



**A CORPUS-BASED APPROACH WITHIN JULIANE HOUSE'S  
MODEL FOR TRANSLATION QUALITY ASSESSMENT**  
**Uma Abordagem Baseada em Corpus Situada no Modelo de  
Juliane House para Avaliação da Qualidade da Tradução**

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**Abstract**

*This paper proposes an overt adaptation to Juliane House's Model for Translation Quality Assessment (hereafter HMTQA) (House, 1997) in order to merge its macro-analytical framework with a lexical and syntactic corpus-based approach to evaluate translation quality. To do so, firstly we introduce HMTQA; secondly we argue why a corpus-based approach, along with aligning source text (ST) to translated text (TT), may play an operative role within HMTQA; finally we present an application of our proposal. It concerns the translation of *O papel do Itamaraty* from Portuguese into English: this text provides a general introduction to the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) from the point of view of this governmental body.*

**Key-words:** *translation studies; applied linguistics; translation quality assessment; corpus-based approach.*

**Resumo**

*O presente artigo constitui uma proposta de adaptação transparente do Modelo de Avaliação da Qualidade de Tradução desenvolvido por Juliane (doravante HMTQA) (House, 1997), que almeja unir a estrutura macroanalítica desse modelo a uma abordagem léxico-sintática baseada em corpus para avaliar a qualidade em tradução. Para tanto, em primeiro lugar apresentamos o HMTQA; em segundo lugar, indicamos por que uma abordagem baseada em corpus, combinada ao alinhamento entre o texto de partida (TP) e o texto traduzido (TT), pode ser proveitosa ao HMTQA; por fim, expomos uma aplicação de nossa proposta. Esta se ocupa da tradução de *O papel do Itamaraty* do português para o inglês: esse texto proporciona uma introdução geral ao Ministério das*





*Relações Exteriores do Brasil (MRE) sob o ponto de vista desse órgão governamental.*

**Palavras-chave:** *estudos da tradução; linguística aplicada; avaliação da qualidade de tradução; abordagem baseada em corpus.*

## 1. Introduction

Just twenty years after the first edition of *A Model for Translation Quality Assessment* (House, 1977), Juliane House (1997) presents a new point of view on her Model for Translation Quality Assessment (HMTQA) in a work called *Translation Quality Assessment: A Model Revisited* (House, 1997). Balancing the potentials and pitfalls of HMTQA, it is possible to realize the model still aims the same in terms of assessing product quality:

The task of the model for translation quality assessment is therefore not to ask whether a particular translational blueprint, task, or attempt is or was licensed (*sic*), but to assess as objectively as possible what has emerged from the set of circumstances inside which the translation task or purpose was conceived (House, 1997: 164-165).

Recalling the classic concepts of *literal translation* and *free translation*, HMTQA terms the first one *overt translation* and the latter *covert translation*. However, they do not concern linguistic elements by themselves, but textual purpose and design. Overt translation is the translation type to be chosen here for the assessment of translated text (TT) called *The Ministry*, whose source text is entitled *O papel do Itamaraty*: it is a short introduction to the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) available in the website of the institution. On the concept of overt translation House states:

In *overt* translation, the function of the translation is to enable its readers access to the function of the original in its original linguacultural setting through another language. This means that there can be no simple functional equivalence, rather a type of “second level” function must be posited, which allows the translation receptor a view of the





original through a foreign language while clearly operating in a different discourse world (House, 1997: 29; emphasis by the author).

Another feature of HMTQA is the distinction between an overt translation and an overt version:

(...) *Overt* translation (...) has a *second level function* that is not different but is in fact closely related to the function of the original text in that it allows target culture readers access to the original function. If, however, different secondary functions were added to the translation, an *overt* version would result in the terms of my model, i.e., a bilingual textual operation which is no longer considered to be a translation (House, 1997: 104; emphases by the author).

Although HMTQA does not design aligning source text (ST) to TT as a *conditio sine qua non* for analyzing and comparing them, there is no instruction in the model limiting or denying this possibility. The aspect which should be closely observed is the need to assess TT in regard to the global picture. Thus, aligning ST to TT is the first instance of adaptation to HMTQA.

Since translation quality assessment regards translation mistakes as essential research data and aims to avoid value judgments, we introduce the second instance of adaptation to HMTQA: the use of corpora to check if lexical and syntactic features of TT preserve the sense expressed through ST. According to Bowker & Pearson (2002: 9):

(...) *Corpus linguistics requires the use of a corpus. Strictly speaking, a corpus is simply a body of text; however, in the context of corpus linguistics, the definition of a corpus has taken on a more specialized meaning. A corpus can be described as a large collection of authentic texts that have been gathered in electronic form according to a specific set of criteria. There are four important characteristics to note here: 'authentic', 'electronic', 'large' and 'specific criteria'. These characteristics are what make corpora different from other types of text collections (...).*





Along with these authors, our theoretical basis on the corpus-based approach comes from Sinclair (1991); Biber, Conrad & Reppen (1998); Hoey (2003); and Berber Sardinha (2004). Two corpora play the role of interactive reference works for assessing lexical and syntactic adequacy regarding translation into English: *The Corpus of Contemporary American English*, or COCA, by Davies (2008), and *BYU-BNC: The British National Corpus*, or BYU-BNC, by Davies (2004).

Our approach to the evaluation of *The Ministry* relies on a large amount of authentic data, which can be explored through the use of computer focusing the search for empirical patterns of English usage.

Thus, this paper is divided into three sections:

2. Description of HMTQA – (House, 1997);
3. Adaptations to HMTQA – Aligning ST to TT and adopting a corpus-based approach to evaluate Register; and
4. Application of our proposal of revision to HMTQA.

## 2. Description of HMTQA – (House, 1997)

Taken together, the four levels proposed in the revised HMTQA (see Table 1) may be regarded as a result of the following reflection:

Instead of taking the psychological category of readers' "intuitions and beliefs" as the cornerstone of translation evaluation, the model presented here is a text-based, linguistic one in the broad Hallidayan conception of linguistics, which looks at language in social life and focuses on texts, the products of human decision processes that are the most tangible and least ambiguously analyzable entities (House, 1997: 118).

Stating some translated texts are 'good' whereas other ones are 'bad' is not in accordance with the point of view presented above. Indeed, thinking in terms of 'adequate' or 'inadequate' pieces of translation submitted to evaluation, House does not intend to oppose analysis to judgment, since "(...) linguistic analyses provide a basis for judgement (*sic*) and grounds for arguing an evaluative judgment" (House, 1997: 118).



Language/Text	Register	Genre	Function of the Individual Text
– Geographic Origin – Social Class – Time	– Field – Tenor – Mode	– Generic purpose	– Textual Profile (ST) – Statement of Quality (TT)

**Table 1: The four levels of HMTQA in House (1997)**

### 2.1. The first level: Language/Text

It recalls the ‘Dimensions of Language User’ from the original HMTQA in House (1977). They relate the author of ST to the social context in which he produced his work. TT is regarded as a means to try reproducing these features. The three subcategories concerned here are termed ‘Geographic Origin’, ‘Social Class’, and ‘Time’.

Geographic Origin deals with the so called ‘regional dialect’, i.e., “(...) features which mark an author’s geographical origin (regional dialect), where the unmarked case is the national standard language (...)” (House, 1997: 38).

Social Class deals with the so called ‘social dialect’, i.e., features indicating “(...) an author’s (...) position on a social scale (social dialect), where the unmarked case is the construct of the educated middle class speaker of the standard language” (House, 1997: 38).

In turn, Time refers “(...) to those features which provide clues to a text’s temporal provenance” (House, 1997: 38).

This way, Language/Text provides means for identifying lexical, syntactical, and phraseological features which conform to ST’s standard language or deviate from it, giving clues to an individual way of making sense through the use of language. Based on this kind of evidence, it is possible to evaluate whether reproducing idiosyncratic features is a relevant procedure concerning a given piece of translation.



## 2.2. The second level: Register

As the concepts of *field*, *mode*, and *tenor*<sup>1</sup> assume a major role regarding Register, House describes them like this:

***Field** captures social activity, subject matter or topic, including differentiations of degrees of generality, specificity or “granularity” in lexical items according to rubrics of specialized, general and popular. **Tenor** refers to the nature of the participants, the addresser and the addressees, and the relationship between them in terms of social power and social distance, as well as degree of emotional charge. Included here are the text producer’s temporal, geographical and social provenance as well as his intellectual, emotional or affective stance (his “personal viewpoint”) vis a vis the content she is portraying. Further, **Tenor** captures “social attitude,” i.e. different styles (formal, consultative and informal). **Mode** refers to both the channel – spoken or written (which can be “simple,” i.e., “written to be read” or “complex,” e.g. “written to be spoken as if not written”), and the degree to which potential or real participation is allowed for between writer and reader. Participation can be “simple,” i.e., a monologue with no addressee participation built into the text, or “complex” with various addressee-involving linguistic mechanisms characterizing the text (...) (House, 2001: 248; emphases by the author).*

So, recalling the original model, presented in *A Model for Translation Quality Assessment* (House, 1977), *field*, *mode*, and *tenor* correspond to the Dimensions of Language Use employed for Register analysis (see Table 2).

1. Proposed by Halliday (see Halliday & Martin, 1993).





Register		
Field	Tenor	Mode
Subject matter and social action	Participant relationship – social role relationship – social attitude	Medium (simple/complex)
		Participation (simple/complex)

**Table 2: The three levels of Register in HMTQA in House (1997)**

Register allows the identification of relations connecting a) the theme or topic concerned in the text to b) the interaction between individuals and c) the means employed for the performance of this interaction. In other words, Register deals with a) what is going on; b) who is taking part on it and what their roles are; and c) how these individuals play their roles.

As Field concerns the subject matter and social action, according to House, it is:

*(...) Very broadly defined referring not only to the text producer's occupational and professional activity but also to the field or topic of the text in its widest sense of area of operation of the language activity as well as details of the text production as these can be deduced from the text itself (the notion of "register" is relevant here) (House, 1997: 42; emphases by the author).*

As a subcategory of Register, Field refers to delimitations such as 'the language of advertising', 'the language of science', 'the language of diplomacy' etc.

The second subcategory of Register, termed Tenor, concerns the Participant relationship, which is divided into a) Social Role Relationship and b) Social Attitude. The first one is determined by the predominance of the author's/narrator's point of view (asymmetry, i.e., an implied undisputed 'authority') or the open suggestion for the introduction of reader's point of view – (symmetry, i.e., a somewhat solidarity and





authorization for the addressee to interpret facts by his own). In turn, Social Attitude is determined by the levels of distancing or closing in between the author/narrator and the reader, which establish a relative formality or informality.

Tenor, therefore, refers to roles assumed by the participants and the degree of social power involved in each of them.

The third subcategory of Register, termed Mode, is divided into a) Medium and b) Participation. The first one is determined by the distinction between oral and written communication; it is simple when the author of ST just aims his text to be read, the case of a newspaper or report, for instance. An instance of complex medium is a political address, which usually is carefully planned through written language and, later on, spoken to the audience at a public performance. In turn, Participation may be simple or complex: it is determined by the distinction between monologue and 'pure' dialogue or dialogue with 'combined features' (see House, 1997: 39).

Mode refers to the means employed for the production of a given text.

### 2.3. The third level: Genre

Regarding HMTQA, House defines Genre this way:

*(...) Genre is a socially established category characterized in terms of occurrence of use, source and a communicative purpose or any combination of these. Inside my model, genre might serve as a category linking register (which realizes genre) and the individual textual function (which realizes genre) (House, 1997: 107).*

Genre refers to text types considering conventional features, motivation and aims; so, it may concern 'children books', 'financial reports', 'journalistic articles' or even 'institutional websites'. Textual design and textual purpose are closely connected with the concept of Genre employed within HMTQA.





#### 2.4. The fourth level: Function of the individual text

Last but not least, it concerns a) the elaboration of ST's Textual Profile and b) the elaboration of TT's Statement of Quality.

On the elaboration of ST's Textual Profile House states:

*By using situational dimensions for opening up the source text, a particular textual profile is obtained for the source text. This profile which characterizes the function of the text is then the norm against which the quality of the translation text is to be measured, i.e., a given translation text is analyzed using the same dimensional scheme and at the same level of delicacy, and the degree to which its textual profile and function match or do not match the source text is the degree to which the translation text is more or less adequate in quality (House, 1997: 42-43).*

This is a distinctive aspect of HMTQA in relation to other models for evaluating quality in translation: the need for reading ST in advance, determining what it demands to be preserved in TT. Approaching ST and TT in a virtually simultaneous manner may decrease the evaluator's ability to focus on the global picture before him.

In turn, the elaboration of TT's Statement of Quality concerns the observation of the following principle of HMTQA: "in the presentation of the results of the analysis of TT, I restricted myself to listing the mismatches along the various dimensions" (House, 1997: 45). Thus, the objective is to demonstrate in which points TT has presented (or not) failures in relation to the preservation of ST's function.

It is worthy realizing that the search for errors along the various dimensions aims at the identification of aspects demanding improvement instead of the presentation of clear-cut 'solutions'. As HMTQA concerns an analysis, comments on every detail of TT submitted to evaluation should not be expected.





### 3. Adaptations to HMTQA – Aligning ST to TT and adopting a corpus-based approach to evaluate Register

#### 1<sup>st</sup> adaptation

Aligning *O papel do Itamaraty* (ST) to *The Ministry* (TT) is intended to allow immediate comparison between lexical and syntactic means employed in the first one and the correspondent linguistic elements employed in the second one. In order to do so, we recur to the elaboration of a vertical table through the program Microsoft Word; the segmentation divides the texts into paragraphs and sentences.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> adaptation

Making use of corpora to evaluate quality in translation concerns the second level of HMTQA, termed Register. Classifying linguistic elements in terms of Field, Mode, and Tenor, it is possible to verify through research in corpora whether the patterns of English usage (the target language) are adequately or inadequately employed. This may be regarded as an operative procedure since HMTQA focuses on product evaluation.

Two corpora play the role of interactive reference works here: *The Corpus of Contemporary American English*, by Davies (2008) – which amounts to 385 million words; and *BYU-BNC: The British National Corpus*, by Davies (2004) – which amounts to 100 million words. Recalling the definition of corpus by Bowker & Pearson (2002), both corpora are sources of authentic data as they: a) are compilations of texts which represent a variety of genres; b) are presented in electronic format, allowing constant update; c) are considerably large, surpassing by far the usual amount of data available in dictionaries and other kinds of reference works; and d) were designed according to specific criteria in order to record the American and British varieties of English in use.

On the meaning of words, Biber, Conrad & Reppen (1998: 26) state that:

*(...) One of the advantages of corpus-based research is that the corpus can be used to show all the contexts in which a word*





*occurs. From these contexts, it is then possible to identify the different meanings associated with a word. Traditionally, citation slips were used for similar purposes. The primary difference is that citation slips represent only those contexts that a human reader happens to notice (in some cases representing only the more unusual uses). In contrast, a corpus-based listing provides an exhaustive listing of all occurrences and contexts.*

This piece of writing is useful for clarifying why a corpus-based approach may be an important means to improve HMTQA: it gives clues to lead the evaluator to avoid value judgments wherever it is possible.

Since our corpus-based approach within HMTQA depends on the research of Key Words in Context, it is important to define the concept of concordance; according to Berber Sardinha (2004: 187):

Concordance is a listing of occurrences of a certain item, where the search word (the one we intend to investigate) is displayed in the center of the page (or computer screen). The search word is accompanied by its original context, i.e., the words which co-occur with it in the corpus concerned<sup>2 and 3</sup>.

Concordances are particularly useful for investigating language usage because they present data in context. In fact, they are closely related to the following statement by Sinclair (1991: 7):

*The recognition that form is often in alignment with meaning was an important step, and one that cut across the received orthodoxy of the explanation of meaning. Soon it was realized*

2. In the original: "A concordância é uma listagem das ocorrências de um item específico, dispostas de tal modo que a palavra de busca (aquela que se tem interesse em investigar) aparece centralizada na página (ou tela do computador). A palavra de busca é acompanhada de seu contexto original, isto é, das palavras que ocorreram junto com ela no corpus".

3. It is important to note that displaying the search word in the center of the page is not a *conditio sine qua non*, although this is the usual manner adopted by corpora research tools. Both *The Corpus of Contemporary American English* (Davies, 2008) and *BYU-BNC: The British National Corpus* (Davies, 2004), for example, display the search word in the center of the concordance line instead of the center of the page.





*that form could actually be a determiner of meaning, and a causal connection was postulated, inviting arguments from form to meaning. Then a conceptual adjustment was made, with the realization that the choice of a meaning, anywhere in a text, must have a profound effect on the surrounding choices. It would be futile to imagine otherwise. There is ultimately no distinction between form and meaning.*

Thus, in order to analyze the second level of HMTQA, termed Register, we rely on how people have actually employed lexical and syntactic means in text form instead of relying just on our own knowledge on English usage. We are particularly interested in the “five questions that linguists (and learners) need to ask about any word” (Hoey, 2003: n.p.):

- 1 *What does the word mean?*
- 2 *What words does it associate with?*
- 3 *What meanings does it associate with?*
- 4 *What grammatical functions does it associate with?*
- 5 *What positions in the text does the word favour?* (Hoey, 2003: n.p.).

Regarding the first two questions, the meaning of a word depends not only on the word by their own, but on its combination with other lexical units. Collocation may have a conventional basis (i.e., the expression in focus presents an overt meaning) or an idiomatic basis (the expression in focus presents a covert meaning):

Collocations merge into idioms, and there is probably no principled way of drawing the borderline between words that collocate and words that form an idiom (though it is easy enough to find examples which are clearly one or the other). Idioms are collocations where the meaning of the combination is not predictable from the separate meanings of the parts. Collocations and idioms are of the greatest importance to the language learner; one of the things that distinguishes an advanced learner’s language from that of a native speaker is that advanced learners often manifest grammatical correctness but collocational inappropriateness (Hoey, 2003: n.p.).





Question 3 relates to semantic association, i.e., “the tendency of a word to keep company with a semantic set or class; some members of this set or class will usually be collocates” (Hoey, 2003: n.p.).

Question 4 relates to “what grammatical associations, or colligations, a word may have” (Hoey, 2003: n.p.)<sup>4</sup>.

Finally, regarding question 5 Hoey (2003: n.p.) states that “the positional preferences of a word [in a sentence] can be referred to as its textual colligations”.

#### 4. Application of our proposal of revision to HMTQA

4.1. **Reading of ST** – a full version of *O Papel do Itamaraty* is included at the end of this paper as Appendix I (p. 16).

#### 4.2. Textual Profile of ST

Due to space constraints – and considering that the Textual Profile of ST is intended to summarize aspects instead of listing items which should be closely observed in the analysis and comparison between ST and TT – this subsection concerns notes on the four levels of HMTQA, i.e., Language/Text, Register, Genre, and Function of the Individual Text.

##### 4.2.1. Language/Text

Geographic origin and Time: contemporary Brazilian Portuguese.

Social class: standard Brazilian Portuguese.

The reading of *O papel do Itamaraty* does not reveal any marked items concerning the three subcategories of Language/Text.

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4. In turn, Tagnin (2005: 30) defines colligation as the conventional binding of lexical elements where one of them performs a grammatical function, such as look *at* and mad *about*.





#### 4.2.2. Register

##### A. Field

Introductory text to MFA. It presents in a concise manner a) the role and activities of this governmental body; b) some of its achievements; and c) some of its historical characters.

##### B. Tenor

a. temporal, geographic, and social origin of the author: one may say that the first two items are unmarked, since the language employed is a) contemporary; and b) representative of the standard usage. Regarding social origin, however, it is possible to note elements which imply that the author is able to instruct properly any kind of reader on the topic – such as the employment of collocation and colligation.

b. social role relationship: one may say that there is asymmetry between the author and the reader, since the text is an exposition of facts provided by someone who is in charge of expressing the point of view of the institution about itself.

c. social attitude: one may say that there is a relative distance between the author and the reader, as the text as a whole tries to provide a positive identity role to the institution which may not be questioned.

##### C. Mode

a. channel: simple, since the text is intended to be read.

b. participation: the text is also simple, since the author is the only utterer.

#### 4.2.3. Genre

Introductory text to an institution. It is possible to state the communicative purpose concerns the provision of information on the institution highlighting its importance within the society as a whole. The





fact that it is available in the Internet stresses the need of user-friendly features like, for example, referring to other sources of information available in the Internet, be them in the same web site or not.

#### 4.2.4. Function of the text

The function of *O papel do Itamaraty* may be stated this way: the author intends to offer the reader a historical panorama of MFA, portraying in a concise manner its evolution and highlighting its importance to the Brazilian society through the presentation of arguments and data. In fact, this kind of text requires careful planning in order to be regarded as an accurate and reliable piece of information.

### 4.3. Comparison between *O papel do Itamaraty* (ST) and *The Ministry* (TT)

#### 4.3.1. Aligning ST to TT – a full version of the alignment between ST and TT is included at the end as Appendix II (p. 17).

#### 4.3.2. Issues of analysis and comparison

##### 4.3.2.1. Language/Text

In general, it is possible to state there is compatibility between ST and TT regarding this category. TT employs contemporary English; there is no clue indicating the intention of avoiding standard English usage; and TT, as a whole, seems suitable to be presented in the website of MFA. A major clue is the translation of country and city names (see Table 1), employing the procedure of calque whenever there is not a conventional translation into English.





§ <sup>5</sup>	Sent. <sup>6</sup>	Portuguese	English
1	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Madri	Madrid
1	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Tordesilhas	Tordesillas
1	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Lisboa	Lisbon
1	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Rio de Janeiro	Rio de Janeiro
1	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Portugal	Portugal
1	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Brasil	Brazil
2	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Uruguai	Uruguay
2	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Rio Branco	Rio Branco
3	6 <sup>th</sup>	Brasília	Brasilia

**Table 1: Translation of country and city names from Portuguese into English**

An only item calls for revision: Brasília should preserve the diacritical mark in English, as observed in São Paulo, for instance (see § 3, 6<sup>th</sup> sentence, in Appendix II).

#### 4.3.2.2. Register

Considering that MFA is the governmental body concerned with the foreign affairs of the country, responsible for the discussion and negotiation of fundamental issues related to various strategic topics which demand attention of the Brazilian federal government, it becomes clear that this institution needs to be very careful in terms of accuracy when providing pieces of information written in a foreign language, particularly English. Thus, let's take a look on what the analysis of TT reveals on the category termed Register.

##### A. Field

Generally speaking, there seems to be compatibility between ST and TT in this regard; however, close observation reveals some

5. Paragraph in which it occurs in ST and TT (see Appendix II).

6. Sentence in which it occurs in ST and TT (see Appendix II).



compromising inadequacies. An aspect which gives clues about this statement is the way designations are presented as a whole (see Table 2).

§ <sup>7</sup>	Sent. <sup>8</sup>	Portuguese	English
3	4 <sup>th</sup>	94 Embaixadas	92 <i>Embassies</i> (930; 207) <sup>9</sup>
3	4 <sup>th</sup>	7 Missões/Delegações	6 <i>Missions</i> (5593; 540)
3	4 <sup>th</sup>	31 Consulados-Gerais	∅
3	4 <sup>th</sup>	6 Consulados	37 <i>Consulates</i> (119; 13)
3	4 <sup>th</sup>	13 Vice-Consulados	14 <i>Vice-Consulates</i> (0; 0)

**Table 2:<sup>10</sup> Kinds of diplomatic service**

Although linguistic elements may be considered equivalent, numerical information does not match at all. There is no justification for translating 94 *Embaixadas* into 92 *Embassies*; 7 *Missões/Delegações* into 6 *Missions*; 6 *Consulados* into 37 *Consulates*; and 13 *Vice-Consulados* into 14 *Vice-Consulates*. In Portuguese, we have 151 units of diplomatic service while in English we have just 149. Here, *The Ministry* does not constitute an instance of overt translation, but an overt version.

The term *consulados-gerais* employed in ST has been mistakenly omitted in TT, since there is a clear-cut equivalent which performs the same function in English: *consulate general*. In COCA we have “the Turkish Foreign Ministry announced the closure of the Turkish *Consulate General* in Jerusalem on 28 August 1980”. In BYU-BNC we find “a joint statement on Dec. 12 announced the opening of a Soviet *consulate general* in New York and a US consulate general in Kiev”.

7. Paragraph in which it occurs in ST and TT (see Appendix II).

8. Sentence in which it occurs in ST and TT (see Appendix II).

9. Number of occurrences of the search word (in italics) in *The Corpus of Contemporary American English* and in *BYU-BNC: The British National Corpus*. Subsequently, these corpora will be referred as COCA and BYU-BNC, respectively.

10. The subsequent tables follow the pattern of this one.



### B. Tenor

Again, we think there is compatibility between ST and TT although a considerable lack of accuracy is evident. Formal style is mainly expressed through the use of collocation and colligation (see Tables 3 and 4), which suggest the author tries to play the role of undisputable tutor on MFA.

§	Sent.	Portuguese	English
1	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Questão das fronteiras	<i>Borders issue</i> (1; 0)
1	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Processo de reconhecimento	<i>Process of the recognition</i> (0; 1)
3	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Temas da agenda internacional	<i>Topics on the international agenda</i> (0; 0)
3	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Preservação ecológica	<i>Ecological conservation</i> (4; 0)
3	4 <sup>th</sup>	Assistência consular	<i>Consular duties</i> (2; 0)
3	4 <sup>th</sup>	Comunicação e difusão [de]	<i>Spreading and communicating</i> (0; 0)

Table 3: Patterns of collocation

There seems to be an inadequacy concerning the use of *borders issue*; the singular form seems to be more closely related to the idea of delimiting frontiers. In COCA we find the following example: “once the *border issue* was settled, Germany hastened to put relations with its eastern neighbors on a fresh footing”. In BYU-BNC *border issue* is also related to delimiting frontiers: “on the *border issue*, both sides agreed to continue intensive discussions on the remaining disputed sectors”.

*Process of the recognition* presents a mistake: employing “the”. Indeed, there is no matching record for *process of the recognition* in COCA and an only one in BYU-BNC, as *process of recognition* presents 11 occurrences in COCA and 2 in BYU-BNC.

*Topics on the international agenda* is another instance in need of revision; *issues on the international agenda* seems to be an option of choice. In COCA we find, for instance: “there are a lot of issues on *the international agenda* which are unresolved”.





Translating *preservação ecológica* into *ecological conservation* does not seem to be an adequate choice; the first 100 noun collocates to the right which come along with *environmental* results in 23365 occurrences in COCA, being *protection* the most frequent one – 3765 occurrences. Example: “the 21st Century Environmental Quality Bond Act will provide an integrated comprehensive program of *environmental protection*”. In BYU-BNC the first 100 collocates to the right of *environmental* amounts to 4780 occurrences, being *protection* the most frequent one too – 524 occurrences. Example: “where economic activity and *environmental protection* pull in opposite directions, priorities have to be assessed”.

Translating *assistência consular* into *consular duties* is another option which does not seem to work out. *Consular duties* imply meeting the needs of the job performed by a consul; an example in COCA is: “there is a U.S. presence in Hanoi that deals solely with MIA-POW issues, but it does not have *consular duties* or authority”. Here, an adequate collocate to recall the idea of *assistência* may be *service*. There are 6 occurrences of it in COCA, being an example: “the other fundamental part of *consular work* is tending to the needs of Americans traveling abroad”.

There are no matching records for *spreading and communicating* in both corpora, suggesting that *comunicação e difusão* has not been adequately translated into English. Through extensive reading, we found in COCA an occurrence supporting the use of *study and promotion* to preserve the intended sense: “the problem was compounded by the reluctance of the guardians of culture in the universities to abandon the classical languages and engage in the *study and promotion of the Swedish language and Swedish history*”.

In terms of colligation, just the translation of *junto a* into *attached to* does not match (see Table 4). *Junto a* implies cooperation in Portuguese whereas *attached to* implies bond; an adequate option to carry on the intended meaning in ST into TT may be *affiliated with*. COCA presents the following example: “some of these organizations have become *affiliated with international* organizations such as the International Society for Education through Art (INSEA)”.



§	Sent.	Portuguese	English
2	1 <sup>st</sup>	Não-intervenção (3)	Non-intervention (49)
1	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Por último (314)	Lastly (856)
2	1 <sup>st</sup>	Contar com (535)	[To] rely on (6761)
3	6 <sup>th</sup>		[To be] supported by (5319)
3	1 <sup>st</sup>	Vem enfatizando (1)	Emphasizing (2567)
3	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Tem intensificado (1)	Has strengthened (6)
3	4 <sup>th</sup>	Neste sentido (302)	In this regard (1667)
3	4 <sup>th</sup>	Junto a (573)	Attached to (6211)
3	5 <sup>th</sup>	Vem aperfeiçoando (0)	Has been improving (29)

**Table 4: Patterns of colligation**

### C. Mode

Generally speaking, one may state there's compatibility between ST and TT concerning Mode, however, some inadequacies related to aspects on channel and participation are somewhat compromising.

Adding information to the 5<sup>th</sup> sentence when translating § 3 into English does not seem to be an adequate textual mean, since the new elements introduced to TT's reader are not closely related with improvements as we can see in ST. *Carreira diplomática* seems to have nothing to do with the so called *Ceremonial Section*; preceding this element, TT translates *carreira diplomática* into *diplomatic activities* in order to fit the idea of *services provided by* – absent in ST. Instead of an overt translation, we find an overt version here.

Merging the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> sentences of ST's § 3 into an only sentence in TT's § 3 may be regarded as another instance of overt version instead of overt translation. More than omitting the functions of *Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão (Funag)* and *Instituto Rio Branco*, TT translates the names of 7 Brazilian state capitals (Porto Alegre, *Florianópolis*, *Curitiba*, *Belo Horizonte*, *São Paulo*, *Recife*, and *Manaus*) into the names of 3 Brazilian states (*Rio Grande do Sul*, *São Paulo*, and *Pernambuco*).

Moreover, translating *Escritório de Representação* into *offices of the Foreign Office with representation* does not provide equivalent information to TT's reader; *branch office* may be regarded as an operative

option here. In COCA we have the following example: “(...) allowing, for instance, the FBI to open a *branch office* in Beijing (...)”. BYU-BNC presents the following example: “a main office will be set up in Bonn with a *branch office* in Washington”.

#### 4.3.2.3. Genre

Generally speaking, both texts may be regarded as pieces of writing available in the Internet and dedicated to introducing a governmental body. However, there is a body of evidence which leads us to claim some mismatches are not user-friendly (see Table 5).

Translating the title from *O papel do Itamaraty* into *The Ministry* is a major clue that it lacks careful planning in terms of communicative focus: throughout TT the synonym for *Itamaraty* is *Foreign Office* instead of *The Ministry*. Indeed, *Ministry of the Foreign Affairs* is an option closely related to the usual designation of Brazilian federal government agencies: there is no matching record of the collocation *Brazilian Office* in any of the corpora, while an example of *Brazilian Ministry* from COCA is “the *Brazilian Ministry* of Agriculture” and another one from BYU-BNC is “The *Brazilian Ministry* of Health”.

Throughout TT, the translation of some of the proper names from Portuguese into English does not seem to be adequate, since it focuses language concerns by themselves, introducing institutions and historical characters which may not be found anywhere through research in English language:

§	Sent.	Portuguese	English
1	1 <sup>st</sup>	Ministério das Relações Exteriores	Foreign Office
2	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Visconde do Uruguai	Viscount of Uruguay
2	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Visconde do Rio Branco	Viscount of Rio Branco
2	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Barão do Rio Branco	Baron of Rio Branco
3	6 <sup>th</sup>	Palácio Itamaraty	Itamaraty Palace
3	7 <sup>th</sup>	Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão	Alexandre de Gusmão Foundation
3	7 <sup>th</sup>	Instituto Rio Branco	Rio Branco Institute

**Table 5: Mismatches between ST and TT concerning Genre**



Translating *Ministério das Relações Exteriores (MRE)* into *Brazilian Foreign Office* and *Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão (Funag)* into *Alexandre de Gusmão Foundation (Funag)* reveals another important inadequacy: if there is an abbreviation which should not have been omitted in TT, this one is *MRE*. It concerns the institution itself, as *Funag* plays a secondary role in the text. Since information available in the Internet may refer to other sources which can be quickly accessed by the reader, it is important to make clear he knows the ways an institution may be entitled in its own website.

#### 4.4. TT's Statement of Quality

Generally speaking ST and TT may be regarded as compatible in all HMTQA' levels of comparison and analysis. However, considering the translator plays the role of mediator in overt translation – trying to preserve, wherever it is possible, the textual function of ST in TT –, we should state that *The Ministry* is not an adequate piece of translation. Two out of three levels for comparison and analysis within HMTQA (the fourth one is addressed in this section) present compromising features:

Register: a) Field – omitting information and adapting data may be regarded not as overt translation but as overt version; b) Tenor – some of the options do not reproduce the distance between writer and reader in terms of accuracy concerning foreign affairs; and c) Mode – again, adapting data may be regarded not as overt translation but as overt version.

Genre: TT's reader does not seem to have a factual basis on MFA.

#### 5. Concluding remarks

Our proposal of adaptations to HMTQA highlights the distinction between a “pedagogic approach” and a “scientific approach” for assessing quality in translation. This point calls for further explanation:





Translation quality assessment is not an undisputed issue in TS. (...) The main problem seems to reside in how to express quality or what measure should be used for the quality of a translation. This question has been typically addressed in two different ways, with many variations. The translated text (TT) may be assessed by experts such as professional translators, translation or language teachers and others, including the researcher. Assessment parameters, that may or may not be clearly stated, are in most cases those used in translation courses and, therefore, will be referred to here as the “pedagogical approach”, although it does not differ considerably from the assessment methods for professional accreditation (ATA, 2000)<sup>11</sup>. There are no means to prevent that the evaluator assesses the translation by comparing it to an ideal text she could have produced herself, thus projecting her own individual standards or prejudices onto the actual text. (...) (Rothe-Neves, 2002: 114).

This piece of writing presents three insightful elements to think through translation assessment: a) there's a need for establishing criteria from the very beginning; b) translation evaluators should not be considered “neutral” judges, since they tend to rely on some set of values; and c) translation evaluators should not regard their contribution as an opportunity to *try their hands*. So:

*Alternatively, TTs may be described according to a system that is theoretically motivated, clearly stated and discussed previously to the analysis. That system also serves to describe the source text (ST) so that, through independent analysis, STs and TTs can be compared. This will be referred here as the “scientific approach”. In such a way, TTs' quality is normally presented as a degree of similarity of the TT description in relation to that of the ST. The model of quality assessment by House (1997; 2000) is perhaps the most famous example (Rothe-Neves, 2002: 114).*

11. This reference is not presented in an accurate manner. In fact, the author refers to: American Translators Association (2001). *Framework for standard error marking: an explanation*. Available at <http://www.atanet.org/bin/view.pl/12438.html>. Accessed on Dec. 23rd 2008.





From the perspective of HMTQA the evaluator plays the role of someone who seeks evolution, providing notes on how an inadequate piece of translation may turn into an adequate one. Thinking in terms of “good” or “bad” translation, usually the evaluator requires a kind of revolution: the translator itself is at stake. Employing corpora as reference works to evaluate quality in translation implies a bottom-up approach closely related to the aim of looking for linguistic evidence in order to make claims about language usage. Corpus Linguistics offers an invaluable basis for those in need of scientific criteria instead of pedagogic intuition to assess language in use. That’s why we think merging HMTQA’s macro-analytical framework with a lexical and syntactic corpus-based approach may be regarded as a considerable improvement to translation quality assessment.

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## APPENDIX I



### O Papel do Itamaraty



Responsável por assessorar o Presidente da República na formulação e execução da política externa brasileira, o Ministério das Relações Exteriores - o Itamaraty, como é conhecido - encontra seus marcos históricos em três momentos. O primeiro, em 1750, na assinatura do Tratado de Madri, quando Alexandre de Gusmão negociou a questão das fronteiras estabelecidas pelo Tratado de Tordesilhas. O segundo, em 1808, com a transferência da Corte Portuguesa de Lisboa para o Rio de Janeiro, em decorrência da ocupação de Portugal pelas tropas napoleônicas; por último, nos anos que se seguiram à independência, em 1822, no processo de reconhecimento do Brasil, durante o período monárquico.

Nesses dois séculos e meio, a diplomacia brasileira definiu seus princípios fundamentais, como a solução pacífica das controvérsias, a não-intervenção e, principalmente a partir de 1945, com a criação da ONU, a participação intensa porém independente nos mais importantes foros internacionais. Desde o início, contou com diplomatas notáveis, como Visconde do Uruguai, Visconde do Rio Branco, Barão do Rio Branco, Oswaldo Aranha, San Tiago Dantas e Araújo Castro.





Hoje, a diplomacia brasileira atualizou seus preceitos e vem enfatizando o processo de integração regional com o Mercosul e outros organismos regionais e financeiros. Vem, também, participando intensamente da discussão de importantes temas da agenda internacional, que inclui questões como a defesa dos direitos humanos, a preservação ecológica e a manutenção da paz. Ao mesmo tempo, tem intensificado seus laços com a Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa e se estruturado para atender de forma mais ágil às necessidades do País e da política externa. Neste sentido, o Itamaraty aprimorou sua atuação no exterior através de 94 Embaixadas, 7 Missões/Delegações junto a organismos internacionais, 31 Consulados-Gerais, 6 Consulados, 13 Vice-Consulados e serviços como os de promoção comercial, assistência consular, apoio às comunidades brasileiras no exterior, comunicação e difusão da cultura e idioma do País.

Internamente, o Ministério das Relações Exteriores (MRE) vem aperfeiçoando tanto sua estrutura organizacional como a carreira diplomática. Para isso, conta com uma estrutura que inclui o Palácio Itamaraty em Brasília, que é sua sede; o Palácio Itamaraty no Rio de Janeiro, antiga sede e hoje Escritório de Representação, à semelhança dos que existem em Porto Alegre, Florianópolis, Curitiba, Belo Horizonte, São Paulo, Recife e Manaus. O MRE conta com uma entidade vinculada, a Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão (Funag), seu braço acadêmico, além do Instituto Rio Branco, encarregado do recrutamento e treinamento de Diplomatas. Entre as várias atividades desempenhadas pelo Itamaraty também se inclui a demarcação das fronteiras brasileiras. (Available online at: [http://www.mre.gov.br/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1454&Itemid=1259](http://www.mre.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1454&Itemid=1259). Accessed on Oct. 12th 2008.



## APPENDIX II

## Alignment between ST and TT

Portuguese	English
Title	
O Papel do Itamaraty	The Ministry
§ 1	
1 <sup>st</sup> sentence	
Responsável por assessorar o Presidente da República na formulação e execução da política externa brasileira, o Ministério das Relações Exteriores - o Itamaraty, como é conhecido - encontra seus marcos históricos em três momentos.	Responsible for advising the President of the Republic of Brazil on the formulation and execution of Brazilian foreign policy, the Foreign Office - Itamaraty, as it is known - has three landmarks in its history.
2 <sup>nd</sup> sentence	
O primeiro, em 1750, na assinatura do Tratado de Madri, quando Alexandre de Gusmão negociou a questão das fronteiras estabelecidas pelo Tratado de Tordesilhas.	The first one was in 1750 with the signing of the Treaty of Madrid, when Alexandre de Gusmão negotiated the borders issue established by the Treaty of Tordesillas.
3 <sup>rd</sup> sentence	
O segundo, em 1808, com a transferência da Corte Portuguesa de Lisboa para o Rio de Janeiro, em decorrência da ocupação de Portugal pelas tropas napoleônicas; por último, nos anos que se seguiram à independência, em 1822, no processo de reconhecimento do Brasil, durante o período monárquico.	The second was in 1808 with the transfer of the Portuguese Court from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro as a result of Portugal being occupied by Napoleon's forces; lastly, in the years following independence in 1822, came the process of the recognition of Brazil during the monarchic period.
§ 2	
1 <sup>st</sup> sentence	
Nesses dois séculos e meio, a diplomacia brasileira definiu seus princípios fundamentais, como a solução pacífica das controvérsias, a não-intervenção e, principalmente a partir de 1945, com a criação da ONU, a participação intensa porém independente nos mais importantes foros internacionais.	It was over that period, spanning almost two and a half centuries, that Brazilian diplomacy laid down its fundamental principles, with the peaceful resolution of disputes, non-intervention and then chiefly from 1945 onwards with the creation of the UN and Brazil's close yet unbiased involvement in the most important international forums.



2 <sup>nd</sup> sentence	
Desde o início, contou com diplomatas notáveis, como Visconde do Uruguai, Visconde do Rio Branco, Barão do Rio Branco, Oswaldo Aranha, San Tiago Dantas e Araújo Castro.	From the very beginning, the Brazilian Foreign Office was able to rely on some notable diplomats such as the Viscount of Uruguay, the Viscount of Rio Branco, the Baron of Rio Branco, Oswaldo Aranha, San Tiago Dantas and Araújo Castro.
§ 3	
1 <sup>st</sup> sentence	
Hoje, a diplomacia brasileira atualizou seus preceitos e vem enfatizando o processo de integração regional com o Mercosul e outros organismos regionais e financeiros.	Today, Brazilian diplomacy has updated its principles, emphasizing the process of regional integration with Mercosur and other regional and financial bodies.
2 <sup>nd</sup> sentence	
Vem, também, participando intensamente da discussão de importantes temas da agenda internacional, que inclui questões como a defesa dos direitos humanos, a preservação ecológica e a manutenção da paz.	It has also been heavily involved in the discussion of important topics on the international agenda including issues such as the protection of human rights, ecological conservation and the maintenance of peace.
3 <sup>rd</sup> sentence	
Ao mesmo tempo, tem intensificado seus laços com a Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa e se estruturado para atender de forma mais ágil às necessidades do País e da política externa.	At the same time, it has strengthened its links with the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries and has structured itself in order to meet the needs of Brazil and foreign policy in as agile a manner as possible.
4 <sup>th</sup> sentence	
Neste sentido, o Itamaraty aprimorou sua atuação no exterior através de 94 Embaixadas, 7 Missões/Delegações junto a organismos internacionais, 31 Consulados-Gerais, 6 Consulados, 13 Vice-Consulados e serviços como os de promoção comercial, assistência consular, apoio às comunidades brasileiras no exterior, comunicação e difusão da cultura e idioma do País.	In this regard, Itamaraty is carrying out its activities abroad through 92 Embassies, 6 Missions attached to international organizations, 37 Consulates and 14 Vice-Consulates as well as by means of services such as trade promotion, consular duties and the spreading and communicating of Brazilian language and culture.



5 <sup>th</sup> sentence	
Internamente, o Ministério das Relações Exteriores (MRE) vem aperfeiçoando tanto sua estrutura organizacional como a carreira diplomática.	Internally, the Brazilian Foreign Office has been improving both its organizational structure and its diplomatic activities as well as the services provided by such areas as the Ceremonial Section.
6 <sup>th</sup> sentence	
Para isso, conta com uma estrutura que inclui o Palácio Itamaraty em Brasília, que é sua sede; o Palácio Itamaraty no Rio de Janeiro, antiga sede e hoje Escritório de Representação, à semelhança dos que existem em Porto Alegre, Florianópolis, Curitiba, Belo Horizonte, São Paulo, Recife e Manaus.	For this, it is supported by a structure that includes its headquarters, the Itamaraty Palace in Brasilia; the Itamaraty Palace in Rio de Janeiro is the former headquarters and present day offices of the Foreign Office with representation for the States of Rio Grande do Sul, São Paulo and Pernambuco as well as support organizations such as the Alexandre de Gusmão Foundation (Funag) and the Rio Branco Institute.
7 <sup>th</sup> sentence	
O MRE conta com uma entidade vinculada, a Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão (Funag), seu braço acadêmico, além do Instituto Rio Branco, encarregado do recrutamento e treinamento de Diplomatas.	∅
8 <sup>th</sup> sentence	
Entre as várias atividades desempenhadas pelo Itamaraty também se inclui a demarcação das fronteiras brasileiras.	The various activities carried on by Itamaraty include the demarcation of Brazilian borders.

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