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## **Assessor-centered translation quality assessment : a theoretical model and a case study**

Karoubi, B.

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**Author:** Karoubi, Behrouz

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# **Chapter I**

## **A Critical Evaluation of Translation Theories and Assessment Models**

In practice, translations are constantly being judged by target language readers who may rarely know even a word of the languages in which the original texts were written. Every day, different translated versions of the same works are published and come on the market; some of them are warmly welcomed by the target readers, some not. But what makes one translation more popular than others? And on what basis do readers judge translations? Are the criteria used for translation quality assessment in Academia fundamentally different from those used in the market by non-Academicians? These are a set of general questions that have motivated research on translation quality in the field of translation studies during the past few decades. In reality, the assessment criteria are often not clearly stated and “translation quality assessment proceeds according to the lordly, but completely unexplained, whimsy of ‘It doesn’t sound right’” (Fawcette quoted. in Baker 1992, p. xii). That is inevitably the case even in some academic settings. However, the whimsical and unexplainable “intuition” of readers is not for sure the only possible criterion for passing judgment on the quality of translations. There are different systematic and objective ways to convert these subjective and intuitive judgments into more tangible and understandable data. Translation scholars have long tried to devise systematic and comprehensive models to explain how translations are/should be assessed; however, because of the complexity of the phenomenon of translation and the fuzzy and relative nature of the concepts, such as quality and quality

assessment, and their related terms, there does not seem to be a general consensus among them.

Despite a lot of promising past and present research efforts on translation quality assessment, there still seems to be ample room for further improvement in this area, particularly, when it comes to providing new interpretations of the concept of quality and developing new methods of assessing it. The current thesis primarily sets out to develop a new conceptual framework to describe translation quality assessment more efficiently as a complex process of decision making. An alternative translation assessment methodology, however, cannot be argued for without relating it to previous methodologies or frameworks, especially since so much of what goes into the new model will be inevitably similar to such frameworks. A critical evaluation of translation theories and assessment models allows their strong points to be incorporated into the new methodology and prevents the repetition of their possible pitfalls and shortcomings. Such an evaluation will also help to show the value of the new methodology by demonstrating precisely how and where it is similar to or different from its previous counterparts. The first chapter of current thesis is, therefore, devoted to a critical review of major translation theories throughout history with a focus on translation assessment models.

### ***1.1. General Translation Theories and Translation Quality Assessment***

Williams & Chesterman (2002, p. 60) quote Salman Rushdie as saying that "description is itself a political act", implying that even purely theoretical concepts are never entirely value free. Behind every particular definition, there inevitably lies a statement of some certain expectations and particular values. The main focus of Translation Quality Assessment (TQA), as the term itself indicates, is on the concept of 'quality' which could be regarded as a cover term for 'value'. Most translation theories are 'evaluative' in nature, because they explicitly or implicitly prescribe that certain translational behaviors and practices be adopted and certain others be avoided. Accordingly, all theories of

translation are ideologically motivated and thus relevant to TQA, because ideology is in essence "a system of evaluations" (Malrieu, 1999, p. 281). Almost every translation theorist offers a definition for translation (as a product or a process) and the very definition of translation conveys, at the same time, unique features that distinguish translation (as defined by the theorist) from other textual products/practices. These distinguishing characteristics are in fact an expression of quality: a manifestation of expectations about what the translation should or should not be. There are always some hidden aspects of quality underlying almost all writings on translation that could be revealed if they are examined critically, even when they seem to have nothing to do directly with the concept of quality. I fully agree with House (1998), where she asserts that the concept of TQA is inherent in each and every translation theory: "Translation quality assessment presupposes a theory of translation. Thus different views of translation itself lead to different concepts of translation quality, and different ways of assessing it" (p. 197). This will explain why the critical review of translation theories should not be exclusively limited to those theories and models that directly deal with the concept of translation quality assessment.

In what follows, I will present a critical evaluation of the most influential translation theories contributing to the discussion about translation quality, and also examine the underlying theoretical foundation of a number of assessment models, mainly in a chronological manner, starting from the pre-linguistics era up until the present time. Each of these theories and models is believed to represent a major/different approach to translation quality assessment. The critical evaluation, at the same time, maintains a loosely thematic order when it comes to the examination of translation theories and assessment models following the era of modern linguistics.

### ***1.2. Translation Quality in the Pre-linguistics Era***

Compared with the history of the practice of translation, which is at least about four thousand years old, the history of systematic approaches to translation

quality assessment is rather short, dating back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when linguistically-oriented methodologies became the prevalent tradition of the time. The history of "Translation Studies" as an academic discipline is even shorter, beginning from the 1970s. This does not mean, however, that there was no such thing as translation theory before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to Munday (2001), translation theory did exist before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but it was generally scattered across "broad series of prefaces and comments by practitioners who often ignored, or were ignorant of, most of what had been written before" (p. 23).

Tracing the developments in the history of general translation theories through different periods may result in a better understanding of how the definition of translation and related concepts, the role of the translator, expectations from translators and accordingly the criteria for judging translations, and the notion of good or quality translation have been constantly evolving to the present time. That being said, I am well aware of the impossibility of presenting a full account of the history of translation in a single dissertation, let alone a single chapter of a dissertation, because it is too broad, and after all, it is beyond the scope of my research. Therefore, I will do my best to present just a relevant and adequate overview of translation theories from the classical times to the emergence of modern linguistics with an emphasis on the concept of quality. My critical evaluation of these theories is confined only to those which have emerged in the West. The reason behind this choice is that, historically speaking, the mainstream modern translation theories and assessment models have their roots in the Western tradition of translation. As shown in this chapter, there seems to be a strong linear consistency in the gradual process of development of different translation theories emerging in different historical periods in the West, from Roman times to the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Romantic period.

Although word-for-word and sense-for-sense translation had been practiced by different ancient cultures long before the Romans, many believe that the theoretical distinction between these two methods was first made explicit by the famous Roman orator, Cicero (106 – 43 BC) (see Bassnett 2002, p. 45). The Romans, who were bilingual in Latin and Greek, used to read translated texts in Latin side by side with their originals in Greek. The main function of translated texts in Roman times, therefore, seems to be that of a mere facilitator for reading the original texts. A Roman *interpreter-translator* simply replaced every single word of the Greek text with its closest grammatical equivalent in Latin. To the Romans, this kind of translation was of no artistic value; it was a subordinate textual practice that everyone with sufficient comparative linguistic knowledge could easily do. That was why great Roman writers and orators such as Quintilian, Horace, and Cicero did not tend to translate Greek word-for-word into Latin. They considered themselves as *orator-translators* rather than *interpreter-translators*. To those elite rhetoricians, translation was merely a sort of 'practice in writing Latin'. As opposed to the present time, where translations are generally perceived to be texts meant for audiences that have usually little, if any, familiarity with the source language, in Roman times translations were not expected to function as a bridge between source and target languages or cultures, because Roman readers were already quite familiar with the form and content of Greek source texts. As a result, those Roman orator-translators who adopted a target-oriented approach in translation were just trying to 'enrich Latin literature'.

It seems that word-for-word and sense-for-sense translations in Roman times were two main translation strategies that were meant for quite different functional purposes. Consequently, there were two completely different criteria for judging the quality of translations at that time depending on the functions they were supposed to fulfill.

The Middle Ages are marked by extreme highlighting of a religious/moral **value** in translation, i.e. faithfulness, which has lasted for centuries right up to the present time. Faithfulness, in its religious sense, was deemed an important responsibility of every devout believer: one should follow the Lord's orders *exactly* as instructed in Holy Scriptures; and no one had the right to *change* the instructions of God. According to Newmark (2008, p. 22), there was a strong tendency toward literalism in the translation of the first religious texts, because they were believed to be the word of God, and in the case of some texts like the Quran, no translation was permitted as a substitute for the original text, since the original text was considered a miracle non-imitable by man. The early ideal of fidelity in the translation of religious texts, as Bassnett & Lefevere (1998, p. 2) assert, was considered an interlinear translation, in which one word would match another.

According to Bassnett & Lefevere (1998, p. 2), there is a direct relationship between the linguistic concept of equivalence and the religious concept of faithfulness. In fact, they believe that the concept of equivalence lies at the heart of the translation models that they name after Saint Jerome as the "Jerome model". In this model the translator is degraded to the level of a mere text-decoder, since a good translator is one who translates the sacred text with fidelity and the utmost degree of fidelity is attained by precise replacement of the words of the source text – which is considered sacred – by their equivalents in the target language.

However, it seems that pedantic adherence to extremely literal strategies in the translation of Holy Scriptures during medieval times was not simply a matter of religious concern. With the recognition of Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, Christianity and as a result the translation of religious texts gradually turned into strong political tools serving the hegemony of religious political systems of the time. The Roman Church endeavored to retain its authorial *power* in the discursive

environment of the Middle Ages by undertaking a complex set of practices which aimed at keeping the statements of the Church in *circulation*, fencing them off from the statements of others, and pushing the statements of others out of circulation (see Mills, 2003, p. 54). Consequently, the Church reinforced a set of moral principles to safeguard its power against potential contenders in the power struggle, i.e. unfaithful translators who dared to challenge the authority of the Church.

Towards the end of the Middle Ages, vernaculars started to play a decisive role in defining the national identity of the nations that were seeking independence either from the dominance of the Catholic Church or of foreign occupiers, and the nationalist leaders found translation a proper tool to promulgate nationalist feelings among their people. One of the very first attempts to use translation into a vernacular as a political tool to promote the national identity of an emerging nation seems to have been made long before the Renaissance by Alfred the Great, the first king of united England, in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century. According to Weissbort & Eysteinnsson (2006, p.34), King Alfred exercised his own 'translation policy' to revive the lost national identity of the English people and England which had been for years under the occupation of Vikings.

The most important criterion in vernacular translations seems to be intelligibility, because they were supposed to address a wide range of audiences, mainly comprised of uneducated laypeople who had little or no experience with written textual material in their mother tongue. Therefore, in the absence of prior expectations and standards for a written tradition, the early vernacular translations themselves happened to establish the first set of standards for future textual productions to come.

According to Bassnett (2000), the history of translation at the end of the Middle Ages is very closely related to the rise of Protestantism in Europe (p. 53). Although Protestantism is generally believed to have begun with Luther,

there are several forerunners of Luther who likewise challenged the Roman Catholic Church authority by making the Holy Scriptures accessible to ordinary people through translation into vernaculars. Some of them, like Wycliffe and Dolet for example, even put their lives on the line for this cause.

The work of Wycliffe, as Preston (1880, p. 78) asserts, is regarded as an inspiration of the reformation movement. As an English theologian and religious reformer in 14<sup>th</sup> century, Wycliffe believed that the church was abusing its power to exploit the poor. He and his acolytes – who were known as Lollards – preached to the people in their native tongue because they thought that the living truth of religion had been intentionally obscured by corrupt Church authorities. He encouraged the first translation of the Bible into English so that ordinary people who generally had no familiarity with Latin could interpret the Scriptures individually (Griffith 1991, p.11). In the same vein in France, Etienne Dolet repeatedly emphasized the importance of reading Scriptures in the vernacular tongue. By the time of Luther in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, *Sola Scriptura* was one of the main principles of Protestantism. As Eppehimer (2006) explains, according to this principle, which later became a basis for the Protestant notion of the "priesthood of all believers", all Christians were encouraged to read the scriptures by themselves without necessarily consulting an ordained cleric (pp. 29-30). To this end, Luther used translation into the vernacular as a means to disarm the strongest weapon in the arsenal of the Catholic Church, i.e. its exclusive right to read and interpret the Bible. He offered a German translation of the Bible which was consciously tailored to the needs of ordinary German speakers. The distinctive difference between Luther's translation and its predecessors lies in the fact that, in addition to intelligibility and comprehensibility, it also aimed at naturalness and fluency of the target text.

By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as cultural and literary systems of newly emerging languages in Europe such as English, French, German, Italian and Spanish

started to flourish, translators who spoke these languages gradually developed a sufficient degree of confidence to start emulating the ancient Latin or Greek literary works with an emphasis on their own contemporary linguistic and literary norms and tastes. The rise of the vernaculars as standard languages, Kelly (2006, p. 72) explains, slowly shifted the focus of translation toward literature, and literary translation became dominant in Europe.

The decline of the socio-political influence of the Catholic Church and the empowerment of new relatively less religious monarchs and political figures in Europe in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century resulted in a major shift in type of discourses being translated and the function of translation. The God-authored texts of the Holy Scriptures as the dominant discourses of the time gave way to man-authored literary Classics. This means that the main function of translation was no longer considered to be the transfer of unchangeable divine truth but the artistic (though sometimes inferior) reproduction of the relative and interpretable intention of the original man-author. Accordingly, the meaning of faithfulness as a *religious* value gradually changed into a *moral* value. Consequently, the main concern of many translators and those who wrote about translation in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (and later on) was to define the nature of the relationship between translator and the original author, and between the target text and the source text as well, from a moral standpoint.

The term "*le belle infidèle*" in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was used metaphorically to show the irreconcilability of the aesthetic value of *beauty* and the moral value of *faithfulness* in the process of translation. In this metaphor, an analogy is made between 'the relationship between the author and the translator or the original and the translation' and 'the relationship between a husband and his wife'. From an ethical standpoint, a translation is supposed to remain faithful to its original as a wife to her husband. However, from an aesthetic viewpoint, creating a translation that is beautiful and appealing to the target readers often would inevitably involve diverging from the original and introducing elements

that do not belong to it; i.e. betraying the original. In this way, a translation has to be either faithful but awkward or beautiful but unfaithful. Translators who produced *'les belles infidèles'* in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, such as d'Alancourt, accepting the risk of being accused of unfaithfulness, consciously favored fulfilling the expectations of the learned society whose taste was decisive in the success of their translations. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, in France the salon, and in Britain the coffee house, as cultural centers of the day where intellectuals gathered, played an important role in establishing criteria against which translations were judged (Kelly 2006, p. 73).

According to Lefevre (1990, p. 22), the rise of philology as a university discipline allowed the Academicians to have their own share, albeit very small, of the mainstream translation market, which was dominated by the taste of the majority of middle class intellectuals, who favored the French manner of translating. As a result, Romantic thinkers at universities found the opportunity to pronounce their ideas and produce translations that were particularly addressed to like-minded experts. Needless to say, these experts had quite different criteria for judging the quality of translations compared to the ordinary readers of the time. This once again indicates the decisive role that patronage and financial factors play in the formation of specific translational criteria and norms, and thus, in defining the concept of 'good' or 'quality' translation during different historical periods. Whereas in the Middle Ages the Church, in the Renaissance the rulers and aristocrats, and in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the middle class intellectuals were the main patrons who supported the translators financially, in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries this role was fulfilled by the academic institutions. Owing to the support of the academies, Lefevre (1990) explains, the experts could successfully establish a small but influential coterie culture in isolation from the general culture of their time.

The Romantic Movement in translation, which initially started outside the sovereignty of the French language in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, was largely led by

German academicians, in particular Herder, Goethe, and Schleiermacher. They were among the most prominent German Romantic thinkers, who had a great influence on later translation theorists, even up to the present, and they unanimously objected to the French tradition of translating. Herder called the French method of translating a “lax” approach that was by no means acceptable, largely because it entailed sacrificing semantic faithfulness (Forster 2010, p. 147). He accused the French of cultural dictatorship and believed that the French behavior was like that of a tyrant who dictated his taste to the original authors and thus presented a distorted picture of them, because, instead of trying to adapt themselves to the taste of the *Other*, French translators forced the original authors to conform to French contemporary customs and appear as captives dressed in French fashion.

Goethe likewise harshly criticized the French approach, using the pejorative adjective of “parodistic” to categorize it in his typology of translation epochs. In Goethe’s view, the French were trying to impose a fake French identity on every foreign element they translated; thus the translation they produced was like a counterfeit fruit grown in the French soil. In the same vein, Schleiermacher firmly rejected the French imitation, arguing that in an imitation “the identity of original is abandoned in favor of analogy of impression” (Schleiermacher qtd. in Lefever 1992, p. 148). He claimed that such a method would fail to satisfy a translator who, permeated by the value of a foreign masterpiece, wished to extend its operational radius to those who spoke his language (p. 149).

According to Berman (1992), the essence of translation for the Romantic translators was the fidelity to the spirit of the works which would open up their own culture to the foreign and thus enable it to *expand*, something that was not viable through adopting the French approach to translation, which was based on infidelity (p. 36). As mentioned earlier, Romantic translation theorists put a strong emphasis first on understanding the peculiarities of foreign works at the

level of reading the original and then on retaining these peculiarities at the level of writing the translation. In fact, a good translator, on their view, was in the first place a good reader of the original: an expert who has interpretive expertise. In order to help translators penetrate into the individuality of the original author and the very essence of the original work, Romantic translation theorists gradually devised a hermeneutic methodology for approaching the original. According to Kelly (2006, p. 75), the hermeneutic approach to translation was initially started by Herder and later refined by Schleiermacher. This approach, in which translation was perceived primarily as an act of interpretation, required translators to show a “cosmopolitan respect for the Other” (Foster 2010, p. 148) and put aside their own hermeneutic prejudices to avoid the tendency to filter another's speech or writing through their own cultural, theological, or philosophical frame of mind (Ramberg & Gjesdal 2005). In order to understand the original, translators have to perform the difficult task of abandoning the originality of their own nation to become one with the original (Goethe in Weissbort & Eysteinnsson 2006, p. 201). This would be possible, in Schleiermacher's view, through a “divinatory” method of interpretation “in which one transforms oneself into the other person in order to grasp his individuality directly” (Schleiermacher qtd. in Palmer, 1969, p. 90). A divinatory method allows translators to re-experience what the original author experienced, which is essentially foreign to them. Once they manage to experience the foreignness of the source text, the main responsibility of the Romantic translators will be then to remain faithful to their own reading of the original and figure out a way to faithfully transfer the sense of foreignness that they have experienced to the target audience when writing the translation version. The solution put forward by almost all the Romantic translation theorists to this problem was more or less the same: the creation of a new artificial language for translation. Here is where the creative genius of translators comes into play. Herder's favorite method of translation, which he calls the “accommodating” approach (see Foster 2010, p. 147), involved

“bending” the usage of target words to accommodate foreign concepts that the target language lacks. For this technique, Foster (2010, p. 148) explains, “the translator should take the most closely corresponding word in the target language and “bend” its usage for the course of the translation in such a way as to make it mimic the usage of the source word”. The result of espousing such a method, of course, will be a deliberately unfamiliar and marked target text which is unsurprisingly difficult to read as well. The desired language of translation to Goethe was the one which attempts to identify itself with the original and in the end comes close to an interlinear version (Goethe in Berman 1992, p. 59). Goethe’s emphasis on an interlinear version, which is, in fact, a kind of facilitator for reading the original, as the highest method of translation, highlights the concept of untranslatability and probably results in strengthening the idea of abandoning the translation all together and directly approaching the original to understand it.

As mentioned earlier, Romantic translators all seem to have pursued a common goal that was the creation of a new language for translation to reconstruct the foreignness of the original. For this purpose they had a variety of devices at their disposal, including literalism, archaism, and neologism. According to Bassnett (2000, p. 71), the typical expectation that a nineteenth-century reader might have of a translation was that of a deliberately, consciously archaic text, full of peculiarities of language that were often obscure and difficult to read. The uniqueness of the language Romantic translators used for translation is not only related to the unconventional textual devices they used, but also to the exceptional way in which they applied them in translating. The Romantic translators did not use archaism mainly for adding historical color to their translations (as it is usually used), but rather for a combination of general effect and readability. This method, which is called "signal translation", aims at letting “the reader of the translation know that the language is unusual” (Delabastita 2004, p. 886).

The issue of translation quality assessment is a recurring one in the literature, and many of the discussions about the quality of translation in the modern time are repetitions of what was already addressed by the earlier theorists but redressed in a scientific fashion. The next section is devoted to the analysis of the major translation theories in the era of modern linguistics in an attempt to discover what it is exactly meant by quality and how it is measured in these theories. The arrangement of the material in the next section is roughly thematic, which helps clarify how the concept of translation quality evolves across different influential theories and models in the era of modern linguistics. It first begins with critical examination of theories and models centered around the controversial concept of equivalence and then deals with target text oriented theories and models.

### ***1.3. Translation Quality in the Era of Modern Linguistics***

By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the attention of translators that traditionally were exclusively focused on the translation of literary texts gradually shifted to non-literary texts of different and new genres and styles, and translation turned from an artistic and often individual activity to a serious industry (see Newmark 1989, pp. 6-8). Around the same time, with the introduction of structuralism into the study of language, it underwent a huge evolution which consequently exerted a great influence on translation theories, especially on those of the second half of the century. Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the study of language, which was generally known as philology, primarily tended to be done historically and its main interest was tracing the development and origin of ancient languages through time. It was Saussure who for the first time shifted the focus of attention from the diachronic or historical study of language to the synchronic or static study of language. He adopted a descriptive approach toward the study of language in which language was viewed as a coherently organized structure. For Saussure, language was all about the ‘structural relations’ between words or, as he put it, linguistic signs. A linguistic sign, according to Saussure, is a two-sided

psychological entity comprised of a mental concept (signified) and a sound-image (signifier). Saussure (1915/1959, p. 6) states that one of the main objectives of the science of linguistics is to determine the universal forces that are at work in all languages, and to discover general laws to explain specific linguistic phenomena. The empirical methodology of Saussure and his terminologies were soon embraced by different structuralist scholars who further elaborated his theoretical model by devising new categorizations by means of which the complex structures of language could be broken down into systematically analyzable components. The most influential among these scholars were Noam Chomsky, who proposed ‘generative transformational grammar’, and Michael Halliday, with his ‘systemic functional grammar’. The wave of structuralism soon found its way into the study of translation. Translation scholars, who were impressed by the empirical method of analysis of linguistic models and their potential in equalizing all texts by reducing them to the same underlying universal system, alongside a group of linguists who were interested in the linguistic aspects of the phenomenon of translation, were highly optimistic about the application of these models in translation research. With the help of linguistic models, they expected to discover universal structural relationships between source and target texts when compared against each other. The core concept in most, if not all, of the linguistic approaches toward translation then became the concept of ‘equivalence’, i.e. what the source and target text have in common.

### ***1.3.1. Equivalence-based Theories and Quality***

Every comparison necessarily involves finding a common platform of reference against which differences and similarities of the objects compared can be stated (Krzyszowski 1990, p. 15). At the same time, the act of comparing inevitably presupposes breaking down the objects compared into comparable units (unless when the objects completely match with each other). The main concern of the majority of translation scholars in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was (and still

is) to base the operation of comparison between the original text and its translation on a current linguistic theory. To this end, they often introduced a common linguistic property of both source and target texts as the platform of equivalence or *tertium comparationis*, and then compared the texts with each other by breaking them into comparable linguistic units. The ultimate goal of such a comparison was to discover the equivalence relationship. The equivalence relationship implies that there is something in the source text (meaning, message, response, function, etc.) which remains unchanged in the target texts during the process of translation. Equivalence-based translation theories solely focus on the nature of the relationship between the source text and its translation. According to these theories, everything in translation is initiated under influence of a source factor; as a result, the influence of other factors in the process of translation is often neglected in these theories. Meanwhile, the concept of **quality** is simply reduced to the degree of precision of equivalence or, in other words, the extent of closeness of the target texts to the source texts in terms of specific linguistic features that they are supposed to share in common.

The following subsections will look into the relationship between the concepts of translation equivalence and translation quality with a focus on the works of prominent translation scholars in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (namely Jakobson, Vinay & Darbelnet, Nida, and House), who although they were influenced by different linguistic schools of their time, all based their approaches upon the concept of equivalence.

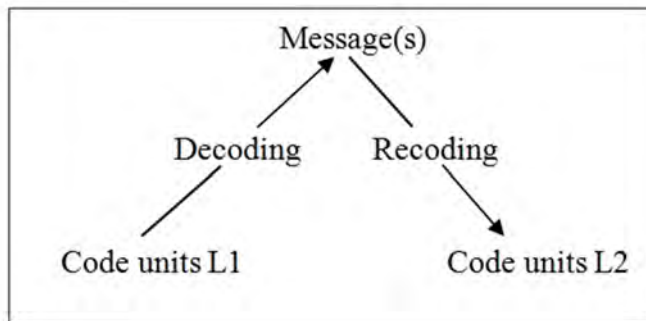
#### ***1.3.1.1. Equivalence in Messages***

Jakobson adopts the Saussurean structuralist view of linguistic sign as a combination of the signifier and the signified, and, like Saussure, insists that the signified is not simply the extralinguistic real-world referent of the signifier. However, unlike Saussure, who perceives the signified (meaning) as a mental image, Jakobson believes that what a signifier *de facto* signifies is an equivalent array of alternative signifiers:

For us, both as linguists and as ordinary word-users, the meaning of any linguistic sign is its translation into some further, alternative sign, especially a sign “in which it is more fully developed,” as Peirce, the deepest inquirer into the essence of signs, insistently stated. (Jakobson 1959, p. 232)

In fact, Jakobson (1959, p. 234) believes that to interpret a verbal sign, even within the same linguistic system, it is always necessary that the sign be translated into other signs; therefore, meaning, in Jakobson’s view, seems to be realized in an endless chain of signification: each sign is defined by a group of other signs which in turn are again defined by other signs. He gives the example of the English word “cheese” and explains that, to understand the meaning of “cheese”, a speaker of a language in which the concept of “cheese” is absent has to be aware that in English it means “food made of pressed curd” and he should at least also have a linguistic acquaintance with the concept of “curd”, which in turn means “the part of milk that coagulates when milk sours”, and so on (Jakobson 1959, p. 232).

When it comes to interlingual translation, where there is usually no full equivalence between separate code-units in different linguistic systems, Jakobson(1959, p. 233) believes that messages could serve as adequate means of transferring meaning across languages. Jakobson (1959, p. 233) defines a message as an equivalent combination of code-units referring to a single (alien) code-unit; in other words, a message is a kind of descriptive equivalence for a single code-unit which usually consists of a hypernym (a generic term) plus a restrictive description, as exemplified in the example of “*cheese*” above. He asserts that usually, in translation from one language into another, the translator replaces not separate code-units but entire messages in another language. Consequently, Jakobson comes to the conclusion that the process of translation involves decoding the source code-units into the form of corresponding messages and then transmitting the messages by recoding them again into the form of target code-units as illustrated in the following figure. In Jakobson’s view “translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes” (p. 233).

**Figure 1:** Jakobson's model of translation

Jakobson's model is surprisingly similar in its overall theoretical framework to the model that Nida (1964) puts forward for the process of translation which will be discussed in more detail in the following section. Both models consider translating as an activity in which the translator *decodes* (in Nida's term *analyzes*) the source text in order to get to the main message of the text and then *recodes* (in Nida's term *reconstructs*) the message in the target text. The main difference between the two models is in their methodology as to how to get to the source text message. While Jakobson proposes a simple lexical expansion procedure in order to break down the source text and get to its main message, Nida suggests a syntactic deconstruction of the surface structures of source text sentences in order to reach to their deep structures and core meanings.

As I have mentioned repeatedly before, the notion of **quality** is inherent in each and every definition for translation; therefore, when Jakobson (1959, p. 233) defines translation as the process of substituting "equivalent messages in two different codes", it implies that a quality translation, in Jakobson's view, contains a message that is equivalent to that of the original text. Here, the message serves as a platform of comparison against which the quality of translation could be measured. Jakobson himself identifies establishing equivalent messages in two different linguistic systems, where lexical and grammatical structures are completely different, as "the cardinal problem of

translation”; therefore, he emphasizes the necessity of preparing “differential bilingual dictionaries with careful comparative definition of all the corresponding units in their intention and extension” and “differential bilingual grammars” that “define what unifies and what differentiates the two languages in their selection and delimitation of grammatical concepts” to guarantee the quality of translation (Jakobson 1959, p. 234). It seems that in Jakobson’s view if such differential dictionaries are made available, then the role of translators will be simply reduced to a mechanical device replacing equivalent groups of code-units in two different linguistic systems.

According to Jakobson (1959), no deficiency in lexical or grammatical means in an existing language will make it impossible to convey the complete conceptual information contained in a text in another language into it through translation. Whenever there is a lexical deficiency, he explains, loan-translation, neologism, semantic shift, or circumlocution can be used to convey the meaning, and whenever there is a grammatical void, meaning can still be conveyed through resorting to lexical means (p. 235-6). The main efforts of some translation scholars, such as Catford (1965) and Vinay & Darbelnet (1958/1995), who adopt a structuralist approach towards translation, are focused on discovering “equivalence in difference”; in other words, they attempt to find systematic formula-like regularities in structural changes that occur where there are discrepancies in lexical or grammatical properties of the languages involved in translation, and then classifying the observed regular patterns into universal translation procedures. The quality of translation, they believe, is then a matter of establishing equivalence by correct application of those translational procedures.

#### ***1.3.1.2. Situational Equivalence***

In their seminal book, *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation*, Vinay & Darbelnet (1958/1995) explicitly assert that in their view translation is not an arbitrary and artistic but a completely rule-

governed activity. They attribute the problem of non-conformity between different translations of a single source text not to the arbitrariness of the translational solutions that are available to translators but to the lack of understanding of “the rules governing the transfer from one language to another” and “the circumstances of translation” (p. 8). They even go on further to claim that they could determine the degree of identity between the source and the target texts in percentages if there was a quantitative criterion for measuring the depth of exploration of the texts.

Translation, according to Vinay & Darbelnet (1958/1995), is a process in which translators establish relationships (equivalence) between specific manifestations of two linguistic systems. This process, in their view, should initially start with the exploration of the source text in order to identify the lexicological units of translation in it. To describe the process of translation, Vinay & Darbelnet (1958/1995) adopt the Saussurian linguistic model, assuming that translators move from signifier to signified in the process of comprehension of the message; and from signified to signifier in the target language in the process of translation (p. 13). However, they believe that beside the vertical relationship between signifiers and signifieds, there is also a horizontal relationship between signs themselves which plays a decisive role in the development of the message, in such a way that sometimes, because of this relationship, the total meaning of an utterance is larger than the sum of its constituent signs (Ibid.). In the process of the analysis of the source text, the translator breaks down the text into the smaller independent semantic units as far as possible to the point where the horizontal relationship between signs is so strong that it makes further semantic breaking down impossible. This point (which of course in many cases may coincide with an individual sign at word level) is what Vinay & Darbelnet (1958/1995) call *the lexicological unit of translation* or *unit of thought* that is “the *smallest* segment of the utterance whose signs are linked in such a way that they should not be translated separately” (p. 21).

The next step following identification of translation units in the source text is the analysis of the semantic content of these units. Here, Vinay & Darbelnet (1958/1995) put emphasis on the necessity of differentiating between two different aspects of signs; i.e. *meaning* (signification) and *sense* (valeur). According to Vinay & Darbelnet (1958/1995), the *meaning* of a sign is related to the conceptual aspect of it and is what is understood of the sign within a given context. The *sense*, on the other hand, is related to the formal aspect of the sign and is what contrasts the sign with other signs in a language and not in an isolated utterance. This differentiation, which is based on Saussure's concepts of *langue* and *parole*, is very similar to the distinction that Catford (1965) draws between formal correspondence and textual equivalence which will be discussed in the sections to come. Vinay & Darbelnet (1958/1995) argue that translators, who are supposed to be already familiar with the sense of the signs of the languages they translate to and from, are mainly concerned with the conceptual aspect of the signs which orient them toward a given situation. The next step in the process of translation, according to Vinay & Darbelnet (1958/1995), is then the reconstitution of the situation which gave rise to the message.

One of the distinctive differences between Vinay and Darbelnet's approach versus Jakobson's approach toward translation is that, unlike Jakobson, who seeks equivalence only within the realm of structural linguistic features, Vinay & Darbelnet (1958/1995) also account for the role of metalinguistic features in the process of establishment of equivalence in translation. According to Vinay & Darbelnet (1958/1995), in order to fully understand the message of an utterance, it is necessary to reconstitute a mental image of the *situation(s)* (i.e. the reality evoked by words) it corresponds to. To this end, translators need to have not only a profound linguistic knowledge of the constituent *signs* of the utterance but also sufficient metalinguistic background information about the *mode of expression* of the signs. They further explain that the mode of expression reveals "the speakers' social status, their characters and their mood of the moment" (p. 12). Vinay & Darbelnet (1958/1995) claim that "once translators understand the mood of the

text, the **quality** of the translation depends less on the literal rendering of each word than on an **equivalent effect**, even if the words which create it do not correspond to each other” (p. 45, my emphasis in bold). They believe that the only criterion to judge whether the target text is an adequate equivalent for the source text is the reflection of the situation, i.e. message. Vinay & Darbelnet (1958/1995) even believe that conceptual bilingual dictionaries with entries corresponding to diverse possible situations could ease the task of translators simply into looking up the appropriate translations under the entries corresponding to the situations evoked by the messages of source text utterances. However, they argue that in practice, because of the infinite possible number of combinations of the signs and, as a result, the infinite situations evoked by them, such dictionaries cannot be possible. Thus, it remains the task of translators to discover the source text situations and messages and find the appropriate combinations of signs in the target language corresponding to them.

Vinay & Darbelnet (1958/1995) notice that the main problem in the final step of the translation process, which is identifying the corresponding translation units in the target language, is that different languages are structurally or metalinguistically different to the extent that sometimes element by element transposition of the source language message into the target language is impossible and translators inevitably have to use different syntactic or lexical structures to reconstruct the message in the target language. To help the translators deal with the differences between languages involved in translation, Vinay & Darbelnet (1958/1995) devise seven systematic translation procedures, namely *borrowing*, *calque*, *literal translation*, *transposition*, *modulation*, *equivalence*, and *adaptation*.

*Borrowing* is a procedure that is used when there is a gap in the lexical inventory of the target language and it involves direct introduction of a source language lexical item into the target language.

*Calque* is again a special kind of borrowing in which a certain source language lexical or syntactic structure which is absent in the target language is directly introduced into it.

*Literal translation* involves direct substitution of the source text elements with the target text elements, while observing the grammatically and idiomatically correct order of elements in the target language, which, however, may be different with the original order of elements in the source language. According to Vinay & Darbelnet, literal translation is a perfect method for translation between languages that are structurally or culturally similar to each other. They maintain that the use of other procedures that involve special stylistic operations, including *transposition*, *modulation*, *equivalence*, and *adaptation*, is justifiable only when the use of literal translation is unacceptable; that is, when the literally translated text has a different meaning, or is structurally or stylistically inappropriate.

The procedure of *transposition* involves replacing the source word with an equivalent word in the target language that belongs to a different grammatical category in order to preserve a stylistic feature of the source text or prevent a change in the original message.

*Modulation* involves approaching the situation indicated by the source message from a different point of view to avoid an unsuitable, unidiomatic or awkward utterance in the target language.

In *equivalence* a completely different target text in term of stylistics and grammar is used to render the source language situation in a way that there may be literally no correspondence between individual constituent elements of the source and target utterances and the equivalence relationship is only identifiable at the level of text.

The last procedure introduced by Vinay & Darbelnet is called *adaptation*. It is used in cases where the situation being referred to by the source text is totally

foreign to the target culture and it involves replacing the source language situation with a different situation in the target language which is, however, considered an equivalent for it. That is why this procedure is also called “situational equivalence”.

According to Vinay & Darbelnet (1958/1995), the appropriate application of their proposed methodological procedures in the process of translating will allow translators to have strict control over the reliability of their translation and, therefore, guarantees the quality of the end product of translation. They claim that the methodology they devised will enable translators to identify translation problems, to classify them into *ad hoc* categories, and to find systematic solutions for them. As mentioned before, in Vinay & Darbelnet’s view, the only criterion to judge the quality of translation is the equivalence of the situation of the source and target messages. The emphasis on the situational factors in the discussion about translation and its quality is also easily observable in the works of other prominent scholars in the field of translation, such as Catford (1965) and House (1976), which are heavily influenced by Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics.

#### ***1.3.1.3. Translation Equivalence and Formal Correspondence***

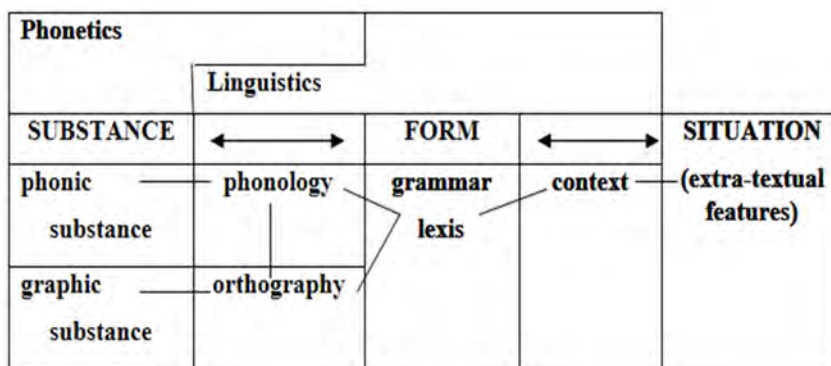
The concept of equivalence lies at the heart of every statement that Catford (1965) makes about translation. In Catford’s view, the main problem in the practice of translation is to discover equivalent textual materials in the target language, and, accordingly, the main function of translation theory is to define the nature and condition of the equivalence relationship (p. 21). Catford defines translation as “the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)” (p. 20). The key terms in this definition are ‘replacement’ and ‘equivalent textual material’. Contrary to many other translation scholars, Catford (1965) does not consider translation as a process in which meaning is ‘transferred’ from the source language into the target language. To him, meaning is a language-specific concept which cannot

be transferred independently from the structure of the language in which it is expressed. Therefore, in his view, the process of translation only involves ‘replacement’ (and not ‘transfer’) of the source language meaning with the target language meaning, or in other words, replacement of the textual material in the source language with the textual material in the target language that just have “overlapping meaning”. Catford (1965) thinks of translation as “a certain type of relation between languages” (p. 20); thus, he believes that the study of translation should be done within the framework of comparative linguistics.

As highlighted in the previous paragraph, Catford believes that the ultimate goal of translation theory is to define the equivalence relationship between source language textual materials and their translation equivalents in the target text. He considers translation equivalents as a priori textual forms which are not ‘constructed’ but ‘discovered’ by “competent bilingual informants or translators”. He thus defines a translation equivalent as “any TL form (text or portion of text) which is *observed* to be the equivalent of a given SL form (text or portion of text)” (Catford 1965, p. 27, my emphasis in italics). It should be, however, noted that Catford points out at other places that the translation equivalent of a source language form might also be realized in the form of a specific syntactic or grammatical *structure* in the target language (and not necessarily a “*text or portion of text*” as described in his definition of a translation equivalent above). In addition to resorting to the linguistic intuition of bilinguals or translators, Catford introduces another way to identify translation equivalents which he calls ‘commutation’. This method involves the systematic introduction of changes into the source text and the observation of consequent changes in the target text to track down the translation equivalents. Therefore, a textual translation equivalent could also be defined as “that portion of a TL text which is changed when and only when a given portion of the SL text is changed” (p. 28).

An equivalence relationship, according to Catford, is an empirical phenomenon which can be described through comparing the translation text with the source language text. To this end, Catford follows a strictly scientific methodology in which the formal structure of the translation text segments or ‘translation equivalents’ is compared with that of their corresponding source text segments. This comparison, which is source text-oriented – the formal structure of the source text segment serves as *tertium comparationis* or a platform of comparison – is based upon early Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics. Halliday treats language as a systemic social resource through which language users can act meaningfully in a particular social context. He considers a text (written or spoken) as a linguistic event which could be described at three distinct strata or levels, namely *substance*, *form*, and *context of situation* (see Figure 2: Language levels). According to Halliday (1961/2005), the level of *substance* concerns the material of language which could be in the form of either phonic or graphic signs; *form* deals with the organization of the substance, which consists of two related levels of grammar and lexis; and finally, *context* is an interlevel which relates the form to the extratextual (i.e. situational and contextual) features.

**Figure 2:** Language Levels (cf. Halliday 1961/2005, p. 39)



Catford's methodology, which is based on Halliday's linguistic model (above), involves a *formal* comparison of language *substances* in two different languages (source and target text) that are supposed to have maximum overlapping in *extra-textual features*. The viability of the comparison is stipulated on the presupposition that there is a reasonable degree of correspondence between formal structures of different linguistic systems (at the levels of grammar and lexis). The objective of Catford's comparative methodology is to investigate whether or not the textual constituents of source text portions and those of their translation equivalents in the target text belong to similar formal categories of their respective linguistic systems. Catford (1965, p. 27) uses the term 'formal correspondent' to refer to "any TL category (unit, class, structure, element of structure, etc.) which can be said to occupy, as nearly as possible, the 'same' place in the 'economy' of the TL as the given SL category occupies in the SL", and he uses the term 'shift' to refer to instances in which the formal structure of the translation equivalent does not formally correspond to that of the source text segment.

Catford categorizes shifts or instances of departure from formal correspondence into two major groups of 'level shifts' and 'category shifts'. Level shifts refer to those instances in which the translation equivalent is realized at a different formal level from its corresponding source text segment; for example, where a grammatical item has a lexical translation equivalent *vice versa*. Formal levels here refer to levels of *lexis* and *grammar*. Catford uses the term 'category shifts' to refer to those instances in which the source text portion has a corresponding translation equivalent within a different grammatical category (structure, class, rank, or system). Category shifts are further classified into structure shifts, class shifts, rank or unit shifts and intra-system shifts.

Catford seems to be highly interested in discovering regular patterns in the occurrence of particular translation equivalents or translation shifts in the translation of a specific source language item on different occasions, so that he can make rule-like general statements about their probability. According to

Catford (1965, p. 30), it is possible that a frequently occurring source language item always has the same particular translation equivalent, in which case its probability could be expressed as ‘absolute certainty’; however, such items commonly have more than a single fixed translation equivalent as they occur several times in different texts or in the course of a long text, in which case the probability of each particular equivalent could be estimated by dividing the number of its occurrences by the total number of occurrences of the source language item. Catford, however, warns that the expression of the probability of the occurrence of a particular equivalent without considering the effect of contextual or contextual factors could be misleading. To clarify his statement, Catford (1965, p. 30) makes reference to a study which investigates the probability of occurrence of different English translation equivalents for the French preposition ‘*dans*’ in a short story. According to the study, of the total 134 occurrences of ‘*dans*’ in the French text, it is translated 98 times into ‘*in*’, 26 times into ‘*into*’, twice into ‘*from*’, and once into ‘*about*’ and ‘*inside*’; and in 6 occurrences a translation shift occurs; i.e., the translation equivalents are not English prepositions. Catford notices that the unconditioned probability of the equivalence *dans*=*into* is relatively very small (26 to 134≈0.19), but if its occurrence is conditioned to cases where it is preceded by a ‘verb of motion’ (e.g. *aller*) and preceded by a ‘noun referring to a place’, the probability is almost certain, i.e. 1. In Catford’s view, it is possible to express the translation-equivalence probabilities as ‘translation rules’ applicable to other texts or to the whole language, provided that the sample from which the rules are derived is big enough. He defines a translation rule as “a statement of highest unconditioned probability equivalence, supplemented by highest conditioned probability equivalences, with an indication of the conditioning factors” (Catford 1965, p. 30).

Similarly to a modern linguist who believes that the real authorities in judgment concerning the correctness of sentences in a language are the native speakers of that language, and consequently attempts to observe how they use language and then describe it in the form of language rules, Catford (1965)

believes that only competent bilingual informants/translators have the authority to discover translation equivalents. Therefore, he bases his theory upon observation and description of translations produced by competent bilingual informants/translators in order to discover general translation rules. It seems that from Catford's perspective, the **quality** of a translation is guaranteed if the translation rules derived from sample translations done by competent translators/bilinguals are applied in it. According to Catford (1965, p. 49), linguistically speaking, translation equivalents which are discovered by competent bilinguals/translators and are used as a model for formulating the translation rules, rarely have 'the same meaning' as their corresponding source text items; rather, they refer to certain situational features in common which enable them to function effectively in the same situation. From these observations, Catford comes to the conclusion that a good or quality translation is the one with the greatest possible overlap of situational range with its source text: "the greater the number of situational features common to the contextual meaning of both SL and TL texts, the better the translation" (Ibid).

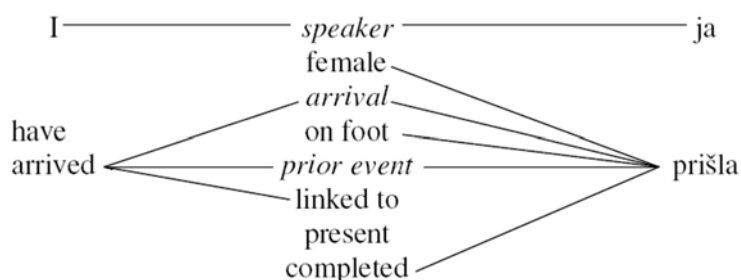
The method that Catford applies for examining the contextual meaning of an SL item and its translation equivalent in TL involves listing the linguistically relevant situational features of the items and then comparing these features with each other to discover those features that are relevant to both SL and TL segments. Catford gives an example of how this method is used in practice. In his example he pictures a situation in which a girl walks in and says 'I've arrived'. According to Catford, amongst myriad contextual features of the situation only a few are linguistically relevant to the sentence 'I've arrived', which is comprised of:

1. the participant in the situation (in this case, *speaker*) i.e. 'I';
2. the event in the situation (*arrival*) i.e. 'have arrived' which is *a prior act, linked to a current situation that is present*.

Catford then examines the contextual features of ‘japrišla’, as a given translation equivalent of the above sentence in Russian:

1. the participant in the situation (*speaker*) i.e. ‘ja’, which is *female* (the gender information is conveyed by the verb ‘prišla’);
2. the event in the situation (*arrival*) i.e. ‘prišla’, which is a *prior event*, *completed* on a specific occasion, *on foot*.

Catford then compares the contextual features of the parts of both SL and TL texts as tabulated below (Cf. Catford 1965, p. 39):



In Catford’s view, the Russian equivalent is “a perfectly **good**” translation of the English text, because he believes it has the maximum possible overlap of situational range with its source text as far as Russian linguistic system allows (the common situational features are italicized above).

However, Catford does not follow a strict systematic methodology in analyzing the SL and TL texts and their parts in detail at the level of context, the reason for which perhaps is that he bases his theoretical model upon Halliday’s early model (1961), which is primarily focused on categories of grammar and not yet fully developed to address the contextual features in detail as well. The method of analysis which is used in a handful of examples provided by Catford for examining the contextual meaning of the SL and TL textual items more or less seems like a simplified version of the method of “componential analysis” which is used by Nida (1964) for examining the basic semantic components of

similar linguistic items at micro-level. Another shortcoming of Catford's comparative model is that, since it relies heavily on the concept of formal correspondence as a platform for comparison, unlike Vinay & Darbelnet's indirect (oblique) translation procedures, it is not capable of providing an explanation for the cases where translation equivalence is merely established at higher levels (level of sentence or higher) and the source text segment and its translation equivalent have completely different grammatical and stylistic structures. Catford also seemingly ignores the fact that Halliday's model is specifically designed for describing the process of language production in which speakers of the first language select among the options that are available to them within the linguistic system almost completely subconsciously, whereas decisions in the process of translation that are often made fully consciously by translators are totally different in nature from those that are made by speakers in the process of language production. Therefore, one can easily question the plausibility of Catford's presumption that bilingual informants are necessarily capable of producing successful translations and that their translations could be set as a yardstick to measure the quality of other translations.

#### ***1.3.1.4. Dynamic Equivalence***

As mentioned earlier, expectations about what is meant by the quality of translation are often expressed in the very definitions offered by translation theorists for translation (either as a product or as a process). This specially holds true for the definition offered by Nida & Taber (1974) for translating as "reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style" (p. 12). In this definition, Nida & Taber (1974) establish a certain set of priorities which they think should be observed by translators. The first and most important priority goes to the reproduction of the message and the other priorities go to the expected characteristics of the message in terms of its accuracy and naturalness in meaning and style. Nida & Taber (1974) stress that

‘the reproduction of the message’ does not simply mean simple reproduction of the formal features of the source utterance such as rhymes, rhythms or its unique grammatical structures as used to be the case in older approaches in translating, but rather it means the replication of the whole process of the original communication in a new setting, taking into consideration different factors ranging from the intention of the sender of the message to the reaction of its receptors. Nida & Taber (1974) base their argument on the presupposition that there is some basic relationship between the intention of the original author and the response of the first receptors (p. 23). They explain that, knowing the background of his intended audience, the original author of the message tailors his message in such a way that it is understood with the highest degree of comprehension by the audience, and consequently, obtains his desired reaction from them. Naturally, one cannot expect that ordinary monolingual receptors in a second language who have a completely different background adequately understand the setting of the original communication, because the message in its original form clearly is not meant for them (p. 23, also p. 163). The translator task then, in Nida & Taber’s view, is to establish a “dynamic equivalence” between source and target messages by transforming the original message in the target language setting in such a way that the new monolingual audience gives a response which is essentially equivalent to the response of the first receptors of the message in the source language. However, they add that although a high degree of equivalence in responses is expected, due to the great differences in the cultural and historical background of the audiences in two different languages, responses can never be identical (p. 24).

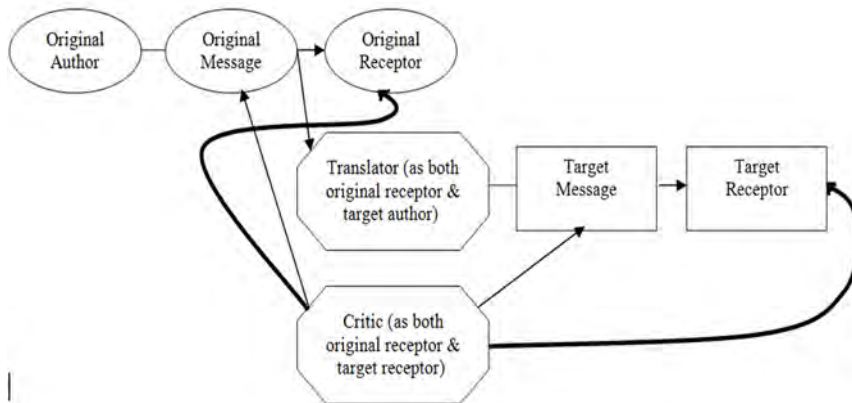
Nida & Taber’s concept of ‘dynamic equivalence’, which is based on the principle of equivalence in response, is in fact a reiteration of Schleiermacher’s so-called domesticating translation strategies in the Romantic period; however, unlike Schleiermacher, who favors foreignizing translation strategies, or in Nida & Taber’s term ‘formal equivalence’, Nida & Taber (1974) strongly support dynamic equivalence which is almost identical with Schleiermacher’s rather

unfavorable concept of domesticating translation strategies. The reason behind this difference seems to lie in the different ideological objectives that they pursue by translating. While the main concern of the Romantic translators and translation theorists is to expand and enrich the target culture through the introduction of foreign elements from the source language and their translations are primarily targeted at a specific elite audience which is supposedly to a large degree familiar with the source culture, Nida & Taber (1974) seem to look at translation as an effective “instrument of evangelism” (p. 31) used for maximum promulgation of the message of God. Accordingly, they primarily target a non-Christian average population that most probably has no familiarity with the source culture as their audience.

Nida & Taber (1974, p. 13) introduce intelligibility as the most important criterion in judging about translation but, at the same time, warn that intelligibility should not be interpreted just in terms of correctness of the grammatical and lexical structures, as used to be the case in traditional approaches to translation. In their view, translationese, or extreme formal fidelity, in traditional approaches would hinder the intelligibility and result in “unfaithfulness to the content and the impact of the message” (p. 13). In the same vein, they criticize the way in which translations were traditionally judged in the past. According to Nida & Taber (1974, p. 22), in the past translations were evaluated by scholarly persons who simply compared the formal and lexical structures of the source texts and their translation to see if translations were “faithful” to their originals. Nida & Taber (1974) argue that the main problem with this method of evaluation is that since the evaluators are to a great extent familiar with the source language, their judgment about the quality of the translation is involuntarily affected by their knowledge of the source message. They further explain that since both source and target messages are meant for a monolingual audience the understanding of a bilingual informant or scholar from a translation could not be a suitable criterion for making judgment about it (p. 23). According to Nida & Taber (1974), the ultimate criterion for the

correctness and adequacy of translation is the degree to which it is comprehended by the monolingual average target receptors (which is supposed to be substantially equivalent to the understanding of the original receptors of the original text). In Nida & Taber's view, it is almost impossible for evaluators to put themselves in the place of both receptors of source and target messages, and yet their judgment about the target message remains the same as that of an average monolingual target recipient. To solve this problem they suggest that critics have to receive feedback from target receptors as to how they comprehend the target text and then compare their comprehension with the "real or presumed" comprehension of the original text by the original receptors as indicated in figure 3.

**Figure 3:** Nida and Taber's model for translation criticism (cf. Nida & Taber 1974, p. 22)



Nida & Taber stress that the response of the receptors of translation should not be merely seen in terms of comprehension of information because in a communicative process the 'expressive' and 'imperative' functions of the message (i.e. how the receptors feel about the message and how they respond to it in action) are equally important. Accordingly, each of the three basic criteria that Nida & Taber (1974, p. 172) introduce for making a judgment about translations, i.e. 1) the correctness of understanding of the message, 2) the ease

of comprehension, 3) the involvement a person experiences as the result of the adequacy of the form of the translation are based on one of the abovementioned communicative functions of the message.<sup>1</sup> The first criterion is focused on the informative aspect of the message and stresses the *accuracy* of understanding the message. The second criterion, i.e. ease of comprehension, is focused on the expressive aspect of the message and stresses the general *efficiency* of the communication. The third criterion is focused on the imperative aspect of the message and stresses the *similarity of response* of the source and target receptors of the message.

Nida & Taber (1974) try to incorporate their criteria for a good translation into their three-stage translation methodology<sup>2</sup> (see Fig. 3) followed by a testing stage. The stages of this methodology consists of 1) *analysis*, which involves the reduction of the source message into its simplest structural and semantic components (kernels) to ensure the precision and correctness of the **comprehension** of the source message at the level of individual kernels, 2) *transfer*, which is a mental process that involves semantic and structural adjustments at levels higher than individual kernels to transfer the content of the message “with as little loss or distortion as possible” at the same time with an eye on preserving some expressive properties (connotation, the emotional flavor and impact) of the message if coincidentally possible, and 3) *restructuring*, which involves selecting an appropriate style to produce an equally acceptable message in the receptor language as the message in the source language (Nida & Taber, 1974, pp. 33-34, also Nida, 1964, p. 68). These steps are then followed

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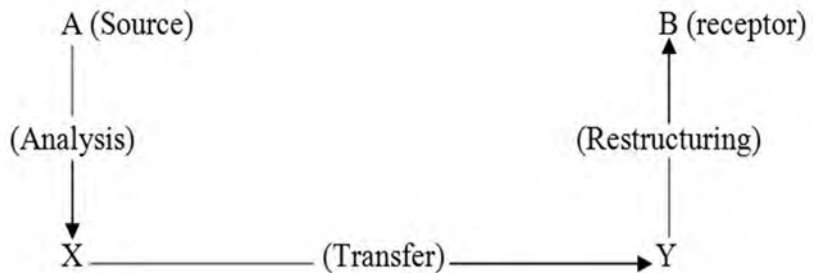
<sup>1</sup>These criteria are the reiteration of the three criteria that Nida (1964) introduces 10 years earlier:

... three fundamental criteria are basic to the evaluation of all translating, and in different ways help to determine the relative merit of particular translations. These are: (1) general efficiency of the communication process, (2) comprehension of intent, and (3) equivalence of response. (Nida 1964, p. 182)

<sup>2</sup> The translation methodology that Nida & Taber propose is again a repetition of Nida's (1964) methodology.

by a testing stage to elicit feedbacks from target receptors and to make sure that their response is equivalent to that of the receptors of the original message.

**Figure 4:** Stages of Translation (Nida, 1964, p. 68)



As can be seen, the stage of analysis almost completely focuses on informative aspects of the message. This step consists of three stages:

- 1) determining the meaningful **relationships between the words and combinations of the words**; 2) determining the **referential meaning** of the words and special combinations of words (idioms); and 3) determining the **connotative meaning**, i.e., how the users of the language react, whether positively or negatively, to the words and their combination. (Nida & Taber 1974, p. 34, my emphasis in bold)

At the first stage, Nida & Taber incorporate Chomsky's transformational grammar in their translation methodology but in a reverse manner (back-transformation) to break down the source text linguistic structures into their underlying simpler structures, known as kernels. From their standpoint, there is a considerable degree of agreement between different languages at the level of kernels; therefore, if translators can reduce source language grammatical structures to their underlying kernels, "they can be transferred more readily and with a minimum of distortion" (p. 39). According to Nida & Taber (1974), the constituent words of the kernel sentences can be categorized under one of the four main semantic classes of events, objects, abstracts, or relationals. The next

stage, then, will be to determine the referential meaning of words and their combinations. Nida & Taber (1974, pp. 56-90) make use of a variety of syntactic and semotactic techniques such as hierarchical and componential analyses to pin down the meaning of ambivalent words and combinations within text and against other words and combinations within similar semantic fields. The last stage or step of analysis is determining the associative meaning of words that is assigned to them based on the readers' emotional reaction to them. Nida & Taber (1974, p. 96) propose a grading system for measuring the connotative meaning of words by means of which one of the values of 'good', 'neutral', or 'bad' is assigned to them and their language level is determined as being 'technical', 'formal', or 'informal'.

According to Nida and Taber (1974, pp. 104-5), the transfer of a message from one language to another is not just made at the level of individual and disconnected kernels because a major part of the message is communicated through meaningful relations that exist between kernels. These relations manifest themselves in the surface structures in the form of specific semantic and syntactic constructions. Nida & Taber argue that, since different languages use different surface structure devices for representing relations between kernels, in the process of *transferring the message*, which is the second phase of their translation methodology, some adjustments will have to be made in the form of the message in order to prevent the loss of content. They add that preserving formal resemblance is only justified when it will not result in unintelligibility or awkwardness (p. 105-6). Nida & Taber (1974, p. 106) list the areas which they think are most problematic in transfer of content where often there is a need for some semantic adjustments in order to minimize the loss of semantic content. These areas include the following (Nida & Taber 1974, pp. 106-110) :

- Idioms: e.g. translating the Hebrew biblical idiom of 'heap coals of fire on his head' (literal translation) into 'make him ashamed';

- Figurative meaning: e.g. translating ‘praise the Lord with the *tongue*’ into ‘praise the Lord with the *lips*’ (literal translation) in some African languages;
- Shifts in central components of meaning: e.g. translating ‘holy kiss’ (literal translation from Hebrew) as ‘hearty handshake’ (Nida 1964, p. 160);
- Generic and specific meaning: e.g. translating the technical term ‘parable’ as the generic term ‘story’ in some languages;
- Pleonastic expressions: e.g. translating the redundant expression ‘answering, said’ (literal translation) simply as ‘answered’;
- Redistribution of semantic components: e.g. translating the term ‘fast’ as ‘not eating in order to worship’ (literal translation) in some languages which lack the concept;
- Provision for contextual conditioning: e.g. translating ‘camels’ as ‘animals called camels’ (literal translation) in some languages that are not familiar with these specific animals.

In addition to the adjustments to the semantic structure, Nida & Taber (1974) believe that the structural forms of the source language should also often be modified to prevent unintelligibility or awkwardness. They classify the structural adjustments in terms of their linguistic levels into these categories: 1) discourse, 2) sentence, 3) word, and 4) sounds.

Nida & Taber (1974) stress that, although it is of the utmost importance to preserve the emotional flavor of the message at the stage of transfer, “under no circumstances should the form be given priority over other aspects [i.e. informative content] of the message” (p. 119). Therefore, similar to the stage of *analysis*, the stage of *transfer* seems to be primarily devised to serve the first criterion for a good translation introduced by Nida & Taber, i.e. the correctness of understanding the message.

The last step in Nida & Taber’s translation methodology, i.e. restructuring, is completely focused on the expressive aspects of communicating the message and aims at meeting the second criterion for a good translation from Nida &

Taber's standpoint, i.e. ease of comprehension. This step involves choosing between various forms of language in terms of time (older vs. newer forms, archaism, neologism, etc.) geography (dialects), sociological factors (age, sex, educational level, occupation, social class or cast, and religious affiliation), circumstances of use (technical, formal, informal, casual, and intimate), and types of discourse (prose vs. poetic) to produce a satisfactory style in the receptor language (Nida & Taber 1974, pp. 120-133). According to Nida & Taber, the translator is expected to recognize various quite different forms of language and attempt to produce something which will be a dynamic equivalent; for example, when translated, "lyric poetry should sound like poetry not like an essay; letters should read like letters and not like some technical treatise on theology" (p. 129). However, they emphasize that by equivalent forms of language they do not necessarily mean the same forms, because the functional significance of similar language forms in two different languages might be quite different; for example, while the epic poem was an accepted form to describe a historical event, it is not an accepted form for the same purpose in the modern Western world (p. 133).

Nida & Taber's three-level translation methodology is followed by a testing procedure which is primarily aimed at receiving critical feedback from potential target recipients to make sure of the similarity of their response to that of recipients of the original message before the final version of translation is out. According to Nida & Taber (1974, p. 163), testing the translation does not merely concern examining the degree of verbal correspondence between source and target texts, but the degree of dynamic equivalence which is determined by the reaction of the potential receptors to the translated text. As a result, the practical tests suggested by Nida & Taber (1974) essentially seem to be focused on the imperative aspects of communicating the message, and their main function is examining the response of the target readers. These tests include:

1. Cloze technique: This is devised to roughly calculate the degree of comprehensibility and intelligibility of the source text. The technique involves providing the target readers with a translation in which every fifth word is deleted and a blank space is left in its place. The readers are then asked to fill the blank with their best guess according to the context. The greater the number of correct guesses, the more comprehensible the text is (Nida & Taber 1974, p. 169).
2. Examining the reactions to alternatives: In this test the translator tries to obtain recipients' responses to specifically problematic sentences in translation by reading alternative translations of the same sentence and asking the readers which alternative "is plainer" or "sounds the sweetest" or the other way around: which alternatives are more difficult to understand. Such a test could provide translators with useful information on the adequacy of their translations (Nida & Taber 1974, p. 171).
3. Explaining the content: This test involves reading the translation to an individual and then get him to explain the contents to other persons who did not hear the reading to see if he makes any significant modifications when restating the contents. Lexical substitutions and syntactic restructurings in the restatement could be a clue as to how translation may be made more comprehensible (Nida & Taber 1974, p. 171-2).
4. Reading the text aloud: In this test, the translator gets several different individuals to read the translation aloud. Wherever the readers stumble, hesitate, or change the lexical or grammatical forms is a signal of problem in translation (Nida & Taber 1974, p. 172).
5. Publication of sample material: According to Nida & Taber, the real publication of sample material is the best test to judge the acceptability of translation. The extent to which people buy copies of a translation and share it with others, the amount of time they spend reading it, and the degree of

involvement they show when reading the translation (their actual reactions to translation) are good indicators of degree of its acceptability.

House (1977, pp. 14-15) treats Nida & Taber's stage of testing as an independent and comprehensive model for translation quality assessment but complains about the limited objectives of the model, which she believes are just measuring intelligibility and ease of comprehension, and its total lack of reference to the source text. It should, however, be noted that Nida & Taber never claim that their step of "the testing of the translation" is an independent assessment procedure; on the contrary, they frequently stress that it is a follow-up procedure in completion of their three-step translation methodology, the main objective of which is to test the equivalence of the response of the readers. The testing step is supposed to be carried out by the same person (the translators themselves) who has already completed the steps of analysis, transfer, and restructuring which involve making numerous references to the source text in terms of semantic and stylistic considerations; therefore, it seems that, for Nida & Taber, if the three-level translation methodology is properly followed, then there is no need to double-check the same references to the source text again in the testing stage. Moreover, since Nida & Taber's translation model is primarily meant for translating the holy scriptures of Christianity (e.g. the Bible), their presupposition is that the authors of these texts are flawless in terms of accurately estimating the communicative channel capacity of their audience and structuring their messages in accordance with it, and, as a result, the translations of these texts are expected to show maximum intelligibility and comprehensibility (see Nida & Taber 1974, p. 164).

Similar to other translation (and assessment) models that are based upon the concept of equivalence, Nida & Taber's model merely concerns the relationship between source and target text and refuses to acknowledge the legitimacy of the effect of any factors other than those that are initiated by the source text. Therefore, in equivalence-based models the source text is the only

yardstick against which the quality of translation can be judged. These models are based on the assumption that the source text has a determinate message/function which is put into it by the original author and which could be precisely identified and replaced by an equivalent message/function in the target language by the translator. The task of the translator, therefore, as Nida & Taber (1974, p. 164) put it, is just limited to producing the closest natural equivalent for the source text, and not ‘editing’ or ‘rewriting’ it. As they see it, even if there is something “stylistically awkward, structurally burdensome, linguistically unnatural, and semantically misleading or incomprehensible”, it should not be corrected in translation, because these are the characteristics of the original message in the source language (Ibid). The old notion of faithfulness, which is in fact a moral value, is redressed in a seemingly scientific outfit in equivalence-based translation theories such as Nida & Taber’s (1974) and again plays an important role in them. Nida & Taber believe that a translation will be of high quality only if in the translator's concern for the response of the receptors he is faithful to the content of the original message. As a result, from their standpoint any kind of intentional or unintentional addition, deletion, or skewing of the message in translation is not justified. However, in reality because of numerous cultural and linguistic differences, the production of a target text that is precisely equivalent to the source text seems to be highly implausible. Moreover, it seems that there are many factors other than factors related to the source text that play a crucial role in determining the final form of translation and also the function that it is supposed to fulfill in the target environment, and obviously when it comes to assessment of the quality of translation the effects of these factors, which are largely ignored in equivalence-based model, should also be taken into account.

#### ***1.3.1.5. Functional Equivalence***

House (1977) is one of the first scholars in the field of translation studies who specifically addresses the problem of translation quality assessment by

developing a theoretical model for this purpose, which is based upon the concept of equivalence. First, House (1977) finds it necessary to (re)define a number of key terminologies such as translation and function of the text. Consequently, she defines (adequate) translation as “the replacement of a text in the source language by a *semantically* and *pragmatically equivalent* text in the target language” (pp. 29-30, my emphasis in italics). House asserts that the first requirement an adequate translation is that it has a function equivalent to that of its source text (p. 30). She believes that one of the main problems with previous approaches to translation quality that are based on the concept of equivalence is that they select inappropriate criteria against which the equivalence relationship is established. According to her, the selection of author’s intention as a criterion for measuring equivalence as in pre-linguistic approaches (e.g. Romantic and hermeneutic approaches), or recipients’ reaction as in response-based approaches (e.g. Nida & Taber, 1974) is problematic because these criteria are rarely empirically investigable. She finds the solution to this problem in selection of ‘the source text function’ as a *tertium comparationis*. House (1977, p. 37) defines the function of a text as the “application or use which the text has in the particular context of a situation” and stresses that the function of the text is **not** simply the same as language functions: “different language functions can co-exist inside what we shall describe as an individual text's function” (p. 31). She prefers to use Haliday’s terms of ‘ideational’ and ‘interpersonal’ functions as labels for the referential and non-referential functional components which exist within a text. Here is an example of how she describes the function of a particular text in practice:

The function of the text consisting of an ideational and interpersonal functional component may be summed up in the following way: the addresser’s main purpose is to inform, to pass on factual information as precisely and efficiently as possible. However, he also wants to make sure that the information is understood properly by the addressees – novice in his special field – therefore, he adjust the texts to the particular needs of the addressees. (House 1977, pp. 76-7)

It seems that the function of a text for House (1977) is the same as the author's intention. She argues that "given sincerity conditions and competence on the part of the original text producer - the function of a text may be seen as corresponding to the text producer's intention in producing the text" (p. 30).

As highlighted in the previous paragraphs, House (1977) defines the function of a text as application of the text in a particular context; therefore, in order to reveal the function of a text, she tries to systematically analyze the relationship between the context in which it is used and the functional organization of language by breaking down the broad notion of context into different manageable dimensions. To this end, she adopts the system of situational dimensions suggested by Crystal and Davy (1969), making some modifications to it to construct her own model for situational-functional source text analysis and assessment of translation match.

Crystal and Davy's (1969) original model includes eight dimensions of situational constraints that are grouped into three broad types:

- A  
INDIVIDUALITY  
DIALECT  
TIME
- B  
DISCOURSE  
(a)[SIMPLE / COMPLEX] MEDIUM (Speech, Writing)  
(b)[SIMPLE / COMPLEX] PARTICIPATION (Monologue, Dialogue)
- C  
PROVINCE  
STATUS  
MODALITY  
SINGULARITY

Crystal and Davy (1969, p. 66)

According to Crystal and Davy (1969, p. 81-2), the dimension of *individuality* tells us which specific person has used the utterance; *regional dialect* tells us where in the country he is from; *class dialect* tells us which social class he belongs to; *time*

tells us during which period he spoke or wrote it; *discourse medium* tells us whether he was speaking or writing and whether he was speaking or writing as an end in itself (*simple*) or as a means to a further end (*complex*); *discourse participation* tells us about the number of participants in the utterance (one or more than one) and whether the monologue and dialogue are independent (*simple*), or are to be considered as part of a wider type of discourse (*complex*); *province* tells us which specific occupational activity the person is engaged in; *status* tells us about the social relationship between the person and his audience; *modality* tells us about his purpose of producing the utterance; and finally, *singularity* tells us about deliberately idiosyncratic preferences of the user of the utterance.

House (1977, pp. 41-50) regroups Crystal and Davy's situational dimensions into two categories of dimensions of language use and dimensions of language user:

- 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

House omits the dimensions of *individuality* and *singularity* because she thinks the idiosyncratic features of the language user will be sufficiently captured in other dimensions of her model. The dimension of modality is also omitted in House's model based on the postulate that it always remains equivalent in source and translation texts during translation. According to House, the dimension of modality only changes during the process of producing "versions", which is not investigable under her assessment model. Under the category of *dimensions of language user*, House lists two factors of *regional dialect* and

*social class dialect* – which were listed under Crystal and Davy’s dimension of dialect – as separate categories named *geographical origin* and *social class*. She also includes the dimension of time under the category of dimensions of language user. Under the category of dimension of language use, she lists *medium*, *participation*, and *province*, but subdivides Crystal and Davy’s dimension of *status* into two separate dimensions of *social role relationship* and *social attitude*. According to House (1977, p. 45), the dimension of *social role relationship* deals with the role relationships between addresser and addressees, and the dimension of *social attitude* deals with the degrees of social distance or proximity (levels of formality). The dimension of *province* is more elaborate in House’s model and, in addition to occupational and professional activities, also reflects the field or topic of the text or “area of operation”.

House (1977) breaks down the linguistic evidence which characterizes the function of the text on any one of the eight situational dimensions into three types: syntactic, lexical, and textual. She then uses her analytical framework to prepare textual profiles of the source and target texts. The source text profile which characterizes the function of the text on each situational dimension then serves as a yardstick against which the quality (adequacy) of the target text will be measured: “The degree to which TT’s profile and function match or do not match ST’s, is the degree to which TT is more or less adequate in quality” (House 1977, p. 245). House then identifies two types of mismatches between source and target texts and labels them as errors: dimensional mismatches or *covertly erroneous errors*, which result from mismatches of situational dimensions and non-dimensional mismatches or *overtly erroneous errors*, which result from breaching the target language (linguistic) norms and mismatches of the denotative meanings (House 1977, p. 245).

According to House (1977, p. 188-89), the comparison of the source and target texts along the eight situational dimensions in her case study led to the discovery of two translation types: overt translation and covert translation. She

defines an overt translation as one in which target language addressees are **not** being directly addressed. An overt translation is overtly a translation and not a “second original” in the target language. House (1977, p. 190) explains that this type of translation is called for in situations where a direct match of the original function of the source text is **not** possible either because the source text is tied to a specific historic event or because of the unique status that the source text has in the source culture. In her view, in such situations a topicalized *second-level function* could be set as a criterion against which the adequacy (quality) of translation might be measured, i.e. the function that holds for an audience in the source culture who similarly are not directly addressed by the original author. This topicalization of the source text function often involves manipulating the target text over some of the functional dimensions; for example, in translating a historical text which is tied to a specific non-repeatable period of time in the source text-culture, the translator has to transpose the function of the text for the contemporary, educated middle class speakers of source language, for whom the text is marked as archaic (at the dimension of language use) when it was not originally marked for the original addressees in the time in which the text was produced (191). House believes that if the function of a target text does not match with one that holds for a comparable audience in the source community, then the target text is no longer a translation but an ***overt version*** with a new secondary function.

The second type of translation that House (1977) claims to have discovered during her case study is the *covert translation*. She defines covert translation as “a translation which enjoys or enjoyed the status of an original ST in the target culture” (p. 194), because the source text of a covert translation is **not** exclusively addressed to a specific source culture audience or tied to the source language culture. According to House, a covert translation has an equivalent purpose with its source text; i.e., they are both based on “contemporary, equivalent needs of a comparable audience in the source and target language communities” (p. 195). In her view, difficulties arise in establishing functional

equivalence in covert translation where there are particular culturally or historically linked elements in the source text or where there are different cultural presuppositions in two language communities, in which case the translator has to apply a kind of *cultural filter* in translation in order to create an equivalent effect to the source text (p. 196). Application of a cultural filter may require manipulating the target text over one or several functional dimensions. An example of this could be supplying additional information and thus manipulating the dimension of social role relationship in the target text in translation of a tourist information booklet based on the assumption that the expectations of the target culture addressees are basically different from those of the source culture addressees (p. 201). However, House warns that the presuppositions concerning cultural differences should be substantiated by reliable ethnological and sociological research; therefore, in her view, the application of a cultural filter based on “cliché assumptions” is not acceptable. According to House (1977, p. 200), the unjustified and arbitrary application of the cultural filter will result in a *covert version* which is an inadequate translation.

House’s basic requirement for equivalence of source and target texts primarily was that the target text should have an equivalent function to that of the source text, achieved through employing equivalent pragmatic means. However, the discovery of covert and overt translation types makes her modify her primary principle of functional equivalence and relativize it in the following way: 1) with regard to source and target texts having the same (equivalent) functions, achievement of a strict functional equivalence is only possible in the case of an covert translation, and in the case of overt translation only achievement a second-level function might be aimed at as a criterion for an adequate translation; and 2) with regard to employment of equivalent pragmatic means, in the case of covert translation of a source text that contains source culture-linked components or where the cultural presuppositions are different, in order to create an equivalent effect, the translator has to apply a cultural filter

which often involves employing pragmatic means on some functional dimensions that are different from those employed in the source text.

House's assessment model finishes by listing covertly and overtly erroneous errors (dimensional and non-dimensional mismatches) discovered in the process of contrastive analysis of the source and target texts profiles and making some statements about their consequences. To sum up, from her standpoint, the fewer mismatches discovered, the more adequate the translation is: "The degree to which TT's profile and function match or do not match ST's, is the degree to which TT is more or less adequate in quality" (House 1977, p. 245).

The criticisms leveled at House's model are centered around the following four major points: 1) rigidity, complexity, and unwieldiness of the analytical categories and terminology used; 2) lack of intersubjective verifiability between different assessors using the model; 3) exclusion of certain text types (poetic-aesthetic texts) from analyses; and 4) the distinction between overt and covert translation (see House 1997, pp. 102-106; Drugan 2013, pp. 52)

Drugan (2013, p. 53) argues that if House's model is going to be used by professional translator and practitioners outside academia in the real world, other criticisms may also be raised: first, the sample on which she tests her model is restricted, focusing on only one language pair (English-German) and a dozen of original texts. Second, the samples do not include complex text types and formats with inherent challenges for quality as those professional assessors are typically dealing with. Third, the time needed to apply the model makes it impractical in the real word professional context. Finally, there is little indication in House's model as to how much access she had to the commissioner's brief, the context of production of the original or the conditions in which the translation was carried out.

Apart from the above criticism, there are also several other moot points in the model that House (1977) proposes for translation quality assessment that need to be addressed. The first one is the way she defines translation: "the

replacement of a text in the source language by a *semantically and pragmatically equivalent* text in the target language” (pp. 29-30, my emphasis in italics). This is not a descriptive definition based on the observation of the actual translations as they exist in the real world. House’s prescriptive definition for translation is too restrictive and if it is going to be accepted in a strict sense, then most of the textual practices throughout history that are already recognized as translations will no longer count as translations. The fact that none of the eight translations that she chooses for her case study fully comply with the definition she offers for translation further indicates that it is unrealistic to say the least. House’s definition of translation postulates that the source text has a single specific function intended by its original author that could be precisely determined through application of a scientific methodology (e.g. Crystal and Davy’s Model). She stresses that translation is all about exact replication of this function in the target text and thus to do anything else is essentially false.<sup>3</sup> This way of thinking leaves no grounds for the translator to make a decision about the function the translation is supposed to fulfill in the target society, since it is already predetermined prospectively by the source text author. House herself, however, has to admit years later in her revised model that assignment of a single (authorial) function/meaning to a text, given the dynamic ways it could be interpreted/translated for different purposes, is not plausible (see House 1997, p. 77).

Another major problem with House’s model is the way she chooses to determine the adequacy (quality) of translations. According to House (1977, p. 245), “the degree to which TT’s profile and function match or do not match ST’s, is the degree to which TT is more or less adequate in quality”. Hypothetically, in this model of translation quality assessment any mismatch is an error which would detract from the adequacy (quality) of translation (see House 1977, p. 56-7). The

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<sup>3</sup>. Similarly to Nida & Taber (1974), House’s main concern in assessing the quality of translation seems to be the traditional concept of faithfulness to the original and she tries to dress it up in a scientific fashion.

main problem with this approach is that in reality many of the mismatches discovered when comparing the source text's profile with that of the target text do not simply seem to be mistakes or errors but *purposeful translation strategies* that are specifically meant by the translators, and House's model is not capable of judging the appropriateness of these strategies. House's model of assessment would presumably even, as Drugan (2013, p. 54) notices, penalize translators for improvements translators make to their translations by categorizing them as mismatches between translation and original. Moreover, while House merely focuses on mismatches, there are cases in which the very act of making a match on one or more functional dimensions seems to be undesired or inappropriate and a change (mismatch) is required. These contradictions seriously question the validity of the source text's profile as *the only yardstick* to measure the quality of translation. House herself seems to be aware of this problem and she tries to partly tackle it through relativizing her model by introducing the concepts such as cultural filtering into it, but still she continues to adhere to the source text's profile as the only criterion for translation quality assessment and is reluctant to acknowledge the great influence of other factors.

One of the other problems with House's comparative model of assessment is that the model fails to specifically clarify whether it is meant to measure the quality of translation as a product or the quality of the process of translating and the competence of the translator. In her model, House tries to find out if the function of the source text which holds/held for a specific group of audience in a specific time in the source culture is kept equivalent in the target text for a *contemporary* comparable audience in the target culture. By the term "contemporary audience", House apparently means the audience at the time when translation is/was produced and **not** the time when the assessment is done, because she frequently makes some statements about the possible intentions of translators for selection of specific textual items in their translations. If one is going to judge the appropriateness/inappropriateness of the translational decisions a translator has made at the time of production of a given translation,

then it is understandable that these decisions are investigated within the specific context and time in which the translation has been produced. However, if one is going to assess the appropriateness/inappropriateness of a translation for a group of target audiences that are not necessarily contemporary with the time in which the translation is produced, then any discussion about the translator's intention seems irrelevant to the objectives of assessment. The reason why House conflates the assessment of the quality of translation with the assessment of translators' competence could be that she has only included recently produced translations in her corpus of study, in which case the production of the translations simply happens to be concomitant with their assessment. It is not clear how House's model is supposed to be applied for assessment of translations that are not recently produced. Nevertheless, insisting on assessment of translations just based on the function that holds for those target audience specifically intended by translators at the time of translating would imply that translations have a limited life-span and an expiry date after which they will be obsolete.

House's emphasis on the necessity of locating *comparable* audiences in the target community also seems to be problematic. House believes that if the function of a target text does not match with one that holds for a *comparable* audience in the source community, then the target text is no longer a translation but an overt version with a new secondary function. Apart from the implausibility of identifying such audiences because of socio-cultural differences that may exist between the source and target communities, the idea that the translation should only address a comparable audience would imply that not only the function of translation but also its audiences are predetermined retrospectively by the source text/author and the translator under no condition has the authority to make a decision about whom his/her translation might be addressed to.

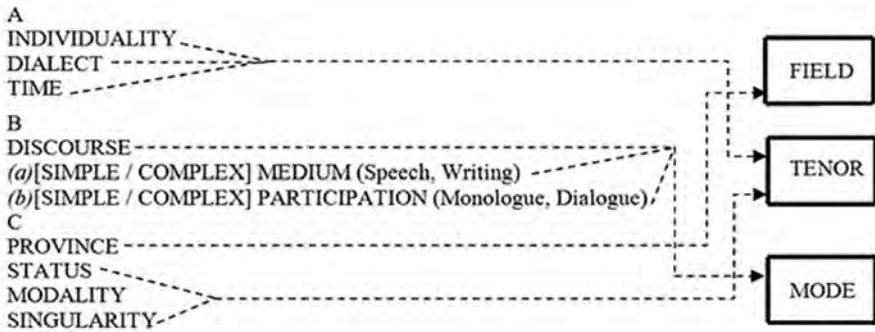
House claims that application of her assessment model to the texts in her case study has led to the discovery of two major translation types: overt and covert translations. Simply put, she believes that based on the nature of their

source texts, translations either directly address the target audience (i.e. covert translations) or do not directly address them (i.e. overt translations). There seems to be several methodological problems with House's typology: first, the corpus House analyzes in her study only includes eight very short English and German textual pairs of certain text types; therefore, making such a generalization about translation types does not seem to be substantiated by enough textual evidence. Second, texts are not always homogeneous throughout, and it is highly improbable that in the course of a longer text only a certain group of audiences is consistently addressed directly all through. Third, even if there is a translation that consistently addresses certain audiences directly/indirectly, it cannot still be labeled once and for all as a covert/overt translation, because the recipient community is dynamic and constantly changing over time; therefore, what was once considered an overt translation may now be justifiably considered a covert one due to developments in the target society through time, and the other way round. As a result, these terms could only be applicable within limited and specific periods of time. The translations strategies that are used in overt and covert translation, i.e. cultural filtering (in covert translation) and the topicalization of the function (in overt translation), however, are not confusing in terms of temporal aspects, since they clearly refer to certain translational decisions that translators make at a specific time (at the time of production of translation).

In 1997 House revises – or, in her own term “revisits” – her assessment model; nonetheless, she keeps intact the principle of functional equivalence as the core concept of her model and does not introduce any major changes to its theoretical foundation. In response to the criticisms leveled at the excessive complexity of the categorization of the situational dimensions in her original model, House (1997) redistributes the situational dimensions used for functional analysis of the source text into fewer categories by adopting Halliday's functional model of register analysis. Figure 5 depicts how House subsumes the

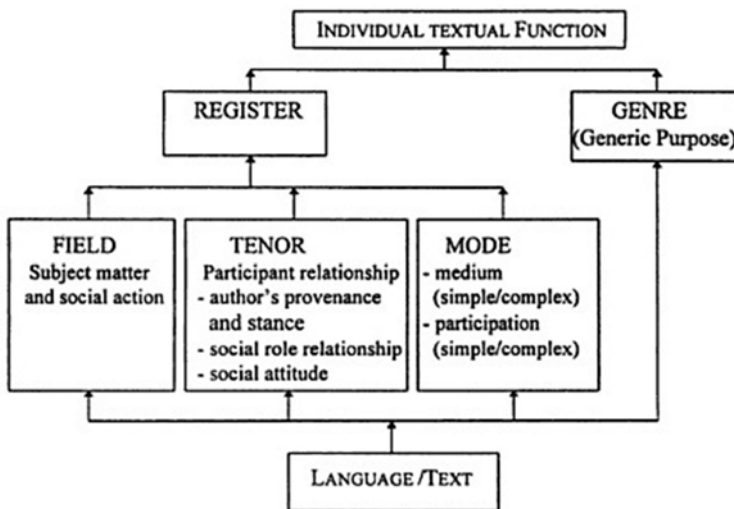
categories of her original model under the Hallidayan trinity of ‘Field’, ‘Tenor’, and ‘Mode’.

**Figure 5:** Redistribution of Crystal & Davy’s Functional Categories into Halliday’s Categories of ‘Field’, ‘Tenor’, and ‘Mode’



The resultant new model (see Fig. 6) consists then of four levels: function of the individual text, genre, register and language/text.

**Figure 6:** House’s Revised Model of Translation Quality Assessment (House 1997, p. 108)



According to House (1997, p. 108), the subdivision of ‘Field’ in her revised model, which captures the subject matter of the text, partly coincides with Crystal

& Davy's (1969) category of 'Province'; however, some specific features of 'Province' are subsumed under the newly introduced category of 'Genre' in the revised model. Under the subdivision of 'Tenor', which captures the nature of the participants and the social relationship between them, House includes the author's temporal, geographical, and social provenance, which were formerly placed under Crystal and Davy's categories of 'Time', 'Dialect', and 'Status' respectively, as well as his intellectual, emotional or affective stance, which were presented under Crystal and Davy's Categories of 'Individuality' and 'Singularity' but were neglected in House's original model. The subdivision of 'Mode' in the revised model captures Crystal and Davy's parameter of 'Discourse'.

The other noticeable modification that House (1997, p. 107) introduces to her revised model of assessment is the integration of the new dimension of 'Genre'. She defines 'Genre' as "a socially established category characterized in terms of occurrence of use, source and a communicative purpose or any combination of these", which serve as an 'in between' category linking register and the individual textual function. She further explains that "the relationship between genre and register is then such that generic choices are realized by register choices, which in turn are realized by linguistic choices that make up linguistic structures in the instantiation of a text".

Despite all the efforts that House has made to optimize her model, she herself eventually admits that her model is not an assessment model *de facto* enabling the assessors to pass a judgment on translation, but rather an analytical tool that just provides grounds for the evaluative judgment; she also acknowledges that the source text is not the only criterion against which the quality of translation is measured:

Judgements of the quality of a translation depend on a large variety of factors that enter into any social evaluative statement. Critical in the case of translation evaluation is the fact that evaluative judgements emanate from the analytic, comparative process of translation criticism, i.e., it is the linguistic analysis which provides grounds for arguing an evaluative judgement.

[...] the choice of an overt or a covert translation depends not on the text alone, or on the translator's subjective interpretation of the text, but also on the reasons for the translation, the implied readers, on a variety of publishing and marketing policies, i.e., on factors which clearly have nothing to do with translation as a linguistic procedure because these are social factors which concern human agents as well as socio-cultural, political or ideological constraints and which—in the reality of translation practice—turn out to be often more influential than linguistic considerations or the professional competence of the translator herself. (House 2001, p. 254)

### ***1.3.2. Target-oriented Translation Theories and Quality***

Before the 1980s, the main criterion for assessing the quality of translation in linguistic approaches was the degree to which translations matched their original from different points of view (e.g. Catford 1965, Nida & Taber 1974, House 1977, etc.). These equivalence-based approaches merely focused on comparison of individual translations with their originals in isolation and therefore in these approaches the source text served as the only yardstick against which the quality of translation could be measured. By the late 1970s, however, under influence of the seminal works of scholars like Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury who saw translations primarily as facts of the target system, putting them in the wider picture of the target literary system (see Toury 1985, p. 19; Even-Zohar 1978, p. 117), the focus of attention changed from the relationship between translations and their originals to the relationship between translations and other translated/non-translated texts within the target system. Their works paved the way for the emergence of new target-oriented translation approaches which, as Hermans (1985) explains, had some common concerns such as “an interest in the norms and constraints that govern the production and reception of translations, in the relation between translation and other types of text processing, and in the place and role of translations both within a given literature and in the interaction between literatures” (pp. 10-11). With this change of focus the perception of what a quality translation should look like also changed: quality in target-oriented approaches means the degree to which a translation complies with the norms governing target text production (including norms

governing translations as a specific sub-group of target texts). Simply put, the shift from source-oriented approaches to target-oriented ones resulted in a change of the concept of quality of translation from fidelity to social acceptability.

#### ***1.3.2.1. Polysystem Theory***

Even-Zohar (1978) looks at translations not as individual and separated texts but as an integrated group of texts that constitutes a particular literary system within the polysystem of the target literature. He believes that translated texts are related to each other at least in two ways: in the way their source texts are selected by the target literature; and in the way they adopt specific norms, behaviors, and policies (p. 118). Even-Zohar shows a particular interest in the study of the position of the translated literature within the target literary polysystem. According to Even-Zohar, the translated literature may occupy either a central or a peripheral position. If the translated literature occupies a central position, it means that it is playing an innovatory role and is actively participating in the process of creation of new norms that might be applicable specifically to translated literature or may even go beyond the boundaries of the sub-system of the translated literature to govern the production of (non-translated) target texts within other target co-systems as well. On the other hand, if the translated literature occupies a peripheral position, it means that it is playing a secondary and conservative role, since it merely follows the norms already established by other co-systems in the target literature (p. 120).

Even-Zohar (1978, pp. 121-22) discusses different situations that might give rise to the placement of translation literature in a central position. According to him, the translated literature could play an innovatory role and move to a central position in the target polysystem when the polysystem is young or weak, or when it is peripheral within a wider group of neighboring literatures, or during turning points or crises, or when there is a literary vacuum.

Contrary to linguistic approaches, which set different forms of equivalence relationships as a priori prescriptive criteria for assessing the quality of translation, target-oriented approaches such as Even-Zohar's and Toury's adopt a descriptive attitude in defining criteria for assessing the quality of translation: they aim at discovering regularities, norms, or rules through analysis and description of existing translations which will then serve as criteria for assessing the degree of acceptability of translations in the target society. The quality of translation then, from Even-Zohar's point of view, depends on the position of translated literature within the target polysystem: if the translated literature is in the peripheral position within the target polysystem then a given individual translation is likely to follow the norms established by non-translated co-systems, and if it is in the central position then a given individual translation is more likely to observe the norms established by the translated literature.

#### ***1.3.2.2. Norms and Decision-making in Translation***

As he considers translating primarily as a process of decision-making within the target environment, Toury (1978) is particularly interested in discovering how target socio-cultural factors and norms affect the decisions that translators make during the process of translating. In Toury's view translating involves playing a social role within the target society; therefore, in order to gain social acceptability, the translators, as social subjects, normally try to avoid behaviors which are prohibited and, at the same time, adopt behaviors which are considered appropriate by the members of the target society. According to Toury (1978), within the community norms serve as criteria against which instances of behavior (including translational behavior) are evaluated as being appropriate or inappropriate (p. 84).

Toury (1978) claims that norms govern every level of decision-making in the translation process (in Toury's term: *translation event*) from the choice of the text to translate to the very final choices of translation strategies of action. Consequently, he introduces three kinds of norms based on different stages

during the process of translation at which translators make critical decisions: 1) initial norm; 2) preliminary norms; and 3) operational norms.

Initial norms govern the translator's decision about the selection of an overall translation strategy before the actual act of translation as to whether to adhere to the norms active in the source culture or to the norms in the target culture. Adherence to the source norms will result in an adequate translation and adherence to the target norms in an acceptable translation (Toury 1978, p. 86).

The preliminary norms govern the decisions about translation policy, i.e. the selection of the source texts to be translated (in terms of their text types, subject matters, time, etc.) and about the directness/indirectness of translation, i.e. concerns about the target culture's degree of tolerance for translating from languages other than the one in which the source text is originally written (Ibid).

The operational norms, as their name may indicate, govern the actual decisions made during the act of translation and are subdivided into *matricial* and *textual-linguistic* norms. *Matricial norms* govern the degree of fullness, segmentation, and distribution of textual materials in the target text. *Textual-linguistic norms* 'govern the selection of material to formulate the target text in, or replace the original textual and linguistic material with' (Toury 1978, p. 87).

As regards translation quality, there is no doubt that Toury's norms are *process norms* (i.e., they govern the decisions made during different stages of the process of translation as a social behavior); however, since they reflect the prominent values and attitudes in a society and thus serve as models embodying the notion of correctness, the product of a behavior which complies with them is also supposed to conform to the relevant notion of correctness. In other words, as Hermans (1996, p. 37) aptly puts it, "Translating 'correctly' amounts to translating according to the prevailing norm, and hence in accordance with the relevant, canonized models".

Toury (1978, p. 91) suggests two major sources for the study of translational norms which, taking into consideration the argument above, could be regarded as sources for extracting criteria for assessing the quality of translation as well:

1. Textual: the translated texts themselves that in fact represent the results of actual norm-governed behavior (product norms); and
2. Extra-textual: theories of translation, statements made by translators, publishers, editors, and other people who are involved with translation.

Finally, in terms of normative power, Toury categorizes the norms into three major groups:

1. Basic (primary) norms: rule-like and mandatory formulations;
2. Secondary norms (tendencies): favorable behavior;
3. Tolerated (permitted) norms.

Toury's groundbreaking work on norms happened to play a crucial role in diverting the focus of attention in discussions about translation quality assessment away from the source text, as the sole point of reference for assessment, and bringing the target linguistic, social, and cultural factors into prominence.

### ***1.3.2.3. Expectancy Norms vs. Professional Norms***

Whereas Toury does not pay too much heed to the role of the readership and their feedback in the process of norm construction, Chesterman (1997, p. 64) draws a distinction between *expectancy norms*, which are the expectations of the target readership of translation as a product, and the *professional norms* which explain the translator's tendency to observe these expectancy norms during the process of translation. He argues that professional norms, as process norms, are subordinate to expectancy norms, as they are in turn determined by the nature of the product they are supposed to end up as. Chesterman (1997) lists three major sources from which expectancy norms receive validation in terms of their

existence in the target language community: 1) the prevalent *translation tradition* in the target culture; 2) the *parallel texts* in the target language; and 3) *economic or ideological factors, power relations* within and between cultures and the like. He further explains that under some circumstances the expectancy norms are also validated by *norm authorities*: a sub-group of the target society such as teachers, literary critics, publishers and so on who are considered by the rest of society to be experts who have the competence to validate the expectancy norms (pp. 64-66).

According to Chesterman (1997, p. 66), professional norms which regulate the translation process receive validation specifically from norm authorities. He categorizes professional norms in terms of their nature (ethical, social, and linguistic) into three major types:

1. The accountability norm: an *ethical* norm that governs translation decisions as to which party (the original author, the translator himself or herself, the readership or any other relevant party) should be given primary loyalty in translation (Cf. Toury's initial norms). The violation of the accountability norm will result in a careless, inaccurate, or deceptive translation.
2. The communication norm: a *social* norm which helps the translator, as an expert in communication, to establish an optimized communication between different parties who are involved in translation depending on the situation. The violation of the communication norm will result in poor readability, undesirable effects, or inappropriate responses from readers.
3. The relation norm: a *linguistic* norm which concerns the maintenance of an optimal similarity between the source text and the target text. According to Chesterman (1997), the relation norm is the only norm which is exclusive to translation, whereas other norms, such as the communication norm and the accountability norm are applicable to other types of communication as well (p. 79). The violation of the relation norm will result in error of comprehension in translations or make them seem too free or too literal.

According to Chesterman (1997, p. 120), “the critical ability to assess and select from among alternatives is not only a requirement for individual translators but also the basis of translation criticism”. It seems that in Chesterman’s view there is a great similarity between the task of a translator and that of a translation critic: translating involves a process of decision-making and selecting an option among different possible options based on norms, and similarly translation criticism involves making a decision (judgment), this time about the appropriateness of the decision that a translator has already made, through reconstruction of the process of translation and taking into consideration the norms and also other potential options that were not selected by the translator. In other words, translation criticism is a second-level decision making process. Therefore, he believes that the discussion about norms is, in this way, quite pertinent to translation quality assessment. Chesterman (1997, p. 121) defines a translation error as anything in the form of the translated text that triggers a critical reaction in the critic (i.e. an instance of deviation from norms), which can range from grammatical mistakes to a translator’s choice of overall approach. He then proposes five different assessment models to detect errors in translation:

1. The retrospective assessment model: This model focuses on the relation of the target text with its source text. A typical example of this kind of assessment is House (1977), who treats any mismatch between the source and target texts as an error. According to Chesterman (1997, p. 123), the main concern of the retrospective assessment is identifying instances of deviation from relation norm (i.e. the linguistic relationship between the source text and the target text).
2. The prospective assessment model: This model is prospective in that it focuses not retrospectively on the relation of the target text with its source text, but prospectively on the effect the target text has on its readership. Typical examples of this kind of assessment are the response-based methods used by Nida and Taber (1964) such as cloze tests, comprehension

tests, readability tests etc. According to Chesterman (1997, p. 128), the main concern of prospective assessment is detecting the cases in which the communication norm is violated.

3. The lateral assessment model: This model sets the translated text alongside non-translated target texts of a similar type (parallel texts) to see to which extent it shows resemblance to them. According to Chesterman (1997, p. 133), the main focus of the lateral assessment is on the expectancy norms.
4. The introspective assessment model: This model focuses on the translator's own internal decision-making process. A typical example of this model is the Think Aloud Protocol (TAP) in which translators are asked to give a verbal commentary on what is in their minds as they translate. According to Chesterman (1997, p. 138), the introspective assessment is most closely associated with the accountability norm.
5. The pedagogical assessment model: This is a combination of the above-mentioned assessment models. The main objective of this method, according to Chesterman (1997), is either making a judgment on translators' competence (accreditation) or providing pedagogical feedback for translation trainees in a learning situation (prescription).

Chesterman's (1997) assessment models are in many ways inspiring and, I believe, have the potential to be used as a conceptual basis for a comprehensive translation quality assessment model; however, there are several moot points in them that need to be discussed. The first point is that Chesterman seemingly fails to treat the *sources* for norms and the *nature* of them separately and often confuses them with each other throughout his assessment models. In his retrospective assessment, for example, he identifies any discrepancy observed in comparison of the translation with the source text (source of norm) as a kind of deviation from the relation norm which is linguistic in nature, whereas in many cases the violated norm is not linguistic in nature. For instance, when he gives an example of three English translations of a Latvian poem (Chesterman 1997,

pp. 126-27) to illustrate how the retrospective assessment model works in practice, he notices a discrepancy between the translations and the original text which, I would claim, is indicative of a deviation from of an accountability (ethical) norm rather than a relation (linguistic) norm:

The source text:

*Dziedotdzimu, dziedotaugu,*

*Dziedotmūžunodzīvoju;*

*Dziedotgājadvēsēlīte*

***Dievadēladārziņā.***

[God+GENson+GENgarden+DIMINUTIVE+LOCATIVE]

Translation 1:

Singing, I was born; singing, I grew up;

Singing, I passed through life;

Singing, my soul entered

**The garden of the Son of God.**

Translation 2:

I was born singing, I grew up singing,

I passed through life singing;

And, singing, my soul ascended

**Into the garden of the Son of God.**

Translation 3:

I was born singing, I grew up singing,

I lived my life singing.

My soul will go singing

**Into the garden of God's sons.**

In his comparison of the translations with the source text, Chesterman notices that in the first and second translations the word 'son' is capitalized. Considering the pagan background of the original poem, Chesterman (1997, p. 128) believes that the decision to capitalize the *son* will serve to adapt the poem to a Christian culture. However, the decision, in my view, is obviously an ethical decision about giving loyalty to a certain party, and thus, is governed by the accountability norm rather than the relation norm. In short, not every discrepancy discovered through comparing the translation with its source text is

pertinent to the relation (linguistic) norm; it can also be pertinent to other kinds of norms (ethical or social) as well.

A second point of concern is that Chesterman (1997) also fails to draw a clear line between the *assessment of translation* and the *assessment of the competence of translators* and sometimes confuses them with each other. He believes that the assessment of texts, implicitly, also involves assessing those responsible for the text and their expertise (p. 145). Chesterman even labels his final assessment model, which is a sum of different assessment models, ‘the *pedagogical assessment model*’, the ultimate goal of which is assessing translators rather than translations. Ironically, Chesterman (1997) himself admits in another place that it is not always the case:

Regardless of how a translator arrives at a final product, regardless of the decisions made or the attitudes held, the final product will be judged evaluatively on its own merits. Good translations may (in theory, at least) come from quite misguided decisions, by chance, as it were. (pp. 137-8)

The point is that the pedagogical objective is just one of the many different objectives that an assessment model may aim at, and not the only one.

Another moot point is that, in the discussion about the lateral assessment model, Chesterman introduces parallel (non-translated) texts as the only criteria to measure the degree of compliance of the translations with the expectancy norm, and it sounds as if he totally forgets to take into account the other two sources for the expectancy norm which he himself enumerated earlier, i.e. the prevalent *translation tradition* in the target culture, and the *economic or ideological factors, power relations* within and between cultures and the like.

The introspective assessment model seems to be only helpful for pedagogical application and translation research, considering its limitations and the requirement of having access to the translator during the process of translation. It does not seem to be applicable at all for assessment purposes in real world situations. Moreover, Chesterman’s argument that the introspective

assessment could be used as the main method to assess the accountability (ethical) norm simply because it might give the assessor access to translators' internal mental processes does not seem to be tenable. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), the subject-agents practicing in a field feel as if the social reality is completely natural, self-evident: "the agent does what he or she 'has to do' without posing it explicitly as a goal, below the level of calculation and even consciousness, beneath discourse and representation" (p. 128). Translators, as social agents in the field of translation, are hardly, if ever, consciously aware of norms and ideological factors governing their behavior during the process of the source text interpretation as well as translation production; therefore, it is highly implausible that they give a verbal commentary on what is subconsciously going on in their minds as they translate.

Finally, Chesterman (1997) puts too much emphasis on the role of the norms in the process of assessment and somehow ignores the crucial importance of the specific objective(s) of the assessment itself. There is not always a complete match between prevalent norms and the conscious objectives of the assessment/assessor. The final purpose of assessment usually is not to examine whether the decision made in any individual case in the translation conforms to the prevalent norms, because it is always possible that the conscious aim of the assessor clashes with dominant expectations of the society. Rather, it is to judge whether decisions made in translation as to follow or not to follow the norms are in line with the overall purpose for which the translation being assessed is going to be used. The key to this problem perhaps lies in Skopos theory, which will be discussed in the following section.

#### ***1.3.2.4. Skopos Theory***

As in many target-oriented translation theories, decision-making is again a key term in skopos theory; nevertheless, what makes skopos theory distinctive from other theories is that it treats translation **not** simply as a social behavior that is subject to norms of different kinds and follows them blindly, but as a purposeful

behavior (in Vermeer's terminology 'action') that is consciously guided toward the *skopos* of translation<sup>4</sup>. According to Vermeer (2000, p. 221), the word '*skopos*' is a technical term for the aim or purpose of translation. He explains that every translation presupposes a *commission*: an instruction, given by translators themselves or by someone else, which contains a statement about the specification of the *skopos* of translation and the condition under which the *skopos* should be attained (pp. 228-29).

As Schäffner (1998b, p. 236) maintains, a text in a *skopos*-oriented approach is regarded as an 'offer of information' from its producer to a recipient. Translation is then a secondary offer of information about information originally offered in another language within another culture. The translator, as an expert in translational action, must interpret the source text information 'by selecting those features which most closely correspond to the requirements of the target situation' (Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997, p. 156). From this perspective, therefore, the translation process is not necessarily controlled retrospectively by the source text or the original author, but prospectively by the *skopos* of the target text as determined by the target recipient's requirements and discerned by the translator.

According to Vermeer (2000, p. 201), an awareness of the requirements of the *skopos* 'expands the possibilities of translation, increases the range of possible translation strategies, and releases the translator from the corset of an enforced – and hence often meaningless – literalness'. The translator thus becomes a target-text author freed from the 'limitations and restrictions imposed by a narrowly defined concept of loyalty to the source text alone' (Schäffner, 1998b, p. 238).

According to Hönig (1998, pp. 12-13), a *skopos*-oriented approach requires the translator to be visible, because such an approach does not establish rules but

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<sup>4</sup>The reason why I believe *skopos* theory should be placed under the category of target-oriented translation theories is that, as Vermeer (2000, p. 229) asserts, the realization of the *skopos* of translation depends on the circumstances of the target culture, not on those of the source culture.

support decision-making strategies; therefore, the translator has to make critical decisions as to how define the translation *skopos* and which strategies can best meet the target recipient's requirements. Translators have to be visible, making their decisions transparent to the clients and accepting the responsibility of their choices. Visible translator will be held accountable for the consequences of their translational decisions, because as Toury (1999, p. 19) declares, 'it is always the translator herself or himself, as an autonomous individual, who decides how to behave, be that decision fully conscious or not. Whatever the degree of awareness, it is s/he who will also have to bear the consequences'.

Hönig (1998, p. 14) usefully contrasts the characteristics of functionalist (skopos-oriented) approaches vs. non-functional approaches as follows:

FUNCTIONALIST		NON-FUNCTIONALIST
	<b>Translator</b>	
Is loyal to his client Must be visible		Faithful to the author Should be invisible
	<b>Translation processes should be</b>	
Target text oriented		Source text oriented
	<b>Aim of translation is</b>	
Communicative acceptability		Linguistic equivalence
	<b>Translation tools taken from</b>	
Psycho-, sociolinguistics, text linguistics (supporting decisions)		Contrastive linguistics lexical semantics (applying rules)
	<b>Analogy</b>	
Building bridge		Crossing river

Vermeer (2000) believes that the *skopos* of a translation is not necessarily identical with that of its source text. As a result, he admits that one and the same text could be translated quite differently for different goals, so that producing a faithful translation which closely corresponds to its original or an acceptable translation which complies with prevalent norms in the target society are just a few possible goals, among many others (pp. 230-31). Acceptance of the legitimacy of translating the same text differently according to different

purposes has significant consequences for my discussion regarding translation quality assessment. It would mean that all kinds of assessment are to a great extent relative: a given translation could be assessed differently for several different purposes other than the one for which it was originally **produced**. It would also mean that there is no absolute criterion for assessment: measuring the degree of compliance with norms or faithfulness to the original would be just some aims among countless number of other possible aims of assessment. Finally, since all decisions in the process of assessment are apparently made on the basis of the *skopos* of assessment, i.e. the purpose for which the translation being assessed is going to be **used**, the first step in designing any kind of assessment model should be a clear description of the *skopos*. That being said, one should always bear in mind that the *skopos* of assessment is not necessarily the same as the one which the translation being assessed was originally produced for, meaning that one and the same translation might be assessed quite differently for different purposes, irrespective of the original purpose of translation.

#### ***1.4. Conclusion***

As evidenced by numerous examples in this chapter, quality seems to come into the picture for almost every translation theory throughout history. The first chapter of this thesis has been devoted to uncovering this hidden aspect and tracing the vicissitudes of its related concepts from classical times to the present. In the course of the critical analysis of various theories in this chapter, attempts were made to show how the meaning of translation, the expectations about the quality, and accordingly the way it was assessed were constantly changing alongside the socio-cultural and ideological developments during different historical periods, but obviously the main focus of the chapter remained on the translation theories and models that emerged following the advent of modern linguistics.

The main purpose of the critical evaluation of a collation of different translation theories and assessment models in this chapter was to identify their strengths and weaknesses as well as the areas of focus which had been remained largely overlooked. Based on the observations that I made at the end of the critical survey, the following problems were identified in general with the translation theories and models surveyed:

1. They do not take enough account of the pivotal role of assessors in translation assessment as a complex process of decision making. Among translation assessment theories and models reviewed in the current study, only Nida & Tabers' model pay marginal attention to the role of assessors in the process of assessment.
2. The theoretical foundations of many of these theories and assessment models are based on the arguable concept of equivalence and they rely excessively on the source text as a point of reference for assessment.
3. Many of them limit the skopos of assessment, i.e. the purpose for which the translation being assessed is going to be used, merely to the purpose the source text is originally written for (intention of author) or the one the translated text is produced for (purpose of translator).
4. They often do not make a clear distinction between 'translation quality assessment' and 'translation competence assessment'.
5. The majority of them assess the quality of translation against a set of fixed standards/criteria that are believed to be universally valid.

The new assessment model which is going to be developed in the course of the next chapter will endeavor to address all these problems and offer practical solutions for them.

Taking into account that the assessment criteria generally are so fluid and relative in nature, it seems that any effort to develop comprehensive assessment models, such as equivalence-based models, which are based on fixed and absolute criteria, would be futile and doomed to fail. As noticed at the end

critical evaluation of different theories and models for translation assessment, many of them, especially those that were based on the concept of equivalence, had a tendency to minimize or even ignore the role of the human agent in the process of assessment, possibly because of the concerns about the potential negative impacts of the subjectivity factor involved. These models have generally reduced the process of assessment to benchmarking the quality of translations against a set of fixed and predefined criteria. Translation quality assessment, however, seems to be far more complicated than a simple act of benchmarking; it is a hermeneutic process that requires the assessor's agency and judgmental skills. An assessment model alone, no matter how well-designed, does not seem to be capable of interpreting the textual data in numerous different contextual situations and passing judgments on the quality of translation. Therefore, instead of trying to eliminate the subjectivity factor related to the human agency, a translation assessment model should ideally try to understand and control it. This situation highlights the necessity of designing a dynamic and flexible model that has adjustable criteria for different assessment skopi and sufficiently accounts for the role of assessors and their judgmental skills. The development of such a model, in my view, would not be possible unless we distinguish between the *descriptive* and *evaluative* functions of the assessment. According to Chesterman (1997, p. 118), the descriptive function of assessment involves making a purely descriptive statement about the type and features of a given translation and its effects on the target culture. The descriptive part of the assessment, in my view, could be done quite objectively, since it is judgment-free. It is the evaluative function that makes the assessment procedure look highly subjective. Chesterman argues that the evaluative function of assessment, which is based upon the results of the descriptive function, involves an examination of the socio-cultural and ideological factors and their effect on the translator's textual decisions, then a comparison of values held by different parties who are involved in translation, and finally, making a judgment on the degree of conformity of the translator's decisions to the

required standards or particular values held by the assessor, or simply put, passing judgment on how good or bad the translation is. The high degree of subjectivity which is often observed in the results of different assessment models is mainly related to the evaluative function of the assessment. One of the main objectives of the next chapters will be to develop a comprehensive theoretical and methodological framework that incorporates useful descriptive and analytical features of different theoretical approaches discussed in the first chapter. Such a framework must seek to encompass different socio-cultural and ideological factors which might affect decisions that assessors make during the process of evaluation. Similarly to many methodologies that have been designed after the linguistic era, I will try to put the basis of the descriptive analysis in my methodology on rigorously systematic linguistic models. However, contrary to many of the methodologies, which are basically based on the concept of equivalence, I am going to shift the focus of attention to the role of assessors and the importance of the assessment skopos in the TQA process. In the meantime, extreme caution will be exercised throughout the following chapters not to conflate the process of assessing translators' competence with the process of assessing translation as a final product irrespective of the translator who has produced it (the latter is the main concern of the current thesis).