

Quality Assurance in Specialized Translation: An Overview of the Process

ELFEKAIR Nada *

Université Alger3, Algérie.

nadamezani@gmail.com

BELGUERNINE Abdelkader

Université Alger3, Algérie.

belguernine.a@gmail.com

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*Corresponding Author

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Abstract:

Quality assurance (QA) in specialized translation is critical to ensuring the quality, accuracy, and consistency of translated texts. In this paper, we examine the various elements of QA and their significance. We also explore current practices and challenges in QA, given the impact that it would have on the credibility and reputation of specialized translation agencies. Additionally, we consider the perspectives of various stakeholders involved in the QA process, the importance of training and professional development in QA, and the impact of new technologies and methodologies on the QA process. Our goal is to provide a comprehensive overview of QA in specialized translation and to contribute to the ongoing discussion of best practices and advancements in the field.

Keywords: Quality Assurance (QA); Translation Review; Terminology Management; Technical Translation; Specialized Translation Industry.

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Résumé : L'assurance qualité (QA) dans la traduction spécialisée est essentielle pour garantir la qualité, la précision et la cohérence des textes traduits. Dans cet article, nous examinons les différents éléments de l'assurance qualité et leur importance. Nous explorons également les pratiques et les défis actuels en matière d'assurance qualité, compte tenu de l'impact que cela pourrait avoir sur la crédibilité et la réputation des agences de traduction spécialisée. De plus, nous considérons les perspectives des différentes parties prenantes impliquées dans le processus d'assurance qualité, l'importance de la formation et du développement professionnel en assurance qualité, ainsi que l'impact des nouvelles technologies et méthodologies sur le processus d'assurance qualité. Notre objectif est de fournir un aperçu complet de l'assurance qualité dans la traduction spécialisée et de contribuer à la discussion en cours sur les meilleures pratiques et les avancées dans le domaine.

Mot clés : Assurance qualité (QA); Révision de traduction; Gestion de la terminologie; Traduction technique; Industrie de la traduction spécialisée.

ضمان الجودة في الترجمة المتخصصة: لمحة عامة عن العملية

الملخص:

ضمان الجودة في الترجمة المتخصصة عملية حاسمة تكفل جودة النصوص المترجمة ودقتها. ويعالج هذا المقال مختلف عناصر مفهوم ضمان الجودة وأهميته، كما يستكشف رهن الممارسات في ضمان الجودة ورهاناتها، نظرا لأثرها الذي ينعكس على سمعة وكالات الترجمة المتخصصة وعلى مصداقيتها. وفضلا عن ذلك، نقف عند استشرافات مختلف الشركاء المعنيين بالجودة في الترجمة، وكذا على أهمية التكوين والتطوير المهني إلى جانب أثر التكنولوجيات والمناهج الحديثة في تطوير ضمان الجودة. غايتنا من هذا المقال هي رسم لمحة شاملة لهذا المفهوم في الترجمة المتخصصة والإسهام في النقاش الدائر حول أحسن الممارسات والتطورات في هذا المجال.

كلمات مفتاحية: ضمان الجودة؛ مراجعة الترجمة؛ الإدارة المصطلحية؛ الترجمة التقنية؛ صناعة الترجمة المتخصصة.

Introduction:

Norms and standards play a crucial role in any industry as they provide a common reference point, help ensure quality, and promote consistency and reliability. In the language industry, norms and standards are particularly important for ensuring effective communication and

avoiding misunderstandings. This includes standards for grammar, spelling, and vocabulary, as well as conventions for translating and interpreting. Adherence to these norms and standards helps to maintain the credibility and reputation of the industry, and ensures that language services meet the expectations and needs of clients.

Some examples of standards and norms in the translation industry include:

1. **ISO 17100:** This is an international standard that sets requirements for translation service providers, including quality management, resources, and processes.
2. **EN 15038:** This European standard specifies quality requirements for translation services and covers areas such as project management, translation process, and quality assessment.
3. **ATA (American Translators Association) Certification:** This program certifies translators and provides a benchmark for quality in the translation industry.
4. **LISA (Localization Industry Standards Association) Translation Quality Metrics:** These metrics provide a standardized way to assess the quality of translation work, including factors such as accuracy, completeness, and consistency.
5. **CAT (Computer-Assisted Translation) Tools Terminology Management:** This standard covers the use of technology in translation, including the management of terminology and translation memory databases.
6. **Interpreting standards:** There are also norms and standards for interpreting, including guidelines for consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, and standards for sign language interpretation.

1. Research questions and hypotheses:

The present paper is motivated by the following main research question: What are the most effective Translation Quality Assurance (TQA) strategies and techniques for ensuring accurate and consistent translations in specialized domains, such as legal, medical or technical translations? To answer this question, we assume that Effective Translation Quality Assurance strategies and techniques, tailored to the specific needs of specialized domains, will improve

translation accuracy and consistency, ultimately leading to better communication and understanding among stakeholders.

This hypothesis assumes that TQA is crucial for achieving high-quality translations in specialized domains, where accuracy and consistency are particularly important for communicating complex concepts and information. It also suggests that TQA should be tailored to the specific needs of each domain, taking into account the linguistic, technical, and cultural challenges that may arise in the translation process. The hypothesis further implies that better communication and understanding among stakeholders, facilitated by high-quality translations, can have positive effects on various aspects of business, research, or social interactions.

1.1 Research methodology:

A mixed-methods approach (quantitative and qualitative) would allow to test the aforementioned hypothesis by providing both quantitative evidence of the impact of TQA on translation quality, and qualitative insights into the specific TQA strategies and techniques that are most effective for different specialized domains. Nevertheless, a descriptive approach to the TQA process in specialized translation could also be valuable in providing an overview of the different TQA strategies and techniques that are commonly used in the industry.

To do so, we delve deeper into the various elements of quality assurance in specialized translation and their significance. We also examine current practices and challenges in QA, and explore how new technologies and methodologies are being developed to improve the QA process. Moreover, we evaluate the role of QA in ensuring the quality of translated texts and its impact on the credibility and reputation of specialized translation agencies.

Furthermore, we will consider the perspectives of various stakeholders involved in the QA process, including professional translators, quality assurance experts, and clients. We will also explore the importance of training and professional development in quality assurance, and the impact that it has on the overall quality of translated texts.

Ultimately, our goal is to provide a comprehensive overview of quality assurance in specialized translation and its significance, and to contribute to the ongoing discussion of best practices and advancements in the field. By gaining a deeper understanding of the role of QA

in specialized translation, we hope to help enhance the quality and accuracy of translated texts, and to promote the growth and development of the specialized translation industry.

2. Quality Management:

Based on the different aforementioned standards and norms, many translation companies created bespoke systems to manage quantitative measurements and assessment of translation quality.

“...coordinated activities to direct and control an organization... with regard to quality ...” (ISO 9000:2005(E), p. 9) that cover the whole process from first client-TSP4 contact to aftercare and complaints mechanism” (EN 15038/ISO 17100)

The goal of Quality Management (QM) is to achieve consistent high-quality translations that meet the requirements of clients and the standards of the specialized translation industry. It plays a critical role in Quality Assurance in specialized translation, as it ensures that translations are of the highest quality, accuracy, and consistency.

In Quality Management, various quality control measures are put in place to ensure that the quality of translations is maintained at all times. This includes regular checks of translated texts, regular training and professional development of translators, and the use of technology and tools to assist in the translation process. Furthermore, Quality Management involves regular assessments of the translation process, feedback from clients and other stakeholders, and the analysis of translation data to identify areas for improvement.

By implementing a comprehensive QM system, the Language Services Providers agency (LSP) can ensure the quality of their translations, improve their competitiveness, and build a strong reputation in the industry.

Once the client request reaches the LSP, a dedicated Project Manager (PM) will be assigned. The designed PM will make every effort to get to know the client brand's preferences and needs as well as the areas in which he operates, in order to choose and manage the right team to work on his project. As soon as the linguistic team for the project is formed, the dedicated PM will ensure that the client preferences, his budget and his deadline are strictly respected, guaranteeing maximum quality in every step of the process. The PM will be always available

to answer any question the client may have, and will also look for opportunities to enrich his project whenever possible (using new work methods, procedures, tools or others).

Many international organizations have a Translation Quality Management (TQM) system in place. The goal of TQM in these organizations is to ensure that the translations produced are accurate, culturally appropriate, and fit for their intended purpose. TQM systems typically involve the implementation of standard processes, quality control checks, and ongoing training for translators and editors. For example, the European Union (EU) has a centralized Translation Service that provides high-quality translations for all its institutions and bodies.

The EU Translation Service has established TQM processes that cover all stages of the translation process, from the selection of translators to the final quality control checks. Similarly, the United Nations (UN) also has a comprehensive TQM system in place that covers all its translation needs. The UN Translation Service provides translations in all six official languages of the organization and is responsible for ensuring that the translations are of high quality and culturally appropriate.

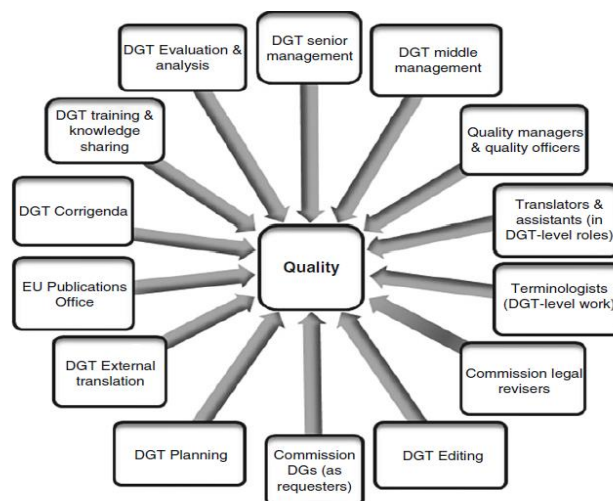


Fig.2 Quality management at DGT level (EU) (Moorkens et al., 2018)

3. Translation Quality Assurance:

As part of the TQM, quality assurance (QA) in translation refers to the systematic processes and techniques used to ensure that translated texts meet specific standards of quality, accuracy, and consistency. It is a set of specific measures and procedures "... providing confidence that quality requirements will be fulfilled" (Hoyle, 2001, p. 59). This includes steps

such as reviewing and editing translations, checking for grammatical errors, ensuring consistency in terminology usage, and verifying the accuracy of cultural references.

In specialized translation, QA is especially important because translations often involve highly technical or subject-specific content, and even small inaccuracies can have significant consequences. As a result, specialized translation agencies and clients may have specific QA requirements and expectations that must be met. TQA can involve a range of activities, including:

a) Translation review:

Translation review is an important step in the Translation Quality Assurance (TQA) process. It “refers to the process of checking a translation in order to detect and correct errors, omissions, and inconsistencies, as well as to improve its quality, clarity, and relevance to the target audience” (Przybysz, & Sini, 2017). It is typically performed after the translation process has been completed and is aimed at ensuring the quality of the translated content. The following are the stages of translation review in the TQA process (DGT, 2015):

1. Preparation: In this stage, the reviewer will be provided with the original source text and the translated target text, along with any relevant instructions or guidelines.
2. Review of translated content: The reviewer will compare the source text and the target text to identify any errors or discrepancies in grammar, style, terminology, formatting, and so on. The reviewer will also check that the target text conveys the meaning of the source text accurately.
3. Documentation of errors: The reviewers will document any errors that they have identified, including details of the type of error, the location of the error in the target text, and a description of the correction that is required.
4. Correction of errors: Depending on the agreement between the client and the translation agency, the reviewer may either correct the errors themselves or raise the issues to the original translator for correction.

5. Final review: After the corrections have been made, the reviewer will perform a final review of the target text to ensure that all errors have been corrected and that the quality of the translation meets the required standards.

6. Approval and delivery: If the reviewer is satisfied with the quality of the translation, they will approve it, and the final version of the translated content will be delivered to the client.

b) Terminology management:

Terminology management is the stage in the TQA process where the terms used in the source text are analyzed, selected, and documented for use in the target language. This stage is critical for ensuring consistency, accuracy, and coherence in the translated text (Hansen-Schirra, 2006).

In terminology management, a glossary of terms is created, which acts as a reference for translators and reviewers. The glossary contains a list of standard terms, definitions, and translations for specific technical or industry-specific terms that are used in the source text. This helps to avoid misunderstandings and inconsistencies in the translation.

The terminology management stage also includes verifying the accuracy and consistency of terms and ensuring that they are used consistently throughout the translated text. This includes checking the terminology used in previous translations and updating the glossary as necessary.

Finally, the terminology management stage may also involve working with subject matter experts or stakeholders to obtain approval for the glossary and terms used in the translated text. This helps to ensure that the translations accurately reflect the intended meaning and that the target language is consistent with the industry or organization's terminology.

According to a recent survey conducted by Lopez Rodriguez & Schaar in 2015, in 27 translation companies of different sizes and from different countries, terminology management is a common practice among translation companies, but the degree to which it is implemented and the tools used vary significantly. The study also reveals a lack of standardization in terminology management practices, which can lead to inconsistent translations and lower translation quality. The authors argue that the implementation of a

comprehensive terminology management process in TQM can contribute to improving translation quality and reducing costs by streamlining the translation process and ensuring consistency in the use of terminology (Lopez Rodriguez, & Schaar, 2015).

4. Quality control:

Quality control stage in the TQA process involves evaluating the accuracy, completeness, and consistency of the translated content. It is the final step in the translation process that ensures that the translation meets the required standards and meets the needs of the target audience (Hansen-Schirra, 2006). The quality control stage involves the following steps:

a) Review and Correction: The translated content is reviewed by a professional translator or linguist to ensure that it is accurate, idiomatic, and meets the target language standards. Any errors, typos, or inconsistencies are corrected at this stage.

b) Formatting and Layout Check: The translated content is checked to ensure that it is properly formatted and laid out. This step ensures that the content is easy to read and that the target audience can understand it.

c) Terminology and Style Check: The quality control stage also involves checking that the translated content uses the correct terminology and style. This step ensures that the content is consistent and that the target audience can understand it.

d) Cultural Adaptation: This step involves checking the translated content for cultural references, idioms, and expressions that may not be appropriate or relevant to the target audience. If necessary, the content is adapted to meet the cultural expectations of the target audience.

e) Final Approval: The final step in the quality control stage is the approval of the translated content by the client or project manager. This step ensures that the translation meets the client's expectations and that it is ready for final delivery.

5. The importance of training and professional development in QA

Training and professional development are crucial components of quality assurance in the translation industry. They play a vital role in ensuring that quality assurance personnel have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their duties effectively. TQA is a complex and multifaceted process that requires a thorough understanding of the translation process, linguistic skills, cultural awareness, and attention to detail (Hayes, (2017).

Professional development and training allow quality assurance personnel to stay current with the latest industry trends and best practices, as well as to acquire new skills and knowledge. The personnel can attend workshops, conferences, and online courses, which provide opportunities for professional growth and improvement. Additionally, regular training and professional development programs can help quality assurance personnel to develop their skills in areas such as linguistic analysis, translation technologies, and cultural sensitivity.

Moreover, training and professional development can enhance the motivation and job satisfaction of quality assurance personnel, making them more efficient and effective in their work. By continuously investing in their training and professional development, quality assurance personnel can ensure that they are equipped to handle the challenges and demands of the translation industry and provide high-quality services to clients (Bhatia, 2004).

6. The impact of new technologies and methodologies on the QA process:

New technologies and methodologies are having a significant impact on the TQA process. The development of translation memory tools and computer-assisted translation (CAT) software has greatly streamlined the translation process, making it faster and more efficient. These tools can automatically generate translation suggestions based on existing translations in the memory, reducing the need for manual translation and allowing for consistent use of terminology and style. Additionally, machine learning algorithms and neural machine translation (NMT) are becoming increasingly sophisticated, leading to improved accuracy and reduced post-editing time (García, 2018).

The rise of cloud-based tools and platforms for translation management has also made it easier for translation teams to collaborate and share resources, reducing the likelihood of errors and inconsistencies. The use of project management software, such as Trello or Asana,

enables translators to communicate effectively with other team members, clients, and stakeholders. The use of tools such as Plunet or XTM, which allow for the automation of QA checks, has also helped to ensure that translations are of the highest quality, with fewer errors and inconsistencies (XTM International, (n.d.).

However, despite the benefits of these new technologies and methodologies, it is important to remember that the human element remains critical to the Translation QA process. Computers are not yet capable of fully replacing the expertise of a skilled human translator or QA specialist. It is important to strike a balance between the use of technology and human intuition, as computers can miss nuances and cultural references that only a human would pick up. The impact of new technologies and methodologies on the TQA process has been largely positive, but it is important to remember that the human element remains critical to ensuring that translations are of the highest quality.

7. Stakeholders involved in the TQA process:

There are several stakeholders involved in the TQA process, each with their own specific role and responsibilities. These stakeholders include (Bendazzoli & Vaz, 2020):

a) Translation Project Manager: This person is responsible for overseeing the entire translation process, from assigning translators and editors to ensuring that the final product meets the client's specifications.

b) Translators: These are the professionals who are responsible for converting the source text into the target language. They play a crucial role in the TQA process, as they are the ones who produce the initial translation.

c) Quality Assurance Specialists: These professionals are responsible for reviewing the translations produced by the translators to ensure that they are accurate and free of errors. They use a variety of tools and methods to verify the quality of the translations, such as style guides, glossaries, and spell checkers.

d) Clients: Clients play an important role in the TQA process by providing clear and detailed specifications for the translation project, including the target language, target audience, and specific cultural references.

e) End-users: These are the individuals who will ultimately be using the translated text. They play an important role in the TQA process by providing feedback on the quality and accuracy of the translations, which can then be used to improve future translations.

f) Technology Providers: These are the companies that develop and provide the software and tools used in the TQA process, such as translation memory tools, machine learning algorithms, and quality assurance platforms.

Each of these stakeholders plays an important role in ensuring that the TQA process is effective and efficient, and that the final translations are of the highest quality.

8. The importance of TQA in specialized translation:

By Specialized translation, we refer to the translation of texts that require specific subject-matter expertise and technical knowledge in a particular field. Specialized translations may include texts from various domains such as law, medicine, economy and finance, among others. The translator must have a deep understanding of the subject matter and specialized terminology, as well as the linguistic and cultural nuances of the target language, to produce an accurate and effective translation (Nord, 2011).

Quality assurance is important for all types of translation, not just specialized translation. However, given the specific nature and technical complexity of specialized translations, quality assurance becomes even more crucial to ensure accuracy and precision in the translation. Specialized translations require a high level of subject-matter expertise, technical knowledge, and familiarity with specialized terminology, which makes them more challenging to translate accurately. In addition, specialized translations are often used in critical contexts, such as legal or medical documents, where errors or inaccuracies could have serious consequences. Therefore, quality assurance processes, such as editing, proofreading, and review by subject matter experts, are essential to ensure the quality and accuracy of the translation (Katan, 2009).

Conclusion

In the world of specialized translation, quality assurance is a critical aspect that cannot be overlooked. Ensuring high-quality translations is essential to maintaining the reputation of the translation agency and building trust with clients. Quality assurance is the process of ensuring that the translated texts meet the highest standards of accuracy, grammar, and cultural appropriateness. It involves a systematic approach to evaluating the quality of the translated content and making necessary changes to ensure that the end product is of the highest quality.

Quality assurance is not just about fixing errors or correcting mistakes, but also about ensuring that the translated content accurately reflects the original source text and that it is culturally appropriate for the target audience. This requires a deep understanding of the source language and the target language along with their respective cultures, as well as a thorough understanding of the subject matter being translated. The quality assurance process typically includes steps such as proofreading, validation, and editing, all aimed at ensuring that the final translated content is accurate and culturally appropriate.

In conclusion, quality assurance is an essential part of the specialized translation process. It ensures that the translated texts meet the highest standards of quality and accuracy, thereby safeguarding the reputation of the translation agency and building trust with clients. This process plays a critical role in ensuring that the translation agency produces high-quality translations that accurately convey the intended meaning, while also meeting the specific cultural and linguistic needs of the target audience.

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