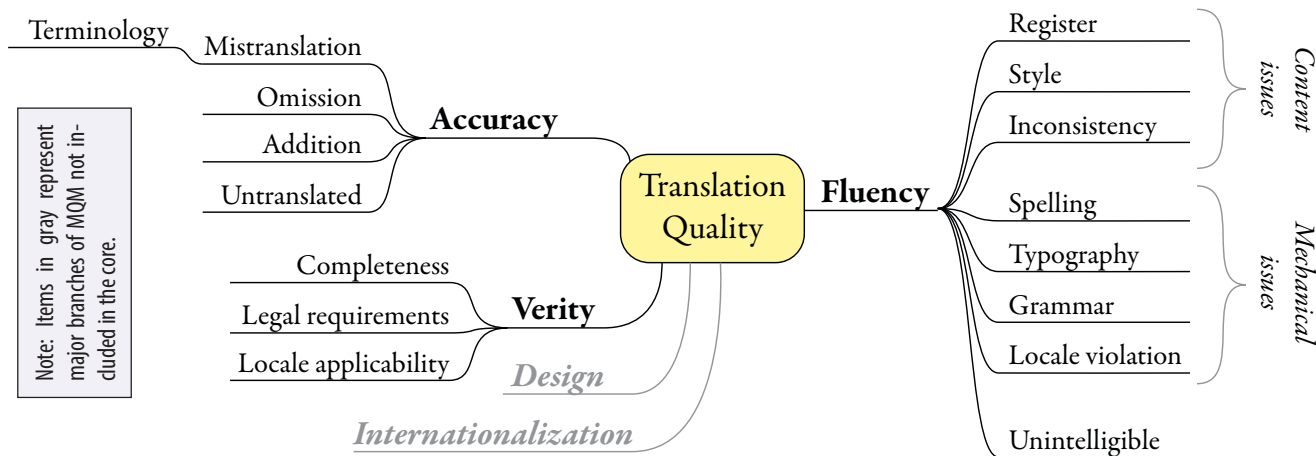


# MQM (Multidimensional Quality Metrics)

The Multidimensional Quality Metrics (MQM) provides a framework for describing and defining metrics used to assess the quality of translated texts by identifying specific issues with those texts relevant to particular *translation specifications*. *Issue types* (also called *error categories*) are organized into a hierarchy. The core issue types are as follows:



Unlike “monolithic” metrics that provide a single “quality score”, MQM is designed to provide insight into the precise nature of problems found in translations in order to provide insight into the specific aspects of the translation that need correction or resolution.

There is no single metric that is appropriate to all translation projects. There is not even one ideal, absolute translation quality that is independent of the audience, purpose, and other specifications for the project. Thus, rather than talking about absolute levels of quality, MQM suggests we talk about *types of quality* and *levels of quality* relative to a type.

A *type of quality* is defined by the choice of a metric. The diagram on the other side of this handout shows what goes into defining a type of quality and its associated MQM metric: translation specifications (which define how various *dimensions* will be assessed) and a method of assessment. From the specifications and method, the relevant dimensions, with their issue types are selected, and weights are assigned, forming a customized metric. Various software tools are available to facilitate building and using customized metrics, but MQM does not interpret the result of applying a metric. The user of the metric decides on thresholds for acceptance. Ideally, the result of applying a metric is independent of the individual assessor.

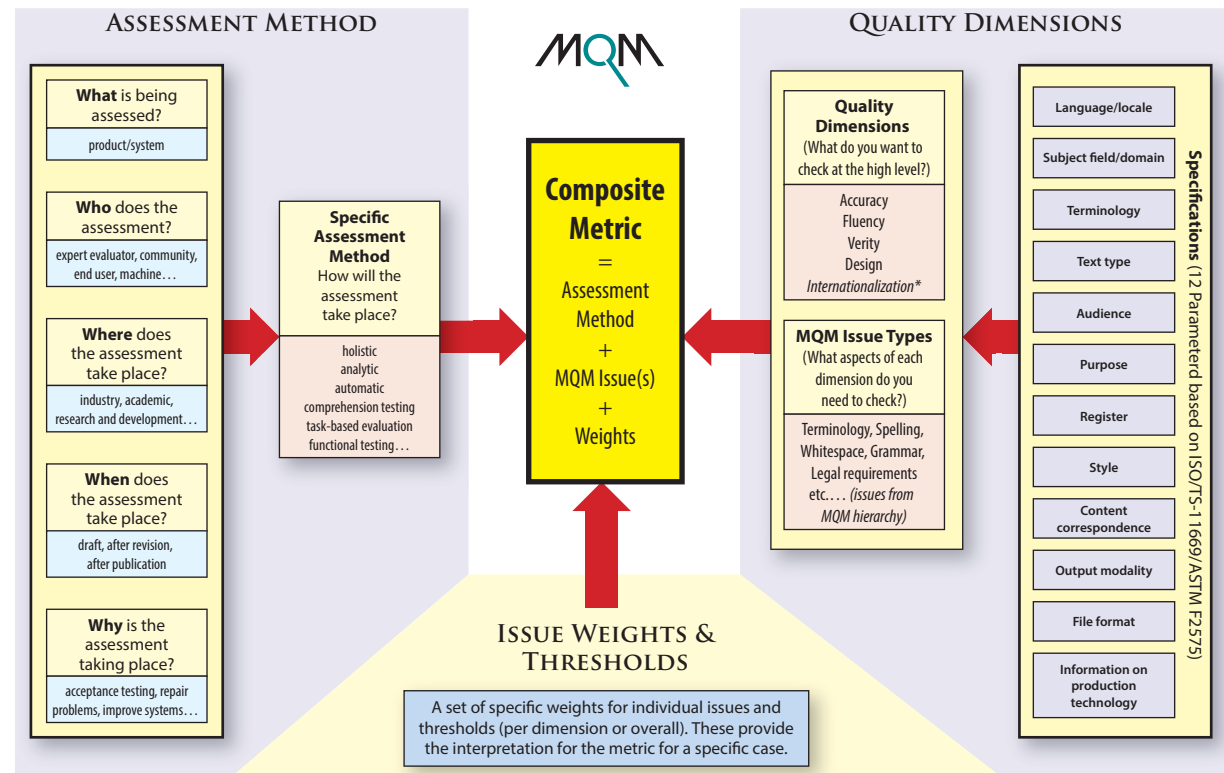
For the formal definition of MQM, please visit the following website: <http://www.qt21.eu/mqm-definition>

In many cases an appropriate metric will already have been chosen for a task. For cases where a metric does not already exist, the process outlined below describes how an appropriate MQM metric is created.

MQM is suited for assessing a **product** (i.e., target text and other deliverables) or **system** (e.g., diagnosis of problems in an MT system). It is not designed to assess a **project** (e.g., whether the product was delivered on time) or a **process** (e.g., whether all agreed-upon tasks were actually performed).

The following inputs are combined to create an MQM metric:

- **Assessment Method.** On the left, the answers to *who*, *where*, *when*, and *why* determine the specific assessment method (e.g., detailed error analysis or a holistic set of criteria that apply to the entire text).
- **Quality Dimensions.** On the right, the *specifications* (values of the 12 parameters) determine the high-level quality dimensions and the associated **MQM issue types** needed to assess them. (Note that even though dimensions are broad categories, not all dimensions apply to all tasks, e.g., if Design is not a concern for a particular “text only” task, it will not be assessed.)
- In the middle, **issue weights** and overall **thresholds** provide the interpretation of the results of the assessment task. (For example, a metric might specify that compliance with *Legal requirements* is more important than *Style* and also require that the overall quality score exceed a specific threshold).



A composite MQM metric therefore consists of a method, a set of one or more issue types that correspond to each of the dimensions that need to be assessed, and an accompanying set of weights for each issue type. Together these components enable an appropriate score (or other indication of quality level) to be calculated and compared against requirements as specified in the thresholds.

For more information on MQM or to provide feedback on MQM, please send an email to [info@qt21.eu](mailto:info@qt21.eu).