

Applying Juliane House's Translation Quality Assessment Model (1997) on a Humorous Text: A Case Study of *The Simpsons*

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Introduction

This article aims to evaluate the performance of Juliane House's (1997) influential model of translation quality assessment on the analysis of humorous texts through its application on a translation of an episode of the animated US-American TV series *The Simpsons*. The rationale behind the research design and the use of a case study to evaluate the performance of the assessment model is mainly justified by the calls (Hönig 7; McAlester 232; Waddington, "Different Methods" 312; Rothe-Neves 117; Williams, *Translation Quality Assessment* 18) for more empirical studies to be carried out to support the value of translation quality assessment models, in this case on a text that has certain particularities that will be explored in this paper. Although House has recently published an updated version of her model, it was deemed relevant to use the 1997 model due to the influence it has had in the field of translation and of quality assessment, having provided many concepts that are still relevant and in use today (Waddington, *Estudio comparativo* 48; Baker 323; Hatim 41; Munday, *The Routledge Companion* 28; Newmark 44), and that have become "standard terminology in translation studies" (Lauscher 153). In her 1997 book *Translation Quality Assessment: A Model Revisited*, as well as presenting the model, House uses four short texts in order to illustrate what she calls "model analyses" (121) of its application. Although in her original 1977 publication a dialogue from a comedy was one of the texts included, none of the 1997 texts are of a humorous nature. It was therefore considered that the analysis of a text purposely created to elicit laughter would be a novel way to test the applicability of the model, particularly in an area—humour translation—that according to Patrick Zabalbeascoa "has not received sufficient attention from scholars in either field" ("Humor and Translation" 186).

In order to assess its performance on a humorous text, a number of relevant theoretical concepts are initially reviewed. Firstly, the notion of quality is discussed, focusing on how its subjective nature adds to the complexity of finding a definition that permits its measurement on translated texts. Within this context, House's 1997 model of translation quality assessment is presented, including a detailed analysis of its systematic approach together with the influence her model has had on the

field of translation studies. This is followed by how, in translational terms, the language of humour is one of the most challenging aspects for a translator to deal with. This is due to its particular nature, defying traditional views of translation and requiring the use of a full range of strategies in order to be successfully transferred to the target language. The next section sees the application of House's model on the translation into Spanish of an episode of *The Simpsons*. In spite of its animated nature, Jason Mittell (17) believes that as a genre *The Simpsons* can be better categorised as a situation comedy, offering numerous instances of humour throughout the text. Its application consists in the creation of a textual profile and a statement of function for the source text and its comparison to the target text before the production of a final statement of quality. The results from applying House's model to the case study are then used to evaluate its performance in assessing the quality of a translated humorous text in order to see if the model's functional-pragmatic approach and the concept of equivalence sought between texts suit the particularities of this type of texts.

Translation Quality Assessment

Within translation studies, the field of translation quality assessment is an area that has always attracted interest, but especially so since the 1990s (Lauscher 150). However, Rui Rothe-Neves (114) states that "the main problem seems to reside in how to express quality" and "what measure should be used to assess the quality of a translation." This may be explained by the fact that the criteria used to assess quality in a translation depend on the theoretical approach adopted by the assessor (Hönig 6; House 1; Schäffner 1; Rothe-Neves 114), meaning that differing views on what translation is bring different elements to the evaluation process.

Scholars have developed models of quality assessment aiming to provide a systematic method to evaluate translations that allow for "reproducible, intersubjective judgement" (Lauscher 151). Christina Schäffner points out that regardless of the approach taken or the method used to assess a translation, the real value of any model is in the practice (5). Indeed, translation quality assessment models are commonly criticised for not providing help in practical terms (Lauscher 158). This is particularly the case when a model is very detailed, as this makes it more difficult to apply to practical situations and achieve intersubjective reliability (Rothe-Neves 116). In order to overcome this, many authors (Hönig 6; McAlester 232; Waddington, "Different Methods" 312; Rothe-Neves 117; Williams, *Translation Quality Assessment* 18) suggest that a more extensive application of the models is needed as they complain of a lack of empirical evidence and the restricted type of texts they have been used on.

In spite of the subjective nature of the notion of quality, the lack of universally accepted criteria and the anecdotal evidence provided by the literature, Lynne Bowker emphasises the need to have models to assess translation quality and provide meaningful feedback to the different parties involved in the translation process (183). House's original translation quality assessment model was published

in 1977, a model that she later revised, addressing some of the criticisms it had attracted (Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies* 91). The revisited model was published in 1997 and can be circumscribed within discourse analysis, incorporating Halliday's influential systemic functional model but also "Prague school ideas, speech act theory, pragmatics, discourse analysis" (House 247) amongst others, and the 2014 version is still based on textual and contextual analysis. House's model requires the analysis and comparison of the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) at three levels: Language/Text, Register and Genre, the last two being "situational dimensions" (House 37). At a situational dimension level, the Register, or the analysis of the text within its context, is further subdivided into Field (subject matter or topic), Mode (channel and degree of participation between writer and reader) and Tenor (social distance between addresser and addressee). The final situational dimension is Genre, or the "cultural discourse type" (House 106). Jeremy Munday (*Introducing Translation Studies* 92–93) summarises the operation of the model as follows: firstly, a profile is produced of the ST Register and a description of its Genre is added in order to establish a "statement of function". House (29) argues that equivalence is the fundamental criterion of translation quality not only at a linguistic level but also at semantic and pragmatic levels. This equivalence requires that the function of the ST is reproduced in the translation, although House uses a pragmatic concept of function, where the text and the context of the situation are not seen as separate entities (House 37). The same process is then carried out for the TT, and both ST and TT profiles are compared, which produces a statement of mismatches or errors that can be categorised as covertly (at Register and Genre level) or overtly (denotative meaning at text level) erroneous errors. This categorisation of errors is considered by Christopher Waddington (*Estudio comparativo* 48) as a pioneer and relevant distinction. It is at the end of this process when a statement of quality of the translation can be made.

Having identified errors in the translated text, House explains, the final qualitative judgement then consists of a "listing of both covertly and overtly erroneous errors and of a statement of the relative match of the ideational and the interpersonal functional components of the textual function" (46). Her idea of function, however, goes beyond text typologies, which she considers to be a useful tool to classify texts but far too simplistic and imprecise to be able to use as a measure. Hence, she uses the cognitive and emotive meaning of language by looking at ideational and interpersonal functions to determine the individual function of a text. Based mainly on Halliday's 1973 study *Explorations in the Functions of Language*, she presents the difference between the description of the external world, the presentation and evaluation of arguments and explanation—ideational function—versus the expression of internal states of the individual—interpersonal function—(House 36). The errors identified in the text analysis have a relative weight depending on each individual text and the impact they have on either function, but Malcolm Williams ("The Application of Argumentation Theory" 334) indicates that the model does not offer a specific weighting and quantification method, which means it is not possible to establish whether or not a TT reaches a specific standard of quality. This

is something that, he states, is common to non-quantitative models. Waddington highlights the fact that, from an academic perspective, the model does not explain how to go from the statement of quality to a specific grade (*Estudio comparativo* 160). House (119) seems to accept this as she admits that the concept of quality in translation is “problematical” and that it is difficult to pass a final judgement that fulfils the “demands of objectivity,” as judgements are by nature subjective.

In the final step of the assessment, the translation is categorised as either overt or covert. According to Lawrence Venuti (122) House's stance takes into consideration “how much the foreign text depends on its own culture for intelligibility” to then decide whether a translation needs to be “overt” or “covert”. House (66) defines “overt translation” as “one in which the addressees of the translation text are quite ‘overtly’ not being directly addressed: thus an overt translation is one which must overtly be a translation [and] not, as it were, a ‘second original’”. On the other hand, a “covert translation” is one that “enjoys the status of an original source text in the target culture” not specifically addressed to a particular target culture audience and therefore becomes a text that “may, conceivably, have been created in its own right” (House 69). Equivalence between the ST and the TT must be sought at the level of Genre and individual text function, whereas Language/Text and Register may be modified including cultural elements by applying a “cultural filter” (Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies* 94). This application is, according to Basil Hatim and Jeremy Munday (291), informed by the awareness of the differences and similarities between the source and target cultures, and an unjustified use of adaptation and filtering results in what House (161) calls a “version”, which can also be overt or covert. However, House (75) gives relevance to the influence of external factors (reasons for the translation, implied readers, publishing and marketing policies) to decide what type of translation to go for.

Overall, the main contribution of House's model seems to be the combination of a linguistic approach with textual, situational and cultural aspects (Schäffner 2) and one that provides useful tools to judge the quality of a translation by applying register theory to translation quality assessment (Hatim and Munday 293). Its application, however, is limited due to its complexity and not having a process to quantify errors, and these became factors to consider when analysing the case study.

Humor and Its Translation

In common with the notion of quality, humour is also a concept that, due to its complex nature, is hard to define (Rojo 34). In spite of the fact that, in terms of ordinary understanding, humour is a normalised common occurrence that is easy to identify, from a scholarly perspective the analysis of what humour is and agreeing a definition of the concept has become a challenge (Meyer 310; Vandaele 149), partly due to the lack of academic research in this area (Attardo 1287; Morreall 243; Vandaele 149). According to Robert Latta, it is the lack of knowledge of the

basic process of humour that prevents us from achieving a satisfactory descriptive definition (30).

Due to the complexity of defining humour and the seemingly conflicting theories attempting to explain the process, Jeroen Vandaele (154) suggests that those translating it should adopt a “minimal single operational definition of humour,” as in what causes humorous effect, and attempt to reproduce it. From a translation theory perspective, Munday (*The Routledge Companion* 195) argues that humour translation confronts two traditional tenets within translation studies: equivalence and translatability, in the sense that meaning needs to be transferred from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL) “without undergoing radical changes,” and this notion is clearly challenged in the translation of humour. According to Lukáš Kostovčík (176), some authors have proclaimed the untranslatability of humour or consider the resulting translations as mere adaptations rather than translation proper (Hernández and Mendiluce 4). Dirk Delabastita explains, however, that translatability depends on the concept of translation used in terms of types and degrees of equivalence, specific genres and communicative situations (“Introduction” 127). Ana María Rojo (35) believes that linguistic and traditional approaches to translation do not take into account social and cognitive factors embedded in humour, thus not recognising that “the semantic meaning of any instance of verbal humour is secondary to its primary intention to be humorous” (Kostovčík 176). In this respect, Juan José Martínez (189) considers that a functionalist approach to translation allows translators to adopt strategies that can transfer humour into a TL, as a translation is judged “not by equivalence of meaning but by its adequacy to the functional goal of the TT situation” (Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies* 87). Hence, in humorous texts, fidelity to the original takes second place and “equivalence will need to be relinquished in favour of skopos” (Chiaro 199).

As such, the common procedure for translators is either to be faithful to the ST when humour can be easily translated or, otherwise, to adapt to the norms and culture of the TT (Rojo 37). More specifically, Delia Chiaro (200–06) explains that the main strategies available to the translators of humour are substitution (partial or total) of the ST humour in the TT, replacement of ST by an idiomatic expression in the TL, and compensation in another part of the TT for ST humour not transferred in other instances. Delabastita (*There's a Double Tongue* 39) explains that these three approaches encompass a wide variety of strategies, from paraphrasing, amplification or explication to reduction or omission as well as literal or word for word translation, amongst others, and that the use of one or another will depend on personal taste and target audience expectations. Zabalbeascoa (“Translating Jokes” 239) points out that translators should use the full range of strategies available to them but that, in spite of the fact that individual items may need individual solutions, there is a need to find a common thread for coherence. Given all these factors, it is not surprising that humour translation is considered to be a specialised type of translation, qualitatively different from other types (Vandaele 150) that requires time, skill and knowledge as well as a “high level of craftsmanship” (Armstrong 185).

Application of the Model on the Case Study

The case study focuses primarily on the quality of the translation of the verbal elements of the acoustic code and not on its non-verbal elements or the visual code, although some of the constraints of audio-visual translation (link between both codes, time synchronisation) are taken into account in the analysis. Episode 9, season 6 of *The Simpsons* (first aired 27 November 1994) is analysed in the form of the author's transcription of both the original episode and the Spanish dubbed version published on DVD. Unlike the original version, written cooperatively by a number of script writers, the Spanish text is produced by one single translator, María José Aguirre de Cárcer, who has been in this role since the series started broadcasting in Spain in 1990. Aguirre has received numerous awards and her work has been recognised by FOX as one of the best translations of the series in the world (Ferrero).

House's 1997 model is applied to the full script, and not only to the excerpts perceived to be humorous. The textual analysis included the lexical, syntactical and textual means of both the ST and the TT in terms of Register (Field, Tenor, Mode) and Genre in order to produce a statement of function for each text, followed by a profile comparison and the identification of mismatches, before a final statement of quality is made. Although the examples provided below mainly relate to the translation of humorous passages and how the model assesses them, reference is made to other aspects that directly or indirectly affect the humorous content of the text.

Analysis of the Original

FIELD

The ST is an episode of the animated cartoon series *The Simpsons*. It deals with the lives of a dysfunctional US-American working-class family and its interaction with the characters and the society around them. In this episode, the father, Homer Simpson, is wrongly accused of sexual harassment by the family's babysitter, generating a public outcry, and this continues until a videotape appears confirming Homer's innocence. The story deals with the role of the media reporting events in a biased, sensationalist manner with little regard for the truth and the influence this has on public opinion. This is done in a satirical manner with many instances of humour in a parody of characters and institutions portrayed. The episode contains numerous examples of non-marked and cultural elements of humour.

TENOR

Authors' Temporal, Geographical and Social Provenance:

Episodes of *The Simpsons* are written by a team of script writers, rather than a single person; therefore, any episode will have contributions from a number of people. The script analysed here contains features of unmarked, contemporary, standard US-American English.

Authors' Personal (Emotional and Intellectual) Stance:

Although House's model does not address multiple authorship, the analysis of the text highlights certain elements regarding the personal viewpoint of the content being portrayed within the communicative task (House 109). Characters and institutions involved are presented in a humorous and satirical manner: family life and social relationships are grossly distorted and, in this episode, the authors depict the media's manipulation of events in order to achieve maximum impact via sensationalist headlines. It also parodies reality shows and other popular programmes that use news topics for entertainment and their disregard for the truth. At the same time, it presents the effect this can have on the audience of these programmes in creating opinion and the role of television in society.

Social Role Relationship:

The social role relationship between addressers and addressees in this text is symmetrical. Through the use of parody and humour, the authors try to satirically portray the role of the media and certain TV programmes but also direct social criticism at the volatility of audiences. This is done in a way that the addressee is able to easily understand and enjoy as the deliberate exaggeration of the characters and institutions is readily comprehensible. Interestingly, the text parodies the medium it uses for its own transmission to reach the addressees.

Social Attitude:

An informal style is used throughout the dialogues amongst characters, typical of everyday, social conversations and there are many instances of use of colloquialisms.

MODE

Medium

Complex: this text is written to be spoken by the characters of the TV series. This medium is designed to simulate real-life, spontaneous language found in daily activities and interactions of the characters in social occurrences. Following Biber's (1988) oral/literate dimensions, which House (109) uses to further distinguish between the spoken and the written medium, this text is involved, situation-dependent and non-abstract, typical of dialogues where interactivity is present within an unplanned, informal and non-technical discourse.

Participation

Participation is complex, as dialogue is combined with a few instances of narration/monologue.

GENRE

In spite of its animated format, this episode and *The Simpsons* as a TV series are generally categorised as a situation comedy. As a genre, this is defined as a form of narrative television comedy arising from a domestic or work-based environment

with a limited cast of regular characters caught in conflicting relations. Its format usually consists of self-contained episodes between 20 and 25 minutes long with frequent humorous scenes based on dialogues or visual gags as part of a structured storyline, whose characters need to resolve a conflict before returning to the normality of events presented at the beginning of the show (Claessens and Dhoest 54; Padilla and Requeijo 192). However, as an animated series, *The Simpsons'* authors are also able to widen the type of conflicts and the situations and environments where these take place, expanding the topics covered, as well as not being restricted by a limited number of characters. Mittell (18) argues that this dual nature allows the authors to ignore and contravene conventions of both animation and situation comedy genres as well as being able to present a more satirical viewpoint of the reality represented in the episodes, which becomes an essential part of its nature. In spite of this duality, the genre of situation comedy is, in general terms, the type that best seems to define *The Simpsons*. As such, its main aim is to entertain its target audience through the use of humorous instances, something that is clearly seen in the text analysed here.

Statement of Function

The ideational function of the text deals with the relationship between the media and society and how the reporting of events can have an influence on the opinions of the audience. It explains the attempts to clear the main character's name after being accused of an act he did not commit and the difficulties he finds in doing so. This is realised in the Field through the use of devices that keep a coherent and cohesive structure of the topic, the use of common daily interactions between characters and references to items of US-American culture. On Tenor, the symmetrical social role relationship is used to convey a criticism of the influence of media in society from an equal level between authors and viewers. On the Genre, the ideational function gives structure to the storyline as a cohesive requirement of situational comedies, even if the topic goes beyond how a more standard, non-animated series would be expected to approach it.

In spite of the fact that the ideational function is clearly conveyed throughout the text, it is far less prominent than its interpersonal function. On the dimension of Field, the story is delivered as a parody of society in general and, in particular, the media's pursuing of sensationalist headlines and the entertainment values of any storyline, which is subsequently covered in many other TV formats (reality shows, talk shows, films, news bulletins). This dimension also deals with the influence this has on the audience through the portrayal of extreme reactions. The Tenor also clearly marks the interpersonal function of the text: the references to family life, the media and the use of hyperbolic descriptions highlight the stance of the authors who expect their own audience to be able to enjoy the parody of characters and institutions. The constant use of humour and informal style of the dialogues make this text approachable to the viewer, which also operates at an interpersonal level. On Mode, the medium emphasises a text that is "written to be spoken as if not

written” (House 109) and it is marked as involved, situation-dependent and non-abstract language. These are characteristics of dialogues, tending to be unplanned, informal and non-technical. The constant interaction between characters, usually through short exchanges, and the variety of sentence functions in changing scenarios belong to the interpersonal dimension, which has an emotive component. Finally, the Genre of situation comedies has a clear interpersonal dimension: to entertain the viewer through the use of numerous humorous occurrences via the resolution of a conflict, which serves as structure, between the characters. This is further highlighted by the animated nature of *The Simpsons*, allowing the authors to stretch the conventions of the genre in order to increase the humorous and entertainment values of the characters and situations.

Comparison of Original and Translation

After analysing both ST and TT, mismatches have been found in the dimensions of FIELD and TENOR as well as a number of Overt Errors. In FIELD, the specific references to US-American culture have either been kept as the original or translated, usually in a literal manner.

SOURCE TEXT	TARGET TEXT	REVERSE TRANSLATION
(Homer is discussing sexual harassment with Bart)		
<i>And the dog in the Coppertone ad?</i>	<i>¿Y el perro del anuncio de Coppertone entonces?</i>	And the dog in the Coppertone ad then?
<i>Can you introduce me to the Sasquatch?</i>	<i>¿Podría presentarme a Sasquatch?</i>	Could you introduce me to Sasquatch ?
<i>Ted Koppel is not a robot?!</i>	<i>¿Ted Koppel no es un robot?!</i>	Ted Koppel is not a robot?!
(In his televised speech)		
<i>Hello, I'm Homer Simpson, or as some of you wags have dubbed me, Father Goose.</i>	<i>Hola, soy Homer Simpson, o como me apodan ahora algunos bromistas, Padre Ganso.</i>	Hello, I'm Homer Simpson, or as some wags call me, Father Goose .
(Voiceover introducing a chat show)		
<i>And here's your host: Gentle Ben.</i>	<i>Con todos ustedes, el Bueno de Ben.</i>	And here is Gentle Ben .

Table 1: Examples of Field mismatches

This has an impact on the access the target audience would have to these elements, which would depend on the shared knowledge between the source culture and the target culture. In the majority of examples shown in Table 1 it is very likely that the reference, and hence the humorous effect intended, is lost (Ted Koppel is not known as a TV presenter in Spain; the film *Father Goose* was released as *Operación Whisky* [Operation Whisky], and the concept of public access television is unknown). However, the relative obscurity of some of the cultural references in the ST (the original Coppertone advert—showing a young girl whose swimsuit bottom is being pulled by a dog—was introduced in 1953 in the United States; and *Gentle Ben*—showing the adventures of a boy with his black bear, Ben—broadcasted between 1967 and 1969) means that a number of these references are possibly also lost to the source audience. On the other hand, the translator has been consistent in the use of this strategy giving access, albeit limited, to cultural aspects of the original and not attempting to adapt these elements for the target audience. This strategy, however, also has an impact on the other dimensions as will be seen below.

Another noticeable aspect is the reduction in the number of elements relating to the media and their specific vocabulary used, which decreases the depiction of how the media report events, the incongruence of their actions and, therefore, the implied humour: *live* or *tune in* are omitted and *round-the-clock coverage* is translated as *vigilancia* [surveillance].

This reduction is also noticeable in the few instances where the innocence/culpability aspect is diminished, causing a neutralising effect of this theme through the selection of less expressive choices:

Your silence will only incriminate you further.—Su silencio no hace más que empeorar las cosas. [Your silence only makes things worse.]

The media's making a monster out of you.—A los medios de comunicación no les interesa la verdad. [The media are not interested in the truth.]

Although the number of covert mismatches in this respect is relatively small, it has an impact on the FIELD: the main character is trying to prove his innocence as he has to deal with the portrayal of him as the guilty party that the media are presenting to the audience. The omissions, reduction of iconic linkage and mismatches observed in the textual aspect contribute to this, thus reducing the ideational function of the text and the humorous impact. However, the overall cohesion and coherence of the text is not compromised.

On TENOR, the mismatches generally refer to the loss of expressivity as the authors try to parody family life and society in general through the use of hyperbolic depictions and extreme reactions. In some cases this is lost due to lexical and syntactical choices that are more neutral and reduce the emotive meaning, hence also reducing the parody effect of the characters and institutions:

SOURCE TEXT	TARGET TEXT	REVERSE TRANSLATION
Scandal	Últimas noticias	Breaking news
(Homer arrives at the Candy Industry Trade Show)		
<i>Ohh! I feel like a kid in some kind of store!</i>	<i>¡Aay, me siento como un niño en algún tipo de tienda!</i>	Ohh! I feel like a kid in some kind of store!
(A salesman tries to impress Homer in the Trade Show)		
<i>That is the rarest gummi of them all, the gummi Venus de Milo, carved by gummi artisans who work exclusively in the medium of gummi.</i>	<i>Es la gominola más extraordinaria, la Venus de Milo, tallada por artesanos que trabajan con gominola como material exclusivo.</i>	This is the most extraordinary gummi , Venus de Milo, carved by artisans who work exclusively in the medium of gummi .
(Security guard to Marge Simpson as she eats celery in the Trade Show)		
<i>All right, you're going to have to put some sugar on that celery or get out.</i>	<i>Si no le echa un poco de azúcar al apio tendrá que salir de aquí.</i>	Unless you put some sugar on that celery you will have to leave .

Table 2: Examples of Tenor mismatches

This has a certain impact on the portrayal of the relationships between the members of the family, exaggerated depictions of roles and institutions or sarcastic and deprecating comments that contribute to the humorous content. Some of these choices also reduce the portrayal of the head of the family as a childish, unreasonable and incongruous character (for example when he is not able to finish an obvious set phrase: to feel like a kid in a candy store). Still related to the loss of expressivity, a few mismatches seen in Table 2 refer to the use of more neutral and less colloquial language by the characters, albeit within a clearly informal style characteristic of a dialogical structure. Due to this, some of these choices have an impact on the humorous content of the text.

On Social Role Relationship, and as before, the strategy used by the translator to keep references to United States culture has, as a consequence, a reduction in the humorous elements of the translation. These references are used throughout the text, hence used as an element of textual cohesion, with the purpose of generating a humorous effect. The authors rely on the audience to be able to understand and participate in it, generating complicity between them and creating a social relationship of equality. As has been seen in the examples in Table 1, the strategy deployed by the translator reduces this complicity, leaving the target audience to their own devices regarding access to the humour and, therefore, having an impact on the

interpersonal function of the text, since the authors' stance, social relationship and social attitude is modified. To a certain extent, however, this is compensated by the instances of non-marked humour, which are abundant in the ST and have mostly been transferred successfully to the TT as can be seen here:

SOURCE TEXT	TARGET TEXT	REVERSE TRANSLATION
(Apu the shopkeeper to Homer)		
<i>Hey. Hey! Hey! I have asked you nicely not to mangle my merchandise. You leave me no choice but to ... ask you nicely again.</i>	<i>¡Eh, eh, eh! Le pedí amablemente que no manoseara la mercancía. Me está usted obligando a ... pedirselo amablemente otra vez.</i>	Hey. Hey! Hey! I have asked you nicely not to mangle my merchandise. You are making me ... ask you nicely again.
(Bart describing a computer game)		
<i>"Disembowler IV": the game where condemned criminals dig at each other with rusty hooks.</i>	<i>"Destripador IV", ¡el juego en el que criminales convictos se atacan mutuamente con garfios oxidados!</i>	"Disembowler IV": the game where convicted criminals attack each other with rusty hooks.
(Homer to the rest of the family as the situation becomes unbearable)		
<i>Marge? Kids? Everything's going to be just fine. Now go upstairs, and pack your bags ... we're going to start a new life ... under the sea.</i>	<i>¿Marge? ¿Hijos? Todo acabará solucionándose. Subid arriba y haced las maletas ... comenzaremos una nueva vida ... en el fondo del mar.</i>	Marge? Kids? Everything's going to be sorted. Go upstairs and pack your bags ... we're going to start a new life ... under the sea.
(Homer to the babysitter)		
<i>Hey, could you take the wheel for a second? I have to scratch myself in two places at once.</i>	<i>¿Puedes sujetar el volante? Necesito rascarme en dos sitios al mismo tiempo.</i>	Could you hold the steering wheel? I have to scratch myself in two places at once.

Table 3: Examples of successfully transferred non-marked humour

On MODE, the only mismatch found (textual: omission of first names in some clauses used in direct speech for coherence and cohesion) is compensated by the translator in other instances of the TT where first names are added, so it can be said that this dimension is not affected.

On GENRE, the TT does not vary the genre of the original. This is still a situation comedy involving a domestic environment where the characters need to resolve a conflict before returning to the normality of events presented at the beginning of the show. The translation maintains the aim of the genre to entertain the target audience through the use of frequent humorous scenes and dialogues. However, there is a loss of humour manifesting itself in the various dimensions analysed here, the most evident of which is the strategy used when dealing with socio-cultural references. There are a total of 17 jokes that contain these elements, 7 of which have been left in the original format and 10 have been literally translated. Those jokes that have not been translated are still available to the target audience so long as they have the necessary shared knowledge with the source audience, although this is unlikely due to the specific references mentioned in the ST. The 10 translated jokes with socio-cultural elements maintain the humour in three occasions but these are lost in the others. As the majority of humour in *The Simpsons* is non-marked, in common with most situation comedies (Chiaro 203), the percentage of humour that may be lost is relatively small, but this is still a key feature of *The Simpsons* and of television comedies as a whole. On the other hand, it is precisely its audiovisual format that does not allow the translator to adopt other commonly used strategies such as glossing, explication, paraphrasing or compensation. Overall, the entertainment aim of the genre is still kept in the translation.

The Overt Errors are quite reduced in number and affect humorous and non-humorous passages. Due to the small number, they do not substantially affect either the ideational or interpersonal functions of the text.

SOURCE TEXT	TARGET TEXT	REVERSE TRANSLATION
(Homer as he impatiently waits for Marge to get ready)		
<i>Hurry, Marge! If we get there early we can get our pictures taken with the two surviving Musketeers!</i>	<i>¡Corre Marge, al que llega pronto lo fotografian con los dos únicos mosqueteros que quedan vivos!</i>	Hurry Marge! Whoever gets there early is photographed with the only two surviving Musketeers!
(Lisa to the babysitter)		
<i>Sorry about my unenlightened brother. He will make the next few hours a living hell</i>	<i>Perdona a mi ignorante hermano. Intentará convertir las siguientes horas en un infierno constante.</i>	Forgive my ignorant brother. He will try to make the next few hours constantly hell.

Table 4: Overt errors (continued on next page)

SOURCE TEXT	TARGET TEXT	REVERSE TRANSLATION
(TV producer picking up a call that could be in support of Homer's innocence)		
<i>Yes, I am interested in long-distance savings. Very interested.</i>	<i>¿Que si me interesa el ahorro a largo plazo? Sí, sí, me interesa mucho.</i>	Am I interested in long-term savings ? Yes, yes, very interested.
(About secretly videotaping couples in cars)		
<i>Every single Scottish person does it!</i>	<i>¡Todos los escoceses que conozco lo hacen!</i>	Every single Scottish person I know does it!

Table 4: Overt errors (continued)

Statement of Quality

The analysis of both ST and TT textual profiles has highlighted that the ideational function of the text has been affected in the translation to a certain extent. The implied criticism of the media for their treatment of events for entertainment purposes and the effect this can have on society is still obvious in the translation. This criticism is kept at a level that the target audience can relate to. Effectively, this is the concept that gives a cohesive structure to both texts. However, the mismatches highlight a small reduction in the social criticism by using, on occasions, a more neutral stance and a diffusion of the struggle between the attempts to prove the innocence or the culpability of the main character.

On the other hand, as has been seen in the statement of function above, the interpersonal function is much more prominent than the ideational one. The ST presented a parody of society and the institutions within it, using hyperbolic and extreme descriptions to portray them. This distorted view is applied to family, society and the media and their relationships. Humour is a constant throughout the text and also an essential element of the genre within which it is circumscribed. The aim of the situation comedy genre is to entertain and the TT achieves this and is able to present the satirical depiction of the elements explained above. However, the interpersonal function is affected by two elements: the use of less expressive structures and the partial loss of humour. Regarding the former, there are a few instances where the lexical and syntactical choices reflect a more neutral stance from the translator. This sometimes affects the second element, when less expressivity implies a loss of humour. Nevertheless the most noticeable element is the loss of most socio-cultural references as they are kept as in the original or literally translated, which has an impact on the tenor of the text, as the stance and social relationship are affected. This loss of humour is, however, only partial as not all socio-cultural references would have been available to all members of the ST audience. Moreover, the number of other humorous references transferred, mainly unmarked, compensates for this loss.

This has a further implication for the categorisation of the translation as overt or covert. Most strategies used in the translation of the ST point at a covert translation, which implies that both the ST and TT have equivalent purposes and needs for comparable audiences and, effectively, the target audience is directly addressed (House 69). In this respect, the primary level function (ideational and interpersonal) and the Genre need to be kept in order to “recreate an equivalent speech event” (House 114). Although the above analysis has shown the mismatches relating to the ideational and interpersonal functions, this is still clearly a translation that aims to take the TL and target audience into account as it deals with a text that is not particularly tied to a specific time or culture. This implies that equivalence is not necessarily sought at the level of Language/Text or Register via the application of a cultural filter that can manipulate these levels. This is done in order to overcome the differences in the “socio-cultural norms of the two linguacultures” (House 75) although its use needs to be justified in order not to produce what House calls a “covert version” (161). In the case of the translation analysed above, a cultural filter has been applied in order to produce a text that follows a dialogical structure similar to an original text written in Spanish, except in those few instances where the translator has leaned towards a more literal translation producing some unnatural sentences. The translator has, on this occasion, successfully applied the cultural filter in order to fulfil the communicative preferences of a Spanish audience.

Interestingly, however, this cultural filter has not been applied to the socio-cultural references that seem to be the origin of mismatches in most dimensions. Although this only applies to one aspect of the TT, this instance is reminiscent of an overt translation, where the target audience is overtly not being addressed and where a text is specifically tied to the SL community and culture. This is usually the case when dealing with time-specific texts or those with certain status where the original primary text function cannot be met, although this is clearly not an issue with this text. In this case, the translator has decided to either keep the original names used in the ST or literally translate them, as has been explained before. Two reasons may be given for this: firstly the restriction imposed by the audiovisual format, preventing the translator from using the full range of translation strategies available when dealing with other formats; secondly, the artificiality that can be perceived by the target audience if a text is too domesticated, something which is especially relevant when dealing with the translation of humour, and the negative reception this may have on the target audience. This is a pertinent point in this case, as *The Simpsons*' country of origin is well known. In spite of the risks, the translator has been consistent in the application of this strategy throughout the text.

Model Analysis and Conclusions

House's model is based on functional-pragmatic theories of language use, which enables an analysis of the “linguistic-discoursal as well as the situational-cultural particularities of the source and target texts” (House 29). In turn, this means that equivalence between texts is sought at both the semantic and the pragmatic levels,

that is, the use of a text within its context, where the denotative meaning of words needs to be seen beyond their referential aspect and have to be considered within a specific communicative situation. House accepts that in certain occasions it is “both possible and necessary to aim at equivalence of pragmatic meaning at the expense of semantic meaning” (31). In terms of humour, this is a relevant distinction, as Kostovčík (176) points out that the semantic meaning of a humorous text is secondary to its primary intention of being humorous and that precedence should be given to function over form when translating it. From a conceptual perspective, House's model is able to calibrate the significance of humour within a text in order to assess the strategies followed by translators when dealing with these types of text. At the same time, the model also takes into account the individual components of a text that turn it into a cohesive whole and that, according to House, “should be kept equivalent in translation” (31).

Function equivalence is another concept that House introduces to assess the quality between two texts that can be useful for the assessment of humour (35). Her idea of function goes beyond text typologies and uses the cognitive (ideational) and emotive (interpersonal) meaning of language to determine the individual function of a text. It seems evident that the use of humour has a clear interpersonal, emotive function within language, so this distinction is also beneficial as the application of her model is able to deal with this type of language use within a text. The identification of the ideational and interpersonal elements as well as the semantic and pragmatic levels of language contained in a text is done through the detailed analysis of these dimensions. This requires a thorough and exhaustive reading of both texts and this is stressed by Sara-Viola Rodrigues (224) as an essential feature of the model's effectiveness. Indeed, in terms of humour, such a systematic analysis of the text permits the detection of humorous instances as well as the manner in which they are realised in the text, due to the multi-perspective approach of the model. On the one hand, the various dimensions highlight the role of humour in the text and, in the case study, this was made particularly clear on the dimensions of Tenor and Genre. On Tenor, the subdivisions of Stance, Social Role Relationship and Social Attitude showed the preponderance of instances of humour and the part it played in expressing the authors' ideas, the level at which it reached the addressees and how this was expressed in terms of style. The analysis of Genre is valuable in order to categorise the priority humour has in a text, which would then have obvious implications on the translator's selection of strategies depending on the various other priorities above and below the preservation of humour (Zabalbeascoa, “Translating Jokes” 243). In the text analysed, the Genre emphasised the importance of humour in a situation comedy and categorised it as an essential part of its nature, hence considering it as top priority for the translator to maintain in the TT, something that has been clearly achieved. At the same time, the analysis of the dimensions from a lexical, syntactical and textual perspective helps to comprehend the manner in which the humour is expressed and the role it may have as coherence or cohesion device within the text. Once again, this provides a useful comparison tool when assessing the humour elements on both ST and TT and whether or not they have been maintained.

Although such thorough reading of both texts can be very useful in providing elements for text comparison and subsequent evaluation, it is one of the main points of criticism of the model. The detail and complexity of its taxonomies and the time required to apply them to both ST and its translation is one of the negative aspects highlighted by critics (Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies* 92; Rothe-Neves 116; Waddington, *Estudio comparativo* 160; Williams *Translation Quality Assessment* 13). This is likely to be a fair criticism, as the analysis of the dimensions and the subdivision into lexical, syntactical and textual means becomes a time-consuming exercise, albeit the results provided by it are of great value.

The analysis of the situational dimensions is used to create a textual profile for the ST and a statement regarding its function (ideational and interpersonal) is presented. A second textual profile is created for the TT, and the dimensions are used once again to highlight any divergences found between them. The ideational and interpersonal elements that integrate the textual profiles created for both are then used to make a statement of quality regarding the matching of the ST and the TT along their ideational and interpersonal functions, and this is particularly useful to humour. Humorous texts have a clear, dominant interpersonal element, as the author expresses a particular attitude and relationship with the addressees from an emotive, connotative perspective. The model is, therefore, able to recognise this particular function of language in a text, and the comparison between ST and TT realises whether or not the interpersonal, as well as the ideational, functions have been matched. In the case study, the textual profiles of both ST and TT highlight that the ideational function of the text has been affected in the translation to a certain extent, as the mismatches show a reduction in the social criticism of the manner in which the media portray events. The application of the model has also shown that the use of less expressive structures and the loss of most socio-cultural references as they are kept as in the original or literally translated provoke a loss of humour.

Having completed this stage, the categorisation of a translation as either overt or covert provides another important element to the translation of humour. An overt translation is clearly seen as such and not as a second original and, in this type of translation, the original text function cannot be met, so a second-level function is then sought. A text and its overt translation are to be equivalent at Language, Register and Genre, but it enables access to the function the original text had in its discourse world (second-level functional equivalence) and gives the target audience the opportunity “to appreciate the original textual function, albeit at a distance” (House 112).

On the other hand, a covert translation enjoys the status of an original source text in the target culture and this is usually done with texts that are not particularly tied to the source language and culture. In this case, the ST and the TT function is the same and relevant to their own addressees, who have equivalent needs in both communities. In this kind of translations, the use of a cultural filter is required, where a subtle adaptation into the target culture is needed. In the case of covert translation, equivalence is necessary at Individual Function and Genre, but Language/Text and Register can be manipulated, especially in the case of texts

with a clearly marked interpersonal function. This is an important aspect of the model in regard to humour translation. Those authors who advocate that humour is translatable (Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue* 46; Zabalbeascoa, "Translating Jokes" 237; Vandaele 154; Martínez 188; Rojo 38; Chiaro 199) explain that this is the case as long as a functionalist approach to translation is adopted, where the purpose of the original text is kept in its translation, in this case, the humorous effect. In order to achieve this, the full range of strategies available to a translator should be utilised, from word for word, amplification or paraphrasing to omission (Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue* 46). Although House (36) considers text type function too simplistic an approach to categorising texts, the application of the cultural filter and the requirement for covert translations to be equivalent at the Individual Function and Genre levels opens the door to a number of strategies to be adopted by the translator. The manipulation of Language/Text and Register allows a TT to be "a very real distance from the original text" (House 114) and this is why covert translations may be received as originals. Based on this, it seems plausible to say that her model is able to appreciate the variety of strategies that can be used by a translator in order to keep certain dimensions and, hence, the individual primary-level function of the ST. As has been seen, this is an important aspect when translating humour and shows a degree of flexibility of the model in the evaluation of humorous texts. The case study has shown that the application of a cultural filter has produced a text that follows a structure more similar to a text written originally in Spanish, which would qualify the translation as covert. However, the strategy used to deal with socio-cultural references, which seems to be the origin of mismatches in most dimensions, would point at an overt translation, where the text is specifically tied to the SL community and culture.

The final stage of the evaluation in House's model consists in a qualitative judgement based on "the relative match of the ideational and the interpersonal functional components of the textual function" (House 46) once the covert mismatches and the overt errors have been taken into account. Although this final evaluation is ultimately not a scientific one, she maintains that it still provides the basis for an evaluative judgement. However, House (119) also admits that the intention of the model is not to provide an absolute evaluation as "it is difficult to pass a final judgement of the quality of a translation that fulfils the demands of objectivity." This admission is the basis of the second major criticism of the model. Williams ("The Application of Argumentation Theory" 335) explains that this is common to non-quantitative models as they do not offer a quantification of errors and agrees with other authors (Waddington, *Estudio comparativo* 160; Bolaños 190; Calvo 23) that this prevents the assessor from making a specific statement about the quality of a translation. This is further highlighted by the fact that texts with a marked interpersonal function, such as humorous ones, present the most difficult problems of translation equivalence (House 75) and, hence, the production of a concrete final evaluation. This also seemed to be the case in the text analysed above, as the statement of quality concentrates on the relative matching of the primary-level function between the two texts. Even though the multi-perspective approach of the model

offers a wide range of elements for quality assessment, passing a final judgement is not entirely feasible. Although many authors seem to agree with House that judgements are by nature subjective, especially when dealing with issues of quality assessment (Schäffner 4; McAlester 231; Bowker 183; Brunette 169; Maier 137), it is evident that there is a clear difficulty moving from the statement of quality to a specific, quantitative assessment of the TT.

Finally, House (75) mentions in her model a number of external factors that may impact on the performance of the translator, which should provide an additional element for analysis of the quality of a translation. In the case study, this would relate to the use of the text in an audio-visual format. Although the model has been applied only on the verbal aspect of the acoustic code, it is apparent that other audio-visual constraints (such as the link between both codes or time synchronisation) would also have an influence on the work of the translator. In humorous texts, these limitations are further exacerbated by those instances containing linguistic and socio-cultural elements, as the range of strategies available to the translator is greatly reduced. This is, however, not reflected on the model itself as it does not provide any guidance on how to take any of these external factors, audiovisual or otherwise, into account in order to assess how this may affect the quality of the translation.

Overall, the application of House's model on a case study has highlighted its suitability for its use on a humorous text. The key aspect of the model regarding humour is the dual equivalence that is sought at a semantic and pragmatic level, as it analyses the use of text within its context, which means that the denotative meaning of words needs to be considered within a specific communicative situation and seen beyond their referential aspect. At the same time, House's model bases equivalence on the match between individual text functions of the ST and TT, and this takes into consideration the ideational and interpersonal functions of a text. It is within the interpersonal, emotive function of language where humour can be identified and given its relative importance. These two aspects allow for the calibration of humour: its realisation and the role it has within a text, giving it a priority order in comparison to other situational dimensions and providing an element that can be used to evaluate the ST and its translation. Through a covert translation, the model is able to accept any strategies adopted by the translator in order to maintain humorous effect as long as the primary function of the text and the genre is maintained, which also allows the assessor to determine the role humour has in the text and to take this into consideration when assessing the level of equivalence between both ST and TT.

As well as the model's complexity, the lack of specific weight for mismatches and errors is one of the aspects that has attracted most criticism from academics. The model is not able to provide a final, objective assessment of the quality of a translation but this is common to non-quantitative assessment models. However, the perceived limitations of the model are generic to any type of texts and not specific to the assessment of humorous texts.

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