

The Seven Standards of Translation

Ali Darwish

Notice

The following presentation is based on copyright work from Elements of Translation, by Ali Darwish (2003, not published yet).

Please do not remove this notice.

Copyright Notice

This presentation is protected by copyright and may only be used for private study, scholarship or research. Any other manner of broadcast or non-broadcast public performance, diffusion, transmission, editing, copying, hiring, or selling, in whole or in part, is strictly prohibited unless expressly authorized in writing by the copyright holder.

Effective Translation

- Effective translation meets the following seven standards that ensure high reliability.
- “Effective” in this sense is producing a decided, decisive, or desired **effect**.

Standard 1: Accuracy

- Effective translation is accurate.
- Accuracy here refers to conformity to the **information content** of the original, keeping within the **parameters of the source text**.
- An effective translation (not text form) is **true to the original**.
- Accuracy is closeness to the **true value of meaning** of the original.

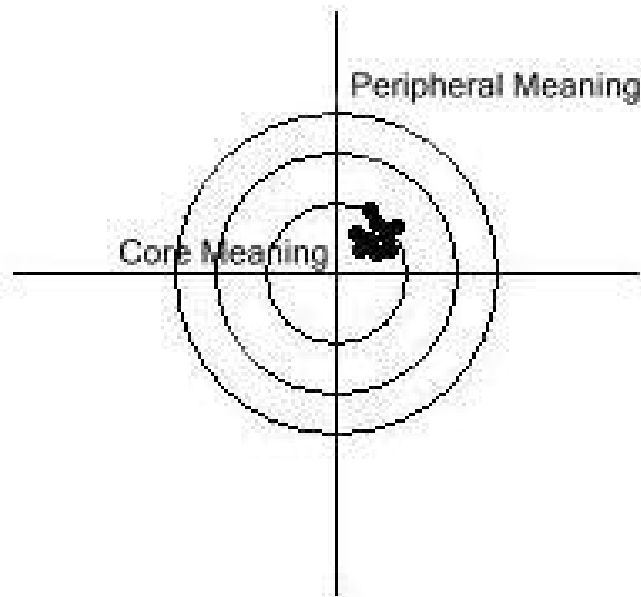
Text Parameters

- Four corners of document
- Inference from within the text not from outside the text
- Intrinsic (essential) information content
- No extraneous information

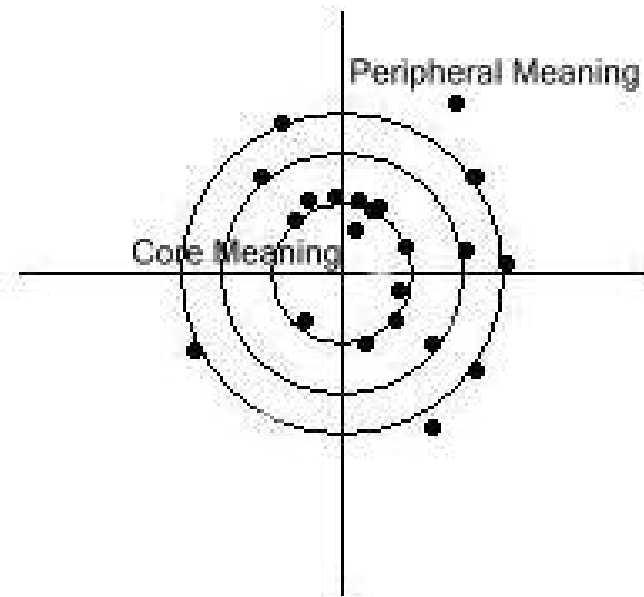
Standard 2: Precision

- Effective translation is precise.
- Precision refers to the quality of being exact and definite.
- Precision is the closest approximation to the core meaning.
- Preserves both intentions: communicative and informative.

Accuracy vs. Precision



TRANSLATION PRECISION



TRANSLATION ACCURACY

Accuracy vs. Precision

- Accuracy is rendition of source language meaning within the spectrum of meaning (the scattergun effect)
- Precision is rendition of source language meaning in full dimensions (the bulls eye effect)

Standard 3: Correctness

- Effective translation is correct.
- It is free from errors of:
 - Meaning
 - Spelling
 - Grammar and
 - Translation-induced or introduced Errors of Fact

Errors of fact

- Do not correct information in the source which you think is incorrect.
- Instead, use annotations to alert the reader to incorrect information, as in the following examples:

Examples

- In-text Annotation Only:

President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1965 [sic].

- Or with Footnote Annotation:

President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1965 [*].

[*] Translator's note: date as appears in the source.

Standard 4: Completeness

- Effective translation is complete.
- Completeness refers to the preservation of the **integrity of information** in terms of content and intentions.
- A complete translation is free from unwarranted or unjustifiable omissions.

Information Integrity

- Information integrity refers to the state of being whole.
- In translation, information integrity refers to the ability to retain the same information in terms of accuracy, correctness, completeness and original intentions (both informative and communicative).

Standard 5: Consistency

- Effective translation is consistent.
- Consistency refers to the uniformity of terminology, presentation, transliteration and transcription presentation and conventions.
- It also refers to the logical coherence of sentences and paragraphs and other textual components such as parallel structure and thought patterns.

- Certain translation situations require morphological changes to a specific term (e.g. noun -> adjective).

Example: Family matters

French: Sujets de famille

Spanish: Materias de la familia

Arabic: مسائل عائلية (lit: *familial matters*)

- However, replacing the term with another one along the continuum (synonyms) renders the translation inconsistent and lacking **internal integrity**.

Internal Integrity

- Textual coherence and cohesion
- Internal referential integrity

Standard 6: Clarity

- Effective translation is as clear as the original text is in terms of what it actually appears to declare.
- Translation-induced ambiguities in the target text contribute to ineffective translations and must be avoided.
- In reconstructing the text in the target language, guard against translation-induced errors, distortions and ambiguities.

Standard 7: Fitness for purpose

- Effective translation is fit for purpose.
- A translation may be accurate, precise, correct, clear and complete, yet may not meet the information needs of its intended readers or users.

Bibliographical Sources

- Darwish, A (2001). *The Translator's Guide*. Melbourne: Writescop.
- Darwish, A (2003). *The Transfer Factor*. Melbourne: Writescop.
- Darwish, A (forthcoming). *Elements of Translation*, Melbourne: Writescop.