

Developing House's Model to Assess the Translation of Key Cultural Texts

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Abstract : This paper aims to systematically assess the translation of key cultural texts. The paper, therefore, proposes a modification of the discourse analysis model for translation quality assessment introduced by the linguist Juliane House (1977, 1997, 2015). The data for analysis has been chosen from a religious text that has never been investigated before. It is an overt translation of the biography of Prophet Mohammad. The book is written originally in Arabic and translated into English. A soft copy of the translation, entitled The Sealed Nectar, is posted on numerous websites including the Internet Archive library which offers a free access to everyone. The text abounds with linguistic and cultural phenomena relevant to Islamic and Arab lingua-cultural context which make its translation a challenge, as well as its assessment. Interesting findings show that (1) culturemes are rich points and both the translator's subjectivity and intervention are apparent in mediating them, (2) given the nature of historical narration, the source text reflects the author's positive shading, whereas the target text reflects the translator's axiological orientation as neutrally shaded, and, (3) linguistic gaps, metaphorical expressions and intertextuality are major stimuli to compensation strategies.

Keywords : Arabic-English discourse analysis, key cultural texts, overt translation, quality assessment

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