

International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies

ISSN: 2308-5460



Translation Evaluation: A Comparative Study of an Oblique Translation

[PP: 108-112]

Esmail Zare Behtash
Masoumeh Yazdani Moghadam
(Corresponding Author)

Department of English Language, College Of Management and Humanities,
Chabahar Maritime University Sistan and Baluchestan Province
Iran.

ABSTRACT

Translation is of an absolute necessity in today's world. Robinson (1997) states that the study of translation is an integral part of intercultural relations and of conveying scientific and technological knowledge. He further mentions that "translators need to be able to process linguistic materials quickly and efficiently; but they also need to be able to recognize problem areas and to slow down to solve them in complex analytical ways" (p. 2). This study is an attempt to explore and evaluate an oblique translation of a text from English into Persian to find the most frequent translation strategy. To reach the goal of the study, the researchers selected one hundred and ten sentences of an original English text which had been translated freely at random and compared them with their Persian counterparts. The findings of the study indicated that Persian translator used equivalent strategy with the highest percentage (45%) in the translated corpus. After that, modulation, and transposition had the highest percentages respectively.

Keywords: *Free Translation, English Language, Evaluation, Persian Language, Translation Strategy*

ARTICLE INFO	The paper received on	Reviewed on	Accepted after revisions on
	25/04/2017	16/06/2017	10/07/2017

Suggested citation:

Behtash, E. & Moghadam, M. (2017). Translation Evaluation: A Comparative Study of an Oblique Translation. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*. 5(2). 108-112.

1. Introduction

Translation is a tool for conveying meaning. Bell (1991) maintains that the stated goal of translation is to transform an original text in one language into its equivalent in a different language so as to convey the meaning, its formal features and functional roles of the original text. So, when we translate from Source Language (SL) to Target Language (TL) many different issues will arise such as culture-specific items, lexical ones, etc. it is the translator's duty to choose the correct and proper route in her/his translation to make the translation comprehensible for its readers. Hence, translating from one language into another has its own difficulties especially when the two languages are not close to each other these difficulties will be more, and make the translation task a challenging one for the translators. Translation is "the reproduction in a receptor language of the closest natural equivalence of the source language message, first in terms of meaning, and secondly in terms of style" (Nida and Taber, 1969, p. 208). Based on this definition we

understand that conveying the core meaning of the message takes priority in translation over style. Therefore, in the act of translating from English into Persian translators should try to do their best to convey accurate and correct meaning of the original message. Translation scholars proposed different strategies and procedures for translating a text, therefore, translators should try to identify these procedures and render the text correctly and appropriately from SL to TL. In most cases, the general belief is that translators should find the equivalent of words or expressions from SL to TL, so this is not always possible. Considering the above mentioned issues, the study aimed at identifying the most frequent oblique translation procedure in translating from English into Persian. Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995) categorize translation procedures as follows:

1. Direct translation which contains borrowing, calque and literal translation,

2. Oblique translation which covers transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation.

These procedures will be elaborate in the next following section. So, this study is based on Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995) categorization of translation procedures which were stated earlier. Therefore, the research question is: What is the most frequent translation strategy in evaluating an oblique translation?

2. Review of the Related Literature

Different scholars consider translation procedures such as Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995), Newmark (1988), etc. Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995) compared stylistic features of French and English languages. They analyzed the texts in these two languages and identify their differences and propose various translation strategies for them. They introduced two general categories for translation: (a) direct translation, (b) an oblique translation. Based on them these two broad divisions comprise seven translation procedures, the first one includes three procedures as follows:

1. Borrowing: it refers to cases when the source language borrows words directly to the target language.

2. Calque: this procedure occurs in cases where the source language expression or structure is transferred literally into the target language.

3. Literal translation: based on Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995), this is 'word-for-word' translation, which occurs which most frequency between languages of the same family and culture. They mention that literal translation should be used when the translator assures that meaning is preserved. Where literal translation can't be applied, they propose the strategy of oblique translation including four procedures as follows:

4. Transposition: this occurs when during translation one part of speech is changed into another with no change in meaning. Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995) argue that transposition is the most frequent structural change which Persian translators used it in their translations.

5. Modulation: this refers to changes in point of view of the SL.

6. Equivalence: they state that equivalence is employed in cases where similar situation is described by different stylistic or structural means.

7. Adaptation: it occurs in cultural cases when source culture and target culture are

the same, i.e. a situation in one culture does not exist in the other one. The authors claim that a refusal to use such adaptation in an otherwise 'perfectly correct' TT 'may still be noticed by an undefinable tone, something that does not sound quite right'.

2.1 Translation Assessment

House (2015) review different approaches to the translation evaluation namely (a) mentalist views referring to the subjective and intuitive judgments of ordinary people "who talk about how good or how bad one finds a translation. In the majority of cases, these judgments are based on simple impressions and feelings" (pp.9-10). In her view, in this approach translation quality assessment is done based on subjective decisions made by the translators and their experiences. This view considers what occurs between the translators and an original text, (b) behavioristic view looks on more objective criteria for evaluation such as informativeness and intelligibility. According to House (2015) this approach takes equivalence response into account, i.e. the translated text should produce the same response on its receives as that of source text on its receptors, (c) functionalist view refers to the purpose of the translation, (d) descriptive translation studies, here, the focus is on the actual translations, hence the translations are considered as cultural which are both norm-governed and have cultural significance, (e) philosophical, socio-cultural, socio-political approaches investigate unequal power relations, manipulation, and injustices in translated texts. Based on her view, here "emphasis is placed on which texts are chosen for translation, and why, and exactly how and why an original text is skewed and twisted in favor of powerful ideologies, reflecting certain group and individual interests" (p.13), and (f) linguistically oriented approaches try to identify the relations between the text and how text and its features are considered from authors, readers and translators' viewpoints.

2.2 Free and Literal Translation

Jakobson (1959) states that translation of poetry is hard and maintains that poem is not translatable since the forms of words shape meaning of the text. So, from such statement the distinction between content and style and form and sense arose. Senses are translatable from SL to TL but form cannot often be translated. The difference between form and content can be related to the one between literal and free translation. Based on Hatim and Munday

(2004) literal translation is word for word translation which can occur between two closely related languages but free translation tries to carry the core meaning of the ST. They also maintain that literal translation impairs the comprehensibility of the text, therefore, the translated text should be natural and comprehensible for its readers.

Different researchers have conducted studies on translation evaluation. Here, we present some of them. House (2001) proposes techniques for the practice of translation assessment. She introduces different approaches for translation evaluation arising from different concepts of meaning such as mentalist view, behaviorist view, text and discourse based approaches, functional-pragmatic model of translation evaluation. She enumerates different features of text and situation of their use. She argues that analysis of linguistic forms and function of the target text in comparison with the original form is the basis of any valid assessment of whether and how a translation can be adequate one. Thus, any evaluation of translation has a subjective part which the translator must recognize it. Bowker (2001) asserts that translation evaluation is a difficult task and therefore, there are existing ready-made models for this task which makes it easy one. He introduces a corpus designed to evaluate translations. From his perspective, analysis of translation errors results in analysis of translation teaching methods and such a corpus should be integrated in translation teaching. Secara (2005) also puts it that translation evaluation is a subjective task depending on human impressions. In his paper, he introduces a framework to evaluate translations based on error classification and provides a way for translators to benefit from such a systematic model of error classification in translation evaluation. Thus, by applying this model translation teacher can give grade and feedback to the students about their translation.

3. Methodology

Based on previous materials, the goal of the study was to identify the most frequent translation method in evaluating a free translation of a book. This study is also a descriptive one. To reach this aim, the researchers selected *Animal Farm* and its Persian translation as the material of the study.

To achieve the purpose of the study, the intended book was studied chapter by chapter and then compared with its Persian

equivalent, and researchers identified and underlined all instances of sentences which had oblique translation. For easy collection of data, these sentences together with their Persian translations were written down on separate data note cards and then the study tried to see which oblique translation strategy had the highest frequency in the Persian text. Finally, their percentage was calculated.

4. Analysis and Discussion

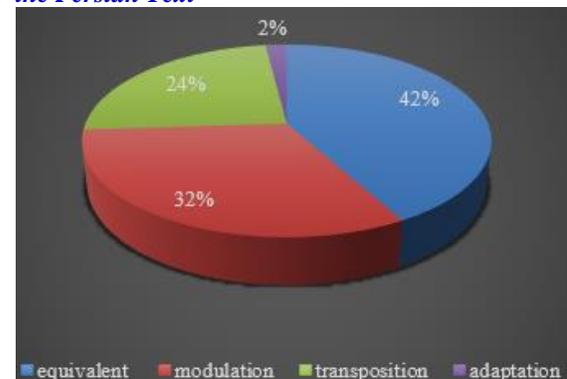
After thorough investigation, the researcher found one hundred and ten sentences in the *Animal Farm*, translated by Saleh Hosseini and Massumeh Nabizadeh. All of the selected sentences had a free or an oblique translation. The sentences fall into transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation categories on their translations. The results are summarized in the following table and figure respectively:

Table 1. Frequencies and percentage of translation strategies in the intended corpus

Strategies	Frequencies	Percentage
Equivalence	46	~42%
Modulation	35	~32%
transposition	27	24%
adaptation	2	~ 2%

So, based on the above table, 42% are classified into category of equivalence, 32% are in the category of modulation, 24% of the data falls into category of transposition and just 2% fall into category of adaptation. Thus, equivalence had been applied with the highest frequency by the Persian translator.

Figure 1. Percentage of the translation strategies in the Persian Text



According to the figure 1, equivalent strategy got the highest percentage (42%), and modulation procedure took the second place. Therefore, based on these results, the following reasons are tentative arguments of the study: (a) the Persian translator may want to present a communicative translation, (b) the translator might try to produce a natural text as the original Persian texts, (c) the translator may create the text based on the

Persian language style and culture, (d) translator direction might have been towards the target readership not the original author of the text. The study tried to find similarities and differences between the original text and its Persian translation. Thus, in evaluating translation different scholars identify different methods such as House (2001). Considering literature which state that translation evaluation is a subjective task but we can make it objective by using models of translation evaluation, this study confirms the literature, additionally, it is in agreement with the work of Secara (2005). The findings of the research stated that Persian translator used equivalent procedure with highest percentage from among other procedures of oblique translation proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995). The findings are in alignment with the House (2001) study who phrases that for a translation to be an adequate translation, the translators should take its semantic and pragmatic equivalent aspects into account and keep them up in the target text.

5. Conclusion

The study aimed at identifying the most common oblique translation in an original English text and its Persian equivalent. After data gathering and analyzing the results these findings were as follows: The Persian translator used equivalent strategy with the high percentage the target translated text. Consequently, this study proposes equivalent strategy as a suitable strategy for Persian translators to apply it when translating freely from English into Persian language. So, for more generalizability of the results other studies should be done, and also we can consider other translations of this book to make the results more comprehensive. The study only considered one translation of this book. Thus, the study is beneficial for translation students, English teachers and who those who are in comparative studies especially in translation.

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Appendix 1: Data relating to original English sentences and their Persian translation strategies

Transposition		
1	He lurched across the yard.	تلو خوردن از حیاط گذشت.
2	He kicked off his boots.	چکمه اش را یا تلنگه از پا تیر آورد.
3	Mrs. Jones was already snoring	خانم جونز، تا بگوئی چه، صدای خروپوش بلند شده بود.
4	The pigeons fluttered up to the rafters.	کبوتران بلبل زدن روی تیرهای سقف جا گرفتند.
5	Who drew Mr. Jones trap	دوست که کش آقای جونز
6	Before I die,	قبل از مردن
7	Those who dwell upon it	ساکنینش
8	Until it is victorious	تا تحقق پیروزی
9	The stupidest of them	انهایی که از حرفی رو دست نداشتند
10	Going up in flames	در شعله های آتش خیز و واز می کردند.
11	When Boxer heard this	باکسر یا شنیدن این حرف
12	Whatever goes upon two legs	بر دو پا رونگهان
13	Whatever has wings	بالدار
14	For the benefit of the others	برای اینکه دیگران هم مستفیض شوند
15	The clever ones	آنها که باهوشتر بودند
16	After a little thought	کمی فکر کردند
17	With their superior knowledge	چون معرفشان بر دیگران می چربید
18	When they harvested the corn	بعد از برداشت غله
19	We are brain-workers.	ما با مغزمان کار می کنیم.
20	It was better-kept.	توجه بیشتری به آن می شد.
21	No sentimentality.	احساساتی نشو.
22	The sheep who had been killed	گوسفند مقتول
23	Very serious	که خیلی هم جدی است
24	Too frightened to speak	از ترس زبانشان بند آمد بود
25	That all animals are equal	تساوی حیوانات
26	Our enemies would be upon us	سلطه ی دشمن
27	The sight of Napoleon	نظاره ی او را می بینند که
Modulation		
1	In fact	راستش را بخواهید
2	If asked why,	عاشق را هم که می پرسیند،
3	Without openly admitting it,	هیچوقت علناً چیزی اظهار نمی کرد.
4	She took a place near the front.	رفت جلو نزدیک همه نشست.
5	... is stolen from us by human beings.	انسان دودیا ... می دزد.
6	It is summed up in a single word.	در یک کلمه خلاصه می کنیم
7	Man is the only real enemy we have.	انسان دشمن واقعی ماست و بیز.
8	He is too weak to pull the plough.	انقدر ضعیف است که عرضه ی کشیدن گاو آهن را ندارد.
9	You cows that I see before me.	ای گاوهایی که روی روی من نشسته اید.
10	Each was sold at a year old.	یک سالشان که شد آنها را فروختند.
11	You will never see one of them again.	آرزوی دیدنشان را به گور می برید.
12	No animal escapes the cruel knife in the end.	هیچ حیوانی از تیغ بیاد در امان نخواهد بود.
13	I have little more to say.	دیگر عرضی ندارم.
14	Remember	فراموش نکنید
15	All the habits of Men are evil.	هیچ عادتی از عادات انسانی نیست که تیر نباشد.
16	When Man has vanished	روزگاری که اثری از انسان نباشد
17	Almost before Major had reached the end	هنوز میجر به آخر سرود نرسیده بود
18	The whole farm was asleep in a moment.	بنی حیوانی در مزرعه تود که خوابیده باشند.
19	The hedges were neglected.	کسی به فکر پرچین ها نبود.
20	In all directions	چپ و راست





21	Jones was expelled.	جوز را بیرون انداخته بودند.
22	They could hardly believe.	باورشان نمی شد.
23	The door was broken open.	در را شکستند.
24	In a very little while	طولی نکشید که
25	They slept as they had never slept before.	برای نخستین بار به عمرشان مزه ی خواب راحت را چشیدند.
26	Mollie was discovered to be missing.	مئوچه شدند مولی غیبش زده است.
27	It was the biggest harvest that the farm had ever seen.	هیچوقت از مزرعه چنین محصولی برداشت نشده بود.
28	They had no more to say.	دیگر جای بحث نماند.
29	It is not true.	نروغنه
30	With his books held open by a stone	کتاب هایش را با قطعه سنگی باز نگه می داشت
31	Now clean of flesh	که حالا دیگر اسکلتی از آن باقی مانده بود.
32	He could not get beyond the letter "D"	به حرف "ت" که می رسید گیر می کرد.
33	It was much exaggerated.	زیادی بزرگش کرده بودند.
34	There was not many nowadays.	خیلی کم پیش می آمد.
35	The animals were dismissed.	حیوانات را مرخص کردند.
Equivalence		
1	That is the plain truth.	این که دیگر به قدری عیان است که حاجت به بیان ندارد.
2	A thousand times no!	صد البته که نه!
3	Yet there is not one of us that owns more than his bare skin.	منتها هیچ کدام از ما جز باد به دست نداریم.
4	Cows, pigs, hens, sheep, everyone.	از گاو و خوک گرفته تا مرغ و گوسفند.
5	He will cut your throat.	سر از تکت جدا می کند.
6	Is it not crystal clear?	آیا مثل روز روشن نیست؟
7	What then must we do?	پس تکلیف چیست؟
8	Justice will be done.	حق به جدار می رسد.
9	Fix your eyes on that.	تمام هم و غمتان همین باتند.
10	Above all,	مهمتر از همه
11	It is all lies.	این حرفها بیرونیا دروغ است.
12	Perfect unity	یک دل و یک زبان
13	I cannot describe that dream to you.	خوابم در وصف نمی گذرد.
14	In tremendous unison	یک دل و یک زبان
15	Secret activity	فمالیهای زیرزمینی
16	He could turn black into white.	می تواند شب را روز جلوه دهد.
17	The pigs had great difficulty.	خوکها خون دلها می خوردند.
18	He did not work.	تسوت به سواد و سفید نمی زد.
19	He had fallen on evil days.	بخت سر هم بد می آورد.
20	He had taken to drinking more than was good for him.	تا خرخره عرق می خورد.

21	They could stand it no longer.	گامه ی مسبر حیوانات ابریز شد.
22	With one accord	یک دل و یک جان
23	They gave up trying to defend themselves.	از مقاومت دست کشیدند.
24	They took to their heels.	فرار را بر فرار ترجیح دادند.
25	Good fortune	طالع بلند
26	On market days	در موسم بازار روز
27	To keep the flies out of his ears	برای خلاصی از شر مگس بر سر و گوشش
28	In a very foolish manner	با ادا و اطوار
29	All the animals	جملگی پرندگان و چرندگان
30	That will be attended to	بجا برایش فکری می کنیم
31	The milk had disappeared.	لتری از شیر نیست که نیست.
32	As for the horses,	و اما از اسبها بگوئیم.
33	Every inch of the field	و جاب به وجب مزرعه
34	Every animal down to the humblest	همه ی حیوانات از گنده گنده هایش گرفته تا ریزه میزه های فسقعی
35	There was no work.	کار و بار تمطل بود.
36	Without fail	بی یرو نیگرند
37	Long words	حرف های ظلمه سلسله
38	I dislike them.	حالم از آنها بهم می خورد.
39	It was too obvious.	مثل روز روشن بود.
40	These two dislike each other.	این دو چشم بدین همدیگر را ندانند.
41	They emerged in their rear.	بخت سر آنها سبز شدند.
42	He dropped dead.	لختش به زمین افتاد.
43	They tried to run.	زند به چاکد.
44	Her appetite was excellent.	اشتهایش حرف نداشت.
45	Look me in the face.	نوی چشمهام نگاه کن.
46	Filled everyone with admiration.	از تمجب دهانشان باز می ماند.
Adaptation		
1	It was a stirring turn, sth between "Clementine" and "La Cucaracha".	الحق هم آهنگ آن شورانگیز بود.
2	He could not get beyond the letter "D".	به حرف "ت" که می رسید گیر می کرد.