



---

## The Required Criteria for Constructing a Communicative Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) Scale

---

Sepeedeh Hanifehzadeh<sup>1</sup>, Farzaneh Farahzad<sup>\*2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Campus, Tehran, Iran

<sup>2</sup> Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran, Iran

---

Received: 3 October, 2016

Accepted: 19 December, 2016

---

### Abstract

This study investigated criteria and themes required for constructing an objective and communicative psycho-motor mechanism scale based on the theory of translation proposed by PACTE. Qualitative paradigm was employed in relation to the translation tasks and the number of participants (no.11). Feedback through semi-structured interview was obtained to find the descriptors in designing the psycho-motor mechanism scale. Two independent raters, familiar with analyzing qualitative data, evaluated the translation works and responses to the interviews. The results of the study could contribute to the field of translation studies. The findings showed that more objective criteria in relation to anchored theories of translation quality assessment were required in the field.

**Keywords:** Dependability, PACTE, Psycho-motor mechanism, Replicability, Translation quality assessment

---

### INTRODUCTION

Translation has been an important testing instrument to evaluate the knowledge of the learners (Waddington, 2001). It is an area where theory and practice are joined, which ideally means that translation scholars apply theoretical ideas in their own practice, whilst continuously improving their own reflective ideas regarding the theory of translation based on their experience in pedagogy.

Word for word or literal translation, however, is a direct indication that learners are only capable of memorizing prefabricated units and grammatical points without any sign of recreating a similar type of argument conveying the previous information in a creative voice. Screening the

information for translating any type of text, therefore, is a requisite skill which critical thinking can facilitate (Chareonwongsak, 2008). In translation, most of the learners are convinced that there is only one correct interpretation of the text (Kim, 2000). In other words, interpretations are not flexible enough to digest and target the text from different angles. However, with the great upheaval through the introduction of new skills and components in translation competence, particularly with the advent of models of Campbell (1991) and PACTE (2003), communicative assessment of the works of translation received paramount importance. Most of the authors seem to agree that translation is most useful as a quick and easy way to present the meaning of words and contextualized items, and when it is necessary to draw attention to certain differences that

---

\*Corresponding Author's Email:  
farahzadatu@yahoo.com



would otherwise remain unnoticed (Ellis, 1992; Harmer, 1991; Nunan & Lamb, 1996).

After this great revolution in translation studies and repercussion of new ideas in the field, in spite of the wide agreement on the utility of translation as a beneficial tool for promoting the flexibility of learners, the manifestation of the assumptions could hardly be traced in any works of translation produced by the learners, especially in the context of Iran. The incongruence, even in modern decade of translation studies, can be justified by the fact that the scholars or stakeholders of the field believe that these subtleties can sometimes be disregarded since evaluating and scoring the translated texts based on currently introduced components places a double pressure on authorities and organizations and that it is a futile practice. As a result, the stakeholders' reluctance mandates the learners to behave according to accepted standards and criteria and never move beyond the borders.

To overcome the problem, some measures such as; developing appropriate scales for measuring the new components of translation competence, can be taken and offered to the teachers, raters, practitioners and especially curriculum developers and program designers to embed new criteria for evaluation of translated texts. Campbell (1991), for example, took a new approach and examined the translation tests to consider translation competence and reveal translation processes rather than comparisons between source and target texts. Lexical variety ratio, average word length and words omitted, hence, set the ground for three features in translation assessment. These features are lexical coding of meaning, global target language competence and lexical transfer competence.

Another added feature in evaluation of translation is the psycho-physiological component introduced by PACTE (2003), which instantiates critical thinking abilities including analysis, synthesis and evaluation as important and effective benchmarks in evaluation of the quality of translation.

Learners who can use abundant data in generating new ideas are, therefore, favored above

those who lack the ability to absorb information to create new ideas to solve problems.

Given this background, the present study was an attempt to evaluate and elicit the criteria that are needed in designing and constructing an objective and communicative psycho-motor mechanism scale based on the theory of translation competence proposed by PACTE (2003).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Translation denotes to the act of reformulating a message from the source language into the target language. It requires first to grasp and convey the meaning of the source language text and next choose an adequate target-language sentence structure to represent the meaning by the selected structure (Malakoff & Hakuta, 1991). The translation process can be evaluated in three stages: (1) translation-related reception of the source language text; (2) transfer of text from the source language into the target language; (3) translation-related production of the target language text (Tarp, 2004, p. 31). Now, the important question is whether translation is the final product and an output of the translator, or it is comprised of a set of procedures that a translator surpasses to render the final product. In other words, the essence of translation as a process or a product is a matter of debate.

Translation theory is concerned with two phenomena: (1) the product-oriented theory of translation which denotes that a written text in a target-language as the result of a translation process has been described and analyzed by a comparison with the respective source-language text and (2) the competence-oriented theory of translation which focuses on translators' internalized knowledge (Lörscher, 1995, p. 884). In defining translation competence, one may focus not only on its product, but also on the processes involved, which signifies that translation is a skill that can be trained and investigated in terms of relevant strategies and/or competencies (Latkowska, 2006). Hatim, and Munday (2004) also mentioned that translation could be analyzed from two different perspectives, process, which refers to the activity of converting a source text into a

target text in another language, and product, which is the translated text.

Irrespective of the fact that translation is conceived as a process or product, an important issue in Translation Studies is the assessment of translation as a competence or performance. However, there is no universal set of criteria to evaluate what we consider strong or weak translation.

Among different models proposed on translation, PACTE group submitted the first draft of their translation model in 1998. However, two years later, they modified and fleshed out the proposed draft and submitted the final version in year 2000. After several years of attempt, the thoroughly revised model appeared in 2003 and it was applied in research done by PACTE group or other research around the world (PACTE, 2003).

The model of PACTE, as a communicative process, was originated from the definition provided by Newmark (1988) who introduced two approaches as semantic and communicative translation. Semantic translation “is personal and individual, follows the thought processes of the author, tends to overtranslate, pursues nuances of meaning, yet aims at concision in order to reproduce pragmatic impact” (p. 46). Communicative translation, on the other hand, “attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership” (Newmark, 1988, p. 46). PACTE’s model is composed of a set of interrelated sub-competencies, which are interdependent, hierarchical and can compensate for one another. It seems that the latter group attempted to validate their theories by the use of empirical tools.

Thanks to the impact of results emerging from evaluating translation competence and its acquisition, the model changed in time (PACTE, 2005). The description of respective sub-competences developed simultaneously with the model (PACTE, 2003), which have been explained as follows:

- Bilingual sub-competence: It is mainly the procedural knowledge needed to communicate in two languages. It includes the

specific feature of interference control when code-switching between the two languages. It is composed of pragmatic, socio-linguistic, textual, grammatical and lexical knowledge in the two languages.

- Extra-linguistic sub-competence: It is predominantly declarative knowledge, both implicit and explicit, about the world in general and in specific areas. It contains bicultural knowledge (about the source and target cultures), encyclopaedic knowledge (about the world in general) and subject knowledge (in specific areas).

- Knowledge about translation sub-competence: It is chiefly declarative knowledge, both implicit and explicit, about what translation is and aspects of the profession. It includes knowledge about how translation functions and knowledge related to professional translation practice.

- Instrumental sub-competence: It is predominantly procedural knowledge connected to the application of documentation sources and information and communication technologies applied to translation such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias, grammars, style books, parallel texts, electronic sources, corpora, searchers, etc.

- Strategic sub-competence: It is the procedural knowledge to be applied as an ancillary tool in translation process and solve the problems encountered. This is an essential sub-competence which affects all the others and causes interrelations among them because it controls the translation process. It intervenes by planning the process in relation to the translation project, evaluating the process and partial results obtained, activating the different sub-competencies and compensating for deficiencies, identifying translation problems and applying procedures to solve them.

- Psycho-physiological components: It includes different types of cognitive and attitudinal components and psycho-motor mechanisms. They include: cognitive

components (memory, perception, attention and emotion), attitudinal aspects (intellectual curiosity, perseverance, rigour, critical spirit...), and abilities like creativity, logical reasoning, analysis and synthesis, etc.

Psycho-physiological components of PACTE (2003) included different types of cognitive and attitudinal components and psycho-motor mechanisms. Among these cognitive components such as; memory, perception, attention span, creativity, logical reasoning capacity, analysis, synthesis and emotion exist. Attitudinal aspects such as; intellectual curiosity, motivation, perseverance, rigor, discipline, critical spirit, creativity, as well as confidence in one's own abilities (self-efficacy) and knowledge about personal limitations are the typical examples. The psycho-motor mechanism ability denotes to the capabilities of the individuals in selecting the main idea in the text, the ability of reasoning, and reading ahead and saying what first comes to mind. In fact, the categorization of the last item as the psycho-motor ability is quite similar to what Facione (2013) elaborated on the definition of critical thinking. Facione (2013) defined critical thinking as the purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual consideration upon which that judgment is based. What PACTE (2003) refers to as psycho-motor mechanism ability is, therefore, one of the offshoots of the psycho-physiological component of translation competence model that is equivalent to the definition of critical thinking proposed by Facione (2013).

Famil Khalili (2011) also attempted to develop a translation quality assessment scale based on the theories of PACTE (2003). He, however, operationalized and developed seven descriptors based on the first two subcomponents. They were bilingual and extra-linguistic subcomponents. The descriptors derived from the bilingual and extra-linguistic subcomponents of PACTE' model were evaluated in terms of five independent

variables. These investigated variables were: (1) the ability to use the language to manifest linguistic functions and speech acts; (2) the ability to use the language according to the socio-linguistic conventions of the target language; (3) the ability to apply the textual conventions of the target language including knowledge of texture (coherence and cohesion mechanism) and knowledge of different genres with their respective conventions (structure, language feature, etc.); (4) the ability to use well-formed sentences involving conformity with the native speakers' knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and phonology/graphology; and (5) the ability to use culturally appropriate language. The developed scale had a considerable reliability and was successful in assessing translation quality and this established the construct validity for the scale.

## METHODS

To develop a communicative and objective scale for assessing the psycho-motor mechanism ability of the translation trainees, a qualitative evaluation was employed to discover the main criteria that should be included in the scale. A purposeful typical case sampling was used to recruit the participants (Creswell, 2013). The researchers chose typical case sampling because the results and findings from interview and translation data were further used to design the translation quality assessment scale. Eleven translators who were first year post-graduate students in the field of master's of translation studies from Allameh Tabataba'i University participated in this qualitative study. All the participants were Iranian female learners and they had taken and passed the main courses in the field of translation studies in their undergraduate studies. Therefore, all eleven participants were familiar with the basic theories of translation.

## Instruments

### *Translation tasks*

The main information used to evaluate and validate the developed scale, was elicited from two translation tasks. Each task include translation of a news story from an English learning website

and this includes learning material from the Guardian ([www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com)). In preparing the texts for translation, several criteria were adopted from PACTE (2005) to include suitable materials for translation. PACTE (2005, p.59) elaborates the selection criteria as follows:

- The texts need to be of the same genre and in the same field for the language to be translated. In other words, the texts need to be the pieces that occur in a specific social setting with distinctive characteristic parameters of organization, structure and communicative function.
- The texts should manifest multiple translation problems. Briefly, they should engage the abilities of inferencing, interpreting, evaluating the arguments, and making deductions in translators.
- The preferred texts are the short ones with approximately 175 to 300 words.
- The texts should contain the genres translated by professional translators in the target language.

Accordingly, the first text was news story about a solution for unemployment in one of the cities in Italy. In the body of the text, the solution to the problem and the mixed reactions of people were all recounted. The story titled “Elmas Finds Novel Way to Cut Unemployment: Pay People to Leave”. It included two hundred and twelve (212) words organized into five paragraphs and reflected an Italian point of view. The second text elaborated on a solution in Indian context. It detailed about the genius opinion of some officials in India who have signaled the introduction of compulsory yoga practice for families. The main benefits of the yoga for them were enumerated and consequently people’s reactions were reported. The story titled as “Modi’s Plan to Change India and the World through Yoga Angers Religious Minorities” and it consisted of two hundred and eleven words organized into five paragraphs.

The rationale behind choosing the length of the texts was that the texts, which had been longer than this size, for example, were not suitable

for being translated in a single session and shorter texts were suspected of not providing enough information for analysis and scoring.

The chosen texts met all the criteria itemized above. They were based on the same genre as their main function was reporting some novel solutions for people’s problems in two different countries. The lexical field in these two texts contained related words and expressions based on the title of the news. The style in these two texts swayed from colloquial speech to formal language as in the news, the direct reports of ordinary people were included as well. Also, the texts were challenging in some parts as they required translator’s ability in inferencing, interpreting, and deducing, since some parts could convey multiple meanings and just the tactfulness of the translator could be exerted for evaluating the previous arguments and finding the best interpretation and deduction. The main feature of the texts was that they were idea-oriented rather than word-oriented and if the participants could guess the idea presented in the text; they could successfully come up with the best translation. The texts were also suitable for advanced level of language proficiency and news stories did not mandate the participants to tap onto their background knowledge as a facilitative tool for translation.

### ***Semi-structured Interview about Problems in Translation***

The researchers developed a semi-structured interview to gain the participants’ retrospective comments about the problems they encountered while translating the two texts.

In the interview, among the seven designed questions, only three of them needed open-ended answers and four of them required limited responses.

As Farahzad (1992) asserted, each questionnaire, interview, or rating scale should be anchored by a solid theory of translation quality assessment. In doing so, the blueprint for designing materials for translation assessment resemble the vertices of a triangle. As an example, in her article entitled “Testing achievement in transla-

tion classes”, Farahzad (1992) maintained that for scoring each type of translation text, it can be scored holistically and the examiner may find it convenient to approach the text as the unit of translation and adopt this system, especially with a large number of students. In every analysis of the clauses, sentences, or the whole text, however, three features determine the score of the translator. The first is accuracy, which denotes the precision in the translation of the source text and the degree of closeness of the translation to the source text. The next feature is appropriateness, conveying the fluency and the correctness of the structures in the sentences. The last element as cohesion (e.g. transitional, appropriate use of pronouns, linkages, etc.) and style of discourse (choice of words, grammatical structures, etc.) also apply to the whole text.

The researchers, therefore, constructed the theory underlying the translation competence and performance and for each vertex of the triangle included accuracy, appropriateness and translation strategies. Accordingly, the first and second questions in the interview were about the accuracy of translation skills of the participants and the third, fourth, and fifth questions were allocated to the strategies that the participants selected to fulfill the translation. The sixth and the seventh questions were the general appraisal of the translators about their abilities in translation. For example, the third question asked the participants about their strategies for translating the words with multiple meanings; whether they used omitting, borrowing, coinage or addition as the useful strategies to overcome their problem in case of the words with multiple meaning. The fourth and fifth questions were about the translation of words with no appropriate equivalent in Persian and the idioms. These two questions also inquired from the participants about their applied strategies as well.

### **Procedure**

In this study, the translation tasks (including two texts of two hundred and twelve words and two hundred and eleven) were first given to a class of

eleven master’s level students at Allameh Tabataba’i University. The allocated time to do the translation was almost one hour. After translation task completed, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all the participants and their oral responses were recorded for later transcription by two raters. Based on the thorough review of the related literature and the results of qualitative analysis of data, the main categories and emerged themes for the researcher constructed scale were obtained.

## **RESULTS**

### **5.1 Obtained Categories from the Interviews**

The following categories were obtained based on the seven questions of the semi-structured interview. At first, all the interviews were transcribed verbatim and the main categories based on the responses were categorized.

#### **Interpretation of the Title**

In the first translation text, the title was “Elmas finds novel way to cut unemployment: pay people to leave.” The first ambiguity in the title was the word “Elmas” which was not clear for some of the translators. “At the first glance, I thought Elmas is a name of a popular person. However, by covering the whole passage I came to the conclusion that it is the name of a city.” So, some of the translators stopped to translate the title until going through the whole text; however, one translator forgot to go back to the title for its translation although she could translate the title.

Also, another problem was the implication in the phrase “pay people to leave” in which the translators were not sure about the subject. Most translators translated the title as a complete sentence, but some resorted to Persian phrases for its translation since they could not recognize subject-verb agreement.

In the second text, the title was “Modi’s plan to change India and the world through yoga angers religious minorities.” Almost all translators made a comprehensive and meaningful translation of the title; however, one of them could not link the verb “anger” to any subject and left the translation as a meaningless phrase with omitting

the main verb in the title.

As it is evident from the performance of the translators in this study, their dependence on the context gives the translated title a communicative utility, which means it can trigger more meaning than its source counterpart and thus become more creatively potent. In other words, the creation of an alternative title is basically a crucial process, whereby some textual aspect is focused on. It is the meanings generated by the text that form the basis of the translator's cognitive processes. Therefore, the creation of an alternative title is attached to the notion that the translator and the source text (considered here as participants in communication) are cooperative. The translator (who has a certain amount of independence) makes his choice meaningful whilst the text delivers the evidence for that choice. However, it has to claim accuracy and economy, even when it creates an alternative title. Although it permits an element of creativity and it is very subjective because it depends on the taste area of the translator, it must be controlled by the demands of the source text (Briffa & Caruana, 2009).

Generally speaking, title translation can be a vexing process and since titles are necessarily contextual, in that their meaning is specified by the text, they become governed by non-detachability (Briffa & Caruana, 2009).

All in all, it was revealed that in the texts chosen as the translation tasks, the interpretation of the title was mostly dependent on the thorough reading of the passages and without appropriate comprehension of the passage, it was quite difficult to have a meaningful translation.

### **Faithfulness**

The second significant category belonged to faithfulness in the translations. A faithfulness error was considered when the target text did not respect the meaning of the source text as much as possible. Candidates were asked to translate the meaning and intent of the source text, not to rewrite it or improve upon it. For example, in the first translation task, for translating the sentence "one of the many reactions was disbelief", the

translator added extra meaning as "the reaction of one of the members was disbelief in the condition that from the beginning they were not optimistic about the project".

Also, in the interview, the translator asserted that since it was a communicative type of translation, it was possible to add other information to make it more comprehensible. However, the extra information changed the meaning. The same translator, in the second translation task added new information to a phrase. In the phrase "suggested an international yoga day on a visit to New York", the translator changed it to "suggested an international yoga day and register it at the international calendar as a ceremony for each year".

Some translators, as they asserted in their interview, could not distinguish between a communicative translation and a creative rendition of the text that could change the meaning.

However, it can be said that, whatever the difficulty in the translation process, procedures must aim at the essence of the message and faithfulness to the meaning of the source language text being transferred to the target language text. In the words of Nida and Taber (1982), translation can be viewed as reproducing the nearest equivalence in the source language to the target language both in terms of semantic and stylistic aspects. Therefore, besides the syntactic elements, keeping with other aspects of the language is significant and the newly produced text should not distract the mind of the reader from the original meaning, which is in contrast to the creative rendition of an original text.

### **Literalness**

A literalness error occurs when a translation that follows the source text word for word results in awkward, unidiomatic, or incorrect renditions. Although several times, it was remarked that the translation should be communicative, some translators delivered a word for word translation. It seemed that they used literal translation for some parts that they did not grasp the meaning of the sentence.

The typical example was the sentence "joblessness rates continue to creep up and the rhetoric

does little to shorten the dole queue” in the first translation task. In this sentence “rhetoric” was translated as “oratory” and “dole” as “grief” and “queue” as “line”. So the produced target text was totally different from the main meaning.

Also, in the second translation task, the phrase “adding that yoga could help in tackling climate change”, the phrase was translated in a way that it denotes that the practice of yoga could change the mood of Indian people since they separately translated the sentence.

Another translator explained that literal translation was the safest way of translation and even better than omitting a part since at least one is observing the honesty in delivering the text. For instance, in the phrase “Piscedda, however, is undeterred, remarking of his on-line critics”, the translator states that the “critical situation was on the line and hot” and the meaning was quite far-fetched and opaque by the literal translation.

Accordingly, some participants added that since they could not comprehend some sentences or phrases, they translated them literally though they knew that the purpose of the task was submitting communicative translation. Also, some of them could comprehend the source text optimally, but their lack of proficiency in the target language made them deliver literal translations.

Literal translation is word-for-word translation and it is very common among languages of the same family (Munday, 2001, p.57). It is a direct transfer of a source language text into a grammatically and idiomatically appropriate target language text. In this translation the role of the translator is restricted only to conform to the linguistic restrictions of the target language.

As it is evident, two languages which are from the same family and share similar grammatical and idiomatical rules can be easily translated into each other. However, in this study, two different languages with various origins were contrasted, so the literal translation of the subjects seemed totally awkward in several cases and that was why the researchers asked the participants from the beginning to translate the texts communicatively.

### **Translation of Words with Multiple Meanings**

There were some words in both texts which had two or multiple meanings. Some translators used the technique of addition to translate them. In other words, besides choosing one meaning for the putative word, they added extra information as a justification for their choice. Also, two of them added a new meaning instead of the established meanings for the putative word. In other words, they used the technique of coinage to come up with a new meaning as they thought that none of the defined meanings suited the word in the specific context.

Others used the technique of omission for the words with multiple meanings. For example, in the phrase “officials have already signaled the introduction of compulsory yoga” in the second text, one translator decided to omit “signal” as the verb in the sentence and change the translation to “yoga became compulsory” instead to make the sentence more comprehensive and understandable. As another example, in the sentence “it is a complete package for everybody’s body and a cheap way to keep you hearty” in the second translation text, one translator that selected the correct translation for the word “hearty” asserted that by comparing this sentence with the one stated in the first paragraph, “it [yoga] is the only healthy way to start the day”, she compared the two sentences with each other and decided that even “hearty” in the above mentioned sentence may have the same meaning.

However, in the case of another translator, since she could not choose the best meaning for the word “hearty”, she decided to ignore all the meaning and elaborate on the word by saying that “yoga is a useful way for purifying the soul”. So, for her, the technique of addition and dummy elaboration was handier as she mentioned even by her type of translation the meaning was quite comprehensible.

All in all, different strategies were applied by the translators in facing the words with multiple meanings such as coinage, addition and elaboration, omission, and borrowing.



It can be claimed that knowing a word involves more than just knowing the meaning of a word. In fact, lexical knowledge consists of various levels of knowledge (De Groot, 2002). Lexical knowledge also includes its various connotations, syntactic constructions, morphological options, and semantic associations. The process of lexical development is often developing the meaning of the word first, and then, developing the grammatical/morphological knowledge of the word (Schmitt, 2000). Therefore, there may be several cases in which the translators are confused with choosing the correct meaning for any word or phrase in the task.

The helping aid, in this regard, is other ancillary features of the words such as the various connotations of that word, semantic associations, etc. Again, in this process, proficient translations are not mystified since they can get help from several features of the words and use translation strategies as mentioned above to come to the appropriate meaning.

### **Translation of Words with no Appropriate Equivalence in the Target Language**

This was another point raised in the translation and subsequent interviews. As an example, in the first text for translation, the phrase “in the hardest-hit parts of the EU” created complications for some translators. Two of them emphasized that they could not completely comprehend the meaning of “hardest-hit” based on the context in which it appeared but could not reflect it in the target language.

Hence, they preferred to translate it as “in some parts of EU” and “in specific areas of EU”. Another problem of most of the translators was in the second text in the phrase as “Modi, an ascetic who is a yoga practitioner”. Their significant problem was that they knew the meaning of ascetic but at the time of the translation, no appropriate equivalence came to their mind. One translated it as “a religious leader and head” in which she added extra information and elaborated. Another one translated it as a “monk” as a close translation to the word. Again, another translator coined a new word for it as “abstinence taker”, yet

another one translated it to “an Indian guy”. So, each of them resorted to a kind of technique to solve the problem for Persian translation though most of them knew the meaning of the word in English. The typical used techniques were omission, elaboration and addition, coinage, etc.

Baker (1992) claims that errors in translation mostly result from the non-equivalence between the source and target languages. However, good translators with encyclopedic knowledge and linguistic knowledge of both the source and target languages know how to deal with them. In case of not finding the appropriate equivalence in the target language, it is suggested that a competent translator should have an inquisitive mind constantly searching for encyclopedic knowledge (Hatim & Mason, 1990, pp. 106-107) so that he/she can acquire appropriate background knowledge to interpret the source language text without making embarrassing errors. In other words, the use of translation strategies is highly suggested and in this study the subjects actually resorted to translation strategies as well.

### **Translation of Idioms**

Like the previous parts, some translators used the correct meaning for the idiom and some resorted to other techniques. The only idiom was in the first translation text as “institutions are raising the white flag”. Three of the translators just changed the tense of the sentence to simple past and translated it literally.

Although they were not deviated from the correct meaning, their word for word translation actually made the paragraph incoherent. To top it all off, one translator even observed the present continuous tense in the idiom and translated as “the institutions are raising the white flag at the moment” which seemed rather awkward. In brief, the literal sense in the translation made it quite deviant from the main concept and purpose of the paragraph.

Another interesting technique was that one of the translators coined a new collocation and conflated the phrase “raising flag” with the concept of “defeat” to render “with doing this, organiza-

tions raise the defeat flag”. It was the sign of creativity of the translator, as the translation denoted she could grasp the concept of idiom but in rendering it, she was somehow skillful as it does not seemed awkward in the paragraph. In her interview, also she pointed that it is possible to play with the word and think on the translation based on the context to submit the best translation. The translator, like the previous ones, tapped on her ability as critical thinking to come up with a meaningful translation.

However, some translated it correctly and found the idiomatic translation in Persian which included the concept of raising the white flag with its connotation as acknowledging the defeat. So, the appropriate idiomatic substitution of it made the paragraph as an original Persian piece of text.

Generally speaking, the strategies were literal translation in which the meaning was deviated from the original concept, using the appropriate idiomatic meaning in the target language, and using literal translation still with preserving the original meaning.

One aspect of lexical meaning in languages is expressive meaning. Baker (1992) defines expressive meaning as a word that cannot be evaluated as true or false because the word in question has to do with the speaker's feeling and experience (p.13). Expressive meaning can pose many problems for translators, especially unseasoned ones. Errors in this respect are classified into wrong translation of idiomatic expressions. This type of problems in translation is the result of inappropriate reading and writing in the source language (Suksaeresup & Thep-Ackrapong, 2009). Therefore, a competent translator has to constantly keep up with new idioms.

However, in our study it seemed that they resorted to literary translation of the idiomatic expression since they wanted to follow honesty as the literal translation even did not change the direction of the meaning in the paragraph. Still, it made the paragraph awkward somehow. Thus, maybe the participants were not very skillful in using their translation strategies comparing to

their command of knowledge in idiomatic expressions.

### **Subject/Verb Agreement**

Another significant problem of the translators was that they mentioned they could comprehend the meaning of the source language, but in translation to Persian, sometimes the sentences became so lengthy that the agreement between subject and verb in terms of plurality was not observed.

For example, in the second text, there was a sentence as “officials have already signaled the introduction of compulsory yoga for India’s famously out-of-shape police officers”. Two of the translators commented that the sentence was long and we forgot to translate the verb “signal” as plural. Also, in these two sentences together, “officials have already signaled the introduction of compulsory yoga for India’s famously out-of-shape police officers said that daily yoga lessons would be offered free”, one translator made an agreement between the subject “officials” and the verb “signaled” but in the second part did not make agreement between “officials” and “said” so translated the verb as a singular one.

The examples of this type were common especially in longer sentences and it refers to the fact that the translators minds were so obsessed with comprehending the English text that they rarely reflected on their own Persian translation. In other words, their main attempt was more focused on comprehension rather than production, since they fancied they were totally fluent in Persian and production of a comprehensible and understandable piece of Persian text was taken for granted.

However, in this study, during the interviews done, it became apparent that most of the errors were related to the length of the sentences in the source language that distracted the subjects’ attention from the appropriate focus on the Persian translation. Few subjects were not thoroughly fluent in Persian but the rest had good command of their first language. Therefore, unlike the abovementioned study the main reason

for the problems in subject-verb agreement was distraction.

### **Misunderstanding (Miscue)**

This was not a common mistake among the translators, but it was seen in several cases. The problem was that the translator did not recognize the word correctly and thereby mistranslated it. Two translators did not recognize the word “waiter” and translated it as “writer” in the first translation task in the sentence “he started as waiter”.

Another example was in the first transition task in the sentence, “governments across Europe dream of finding a magic solution to rising unemployment”. One translator thought that “governments were rising unemployment” and translated it based on this understanding. However, in the interview session, when she read the sentence for the second time, she figured it was the problem under study by the governments. Therefore, she changed her mind about the translation and asserted that it was the result of heedless reading of the sentence.

Yet, another translation problem was in the sentence “the council will pay for ten unemployed locals to take intensive English lessons”. One translator did not recognize the word “council” and translated it as “consulate”. Yet, in the interview, she was cognizant that there is a huge difference between the meanings of these two words and just she misrecognized the word.

Therefore, misreading a word or phrase was a harmful mistake that marred the rendition of the text, since it could change the total meaning of the text, even a more deleterious element than the previous ones since the translators translated the sentences based on a fake understanding of the words or phrases.

When reading a passage, second or foreign language subjects often encounter problems dealing with vocabulary. These problems are often lack of word knowledge, misleading guidance from the text, or mistaken knowledge (Laufer, 1997). As is it duly mentioned by Laufer, vocabulary recognition is a pivotal means in a fluent reading of the paragraphs. The problem is exac-

erbated when mistaken knowledge is accompanied. In other words, the false recognition of a word or a phrase is rather detrimental to understanding of the whole text as was evident in this study in which one translator did not understand “rising unemployment” in the first line of the translation task due to misreading of it and the whole translated text became rather awkward. Since comprehension is the key to understanding a text (Diaz-Rico, 2004), such lexical problems interfere in the process of reading comprehension (Laufer, 1997).

### **The Author’s Point of View**

This last point was general in translation works of the subjects since it was randomly observed in some paragraphs and not the others. The problem was that the translators were sometimes uncertain why the author of the texts included some paragraphs in the texts. In other word, they could not recognize the argument of some of the paragraphs or point of view of the author in them; whether the author was in favor of the argument or not. Subsequently, the inconsistency in lack of comprehending the sense and the argument of the author resulted in incoherence in the reading of the whole translation.

One of the subjects recounted that “position and subsequently the argument of the author in specific paragraphs was not clear for me” and if she were instead of the author she would totally cross out the paragraph as it seemed redundant. Or, one of them added if she were instead of the author she would add more examples for the solutions for unemployment and then she would add that paying people to leave the city would be the best alternative. This way, the author’s stance would be figured out in the text.

As Fish (2003) mentions the practice of translation encourages the reflection on language usage and the exchange of different points of view, raising language awareness. Fish is one of the advocates of using translation tasks in the EFL context to promote the learners’ abilities to recognize the point of view of the author and the main arguments in the text.

Xiaoshu and Dongming (2003) argue that the translation process consists of two steps: First, the translator should carefully appreciate the tone and spirit of the whole original work through words, sentences and paragraphs it is made up and then he starts translating it sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph from beginning to the end, with the reproduction of the original style kept in mind. In other words, if the spirit, point of view, and stance of the author are not recognized in each of the paragraphs, the whole translated text would be inconsistent and incomprehensible. Likewise, in this study, the translators that recognized the author's perspective in each part delivered better understandable translations which approached the trend in communicative translation.

### **The Aspects of the Scale for Translation Quality Assessment**

Generally, based on all the derived categories according to the interview and the translation works, the researchers conflated the mentioned categories to come up with three main components in designing the scale for translation quality assessment.

Based on the categories and the idea of a triangle, for vertices of a triangle, three main themes and subsequently three components were designed. The categories, namely, subject/verb agreement, literalness, misunderstanding (miscue) were summarized under the main theme of "accuracy in comprehension of source language content." The categories, namely, faithfulness, subject/verb agreement and literalness were summarized under the main theme of "appropriacy in production of target language." And as the last step, the categories including interpretation of the title, translation of words with multiple meanings, translation of words with no appropriate equivalence in the target language, translation of idioms and the author's point of view were summarized under the theme of "translation strategies."

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

In the first place, based on the obtained categories, the necessary criteria to construct an objec-

tive and communicative scale were unfolded. Therefore, psycho-motor abilities of the translators like creativity, logical reasoning, analysis and synthesis, in the act of translation, could be assessed with the elicited categories and themes.

Famil Khalili (2011), in a study, operationalized and developed seven descriptors based on bilingual and extra-linguistic subcomponents. The descriptors derived from the bilingual and extra-linguistic subcomponents of PACTE' model were evaluated in terms of five independent variables. These investigated variables were: (1) the ability to use the language to manifest linguistic functions and speech acts; (2) the ability to use the language according to the socio-linguistic conventions of the target language; (3) the ability to apply the textual conventions of the target language including knowledge of texture (coherence and cohesion mechanism) and knowledge of different genres with their respective conventions (structure, language feature, etc.); (4) the ability to use well-formed sentences involving conformity with the native speakers' knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and phonology/graphology; and (5) the ability to use culturally appropriate language. The developed scale based on the above criteria had a considerable reliability and was successful in assessing translation quality and that established the construct validity of the scale.

In another similar study, Orozco and Albir (2002) designed a tool for measuring the concept of translation competence proposed by PACTE. Their multidimensional translation competence questionnaire consisted of three instruments namely, translation notions instrument, translation problems instrument, and translation errors instrument. Their developed questionnaire, likewise, favored high reliability and validity, which could put the ideas of PACTE (2003) into practice.

Alavi and Ghaemi (2013) conducted a study based on the questionnaire developed by Orozco and Albir (2002), which in turn was another practical approach to put the ideas of PACTE into practice. Their study redeveloped and modified the translation competence questionnaire by

Orozco and Albir and assessed the validity and usefulness of their multi-dimensional translation competence questionnaire in the Iranian sample. Alavi and Ghaemi, based on their findings, concluded that the translation competence questionnaire by Orozco and Albir, modified and redeveloped by them, has surely strong psychometric characteristics and good construct validity in the context of Iran. Therefore, their attempt was another manifestation of operationalization of PACTE's (2003) definition in translation competence.

This study was the first attempt to elicit the objective and communicative criteria based on the psycho-motor mechanism concept in PACTE theory of translation competence. In this study, as the design was *ex post facto*, no intervention or observation during the translation class were made or done and only the final product of translation was evaluated based on the obtained responses from the semi-structured questionnaire.

However, when the outcome is tested, it was important to evaluate the input that the learners received. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the course and curriculum developers to include psycho-motor or critical thinking abilities in the program of graduate and undergraduate learners. As Paul (1992) asserted that students learn best "when their thinking involves dialogue or extended exchange between different points of view or frames of reference" (p. 291), and advocated engaging students in dialogical (involving dialogue or exchange of different view points) and dialectical (testing strengths and weaknesses of opposing viewpoints) thinking, listening, and speaking situations in the classroom.

A possible future trend in the field of translation studies might be investigating the subjective nature of the variables involved in translation quality assessment. In this vein, a scale based on the subjective and objective nature of the variables can be constructed in which according to the nature of each variable, subjective or objective measurement of the construct can be done. Therefore, finding the procedures for reducing the observed subjectivity or even objectivity of

constructed scales can be an important concern for interested scholars in the field.

The present scale was developed to gauge translation quality based on a pre-established theory of translation competence. As it was a scale with a reasonable obtained validity and reliability, its concurrent validity manifested that the scale can predict the competence and performance of the translators in two of the critical thinking appraisals. It would be also useful to apply this scale in other educational setting as well. It is recommended, however, to check the validity and reliability of the scale in other educational context or in a broader perspective of translation quality assessment. As this study was not an exhaustive one with numerous participants, it can be a starting point for substantial research to construct objective analytic translation quality assessment techniques in future.

## Reference

- Al Dubib, D. (2013). *Error analysis of subject-verb agreement in the writing of EFL Saudi female students: A corpus-based study*. Retrieved June, 2016 from [http://www.awej.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=376:dalal-a-al-dubaib&catid=20&Itemid=117](http://www.awej.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=376:dalal-a-al-dubaib&catid=20&Itemid=117)
- Alavi, M., & Ghaemi, H (2013). Reliability assessment and construct validation of translation competence questionnaire (TCQ) in Iran. *Language Testing in Asia*, 3 (18), 1-10. doi:10.1 186/2229 - 0443-3-18
- Baker, M. (1992). *In other words: A coursebook on translation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Briffa, Ch., & Caruana, R. M. (2009). Stylistic creativity when translating titles. PALA 2009 Conference, Roosevelt Academy in Middleburg, The Netherlands. Retrieved June, 2016 from <http://www.pala.ac.uk/uploads/2/5/1/0/25105678/briffa2009.pdf>
- Campbell, S. J. (1991). Towards a model of translation competence. *Meta: Transla-*

- tors' *Journal*, 36 (2), 329-43. doi:10.7202/002190ar
- Chareonwongsak, K. (2008). *Critical thinking: A crucial skill in the information age*. Retrieved January, 2015 from <http://www.kriengsak.net/>
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. New York: Sage publications.
- de Groot, A. M. B. (2002). Lexical representation and lexical processing in the L2 user. In V. Cook (Ed.), *Portraits of the L2 user* (pp. 29-63). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Diaz-Rico, L. T. (2004). *Teaching English learners: Strategies and methods*. USA: Pearson Education.
- Duff, A. (1989). *Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (1992). *Second language acquisition and language pedagogy*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Facione, P., A. (2013). *Critical thinking: What it is and why it counts* (6<sup>th</sup> ed). Millbrae: Measured Reasons and California Academic Press.
- Famil Khalili, Gh. (2011). *Developing a valid scale for translation quality assessment in undergraduate translator training program* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Iran.
- Farahzad, F. (1992). Testing achievement in translation classes. In C. Dollerup & A. Loddergard (Eds.), *Teaching translation and interpreting* (pp. 271-278). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Field, A. (2013). *Discovering statistics using SPSS. (3rd ed.)*. London: SAGE.
- Fish, S. (2003). *Is there a text in this class? The authority of interpretative communities*. Cambridge : Harvard University Press.
- Harmer, J. (1991). *The practice of English language teaching*. London: Longman.
- Hatim, B., & Mason, I. (1990). *Discourse and the translator*. New York: Longman.
- Hatim, B., & Munday, J. (2004). *Translation: An advanced resource book*. New York: Routledge.
- Honey, P. (2000). *Critical Thinking questionnaire*. Retrieved January, 2015 from <http://www.PeterHoneyPublications.com>
- Latkowska, J. (2006). On the use of translation in studies of language contact. In J. Arabski (Ed.), *Cross-linguistic influences in the second language lexicon* (pp. 210–225). Cleveland: Multilingual Matters.
- Laufer, B. (1997). The lexical plight in second language reading. In J. Coady & T. Huckins (Eds.), *Second language vocabulary acquisition* (pp. 20-34), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lörscher, W. (1995). Psycholinguistics. In S. W. Chan & D. E. Pollard (Eds.), *An encyclopaedia of translation—Chinese-English/English-Chinese* (pp. 884–903). Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- Malakoff, M. & Hakuta, K. (1991). Translation skill and metalinguistic awareness in bilinguals. In E. Bialystok (Ed.), *Language processing in bilingual children* (pp. 141-167), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Munday, J. (2001). *Introducing translation studies: Theories and applications*. London: Routledge.
- Newmark, P. (1988). *A textbook of translation*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Nida, E. A., & Taber, Ch. R. (1982). *The theory and practice of translation*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Nunan, D., & Lamb, C. (1996). *The self-directed teacher. Managing the learning process*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Orozco, M., & Albir, A. H. (2002). Measuring translation competence acquisition. *Meta*, 47 (3), 375-402. doi: 10.7202/008022ar
- PACTE (2003). Building a translation competence model. In F. Alves (Ed.), *Triangulating translation: Perspectives in pro-*

- cess oriented research* (pp. 43-66). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- PACTE (2005). Investigating translation competence: Conceptual and methodological issues. *Meta*, 50(2), 609-619.
- Paul, R. (1992). Critical thinking: Basic questions and answers. *Think*, 34(3), 28-36.
- Schmitt, N. (2000). *Vocabulary in language teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Suksaeresup, N., & Thep-Ackrapong, T. (2009). Lost in translation: How to avoid errors in translation from English. *Translation Journal*, 13 (1), 1-11.
- Tarp, S. (2004). How can dictionaries assist translators? In S. W. Chan (Ed.), *Translation and bilingual dictionaries* (pp. 23–38). Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag.
- Waddington, C. (2001). Different methods of evaluating student translation: The question of validity. *Met: Translator's Journal*, 46 (2), 311-325. doi: 10.7202/004583ar
- Waddington, C. (2003). A positive approach to the assessment of translation errors. *Actas del I Congreso Internacional de la Asociación Ibérica de Estudios de Traducción e Interpretación*, 2, 409-426.
- Xiaoshu, S., & Dongming, Ch. (2003). Translation of literary style. *Translation Journal*, 7 (1), 1-9.

#### **Biodata**

**Sepeedeh Hanifehzadeh** is a PhD candidate in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). She studies at Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch and her main areas of research interests are in the field of translation studies, assessment of scales, objective and subjective assessment.

Email: sepeed1999@yahoo.com

**Farzaneh Farahzad** is a faculty member of Al-lameh Tabatabai University in the field of Translation Studies. Her main areas of research interests are cultural studies, English translation, language teaching, and interdisciplinary studies.

Email: farahzadotu@yahoo.com