

Providing a Critical Appraisal of the Persian Translation of Coelho's *the Devil and Miss Prym* On the Basis of House's Revised Model of Trancism

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Abstract: Trancism reassures the readers of the translation quality and helps the translator learn from his/her mistakes to avoid them in future works. Thus, the present study made a comparison between Coelho's (2000) *the Devil and Miss Prym* and its Persian translation produced by Hejazi (2001) according to House's (2015) functional-pragmatic model of trancism to investigate the translation type, overt translation or covert translation, evaluate the quality of the translation, and examine the appropriateness of House's model to trancism. Moreover, it attempted to probe the effectiveness of educational degree in the translator's achievement. According to the results, the translation the translator produced was a covert type of translation and not of high quality due to various types of overt erroneous errors. House's model was also not applicable to trancism due to its insufficiency to achieve a complete objective judgment of the translation quality. The results also indicated a beneficial effect educational degree in Translation Studies had on the translator's success that the translator of the novel under investigation did not enjoy it.

Keywords: Trancism, Overt Translation, Covert Translation, Functional-Pragmatic Model

1. Introduction

*Trancism*¹ is a detailed analysis of a translation aimed to "help improve the translation through the constructive comments provided by the critic" (Abdi, 2021, p. 561). Pym (2014) states that trancism is "the set of discourses that assess the way translations help or hinder progress" that makes it "an unfashionable and perilous exercise" because the critic is first forced to say "what the progress looks like" (p. 5). For Popovic (as cited in Spirk, 2009), a critique of a translation is an axiological activity that includes subjective taste, analytical evaluation of the translator's product, and function of the translation in the context of contemporary literature. He considers trancism as the third chain of communication because it produces a reaction to the translated text, which is the second chain of communication.

The relation between translation and criticism is somehow vague and not clear due to the agreement that the translator needs to begin with "a reading of a literary text, but not on how that correlates with the main lines of literary criticism" (Turner, 2006, p. 168). A critique of a translation, as he clarifies, is mainly conducted through either a comparison between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) with the aim of establishing the norms of the translation or between two different translations to make the differences clear. The benefit gained from such a comparison is to indicate "not only what an author is doing, but also what he is not doing" (p. 170). There is another type of criticism that is frequently made when the translator, as Simpson (1975) implies, is in the position

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¹Trancism is the term was coined by Abdi (2021) for Translation Criticism, and the researcher used it in this article as an alternative to Translation Criticism.

of the critic and criticizes him/herself that most of the time done subjectively rather than objectively. A critique of a translation should be conducted objectively via a systematic method in order to avoid the subjective judgment and personal bias. This makes the job of the critic difficult due to many approaches to trancism and the absence of a unique criterion to assess the quality of the translation. To achieve this, theorists first need to reach a general agreement on definitions and the criteria for translation quality control must then be tested and verified (Dodds, 1985; Qassem, 2021). But it is far from reality and unattainable. This is because various text types, as Valero (1995) argues, are in need for various translation methods and therefore various criticism approaches. In this way, the critic, as he discusses, is not faced with the ST to produce the TT, but with two *completed communication situations* that place him in the position of receiving of both ST and TT.

From different model of trancism, House (2015) develops her model by inspiring Halliday's functional and systemic theory. She devotes her full attention to the analysis of the ST and TT by considering *mismatches* and *errors*. To end this, House proposes two different translation types, overt and covert translations. The former is "one in which the addressees of the translation text are quite overtly not being directly addressed" (p. 54), because of a difference in the function of the ST and TT. In contrast, the latter is "a translation which enjoys the status of an original source text in the target culture" (p. 56), because both the ST and TT serve the same function in their own respective culture and language.

Under House's (2015) functional-pragmatic model of trancism, the present study aimed to make an objective judgment on the quality of Persian translation of Paulo Coelho's (2000) *the Devil and Miss Prym* by making a comparison between the original book and its Persian translation to find out the type and quality of the translation as well as the applicability of House's model to trancism. In addition, the significant role educational degree in Translation Studies (TS) plays in the success of the translator was examined. To meet the objective of the present study, the researcher looked for the answer to the following questions:

1. Which House's (2015) translation type, overt translation or covert translation, did the translator produce?
2. What was the level of translation quality, low quality or high quality, produced by the translator according to the House's (2015) model of trancism?
3. Was House's (2015) model applicable to trancism?
4. Did an educational degree in TS have a beneficial effect on the translator's success?

The present study addresses the existing gap in the literature and pays special attention to the subject matter that has been rarely focused via a careful evaluation of the quality of Persian translation of Paulo Coelho's (2000) *the Devil and Miss Prym* to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Persian translation to help the translator be aware of his performance. This leads the translator to maintain the strengths and resolve the weaknesses for the future tasks. The present study's findings should be helpful for newly critics, translation students, and those who are interested in trancism.

2. Review of the Related Literature

2.1. Trancism from Different Perspectives

Simpson (1975) states that trancism should realistically reflect the new awareness, but it still seems improvised and most often the time its scope is very limited. Thus, there, as Simpson (1975, p. 255) argues, is a need for “a more objective, comprehensive and systematic approach” to make the uncovering of “a near maximum of *gems*” included in a given translation easier. He considers the linguistic approach as the best one because of its considerable advantage in dealing with a large number of noticeable literary points that may derived from the translation of a given text. In a sense, this approach provides the opportunity to come to a comprehensive and mostly an objective judgment of a translation.

Broeck (2014) believes that trancism is an *amateurish* due to that it is at disposal of and done by a set of journalists who were familiar with the SL literature for the negligence of some countries, such as Western countries, in the practice of trancism and the real position of translators in the society. This causes the critic to come to a poor judgment due to the other issues paid more attention than translation itself, such as focusing on error analysis or treating the translation as if dealing with the ST in the mother tongue and forget that it is a translation. For Broeck, the ideal criticism is obtained when a comparative analysis of both the ST and TT is made because of the involvement of the structures and systems of both texts.

In their scheme for describing translations, Lambert and Gorp (2014) take into account trancism as one of the main problems under the study. They express that trancism was conventionally considered “in a strictly binary and one-directional way, as a straightforward confrontation between T1/ST and T2/TT” (p. 46). In some evaluations, a critique of a translation, as they argue, was just focused on some linguistic aspects relating to the equivalent problems to seek the answer of such a question: are the given linguistic features in T2 suitable for linguistic features in T1? This approach to trancism, which is called by them *the reductionist approach*, is failed due to regardless of the complex nature of equivalence. Their descriptive scheme aimed to investigate the translation strategies the translator applied to determine the overall strategy of the translation through a textual analysis.

2.2. House's Functional-Pragmatic Model of Trancism

In the revised model (see Figure 1), House (2015, p. 63) defines translation as “the replacement of a text in the source language by a semantically and pragmatically equivalent text in the target language” that leads to an adequate translation. She applies the Hallidayan register concept to her model. The register is divided into three dimensions: *Field*, *Mode*, and *Tenor*.

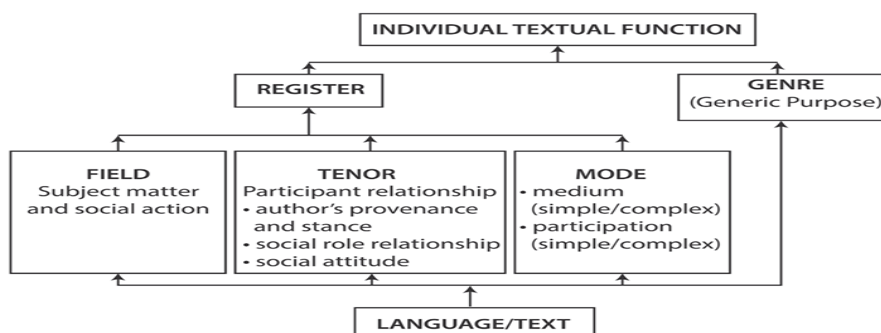


Figure 1. A scheme for analyzing and comparing original and translation texts (House, 2015, p. 65)

House (2015) describes that Field refers to the subject matter, or social action of the text; Mode points to both addresser/sender and addressee/receiver and the level of real participation in which writer and reader are involved; Tenor implies “the nature of the participants...and the relationship between them in terms of social power and social distance” (p. 64). House also applies the concept of *Genre* to her revised model because she believes that a statement of the individual textual function, including interpersonal and ideational elements, will not be achievable just by the concept of register because of its importance in judging the quality of the translation and in making one able to refer to “any single textual exemplar to the class of texts with which it shares a common purpose or function” (p. 64).

House (2015) makes a distinction between two translation types, overt and covert translations, as a need for a critique of a translation because they are merged into a coherent theory of transicism. House considers two levels at which the equivalent is sought, *the level of language/text*, and *the functional level/a second-level functional equivalence*. In an overt translation, as she argues, it is possible to achieve the equivalent at the level of language/text, genre, and register, but not at the functional level which the TT can gain access to the ST function, “allowing the TT receivers to ‘eavesdrop’ on the ST” (Munday, 2001, p. 93). Thus, the translator, as House expresses, plays an important role and is clearly visible because of the responsibility s/he has for providing target culture (TC) readers with the opportunity to full access to the ST and its cultural impact on source culture (SC) readers, enabling TC readers to “observe and/or judge this text from outside” (p. 67).

According to House (2015), a covert translation does not pragmatically represent a translation of the ST but conceivably the creation of a translation in its own right. The ST and its covert translation, as she implies, follow the same equivalent purpose because of the current equivalent needs relating to a comparable audience they are built on. In such a translation, there is a possibility of keeping the function of the ST equivalent in the TT via an increase in *a cultural filter*. House discusses that this creates more difficulties, more many subtle, and cultural translation problems for the TT due to the lack of orientation of the TT towards the SC. In a covert translation, the translator, as she states, makes an attempt to reproduce an equivalent speech event and to be unfaithful to the ST, leading him/her to be less visible.

3. Methodology

3.1. Corpus

The corpus of the present study encompasses the English version of Paulo Coelho's (2000) *the Devil and Miss Prym* published by Harper Collins in 240 pages, and its Persian translation that was made by Arash Hejazi (2001) and published by Nashr-e- Caravan in 233 pages. Paulo Coelho is a Brazilian novelist who was born on August 24, 1947 in Rio de Janeiro. He rose to fame for his novel *The Alchemist*. Hejazi is an Iranian writer, translator, and publisher who was born on February 19, 1970. He is the director of Caravan Publishing and the official translator of Paulo Coelho's books into Persian. Along with the novel *the Devil and Miss Prym* was one of Coelho's bestselling and well-known novels, it is translated by whom is a physician and graduated from the medical school of Iran University of Medical Sciences. It alludes to that the translator is not a graduate of and holds an educational degree unrelated to TS. This aroused the researcher's curiosity to choose this version of Persian translation of the book from other Persian translations to find out whether an educational degree in TS has a considerable effect on the translation quality and the success of the translator.

3.2. Procedure

A comparative analysis was made between the English version of Coelho's (2000) *the Devil and Miss Prym* and its Persian translation to make a judgment as objectively as possible on and a detailed analysis of the Persian translation according to House's (2015) model of trancism. This includes Field, Mode, Tenor, and Genre, and the determination of overtly erroneous errors via identifying the translation strategies, namely addition, omission, and substitution strategies as well as breaches of the TL system applied by the translator. This led not only to investigate the translation type, overt translation or covert translation but also to apply a qualitative model of analysis.

The present study was a corpus-based TS (CTS) that was developed by Baker (1993). As Li and Hu (2018) state, CTS provides the researcher with an efficient research methodology including both a descriptive-oriented and corpus-based approach. This research methodology enables the researcher to examine "the nature of translation as a product and a process by means of corpora" via a comparative analysis method between the features of the TT and ST.

4. Results and Discussion

In this section, a detailed analysis of the corpus of the present study is provided under House's (2015) model of trancism. That is to say, a discovery of the resister profile of the ST was made; followed by a comparison between the ST and TT to examine overtly erroneous errors. The results obtained from the analysis of each category of her model, Field, Tenor, Mode, Genre are provided as follows:

4.1. ST profile

Field category encompasses subject matter and social action. The former is *the Devil and Miss Prym* one of the famous and bestselling novels in the literary world. It is also popular among adults. Thus, the subject matter is a novel and the social action is general and popular. Tenor category points to author's provenance and stance, social role relationship, and social attitude. The author's provenance and stance refer to the nature of the creator of the novel, Paulo Coelho as a Brazilian novelist and lyricist, who not only is the best in Brazil but also in the world of literature. Social role relationship is symmetrical because of the author's position in the story who makes an attempt to adjust a balance between the readers and himself by narrating the story. Social attitude can be either formal or informal that in this case is informal. On Mode, two elements need to be determined, medium and participation. The medium of the novel is complex because the text is written to be read as if spoken in the form of both monologue and dialogue. The participation is also complex because it is a combination of both monologue and dialogue. Genre is novel. The function of the novel was mainly ideational because it tells a story and is implicitly present. In a wider sense, the story makes the readers aware of certain events and facts involving the protagonist depicted in the text. The author intends to make people worried about temptations and desires that go against their morals. One of the story's main protagonists is the priest trying to save the village from the temptation and desires, achieving a mass amount of gold, created by the stranger who attempts to investigate whether mankind is good or evil by playing the role of the devil. The other functional dimension, interpersonal dimension, was also present in the text. It is highlighted via the Genre because the focus of the author was mainly on the stranger who comes to tempt the people of Viscos by increasing their desires to have a large amount of gold. The presence of interpersonal dimension was seen on Field dimension through the lack of technical non-academic terms, complexity of syntactic structures, and redundancy through repetition and iconic linkages. On Tenor, there were some factors to indicate the interpersonal dimension, such as the use of informal style and the authors personal

stance and social attitude. On Mode, the interpersonal dimension marked by monologue and dialogue speeches as well as the emergence of personal narrative because the medium of the text is written to be read as if spoken and the participation emphasized via the use of dialogue format in some parts of the story.

4.2. Comparison of the ST and TT

On Field, there were some lexical mismatches due to the inadequate translation of some items. For example, the ST item *old people* was translated impolitely into پیر و پاتالها that was not only a suitable TT equivalent for but also an insult to the elderly. Such mismatches have been observed in syntactic structures in such a way that the long sentences encompassing two or more subordinating clauses in the ST were translated into separate short sentences. For example, the ST sentence *everybody in this village is honest, starting with you* was separately translated into در این دهکده همه شرافت مندند. از خودت شروع کنیم. On Tenor, the lexical mismatches were also engaged in social attitude because of making space between the author and the reader. For instance, the ST item *speech* was translated into خطبه which is specific to religious people and used by them in religious places when talking on moral or religious subjects. Some syntactic mismatches were carried out on Tenor dimension due to incorrect grammatical use that led to a decrease in cohesion. For example, the simple ST sentence *I came to Viscos* was translated into آمدم به ویسکوز without observing Persian sentence structure (S.O.V). On Mode, the lexical mismatches were seen in medium because of the formal translation of some informal ST items. In the ST sentence *she thought of adding* the ST item *adding* was translated formally into بی افزاید. There were also some mismatches in participation when, for example, the ST declarative sentence *she could choose not to believe the legend and scare off the wolf* was translated into rhetorical question افسانه را باور نکند و گرگ را بترساند؟

4.3. Overt erroneous errors

Omission

Omission strategy was employed by the translator to omit the ST items or parts according to either a cultural filtering or the translator's preference (see Examples 1 and 2)

Example 1

"The stranger carefully read the form he was given to fill in at the hotel, deciding what he was going to put." (p. 6)

" خارجی با دقت برگه ورودیه هتل را خواند و فکر کرد چگونه آنرا پر کند. " (ص. ۲۲)

Example 2

"I work in the evenings at the bar of the hotel where you're staying." (p. 8)

" شب ها در همان هتلی کار میکنم که شما در آن اقامت دارید. " (ص. ۲۴)

Addition

The translator employed addition strategy to add some extra information/explanations to the ST item to make the translation more explicit (see Example 3).

Example 3

"There's just one thing," the mayor's wife commented." (p. 139)

" همسر شهردار گفت: حالا می ماند یک ریزه کاری نهایی. " (ص. ۱۶۹)

Substitution.

In Example 4, the use of the impersonal pronoun *مرد* for adjective *he* changed the original or intended meaning.

Example 4

"Once again, he nodded." (p. 78)

"*مرد دوباره با جنباندن سرش تایید کرد.*" (ص. ۱۰۰)

Breaches of the TL system.

According to House (2015), there are two types of breaches of the TL system, ungrammaticality and dubious acceptability. The former refers to "clear breaches of the language system" (see Example 5); whereas "the latter points to breaches of the norm of usage" (p. 33) (see example 6).

Example 5

"What exactly are you driving at?" (p. 80)

"می خواهی به کجا برسی؟" (ص. ۱۰۲)

Example 6

"Concerned about the future...that Miss Prym's story might spread and drive away hunters and tourists alike, he decided to call an emergency meeting," (p. 104)

"مرد، نگران آینده...که ممکن بود داستان دوشیزه پریم پخش شود و شکارگرها و جهانگردها را از آنجا براند، یک جلسه اضطراری تشکیل داد." (ص. ۱۲۶)

In the above example, the incorrect use of the TT item *شکارگرها* for the ST item *hunters* is not common at least in the TL system, Persian. The suitable equivalent for the ST item *hunters* is *شکارچیان* to give the ST item a clear sense and make it more common and understandable to the target readers.

5. Discussion

In the analysis of the book *the Devil and Miss Prym*, the main focus was on overt erroneous errors because of that the book under investigation falls into the literary work category and, as House (2015) states, should be translated overtly. Thus, the judgment was done on the basis of the framework appropriate to overt translations. According to the results obtained from the comparison between the ST and TT, many overt erroneous errors were found on Field, Tenor, and Mode dimensions. Both ideational and interpersonal functions of the text were influenced by such mismatches. On Field, the inappropriate TT translations were made for the ST items the extent to which some ST items were translated very informally and many long ST sentences rendered into two or more simple TT sentences. This led to a change in the interpersonal function of the text because of making the implicit meaning of the ST items more explicit. There was also a change in the interpersonal function on Tenor dimension due to the replacement of the ST items with the unsuitable TT equivalents and improper use of grammar that led to the loss of cohesion.

The mismatches observed on the Mode dimension were the same as those seen on Tenor, but they did not change the Genre of the text and the medium of the TT was complex because it is written to be read as if spoken. Along with the above overt erroneous errors, there were some others that were made because of the use of some TT-oriented translation strategies, namely, omission, addition, and substitution strategies as well as breaches of the TL system. Omission strategy alongside addition strategy leads the translator towards the TT structure. The former strategy was mainly applied by the

translator inevitably because he may have been forced to employ it due to the cultural filter (see example 2) or economic conditions, for example, to save on paper or ink imposed on the translator by the publisher.

Addition strategy is also a TT- oriented strategy employed to make the meaning of the ST item more understandable and clear to the TT readers by adding a short explanation to or a very brief description alongside the ST item that was not necessary in most cases. The inappropriate use of the TT item for the ST or the incorrect combination of elements leads to some changes in the translation that can be occurred via substitution strategy. The use of such a strategy should be skillfully otherwise, some unwanted changes made in the structure and meaning of the ST item that not only distort the meaning of the sentence but also decrease the understandability of the readers. Breaches of the TL system affected the meaning of some ST items and made a slight change in their meaning but had no significant effect on the quality of the translation.

The results derived from Anari and Varmazyari's (2016) study on the quality assessment of political texts differed from the present study results in the conclusion they reached. According to them, the translation made by the translator was an overt translation due to covertly erroneous errors. Furthermore, as House (2015) implies, such texts are expected to have a covert type of translation. The results of Alavipour and Noroozi (2020), who judged the translation quality of a literary text, were similar to the results derived from the present study. After comparing the ST and TT, they concluded that the original book was translated covertly due to various types of overt erroneous errors and translation strategies.

6. Conclusion

Each society is in need of trancism to make the readers aware of the quality of both translation and translator. This helps readers know what quality of translation they read and keeps them free to choose high-quality translations. Thus, the present study made a judgment on the quality of Persian translation of Coelho's (2000) *the Devil and Miss Prym* under House's (2015) functional-pragmatic model of trancism to determine the translation type and quality the translator produced and examine the applicability of House's model to trancism. Along with these primary objectives, there was a secondary objective to investigate the effectiveness of educational degree in TS in the success of the translator. As the results indicated, the Persian translation produced by Hejazi (2001) did not comply with the criteria and what House considered in her model of trancism for an over translation that a literary translation should follow. That is to say, the translation made by the translator was a covert type due to a series of overt erroneous errors and the type of translation strategies that kept the translation at a considerable distance from the ST and deprived the target readers of the original voice as well as reduced the visibility of the translator. Hence, the researcher concluded that the translation was not of high quality and House's model was not applicable to trancism due to its capability to help the critic achieve a complete objective judgment of the translation quality. Moreover, the results of the study acknowledged the benefit of educational degree in TS in the translator's success that the translator of the novel under judgment did not enjoy it due to the mentioned overt errors and inappropriate use of addition and omission strategies in some cases alluding to his lack of mastery over translation strategies and background knowledge of translation theories.

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