**Retrospective and Introspective Think-Aloud Protocols in Translation Quality Assessment: A Qualitative Research**

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**Abstract**

Recently, one of the major concern in Translation Studies has been on what really goes on in the translators’ head while they are translating, not what researchers claim is going on. It is believed that such understanding is not achieved from an analysis of the ultimate product - the translated text. Among the techniques utilized in studying such cognitive processes and systems, think aloud protocols (TAPs), have widely been employed. A qualitative content analysis research, this study aimed at exploring the comparative difference introspective and retrospective TAP can cause in English-to-Persian translation quality. The selected participants were 15 MA students studying English translation studies (TS) at Islamic Azad University, Karaj Branch. The subjects have purposively been sampled. They were required to translate two English texts into Persian, one introspectively and the other retrospectively, while the participants’ voices were audio-recorded and transcribed later. Relying on FamilKhalili’s Translation Quality Assessment scale (2011), the frequency distributions for the 14 encoded themes proved that the participants performed differently in introspection and retrospection TAP phases. In fact, while the themes *Coherence* and *Grammaticality* had the higher frequency counts in the retrospection phase, *Dialogical Register, Linguistic Functions* and *Speech Acts* had a considerable growth in the introspection phase.

**Key words:** *Assessment, Introspection,**Quality, Retrospection, Translation*