al-?i:lm fi:al-mujtama
(7a) The role of the media in the society
(7b) The role of media in society.

(8) Super predators arrive
(8a) luṣufsawlqa al-?ada wasalu: (literal)
(8b) wuṣul luṣufsawlqa l?a:da (Arrival of super predator)

In this case, the instructor needs to explain the errors in 7a as resulting from an inaccurate transfer from Arabic due to the divergence in use between the two languages of the definite article system. In 8a, the student transferred the English sentence structure (SVO) into Arabic which requires a different syntagmatic distribution (VSO). Though a possible structure without a verb can be rendered as 8b notice, however, that one of the characteristics of Arabic is the relative fluidity of its word order as it permits as many ways of ordering the constituents of the sentence as possible (Abdul-Raof 1998). The transfer in 8a is from the foreign language (SL) into the mother tongue (TL) in contrast to the common assumption that transfer errors occur the other way round, i.e. from TL to SL.

Trainees need to be introduced to such linguistic differences; it is the instructor's responsibility to explain such differences and make them part of translation strategies. Since translation errors vary a great deal, seeking different remedies according to the type of error would be realistic in translation practice. Thus, a classification of errors, though often overlapping, is essential. It should be noted, however, that such a compartmentalization does not necessarily imply a clear-cut line between translation errors as an error can be classified in more than one category.

In this respect, two major types of translation error can be distinguished: errors made at micro-textual level and those at macro-textual level the two of which (micro- and macro-levels) constitute the standards of textuality of text. Micro-errors refer to those deficiencies in the organization of the textual elements in the text, i.e. the way the surface components of text (phonology, morphology and syntax) relate together. Errors at this level are mainly threefold: syntactical, semantic, and stylistic. The idea is an amalgamation of Widdowson's (1979) categorization of equivalence and Kussmaul's (1995) typology of errors.

At the micro-level, the syntactic type is usually more important in foreign language teaching but appears also in translations (Kussmaul 1995). It includes errors such as the wrong use of conjugation, prepositions, agreement and word order. Semantic errors often refer to the wrong selection of a word's meaning particularly in judging between polysemes and synonyms such as the French savoir/connaitre or the English see/watch, or the Arabic inSaraha (went away)/gha:dana (departed) or akala (ate) tana:wala (had a meal or tackled a certain subject).
The stylistic type represents the student's inability to differentiate between intrinsic stylistic features peculiar to each language or different situations within the same language. Indeed, different styles are often used with different genres. For instance, repetition is a prominent stylistic feature that characterizes Arabic texts and often shows up in English texts translated by native Arab speakers. In English, however, repetition is often considered redundant and is usually required to be avoided in translation from Arabic (Williams 1984).

Macro-errors, however, refer to failures to render the extra-linguistic meaning of the surface components and the communicative functions they perform. Within this contextual aspect of text, two types of error could be identified: one relating to situational adequacy and the other to general cultural adequacy. Situational errors involve failure to preserve any of the three Hallidayan discourse parameters of field, tenor and mode of the ST in the TT. Field is an abstract term which refers to what the text is about. Linguistic choices in translation are often determined in terms of the field of discourse. For instance, in a military context, sentence 9 would be more suitable than sentence 10:

(9) Execute one's orders
(10) Do one's orders.

Misrepresentation of tenor, on the other hand, is often a result of a failure to transfer the ST's interpersonal relationships. For example, sentence 11 would be undesirable in a formal context whereas sentence 12 would be more appropriate:

(11) Cops came to his home
(12) The police came to his home.

The mode of discourse, however, is concerned with the role language plays in the interactive process (Halliday and Hasan 1989). For example, re is appropriate in a business letter but is rarely, if ever, used in spoken English (Baker 1992). Likewise, basmala an acronym of the Arabic phrase meaning In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, and the Most Merciful is ideally used in written Arabic but is unlikely to be acceptable in spoken Arabic varieties. These language choice restrictions such as re and basmala are in both cases likely to be imposed, as Baker (ibid.) explains, by the fact that speakers of each language have certain expectations about what kind of language is appropriate to particular situations.

Cultural errors, on the other hand, refer to the failure to represent the embedded cultural meaning of the ST into the TT. Difficulty in translating the cultural embedding often increases when "the ST is tied in a specific way to the source language community and culture" (House 1977:189), that is, the field of the ST is not shared by or common to the target culture. Cultural problems usually arise at this level for the student who, in such a situation, is often undecided about whether to opt for a cultural adaptation as a way of compensation or keep the exotic character of the ST as a way of enhancing cross-cultural rapprochement. Kussmaul (1995: 134) argues that trainees "should be left in such cases to decide for themselves, though they should be advised to take into consideration the readership".

After the identification and description of the error as affecting the micro and/or macro-level of meaning, a necessary step forward is needed because identification and description alone cannot provide any viable solution for translation problems. It is also essential to look for the reason of errors that is to provide an explanatory account of the students' errors.
2.3. Explanation of Errors

It is held that errors are attributable to transfer from the SL, which occurs when the student cannot help mixing up two systems, at the same time, ending up with a new one of his own belonging to neither of them. Translation instructors can make use of the interlanguage approach, but not at an advanced stage as Kussmaul (1995) noted. That is to say, beginners in a translation course are more prone to transfer errors and are consequently often advised, like foreign language learners, to distance themselves, as far as possible, from the SL. As far as Arab trainees are concerned, I believe that they have to be encouraged at the first stage of their programme to gain confidence and competence in the TL (English) and culture. At a more advanced stage, however, it becomes clear that translation is not the same as foreign language teaching. While the main concern of foreign language teaching is the TL, translation involves, in addition to the TL, SL which is the primary source of information the translator departs from and should keep in with whenever possible. Neubert and Shreve (1995:415) depict translation error as

what rightly appear to be linguistically equivalent may very frequently qualify as "translationally" nonequivalent, and this is so because the complex demands on adequacy in translation involve subject factors and transfer conventions that typically run counter to considerations about "surface" linguistic equivalent.

This is why trainee translators are often faced with the problem of how to represent the meaning of the SL into the TL without affecting the structure of either of them. Thus, translation errors relate to translation skills though they may be transfer errors similar to that of language teaching. Yet, explanation of errors is often speculative because the process of translation took place in the translator's mind which we do not have access to it. These speculations may either concur with the reality about the translation process or contradict it; Kussmaul (1995:6) points out in this regard that

our expectations and guesses may coincide with reality, i.e. with what happens in the translation process, but there are also the well-known cases when we find mistakes in our students' translation which are explained to us by our students in a completely different manner from the way we should have explained them.

This emphasizes that absolutes in translation are untenable and any principle can be questioned. From what preceded, I tried to highlight some necessary prior steps to the evaluation of translation errors. They are the identification, description and an explanation. However, these steps mainly performed on "an intuitive basis establishing an experimental taxonomy of potential translational difficulties and of the general linguistic, extra-linguistic and socio-cultural impact a particular text makes on the student" (Wilss 1992:395).

3. The Assessment of Instructors' Evaluation and Consistency

The assessment of translator's performance is a widespread activity that has attracted the attention of several researchers and publications. There is an abundant amount of literature on how to teach translation and assess trainees' performance (Lonsdale 1996, Malmkjær 1998 and Hatim 2012). However, little use has been made of the feedback from students' performance and especially from instructors' translation quality assessments. In other words, although tests and criteria have been set for instructors to conduct their assessment, the scrutiny of their
evaluation tools, the interaction of instructors with these tools, and the pedagogical implications of such interaction for the theory and teaching of translation are all areas that have been under-researched.

At the beginning, I attempted to predict different possible criteria instructors might be using during their evaluation, viz. identification, description and description. The evaluation will be divided into two main sections: the first is concerned with instructors' interaction with the aforementioned criteria of assessment and the second with their inter-consistency. Before proceeding in the analysis of students' errors, it is worth giving a brief description of the nature of the data. That is how translation errors can enhance our understanding of practical translation practice. Several ideas are put forward on how such a task can be best realized or performed. These ideas will serve as a methodological matrix for the analysis and evaluation of actual translation errors derived from a real corpus which consists of two main databases.

5.1. Database One: Translation-Tests

The first database consists of three passages given as translation tests to twenty Arab trainee-translators at Benghazi University, Libya. Testees who made under familiar test conditions were asked to produce the Arabic translations of three English test-translations represent the main Hallidayan text types: argumentation is used to evaluate objects, events or concepts with the aim of influencing future behavior, i.e. to persuade readers to accept a claim, whether that acceptance is based on logical or emotional appeals or both. Exposition is used to analyze concepts with the aim of informing or narrating and instruction is used to direct the receiver towards a certain course of action. It is worth mentioning that text type is vital for communication aims as Hatim and Mason (1990:140) postulate that "a conceptual framework which enables us to classify texts in terms of communicative intentions serving an overall rhetorical purposes". Fawcett (1997:104) also emphasizes that text type help us choose the appropriate translation method (solution) when he made it clear that "it makes no sense to judge a translated text in the traditional manner of picking out a few items to comment on, we should begin by determining the text type since the text co-determines the appropriate translation method.

Taking more than one sample from each trainee by testing them in terms of different text-types has two main implications for the present work. First, it increases representativeness of the student's performance which varies even in similar tasks, let alone in producing different text-types. Second, it ensures the validity and reliability of the assessment of students' translations because the more samples we have from the output of each testee the more reliable the assessment is likely to be (Hughes 1989). Thus, the separation between text types is expected to provide a balanced assessment of errors because, as Hatim (1997) observes, the demands of each translation task vary according to the type of text being translated, certain types often being more demanding than others.

As to the analysis of the students' translations, it starts with the identification of discrepancies in each text. These discrepancies are, afterwards, described by locating their linguistic realizations. That is, the actual part of the text which bears the discrepancy is defined in terms of the descriptive parameters (syntactic, semantic, and stylistic). Because the analysis of the macro-structure of a text can be verified in translation only through the choice and
arrangement of its actual linguistic signs (given that they are the usual feedback that trainees are provided with), syntactic, semantic and stylistic errors will also be examined in terms of their effect on the macro-textual level of translations. The descriptive analysis is carried out separately on each text-type. Once the errors are classified as syntactic, semantic or stylistic, and it is determined whether they also affect the macro-textual level of the translation, we shall try to trace them back to their source. That is, errors will be explained as to whether they are stimulated by the trainee's lack of competence in the TL or transfer from the SL, etc. At this stage a comparative analysis is crucial. For example, comparison between the SL system and TL system is essential to trace interference. Comparison between errors of different text-types can also determine the difficulties inherent in the rhetorical or discoursal nature of the text-type being translated.

3.2 Database Two: the Questionnaire

After the analysis of students' errors in the corpus, assessment of instructors' perception of their gravity is also essential to complete our evaluation task of these errors. This was realized through the administration of a questionnaire to ten evaluators (translation instructors). The questionnaire consists of fifteen translation errors described and explained during the analysis of students' performance. That is to say, there was a selection of all possible categories of errors that can generate different criteria of assessment but the choice between errors of the same type was random. For each erroneous construction, its corresponding ST was provided with details of which text and line it is extracted from. For instance, Sample 6 text Three, lines 1-3 reads:

He seized what lay around him …
wa istafa:d min kul ma hawlah

The contextualization of the extract is also made easier by mentioning the number of the text and lines as all three texts and their lines are numerated and attached to the questionnaire. Instructors were required to assess these constructions (four error-samples for each criterion) on the basis of two scales. In the first scale, they had to determine the type of error(s) as syntactic, semantic and/or stylistic. In the second scale, they were asked to evaluate the erroneous constructions in terms of their gravity using a score system from 0 to 5. Score 5 stands for most serious errors and 0 for non-errors.

After the collection of the questionnaire, instructors' scores were compared to examine to what extent they made use of the evaluation criteria (identification, description and explanation) and how consistent and reliable their assessment was. The analysis investigated the instructors' interaction with inter-consistency. Consistency can be defined in the context of this work as giving consistent information about the value of a learning variable being measured while inter-consistency is related to the production of similar judgments by different instructors when evaluating the same sample, i.e. the more similar the scores are, the higher is the inter-consistency achieved and vice versa.

3.3 Analysis of Students' Corpus

On the whole, the analysis of the translation of argumentation shows a number of weaknesses that can drastically affect the quality of the translation or the credibility of the
translator. Students made a variety of linguistic errors which can alter the micro- and/or macro-level of the translation. These tend, however, to be errors made by individual students and are not much different from those made when translating exposition and instruction. Some errors, however, are more frequent in argumentation than in the other text-types. Others are a mere result of cross-linguistic variation between the argumentation formats of the two languages.

As far as translation of argumentation between Arabic and English is concerned, it is essential to acquaint the trainee with the argumentative format in each language and the ways variation could be dealt with. To convey the argumentation convincingly to the TL audience, the translator must do so within the constraints imposed by the discourse situation of the text. The realization of these constraints, defined as field tenor and mode, can be cross-linguistically variant. In this case, the translator is compelled to work with the constraint framework of the TL but must find at the same time compensating techniques to preserve the pragmatic goal of the ST.

The investigation of the problems related to the translation of exposition and instruction text types shows that in most cases students lacked the frame and schema of the type and genre of the text they were translating as they made all types of errors. Testees seem to pay little attention to the textual aspects of text, such as cohesion, coherence and the organization of information (thematic, forms, argumentation).

Compared with their translation of argumentation, testees performed better in exposition and instruction as their errors became less frequent and less serious especially with regard to the core meaning of text. Most of their errors affected partially either the meaning of some words/expressions or the naturalness with which the whole text was presented. The students' main incompetence in this regard was the way they processed the text. They seemed to opt for a minimal processing of words and sentences and did not give way for a multiplication process within the whole context in order to allow its expressive and communicative aspect to become manifest. It is obvious that students lacked the necessary pragma-textual framework, when dealing with two culturally and linguistically incongruent languages like Arabic and English.

In sum, the texts were hardly negotiated by the trainees and there was an obvious inclination towards the SL forms and rhetorical functions. In other words, trainees were not aware of the impact of the TL audience's modes of thought and response on the quality of the translation. Therefore, their rendering seemed to strip out the text from its aesthetic functions and ornamental values; the transfer of content, regardless of the appropriateness of its presentation in the TL, was their only concern.

3.4 Questionnaire Results

Table One (appendix I) is a numerical representation of instructors' assessment of the fifteen samples administered as a questionnaire. I rearranged the order of samples in the table according to the criteria which they mostly violate and were intended to test. In other words, one sample may involve the violation of more than one criterion but in most cases it is set to test one of the criteria regardless of the instructors. The Table shows a serious disparity among instructors' scores. However, a detailed analysis of these samples takes into account the different types of error each one involves; their recognition by instructors also indicates that the level of inter-consistency amongst instructors is relatively satisfactory. Most of them severely penalized
errors which affect the core meaning of the ST either by altering it, deleting part of it or making it unintelligible. The alarming observation which can be inferred from the instructors' evaluation is that their analysis and assessment of the trainees' translations are often performed at the surface level. In other words, instructors, in the process of their assessment, check upon the main content of the ST without paying equal attention to pragmatic and stylistic aspects of translation such as ideological shifts, intertextual meanings, naturalness and collocative patterning of words.

4. Conclusion

Finally, evaluation is an important element of translation teaching for it is a feedback from which instructors check upon their students' achievements and needs. To be so, it must probe into all meaning aspects that are crucial to a successful translation. In the case of our evaluators, apart from the semantic content, almost all other aspects were overlooked. Instructors' feedback from their evaluation in this context is not of much help as it does not cover all students' needs. It can even be misleading if instructors design their own syllabus, remedial teaching or completion of the course on the basis of the findings from this kind of evaluation.

From the discussion of instructors' evaluation, it can be claimed that there is a considerable imbalance in their assessment in terms of the different criteria and tools available for this purpose. Such an imbalance can have undesirable effects on the teaching/learning process. The inconsistency in instructors' evaluation is likely to cause confusion for the trainees and mask the clarity of the course objectives.

It should be noted that errors are just part of the students' development process in training. Any sound account of this process should involve the other part of the students' performance which does not involve error-making. In other words, the instructor's analysis should not be limited solely to those areas that are problematic to the students but can be extended to those mastered skills in order to draw a complete picture of the training process.
References


**Appendix I**

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(Table 1: numerical representation of Instructors’ assessment)
(Table 2: Transliteration System for Arabic Sounds)

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