



The Multi-Layered Title: Problems and Procedures of Translating Books' Titles

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 9 November 2013;

Received in revised form:

20 January 2014;

Accepted: 22 January 2014;

Keywords

Title,
Genre,
Translation strategies,
Titrology.

ABSTRACT

Titles are multi-layered and functional in nature. In the recent years, the academic field of titrology has paid particular attention to the analysis of titles from different scopes, but research on the translation of titles has been very limited, especially in the context of Persian language. This study has addressed structural differences and generic peculiarities of book titles and investigates the translation methods adopted by Iranian translators. To this aim 180 English book titles and their translations were analyzed according to the methodology proposed by Nord (1995) and their translation strategy is categorized according to Vinay-Darbelenet's model of translation strategies. The results showed Iranian translators' preference of direct translation methods, while indirect strategies were applied where generic conventions and cultural differences imprinted structural and lexical shifts.

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Introduction

Titles are defined as descriptive labels of texts specified to fulfill various purposes. The academic study of titles, known as "tit(r)ology" is not very long-established, but due to the significant role of titles in representing a cultural product it has come to the fore of academic attention. The pioneering studies of literary theorists Claude Duchet and Gerard Genette in the 1970s and the 1980s raised scholars' interest in the titles. Some of other notable premiere studies include J. Hollander (1975), H. Levin (1977), J. Fisher (1984), L. Hoek (1981) and H. Adams (1987), among others. Dupre and Van-steendam (2013) report that two specific aspects which have always been the main theme of exploration are function of titles (Grivel, 1973; Hoek, 1981; Genette, 1987; Lodge 1992; Nord, 1993, 1995; Lorch and Lorch 1995; Virbel, 1989, 2002, 2008; Viezzi, 2004, 2010; Bouchehri, 2008; etc) and their form and structure (Fisher, 1984; Nord, 1995; Biacchi, 2004; Hartley, 2007; Gibbons, 2007; Bouchehri, 2008; Soler, 2011; etc). In recent decades titrology has attracted the attention of many scholars from diverse fields and has therefore become less attached to the studies of literary critique (Sidiskyte, 2013). Semioticians (Rothe 1971, 1985; Hoek, 1981; Iliescu, 2001; Baicchi, 2004, Taha 2009) attempt to define title in terms of a linguistic sign referring to another sign (text) which carries verbal message as well as non-verbal. They also try to establish the relationship existing between title and text in terms of indexicality, reference and representativeness. The cognitive theorists (Kozminsky 1977; Salma-Cazucu, 1999, Taha 2009, etc.) attempt to realize the cognitive capacities of titles such as effect on text comprehension, text recall, and evaluation. The stylistic view to title enables the researcher to address specifically its translation. According to Briffa & Crauna (2009), the stylistic choices in a title are of paramount importance; so this feature should be carried through in the translation, paying particular attention to authenticate it within the target language and culture. Another important approach to the study of title which seems to be the most elaborate one is the functional approach. The amount of theoretical and practical researches in this field is more than any other approach. Among

the first scholars who studied functions of title is Charles Grivel who presented his definition of title based upon three functions: 1) identifying the work 2) designating its content and 3) evaluating/ highlighting it (cited in Genette, 1988). There is a consensus among all researchers on these three basic functions, however; there have been many attempts to identify more functions for the titular unit. It is noteworthy that many of the contributions to the field of titrology are in French; hence they have not found their way to the international level of scientific discussions and remain localized (Sidiskyte, 2013).

Title and Translation theories

The research on the translation of titles has been very limited. In a review of empirical research on film title translations, Dupre and Van-steendam (2013) report that only a minority of the studies which explore translation procedures of film titles are corpus-based (Bouchehri, 2008; Brownlees, 1994; Jiménez, 1997, Pastor, 2011). Regarding the translation of film titles, Sidiskyte (2013) states that there are also a number of research articles produced in the context of Asian countries (Mei, 2010; Chang, 2012; Yin, 2009; Kelan and Wei, 2006). From a more general theoretical point of view, there are two translation scholars who proposed for translation methods. Newmark (1988) discusses the translation of titles based on two main types of titles: descriptive titles (that describe the topic of the text) and allusive titles (that have some kind of referential or figurative relationship to the topic). He puts emphasis on possible generic variations of titles and asserts that for serious imaginative literature, descriptive title should be 'literally' kept, and an allusive title must be preserved literally or, where necessary, imaginatively. On the other hand, for non-literary texts, replacing allusive by descriptive titles seems more appropriate, particularly if there are idiomatic or culture-bound elements in them.

A more extensive view to titles and headings is presented by Christian Nord (1993, 1995, and 2012). Nord (1993) starts from the assumption that titles and headings are textual units forming a text-type and finds three aspects as vital elements for the analysis of titles: 1) the communicative functions; 2) the culture-specific and genre-specific ways to verbalize these

functions; 3) the culture-specific structural conventions determining the textual design of titles. She conducted a contrastive research (1995) on titles and headings of different publications, including scholarly journal articles written in English, French, German and Spanish. She identified three functions of titles, which are relevant to the general communicative situation, and three optional functions of titles determined by specific interactional circumstances.

Methodology

In order to identify the influence of genre on the translation of titles, titles' structural features and possible generic differences were investigated according to the model proposed by Nord (1993). Nord's model has a basis in contrastive analysis of titles, but it is not duly elaborated for the translation of titles. Hence, some parts of it which serve to the purpose of this study are adapted. Nord distinguishes between title types, forms and patterns which the first two are addressed here. For title type, Lahlou's taxonomy (1989), adapted from Genette's discussion of titles, is chosen over Nord's classification. Since Nord's classification of simple, combined and title strings (more than one sentence) seems too general and not adequately distinctive. According to Lahlou, any title includes at least one of these constituents: Title, Subtitle and Genre indicator; which generates six potential titling patterns:

- 1 T: Title
- 2 TS: Title + Subtitle
- 3 TG: Title + Generic Indicator
- 4 TSG: Title + Subtitle + Generic Indicator
- 5 GS: Generic Indicator + Subtitle
- 6 G: Generic Indicator

By title forms, linguistic form of titular phrase such as nominal, adverbial, etc. are identified and compared to their translations.

To identify and compare the translation strategies used by Iranian translators, the translation model developed by Vinay and Dalbarnet was used. This model consists of seven procedures that represent either direct or oblique translation methods.

Three direct translation procedures:

1. Borrowing: The SL word is transferred directly to the TL.
2. Calque: This is a special kind of borrowing where the SL expression or structure is transferred in a literal translation.
3. Literal translation: Word-for-word translation

Four oblique translation procedures:

4. Transposition: a change of one part of speech for another without changing the sense.
5. Modulation: The change of semantics and point of view of the source language.
6. Equivalence: describing the same situation by different stylistic or structural means.
7. Adaptation: changing the cultural reference when a situation in the source culture does not exist in the target culture (cited in Munday, 2008).

Analysis and Results

The structural analysis of 180 book titles (60 in each genre) enabled us to identify genre-related features in English and their translated Persian titles. Table 1 shows the frequency of original English titles in each type.

As we can see here, the majority of titles tend to be in single T form in L and E genres, but their frequency varies. The second common structure is TS, which is the most common in Humanities and the second frequent in Experimental genre. In literary genre TG is the second frequent, although with a high

difference and closely followed by TS. Other structures such as TSG, GS, and G are almost rare.

Table 1. Title types identified in literary, humanities and experimental genres

Title Type	L	H	E
(single unit) T	47	21	51
Title+ subtitle: TS	5	35	9
Title + Generic Indicator: TG	6	0	0
Title + Subtitle + Generic Indicator: TSG	1	4	0
Generic Indicator + Subtitle: GS	0	0	0
Generic Indicator Title: G	1	0	0

Table 2. shows the frequency of titles which were translated in the same type or in a different type.

Table 2. The frequency of translated types of titles

Genre	Items	Translated in the same type	Translated in a different type
L	(47 T)	47	0
	(5 TS)	1	4 (T)
	(6 TG)	1	5 (T)
	(1 TSG)	0	1 (TS)
	(4 GS)	0	0
H	(21 T)	16	5 (TS)
	(35 TS)	27	8 (T)
	(4 TG)	4	0
	(1 TSG)	0	0
	(4 GS)	0	0
E	(51 T)	46	5 (TS)
	(9 TS)	1	8 (T)

The results show that in literary genre the whole 47 single titles were rendered as single titles i.e. no change in their type was made. However, in other genres, a number of single titles were changed to other types. In Humanities out of 21 single titles, 5 titles were produced as TS type (a subtitle was added to the source title) and in the Experimental genre out of 51 single titles, 5 titles were reproduced as TS type. The subtitle part most often has a descriptive function which explains the theme mentioned in the title and gives extra information about the book to the readers. Moreover, these subtitles act as catchy phrases which serve to the appellative function of book titles. On the other hand, table 1 shows that in Humanities the TS title type is the most common which refers to the generic conventions of Humanities book titles and can be mentioned as a cause of shift to TS type in the translations. Here are some examples:

Philosophy of science in the twentieth century	فلسفه ی علم در قرن بیستم: چهار موضوع اصلی
The legacy of Persia	میراث ایران/ تالیف سیزده تن از خاورشناسان
The paradoxical flow of acceptance and rejection in the films of Woody Allen	همه می گویند دوستت دارم: وودی آلن در آینه ی سه فیلم

Industrial electronics	ها در Amp-Op الکترونیک صنعتی پیشرفته: پیشرفته DC، AC کاربرد صنعتی، موتورهای
Writing manual automation and power distribution	برق صنعتی پیشرفته کاپا3: آخرین دستگاه های اتوماسیون برق صنعتی نصب، راه اندازی نقشه کار
Surface irrigation systems and practice	آبیاری سطحی: سیستمها و نحوه کاربرد آنها
Basics of engineering economy	مبانی اقتصاد مهندسی: ارزیابی اقتصادی پروژه های صنعتی
Sprinkler irrigation	آبیاری بارانی: دستگاههای مورد نیاز و نحوه استفاده از آنها

For TS type, results showed the same tendency. Except in Humanities, the TS form was not very common in the other two

genres. Among 5 TS titles in literary books, 4 of them have shift to T (the most common one in their genre). Similarly in E book titles, from 9 TS titles, 8 are translated as T type. According to the results shown in table 1, T titles have a high frequency in literary genre. It appears that T titles act as a conventional type in this genre, both regarding their frequency in original English titles and in their translations. For a literary book, which its main function is supposed to be the expressive function (Buhler), a description in form of subtitle seems unnecessary, distracting and unconventional for readers. However instances may happen according to the situation of the target text. In the examples provided below, the subtitle part seems essential for the English reader, as it distinguishes the book by informing about a specific edition or other information. But for the Persian reader this seems unnecessary, since it is not distinctive for them.

Samuel Beckett: the Grove centenary edition	هذیان‌ها
As I lay dying: the corrected text	گور به گور

Examples from Humanities and experimental genres show another kind of strategy. In L titles, the subtitle was removed. But in the few instances of H and E genres, the subtitle is not removed but it is combined with the title into one single unit. The reason for this can be the translator's preference for clarity or economy.

For TG titles, instances were only found in literary books titles in our corpus. Generic indicator is a constituent which seems unlikely to appear in humanities and experimental book titles (however they can appear in article titles in these genres). According to the examples from corpus and background knowledge of the writer, the convention of literary genre in Persian language seems to exclude genre indicator form title of the cover page of the books. For the Persian reader, an expressive title for literary book is more appealing and conventional. In all translated versions of the L titles, genre indicator is removed. In this one example from literary titles, the original title included only genre indicator:

Ten sorry tales >>>> تارک دنیا مورد نیاز است: ده داستان تأسف بار

The procedure adopted here, is addition of a title to the source genre indicator. The title "ten sorry tales" has been literally translated to *ده داستان تأسف بار* as a subtitle, following another title. The choice seems justifiable. The original English title indicates only the genre of the book. To the English reader it may seem adequate in terms of being informative and appellative, but to the Persian reader it is vague since this genre is not common in Iran's fiction, so the translator or the publication house decided to use the title of one of the stories which is more catchy; and it emphasizes on a new kind of fiction for the readers. Interestingly, this book has sold many copies in Iran. If we take title of the book as the first criterion which attracts the reader's attention prior to the other factors, its title has fulfilled the purpose of translator and the publication house.

The other structural feature is concerned with title form. The available title forms in the corpus of this study were:

- 1) *Nominal titles* consisting of a noun phrase that may have one or two complements Example: Kant theory of knowledge
- 2) *Adverbial titles* introduced by a preposition Example: beyond our solar system
- 3) *Verb titles* consisting of a verb, in the form of infinitive Example: understanding digital electronica
- 4) *Clause titles* in the form of a main and/or subordinate (often temporal or relative) clause Example: Look at the birdie!

Table 3 The frequency of title forms identified in literary, humanities and experimental genres

Title form	L	H	E
Nominal	43	52	55
Adverb	4	2	0
Verb	1	2	5
Clause	12	4	0

Analysis of Translation Strategies Regarding Title Forms

Among 60 titles of literary books, 43 titles have the nominal form. Their target text equivalents i.e. their translations all have the nominal form. In Humanities 52 titles had the nominal form and all were translated to nominal form. In Experimental 55 titles have the nominal form, which all are translated to nominal form.

Table 4. The frequency of translated title forms in each genre

Literary	Humanities	Experimental
43N→43N	52N→52N	55N→55N
4Adv→3adv, 1Adj	2Adv→2N	-
1V→1N	2V→2N	5V→4N
12C→12C	4C→2N, 2C	-

Among 4 adverbial titles of literary books, 3 were translated as adverb and one is rendered to adjective form: As I lay dying *گور به گور*

In humanities, the 2 adverb titles were rendered as nominal titles:

Beyond our solar system منظومه ی شمسی ما

In defense of pure reason دفاع از خرد ناب

Among 8 verb titles in the corpus, all of them are rendered to nominal forms:

Plan or die: 10 keys organizational success	برنامهریزی یا مرگ: "برنامهریزی راهبردی - کاربردی" ۱۰ کلید برای موفقیت
Interpreting soil test results: What do all numbers mean?	تفسیر نتایج آزمون خاک: معانی اعداد چیست؟
Understanding digital electronica	مفهوم عملی الکترونیک دیجیتال
Writing manual automation and power distribution	برق صنعتی پیشرفته کاپا۳: آخرین دستگاه های اتوماسیون برق صنعتی نصب، راه اندازی نقشه کار

12 titles in literary genre and 4 titles in Humanities have the clause form. Among them 2 titles were rendered as nominal form and the rest of it were rendered as clause.

It can be concluded that Nominal title forms tend to be translated as nominal form: genre convention implies nominal form and according to linguistic structures of the two languages, most nominal forms are possible to be rendered as nominal forms. So in most cases a literal translation of title is applied. According to Nord (2012) nominal titles allow a condensed presentation of the information and allow a linear topic-comment progression, whereas clause titles are easier to understand and often stylistically more acceptable. However, it seems that unlike title types, more title forms tend to be preserved in their translation.

From the structural analysis of English book titles and their Persian translations, it could be concluded that genres imprint differences on the production and reproduction of book titles. in spite of translators' preference to preserve the structure of source titles, the structural conventions of target genre causes shifts of structure to the more common structures of the target culture.

General translation strategies

The structural analysis of the translation of English book titles into Persian has enabled to identify and compare generic conventions of book titles. However, this analysis lacks the

evaluation of semantic content and the lexical choices of translators. The translation methods of Vinay & Dalbarnet are hence considered useful to identify the procedures of translating titles in terms of content. The most widely applied translation methods by expert translators help us to disclose differences in the translation procedures employed for each genre.

In this part the general translation strategies used by translators are drawn based on Vinay & Dalbarnet's model of translation strategies.

Table 3. The frequency of translation strategies in translated book titles in three genres

Procedure	L	H	E
1. Borrowing	0	0	12
2. Calque	0	0	0
3. Literal Translation	44	45	44
4. Transposition	1	7	4
5. Modulation	7	6	0
6. Equivalence	5	2	0
7. Adaptation	3	0	0

As can be derived from the given data, literal translation is the most frequently applied procedure in the translation of titles into Persian in each genre, which points to the fact that direct translation procedures are preferable and widely used by Iranian translators. On the other hand, the procedure of literal translation is not very closely followed by other strategies which strengthen its general preference over other strategies. The use of other strategies shows variations across genres.

The analysis of the usage of the borrowing procedure in Experimental genre which contains specialized technical vocabulary has shown that translators tend to directly borrow proper names or technical words which have no equivalents in the target language.

Examples:

Borrowing

Advanced digital design with the Verilog HDL	طراحی دیجیتال پیشرفته با Verilog HDL
Power control circuits manual	power control مدارهای کاربردی
Schematic capture with cadence P.spice	(پی اسپیس) P.Spice راهنمای جامع اسپایس

In all genres no cases of the calque translation procedure were employed in the translation of book titles.

In the choice of the transposition procedure, translators tried to produce a more acceptable title regarding the linguistic form of it in the target language. There are 7 instances in Humanities and 4 in experimental genre, only one case was found in literary genre. Examples:

Discipline without shouting or spanking.	تربیت کودک بدون تنبیه
Your painting questions: answers from A to Z	بیش از 300 نکته مهم درباره نقاشی بصورت پرسش و پاسخ

In Literary genre Modulation and Equivalence closely follow each other with 7 and 5 instances respectively. However, these strategies were used in 8 instances in Humanities and not used at all in experimental genre. Modulation as a translation procedure allows some modifications of the original text. The investigated cases of the use of modulation procedure have revealed that the procedure is most often employed when the target language does not have exactly the same collocations or cultural contexts. For this reason, the modulation procedure works as a linguistic and cultural mediator. However, in challenging items of cultural variation, adaptation strategy is used. Adaptation was used in 3 titles in literary genre and not at all in the other two; since culture-specific words seem to be rare in specialized genres. Examples:

As I lay dying: the corrected text	گور به گور
Mockingbird wish me luck	دعای خیر پرندۀ مقلد
White men's grave	گورستان اهل فرنگ

As we can see from the findings, translation of literary book titles tends to show more creativity and a more variety of strategies are used in this genre. Referring to Vinay and Darbarnet's classification of the translation procedures as direct and oblique, it may be stated that in this set of book titles translators relied more on the direct translation procedures (145 cases) whereas translators gave a low preference to the oblique translation procedures (35 cases). As can be seen from the findings, the variation between direct and oblique translation procedures applied in the translation of book titles in literary, humanities and experimental genres is significant, pointing at the preference of direct translation methods over indirect strategies.

Conclusion

According to the data analyzed, we could see that genres imprint differences on the production and translation of book titles. The difference is of two kinds: general difference, e.g. literary titles (ST&TT) are mostly expressive and single unit form; and culture-specific differences such as in Persian books, genre indicator was avoided while the original titles had the genre indicator part. In experimental genre, most of the translated books are published under two titles: the translation on the front cover and the original on the back cover page.

As can be derived from the results, literal translation is the most frequently applied procedure in the translation of book titles into Persian, which points to the fact that direct translation procedures are preferable for translation of book titles and widely used in Iran.

On the other hand, the procedure of borrowing technical terms in experimental book titles which have no genuine equivalents in the target language conveys a more scientific and technical sense which make titles work as attention grabbers for prospective readers. Other procedures such as Modulation, transposition, equivalence and adaptation were mostly frequent in literary genre, which demands and also allows for a more creative translation strategy, especially in cases such as cultural terms and idiomatic language.

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