
The Quality Assessment of the Persian Translation of “The Graveyard” Based on House’s Translation Quality Assessment Model

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Abstract

The notion of Translation Quality Assessment has been the object of many studies. TQA as the comprehensive treatment of translation evaluation, focuses on the relationship between the source text and target text and also emphasizes that translation is a linguistic operation. To accomplish this research, House’s model of TQA was chosen as the framework for the investigation of “The Graveyard” by Gaiman and its Persian translation by ObeydiAshtiani. The aforementioned model involved qualitative aspects which focus on lexical, syntactic and textual means under the main categories of field, tenor and mode. Subsequently, the categorization of the translation as either overt or covert was done. The findings and outcomes of this analytic and comparative study demonstrated that the Persian translation did not follow the original one in several cases and was ultimately categorized into a covert translation where cultural filter has been applied.

Keywords: Field; Mode; Register; Tenor; Translation Quality Assessment

INTRODUCTION

Translation is a skill and an art of considerable aesthetic importance and practical value in the modern world (Newmark1988). Historically all societies all over the world need to gain access to scientific and technical knowledge, foreign arts or literature and this could be achieved through translation products. Literary works are those of great arts, which show the human all cultures and customs. As they are the heritage of human but in different languages, the translation of such works are a great indeed. As Bassnett (2007) says,

translation studies including translation criticism has been developing as a distinct discipline. Any theory of translation questions the nature of translation or more specifically, the nature of the relationship between a source text and its translation. The inherently reflective nature of translational action reveals itself in a translator’s focuses on the situation of a text and his or her recognition of the intimate interconnection of text and context. As texts travel across the time, space and different orders of indexing in translation, they must be re-recontextualized. Exploring text in context is thus the only way of exploring text for the purposes of translation as recontextualization (House, 2006). There are many kinds of transla-

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tion such as: Grammatical Translation (Catford, 1965), Homophonic Translation (Kelly, 1979), Gist Translation (Hervey and Higgins 1992), Overt and Covert Translation (House, 1997).

Within translation studies, the field of translation quality assessment has always been a subject of interest to the international translation community and one of the useful surveys of TQA models in the literature, is House's translation quality assessment model. In fact, translation as a product had to undergo some form of quality control and this obviously required tools and criteria to avoid general labels of 'good' or 'bad' put on translations as rejected by Reiss (2000).

Waddington (2001) also believes that most of the contributions to the translation quality assessment are theoretical and descriptive, and he also explains that there are some main themes which can be regarded as the centre of those contributions and some of which are categorized under two subheadings: first, to establish a criteria for a "good translation", and second, to reveal the nature of translation errors. Baker argues that one of the most difficult tasks for translation theoreticians is setting a model for assessing translations (Baker, 2011).

The first systematic view towards the evaluation of translation texts was proposed by Nida through "the principle of equivalent effect" (Munday 2001). One of the influential models in this area has been proposed by House in 1977 revisited in 2015. Her model incorporates some of her earlier categories into an openly Hallidayan Register model. Halliday's description of Register as a variety of language, corresponding to a variety of situation with situation interpreted by means of a conceptual framework using the term "Field", "Tenor" and "Mode" (Halliday, 1985/89, 29, 38) is revisited to reflect on the theoretical work the term "Register". In order that the both source text and target text could be compared systematically, based on these notions, translation quality assessment should be done to find out how much the translators that render source texts to target texts could cope with translating and get to know whether different transla-

tors do differently in translating the literary genre. This study deals with the comparison of the English text and its Persian translation according to House TQA model, analysis of both ST and TT based on the mentioned model has been done to assessing the evaluation of the translation in order to find out to what extent the translation is proper according to House's model and then determining whether the translation is overt or covert. Translation quality assessment is a subjective exercise, that's why many theories and systematic methods have been developed by many scholars. In order to provide meaningful feedback in the translation process. House focuses on three aspects of the meaning which are important for assessing the translation. House bases her model on comparative ST-TT analysis leading to the assessment of the quality of the translation, highlighting 'mismatches' or 'errors' (House 1997). This comparative model focuses on the lexical, syntactic and textual means used to construct Register. House's concept of Register covers a variety of elements, some of which are Field, Tenor and Mode. The Ideational and Interpersonal function are two important components of evaluation. According to this model, the statement of quality of a translation is to what extent the foreign text depends on its own culture for intelligibility. As the statement of quality made of the translation, the translation can be categorized into one of two types: Overt translation or Covert translation (House 1997).

In this research, in order to do such evaluation, the English novel "*The Graveyard*" was chosen as an original text and its Persian translation by ObeydiAshtiani was also selected as the matter of investigation. The comparison and evaluation of translation reveals criteria about the process of translation and its quality based on the mentioned framework. The first assessment is the analysis of the original text and the second assessment is the analysis and comparison of Persian translation to the original text in order to evaluate the quality of translation according to House's translation quality assessment. The analysis of the source text and its translation work

make it possible to determine whether the original text is translated overtly or covertly.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the same tune with present study, there are some selective reviews of several studies based on the House's TQA model.

HeidariTabrizi, Chalak and Taherioun in 2012, used House's model to assess the quality of Balooch(2004)'s Persian translation of Orwell(1949). Based on the findings of dimensional mismatches and overt errors.

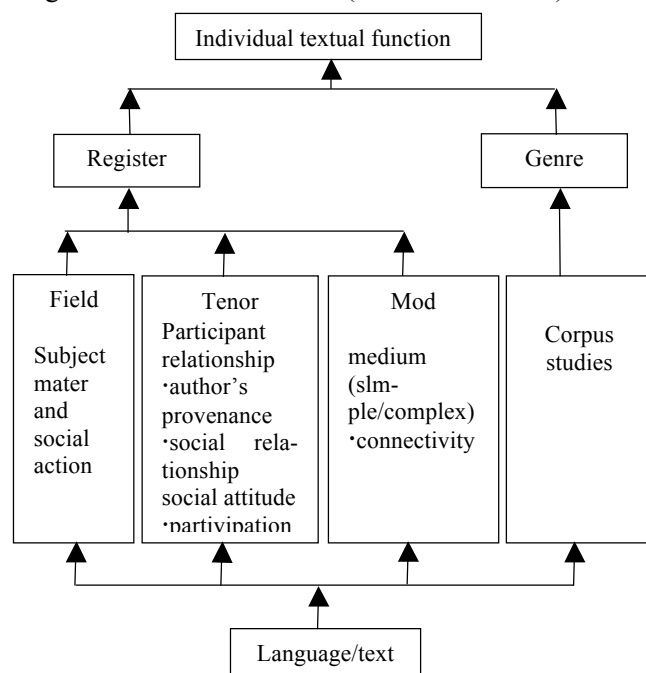
The other authors, are Yamini and Abdi in (2010). They applied House's model on Persian translation of Macbeth by Ala'uddinPasargadi. They also found the translation covertly erroneous errors & overtly erroneous errors, and the approach which they used to analysis was quantitative.

Ehsani and Zohrabi (2014) assessed Persian translation of English advertising texts of cosmetic products on the basis of House's Functional-pragmatic model of TQA. They identified profiles of the source texts and target texts and also showed overt errors.

METHODS

House's Model

A revised scheme for analysing and comparing original and translated texts (House 2015: 127)



House's concept of Register:

Field: refers to the subject matter and social action, and covers the specificity of lexical items.

Tenor: includes 'the addresser's temporal, geographical and social provenance as well as his [or her] intellectual, emotional or affective stance(his [or her] "personal viewpoint")' (1997:109;2015:64). 'Social attitude' refers to formal, consultative or informal style. There is an element of individuality to this, as there is to stance.

Mode relates to 'channel' (spoken/written, etc) and the degree of participation between addresser and addressee (monologue, dialogue, etc.). (Munday, 2001, pp. 146-147)

The model is applied as follows:

A profile is produced of the ST Register.

To this is added a description of the ST genre realized by the Register.

Together, this allows a 'Statement of function' to be made for the ST, including the ideational and interpersonal component of that function (in other words, what information is being conveyed and what the relationship is between sender and receiver).

The same descriptive process is then carried out for the TT.

The TT profile is compared to the ST profile and a statement of 'mismatches' or errors is produced. These are categorized according to the situational dimensions of Register and genre. Such dimensional errors are referred to as 'covertly erroneous errors', which are denotative mismatches (which give an incorrect meaning compared to the ST) and target system errors (which do not conform to the formal grammatical or lexical requirements of the TL).

A 'statement of quality' is then made of the translation.

Finally, the translation can be categorized into one of two types: 'overt translation' or 'covert translation'. (Munday, 2001, pp. 147)

In House's rather confusing definition (1997: 66; 2015: 54), 'an overt translation is one in

which the addressees of the translation text are quite "overtly" not being directly addressed'. In other words, the TT does not pretend to be (and is not represented as being) an original and is clearly not directed at the TT audience.

A covert translation 'is a translation which enjoys the status of an original source text in the target culture' (1997: 69; 2015: 56). The function of a covert translation is 'to recreate, reproduce or represent in the translated text the function the original has in its discourse world' (2015: 67). It does this without taking the TT reader into the discourse world of the ST. Instead, equivalence is necessary at the level of genre and the individual text function. To achieve this, what House calls a 'cultural filter' needs to be applied by the translator, modifying cultural elements and thus giving the impression that the TT is an original. (Munday, 2001, pp. 147-148)

Material

The text used in this study comprise:

PROCEDURE

The procedure of current research is analytic, qualitative and comparative. It involved and followed in the analysis of ST at the three levels of lexical, syntactic and textual means and then comparing the ST and the TT using the same three-level analysis, then categorising the translation as overt or covert translation. Finally, a statement of the quality of the translation is given. As House's model introduced no types of measurement, the assessment is completely qualitative. The English novel "The Graveyard" by Gaiman and its Persian translation by Obeydi-Ashtiani formed the corpus of the study. The data was chosen randomly through the pages of the book.

These pages were then compared with the corresponding sections in the translation. The page numbers do not match between the ST and the TT.

DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS

The present study concerns a qualitative aspects.

Analysis of the ST and statement of function are as follows:

Field

The original text is a book with pictures for children in 312 pages. The genre is horror_fiction. The novel traces the story of Nobody "Bod" owns who is adopted and raised by supernatural occupants of a graveyard after his family is brutally murdered. The title of the book "The Graveyard" is well in line with characterization.

Lexical Means

Ample use of lexical items which imply different meanings as to make the horror atmosphere.

I'm between the ghouls and monsters (p. 9)

Her beady ghost_eyes (p. 10)

Figurative use of language in order to make the text more mysterious and out of reach as mental entity such as simile, personification and metaphor.

Simile:

His shoes were black leather, and they were polished to such a shine that they looked like dark mirrors (p. 8)

Metaphor

Table 1

Title	Author/Translator	Year of Publication	Publisher	Number of page
The Graveyard book	Neil Gaiman	2008	Harper Collins Publisher (New York)	312
کتاب گورستان	کیوان عبیدی آشتیانی	1388	نشر افق (تهران)	417

Around his neck hung a necklace of sharp, long teeth (p. 52)

Personification

Minds will not hold you (p. 106)

Syntactic Means

Long sentences, clauses, recursion and multiple embedding which the novel more complex syntactically.

The man Jack sniffed the air. He ignored the scents that had come into the room with him, dismissed the scents that he could safely ignore, honed in on the smell of the thing he had come to find (p. 9)

That means you have infinite potential. You can do anything, make anything, dream anything. If you change the world, the world will change. Potential. Once you're dead, it's gone. Over. You've made what you've made, dreamed your dream, written your name. You may be buried here, you may even walk. But that potential is finished (p. 179)

Lively detailed description of events in order to make the inner world of the author sensible.

The sky was red, but not the warm red of a sunset. This was an angry, glowing red, the colour of an infected wound (p. 78)

Textual Means

Textual cohesion is achieved through iconic linkage and theme dynamics.

Iconic linkage

There is iconic linkage between many clauses in the text, highlighting some words or sentences.

My baby! He is trying to harm my baby! (p.15)

Police (p. 57)

It's going to eat me (p. 92)

Theme dynamics

Thematic movement through rhetorical and interrogative questions.

Can't you see how ridiculous this is? (p. 21)

You mean you never had a cake or candles or stuff? (p. 40)

Tenor

The author's temporal, geographical and social provenance

Conversational, contemporary, standard middle-class American English.

Author doesn't point to a special time. The market place is *the graveyard*. His world of emotion is a dark one with many doubts. The characters keep their dignity and are not infantilized.

Lexical means

The author uses harsh lexical items to show his sorrows and anger. It's a way of showing his hatred about people and material world.

Fear is contagious. You can catch it (p. 188)

You aren't allowed out of *the graveyard* because it's only in *the graveyard* that we can keep you safe (p. 37)

His hair prickled, and his skin was all goose-flesh (p. 132)

Syntactic means

Ample use of tag questions through the text.

That's an alter stone, isn't it? (p. 280)

I called you boy, didn't I? (p. 298)

Textual means

Theme dynamic is obtained through the negative meaning sentences.

She'll not come here again (p. 17)

No love lost between our side and theirs (p. 38)

Social role relationship

a) Author reader: the narrator is a third person narrator, it means that the narrator never talks about itself, but just narrates the story. Although the narrator is most closely tied to Bod and his story, this narrator can go into the mind of any character it chooses. The narrator is probably holding back information so readers have a little puzzle to figure out while they read.

b) Characters among themselves: complexity,

involvement, sympathy.

Social attitudes

Informal- consultative style level: conversational, characterizing the type of strange horror occurring in a graveyard between supernatural.

MODE

Medium: complex

Written to be read, creating for children. This medium could be described along Biber's three dimensions: involved vs. Informal, explicit vs. Situation dependent, abstract vs. non-abstract.

Participation

Complex: marked by frequent implied dialogic part and the informal style.

Lexical means

Use of "well", a token typically used at the beginning of a response in a dialogue.

well, you'll see how he's dressed (p. 129)

Syntactic means

Complexity of clauses and phrases, using imaginary creatures to effect on reader's mind.

Ghouls move fast. They swarmed along the path through the desert more swiftly than a vulture flies and Bod was carried along by them, held high overhead by a pair of strong ghoul arms, tossed from one to another, feeling sick, feeling dread and dismay, fleeing stupid (p. 82)

Textual means

The presence of narrative makes the text as a piece of story written to be read by readers.

Genre

"The Graveyard" is modern in style and genre is horror_fiction for children. It reflects the subjective nature of the stories which brings the metaphysical aspects in an indivisible whole.

Statement of Function

The function of the original text consists of an ideational and an interpersonal component might be summed up as follows:

The author's intention is to tell an effective story about his personal thoughts and understanding. He wants to share and communicate his emotions, personal feelings and his point of view of the world with others. He mentions in the story that he is writing to his shadow, in this case he actually refers to readers implicitly, he uses this technique to attract readers and to have motive effect on them to be curious about the novel. He wants to impart the philosophy of life to readers but in a bitter tone. On FIELD, the abundance of figurative language use, as well as complex syntactic structure and detailed description of events to make the text the horror_fiction novel, all these feed into the interpersonal functional component. On TENOR, the author's personal stance and social attitude evident in the text strongly mark the interpersonal function component. Ample use of harsh lexical items, bitter tone, rhetorical questions, negative meaning and informal style, clearly support the interpersonal component. On Mode, both the fact that medium of this text is "written to be read" and the participation is marked by frequent implied dialogic parts as it seems the main character is in doubts and expecting answers to his question and presence of personal narrative, simulated speech (monologue and dialogue) also strengthen the interpersonal function.

ST and TT comparison and statement of quality Field

Lexical mismatches

Loss of meaning, this part of translation is not tied to ST completely.

Owens knew what his wife was thinking when she used that tone of voice (p. 17)

آقای اوونز میدانست همسرش موقع گفتن آن جمله ها به چه چیزی فکر میکرد.

These two clauses are not equivalent in meaning.

بله یادم رفت. Yes. Exactly (p. 104)

Syntactic mismatches

The translation is not source oriented and not translated literary, for adding some words or phrases and omission.

She had a face that was intelligent and not even a little bit beautiful (p. 109)

دختری بزرگتر از خودش بود، ولی بزرگسال نبود، چهره اش نه دوستانه بود و نه غیر دوستانه، محتاط به نظر می رسید و باهوش و کمی زیبا.

A flash of pain woke him, sharp as ice, the colour of slow thunder, down in the weeds that summer's night (p. 108)

در آن شب تابستانی، دردی ناگهانی دیدارش کرد، جایی در بدنش تیر میکشید، فریادی از روی ناراحتی کشید.

Textual mismatches

Loss of cohesion, for changing the form of declarative into rhetorical question.

that's what I've done (p. 135)

فهمیدی؟

Tenor

Author's personal (emotional and intellectual) stance.

Lexical mismatches

The translator deleted some phrases in TT therefore, the translation doesn't follow the original meaning.

Put hairs on your chest. Say when (p. 135)

The two titles of chapters are not equivalent to "The Hounds of God" and "Danse Macabre" "نوی مرگ"

Syntactic mismatches

Clause structures are shorter and even simpler in translation. Skewed the meaning and no literary translation.

It was there in the crisp winter air, in the stars, in the wind, in the darkness (p. 144)

زمستانیشک بود و ستاره ها کم تر دیده میشدند.

Loss of cohesion due to false grammar in translation.

What are you doing now? (p. 41)

داری چه کار کنی؟

she'll not come here again (p. 17)

او دیگر به اینجا برنخواهد گشت.

Textual mismatches

In this part of the text, translation doesn't follow the original due to social attitude of the translator.

The focus of the translator is towards the TT readers therefore, It is considered as a covert translation which the cultural filter is applied.

The half-filled bottle of whisky (p. 135)

یک بطری نوشیدنی.

Bod went back up the hill, to the little chapel near the entrance to *the graveyard* (p. 100)

او بالایتهیبرگشت، به نمازخانه ی کوچکنزدیک در ورودیگورستان.

As I Am so shall you be (p. 164)

همه به خاکبرمیگردیم.

Mode

Participation

In one stance in the original, the attempt via a rhetorical question is not kept up in the translation or the declarative sentence in original turns into rhetorical question.

I mean, before you cursed them all? (p. 112)

منظورم قبل از نفرین کردن آن هاست.

I'm never going to know this (p. 72)

دانستناینچیزها به چه دردممبخورد؟

Genre

Inasmuch as the translation is still a children's book. There has been no change in the genre of this text, however, the translation reveals cultural filter and changes at the level of language. The picture of the translated book is the same as the original one.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As it is obvious, the research focused on the book "The Graveyard" by Gaiman as the source text, and Its Persian translation by Obeydi-Ashtiani, as the target text. The main goal of the analysis and assessment was to recognize the extent of the quality of the translation based on the House model. The qualitative data collected, then the first analysis was done upon the original text, and the second one on Its Persian translation. The state-

ment of quality of both ST and TT made therefore the results revealed mismatches along the dimensions of Field, Mode, and in particular Tenor.

The comparative Source Text and Target Text analysis in House's model of TQA is leading to the translation quality assessment. The Persian translation of the book "*The Graveyard*" by ObeydiAshtiani was analysed and also the important elements of translation provided, under the three aspects of lexical, syntactic and textual means based on the mentioned framework. Main findings of the study are as follows:

On Field, loss of meaning was established and the translation was not tied to source text completely in several cases. The translator added some words or phrases which were not in accordance to the original and also loss of cohesion for changing the form of declarative into rhetorical question can be met. In some cases no literary translation which skewed the meaning of an original. On Tenor, short and simple clauses of original's long sentences. In this part, the translation was not source oriented and the focus of the translator was toward the TT readers, therefore, the translator deleted some phrases and changed the title of some chapters which were not corresponded to the target culture, in addition using cultural filter by the translator produced a covert translation

As the evidence was shown in data analysis, The Persian translation of the book "*The Graveyard*" by ObeydiAshtiani, doesn't conform to House's model of TQA, due to some errors in lexical, syntactic and textual means which make the translated text to be far from the original text and leads the translation to the covert one, therefore, the translator

Couldn't maintain the translation as the original text. In this case the reader feels the inconsistency, in particular, where the cultural filter has been applied.

The textual profiles of both ST and TT demonstrate that the ideational and interpersonal function of the text has been affected in the trans-

lation to some extent, as the detailed mismatches showed above.

In this kind of translation, the culture filter was required, where a adaptation into the target culture was needed. Thus, the interpersonal function is clearly marked.

Based on the analysis and comparison of the translation, overt or covert mismatches and errors have been taken into account. In this respect the equivalents don't reflect the original text and It is more straightforward for the TT readers.

In the field of assessment, Ideational and Interpersonal are two functional components. These two components are separate. The first one is linguistic analysis, description and explanation on the basis of research and knowledge. The second one is something which relates to social relevance and refers to value judgement. It also includes the personal taste. Both the Ideational and Interpersonal are needed in translation, especially in the field of assessment. The reason why is that, analysing the text is one of the major factor for judging. Without analysing, judging is irresponsible, and the analysed text without judging, somewhat seems pointless.

CONCLUSION

Evaluation of a translation is something necessary for translators in most countries including Iran. In translation quality assessment, care should be taken in the case of the difference between analysis and social judgement in the field of evaluating any translations, that is to say, there is difference between the comparison of textual profiles, describing and explaining differences established in the evaluation and analysis of the quality of translation. There are many factors in the evaluation of the translation which depend on the social evaluative judgement. This judgement would be made as a result of the comparative process of translation criticism, or the linguistic analysis, because linguistic analysis is the thing that provides grounds for arguing social evaluative judgement.

There are also some factors other than subjective interpretation of the translated text. The fac-

tors which specify the translated text as an overt or a covert translation. One of them is culture and the other is about implied readers. These are known as socio-cultural factors that has nothing to do with translation as a linguistic procedure.

Translation is a linguistic-textual phenomenon, thus, It is important to know that linguistic description and explanation should not be confused with evaluation criteria based on political, social or individual grounds.

Houses TQA model provides framework for linguistic analysis, description and comparison of text and the evaluation of translation, then linking them with cultural items and finally provides a qualitative judgement which is totally subjective.

Taken together, The analysis of The translation of the book "*The Graveyard*" can be interpreted as reflecting differences in Persian and English preferences and norms established in cross-cultural research. The Persian translation analysed above can be described as a covert translation, in which a cultural filter has been applied.

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Biodata

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