

## **RESEÑAS**

**House, Juliane. Translation Quality Assessment. A Model Revisited. Gunter Narr Verlag, 1997, Tübingen**

In the chapter on Translation Criticism (Übersetzungskritik) of the *Handbuch Translation* (M. Snell-Hornby, H. Höning, P. Kussmaul, P. Schmidt (ed), 1999), Klaus Kaindl describes adequately the field of Translation Criticism as a 'stepchild' of the translation science. He also points out that it is only in the 70s that the translation science began to deal with the tasks and goals of Translation Criticism (Ibid, p.373). In fact, the first edition of Juliane House's book, which was her Ph.D. dissertation, was published in 1977; there was a second edition in 1981, and a third one in 1997, which we intend to review. Within this context we can state that House's initial interest was to provide translation criticism (=Translation Quality Assessment) with a scientifically-based foundation that would allow for its development as a proper field of study and research in the science of translation. Due to the importance of translation criticism for the field of translation theory and practice in general and for the understanding of this discipline in our country, we decided to review House's proposal by presenting a very exhaustive and detailed account of her statements in her own words and commenting on them where it deemed pertinent.

House's book is divided in six chapters, in addition to an Appendix, a Bibliography, an Author Index and a Subject Index. In Chapter 1 the author "reviews and critically examines approaches to translation and translation quality assessment, both those preceding and those following the publication of the original model". House's model is sketched in Chapter 2; she "distinguishes different kinds of translation, and proposes that cultural filtering is appropriate in some translation types". In Chapter 3 she "investigates the notion of a cultural filter in some detail for the language pair German/English, gathering exemplary evidence from contrastive pragmatic research, including a series of studies by the author comparing these two linguacultures". In Chapter 4 "the revisited model of translation quality assessment is presented"; Chapter 5 "is devoted to the illustration of the model" and Chapter 6 "summarizes the results, attempts to evaluate the model itself, and makes suggestions for its use in translation teaching programmes". Let's see in some detail the main issues discussed in each chapter of the book.

*Chapter 1. Review of Approaches to Evaluating the Quality of a Translation.* The author's point of departure is "evaluating the quality of a translation" (p.1). When one tries to make statements about the quality of a translation, "one thus addresses the crucial question of the nature of translation,

or, more specifically, the nature of (1) the relationship between a source text and its translation, (2) the relationship between (features of) the text(s) and how they are perceived by human agents (author, translator, recipient), and (3) the consequences views about these relationships have for determining the borders between a translation and the other textual operations" (*ibid*). Three broad approaches to assessing the quality of a translation are discussed by the author within the framework of the above-mentioned questions.

1. *Anecdotal, Biographical and Neo-hermeneutic Approaches to Judging Translation Quality* ."Faithfulness to the original", "retention of the original's special flavour", "preservation of the spirit of the source language", etc., are typical anecdotal reflections made by generations of professional translators, poets, writers, philologists and philosophers (*Ibid*). They "deny the legitimacy of any effort of trying to derive more general rules or principles for translation quality and secondly to list and discuss a series of concrete and random examples of translation problems and their unexplained or inexplicable optimal solutions" (p.2). "In the 'neo-hermeneutic' approach (cf.e.g.,Paepcke 1986; Stolze 1992; Kupsch-Losereit 1994) the hermeneutic understanding and interpretation of the original and the fabrication of a translation are individual, creative acts that on principle defy systematization, generalization and rule giving" (*ibid*). House considers this to be "an extreme relativisation of content [which] is particularly inappropriate as a guideline for evaluating translations: a translation is not a private affair but normally carries with it a threefold responsibility to the author, the reader, and the text" (p.3). "To sum up, most of the anecdotal approaches to the evaluation of translation emphasize the belief that a quality of a translation depends largely on the translator's subjective interpretation and transfer decisions, which are based on his linguistic and cultural intuitive knowledge and experience (*ibid*). With respect to the three basic questions posed at the beginning of this chapter, "we can state that the subjective, and new-hermeneutic approach to translation evaluation can only shed light on what happens between the translator and (features of) the original text. With regard to the other aspects, it is unenlightening, as it represents a narrow and selective view of translation one-sidedly emphasizing one aspect of translation: the process of comprehension and interpretation on the part of the translator. In concentrating on the individual translator's process of comprehension, the original text, the translation process proper, the relation between original and translation, the expectations of the target text readers are not given the attention they deserve, and the problem of distinguishing between a translation and various types of versions and adaptations is not even recognized" (*ibid*).

*2. Response-oriented, Behavioural Approaches to Evaluating Translations.*

One of the most outstanding representatives of this approach is E. Nida, whose most important criterion for assessing the quality of a translation “is closely related to his well-known basic principle of ‘Dynamic (or functional) Equivalence of a Translation’ i.e., the manner in which the receptors of the source text respond to the translation text must be equivalent to the manner in which the receptors of the source text respond to the source text” (p.4). For House “assuming that it is true that a translation should produce equivalent responses, the question remains, however, whether the degree to which this requirement is met, can be empirically tested. If it cannot be tested, it seems fruitless to postulate the requirement, and the appeal to ‘equivalence of response’ is really of no more value than the philologists’ and hermeneuticists’ criterion of ‘capturing the spirit of the original’” (ibid). “The major weakness of all response-based suggestions for translation evaluation is the weakness of all behaviour-centered approaches: the ‘black box’, the human mind is not taken into account, such that, for instance, tests involving expert judges, must take criteria for granted that need to be developed and made explicit in the first place” (p.5). In relation to the three questions asked above, “the response-oriented approach to translation quality assessment all but ignores the *raison d’être* of any translation which undeniably lies in the existence of an original text, and the need to present that text in other words. [They] have nothing to say about the relationship between original and translated text, nor can they shed light on whether a translation is in fact a translation and not a version, an adaptation or another secondary textual product derived from an original text” (p.6)

*3. Text-based Approaches to Evaluating Translation.**3.1. Literature-oriented Approaches: Descriptive Translation Studies.*

“In this approach the existence of a source text that served as a basis for the translated text is thus played down to a considerable extent” (p.7). For House, the basic problem in this approach is “how one is to determine when a text is a translation and what criteria one is to use for evaluating a translation –but these are questions which a descriptive translation researcher would probably never ask, since he would typically start from the hypothesis that a translation belongs exclusively to the literary system of the target linguaculture” (ibid). The major problem with taking this approach is summarized by House in one question: “On which criteria are we to legitimately say that one text is a translation, another one not, and what exactly are the criteria for judging the merits and weaknesses of a given ‘translation’?” (p.8). In terms of the three questions asked at the beginning of this Chapter, “it is most prominently question two concerning the

relationship between (features of) the text and the human agents involved that are the concern of descriptive translation studies" (ibid).

**3.2 Post-Modernist and Deconstructionist Approaches.** Theorists in this approach "undertake to unmask the unequal power relations that are reflected in the translation directions from and into English, and the promotion of further English language hegemony through one-sided translations from English and an ever decreasing number of foreign texts being translated into English" (p.9). "With respect to the three questions above-mentioned, the critical post-modern approaches are most relevant in their attempts to find answers to the first question and also to the second one. However, no answers are sought for the question of when a text is a translation, and when a text belongs to a different textual operation" (p.11).

**3.3. Functionalistic and Action and Reception-theory Related Approaches.** "In their functionalistic or 'Skopos-theory' of translation, Reiss and Vermeer (1984) claim that it is the 'skopos', i.e., the purpose of a translation, which is overridingly important. Given the primacy of the purpose of translation, it is the way target culture norms are heeded that is the most important yardstick for assessing the quality of a translation" (p.12). More relevant for House's discussion "is the failure of the authors to spell out exactly how one is to determine whether a given translation is either adequate or equivalent let alone how to linguistically realize the global 'skopos' of a translation text" (ibid). According to House "this theory might be classified as part of cultural studies. Since its propagators believe that the original is a quantité négligable and emphasize the translation's total dependency on its purpose and its recipients, it is in fact very similar to the response-oriented approaches discussed above, and the criticism made above of these approaches hold here too" (p.16). "With respect to the three questions, the functionalistic approach is not concerned about the relationship between original and translation, nor is it concerned with establishing criteria for delimiting a translation from other textual operations. As it stands, functionalistic approaches are solely concerned with the relationship between (features of) the text and the human agents concerned with them" (ibid).

**3.4 Linguistically-oriented approaches** "In these approaches the source text, its linguistic and textual structure and its meaning potential at various levels (including the level of context of situation in a systemic framework), is seen as the most important, indeed constitutive factor in translation" (p.16) House's approach can be located within these linguistically-oriented approaches. Reiss' (1971) has been one of the most influential linguistic textual approaches. She suggested that "the most important invariant in translation is the text type to

which the source text belongs, as it determines all subsequent choices a translator has to make. She claims that different types of texts can be differentiated on the basis of Bühler's three functions of language: content-oriented texts, e.g., news, scientific, technical texts, form-oriented texts, such as poems and literary journal, and conative texts, e.g., advertisements and texts of persuasive bent" (p.17). House criticizes this approach as Reiss "gives no clear indication as to how one should go about establishing language functions and the source text type. Further, at what level of delicacy that can and should be done is left unexplained" (*ibid*). Some proposals are revised (Koller 1972; Wilss 1974/77; Neubert 1994). Other authors' approaches that integrate recent research on sociolinguistics, speech act theory, discourse analysis and pragmatics (Hatim and Mason 1990; Bell 1991; Gutt 1991; Baker 1992, Schreiber 1993; Steiner 1995; Gerzymisch-Arbogast 1994) are also discussed. "With regard to the three questions asked at the beginning of this Chapter, linguistic textual approaches take the relationship between the original and translation seriously, but differ in their capacity to provide detailed techniques and procedures of analysis and evaluation. [...] The relationship between (features of) the texts and how they are perceived by human agents has become a concern of all those approaches that consider language in use. Few of the linguistic textual approaches, however, have examined the question of the consequences of these relationships for determining the differences between translation and other textual operations, a notable exception being Schreiber (1993)". (p.24). A key tenet of House's approach is expressed in the following statement: "The notion of equivalence is the conceptual basis of translation and, to quote Catford, 'the central problem of translation practice is that of finding TL (target language) equivalents. A central task of translation theory is therefore that of defining the nature and conditions of translation equivalence' (1965:21)" (p.25). "Equivalence is therefore always and necessarily relative, and has nothing to do with identity. 'Absolute equivalence' would be a contradiction in adiecto" (*ibidem*). House presents Koller's (1992) five 'frames of reference' for determining the type of equivalence: denotative, connotative, text normative, pragmatic, and formal-aesthetic equivalence". (*ibid*). Finally, House summarizes her position in relation to the notion of equivalence and the way it has been criticized:

"The attack against the concept of 'equivalence' in the field of translation studies has a slightly dated touch: definitions of equivalence based on formal, syntactic and lexical similarities alone have actually been criticized for a long time, and it has long been recognized that such narrow views of equivalence fail to recognize that two linguistic units in two different languages may be ambiguous in multiple ways. Formal definitions of equivalence have further been revealed

as deficient in that they cannot explain appropriate use in communication. This is why functional, communicative or pragmatic equivalence have been accredited concepts in contrastive linguistics for a very long time, focussing as they do on language use rather than structure. It is these types of equivalence which have become particularly relevant for translation, and this is nothing new (cf. Catford 1965)" (p.26).

*Chapter 2. The Original Model for Evaluating Translation.* In this Chapter House introduces some Fundamental Concepts, her Model of Translation Quality Assessment, Operation of the Model and Refinement of the Model. In 1. Fundamental Concepts, the author discusses the concept of equivalence which captures a "double binding relationship both to its source and to the communicative conditions of the receiving linguaculture" (p.29). The author states that "equivalence is related to the preservation of meaning across two different languages" (p.30), and then deals with the semantic, pragmatic, and textual aspects of meaning particularly important for translation (ibid). She defines translation as "the replacement of a text in the source language by a semantically and pragmatically equivalent text in the target language" (p. 31). Thus, "an adequate translation text is a pragmatically and semantically equivalent one" (p. 32). The author also differentiates functions of language versus functions of texts. She reviews different proposals for the notion of function of language (Malinowski 1923, Odgen and Richards 1946; Karl Bühler 1965; Roman Jakobson 1960; Dell hymes 1968; Karl Popper 1972; Hallyday 1973; Hallyday and Hasan 1989) and criticizes "an equation of language function and textual function /type for being overly simplistic: given the language has functions a to n, and that any text is a self-contained instance of language, it should follow that a text will also exhibit functions a to n, and not –as is presupposed by those who set up functional text typologies- that any text will exhibit one of the functions a to n (e.g. 'Der informative Texttyp')" (p. 36).

## 2. *Toward a Model of Translation Quality Assessment.*

House begins by stating that "the function of a text [is] the application or use which the text has in the particular context of situation" (p. 36). Now, the situation itself can be divided into manageable parts or 'situational dimensions' (p.37). The author follows Crystal and Davy (1961) for analyzing the parts of a situation (ibid):

- A. Individuality
- Dialect
- Time

## B. Discourse

- a. (Simple/Complex) *Medium* (Speech, Writing)
- b. (Simple/Complex) *Participation* (Monolog, Dialog)

## C. Province

- Status
- Modality
- Singularity

The author eclectically adapted Crystal and Davy's model by collapsing the three sections A, B, and C into two sections: Dimensions of Language User and Dimensions of Language Use.

## A. Dimensions of Language User

- 1. Geographical Origin
- 2. Social Class
- 3. Time

## B. Dimensions of Language Use

- 1. Medium: simple/complex
- 2. Participation: simple/complex
- 3. Social Role Relationship
- 4. Social Attitude
- 5. Province

The author then explains the modifications she has made to the original dimensions of situation proposed by Crystal and Davy. She defines the basic criterion of functional match for translation equivalence: "a translation text should not only match its source text in function, but employ equivalent situational-dimensional means to achieve that function, i.e., for a translation of optimal quality it is desirable to have match between source and translation text along these dimensions which are found -in the course of the analysis- to contribute in a particular way to each of the two functional components, ideational and interpersonal, of the text's function" (p.42).

In 3. *Operation of the Model*, House describes the method of operation of the model, "outlining the method of analyzing and comparing texts by indicating how the various situational dimensions of the model are realized syntactically, lexically, and textually, drawing eclectically on a number of concepts deemed useful for the establishment of linguistic correlates to the situational dimensions"

(p.43). The author distinguishes three main textual aspects: 1) theme dynamics (various patterns of semantic relationships by which 'themes' recur in texts), 2) clausal linkage (a system of basically logical relations between clauses and sentences in a text), 3) iconic linkage (two or more sentences cohere because they are isomorphic). (p.45). House justifies her model by stating that "apart from using the objectively fixed set of situational dimensions as a sort of **tertium comparationis**, this method of determining the appropriateness of TT depends of course on the analyst's intuition and on the intuitive judgments asked to help substantiate certain points" (p.46). Two test cases of implementation of the model are presented by the author: a commercial text (p.46) and a journalistic article (p.57).

In 4. *Refinement of the Model*, the author offers suggestions for a Translation Typology (p.65). Two basic translation types are suggested: overt translation and covert translation. "An *overt* translation is one in which the addressees of the translation text are quite 'overtly' not being directly addressed: thus an *overt* translation is one that must overtly be a translation not, as it were, 'a second original'. In an *overt* translation the source text is tied in a specific manner to the source language community and its culture" (p66). [...] "a *direct* match of the original function of the source text is not possible in *overt* translation, either because the source text is tied to a specific non-repeatable historic event in the source culture (for example, Karl Barth's sermon or Winston Churchill's speech, both given at a particular time and place to a particular audience) or because of the unique status (as literary text) that the source text has in the source culture" (p.67). Now, "a *covert* translation is a translation that enjoys the status of an original source text in the target culture. The translation is covert because it is not marked pragmatically as a translation text of a source text but may, conceivably, have been created in its own right. A covert translation is thus a translation whose source text is not specifically addressed to a particular source culture audience, i.e., it is not particularly tied to the source language and culture. Its source text and its *covert* translation text are pragmatically of equal concern for source and target language addressees. Both are, as it were, equally directly addressed. A source text and its *covert* translation have equivalent purposes, they are based on contemporary, equivalent needs of a comparable audience in the source and target language communities. In the case of *covert* translation texts, it is thus possible and desirable to keep the function of the source text equivalent in the translation text" (p.69). Examples of covert translation would be a scientific text, a tourist information booklet, and a journalistic text. "In a covert translation, the translator has to make allowances for underlying cultural differences by placing what [House] call[s] a *cultural filter* between the source text and the translation text"(p.70).

We think that the potential usefulness of the distinction between overt and covert translation becomes rather relative when House states that “A particular ST does not necessarily require once and for all either a covert or an overt translation, given the different, dynamic ways of viewing a text and different purposes for which a translation may, in the course of time, be required”(p.77). Does it mean that everything is relative? Isn’t there anything ‘invariant’ that guarantees that a translation of a source text is precisely a translation and not another language realization such as an adaptation, a summary, or, say, a paraphrase? How powerful is actually the concept of equivalence? In this respect we do not agree completely with House’s relative position. Obviously, there are “different, dynamic ways of viewing a text”, but it does not mean that there are  $n$  possibilities for translating, not if what we attempt to produce is a translation, which we consider to be semantically and pragmatically equivalent. The semantic and pragmatic levels of textualization in the translation process guarantees that it is still a translation what we are dealing with.

*Chapter 3. Substantiating the Cultural Filter: Evidence from Contrastive Pragmatic Discourse Research.* In the 70s and 80s House conducted “a number of contrastive pragmatic analysis comparing the discourse of German and English native speakers”(p79)[...] in order to establish the presence or absence of pragmatic differences in the verbal behaviour of English and German speakers” (p.80). Discourse phases (opening and closing phases), discourse strategies (supporting move, getting a-pre-commitment, disarming the interlocutor, or muddling your way through an issue by expanding it verbosely), gambits, speech acts (directness, politeness) were used in the theoretical framework. As a result of her research, House points out that “German subjects tended to interact in ways that were more direct, more explicit, more self-referenced and more content-oriented” (p.84). House presents the pattern of cross-cultural differences in her research along five dimensions:

#### Dimensions of Cross-Cultural Difference

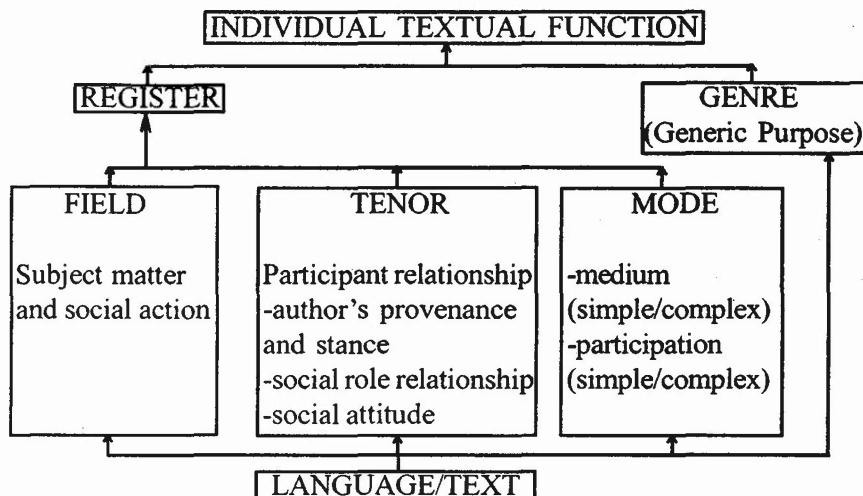
German	English
Directness	Indirectness
Orientation Towards self	Orientation towards Other
Orientation towards content	Orientation towards persons

Explicitness	Implicitness
Ad hoc Formulation	Use of Verbal Routines

“In terms of the two Hallidian language functions, the ideational and the interpersonal, it is the ideational one, which seems to be given a different focus in German interactions –often at the expense of the interpersonal one” (p.85). Then House presents ‘some contrastive pragmatic studies supporting the hypothesis of the five cross-cultural dimensions’ (p.88). Finally, some examples are provided of “translations featuring cultural filtering along the five dimensions of cultural difference” (p.95).

*Chapter 4. The Model Revisited.* House discusses the different aspects of her model that have been criticized. With respect to “the nature of the analytical categories and terminology used”, she concedes that there can be a regrouping of analytical categories into fewer more general ones (p102). As regards the “lack of intersubjective verifiability of the analysis”, House argues that the model “enables the evaluator to make the analyses and interpretations transparent, explicit and non-subjective –but only to a certain point, i.e., the ultimate judgment of quality resulting from the analyses contains necessarily a hermeneutic, subjective component” (p.103). As to the “limits of translatability”, the author clarifies that she deliberately excluded poetic-aesthetic texts from her analyses partly because these texts are “outside her professional focus of interest” (*ibid*). Finally, in relation to the distinction between overt and covert translation, she clarifies that Reiss and Vermeer misunderstood the notion of an *overt* translation, which “has a *second level function* that is not different but is in fact closely related to the function of the original text in that it allows target culture readers access to the original function. If, however, different secondary functions were added to the translation, an *overt* version would result in terms of my [House’s] model, i.e., a bilingual textual operation which is no longer considered to be a translation” (p.104). Unfortunately House does not explain clearly what is to be understood as a ‘second level function’. How closely related should it be to the original function? Next, House rethinks the categories for analysis and attempts to “clarify the relationship between textual function, linguistic characteristics and social use of a text by introducing the category *genre*” (p.105). She states that “a translation embeds the text and its genre in a new speech event in the case of *overt* translation, and it recreates an ‘equivalent’ speech event in the case of *covert* translation. Theoretically, the genre of a text is something to be kept equivalent in both *overt* and *covert* translation” (p.107). At this point in House’s presentation it is still not very clear how the notion of ‘speech event’ is to be understood and further why

there is a 'new speech event' in the case of overt translation and why an 'equivalent' speech event is recreated in covert translation. Another serious shortcoming could emerge from the fact that 'genre' is a rather fuzzy-edged category and consequently it turns out to be problematic to state that it is precisely 'genre' what is to be kept 'equivalent' in translation. In this respect House herself points out. "the category [of genre] remains therefore a socially-determined, pre-scientific category in the sense that its parameters cannot be set by scientific decree. Consequently, of course, it is conceded that the concept remains fuzzy-edged" (p.159-160). Still, 'genre' seems to be of crucial importance in House's revised model: "genre is a socially established category characterized in terms of occurrence of use, source and a communicative purpose or any combination of these. In my model, genre might serve as a category linking register (which realizes genre) and the individual textual function (which exemplifies genre). The resultant revised model consists then of four levels: function of the individual text, genre, register and language/text" (p.107). The author subsumes the categories for register analysis in the original model under Hallidayan 'trinity' Field, Tenor, Mode (ibid). She proposes a 'scheme for analyzing and comparing original and translation texts' (p.108):



In rethinking the notion of 'Translation Evaluation' House states: "The choice of an *overt* or *covert* translation depends not just on the translator himself, or on the text or the translator's personal interpretation of the text, but also, and to a considerable extent, on the reasons for the translation, on the implied readers, on publishing and marketing policies. In other words, in translation there are many factors that cannot be controlled by the translator and have to do with translation

as a *linguistic* procedure or with the translator's linguacultural competence. Such factors are social factors, they concern human agents and socio-political or even ideological constraints that normally have greater power and influence than the translator. Still, a translation is also a linguistic-textual phenomenon and can be legitimately described, analysed and assessed as such" (p.119). House's statement seems to be closer to the response-oriented, functionalistic approaches she criticized than to the linguistically-oriented approach where she had initially located her proposal. Obviously external factors do have a bearing on translation; however we think that translation is by definition basically and primarily a linguistic-textual operation. Thus the translation procedure is not open to the direct influence of all external factors (social, economic, ideological, etc) to the extent that they will determine how to translate or what is to be considered as a translation. Otherwise many linguistic products (adaptations, paraphrases, summaries, etc) could be considered translations because of the direct influence of these contextual factors. It is right here that the importance of the concept of equivalence becomes evident. A translation is a translation precisely because an equivalent relation between a ST and a TT can be readily recognized. This equivalence is basically of semantic and pragmatic nature (and in literary texts eventually of 'formal' nature). Therefore we cannot accept without restrictions House's statement and the implied meaning that almost any external aspect can count as a crucial factor in choosing how to translate. On the other hand, we do not think either that a ST can be translated arbitrarily and manifoldly in a range going from an overt to a covert translation. The text itself is of paramount importance and it 'tells' one how it is to be translated because it reflects the author's communicative purpose and this has been textualized in a very specific way with some intended readership in mind. It is not up to the translator to alter arbitrarily the meaning of the original because he suspects the target linguaculture could react to it in this or that way, or because the publisher has decided that some omissions are necessary. These are ethical issues. The translator is to state and clarify what a 'translation' is, which its boundaries are, and what other linguistic products he is able to provide which do not necessarily are translations.

In *Chapter 5* the author compares some source and translated texts (a children's book, an autobiography, a philosophical essay, and a history text) by using her revised model. At the end of the analysis of the translation of the philosophical essay House states: "The plausibility of allocating a text to be translated *overtly* or *covertly* depends on social factors, i.e., the status of the author and the text" (p.146). If we follow House's indication this would lead us to consider that the process of translation is always and completely externally-

bounded (socially bounded). Then, how are we to determine what the status of the author and the text is? Once again we think that our decision cannot be so arbitrary. It is necessary to take account of what the text actually tells us about the way it was intended to be read, the way it has been textualized, etc. Thus we are to resort to the concept of equivalence as we have sketched it above.

With respect to the book's *Conclusion* it is interesting to note that House reaffirms that she "retained the central notion of source and target text comparison as the basis for translation quality assessment, even when this text-based approach has for many specialists in the translational field been overtaken by a more target-audience-oriented notion of translational appropriateness. [She] believe[s] this shift of focus in translational studies to be fundamentally misguided" (p.159). In our previous comment we pointed out how House, despite her statement about the central notion of source and target text comparison, presents in her analysis of two translated texts (a philosophical essay (p.146) and a history text (p.157)) a rather target-audience-oriented notion of translational appropriateness which leaves uncertain the decision to translate overtly or covertly. How is one to understand that the very same text (as those cases mentioned above) can be translated in at least two different and opposed ways. In House's words: "in the *overt* case, the translator has at least leeway to alter the fabric and content of the text, but has a clearly recognizable role and function for the reader. In *covert* translation, on the other hand, it is the task of the translator to be invisible, but at the same time to transmute the original such that the function it has in its original situational and cultural environment is re-created in the target linguaculture" (p.163). No place in the book is there any illustration of what House means by overt and covert translations of the *same* text, so that we can clearly see what the modifications in the two versions are and if, as we suppose, the concept of equivalence still holds.

By Sergio Bolaños Cuéllar\*  
National University of Colombia

---

\* sbolanoc@yahoo.com