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Malcolm Williams. *Translation Quality Assessment: An Argumentation-Centred Approach*. Ottawa: Univeristy of Ottawa Press, 2004, 188 pp.

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*Translation Quality Assessment: An Argumentation-Centred Approach*, by Malcolm Williams, a professor at the University of Ottawa, takes a new outlook on how the evaluation of translations should be conducted. The first main section of this study introduces the topic of developing an argumentative-centered translation quality assessment model. The second section tests and refines the model, defining an overall quality standard.

The first half of the book outlines six major aspects of the new assessment model that Williams proposes, including, argument macrostructure, propositional functions, conjunctives, types of arguments, figures of speech and narrative strategy. These aspects form the framework that Williams uses to construct his arguments and theories.

Chapter 1 showcases several different translation quality assess-

ment models that are currently in use or that have been developed recently along with their flaws. Williams uses these models to strengthen support for his own model by shedding light upon the major fallacies of pre-existing models. He also investigates various translation strategies, going on to say that “All translation quality assessment models are concerned with error typology, and the typology differs according to the approach and the linguistic or philosophical theory adopted. In turn, the notion of error is of necessity predicated on a prior notion of acceptability.”

The following two chapters more thoroughly discuss the six major aspects of assessment and argumentation theory as well as the idea of rhetorical topology. Williams uses these chapters to explain why microtextual practices in the translation industry, focusing on lexical and morphosyntactic units at the subsentence level to be applied to short passages of text, need to take on a more macrotextual approach. This allows for the assessment of “each passage as an integral part of a whole, to take account of the fact that the translation of the short passage is, in

principle at least, determined in part by, and in its turn influences, the text as a whole, or to evaluate the logic and coherence existing even within the sample passage itself.”

The discussion of the use of rhetorical topology outlines the argumentative strategy that Williams uses to further showcase the need for major changes to current translation quality assessment strategies. The use of organizational relations and inference indicators, as outlined in the chapter on rhetorical topology, supports the notion of greater integration of macrotextual assessment and the idea that a translation should be viewed as a whole work rather than broken down into a series of individual sentences and paragraphs.

Williams begins the second section of the book by demonstrating how the application of argumentation theory can be applied to current microtextual assessment standards and how this could make major improvements to the current systems of assessing quality. Argumentation theory, says Williams, can “serve to remove some of the subjectivity and randomness from decisions on the acceptability of trans-

lations.” The author then goes through the daunting process of “setting and defining levels of acceptable and unacceptable quality and determining the acceptability threshold the level of tolerance of errors.” Williams begins this process by setting up a distinct analytical process of analyzing his model for assessing the quality of certain translations. He then analyzes several texts in this manner. After creating a comparative summary of the results, Williams uses the final analyses to refine the proposed model.

Issues of different quality standards arise often in this section of the book in that it explores the perils of quantification and the “current mantra of zero defects,” which more frequently constitute the quality standards used today. According to Williams, his approach “is predicated on the possibility and necessity of accuracy and of a translation that reads as though it was in fact originated in the target language.”

Malcolm Williams uses *Translation Quality Assessment: An Argumentative-Centred Approach* to present an improved method for rating translations as acceptable. He dissects many of the previous models of transla-

tion quality assessment, thoroughly explaining them, as well as pointing out strengths and weaknesses in each. Williams ideas for quality assessment faithfully adhere to the viewpoint that

macrotextual analysis and the overall reasoning and argument structure can more thoroughly and accurately determine the acceptability of a text.

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