



A Comparative Quality Assessment of Translation of Faulkner's "Uncle Willy" Based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar model

M.Reza Samimi

Translation Studies, Kharazmi University, Tehran.

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ABSTRACT

Translatologists have tried to take advantage of scientific models to escape from the diversity of personal ideas to assess the quality of a piece of translation. One of those models is Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. In this paper the researcher has chosen "Uncle Willy" by William Faulkner and analysed its transitivity patterns, to find out the writer's style, based on Halliday's six processes and compared it with those of the translated text. The results show that the translator has emphasized the writer's materialistic point of view and has decreased the relational interactions between the characters of the story in the interests of their mental actions. This has caused relational actions to happen in regard to dialogues while in ST more verbal actions happen in characters' mind. And the existential aspect of the story has taken a stronger colour.

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Introduction

"Translation is first a science... secondly, it is a skill ... thirdly, an art ... lastly, a matter of taste". (Newmark, 1988: 6). Years have passed from "what George Steiner (1998: 319) calls a 'sterile' debate over the 'triad' of 'literal', 'free' and 'faithful' translation" (Munday, 2001:19) So that translation can find its real place within the academic and scientific majors. We can regard Nida as one of the first people who helped this to happen, "Nida is moving in the direction of a scientific analysis" (Gentzler, 1993: 95), by taking Chomsky's Generative-transformational Grammar into account. So far linguistics has helped translation get far away from subjectivity and get close toward objectivity. This is a good reason assessing the quality of a piece of translation does not seem reasonable without a scientific model. Many models have already been presented and used like that of Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar which "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, 2001:90). In this sort of communication a writer's lexical choices are of paramount importance.

"It [SFG] begins an analysis of language in social Context where a particular lexico-grammatical choice is constructed under the influence of the social and cultural context. Meaning, central to [SFG], is achieved through the linguistic choices in paradigmatic and the syntagmatic levels of discourse where the words are arranged in a clause or text." (Al-qinai, 2000: 497).

In fact language is an instrument which represents the writer's understanding of his world and the way he experiences the real world and its events. In Halliday's model there exist three types of metafunctions, (*ideational, interpersonal, textual*), from which ideational takes the responsibility of the above-mentioned duty.

Indeed, every writer experiences and understands the world and its realities individually and in segments, then represents them using language through lexical choices and within the *ideational* function. Halliday has described six processes, (*material, mental, verbal, behavioral, relational, and existential*) through which experiences are presented. Now analyzing a writer's choices using the transitivity pattern which is in Halliday's terms, a part of the *ideational* function of the clause, which in fact belongs to the experiential metafunction and shows how language construes our experience of the world around us, we can discover the writer's internal network of real-world understandings and then comparing that with that of a translation we can assess the quality of the translation and give this a scientific color.

In this paper the researcher has made a comparison between William Faulkner's "Uncle Willy" and its translation from the transitivity point of view as an indicator of the writer's style to assess the degree of the translated text closeness/farness to that of the original text. Thus, first the text was divided into clauses, and then each clause main verb was discerned and categorized into one of the Halliday's six verb processes and the results were compared and analyzed.

Literature Review:

It is clear that teaching translation has always been partly subjective and this causes some theorists not to believe translation as an academic major. As Neubert (1984: 69) says: "Often we cannot agree what a particular translation should be like. But can one teach what one does not know?" Regarding the above-mentioned sentence, what is difficult to teach is difficult to assess, maybe because of the lack of a clear-cut criterion. Translation quality assessment is of important topics in Translation Studies which has so far been discussed many times. James Holmes has considered this as a part of translation criticism but because of the matter of subjectivity in between

many theorists still criticize academic approaches to translation quality assessment due to their lack of determining the nature of quality (Lauscher, 2000). Afterwards attempts have been toward identifying and defining criteria related to translation quality and assessing that systematically. So far many types of such models have been presented. Lauscher (2000) in her paper has divided these models into two groups:

(1) equivalence-based approaches in which equivalence is used to define the relationship between the two texts with the aim of reproducing the source text (Lauscher, 2000).

One of these models was introduced by Katherina Reisse in 1970. "Her ... approach aims initially at systematizing the assessment of translation" (Munday, 2001: 73). She defines translating as "a bipolar procedure aiming at producing a target text while constantly referring back to the source text" (Lauscher, 2000: 151). Another model is House's. She explains her model: "the model is also based on the notion of 'equivalence'" (House, 1997: 29). "The notion of equivalence, on which the model is based, is related to the preservation of 'meaning' across two different languages." (House, 1997: 30). In effect, House is going to make a systematic comparison between the two texts and then regarding the mismatches assess the quality of the translation.

Van den Broeck seeks for "functionally relevant features" based on which factual equivalence between the two texts can be measured (Lauscher, 2000). like Toury who "holds to the use of a hypothetical intermediate invariant or *tertium comprationis* as an 'Adequate Translation' (AT)" (Munday, 2001:112), Van den Broeck (1985) believes in AT as a yardstick to compare the translation's shifts from a contrastive linguistics and stylistic point of view (Lauscher, 2000).

The second category is:

(2) Functional Approaches in translation get far from source-text and get close to the function determined by the translation commissioner and the target cultural situation (Lauscher, 2000).

Ammann (1990) based on skopos theory believes that "a good translation is one that allows the target reader to reach a coherent interpretation of the target text". (Lauscher, 2000: 156).

Another functional model was proposed by D'Hulst (1996) in which translation function takes the burden of quality. Models proposed for assessing translation quality bear both advantages and disadvantages and are constantly criticized by scholars from the view of their inability in practical usage. But, among these, one of the most reliable models, based on functional linguistics, is that of Halliday.

Toolan (1386) considers Halliday's grammar as one of the most beneficial and useful contemporary and semantic ones which can be used for analyzing literary texts (Agha Gol Zade, 2012). Based on his model socio-cultural framework influences genre and genre itself helps to shape the register which contains three items as *field*, *tenor*, and *mode* each of which are realized by three different metafunctions as *ideational*, *interpersonal* and *textual* respectively. Each will be explained below:

The *ideational* function of language is used to construct externally the inner world of the author's experience. In fact this is used "for expressing a content in terms of the speaker's experience and that of the speech community" (Halliday, 2003: 312). Halliday refers to this as the "content function of language" (Halliday 2007: 183).

Interpersonal function deals with the relationship between the participants and their roles in a communication. Halliday

defines it as "it embodies all use of language to express social and personal relation" (Halliday, 2003: 316).

Textual function of language is the field in which *ideational* and *interpersonal* functions happen. In fact it "fills the requirement that language should be operationally relevant-that it should have a texture, in real context of situation" (Halliday, 2003: 316-317). Now regarding the ideational metafunction such a top-down relation can be established: the register variable 'field' of the context of situation is realized by the '*ideational* metafunction', which, in turn, is realized by the *lexicogrammatical* '*transitivity pattern*', whose choices are realized by a spoken or written medium of expression (Praxedes Filho, 2004).

Transitivity pattern bridges the gap between the grammatical choices and the meta-functions. Based on Halliday's model: "the set of options relating to cognitive content, the linguistic representation of extra linguistic experience, whether of the phenomena of the external world or of feelings, thoughts and perceptions" (Halliday, 1967: 199). Transitivity itself has three components as follows: *the process itself*, *participants in the process* and *circumstances associated with the process*.

Six types of processes are introduced through which experiences are presented. They will be named and explained below: *material*, *relational*, *mental*, *verbal*, *behavioral*, and *existential* processes.

A *material* process is a process of doing or happening, and the Actor is the key participant. The mental process has to do with affection, cognition, perception, or desideration.

Verbal processes include all modes of expressing and indicating, even if they need not be verbal, such as "showing".

Existential process involves *existential* constructions which are introduced by an empty *there* in subject position.

Relational processes are concerned with being, possessing, or becoming.

Behavioral process is a hybrid process -- a *material-mental* process. Halliday (1971) in his study on Golding's work, "The Inheritors", has shown that one of the characters, namely Lock, had difficulty understanding cause and effect relationships which all has been discovered out of his utterances. (Agha Gol Zade, 2012). In 1982 Burton, analyzed a part of S. Plath's work by the name of The "Bell Jar" based on which he led to the result that the main character of the novel is inactive and every act was done by other participants, which caused the main character to seem lonely and a victim (Agha Gol Zade, 2012).

R. Hassan (1989) in an analysis based on Halliday's model on one of the Murray's poems has discovered that the *material* process is the dominant one but there are no *verbal* processes and there is only one *mental* process in the poem. Thus, she believes that the old man's loneliness results from the absence of other participants. (Agha Gol Zade, 2011). In 1997, Hatim and Maison put Halliday's model into practice on a part of Albert Camus novel "The Stranger". They observed some changes in the novel, transitivity *pattern* had caused shifts in *ideational function* of the text in the way that the story main character had become a passive one, though he was an active one in the story (Munday, 2001). In this paper we have examined the "Uncle Willy" by William Faulkner and its translated text, according to Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, and compared the two texts *transitivity patterns* looking for degree of mismatches in between based on which we assessed the quality of the translated text.

Data analysis:

As it was mentioned in the introductory paragraph, we chose one of the Faulkner’s stories by the name of “Uncle Willy” and then we analyzed the story and its translation based on the *transitivity patterns* of Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar. To this end we ,first, divided each text into clauses and compared the two texts clause by clause to find out the main verbs and then we categorized the ST’s and the TT’s main verbs based on Halliday’s six types of process, say, *material*, *mental*, *relational*, *verbal*, *behavioral* and *existential*. Next believing verbs as a set of representations of processes with which the writer shows her perception of the actions in the world, we compared the number and frequency of verbs in the two texts. Afterwards the differences in between were analyzed and the reasons were explained. In this paper the scale is the style of the ST, and the farness and closeness of the TT to the ST, regarding the writer’s style, was considered the indicator of TT’s quality. Differences are shown in the tables below:

Table 1: number and percentage of processes in ST

process	number	Percentage
Material	496	46/05
Mental	164	15/22
Relational	186	17/27
Verbal	139	12/90
Behavioral	61	5/64
Existential	31	2/78
Total	1077	100

Table 2: number and percentage of processes in TT

process	number	Percentage
Material	706	51/30
Mental	200	14/53
Behavioral	199	14/46
Verbal	132	9/59
Relational	86	6/25
Existential	53	3/85
Total	1376	100

Table 3: verb number differences in two texts with the results in TT

process	ST	TT	Difference
Material	496	706	+207 in TT
Mental	164	200	+36 in TT
Behavioral	186	199	+16 in TT
Verbal	139	132	-7 in TT
Relational	61	86	+25 in TT
Existential	31	53	+22 in TT
Total	1077	1376	299 in TT

Table 4: percentage differences in two texts

process	ST Percent	TT Percent	Difference
Material	46/05	51/30	+5/25 in TT
Mental	15/22	14/53	+0/69 in ST
Relational	17/27	14/46	+2/81 in ST
Verbal	12/90	9/59	+3/31 in ST
Behavioral	5/66	6/25	+0/59 in TT
Existential	2/78	3/85	+1/07 in TT
Total	100	100	+27/76 in TT

Discussion:

Observing the differences in the number of verbs, reasonably there are differences in number and percentages of verbs and processes. Every process has increased in the TT but, the *verbal* process which has been reduced by 7 numbers and %3.31. *Material* processes approve of the observable interplay between the characters and also admits the writer's materialistic point of view. *Mental* processes approve of the mental interactions of the characters and even the interactions between

the characters and themselves and sort of stand in opposite direction toward the *material* processes. So the fall in one causes a raise in another. Meanwhile the *relational* processes are a hint on the relations between the characters and the elements of the story.

Chart 1: verb percentage in two texts

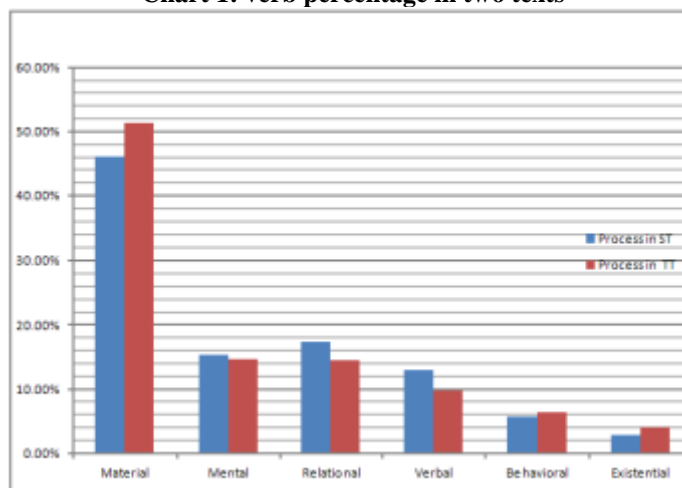
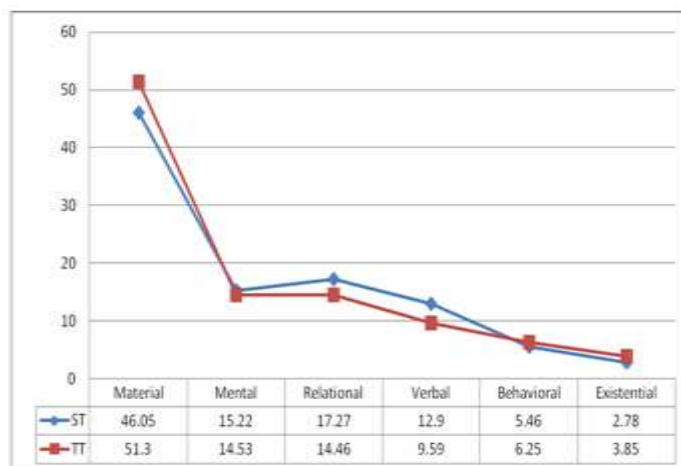
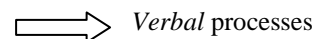


Chart 2: verb processes & percentages of both ST & TT in a total view



Mental processes



Relational processes.

Verbal processes constitute %2.05 of the dialogues but not monologues which cause the active and material presence of the characters and this is correct based on the number of *verbal* processes of the ST.

Material processes in the ST are more than the other five processes. This shows the writer has planned his story based on actions and reactions between the characters, and this causes *mental* processes to become fewer as we see in the story the number of *mental* processes is fewer than *relational* processes and possesses the third place. Compared to the ST, the numbers of *mental* and *relational* processes are the same (M200/R199), however *verbal* processes are 132. This can show that *verbal* processes have been divided between the characters or a character and herself equally which does not follow the ST style. The more *material* processes, the more the contractions between the characters, so allocating the second place to the *relational* processes is reasonable. On the one hand *the behavioral* processes are between the *material* and *mental* processes, and possessing the fifth place by *the behavioral* processes is justifiable and shows that characters behavior in this story has

been left at the mental level and has fewer come to existence through the *material* processes. On the other hand *verbal* processes are between the *mental* and the *relational* processes.

Based on the researcher analysis the writer has shown the characters *verbal* processes through *mental* ones and this caused *verbal* processes to become fewer than *relational* and nearer to *mental* processes. Finally the sixth place of *existential* processes which are between the *material* and *relational* processes, displays that the writer has paid less attention to the existence of phenomena and has followed a materialistic point of view based on actions and reactions, which is proved itself by the plot of the story. Now these processes have been shown another way in the TT.

The translator has properly followed the ST's style of narrating but in contrast to the ST, after the *material* processes, he has shown the writer's point of view through the characters *mental* processes giving the second place to the *mental* processes and this has increased the number of behavioral processes between the characters and has given the third place to them and sort of has changed the style of the writer.

Another point to mention is that the *verbal* processes between the *mental* and *relational* processes are closer to the *relational* ones that proves, contrary to the ST, the communication between the characters within the TT has been made through dialogues. That is, communications are verbal but in the ST communications configure in the characters' minds. But it seems that the translator has observed the writer's style regarding the *existential* and *behavioral* processes.

The TT's *material* processes are **207 (5/25%)** more than the ST's. This shows that although verbs have increased in number, the difference between the *material* processes which show the realistic aspect of writers perceptions are not that problematic. *Material* process has the first place of the six in both texts. This happens a different way for *verbal* processes. These processes are **164 (15/22%** out of **1077)** in the ST but **200 (14/53%** out of **1376)** in the TT. However the percentage of *verbal* processes is **0/69%** more than the TT's. This shows an interesting fact. Since the TT has used more *material* processes, there is less room for *mental* processes which represent the logical and emotional actions. So the decrease of *mental* processes in the TT is reasonable. But the second place in the ST is not for *mental* processes but for *relational* ones and this happens vice versa in the TT. *Relational* processes in the ST have occupied the second place and have a **2/81%** rise, which shows that the writer, after *material* processes, has based his story on the relationships between the characters of the story. But this pattern has not been followed in the TT. *Verbal* processes, based on which the verbiage between the two interlocutors are represented, are **3/31%** more in the ST and are in the fourth place the same as in the TT. But this result is also amazing. Since the *material* processes in the ST are fewer and the *mental* processes are more, thus more *verbal* processes are needed to represent the *mental* verbiages also.

Behavioral processes are to show physical and mental behavior. In fact this process takes place between the *material* and *mental* processes. For the number of *material* processes in the TT is higher, it seems that more *behavioral* actions are required as we see that the difference between the *material* and *mental* processes in the TT is **5/94%** more than the one in the ST. In this way the TT has a rise of **0/59%** in the *behavioral* processes.

The number of *material* processes in the TT is **%5.258** more than the number in the ST. This seems to affect the *verbal* processes which are more influenced by *relational* processes themselves rather than by *mental* processes which are the opposite *material* processes.

Material \uparrow *Mental* \downarrow \Leftrightarrow *Verbal* processes happen more dialogically (relational-verbal) not monologically (mental-verbal).

The mismatch among the processes in the two texts shows that in the ST the writer has wanted to, using the *verbal* processes influenced by the *relational* processes, display the bonds of friendship between the characters of the story and thus indicate the characters' sociability and esprit de corps. However, in the TT, common *material* processes between the characters, which have been shown by dialogues in the ST, have been represented less emphatically.

Material processes have increased, though. Because the *verbal* processes have happened, equally, in the mind of and between the characters. Thus the TT has failed to display the characters' sociability and esprit de corps.

From another point of view, the order of processes in the ST, as follows, tells us:

1. *Material* **496** \Rightarrow the writer has got a materialistic point of view
2. *Relational* **186** \Rightarrow more interactions and relationships among characters
3. *Mental* **164** \Rightarrow more *material* processes

This order is another way in the TT:

1. *Material* **706**

The same as in ST, the number of *material* processes is the largest but the translator has really increased that which has magnified the realistic point of view of the writer.

2. *Mental* **200**

3. *Relational* **200**

Numbers two and three show that the translator has decreased the capacity of characters' sociability and extroversion. And has illustrated them neither socially active nor inactive but neutral. While the pivotal narration of the story is based on the characters' over-felt responsibility toward the society and its members.

The arrangement of the three processes below shows us:

ST	TT
1. <i>Material</i> 496	1. <i>Material</i> 706
2. <i>Mental</i> 164	2. <i>Mental</i> 200
3. <i>Relational</i> 186	3. <i>Relational</i> 199
4. <i>Verbal</i> 139	4. <i>Verbal</i> 132
5. <i>Behavioral</i> 61	5. <i>Behavioral</i> 86

Numbers one, two and five show that because of the writer's materialistic point of view the story is constituted based on the observable interactions and normally the number of *Mental* processes is small and this causes the *relational* processes, which are between (a combination of) the *materials* and *mentals*, to decrease and this means that the writer has paid less attention to the psychological aspect of characters and their decisions and actions are psychologically shallow. Instead, most of the actions happen based on observable interactions. Thus the translator has followed the writer's psychological point of view.

At last, the least processes are the *existential* ones which are the interface between the *material* and *relational* processes. This can suggest that the writer, when narrating the story, has paid less attention to the existentialist view in which "to choose" is of paramount importance as Sartre (1948, 59) clears it in his book

Existentialism is a Humanism: "man is defined as the choices he must make". As a matter of fact, the large numbers of material processes suggest that Faulkner's point of view in the story is a realistic one. This is proved through Uncle Willy's character who is a hapless person for whom the other characters make decisions. In this paper the difference between the *material* and *relational* processes is **36/84%** in the TT but this amount is **28/78%** in the ST. This shows that a **1/07%** rise in *the existential* processes in the TT is reasonable and unlikely to Faulkner; the translator has shown the existentialistic features of the story more strongly.

Conclusion:

Human beings see the world, touch it and feel it. In one word they perceive the world through their senses and then talk about their understandings and verbalize their experiences using the language. But according to Emmanuel Kant no one can recognize the world as it really is and the true recognition will never happen, because he believes people's recognition of the world configures through one's mental background moulds and then gets the shape of the moulds (Kant, 1950). According to this and based on Roland Barthes's definition of style as: a writer's experience makes the style and the style represents the writer's physical rhythm and personal experiences (Barthes, 1987), we could say a writer's understandings of the real world through her mental background moulds make her style, the ones which have been made by her experience. In fact language in this case is used to represent the outside world. Now regarding Halliday's *transitivity patterns* we believe that a writer uses a selection of words among many within which verbs are used to represent the processes through which actions have been done. Now if we regard the way a writer looks at the world and perceives the actions is shown through the verbs she has chosen, we can discuss the style of the two texts and pass judgment on a translation quality. After analyzing both texts based on clauses we counted the ST's total verbs about **1077**. This number has increased in the TT to **1376**. In fact the TT has about **299 (27/76%)** more verbs than does the ST. This happened because of some reasons:

1. A number of **56** verbs (**4/06%**) have been translated in TT without any equivalents in the ST.
2. A number of **305** infinitives (**22/16%**) "infinitive and gerund forms of a verb are two examples of verbals... verbals are used as nouns" (Pollock 1982:227), have been translated into TT which is a usual change in translating from English into Persian as Pazargadi (2006) in his book *The Art of English Persian Translation* explains that in translating from English into Persian sentences bearing verbals are translated into two sentences using two verbs.
3. A number of **6** ST's verbs (**0/55%**) have not been translated into TT.

Although judging the quality of a piece of translation is really of hard work, taking advantage of scientific and systematic models helps us support our assessment academically and scientifically. The results above showed that the differences between the six processes in both texts are not spontaneous but purposeful. As decrease in one results in, increase in another. Totally the amount of differences was not high but worth paying attention. Halliday's model, though difficult and complicated, is one of the best models for assessing the quality of a translation. It is hoped that others, using this model, move this

interdisciplinary one step forward to the scientific level and help us be sure regarding this paper's results.

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