

The Measurement of Quality in Translation

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Overview

- **Technical translation and quality**
 - Translation quality initiatives
 - Quality Control vs. Quality Assurance

- **Our proposal for quality assurance**
 - Checklists
 - Sampling techniques

- **Conclusions**
 - Importance of cost/benefit factors

Translation Quality Initiatives

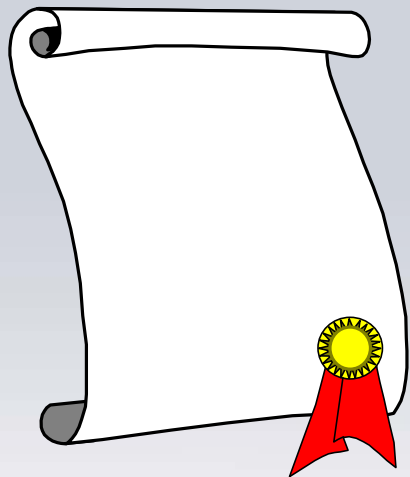
- ISO 9002
- EUATC Quality Standard
- DIN 2345
- ASTM Standard for Language Translation

- SAE J2450
- LISA QA Model

- Academic translation theories and studies
- Private sector methodologies

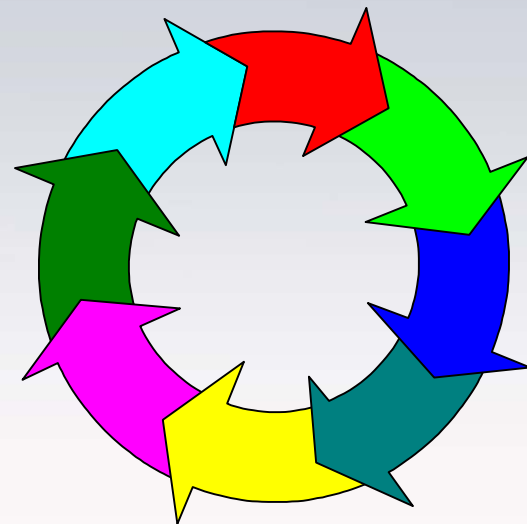
Product & Process Assessment

Translation quality assessment must apply to **both**:



The translated text
(the “**product**”)

The translation process
(the “**process**”)



QC vs QA

Quality Control (QC)

- Quality verification over the **whole** text.
Example: editing.

Quality Assurance (QA)

- Sampling techniques, control of quality over a (statistically significant) **sample** of the whole text.
Example: quality measurement.

Why is Quality Measurement Important?

You can't manage what you can't measure

- It is difficult to **improve** something if you cannot measure it.
- Such measurement should be **repeatable** and **objective**.
- Different persons should arrive at similar assessment for the same piece of translation.

Our Definition of Quality

Functional approach to quality

- Different views of translation lead to:
 - ⇒ Different concepts of quality
 - ⇒ Different assessments

Quality is defined as meeting the needs and expectations of the customer or user.

Customer-driven Considerations

- **Conformance to specifications**

Customer's vs. One's own

- **Fitness for use**

How well the translation performs its intended purpose

- **Value** (= quality & price)

How well the translation performs its intended purpose
at a price customers are willing to pay

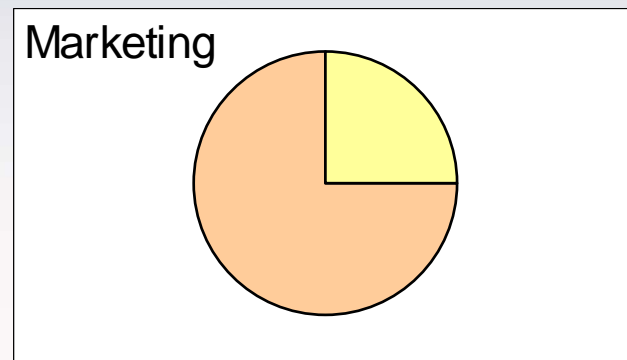
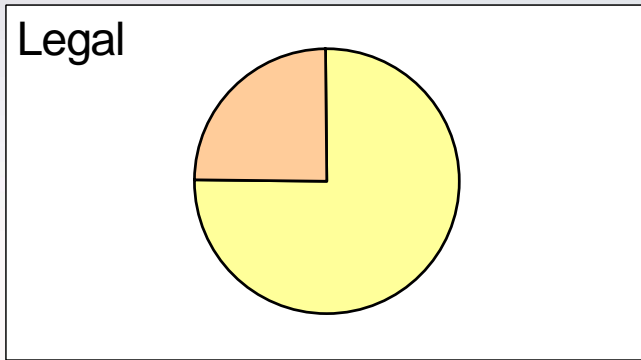
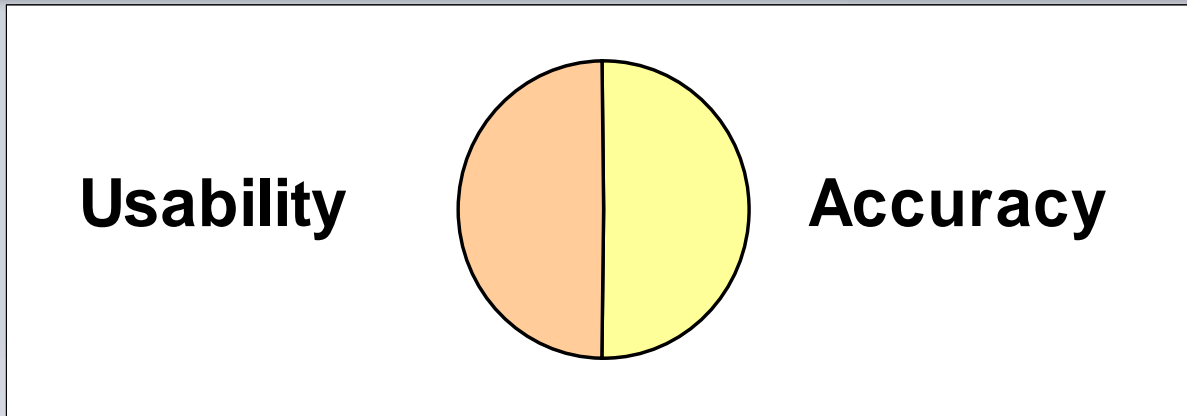
- **Support**

E.g.: Printing, testing

- **Psychological impressions**

E.g.: In-country translators; certification

Translation Quality Factors



Quality Measurement: Our Proposal

What Can Other Disciplines Teach Us?

- Use checklists to collect the data
 - Identify types of errors, issues or problems
 - Determine relative importance of issues (may be different for different languages; e.g., spelling errors in English, French or Italian)
- Use sampling techniques to assess your quality level
 - Determine percent thresholds for various levels of quality
 - Determine whether you have achieved your target quality or not

Use of Checklists

- There are several quality assessment methodologies that rely on the use of checklists – among these the LISA methodology.

Quality Assurance Form

Language:	Reviewer:	Date:	Result: <i>Pass</i>	Comments:		
Client Name						
Project Name						
Project Number						
Project Manager						
		Critical	max. error points + 1			
Number of words	0	Major	5 points			
Max error points allowed	0	Minor	1 point			
Error Category	Minor	Major	Critical	total	max. allowed	
Mistranslation	0	0	0	0	0	
Accuracy	0	0	0	0	0	
Terminology	0	0	0	0	0	
Language	0	0	0	0	0	
Style	0	0	0	0	0	
Country	0	0	0	0	0	
Consistency	0	0	0	0	0	
			Total	0	0	

More elaborate descriptions of the error criteria can be found in the LISA QA model version 1.0 Reference Manual.

Use of Checklists

- There are several quality assessment methodologies that rely on the use of checklists – among these the LISA methodology.
- We would like, however, to advocate the use not of “universal” checklists, but of checklist specifically tailored to each language.
 - Checklists for evaluating translation companies
 - Checklists and tests for evaluating translators
 - Checklists for evaluating translations
 - Limitations of universal checklists
 - Language specific checklists (example, different weight of spelling correctness for different languages)

Statistical Methods

- Defect Counts
 - Statistics on Effort Per Defect
- Defect Density Prediction
- Defect Pooling
- Defect Seeding

Defect Counts

- Useful to obtain a quantitative measurement of how much QC work to do.
- Ratio of new defects to defects solved.
- Statistics on Effort Per Defect
 - In order to estimate the scope of the defect correction work, it is necessary to have good data on the time necessary to fix the various types of defects

Defect Density Prediction

- One way to judge whether the QC work on a translation project is complete is to measure its defect density (the number of defects per page, per 1,000 words or per screen).

Defect Pooling

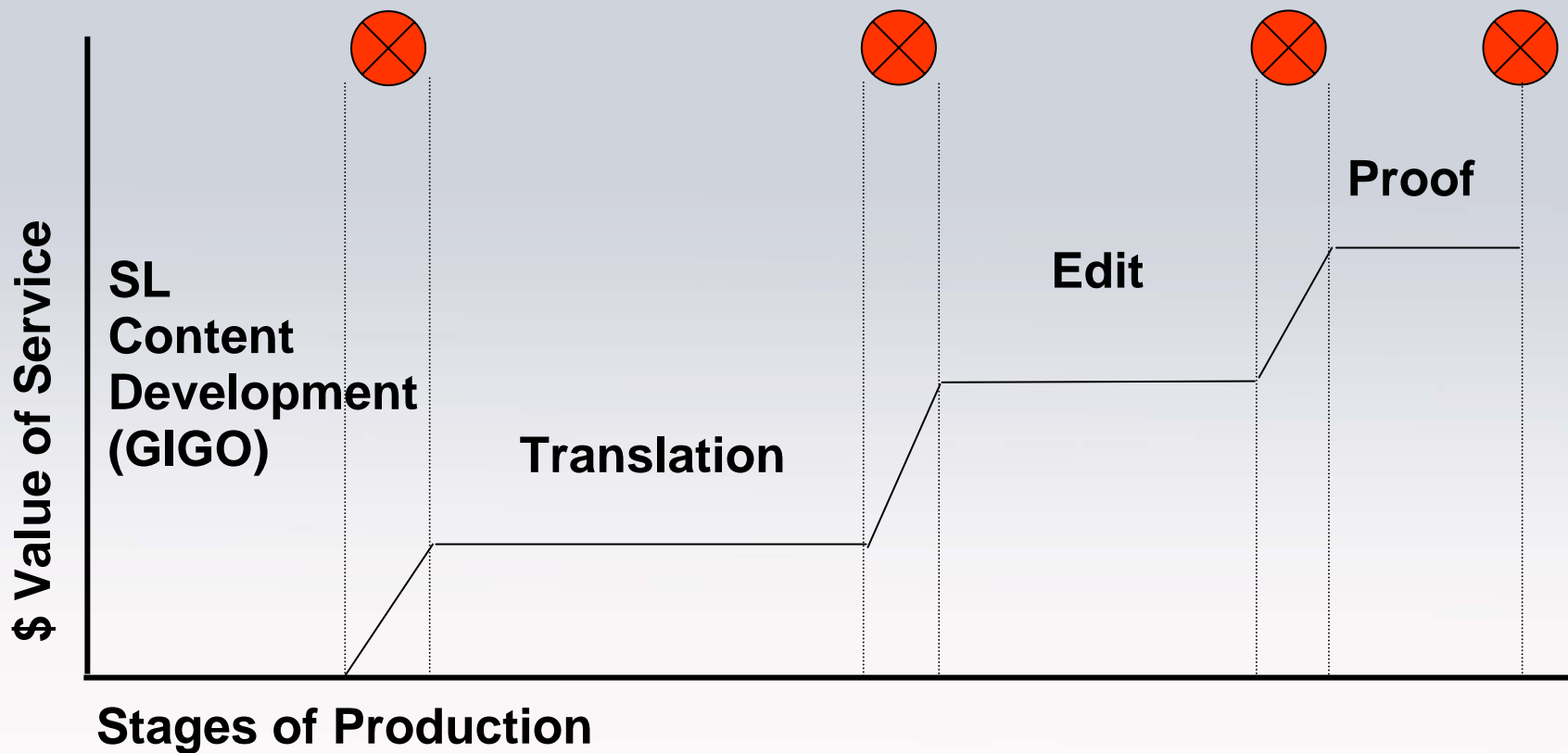
- Defect pooling is a simple defect prediction technique that separates the defects found in a translation sample into two pools.
- Depending on the number of defects found in either of the two pools (but not in both) it is then possible to estimate the defects that have not been found in the sample.
- This number can then be used to estimate the number of defects in the entire project.

Defect Seeding

- Defect seeding is a statistical technique in which a sample of a population is extracted and used to estimate the total population.
- The technique works by deliberately inserting (“seeding”) defects in a complete translation that will be QCed.
- The ratio of the seeded defects found compared to the total number of defects seeded provides a rough estimate of the total number of translation defects yet to be found.
- A common problem with this type of technique is forgetting to remove the errors deliberately inserted.

Inspection Points

Key Principle: Reject “defective material” at its lowest value



Customer-driven Considerations



Importance of Quality

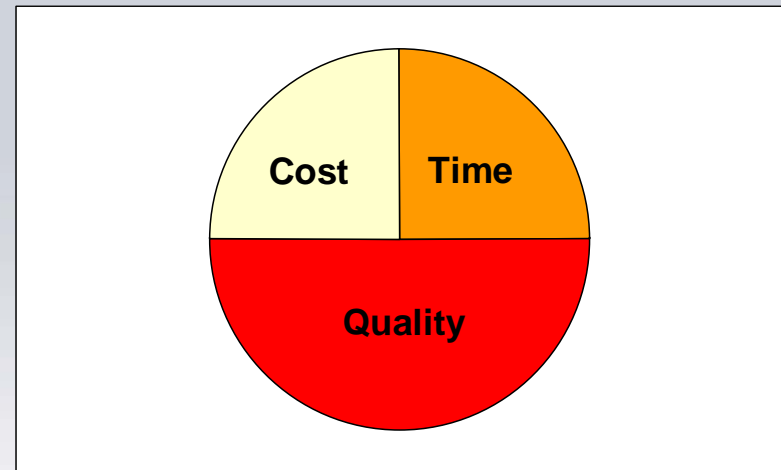
Quality as a Competitive Weapon

Good Quality

⇒ Higher Profits

Good quality of
translation (product) and
service (process)
can pay off in higher profits

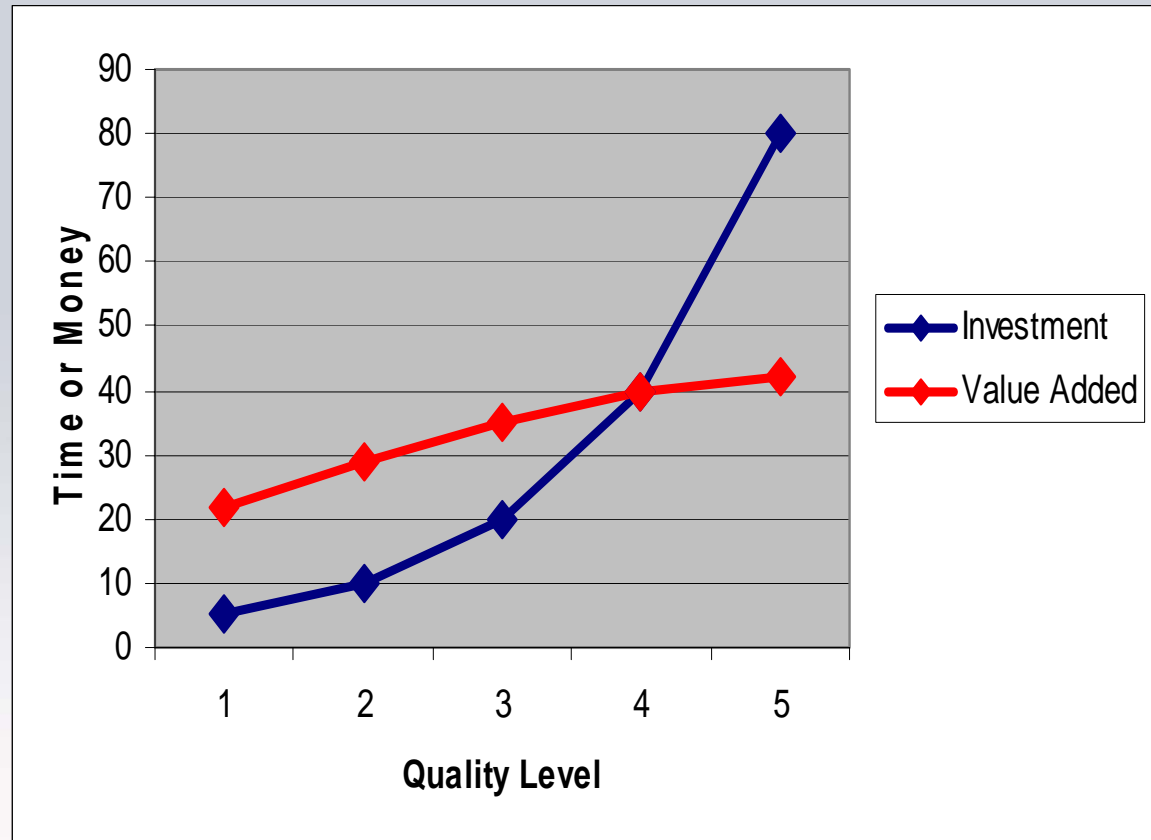
Improving on quality can reduce costs *and*
speed up time-to-market



Cost/Benefit Analysis

Quality measurements are a tool to determine the optimal level of quality.

They could help us identify a cut-off point.



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For more information about translation issues, visit

TranslationQuality.com

Biographical Notes on the Authors

Riccardo Schiaffino

Riccardo Schiaffino worked as translator, translation manager and special software translation project lead for a major software company, and now leads a small company he established with a few experienced colleagues. As a translation manager, Riccardo worked on the improvement of translation quality and on translation quality metrics and tools. He holds an MA degree in Translation, and has been working in translations for over 20 years, first in Italy and then in the U.S. Riccardo is ATA accredited.

Franco Pietro Zearo

Franco Pietro Zearo is a project manager with Lionbridge Technologies in Boulder, Colorado. He holds a degree in translation from the Advanced School of Modern Languages for Translators and Interpreters at the University of Trieste, Italy, and earned an MBA from the University of Phoenix. Before joining Lionbridge in 1996, he worked as a freelance technical translator in Italian, English, and Russian. At Lionbridge, he has held positions in translation, localization analysis, presales, and cultural and globalization consulting. He has been responsible for translation quality on numerous projects for many Fortune 500 clients. In his previous role as senior technical translator, he helped define best practices for the translation department.