



An Investigation of Warner & Warner's Translation of Figure of Speech in SHAHNAMEH: The Story of the Seven Stages of Esfandiyar in Focus

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ABSTRACT

Translation of literary texts in general and poetry in particular as a distinctive type of translation has been of great importance since the early appearance of translations. On the one hand, the difficulty of translating the metrical pattern and on the other hand the nature of poetry itself has turned the poetry translation a very controversial issue and there have been done many investigations on its different aspects. When it comes to rendering the very spirit of masterpieces like Shahnameh, poetry translation becomes so much trickier. This study aimed to analyze the story of The Seven Stages of Esfandiyar in Shahnameh in terms of figures of speech to realize that how the figures of speech are transferred or lost in the English translation of Shahnameh. To this end, First 10 verses of the story of The Seven Stages of Esfandiyar which were selected according to the degree of frequency of figures of speech and also the translation of the selected verses were studied, each of them were analyzed separately by identifying figures of speech. Then the type and number of figures of speech in the source text were compared with those of the target text. The findings indicated that there was about 50% loss in Warner & Warner's Translation of Figures of speech in the selected verses of the story of the seven stages of Esfandiyar in Shahnameh.

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Introduction

All throughout the history, translation has played a crucial role in human communications, as Goethe, the great German writer quoted that translation is "impossible, necessary, and important" (Hanne 2006: 209). Whereas interpreting undoubtedly antedates writing, translation began only after the appearance of written literature.

As one of different types of translation, Poetry translation, if not the most difficult, has been considered one of the most demanding tasks to be done by translators. This could be due to the fact that poetry touches the emotions and spirits of human beings in their lives. In other words, since it is interwoven of aesthetic and figurative features and linguistic ones, poetry touches the heart of the literature. According to Newmark, poetry is the most personal and concentrated form of the literature, where, as a unit, the word has greater importance than in any other type of text. To translate a poem is to catch the exact message, understand the interaction between the form and the content and finally create a new spirit compatible with the target language and culture, so that it could be considered a poem as far as it has (makes) the same impression on the readers as it does on the readers of the source language. Then the translator must totally realize the very fact that he is not the creator of the spirit, rather s/he is to introduce an existing spirit in another language and culture. To feel the heart of the question properly, one must know the subtle distinction between translating and writing which demands more investigation.

While poetry is by no means all figures of speech, the figure of speech is an essential part of poetry. Figures of speech are also found in other literary forms like fiction and drama; however, figurative language is more dominant in poetry than in other literary forms. A figure of speech, sometimes termed a rhetorical figure or device, or elocution, is a word or phrase that departs from straightforward, literal language.

Figures of speech are often used and crafted for emphasis, freshness of expression, or clarity. Figures of speech have been classified into a number of different categories. Most figures originated out of centuries of philological commentary on ancient texts, and so most are named from Greek or Latin, as they originally were meant to classify grammatical peculiarities of those languages. In classification of figures of speech, Peacham (1577) in his book, "The garden of eloquence", enumerated 184 different figures of speech which are divided into two main categories: schemes and tropes. According to Peacham tropes are artful deviations from the ordinary or principal signification of words like anthropomorphism that means ascribing human characteristics to something that is not human, such as an animal or a god. Translating figures of speech due to cultural and linguistic differences is a challenging task that it needs much work and effort and it becomes trickier when it comes to world masterpieces like Shahnameh.

Shahnameh, is an enormous poetic opus written by the Great Persian poet Ferdowsi around 1000 AD and is the national epic of Iran. It tells the mythical and historical past of Iran from the creation of the world up until the Islamic conquest of Persia in the 7th century. Aside from its literary importance, Shahnameh, written in almost pure Persian unmixed with adoptions from Arabic, has been pivotal for reviving the Persian language after the massive influence of Arabic. This voluminous work, regarded by Persian speakers as a literary masterpiece, also reflects Persia's history, cultural values, ancient religions (Zoroastrianism), and profound sense of nationhood. Ferdowsi completed Shâhnameh when national independence had been compromised. While there are memorable heroes and heroines of the classical type in this work, the real, ongoing hero is Persia itself. It is thus an important book for Iran.

Shahnameh is full of figures of speech and purple patches. For example, in just one verse (verse: 867 from Rostam and

Sohrab story) of Shahnameh, there are 6-7 types figurative language like alliteration, assonance, consonance, allusion, collocation, pun, metaphor, etc. Considering the importance of Shahnameh, this literary masterpiece, this study tries to investigate the figures of speech in it and their corresponding equivalences in its translation.

Methodology

The material of this research is the Persian text of Shahnameh and the English translation by Warner & Warner. First, 10 verses of the story of The Seven Stages of Esfandiyar were extracted with regard to the degree of frequency of figures of speech and then different types of figures of speech in the Persian text and their corresponding equivalences in Warner & Warner's translation were identified in order to be compared and contrasted with the source text.

Data Analysis

The 10 verses of the story of The Seven Stages of Esfandiyar which were selected according to the degree of frequency of figures of speech and also the translation of the selected verses were studied, each of them were analyzed separately by identifying figures of speech. Then the type and number of figures of speech in the source text were compared with those of the target text.

1. چو خورشید بر چرخ بنمود چهر بیاراست روی زمین را به مهر
(Verse: 5, p.715)

Cho khorshid bar charkh benmood chehr biarast ruye zamin ra be mehr

He showed his visage like bright Sol above
And graced the surface of the earth with love

a) Alliteration: cho, charkh, chehr

b) Personification: khorshid

c) Rhyme: between chehr and mehr

2. و گر هیچ گردی به گرد دروغ نگیرد بر من دروغت فروغ
(Verse: 38, p.716)

Va gar hich gardi be garde dorough nagirad bar man doroughat forough

But if thou go about to utter lie

In any way they will not pass with me

a) Alliteration: gar, gardi, gard

b) Consonance: r repeated 8 and d 5 times

c) Pun: between gard and gardi, dorough and doroughat

d) Rhyme: dorough and forough

3. چو تاریک شد شب بفرمود شاه از آن جایگاه اندر آمد سپاه
(Verse: 108, p.717)

Cho tarik shod shab befarmoud shah az an jaygah andar amad sepah

When night grew dark the monarch gave command,

And they resumed the march

a) Alliteration: shod, shab, shah

b) Assonance: a sound repeated 7 times

c) Rhyme: between shah and sepah

4. بیامد چو با شیر نزدیک شد جهان بر دل شیر تاریک شد
(Verse: 114, p.718)

Biamad cho ba shir nazdik shod jahan bar dele shir tarik shod

He went his way and drawing near the lions

Turned all the world to darkness in their hearts

a) Assonance: i sound repeated 5 times

c) Pun: between shir and shir, nazdik and tarik

d) Metaphor: shir for esfandiyar

e) Hyperbole: jahan tarik shod

f) Rhyme: shod, shod

5. چو خورشید تابنده بنمود پشت دل خاور از پشت او شد درشت
(Verse: 252, p.722)

Cho khorshide tabande benmood posht dele khavar
az poshte 'u shod dorosht

When bright Sol showed its back,

Which ruffled all the bosom of the west

a) Assonance: o sound repeated 6 times

b) Consonance: sh repeated 5 times

c) Pun: between posht and posht, posht and dorosht

d) Personification: khorshid benmood posht, dele khavar

e) Rhyme: posht, dorosht

6. همه ریگ تفتست گر خاک و خش برو ننگرد مرغ و مور و ملخ
(Verse: 300, p.723)

Hame rig taftast gar khak o khash baru nagzarad morgh o moor o malakh

An arid wilderness of dust and sand

Which birds and ants and locusts traverse not

a) Alliteration: khak, khash and morgh, moor, malakh

b) Consonance: r repeated 6 times

c) Taxis (Mora atonnazir): morgh, moor, malakh

7. نه سمرغ پیدا نه شیر و نه گرگ نه آن تیز چنگ ازدهای بزرگ
(Verse: 287, p.723)

Na simorgh peida na shir o nag org na an tiz chang ejdahaye bozorg

Evanished are Simorgh and lion, wolf

And dragon sharp of claw and valorous!

a) Alliteration: na

b) Consonance: n repeated 4 times

c) Rhyme: between gorg and bozorg

e) Metaphor: shir, gorg

f) Taxis (Mora atonnazir): simorgh, shir, gorg, ejdeha

8. یکی با دو گردی برآمد سپاه بیوشید دیدار خورشید و ماه
(Verse: 227, p.721)

Yeki ba do gardi baramad sepah bepushid didare khorshid o mah

While blast and black cloud veiled the sun and moon

a) Alliteration: ba, bar amad, bepushid

b) Personification: didare khorshid va mah

c) Taxis (Mora atonnazir): khorshid, mah

d) Rhyme: siah, mah

9. دو چشمش چو دو چشمه تابان ز خون همی آتش آمد ز کامش برون
(Verse: 155, p.719)

Do chashmash cho do cheshme taban ze khun hami atash amad ze kamash borun

Its two eyes seemed fountains bright with blood,

While from its gullet fire issued

a) Alliteration: chashmash, cho, cheshmeh

b) Consonance: sh repeated 5 times

c) Rhyme: between khoon, boroon

d) Simile: chashmash cho do cheshme

e) Taxis (Mora atonnazir): chashm, kam

f) Hyperbole: atash amad ze kamash boroon

10. بخورشید مانند همی دست شاه چو اندر حمل بر فرزند کلاه
(Verse: 16, p.715)

Be khorshid manad hami daste shah cho andar hamal bar farazad kolah

As Sol, when it arises gloriously

In Aries, such shall the shah's hand be,

a) Pun: between shah, kolah

b) Simile: Be khorshid manad hami daste shah

Conclusion

The present study was an attempt to examine how much loss have occurred in Warner & Warner's translation of the story of The Seven Stages of Esfandiyar in Shahnameh in terms of figures of speech. The results indicated that the number of figures of speech in the translation is less than that of

Shahnameh. According to the data in table 4, among the figures of speech identified in Shahnameh, rhyme with the most rate of occurrence in the original text was found only once in the target text. Totally, it has been found that the number of figures of speech in Shahnameh is twice more than that of the translation in most cases; and this, in turn, shows that the target readers would lose a great extent of this masterpiece, i.e. Shahnameh, in terms of figures of speech and ascetics.

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Appendix
Table 4.1

	Source Text	Target Text
Verse 1	4	2
Verse 2	4	1
Verse 3	3	1
Verse 4	5	3
Verse 5	7	1
Verse 6	4	1
Verse 7	5	2
Verse 8	4	3
Verse 9	6	4
Verse 10	2	1

Table 4.2

	Source Text	Target Text
Alliteration	7	3
Assonance	4	2
Consonance	4	0
Rhyme	9	1
Personification	4	2
Metaphor	1	1
Hyperbole	3	3
Simile	3	2
Taxis	4	4
Pun	4	0

Table 3.1. Comparing the figures of speech _ Verse 1

	Source text	Target text
Alliteration	*	
Simile	*	*
Personification	*	
Rhyme	*	*

Table 3.2. Comparing the figures of speech _ Verse 2

	Source text	Target text
Alliteration	*	
Consonance	*	
Assonance		*
Pun	*	
Rhyme	*	

Table 3.3. Comparing the figures of speech _ Verse 3

	Source text	Target text
Alliteration	*	
Assonance	*	*
Rhyme	*	

Table 3.4. Comparing the figures of speech _ Verse 4

Table 3.5. Comparing the figures of speech _ Verse 5

	Source text	Target text
Rhyme	*	
Personification	*	
Consonance	*	
Personification	*	*
Pun	*	

Table 3.6. Comparing the figures of speech _ Verse 6

	Source text	Target text
Taxis	*	*
Alliteration	*	
Consonance	*	

Table 3.7. Comparing the figures of speech _ Verse 7

	Source text	Target text
Taxis	*	*
Alliteration	*	
Consonance	*	
Metaphor	*	*
Rhyme	*	

Table 3.8. Comparing the figures of speech _ Verse 8

	Source text	Target text
Taxis	*	*
Alliteration	*	*
personification	*	*
Rhyme	*	

Table 3.9. Comparing the figures of speech _ Verse 9

	Source text	Target text
Simile	*	
Alliteration	*	*
Consonance	*	
Personification	*	*
Taxis	*	*
Hyperbole	*	*

Table 3.10. Comparing the figures of speech _ Verse 10

	Source text	Target text
Hyperbole	*	*
Rhyme	*	
Simile	*	*