



The Effect of Ideology on lexical and Syntactic Choices in Literary Translation: A Case Study of The Persian Translation of The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan

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ABSTRACT

As Simpson (1993) writes, ideology has been defined as the tacit assumptions, beliefs, and value systems which are shared collectively by social groups. These indications show the influence of translator's mental frameworks through which he / she translates and interprets the texts. This study investigated ideological aspects of literary translation by specifically focusing on the analysis of the textual features of a literary source text, namely, Morier's *Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*, a novel originally published in English in 1823, and its corresponding translated target text, namely, *Sargozašt-e Hāji Bābā-ye Eṣfahāni*, rendered into Persian by Mirza Ḥabib Iṣfahāni in the 1880s. Employing Halliday's (1985) systemic functional linguistics (SFL) for the analysis and assessment of translated works, the researchers analyzed the TT by accounting for the sets of constraints within which the expression of ideology take place. In order to indicate the ideological aspects, the study concentrated on the analysis of a number of textual features, namely, "nominalizations", "voice shifts", "modality shifts", "agency shifts", and "thematic progressions". The study finally comes up with the conclusion that the TT has been under the influence of ideological manipulation by the translator in order to conform to the target culture's textual and social values.

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Introduction

For years translations were considered as derivatives, copies, and translators as mechanical devices replacing linguistic codes (equivalents) from one language into another, and the translator's autonomy was always questioned (and is still being questioned) by those who thought of him/her "as a monkey, with no choice save to make the same grimaces as his master" (Leppihalme, 1997, p. 19), until recent years when, under the influence of poststructuralism and functionalism, the focus of attention has been shifted to the issue of translator's agency and subjectivity, and the notions of originality and (absolute) equivalence and also the author's superiority over translator have been severely questioned (Karoubi, 2005).

Translation may not be regarded as a neutral undertaking (cf. Hatim & Mason, 1997), but as an activity in which social, political, religious, and ideological beliefs of the translator can be traced, though not explicitly.

With the emergence of the cultural turn in translation studies, external factors affecting translation have been paid attention to in this field. Therefore, macro factors, such as translator, history, culture, politics in target contexts, translators' agency and ideological manipulation have become the main concern of translation studies (Munday, 2008). In this relation, Lefevere (1992), one of the representatives of the Manipulation school, believes that translation is the rewriting of STs which are manipulated by ideology, poetics, patronage and universe of discourse in which ideology and poetics are the most important constituents (p. xi). According to what has been said, language has a crucial role in the expression of ideology (Sertkan, 2007). Along with the social aspects of language, there is a close tie

between language and ideology, the relationship between language and ideology has been a central topic in the study of media discourse for the past three decades (Shojaei, 2012). Believing that there is a determinant relation between ideological processes and linguistic processes, and more specifically, that the linguistic choices that are made in texts can carry ideological meaning, Critical Linguistics examines how underlying ideologies are embedded in linguistic structures such as vocabulary and syntax (Fowler, 1991; Fowler et al., 1979; Hodge & Kress, 1979, as cited in Shojaei, 2012). In this regard we come across a phenomenon called "language ideology" which has been defined in many different ways (Woolard, 1998, as cited in Shojaei, 2012). It is a term through which "the notion of ideology is linked to language or discourse to characterize the development of beliefs and attitudes toward the learning and use of a particular language". The term language ideology, or linguistic ideology, has been used by some scholars "to describe or analyze the discourse on language within a linguistically diverse context" (Martinez-Roldan & Malave, 2004, p. 161, as cited in Shojaei, 2012). So the translator should be well aware of the beliefs, attitudes, values and rules of the source culture, to understand them and to adequately translate them in the target culture.

Relying partially on the frameworks of analysis put forward by Halliday (1985), later proposed by Calzada Perez (2002) for ideological orientations, this study will present ideological aspects of the literary translation under investigation by focusing on the analysis of the textual features of the literary ST and its corresponding translated TT.

Theoretical grounding of the study

The theoretical foundations of the present research are basically rooted in the theoretical premises put forward by Halliday's (1985) SFL, on the basis of which Calzada Perez (2002) proposed her own model of critical text analysis that delves into the ideological realms of translations. Their theoretical proposals are, in turn, fundamentally based on the line of thought put forward by critical discourse analysis (CDA). A brief description of the theoretical orientation is as the follow:

Halliday's framework for discourse analysis

Halliday's model of discourse analysis, based on what he terms systemic functional grammar (SFL), is geared to the study of language as communication, seeing meaning in the writer's linguistic choices and systematically relating these choices to a wider sociocultural framework (Munday, 2001, p. 90). The sociocultural environment therefore in part conditions the genre, understood in SFL as the conventional text type that is associated with a specific communicative function (Munday, 2012, p. 138). Genre itself helps to determine other elements in the systemic framework. The first of these is register (*ibid.*). In SFL, it is a technical term, richer and more complex. As Munday (2012, p. 139) points out, it links the variables of social context to language choice and comprises three elements: field of discourse, tenor of discourse and mode of discourse. Each of variables of register is associated with a strand of meaning or metafunction: ideational, interpersonal and textual (Munday, 2001, p. 91). The metafunctions are constructed or realized by the lexicogrammar, that is the choices of wording and syntactic structure (*ibid.*). The links are broadly as follows (see Eggins, 1994, p. 78, as cited in Munday, 2001, p. 91):

The field of a text is associated with ideational meaning, which is realized through transitivity patterns (verb types, active/passive structures, participants in the process, etc.).

The tenor of a text is associated with interpersonal meaning, which is realized through the patterns of modality (modal verbs and adverbs, any evaluative lexis).

The mode of a text is associated with textual meaning, which is realized through the thematic and information structures (mainly the order and structuring of elements in a clause) and cohesion (the way the text hangs together lexically, including the use of pronoun, ellipsis, collocation, repetition, etc.).

Method

Materials and procedures

As it was mentioned earlier, an English novel by James Morier (1823), entitled *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*, was selected as the literary ST and its translation into Persian (namely, *Sargozašt-e Hāji Bābā-ye Ešfāhāni*, rendered into Persian by Mirza Ḥabib Iṣfahāni in the 1880s) as the TT. The analytical comparison of the ST and TT was made in terms of Halliday's SFL with regard to nominalization, voice shifts (passive/active sentences), modality shifts, agency shifts, and thematic progressions by comparing the two texts sentence by sentence to locate ideological orientations adopted by the translator. Instances judged to involve ideology in the TT have been located and noted down as qualitative evidence. To put it in other words, the researchers have attempted to investigate the following research question:

1. Is literary translation as a kind of ideological translation?

Morier's Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan

Abbas Amanat (2003, pp. 561-8), in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, has described the book in the following lines:

The *Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* is the most popular oriental novel in the English language and a highly influential stereotype of the so-called "Persian national

character" in modern times. . . . Morier's display of the Persian vagaries served as a reassurance of Europe's cultural and moral superiority and the civilizing mission of the imperial powers. The book contains eighty chapters. Despite Morier's biases, one can still read Hajji Baba as an informative source of the early Qajar period, by virtue of its Persian expressions and proverbs, portrayals of historical figures (often under a thin fictionalized disguise), and the general sense of everyday life in the Persian environment that it conveys. Mirza Ḥabib Iṣfahāni rendered this novel in Istanbul in the 1880s. His translations of European popular novels are indisputably superior to those of many of his contemporaries in style and complexity, as well as his grasp of the original message.

Analysis of textual features in terms of Halliday's SFL

In order to better clarify the intended meaning of the sentences or expressions under scrutiny in the TT, the translation of each instance of the ST into Persian is followed by a literal back translation into English by the researchers to allow the comparison of the ST meaning with that of the TT for those readers who might need more clarification.

Thematic structures

According to Halliday (1985), Theme is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that with which the clause is concerned. Theme can be identified as that element which comes in first position in the clause. The remainder of the message, the part in which the theme is developed, is called in Prague school terminology the Rheme. (pp. 38-39)

In Halliday's opinion (*ibid.*), shifts in the thematic structure of a clause lead to changes in the meaning of the clause.

(1)ST: I had an uncle, my father's brother, a deacon, and an attendant upon the head of our church (p. 202).

عمو و خالویم در خدمت (اوج کلیسا) بودند (ص.230).

TT: æmoo væ khaloo'am dær khedmæte kelisa boudænd (p. 230). [my uncle had worked in church.]

In the ST, 'I', which serves as the Theme, and, at the same time, as the agent of the sentence, has been replaced in the translation by 'my uncle', suppressing the agency of the 'I' and, instead, granting the 'my uncle' an agentive role.

Nominalizations

According to Fairclough (2005), "nominalization is linguistically a shift from verbs to a particular class of nouns in the representation of actions and processes" (p. 926). Nominalized items do not have any agents; in other words, they "undercut agency in that they can occur without any overt mention of agency" (Kies, 1992, Nominalizations section, para. 1).ST: It must have been in the constant dread of the loss of my ears (p. 107).

همیشه خواب بریده شدن گوش و بینی خود را می دیدم (ص.63).

TT: Hæmishe khabe boride shodæne goosh væ bini'ye khod ra mididam (p. 63). [I always had a dream for cutting my ear and nose.]

In the example above, the nominal phrase 'the loss of' has been translated as the verbal phrase 'for cutting' and the nominal phrase 'the loss of', respectively, no longer conveying concrete notions, actions or processes, but rather conveying abstract, unspecified events devoid of any agent.

Modality shifts

The term modality refers broadly to attitudinal features of language, reflecting the text producer's attitude towards, or opinion about, the truth of a proposition expressed by a sentence, or generally the status of what is expressed. It refers to some of the grammatical means by which a speaker or writer, in Toolan's words (2001, p. 7), "qualifies what would otherwise be absolute

statements (Like It's wet and cloudy in Lima; ... [vs.] It seems that it's wet and cloudy in Lima.)”Modality is indicated through the use of modal verbs. According to Halliday (1985, p. 75), modality is “the speaker’s judgment of the probabilities, or the obligations, involved in what he is saying”.

ST: she soon gave me to understand that this must be our last meeting (p. 182)..(199). گفت: این دیدار آخرین است (ص. 182).

TT: goft, in didar-e akhærin ast (p. 199).[She said, “this is the last meeting”.]

This is another difference in syntactic transformation between the ST and TT. While in the ST, the modal verb ‘must’ suggests an obligation, the modality is totally absent from the TT, implying an absolute statement.

Passivization

Agency “can be expressed (or suppressed) by a number of syntactic constructions. . . . Central among the linguistic features that undercut agency is passive voice” (Kies, 1992, p. 231). He adds that “passives are among the most common grammatical devices to undercut agency in English, allowing the agentive noun phrase to occur out of thematic structure.” He further maintains that, in passivization, “characters are not conscious initiators of action” (ibid.).

ST: He was generally known, simply as ‘Hassan the barber’ (p. 100)..(45). "پدرم حسن دلاک" تنها بود(ص. 45).

TT: pedæræm Hasan dælake tænhæ boud (p. 45).[my father was Hasan the barber.]

While in the source text, due to passivization, the agent of the action is not specified, in the Persian translation, it has been explicitly stated that ‘my father’ itself made the decision to depart. Thus, there is a discrepancy between the two texts.

Concluding remarks

Researchers such as Kelly (1998), Puurtinenn(1998, 2003), Sertkan (2007) and Khaje and Khanmohamad (2009) and Banhegyi(2009) who investigated ideological differences between some source books and their translations concluded that the translations were ideologically different from the source books (Mansourabadi & Karimnia, 2012). Mirzā Ḥabib produced a free translation of Morier’s first work with many additions and omissions, and with many stanzas added by the author to satisfy Persian taste (Amanat, 2003). The data obtained through analytical comparison of the ST and TT also confirm such a claim. The researchers can say that it closely related to translator’s ideology.

Hatim (1999, as cited in Ghazanfari, 2009) maintains that any discussion of “domestication” versus “foreignization” inevitably raises the “literal” versus “free” translation debate. “It is tempting to equate foreignizing with a more literal mode,” Hatim explains, “and domesticating with a freer mode. Indeed, this is more or less how it is in most cases”. Moreover, according to Venuti (1995, pp. 18-19), over the last three centuries, there has been a predominant trend towards domestication in Anglo-American translations; Mirzā Ḥabib’s rendering of *Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* seems to be a typical example of this. To put it in Hatim and Mason’s words, it means that the translator has exerted maximal mediation (i.e. intervention) in the process of translating the text, and the result has been to produce a text that is more compatible with generic, discursal, and textual conventions and norms of the target-language culture rather than the source-language culture – hence, relating an ideology that strikingly differs from that of the original text (Ghazanfari, 2005). Therefore, as to the research question that was earlier posed, this can by itself be a testimony that Mirzā Ḥabib’s translation of *Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* is an ideological translation.

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