

Research Article

Translation Quality Assessment of the Vietnamese Translation of *The Da Vinci Code* Using House's Model

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Abstract

This study investigates the interplay of overt and covert translation in the Vietnamese translation of *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown, rendered into Vietnamese by Đỗ Thu Hà, within the framework of Juliane House's Translation Quality Assessment model. It aims to identify the dominant translational orientation of the Vietnamese version and to examine how source-text features are preserved or adjusted across the dimensions of Field, Tenor, and Mode. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study combines qualitative textual analysis with quantitative support through the comparison of selected source-text and target-text pairs. The findings indicate that the Vietnamese translation is predominantly oriented towards overt translation, as it largely retains the cultural specificity, interpersonal meanings, and discourse organization of the original text. At the same time, certain covert adjustments are observable in order to enhance naturalness, readability, and accessibility for Vietnamese readers. Overall, the translation reflects a careful negotiation between fidelity to the source text and adaptation to the linguistic and cultural expectations of the target readership. The study highlights the applicability of House's model to literary translation assessment and contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how culturally embedded and stylistically marked texts are mediated in translation.

Keywords

overt translation; covert translation; translation quality assessment; Juliane House; literary translation; Vietnamese translation

1. Introduction

Translation plays a vital role in enabling literary works to cross linguistic and cultural boundaries, thereby fostering intercultural understanding and expanding access to global knowledge and artistic expression. In literary contexts, translation is not merely a process of linguistic transfer; rather, it is an interpretive and creative act through which meanings, stylistic effects, and cultural values embedded in the source text are re-expressed for a new readership. Because literary texts often contain culturally specific references, distinctive narrative voices, and stylistic complexity, literary translation

requires not only linguistic competence but also cultural sensitivity and interpretive skill. In this sense, translators function as cultural mediators who negotiate between fidelity to the source text and the expectations of the target audience.

The cultural dimension of translation has been widely emphasized in translation studies. Scholars such as Bassnett (2002), Berman (1984), and Venuti (2017) have argued that translation should be understood not only as a linguistic operation but also as a cultural practice shaped by choices about how meanings, identities, and values are represented in

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the target language. These perspectives are especially relevant to literary translation, where the translator must preserve not only propositional meaning but also tone, style, aesthetic effect, and cultural nuance. As a result, the assessment of literary translation requires an analytical framework capable of examining both linguistic realization and communicative function within the cultural contexts of the source and target texts.

Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* offers a particularly suitable case for such an investigation. Since its publication in 2003, the novel has achieved international popularity for its fast-paced narrative and its intricate combination of mystery, religion, history, art, and symbology. At the same time, these characteristics make the novel particularly challenging to translate. Its frequent references to Western religious traditions, historical institutions, artistic symbols, and philosophical ideas require a high degree of linguistic precision and cultural awareness. In addition, Brown's concise and suspenseful style, together with the novel's symbolic and cryptographic elements, demands translation choices that preserve both conceptual meaning and narrative tension. In the Vietnamese context, the translation by Đỗ Thu Hà provides an important opportunity to examine how a culturally dense and stylistically marked literary work is rendered for Vietnamese readers.

Despite the significance of literary translation, systematic studies of Vietnamese translations of internationally popular novels remain relatively limited, particularly those applying an established translation quality assessment framework to examine semantic, stylistic, and cultural transfer in an integrated manner. This study addresses that gap by evaluating the Vietnamese translation of *The Da Vinci Code* through Juliane House's Translation Quality Assessment model. House's framework is particularly relevant because it enables a comparative analysis of the source text and the target text in terms of functional equivalence, linguistic realization, and cultural significance.

Accordingly, this study aims to assess the quality of Đỗ Thu Hà's Vietnamese translation of *The Da Vinci Code*, with particular attention to linguistic accuracy, stylistic preservation, and cultural representation. More specifically, it examines how semantic, stylistic, and cultural elements in selected parts of the novel are rendered in Vietnamese, identifies the major strengths and weaknesses of the translation, and considers implications for improving literary translation practice. To achieve these aims, the study addresses the following research questions:

(1) How are the semantic, stylistic, and cultural elements in selected parts of *The Da Vinci Code* translated into Vietnamese, and how do they compare with the source text?

(2) What are the major strengths and weaknesses of Đỗ Thu Hà's translation in terms of linguistic accuracy, stylistic

preservation, and cultural representation?

(3) What implications can be drawn from the findings to improve consistency, naturalness, and fidelity in literary translation?

By addressing these questions, the study contributes to a clearer understanding of how culturally rich and stylistically complex literary texts can be evaluated and translated in the Vietnamese context.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Challenges in literary translation

Among the major difficulties in literary translation, cultural translation is often regarded as one of the most significant, since literary texts are closely bound to the cultural, ideological, and social contexts in which they are produced.

Fairclough (2013) argues that language is inherently ideological and closely tied to power relations, which means that cultural translation involves more than linguistic transfer. Translators must also negotiate the ideological and socio-cultural meanings embedded in discourse, since lexical, syntactic, and stylistic choices can affect how these meanings are represented in the target text.

Cultural difference is therefore a major challenge in literary translation. Catford (1965) notes that untranslatability may arise from cultural as well as linguistic differences, while Nida (1964) emphasizes that word meaning is shaped by its cultural environment. Likewise, Newmark (1995) defines culture as the distinctive way of life and expression of a community, underscoring the close relationship between language and culture. Bassnett (2002) further argues that local customs and traditions are often difficult to translate because of the lack of cultural equivalence. To address this issue, Newmark (1988) proposes procedures such as transference and componential analysis: the former helps preserve source-cultural elements, whereas the latter improves clarity for target readers. In literary translation, the challenge is to balance these options so that cultural meaning is preserved without reducing readability.

Stylistic translation is another major challenge in literary translation because style is closely connected to the author's artistic identity and the aesthetic effect of the text. Unlike technical translation, which mainly aims to transfer information, literary translation must also preserve tone, mood, and expressive form. As Landers (2001) points out, style is central rather than secondary in literary translation, and the translator's own style should ideally "not exist." This means that translators need to minimize their personal voice and reproduce the stylistic features of the source author as faithfully as possible. Therefore, successful stylistic translation requires attention not only to content but also to the

way literary form and effect are conveyed in the target text.

Linguistic translation is another major challenge in literary translation because differences in grammar, syntax, tense, aspect, and lexical systems can significantly affect meaning and style. Comrie (1985) shows that tense and aspect are not merely grammatical categories but also reflect how languages structure events and time, while Givón (1984, 2001) argues that syntax serves important communicative and discourse functions. This means that translators must do more than reproduce grammatical forms; they must also preserve coherence, emphasis, and naturalness in the target text.

The difficulty becomes greater because linguistic structures vary across languages and cultural frameworks. Joseph (1996) notes that languages shape perception differently, and Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) distinguish between direct and oblique translation as ways of dealing with such structural differences. Catford (1965) further argues that exact grammatical equivalence is often impossible, whereas Nida (1964) emphasizes the need to create a comparable effect on the target audience. Similarly, Newmark (1988) highlights the importance of balancing semantic accuracy with communicative naturalness, Baker (1992) stresses syntactic and textual cohesion, and Venuti (2017) points to the need to decide how much of the original linguistic form should be preserved or adapted. Therefore, successful linguistic translation requires a careful balance between fidelity to the source text and readability in the target language.

2.2 Translating “*The Da Vinci Code*”

In the context of translation quality, *The Da Vinci Code* illustrates the particular challenges involved in translating commercially successful bestsellers. Such works are shaped not only by linguistic and cultural demands but also by market expectations. Venuti (2017) criticizes domestication as a strategy that increases accessibility for target readers but may also flatten the source text by removing its foreign cultural features. Similarly, Toury (1995) argues that translation norms are often influenced by market forces, especially in bestselling fiction, where readability and commercial appeal tend to be prioritized. As a result, translators may adjust content and style to suit a broader audience. Together, Venuti (2017) and Toury (1995) show that translation is not only a linguistic act but also a cultural and economic practice shaped by globalization.

2.3 Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) and House’s Model

Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) has long been a central concern in translation studies because it connects theoretical perspectives on translation with the practical

evaluation of translated texts. In general, TQA seeks to determine how successfully a target text reproduces the meaning, style, and function of the source text. House (1997) treats TQA as a comparative process between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT), while Nord (1991) emphasizes the importance of the translation’s purpose and its ability to meet the communicative needs of target readers. Together, these perspectives show that translation quality involves not only linguistic fidelity but also functional adequacy and cultural representation.

Among the major approaches to TQA, Juliane House’s model is particularly influential because it offers a more systematic alternative to impressionistic and subjective evaluation. House’s framework is grounded in Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1973) and in pragmatic theories associated with Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), both of which view language as a form of communication situated in context. It is also informed by Crystal and Davy’s (1969) situational dimensions of texts, Enkvist’s (1973) work on linguistic stylistics, and Edmondson’s (1981) discourse-based emphasis on context. Building on these foundations, House (1997, 2015) develops a multidimensional model that evaluates translation not only at the semantic and stylistic levels but also in relation to communicative function and cultural context.

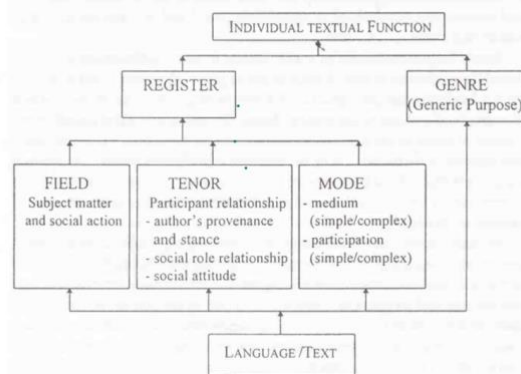


Figure: House's model in (1997:108)

A major strength of House’s revised model is its integration of the contextual variables Field, Tenor, and Mode, which are derived from Halliday’s functional view of language. Field relates to the experiential content of the text, Tenor concerns interpersonal relations and attitudes, and Mode refers to the textual organization through which meaning is conveyed (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Halliday, 2007; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). In House’s framework, these dimensions allow the researcher to analyze how lexical, syntactic, and textual choices contribute to the communicative function of both the ST and the TT. House (2001) further expands the model through the concept of genre, which links individual

texts to the broader linguistic and cultural community in which they operate. In this way, translation assessment becomes not only a linguistic comparison but also an analysis of how texts function within specific social and cultural contexts.

Another important contribution of House's model is its distinction between overt and covert translation. House (1977, 1997) argues that overt translation preserves the source text's cultural and functional status, allowing target readers to recognize it as a translation tied to another linguistic and cultural context. By contrast, covert translation aims to function as if it were an original text in the target culture, often through the use of a cultural filter that adapts linguistic and cultural elements to target-language norms. Munday (2008) further clarifies that House's model evaluates translation quality by comparing ST and TT profiles and identifying mismatches at contextual, linguistic, and functional levels. This distinction is especially useful for literary translation because it helps explain whether a translated text tends to preserve source-text foreignness or to adapt itself more fully to the expectations of target readers.

House's model has been widely valued for its systematic and comprehensive nature. House (1997) argues that it is applicable to a wide range of text types, while Steiner (2003) highlights its ability to combine micro-level linguistic analysis with macro-level considerations of register and genre. Schaffner (1997) also notes that the model effectively incorporates cultural context into translation evaluation. At the same time, some scholars have pointed out its limitations in the analysis of literary texts. Jakobson (1959) stresses that literary translation often involves creative re-expression rather than simple transfer, while Bassnett (2002) emphasizes the need to preserve artistic, emotional, and stylistic qualities. Similar concerns are raised by Newmark (1988), Berman (1984), Boase-Beier (2006), Lefevere (1992), Venuti (2017), Hermans (1996), and Baker (2011), all of whom highlight the importance of aesthetics, ambiguity, cultural depth, and translator subjectivity in literary translation. Although House's model may not fully capture all of these dimensions, it remains highly relevant for the present study because it provides a clear and structured framework for comparing the Vietnamese translation of *The Da Vinci Code* with its source text, especially in terms of function, context, and the distinction between overt and covert translation.

2.4. Review of related studies

In Vietnam, a number of studies have applied Juliane House's model to the assessment of translation quality in literary works, indicating a sustained scholarly interest in this framework. Previous research has examined Vietnamese translations of works such as *Twilight* (Lê, 2009), *Chicken Soup for the Soul* (Nguyễn, 2010), *The Call of the Wild*

(Nguyễn, 2011), *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (Cao, 2014), and *The Great Gatsby* (Triệu, 2015). Particularly relevant to the present study is Đặng's (2013) evaluation of the first three chapters of *The Da Vinci Code* based on House's model. Collectively, these studies demonstrate the applicability of House's framework to the evaluation of literary translation in Vietnamese, especially in relation to meaning, style, and functional equivalence.

However, despite these contributions, limited attention has been given to the ways in which overt and covert translation operate across the dimensions of Field, Tenor, and Mode in the Vietnamese translation of *The Da Vinci Code*. Most previous studies have tended to focus on selected excerpts or to provide general translation quality evaluation without specifically examining the distribution and implications of overt and covert translation within House's functional-pragmatic framework. Building on earlier applications of House's model, the present study addresses this gap by investigating how overt and covert translation are manifested in selected source-text and target-text pairs from the Vietnamese version of *The Da Vinci Code*. In doing so, it seeks to provide a more focused account of how House's model can be applied to literary translation assessment in the Vietnamese context.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

Circular RNAs (circRNAs) are a special type of non-coding RNA. This study adopts a mixed-method approach to investigate overt and covert translation in the Vietnamese translation of *The Da Vinci Code*. The qualitative component is used to examine how selected source-text features are rendered in the Vietnamese version, while the quantitative component is employed to identify the frequency and distribution of overt and covert translation patterns across the analyzed data. This design is appropriate because it allows the study to combine close textual analysis with numerical evidence of broader translation tendencies. The study is grounded in Juliane House's Translation Quality Assessment model, particularly its distinction between overt and covert translation.

3.2. Data Sources

The data were collected from Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* as the source text (ST) and its Vietnamese translation, *Mật mã Da Vinci*, translated by Đỗ Thu Hà, as the target text (TT). These two texts form the primary corpus of the study. The English novel was chosen because of its wide use of historical, religious, symbolic, and stylistic features, while the Vietnamese translation provides a suitable basis for examining

how such features are transferred across languages.

3.3. Sampling

Purposive sampling was employed to select representative excerpts from the novel for analysis. Rather than analyzing every sentence in the text in equal detail, the study focuses on text pairs that are particularly relevant to identifying overt and covert translation. The selected excerpts were drawn from across the novel to ensure variation in linguistic and textual features. They were then grouped according to the dimensions of Field, Tenor, and Mode in House's framework. This sampling procedure allows the analysis to capture both local translation choices and broader translation tendencies.

3.4. Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process consisted of several steps. First, both the source text and the Vietnamese translation were digitized and prepared in editable form. Second, the texts were aligned in parallel format to facilitate direct comparison between the ST and TT. Third, Viet-Corpus was used to search, identify, and extract relevant excerpts from the bilingual data. After that, the selected text pairs were organized in Microsoft Excel, where they were recorded, coded, and categorized according to the analytical needs of the study. This procedure made it possible to manage the data systematically and to prepare them for both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

3.5. Analytical Framework

The analysis is based on Juliane House's Translation Quality Assessment model. In this article, the model is used primarily as a framework for identifying whether a translation instance tends toward overt translation or covert translation. Overt translation refers to cases in which the target text preserves the source text's foreignness and cultural-linguistic distinctiveness. Covert translation, by contrast, refers to cases in which the translation is adjusted to sound more natural and accessible to the target readership. By applying this distinction to the selected ST–TT pairs, the study aims to determine the dominant translation tendency in the Vietnamese version of *The Da Vinci Code*.

3.6. Data Analysis

The analysis was conducted in two stages. First, a qualitative comparison was carried out between the English source text and the Vietnamese target text in order to identify how linguistic and textual features were translated. Each selected pair was examined in context and then categorized as either overt or covert translation based on House's framework. Second, the categorized data were quantified to calculate the

frequency and percentage of overt and covert translation across the dataset. The use of both qualitative interpretation and quantitative summary helps reveal not only individual translation choices but also the general translation tendency of the Vietnamese version.

3.7. Research Scope

Although the original thesis examined semantic, stylistic, and cultural features within a broader translation quality assessment, the present article narrows its focus to overt and covert translation. Accordingly, the study does not attempt to provide a full evaluation of all aspects of the Vietnamese translation. Instead, it concentrates on how the selected ST–TT pairs reflect either preservation of source-text features or adaptation to target-language norms. This narrower scope makes the study more suitable for the journal article format and allows for a clearer discussion of translation tendency.

4. Result

This section presents the main findings on overt and covert translation in the Vietnamese translation of *The Da Vinci Code*. Drawing on the selected ST–TT pairs categorized under Field, Tenor, and Mode, the analysis shows that overt translation is more frequent than covert translation across all three dimensions. This pattern suggests that the Vietnamese translation generally tends to preserve source-text features rather than fully adapt them to target-language norms.

Table 1. Distribution of overt and covert translation across field, tenor, and mode

Dimension	Sentence Pairs	Overt	Covert
Field	254	168 (66.14%)	86 (33.86%)
Tenor	181	133 (73.48%)	48 (26.52)
Mode	21	14 (66.67%)	7 (33.33%)
Total	456	315 (69.08%)	141 (30.92%)

As shown in Table 1, overt translation accounts for 315 out of 456 sentence pairs (69.08%), whereas covert translation appears in 141 cases (30.92%). Among the three dimensions, Tenor shows the highest proportion of overt translation, with 133 out of 181 sentence pairs (73.48%). Field also displays a strong tendency toward overt translation, with 168 out of 254 cases (66.14%), while Mode records 14 overt cases out of 21 pairs (66.67%). These findings suggest that the Vietnamese translation tends to retain the linguistic and textual

characteristics of the source text to a considerable extent across all three dimensions.

4.1. Overt and covert translation in the field

The findings in the Field dimension show that overt translation is the dominant tendency. Out of 254 sentence pairs, 168 cases (66.14%) are classified as overt translation, while 86 cases (33.86%) are classified as covert translation. This indicates that, at the level of content, the Vietnamese translation generally tends to preserve the referential and conceptual features of the source text, especially in passages involving religion, history, symbology, and specialized terminology.

Many examples in the data show that culturally and conceptually important references are retained in the Vietnamese version. This pattern can be seen in the following ST-TT pairs:

Table 2. Example of overt translation in the Field dimension

ST	TT
Opus Dei	Opus Dei
PHI	PHI
Fibonacci sequence	Dãy Fibonacci

These examples suggest that the translator often keeps key source-text references in their original or near-original form. Such choices help preserve the intellectual and cultural framework of the novel, especially when the source text depends heavily on Western religious, historical, and symbolic knowledge.

At the same time, the Field data also contain cases of covert translation, particularly where specialized concepts are rendered in a more accessible but less precise form. One representative example is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Example of covert translation in the Field dimension

ST	TT
cult symbology	Ký tượng thờ cúng

In this case, the Vietnamese rendering conveys the general religious association of the expression, but it narrows the broader academic and semiotic meaning of the source term. The example shows that, although the translation remains understandable, some conceptual precision is reduced.

Overall, the Field data reveal a mixed but clearly preservation-oriented pattern. Core references and specialized items are frequently retained, yet some terms undergo

semantic adjustment, making the translation more accessible while slightly reducing the precision of the original content.

4.2. Overt and Covert Translation in Tenor

The findings for Tenor also show a strong preference for overt translation. Among 181 sentence pairs, 133 cases (73.48%) are identified as overt translation, whereas 48 cases (26.52%) are categorized as covert translation. This is the highest proportion of overt translation among the three dimensions, suggesting that the Vietnamese version generally preserves interpersonal relationships and the source text's tonal orientation to a considerable extent.

Several examples in the dataset show that the translation often maintains the source text's interpersonal force. However, some covert shifts occur when tone, attitude, or formality is adjusted. One clear example is the following:

Table 4. Example of covert shifts translation with tone, attitude or formality adjusted

ST	TT
a sharp, authoritative bark	Một giọng sủa gắt, hách dịch

The source text presents the speaker's voice as harsh and authoritative, while the Vietnamese version intensifies the negative interpersonal effect by making it sound more insulting and aggressive. This indicates a covert shift in Tenor, as the translation changes the evaluative tone rather than reproducing it directly.

Another example in Table 5 shows a shift in politeness and interpersonal nuance as follows.

Table 5. Example of covert translation showing a shift in politeness and interpersonal nuance

ST	TT
If you would be so kind...	Nếu ngài vui lòng...

This rendering preserves the polite intent of the source expression, but it also adapts the interpersonal tone to a more natural Vietnamese form of address. The example suggests that even when the translation remains close to the source text, it may still involve subtle adjustments in how relationships and attitudes are conveyed.

Taken together, the Tenor data suggest that the Vietnamese translation usually retains the source text's interpersonal structure, but occasionally modifies tone, politeness, or attitudinal coloring in order to produce a more immediate or culturally natural effect for target readers.

4.3. Overt and Covert Translation in Mode

Although Mode contains the fewest examples, overt translation still remains the dominant tendency in this dimension. Out of 21 sentence pairs, 14 cases (66.67%) are classified as overt translation, while 7 cases (33.33%) are classified as covert translation. These figures indicate that the Vietnamese translation often preserves the textual organization of the source text, but that some shifts occur in sentence structure, pacing, and information flow.

A representative example of covert adjustment in Mode is shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Example of covert adjustment in Mode

ST	TT
He turned. The gun was already pointing at him	Ông quay lại. Khẩu súng đã chĩa thẳng vào ông từ trước.

The source text uses two short clauses to create suddenness and suspense. In the Vietnamese version, the addition of *từ trước* makes the event more explicit but also slightly reduces the abruptness of the original sequence. This suggests a covert shift in Mode, as the textual rhythm and pacing are adjusted in translation.

Overall, the Mode data show that the Vietnamese translation generally retains the source text's textual structure, but modifications are introduced in some cases to make the sequence of events clearer and more natural for Vietnamese readers.

5. Discussion

CircRNAs have been implicated in multiple cancer The findings indicate that overt translation is the dominant tendency in the Vietnamese translation of *The Da Vinci Code*. Across the dimensions of Field, Tenor, and Mode, the translated text generally preserves many important features of the source text, although a number of covert adjustments are also evident. House (2015) argues that overt translation tends to preserve the cultural and textual characteristics of the source text, whereas covert translation adapts the text more closely to the norms of the target culture. From this perspective, the predominance of overt translation in the present study suggests that the Vietnamese version retains much of the source text's functional value, even though some shifts may lead target readers to interpret certain details differently.

In terms of Field, the translation preserves much of the novel's core content, particularly references related to religion, symbolism, history, and specialized terminology. However, the analysis also shows that some terms are translated in ways

that narrow or alter their original semantic range. As noted in the thesis, such shifts may improve accessibility for Vietnamese readers, but they also reduce semantic precision and may weaken the intellectual depth of the source text. Nida and Taber (1969) maintain that a translation should reproduce not only the message of the original but also a comparable effect on its readers. Viewed from this perspective, the Vietnamese translation increases readability in some cases, but it does so at the cost of part of the academic specificity embedded in the original.

The handling of specialized terminology can also be interpreted through Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) notion of oblique translation. In examples such as the rendering of *cult symbology*, the Vietnamese version becomes more natural within the target-language system, but the broader scholarly and semiotic implications of the source expression are reduced. In a similar way, Vermeer (1989) suggests that translation choices should be understood in relation to the purpose of the target text. If the purpose is to make the novel more accessible to a broad Vietnamese readership, a certain degree of adjustment may be justified. Nevertheless, the thesis also makes clear that excessive adaptation may lead readers to misunderstand the protagonist's field of study or the conceptual framework of the novel.

With regard to Tenor, the findings suggest that the translation largely preserves Dan Brown's stylistic features, especially in the portrayal of interpersonal relations and dialogue. Even so, some adjustments in formality, tone, and evaluative meaning alter how characters are represented. House (1977, 2015) emphasizes that functional equivalence must be considered not only at the level of propositional meaning but also in the interpersonal dimension of discourse. In this study, the Vietnamese translation generally maintains the communicative role of the original dialogue, but some tonal shifts may still influence how Vietnamese readers perceive character relationships and power dynamics.

This tendency may also be explained through Newmark's (1988) distinction between semantic translation and communicative translation. As indicated in the thesis, Đỗ Thu Hà's translation tends to lean toward communicative translation in some instances, particularly where naturalness and target-reader accessibility are prioritized over the preservation of every stylistic nuance. This approach helps the text read more smoothly in Vietnamese, but it may also result in subtle changes to the author's original tone and voice. In this sense, the translation preserves the general effect of the source text, but not always its finer stylistic details.

A similar point can be made through Baker's (1992) theory of translation style. Baker (1992) argues that style is shaped by vocabulary choice, syntactic patterning, and textual organization, so any modification in these areas may affect how a translated text is received. The thesis notes that some of

the stylistic adjustments in the Vietnamese version make the text more natural, but they also modify aspects of Dan Brown's original voice. As a result, although the translation achieves a relatively high degree of readability, it does not always maintain dynamic equivalence in interpersonal terms, since Vietnamese readers may respond to tone and attitude differently from readers of the source text.

In relation to Mode, the discussion in the thesis emphasizes the importance of cohesion, structural parallelism, and narrative rhythm in Dan Brown's writing. The translation often preserves these features, but some structural modifications reduce cohesion, weaken emphasis, or soften the suspenseful pacing of the original. Halliday and Hasan (1976) argue that textual cohesion plays a central role in guiding reader interpretation and maintaining continuity in discourse. When cohesive structures are modified or shortened in translation, the target text may remain clear, but the rhetorical and narrative force of the original may be diminished.

The result further suggests that such changes affect not only textual structure but also the target reader's experience. Iser (1979) proposes that readers actively construct meaning through the process of responding to textual cues. From this perspective, shifts in rhythm, suspense, and information flow may reshape how target readers engage with the translated text. In a novel such as *The Da Vinci Code*, where suspense and intellectual tension are central to the reading experience, the restructuring of certain passages may make the text easier to process in Vietnamese while simultaneously reducing the intensity of the original effect.

Taken together, the findings suggest that the Vietnamese translation remains broadly source-oriented, as indicated by the predominance of overt translation, but also incorporates covert adjustments to improve naturalness and accessibility for Vietnamese readers. In Field, the most noticeable issue concerns the rendering of specialized terminology and symbolic meaning. In Tenor, the main shifts involve tone, formality, and interpersonal effect. In Mode, the principal impact lies in cohesion, sentence structure, and narrative rhythm. Overall, the translation preserves much of the source text's core content and general textual profile, although this is accompanied by partial shifts in semantic precision, stylistic nuance, and reader experience.

In general, the discussion supports the view that the Vietnamese translation achieves a considerable degree of accessibility without completely abandoning fidelity to the source text. At the same time, the data demonstrate that increased readability may come at the cost of specialized accuracy, tonal subtlety, and textual effect. In this sense, the translation reflects an ongoing negotiation between preserving the original and adapting it for the target readership, a tension that is particularly visible when the source text is both

culturally dense and stylistically marked.

6. Conclusion

This study evaluates the Vietnamese translation of *The Da Vinci Code*, translated by Đỗ Thu Hà, using the Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) model proposed by Juliane House. The analysis focuses on how semantic, stylistic, and cultural elements of the source text are rendered in the Vietnamese version. The findings indicate that the translation generally preserves the main narrative structure, suspenseful tone, and thematic content of the original novel, enabling Vietnamese readers to access the historical, religious, and symbolic references that are central to the story. However, the study also identifies several translation issues, particularly in lexical choices, idiomatic expressions, and syntactic restructuring, which occasionally lead to shifts in meaning or reduced stylistic effect. The results further reveal that the translation mainly follows an overt translation approach, maintaining many cultural features of the source text while making limited adjustments for target readers. Overall, the translation achieves a relatively satisfactory level of functional equivalence, although improvements in lexical precision and stylistic consistency could enhance translation quality. The study, therefore, highlights the importance of applying systematic evaluation models in literary translation and contributes insights into strategies for improving the translation of culturally rich and stylistically complex works.

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