

International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies

ISSN: 2308-5460



Ideologically Driven Strategies in the Translation of Comics before and after the Islamic Revolution

[PP: 42-49]

Mina Zand Rahimi

Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Literature and Humanities
Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman
Kerman, Iran

ABSTRACT

This paper was aimed at studying the translation of Tintin comics before and after the Islamic revolution to determine the marked strategies adopted for translating Tintin comics before and after the Islamic Revolution and finally to discuss if the marked strategies were ideologically motivated or not. With the emergence of new approaches in critical linguistics and their applications in translation studies, the role of ideology in the translation process and on the finished product has become considerably significant. The methods followed in this research are critical discourse analysis, (CDA) as developed by Fairclough (1989) and again benefited from the approach proposed by Farahzad(2012) to find the marked translation strategies and to show whether the differences between translations were motivated by ideology or not. The study takes advantage of bilingual parallel corpus. Two translations of each book into Persian were analyzed in the corpus. Each of the Persian translations rendered during two completely distinct political eras of Iran; one before and the other after the Islamic Revolution. The major items which were analyzed and focused on were the comparison of the translation done by *Rayehe-Andishe* Publications of Tintin comics after the Islamic Revolution with the ones done by *Universal* Publications before the Islamic Revolution. The study revealed that there have been some changes in text of the comics' translations after Revolution to accord them to children's age and the ideology of that era. In all examples, the translator of the earlier translated text seems to have tried to correspond to the original version. In contrast, the translator of the TT2 seems to have deliberately added/mistranslated/omitted/euphemised the words or phrases or sentences relating to the translated text. It was also revealed that most of the marked strategies were ideologically driven as suggested by CDA proponents.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis (CDA), Ideology, Comics, Bilingual Parallel Corpora, Strategies, Islamic Revolution

ARTICLE INFO | The paper received on: **12/06/2015** , Reviewed on: **19/09/2015**, Accepted after revisions on: **23/11/2015**

Suggested citation:

Rahimi, M. Z. (2015). Ideologically Driven Strategies in the Translation of Comics before and after the Islamic Revolution. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*. 3(4), 42-49. Retrieved from <http://www.eltsjournal.org>

1. Introduction

In *Language and Power*, Fairclough set out to ‘examine how the ways in which we communicate are constrained by the structures and forces of those social institutions within which we live and function’ (Fairclough, 1989, p.vi). Critical discourse analysis also studied language as a social practice, and its relation to power and ideology (Fairclough, 1995, p.1). According to Van Dijk (cited in Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p.96) The main focus of CDA was on social problems and on the role of discourse in producing and reproducing “the power abuse or domination” and most of the time it does it in consistency with the interests of dominant groups. It seriously paid attention to the experiences and ideas of such groups and try to be against inequality. Moreover, Perez (2014:5) pointed out that most scholars believed that political ideology was a set of ideas, which helped people understand the relationship to their environment and organize their lives better. According to them some ideologies were common, while others were not. Some ideologies were dominant; they were ‘more useful to succeed in public spheres while others remain chained to more domestic setting’. However, they did not want to accept that their definition of ideology was mostly political. Simpson (1993, p.5) believed that a ‘dominant ideology’ was like a mechanism which maintained ‘asymmetrical’ power relations in society. As powerful groups used Language to re-inforce the dominant ideology, therefore their aim must be to apply language as a specific site of struggle.

Farahzad (2012) was among the first translation scholars who used CDA as a new approach in analyzing translation. She (2012) suggested a method for criticizing translation in ‘translation criticism’. Her method was based on Fairclough’s approach to CDA. She (2012) proposed that the choice of translation

strategies could have ideological purpose and could be analyzed through CDA approach.

This study would discuss the translation of comics, a topic largely neglected in translation. Although several invaluable studies regarding the translation of comics have been published (Zanettin, 2008), it still remains an under-investigated topic within Translation Studies. But With the emergence of cultural turn in Translation Studies, as Kaindl (2010) pointed out, comics as a topic of Translation Studies became more interesting. Moreover, multimodal texts such as films, children’s and comics increasingly became the centre of attention in case studies as translation was not studied linguistically. Comics use narrative methods of film to convey their message, creating a “syncretic semiotic system with various discourses, texts and media” (Zanettin 2008, p.13). Harvey (2001, p.76) defined comics as “pictorial narratives or expositions in which words (often lettered into the picture area within speech balloons) usually contribute to the meaning of the pictures and vice versa”. Although, as Saraceni (2003, p.5) pointed out, the interaction of both words and pictures was not the only characteristic of comics, the way in which linguistic and pictorial elements interacted with each other certainly was. From translation studies angle, comics have features in common with picture books. Among which, the most important one is the interaction between two semiotic systems, namely a verbal and non-verbal one, as pointed by Oittinen (2001). Oittinen and Kaindl (2003) argued that ,Nowadays, the verbal was not the only means of communicating meaning in many contexts; more often, the verbal and visual modes worked together to represent multi-layered and complex messages at the same time. As Dollerup & Grun hold (2003), translation of comics represented a special challenge in that they had to actively interplay with illustration



as well as genre elements, i.e. humor. Perhaps the academic disregard of comics, according to Ahrens and Meteling (2010), was because of the popular belief that comics were the area for children or those adults who thought like children. Another reason could be the specific nature of this medium which was the combination of words and pictures. But the limited space and interplay of words and pictures could make translating comics even much more difficult than translating prose.

According to McAllister, Sewell, and Gordon (2006, p.3), an ideological approach to comics was possible for at least two reasons: first, the form of comics made it naturally interesting in ideological studies. As Comics were the combination of words and pictures in a unique way and this combination was very complex in nature, they were much more “flexible in the manipulation of meaning”. The second reason was its social significance. Although often comics were considered as the insignificant ‘funnies,’ they were also involved many readers, i.e. children and adult.

Moreover, in Iran little attention has been paid to comics. Tintin comic books were among the first translated comic books in Iran. This research was certainly not the first nor the last one in the field of translation studies but could be considered as one of the few studies conducted in Iran to attempt the question of comics in translation.

2. Methodology

The main purpose of the study was to explore the differences between translations of Tintin comics before and after the Islamic Revolution in order to determine the marked strategies adopted for translating them and finally to discuss if the marked strategies applied were ideologically motivated or not. The methods followed in this research were critical discourse analysis, (CDA) as

developed by Fairclough (1989) and benefited from the approach proposed by Farahzad (2012) to find the marked translation strategies and to show whether the differences between the translations were motivated by ideology or not. Hence, this study fell under the category of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) as well which was developed by Toury (1995), taking advantage of bilingual parallel corpus. A parallel corpus was a corpus which was widely used in translation studies, as Saldanha & O’Brien (2013, p.68) mentioned, and typically made up of ST in language A and their translations in Language B.

The reason for choosing Tintin comics among other translated comics was that before the Islamic Revolution, Tintin was published in Persian by Universal, the only authorized publisher of Tintin books in Iran. These books were among the first translated comic books in Iran. After the Islamic Revolution, however, printing of Tintin books was interrupted. It was only a few years ago, nearly a quarter century after the Islamic Revolution, that Tintin found its way back into Iran. This time, however, the publishers were unauthorized, and since there was no copyright law practiced in Iran, no one would stop them. An unfortunate outcome was that they altered a lot of stuff out in Tintin stories, and if they had failed to do so, they probably would never have been granted permission to publish the books. The original version of Tintin comics was written by Hergé. The continuing popularity of Tintin with adults throughout the world indicated that, although the basis of the readership and much of the marketing was based on younger readers, an adult readership base always existed as well.

2.1 Data Collection

To achieve the goal, two translations of each book into Persian were analyzed in the

corpus. Each of the Persian translations rendered during two completely distinct political eras of Iran; one before and the other after the Islamic Revolution.

The major items which were analyzed and focused on were the comparison of the translation done by *Rayehe-Andishe* Publications of Tintin comics after the Islamic Revolution with the ones done by *Universal* Publications before the Islamic Revolution. The books which were analyzed included at the end of the paper.

3. Data Analysis and Discussion

3.1 Exploring Marked Strategies and Hidden Ideologies in Translations before and after the Islamic Revolution

Concerning the translation strategy in this research, the following questions were investigated:

- What strategies are marked in translations of Tintin comics before and after the Islamic Revolution?
- Are the marked strategies, if any, ideologically-driven as suggested by CDA proponents?

Some examples which seem more ideological were analyzed in the following lines:

Example: 1

ST. *Alone I afraid, with you I not afraid.*

TT1. *mæn væqti tænhæ, tærsid. ba to mæn nætærsid.* (Which translates into: *I when alone, afraid. With you I not afraid.*)(When I am alone, I am afraid, but with you, I am not afraid)

TT2. *ægær rastef ra xast, tfera; æma mæn be foma mædjun bud.* (Which translates *if the truth want, yes; but I to you owe*)(If you want the truth, yes; but I owe you)

In TT1 the sense was not changed whereas TT2 was rendered to *mæn be foma mædjun bud* (which translates *I to you owe*) (if you want the truth, yes; but I owe you). Seemingly, the idea of morality was to be emphasized in TT2, therefore the idea in ST was omitted. So it seemed that it was a

deliberate mistranslation after the Islamic Revolution which revealed the influence of ideology in the translation.

Example: 2

ST. *Not so fast, don't drink it all!*

TT1. *ædzæle nækon. hæmæfo næxor*(which translates *fast not do. All of it not drink*) (not so fast, don't drink it all)

TT2. *xeili arum boxor...ziadef xætærnake*(which translates *very slow drink...many of it dangerous*)(drink it slowly...its overindulging is dangerous)

Earlier in the text, they were caught in snow. Thus, they were talking about drinking alcohol to get warm. TT1 was the same as ST but in TT2, a sentence was added to stress the danger of drinking alcohol since drinking was forbidden in Islam. Also there was a deliberate mistranslation in which instead of translating the original sentence, it was rendered to *xeili arum boxor...ziadef xætærnake*(which translates *very slow drink...many of it dangerous*)(drink it slowly...its overindulging is dangerous). Again the impact of ideology of Islam could easily be seen in translation strategies applied in TT2.

Example: 3

ST. *We must force the door. I'll be responsible for the damage.*

TT1. *dæro bajæd fekæst. mæsulijætef ba mæn*(which literally translates into: *door must break. Responsibility of it with me*) (we must break the door, I hold responsible for it)

TT2. *bajæd dæro hol bedim. æge fekæst mæsulijætef ba mæn...tfareje digeji vodzud nædare.*(which literally translates into: *must the door push we. If broke, responsibility of it with me*) (we must push the door. If it breaks, I'll hold responsible... there is no other way)

Here, again one sentences was added to TT2 to show that breaking other's door was not morally correct but there was no other way and they were forced to do it. Again this addition stressed the idea of morality which was stressed after the Islamic Revolution.

**Example: 4**

ST. *How long people can chatter on the phone! More than a quarter of an hour!*

TT1. *dorost je rob'e xanom por hærfi mikone væ ma ro zire barun ælaf kærde(which translates into: exactly one quarter the lady chattering do and we under the rain keep waiting)(the lady is chattering for exactly a quarter of an hour and keep us waiting in the rain)*

TT2. *je rob'e sa'at ba telefon hærf mizæne! engar næ engar ke jeki indza montæzere. tfeqadr adæme veradzije.(which literally translates into: one quarter of an hour with telephone is speaking. How a person talkative is) (she is talking on the phone for a quarter of an hour. How talkative she is!)*

In both translations, there were rearrangement of the sentence elements and the second sentence was foregrounded. It seemed that the translators sought to stress the time women wasted on telephone. There were some additions in both sentences but seemingly, some of these additions were ideologically driven such as the word *xanum* (which translates to: *lady*) in TT1 which emphasized the gender of the people who were chattering for a long time on the phone; although it did not exist in the original.

Example: 5

ST. *That's funny! Now there are two glasses!*

TT1. *livan tfera do ta fod (which literally translates into: glass why two become)(why do the glass become two?).*

TT2. *tfera seksekæm gereft (which literally translates into: why hiccup I get) (why I get hiccup?)*

Snowy was drunk and saw two glasses instead of one. Here it was seen as deliberate mistranslation and omission to accord to the Islamic ideology of Iran after the Islamic Revolution.

Example: 6

ST. *The Bird brothers, antique dealers of Marlinspike Hall. It was only when I heard that name...*

TT1. *bæradærane pærænde, forufandegane ætiqe, qæsre molinsar ba fenidæne in esm...(which literally translates into: brothers of bird, sellers of antique, mansion of Molinsar with hearing this name)(the bird brothers, antique sellers of Molinsar mansion by hearing this name...)*

TT2. *taze un moqe bud ke fæhmidæm to tfi migofti...vaqe'æn ke bæziha bæraje pul dæst be tfe dzenajati mizænænd! hærf tænd ke in karha axaro aqebæti nædare!(which literally translates into: just that time was that knew I you what said...really some for money hand to what murder doing! although that this jobs end and final not have!)(It was just that time when I got what you were saying....really what crimes some people commit in for money! although these things haven't got good ending.)*

TT1 remained the same while the translator of TT2 added *in karha axaro aqebæti nædare!* (Which literally translates into: *this jobs the end and conclusion not have*) (These acts haven't got good ending) to emphasize the wrong act of killing. It appeared that there must be religious ideology or morality behind it.

Example: 7

ST. *And Bobby Smiles, too, the big boss!*

TT1. *Rajis dæstæfun hæm bud hæmun babi smajlz (which literally translates into: the boss of their group also was the same Babby Smiles) (the head of their gang was also there, that same Bobby Smiles)*

TT2. *unæm rajis tæbæhkaran! (Which literally translates into: that the boss of gangsters!)(That is the head of the gangsters!)*

Here the strategies applied was the deletion of the name of Boby smiles, a famous gangster in America, and also at the same time rewording of big with gangsters which had more negative connotation.

Example: 8

ST. *by Great Wacondah!*

TT1. *be jukanda qæsæm! (Which literally translates into: to Wacondah swear)(I swear by Wacondah!)*

There was no translation in TT2. It seemed that the translator abstained from showing the act of swearing by other gods except Almighty God, as in Islam there was only one God thus after the Islamic revolution this belief was more emphasized than before, although translators of TT1 omitted *Great* to despise the position of *Wacondah*.

Example: 9 &10

ST. *Big Chief Keen-eyed-Mole!*

TT1. *rasuje tfej̄m nafez* (which literally translates into: *weasel eye penetrating*)(penetrating-eyed weasel.)

TT2. *ræjis qæbile* (which translates into: *the boss of the tribe*)

ST. *Browsing-Bison's brother, he dare to strike Big Chief Keen-eyed, Mole!...Death, I say! Death to Bull's -Eye, Browsing- Brison's brother*

TT1. *bæradære "gav væh̄j̄i" dzor'at kærde "rasuje tfej̄m nafez" ra bezænæd! mærg bæ "gav tfej̄m" bæradær "gav væh̄j̄i"!*(which literally translates into: *brother of "bull wild" dare did "weasel eye penetrating" hurt! Death on "bull eye" brother of "bull wild"*) (the brother of "wild bull" has dared to hurt "penetrating-eyed weasel". Down with the "bull eyed", brother of "wild dull").

TT2. *to tjetor dzor'æt kærde ræjis qæbilæro bezæni.* (which literally translates into: *you how dare do, the boss of the tribe hurt.*) (how do you dare to hurt the boss of the tribe?)

In the above two examples, there were deletion of names in TT2s and translation of names in TT1. This deletion changed the idea of the writer to stress the name of the Indians and reduce the difficulty of the text to accord to children's age. Generally speaking, it seemed that the translator of the TT2 tried to delete the taboo words in the whole text and this deletion made the text suitable for children so deleting the difficult names of the Indians could be for the reason of the making the text easier. Seemingly, this strategy was

ideologically driven to observe the morality of the Islam.

Example: 11

ST. *Great Wacondah has sent victory to his braves!*

TT1. *Xodavænde dzæng, vakondaje bozorg, ma ra piruz kærde!* (Which literally translates into: *the God of the war, Wacondah great, we victory did!*) (Wacondah, the God of the war, has sent victory to us)

Again there must be an ideological assumption in not translating the whole sentence after the Islamic Revolution. Seemingly, the translator didn't seek for rendering the sentence which indicated the false God and the faith of some people to these gods.

Example: 12

ST. *That rock will pop like a champagne cork...Any minute now, we'll be free!...*

TT1. *sænge una mesle tfubpænbe botri fampajni mipære be asemun væ bædef ma xælas mij̄im* (which literally translates into: *the stone of them like the cork of bottle of champagne jump to sky and then we are released.*)(That stone will jump into the air like the cork of the champagne bottle and then we will be released.)

TT2. *un tæxte sæng xord mij̄e væ ma azad mij̄im.*(which literally translates into: *that board stone in pieces become and we free be.*) (That stone will break into pieces and we will be released.)

As any kind of alcoholic drink was taboo, the whole sentence *that rock will pop like a champagne cork* was deleted.

Example: 13

ST. *Yet I only had one glass of whiskey*

TT1. *mæn faqæt je gilās viski xordæm.*(which literally translates into: *I only one wine glass of whiskey drink*)(I only drank one glass of whiskey.)

TT2. *daftæm kodʒa miræftæm. hitʃi jadæm nemijad.*(which literally translates into: *had where going I. nothing remember not.*) (Where was I going? I remember nothing.)

In the second translation the translator produced totally new sentences which were



not related to ST and therefore it seemed to be a deliberate mistranslation to implement the ideology of Islam.

4. Conclusion

Critical Discourse Analysis provided researchers and translators with useful tools to investigate translations. The act of translation was not purely linguistic; the translator must attend to political, social, cultural and ideological backgrounds of the writer as well as the source text to be able to render a message from the source to target language.

Fairclough (1995:25) believed that features of texts are ideological because they have the ability to affect power relations. Ideologies, as Fairclough (1995:71) mentioned, exist in the text. The content and the forms of texts have the imprint of ideological process and structures and it is impossible to get rid of ideologies represented, one way or other, in texts. Because meanings are formed through the interpretation of texts and are open to discourses as well.

To Fairclough (1995:41-41), if the naturalization and opacity of ideologies were significant in a discourse, one could have critical discourse analysis. In line with him, Calzada (2014) believed translators translate based on the ideological setting in which they perform the translation. These settings were varied and resulted in a rich 'concoction' of ideologies.

The findings collected from the analysis of the data revealed that choices in these comics were governed by some social, cultural and ideological constraints of society. The translators of TT2 seemed to have deliberately added / mistranslated / omitted / rearranged/euphemized the words or phrases or sentences in order of their frequency. In contrast, the translators of TT1 seemed to have tried to remain faithful to the

ST, if not making it even more implicit or impolite than the ST author himself. Out of 94 samples, about 49 cases of addition, 24 cases of mistranslation, 12 cases of deletion and 8 cases of rearrangement were found.

It appeared that those extra additions which seemed to have been applied for more clarification, explicitation, and emphasis on morality in TT2 might have some ideological reasons. Seemingly, the reason could be that the translated versions published before the Islamic Revolution were directed to adult readership (more like the original French) with so many political and ideological points while the versions translated after the Islamic Revolution were tended to be directed to children readership.

The way the translator of TT1 chose to handle the passage revealed some more freedom about some religious figures or about some morality, while TT2 chose to be more conservative which seemed to be directly linked to the conservative and spiritual ideologies prevailing in our society after the Islamic Revolution. This was a sensitive time and some words or expressions which were in contrast with Islamic belief were deliberately mistranslated or omitted. As to the strategies applied by the translators of TT1 before the Islamic Revolution, all the linguistic materials in the ST has been retained. This might be explained again considering the socio-cultural conditions at the time. Those taboos which were changed in TT2 were not eliminated in TT1 and seemingly, they were not taboo. In this respect, we might assume that the translators of TT1 most probably had no reason to worry about ethical prejudices, censorship and lawsuits.

Notes: It must be mentioned that the *Universal* translations was from the French original and *Rayehe-Andishe* translation was from English translation of the original version. Therefore, most names in *Rayehe-Andishe* Publications were

different from the *Universal* version, e.g. in English version all names were changed to domesticate in English and as Farsi new version was from English, so names were like their English version. For example in old version and original version, the name of the dog was میلو (*Milou* in French). But in the English and new version; it was برفی (snowy).

References:

- Ahrens, J., & Meteling, A.** (2010). *Comics and the city: Urban space in print, picture, and sequence*. New York: Continuum
- Calzada P, M.** (2014). *Apropos of ideology: Translation studies on ideology- Ideology in translation studies*. New York : Routledge
- Dollerup, C., & Grun, M. (2003). Loss and gain in Comics. *Perspective: Studies in Translatology*. 11, 197-215
- Fairclough, N.** (1989). *Language and power*. London: Longman
- Fairclough, N.** (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. UK: Longman Group Limited.
- Farahzad, F.** (2012). Translation criticism: A three dimensional model. *Translation Studies*, 9(36), 39- 44
- Harvey, R.C.** (2001). Comedy at the juncture Of word And image. In R. Varnum & Christina T. G (Ed.), *The Language of comics: Word and image*, (pp.36-40) USA: University Press Mississippi.
- Kaindl, K.** (2010). Comics in translation. In Y. Gambier & L. Van Doorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of translation studies* (vol. 2, pp. 146-152). Amsterdam, Netherland: John Benjamins.
- McAllister, M, Gordon, I & Jancovich M.** (2006). Blockbuster meets superhero comic, or art house meets graphic novel?: The contradictory relationship between film and comic art. *Journal of Popular Film & Television*; Heldref Publication, 34 , 108-114

- Oittinen, R.** (2001). On translating picture books. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* 10.193-205
- Oittinen, R & Kaindl, K** (2003). Translation and the Construction of Identity (abstract). IATIS conference. Retrieved 2.1.2008 from www.iatis.org
- Saraceni, M.** (2003). *The Language of Comics*. London and Newyork: Routledge
- Simpson, P.** (1993). *Language, ideology and point of view*. London and Newyork : Routledge.
- Saldanha, G & O'Brien, S.** (2013). [Research methodologies in translation studies](http://www.researchmethodologiesintranslationstudies.com). Manchester, UK & Kinderhook, USA: St. Jerome Publishing
- Toury, G.** (1995) *Descriptive translation studies- and beyond*, Amesterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Van Dijk, T.A** (2001). Multidisciplinary CDA: A plea for diversity. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Ed.), *Methods of critical discourse analysis* , 95-120. London: Sage Publication
- Zanettin, Federico (ed.). 2008. *Comics in Translation*. Manchester: St. Jerome

Appendix: Samples of translations from two different books

Sr. No	English Text(ST)	Persian Text (TT1) (<i>Universal</i>)	Persian Text (TT2) (<i>Rayehe-Andishe</i>)
1	Tintin in America	تن تن در آمریکا	جدال با تبهکاران
2	The Blue Lotus	گل آبی	نیلوفر آبی
3	The Black island	جزیره سیاه	جزیره سیاه
4	The Shooting Star	ستاره اسرار آمیز	ستاره اسرار آمیز
5	The Secret of The Unicorn	اسب شاخدار	راز کشتی اسب شاخدار
6	Red Rackham Treasures	گنجهای راکام	گنج راکهام سرخ پوش
7	The Seven Critical Balls	هفت گوی بلورین	هفت گوی بلورین
8	Prisoners Of The Sun	معبد خورشید	زندانیهای معبد خورشید
9	Explorers On The Moon	روی ماه قدم گذاشتیم	گشت و گذار در ماه
10	The Calculus Affair	ماجرای کولوس	ماجرای کلکولس
11	The Castafiore Emerald	جواهرات کاستافیوره	جواهرات کاستافیوره
12	Flight 714	پرواز 714	پرواز 714