**Applying Julian House’s Translation Quality Assessment Model on the Book**

***Translation and Power***

#### Abstract

In contemporary era, societies have leveled up their interactions, in such a way that they have globally shared their research and achievements, most often through the English language. Accordingly, translation of the selected texts can be used to ease the comprehension and enhance the utility. For this, the translated version must be comprehensible and coherent. It must transfer the sender’s message completely to the receiver, and it needs to take receivers’ situational context into account for efficiency. This study attempted to evaluate the Persian-translated version of the book *Translation and Power*, applying House’s translation quality assessment model to determine whether the revised model is applicable to the academic-political genre. The method is descriptive and it sets out the comparison between the source and translated texts based on three levels of Language/Text, Register, including field, tenor, and mode, and Genre. In addition, it aimed to define the overtness or covertness of the translation. Random pages were selected for a three-level analysis, aligning the sentences to their counterparts in the original book. The results of the application of the model implied that the translation has failed to completely fulfill the source text functions and has faced a significant amount of undeniable deletions. Furthermore, House's new model proved practical in assessing political translations.

Keywords: *Translation Quality Assessment, Juliane House's newly revised model, ST function, TT function, Differences*

**1. Introduction**

For years, the translated literatures have been evaluated in term of quality which itself can encompass many aspects such as accurately and appropriately transference of semantic, syntactic, and lexical elements between languages.

Translation quality assessment, proposed by J. House (1977), has become a key issue in translation studies (Ehsani, Zohrabi, & Sciences, 2014); which provides a greater platform for evaluating a translated text, resulting in descriptions and value judgments. TQA is the heart of translation theory, in the core of which lies the concept of *equivalence* (House, 2014). Primarily, some scholars defined equivalence as the same value, such as Snell-Hornby and Nida, while the latter extended the range of value to any level. However, this term later was referred to as an asymmetric relationship between source and target by Wilss, Chesterman, Kade, etc. In the functional paradigm, scholars, such as Koller and Reiss, correlate the equivalence with what the text tends to do, i.e. function (Pym, 2017). This functional equivalence is the core of the TQA model of the house, determining, as the means of linguistics, if the function is preserved in the target text. To achieve Functional equivalence, it is required to determine the situational dimensions and linguistic materials (Ehsani et al., 2014). This model utilized the Hallidayan *register* concepts i.e. *Field*, *tenor*, and *mode* (figure 1). She, also, necessitate that meaning at all three levels of semantic, pragmatic, and textual to be preserved in translation (House, 2014). The text was selected from the academic book *“Translation and Power”* to be assessed, determining whether it is translated *overtly* or *covertly*. The translated versions of academic texts have met less quality evaluation than other genres, therefore the result would be considerable.



Figure 1. A revised scheme for analyzing and comparing original and translation (House, 2014)

# 2. Literature review

House (1997) in her TQA model perceived two kinds of mismatches or errors existing in comparing source and translated text, namely *overtly erroneous error* and *covertly erroneous error*. Consequently, she introduced a polarity of translation i.e. *overt* vs. *covert* Translations. These strategies vary based on the text function, or, as Reiss (1968) stated, text-type. Many scholars have applied the TQA model in various fields of concerns. For instance, (2014) analyzed the Persian translations of English advertising texts, resulting in insufficient target texts. They found that House’s functional-pragmatic model of TQA was not applied in translating English texts. Another study investigated the pharmaceutical leaflets based on this model (Zekri & Shahsavar, 2016), the results of which contributed to identified errors and their application in further translation teaching and practice. Anari and Varmazyari (2016), also, in their study, drew a comparison with the previous version of TQA and assessed the Persian translation of Chomskey's Media Control to estimate its viability, based on the Julian House's (2014) newly revised Translation Quality Assessment model. According to the findings, House's newly revised model proved successful in being applied to the assessment of political texts and the translation has not fully achieved the functions intended by the original text. Despite many other pieces of research into the House’s model of TQA, mentioning them is beyond the scope of this study.

# 3. Methodology

## 3.1. Framework

As mentioned above, this paper comprises the House’s model of TQA as the framework. The model sets out the comparison between the source text and translated text based on three levels of Language/Text, Register, including field, tenor, and mode, and Genre. House states that linguistic choices form the register choices of text, leading to the realization of the text type or genre, in the basis of which she proposes overtness or covertness.

At the commencement, the ST was analyzed at three quoted levels to construct an ST profile which then exposed to the comparison with TT using the same three-level analysis. Finally, a declaration of translation quality was reported.

## 3.2. Materials

The texts used in this study encompass as follow:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Title | Sub-titles | Author/Translator | Year of publication | Publisher | Number of pages |
| Translation and power | 10 | Maria Tymoczko  Edwin Gentzler | 2002 | University of Massachusetts Press | 265 |
| ترجمه و قدرت | 5 | سیدمحمد کریمی بهبهانی | 2014 | نشر قطره | 122 |

### 3.2.1. On the translation/the translator

The translator selected four sub-titles among ten, which are individual articles on the field, and the fifth one was chosen from Translation, Power, Subversion. The original book and translated version are unequal in cover design and content quantity. The translated text comprises a huge number of significant omission and simplification cases that were likely led by the translator ideology. The title was, however, translated accurately and literally to the target language, representing that the book is a translated version of the original work.

## 3.3. Procedures

This study randomly selected seven consecutive pages of the book ‘ترجمه و قدرت’ [Translation and Power], including 72 sentences, hereto named as ‘segments’. Hence, the textual profile of the ST was prepared. Each segment in TT was consequently compared to its counterpart in ST. Therefore, the results are given in two function and quality sections.

# 4. Result and discussion

House’s model of TQA implies a complicated detailed analysis of the text, starting with the source text.

## 4.1. ST’s textual profile

### 4.1.1. Field

The book ‘Translation and Power’, edited by Maria Tymoczko and Edwin Gentzler, entails nine articles and one introduction, in sum, contributing to ten sub-titles. Humanity has been involving itself in colonization, politics, power, etc. for centuries. Colonizers implemented a variety of tools and methods in each era to overpower the weaker nations. In this postcolonialism era, the tool has been altered into language and culture, such as English, the most prominent. Language, as a means of communication, has the potential to advertise the interests being likely beneficial to the language users. This dominant language can be injected into other societies by means of translation. Therefore, translation became a medium of colonialization. Hence, it happens to be essential to assess translated text, identifying such colonization, if any.

#### Lexical means

Words and phrases are mostly rather complex. Most segments are too long, thus complex. Although the authors of the article tried to preserve the intervention of their ideology in the text, a specifically directed tone can be sensed in the work.

#### Lexical Fields

Translating and interpreting, social aspects, power (social sciences), language and culture, policy.

#### Processes

### 4.1.2. Tenor

#### Authors’ Temporal, Social and Geographical Provenance

Edwin Gentzler: Unmarked Contemporary Dutch professor. Maria Tymoczko: Unmarked Contemporary Irish professor.

#### Authors’ Personal (Emotional and Intellectual) Stance

Both authors are professor emeritus of comparative literature at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. However, Gentzler is the former director of the Translation Center. They worked on either translation in many aspects or literature at different times.

#### Lexical means

A moderate frequency of political terms, therefore, the text encompasses a rather formal tone. The main focus was put on the ‘treaty’ and colonization derivations such as ‘colony’ or ‘colonizer’.

#### Syntactic means

Frequent use of the compound, complex long-sized sentences along with relatively little usage of simple short sentences. Some sort of balance in terms of active vs. passive structures, although the former is slightly higher.

#### Social role relationship

The relationship between the authors and the reader is perceived to be symmetrical. However, they highlight the power relations of superiority and inferiority of colonizers and colonies.

#### Social attitude

The text narrates a historical and an unfair political British act towards the weaker nation of Maori to inform the reader of what has truly happened.

#### Participation

Simple: monologue with merely indirect address and involvement of addressees.

### 4.1.3. Mode

#### Medium and Connectivity

Simple: this is a written article, based on the categories of House (1997).

### 4.1.4. Genre

The text is an academic article encompassed in the sphere of international politics. The authors argue the powerfulness and effectiveness of the translation as well as how it can take the independency of a nation.

### 4.1.5. Statement of function

The function of this text includes ideational and interpersonal components. Ideational since it takes a stance on the political action against the weaker society and its process. Due to the genre, the interpersonal component is significantly marked as the text attempts to highlight the evil deeds of more powerful sovereignty to make the reader be aware of such actions.

On Field, the repetition of lexical items, some of which entail the power imbalance, indicates the ideational functional component. On Tenor, the authors’ personal stance can be marked in the utilization of significant political terms as being referred to as the specific government. On Mode, the medium is simple i.e. written, and it is marked as involved, explicit, and abstract, reinforcing both functions.

## 4.2. Comparison of source and translation texts

### 4.2.1. Field

#### Lexical difference

The translator has generally tried to keep close to the author as far as possible. This has made it possible to nearly feel the same formal tone of original authors from the translation.

### 4.2.2. Tenor

#### Author’s personal stance

#### Lexical differences

The translator has done too much omission and simplification in translating, leading to the fact that he does not intend to preserve the ideology or the exact message of the original text. In some cases, the translator transferred a word from ST to TT, resulting in a significantly non-equivalent sense.

#### Syntactic differences

In a few cases, change of verb tense is observable, which might lead to a less important semantic divergence. Additionally, all pronouns of ‘we’ were either omitted or converted into the third person mode.

#### Social role relationship

#### Lexical differences

There are some obvious errors in lexical selection. For instance, ‘subsistence farming’ has been translated to ‘کشاورزی’ [*plant farming*], while the term refers to both plant and animal farming. Another example, the phrase ‘the humanitarians’ was translated as ‘گروهی بشردوست’ [*a group of humanitarians*] which entails that there was just a limited, or not enough, number of humanitarians.

#### Syntactic differences

Only one marked case is eager to be mentioned: the application of exclamation mark ‘!’ explicitly where it does not exist in the original source. This remarkable addition would definitely intensify the sense of segment.

#### Social Attitude

The translation enjoys almost the same level of formality in style.

#### Participation

Because the use of ‘we’, quite frequent in the original, is no longer observable in the translation, it can be argued that the translation is much less involved.

### 4.2.3. Mode

#### Medium

Simple: written. The translation text is less emic than the original as there are fewer references to the addresser and the addressees though it cannot be assumed etic either.

#### Syntactic Differences

Use of impersonal pronouns or removing the agency as well as tense shifts.

#### Textual Differences

Overall, it is not deniable that the translation is less cohesive than the original, however, to achieve this, the translator sacrificed and omitted many segments and words.

### 4.2.4. Genre

Despite being less uninvolved and less persuasive, the genre has remained constant in the translation.

### 4.2.5. Statement of quality

The Persian translation does not seem to be able to have the same perlocutionary effect on its readers despite being informative enough. No cultural filter appears to have been used by the translator, the result of which is an overt translation.

Lexical, syntactic and textual differences are observed in the translation compared with the original, which affect both interpersonal and ideational functions of the text, hence, the quality of the translation is lowered as a result of such covertly erroneous errors.

#### Overtly erroneous errors

There are errors in this translation that display the translator's lack of mastery and the result of referential differences:

* The term ‘Her Majesty’, in the UK refers to the queen of England, has been translated as ‘پادشاه’ [king].
* Wars and upheavals in South Africa, India, and Canada were stretching their abilities to the limit.

جنگ‌ها و شورش‌های آفریقای جنوبی، هندوستان و کانادا توانایی‌ها و امکانات آن‌ها را محدود کرده بود،

The idiom ‘stretch to the limit of something’ means to demand a great deal of something while the translator realized it as an act of limiting ‘محدود کردن’.

* The translator misinterpreted conjunction has led to ambiguity for the target reader. He used contrastive conjunction of ‘درحالی‌که’ [however] in translation while no such relationship exists in the original text.
* … James Busby, the British Resident in the Bay of Islands, and Chief Clerk James Freeman. → ... جیمز بازبی و جیمز فریمن هر دو از نمایند‌های دولت بریتانیا در نیوزلند ...:

The original text introduced two characters comprising divergent positions; on the contrary, the translator represented them as they are colleagues, through the word ‘هر دو’ [both].

# 5. Conclusion

Applying House’s newly revised model of translation quality assessment, this study attempted to shed lights on theoretical and practical aspects of the model through analyzing ‘Translation and Power’. This study, also, explored the aspects of political translation which, in turn, is a significant issue.

The research questions can now be answered as follows:

1. House's newly revised model proved successful in being applied to the assessment of political texts.
2. The Translation has not fully achieved the functions intended by the original text as there are both covertly erroneous errors and, mostly, overtly erroneous errors in his work.

The translation, therefore, can be placed in the overt side of the TQA model due to not preserving the same function in the target language.

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