Applying Juliane House’s Translation Quality Assessment Model on Audio-Visual Political Translations of Arab Intermediate Translators

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Abstract
Modern translation devices cannot achieve the expected accuracy as they cannot make up the target text as original as the source text on either the cultural or linguistic level. Translation quality is expected to be a critical academic area, especially concerning audio-visual translation, as it cannot be generated by a machine-translator due to its multidimensional nature. The reason for applying political translation in this study is the linguistic and cultural richness of political discourse, as many political texts are defined and understood in terms of ideology, culture, and political circumstances. The present paper adopts a qualitative aspect. It will be applied through a comparative approach as the study will compare both source text (discourse) and target texts (discourse) according to Juliane House’s model. House’s model is applied due to its comprehensiveness, which analyzes translation according to many aspects including lexical, syntactic, and textual meanings. In addition, House’s model applies the communication theory of “sender-receiver” to the text for defining the accuracy of translation in terms of the relationship between the sender and the receiver. Here, the significance of the study is to testify and examine Juliane House’s as a translation quality assessment model and its efficiency assessing and evaluating audio-visual political translations of Arab intermediate translators.

Keywords: audio-visual translation, House's model, political translation, source text, target text, translation assessment, translation quality

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Introduction

Translation is no longer an abstract study; it represents a complete multi-cultural and multi-linguistic communication system. As it transfers ideas and beliefs from one language to another, translation represents a crucible of all domains of science and culture. To put it another way, translation is more than just a linguistic process. It is more complex than replacing a source language text with a target language text because it includes cultural and linguistic processes that guide the translator in shaping the translated text in a communicative manner.

Political translation involves the conversion of political texts, speeches, and documents from one language to another while preserving the intended meaning and nuances. Political translation plays a pivotal role in fostering understanding, building bridges, and promoting cooperation between nations. In an interconnected world, where political decisions can impact economies, international relations, and people’s lives, accurate translation becomes vital for effective communication. Here, it is worth mentioning that both political translation and audio-visual translation represent an interesting crucible of many disciplines including linguistic studies, translation studies, discourse analysis, and political science. For that reason, audio-visual political translation will likely be one of the most promising academic topics in translation studies in the future. In this regard, this present paper aims to highlight the mechanism, efficiency, and comprehensiveness of applying Juliane House’s (1977) model as a translation quality assessment model and its efficiency in assessing and evaluating audio-visual political translations of Arabic intermediate translators.

Literature Review

Political Translation

Political translation is regarded as one of the most challenging types of translation, as besides the linguistic element it includes cultural, ideological, and diplomatic implications. Here, it is worth mentioning that many political statements and speeches have been mistranslated due to the text's lack of linguistic, cultural, ideological, and diplomatic perceptions. There are many well-known catastrophic translation mistakes committed by political translators. All these mistakes reflect that political translation applies two main strategies: the first is a literal translation (linear translation) that is the main reason for these mistakes, whereas the second is communicative translation which was not applied to political discourses in such mistakes (Carter, 2019). Consequently, the political translator must have a full awareness of diplomatic, cultural, and linguistic elements of the original discourse.

Audio-Visual Translation

Audio-visual translation is the oral paraphrasing of the source text / discourse for transferring it into a communicative target text / discourse that keeps the linguistic, cultural, ideological, and implicative meanings of the source text or discourse (Jakobsen & Mesa-Lao, 2017). There are five major differences between audio-visual translation and written translation, including: 1) the medium; 2) real-time vs. delayed-time; 3) level of direction and intangibles – which are related to understanding idioms; 4) rhetorical language; and 5) cultural differences.

Audio-visual translation includes two major modes: simultaneous and consecutive (Russell, 2005). Simultaneous translation is the translational process in which the translator uses high-quality sound devices to translate source discourse into target discourse simultaneously and
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orally. Here, the translator orally translates the speaker’s source language while the speaker is still speaking. In consecutive translation, the translator translates once the speaker stops speaking (Anastasiou, 2012). Both models require a well-established and comprehensive assessment method due to the complexity of audio-visual translation, especially in case of political audio-visual translation.

Audio-visual translation is associated with electronic media possessing both a sound and a visual component to transfer this component from a source language into a target language. This mode of translation is influenced by the form and the contents. Recently, audio-visual translation has attributed many new modes of translation to the academic arena including dubbing, subtitling, interpreting, partial dubbing, live subtitling, double version, and remark. Dubbing or “lip-synchrony” includes two communicative processes: the first is translation, whereas the second is its synchronization. Dubbing follows the “timing, phrasing and lip movement of the original dialogue” (Nayak et al., 2020, p. 32). Usually, this mode of audio-visual translation is interlingual; however, there are some cases of intralingual dubbing.

Subtitling is the most common mode of audio-visual translation. Translational process displays the verbal language on the screen while it is spoken orally (Gottlieb, 1994). Surtitling is similar to subtitling; however, it produces a single continuous line that is presented without interruption. This translation is increasingly being shown above the stage or on the backs of seats in theatres and opera houses. Despite being displayed in real-time, translations are produced ahead of time. Partial dubbing, “half-dubbing” or “concise synchronization” is the process of attributing a prerecorded spoken text to the original soundtrack. It is not a complete translational process; however, it gives the required information in the target language. Live subtitling is also known as “real-time subtitling”. It differs from traditional subtitling in that a “respeaker” “respeaks” the original sound and dialogue of a live program or event into speech recognition software (Karakanta, et al., 2021). This updated version incorporates punctuation marks and audience-specific elements, which are then converted into subtitles as quickly as feasible.

**Translation Assessment**

Translation assessment is a very important process in either the academic or professional level. The translation cannot be literal. Consequently, there are many levels and degrees of the same translation, each of which has strengths and weaknesses. Hence, it is difficult to define the accuracy of any translation without applying a comprehensive and logical model of assessment, such as the Juliane House Model (Anari & Varmazyari, 2016).

House’s Model is an analytical-comparative method and strategy for assessing translation. This model elaborates the mistakes that are associated with the lexical, grammatical, and textual meanings of the text. The comparative approach of House’s model categorizes errors of translation through making a comparison between Source Text (ST) and Target Text (TT). This comparison is based on both discourses’ genre and context for discovering the originality of translation according to the terms “overt” and “covert” errors of translation. Consequently, House’s model can be described as:

A systematic comparison of an original and its translation on three different levels: the levels of language/text, register (filed, tenor and mode) and genre. Register is categorized into three parts: Filed refers to the subject matter and social action, Tenor includes the participant relationship. It involves the author’s provenance and stance, social
role relationship and social attitude. The last one as a mode relates to channel and the degree of participation between addressee (Shakernia, 2014, p. 10).

The main pillar of House’s model is “equivalence” (Naidj, & Motahari 2019, p. 21). This equivalence must achieve its communicative function. For House, this function has two main elements: ideational and interpersonal (Nazir & Ahmad, 2022, p. 3). In this regard, the function of a text can be determined by opening up the linguistic materials based on the situational constraints.

Based on Halliday’s theory of language, House (1977) introduces this model of translation quality assessment, which compares Source Text (ST) and Target Text (TT) on three different levels: language / text, register (field, tenor, and mode), and genre. The register is divided into three sections: tenor, referring to the participant relationship; and filed, referring to the subject matter and social action. It includes the author’s origins and stance, as well as social role relationships, and social attitudes. The last one, as a model, is about the channel and the level of participation between the addressee (Shakernia, 2014) observes:

House focuses on three aspects of the meaning that are important for translation: a semantic, a pragmatic and a textual aspect. She believes that translation is recontextualization of a text in L1 by a semantically and pragmatically equivalent text in L2. House created a translation typology which she considered it is related more to the translators of the texts we are rendering but, it is essential to know that what kind of translation is suitable for the source text (p. 9).

House adds a very important dimension to the assessment of translation through defining “overt” and “covert” translations. Simply put, overt translation is not authentic and it is strongly affected by the ST, whereas covert translation is more communicative as it focuses on the function and meaning of the ST rather than transferring its linguistic features into the TL.

Here, an important question emerges: how can a translator define if the translation is overt or covert, namely in case of English-Arabic or Arabic translations? In this regard, the study suggests adding back-translation as an important assessment device for defining whether the translation is overt or covert.

In audio-visual political translation, it is necessary to define each element in terms of House’s model. As the study discusses and analyzes political discourse, it is to be noted that the main function of political translation is communicative; it is a translation of knowledge and receiving the most recent updates on local and international affairs. As the samples represent English and Arabic texts / discourses, most samples are intended for the Arabic mentality and culture which vary according to the Arabic reader’s ideology, religion, culture, awareness, and political views.
Concerning social class, which is mentioned in House’s model, it is necessary to assert that political news is intended for all social classes; however, the most educated people are the most interested in political news. Thus, the translation of political news must be direct, clear, and understandable by all receivers. Unlike written translation, which is the main focus of House’s model, the study's samples are concerned with audio-visual medium. Consequently, new elements such as pronunciation mistakes, tone, and voice clarity must be added to House's Model.

**Summary**

There are many articles, essays, and books that discuss and analyze various modes of translation; however, too few studies relate to audio or visual translation. Jakobsen and Mesa-Lao (2017) argue that interpreting and translation are the art and method of paraphrasing. In oral translation, a speaker of the source language says what is being heard by the interpreter, who subsequently translates or paraphrases what has been heard into the target language.

Alouani and Chaalane (2019) elaborate on the importance of applying House's model in assessing the cultural dimension in literary texts, namely in case of Arabic texts. The two authors investigated the quality of the translation result of Gibran Khalil Gibran's English novel *The Prophet*. Two Arabic translations were chosen: the first by Sarwat Okasha and the second by Mikhail Naimy. Both translations were evaluated using Julian House’s approach for judging translation quality.

Valdeón (2022) begins with Audio-Visual Translation (AVT) history in the early twentieth century before outlining the main translation modes linked with AVT and related research. The following sections provide an overview of some of the themes and methods that have piqued the interest of scholars over the last two decades, with reference to the articles in this special issue, which include contributions delving into subtitling and media accessibility, among other modes, and which employ a variety of methods, including mixed-methods approaches and reception studies.

Xiong (2023) argues that Political translation and interpretation has always piqued the interest of translators and commentators as an essential subject of translation. Political speeches frequently illustrate the level of a country's foreign communication and reflect the country's features.

Killingsworth (2005) clarifies that oral translation or audio-visual translation is the process of transferring a speech from a source language to a target language. He adds that a professional oral translator must have very good knowledge of both the source and target languages. In addition, he asserts that the translator must have a full understanding of the genres of both discourses. He adds that the translator must be totally aware of rhetorical language, including: logos, pathos, ethos, and kairos. The use of logical principles to appeal to an audience is known as logos. The term pathos refers to the audience's feelings, whereas ethos refers to the primary characteristics that define a society, nation, or ideology. The term kairos refers to the argument's timeliness. Furthermore, the translator must express messages containing irony and metaphor in a suitable manner.

Baker and Saldanha clarify that there are two major modes of oral translation: simultaneous and consecutive (as cited in Anastasiou, 2012). During simultaneous interpretation, the interpreter works in a high-quality sound booth with at least one colleague. The interpreter receives the original language orally and simultaneously paraphrases it through a microphone. In other words,
the interpreter verbally interprets the speaker’s source language while the speaker continues to talk. The real-time aspect is critical in this case since there is typically a very tiny delay between the speaker’s and interpreter’s words. However, it is not a word-for-word translation; rather than translating a word into its target language equivalent, the interpreter strives to convey the exact meaning through oral paraphrasing.

Media translation represents a translational process with very specific features and elements that are clearly associated with interpretation. In her book *The Interpreter’s Resource*, Phelan (2001) lists ten types of interpretation: conference interpreting, simultaneous interpreting, consecutive interpreting, whispered interpreting, bilateral (liaison) interpreting, sight translation, telephone interpreting, sign language interpreting, television interpreting, and video conference interpreting. Despite the fact that Phelan’s classification is excessively broad because it includes extra modes and sub-classes as the main types of interpretation, she provides detailed analyses and images for all the categories she mentions. The use of sequential or simultaneous interpretation of a conference meeting is referred to as conference interpretation. Conference interpretation is often utilized in international organizations such as the UN, UNESCO, etc. This type of interpretation necessitates high-quality audio sets that allow the interpreter to do their duty.

Mack (2002) argues that there is a significant difference between media interpreting “on site” in which interpreters engage in a studio-based communicative event, with or without the presence of an audience, and interpret for broadcasts of events taking place in a different, often distant location. Interviews with foreign-language speakers via satellite link, as well as talk shows or conversations with people speaking another language, are examples of the former sort of scenario. Interpreters may be “on the set” in such studio-based productions, combining whispered interpreting into the other language with successive interpreting into the programmer’s language, or they may interpret simultaneously in both directions, working at a separate location from a monitor screen.

Gagnon (2010) elaborates that in studying political translation, two topics must be addressed: translation of political materials and translation as a political statement. The meaning of the term “political” is crucial to the interpretation in both circumstances. The present study argues, along with both Gagnon, Chilton, and Schäffner (1997) that a text or an action is likely to be political if it involves power or opposition. As a result, texts become political not only when they are created by a politician, but also when they contain some type of power struggle. A political speech, a controversial play, and a newspaper editorial are all instances of translated political materials. Translation as a political behavior also includes activist translation, feminist translation, and cannibalistic translation. Furthermore, Translation Studies can be political in the sense that it attempts to be engaged in a discourse.

**Methodology**

The present paper utilizes a qualitative aspect. It will be applied through a comparative approach as the study will compare both source text (discourse) and target texts (discourse) according to Juliane House’s model. The model will be applied through lexical, syntactic, and textual meanings in the light of communication theory of “sender-receiver”.
Discussion

The samples are pieces of political discourse that are collected from some Arabic and English news channels, so the receiver (the reader in the case of House’s Model), may be supporter, opponent, or neutral. The receiver’s attitude towards the discourse is determined by their ideology, culture, and political views. However, a receiver-sender relationship which is mentioned in House’s model may not affect the quality of translation. However, in terms of hermeneutics’ theory, the receiver may be a part of the meaning of the text as he shapes it according to his perception (Sokar, 2023). Despite the different perceptions of the same discourse received by each reader / audience, still the matter of authenticity is the most important element of evaluating translation according to House’s treatment of the terms overt and covert, as the following examples elaborate:


TT1: من المتوقع أن يوافق رشي سوناك و أورسولا فان دار ليين علي اتفاق أنفصال أيرلندا الشمالية.

TT2: من المتوقع أن يوافق رشي سوناك و أورسولا فان دار ليين علي اتفاق البريكست الخص بإيرلندا الشمالية.

In TT1, the translation is overt. However, the translator omitted the word, “new” in the SL. Omitting a word is likely a common mistake in audio-visual translation, especially for beginner and intermediate translators. The word, “Brexit” is literally translated as it is translated by the Arabic equivalent. However, this literal translation is an overt translation as it conveys the meaning correctly. In the TT2, the translator uses transliteration as a strategy for translating the word, “Brexit”, as the term is a new expression that refers to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union; it is acceptable to use transliteration as a strategy for translating it. On the contextual level, in terms of Juliane House’s model, both translations neglect reader / author or sender / receiver relationship as they do not clarify additional information about Rishi Sunak and Ursula von der Leyen who are totally unknown by most Arab viewers. That is why, “over-translation” was needed to clarify the identity of both characters.

ST: Cairo's relations with Ankara have been frosty since a 2013 coup that propelled Sisi to power, deposing Islamist president Mohamed Morsi and outlawing his Muslim Brotherhood, many members of which had sought refuge in Turkey (Al Jazeera English, 2019).

TT: علاقات القاهرة مع أنقرة فاترة منذ انقلاب 2013 الذي دفع بالسيسي إلى السلطة ، وأطاح بالرئيس الإسلامي محمد مرسي وحظر جماعة الإخوان المسلمين التي ينتمي إليها ، والتي لجأ العديد من أعضائها إلى تركيا.

In the example above, the TT1 is a covert translation, as it a typical literal translation. Many expressions are mistranslated such as “propelled” and “Islamist”. Here, it is worth mentioning that the translated text is not authentic as it is heavily influenced by the ST. In addition, the translated discourse is heavily influenced by the translator’s ideology. For example, the word “coup” in this context is problematic as it depends on the author’s ideology and political ideas.

ST: We head overseas now to North Korea and those remarkable pictures of the wailing residents of the most secretive nation on the planet the funeral of Dictator Kim Jong is underway. His son is a 28-year-old enigma unknown and untested and now at the helm of a nuclear power (ABC News, 2012).

TT: كان لدينا الآن في الخارج إلى كوريا الشمالية وتلك الصور الرائعة لسكان صيد الحيتان في الدولة الأكثر سرية، وهي جنازة الدكتاتور كيم جونج جارية. ابنه يبلغ من العمر 28 لغزًا غير معروف ولم يتم اختباره.

وهو الآن على رأس قوة نووية.
In this example, the translation is completely literal. A covert translation is noticed. The translation quality here is very poor. The translation neglects the cultural, semantic, and linguistic nature of the TT. This translation is literal rather than communicative. In addition, it neglects the main ideas of the ST and added unnecessary date that does not exist within the TT. As an orally translated text, the translator cannot convey the ironic tone that is noticed in the language of CNN presenter. Thus, on applying Juliane House’s Model to audio-visual translation, it is necessary to notice the speaker’s tone and highlight body language.

ST: This is Dar‘aa, the birthplace of the Syria uprising in 2011, but opposition members call this moment the end of the dream of a democratic country (Al Jazeera English, 2021).

TT: هنا درعا! مهد الثورة السورية التي اندلعت في 2011. ولكن المعارضة تؤمن بأننا وصلنا لنهاية حلم الديمقراطية.

The translation here is communicative rather than literal as it seems more authentic. In other words, the translator typically follows the semantic, grammatical, and linguistic patterns of TT’s language. Moreover, he presents a cohesive translated discourse with comprehensive Arabic partials that keep the text much more cohesive. In terms of sender/receiver–author/reader relationship that is discussed by House – besides applying the main elements of hermeneutics theory that defines the meaning according to the author’s perceptions (Sokar, 2023) – some viewers (readers) or maybe translators will refuse to translate some terms in the same way the previous discourse is translated. In other words, a translator, with different ideology, will translate the word “uprising” into “conflict” or “civil war;” “opposition” into “terrorists” or “troops.” Thus, based on the receiver’s ideas and ideologies, he may accept the translation or reject it.

ST: أهلا بكم قبل عام قالت واشنطن و وكذلك الاتحاد الأوروبي أنها مسألة شهور وتنهار روسيا ولكن الاقتصاد الروسي ونسيجها الاجتماعي امتصا الصدمة الأولي و تجنبا الانهيار (AlArabiya العربية. 2023, 22 March).

TT: Welcome, a year ago Washington and the European Union said that it is a matter of months and Russia will collapse, but the Russian economy and its social fabric absorbed the initial shock and avoided collapse.

The translation is overt; however, it cannot be considered typically authentic. The meaning is conveyed on the semantic, lexical, and cultural levels. The sentences are too long. As an audio-visual translated discourse, it necessitates good pronunciation, pauses between sentences, and an appropriate tone. In the above-mentioned example, in spite of the overt translation of the text on the verbal dimension, the translation is poor on the audio-visual level.

ST: اقتراحه للوساطة رفض من قبل الحكومة. رئيس نقابة الاتحاد الفرنسي النقابي للعمل لوران بيرجه تلقى دعوة للحوار من قبل رئيسية الحكومة الزياد بورن كغيره من ممثلين النقابات الفرنسية الأخرى مع تزايد حالة الأزمة الاجتماعية تحاول بورن استعادة السيطرة على الوضع الداخلي للبلاد بدعوة النقابات للحوار في الأسبوع المقبل (24 / FRANCE 24 Arabic, 2023).

TT: His proposal for mediation was rejected by the government. President of the French Democratic Union of Labor, Laurent Bergé, receives an invitation to dialogue from the head of the government, Elizabeth Bourne, like other representatives of other French unions, with the intensification of the social crisis.

The translation is overt; however, there are many missing equivalents. In such examples, the translator misses some equivalents due to a lack of proficiency or experience. Beginner and intermediate translators may miss some expressions due to technical problems such as either sound clarity or lack of experience. Thus, the translation of any audio-visual discourse requires prior knowledge of the genre of the target discourse to avoid such mistakes.
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In this example, the translation is overt either on the textual or audio-visual level. The translation is grammatically, semantically, and culturally overt. The pronunciation of this discourse is native-like. As the above-mentioned example represents a political-legal discourse, the legal language of the translated discourse is overt too. In other words, the translation of the discourse is authentic, exactly like the source text.

In Arabic/English translation, the translator committed several pronunciation mistakes. The House Model of translation assessment does not pay much attention to pronunciation mistakes, as it mainly based on written translation. However, the present study asserts the importance of adding pronunciation evaluation as a necessary element in audio-visual translation.

One of the most committed mistakes in the samples is pronouncing the sound /ð/ as “d”, such as in “the”, “that”, “these”, “then”, or “them”, or /θ/ in “thousands” or as a /t/ as in “Thames”. The pronunciation of /t/ between two vowels is a very common mistake in the samples. The “flap” sound is poorly pronounced in words such as “water” and “later”.

In case of political audio-visual translation, Juliane House’s Model for assessing translation quality can be applied to intermediate translators. Concerning the medium, it assesses the pronunciation, accent, and speaking tone of translators. Intermediate audio-visual translators may commit various types of these oral mistakes. In political audio-visual translation, the tenor, or what is known as the relationship between sender/receiver, should convey the meaning that can be understood by target readers of political news whatever their ideology or culture.

The context in all examples is translated in the political-media language. That is why it is necessary to assess the translated discourse in terms of the accuracy of media-political language used in the discourse. In other words, the translated discourse must be written in a typical political-media style that is used in the TT. It is worth mentioning that the medium of the translated text/discourse may add some new elements of Juliane House Model’s such as the assessment of the oral element. “Overt” and “covert” are two important terms that are applied to the samples in order to testify to the accuracy of translation. In other words, when the TT is original on either the cultural or linguistic level, it can be described as original and accurate and vice versa. Thus, the Juliane House Model has the ability to discuss, elaborate, and assess audio-visual translation as it penetrates all textual and non-textual elements of translation.

Conclusion

The translation of audio-visual political discourse can be assessed by the Juliane House Model through comparing both ST and TT it terms of semantics, phonetics, syntax, objective, and culture. As House (1977) focuses on the equivalent as a main device for assessing transaction, the equivalent in the translation of the audio-visual political discourse is communicative rather than literal. In the translation of audio-visual political discourse, the intensity of the TT is an important measurement of the quality of a translation. As the examples have elaborated, the quality of the
translated samples is based on the originality of the TT. This originality signifies to what extent the translated discourse is restricted to the TL rather than the SL on the semantic, cultural, lexical, and phonological levels.

The Juliane House Model has proved its ability to assess all moods of translation including audio-visual translation as it is focuses on the medium of translation as one of the most important elements of translation. In terms of communication theory, the Juliane House Model asserts the importance of the target text as well as the target reader as part and parcel of the process of translation.

As a final point, the study suggests more promising studies that are associated with the linguistic elements in audio-visual discourse in order to facilitate more promising studies about audio-visual translation as the features of the linguistic elements of audio-visual discourse are part and parcel of the process of its translation.

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