A Critical Discourse Analysis of Political Implications in Three Persian Translations of Animal Farm

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Abstract

This study draws on a comparative framework to evaluate the translation of political implications in three Persian translations of the novella Animal Farm (by George Orwell), using Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis (CDA) model. The study regards political implications and ideologies as a mode of background knowledge shared by writers and audiences in the source language. Fairclough’s model involves three qualitative stages (interpretation, explanation, reproduction) and takes into account ideological stances. Political allusions in novels, if not sufficiently translated, could downgrade the implicit purposes and even the meaningfulness of the text. Given this significant function, the study specifically focuses on linguistic items that play an extra-textual role in meaning formation and the way they are translated into Persian. Hidden ideologies may appear in the form of assumptions, presuppositions, interactional history, or cultural references. This study emphasizes that translators must not take at face value what Fairclough calls “members resources” and must examine their choices against other sources.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Translation Studies, Political Allegory, Animal Farm, Ideology

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Introduction

Texts rely on audiences’ assumptions, presuppositions, and general world-views, without explicitly expressing them. Such pieces of information are called background knowledge in studies concerned with discourse analysis. Background knowledge includes various types such as situational, cultural, social, and historical pieces of information. Political implications and ideologies, too, are a mode of background knowledge shared by writers and audiences in a community (Karimnia & Rahbarian, 2017; Karimnia & Sabbaghi, 2018; Mansourabadi & Karimnia, 2013; Van Dijk, 1997). Although political implications may mainly appear in politically oriented text-types (e.g. international contracts, journalistic reviews), literary texts can also involve various degrees of shared political knowledge. In cross-linguistic communication, however, it would be very difficult to decide the adequacy of political knowledge for the audience.

Translation is a type of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication. Translators have a mediatory role in the translation process, and one of their functions is to strike a balance between presuppositions in the source text (ST) and the target text (TT). Texts including political implications involve ideologies that must be shared with target language readers (Valdeon, 2007). In doing so, the translator has to implement changes in the translation. A serious problem, however, is how the translator should know about political allusions in a text and how he/she should demonstrate those allusions in the TT? Without such knowledge, the translator may fail to reflect political readings that are potentially embedded in the original text.

Given the theoretical and analytical bases of critical discourse analysis (CDA), this study investigates the Persian translations of political implications in George Orwell’s novella Animal Farm, to find out how each translation reflects political implications in the original text. This analysis would clarify the extent to which the translations managed to represent ideological assumptions in a politically oriented story. CDA specifically focuses on ideological assumptions by taking into account semantic and syntactic resources in a text. The analysis of these elements can help translators to shape a better understanding of cross-cultural differences and find better strategies to express political implications. The study is a qualitative, linguistic analysis which draws on Fairclough’s (1995) CDA model to investigate three Persian translations of Animal Farm. In doing so, the study primarily presents a sample of political allusions in the ST and then explores how each TT reflects the implications in the Persian renditions. Fairclough’s (1995) model is used because of its straightforward structure and compatibility of the type of text analysis in translation criticism.

Literature Review

Political texts are one of the most commonly used text types to disseminate ideologies. To trace and analyze such ideologies, linguistics has proposed theories and methods, including CDA. Unlike descriptive discourse analysis, CDA is primarily interested in revealing power relations, ideologies, power struggles, modes of legitimation, and
concealed meanings. CDA methods have been applied to translation studies to help analyze ideology (especially in political texts). Schaffner (2002, p. 5) defines politics as “a struggle for power, between those who seek to assert and maintain their power and those who seek to resist it ...”. Exploring the relationship between CDA, ideology, and translation, Mason (1992, p. 23) states that “ideology impinges on the translation process in subtle ways.”

Fairclough’s CDA framework has been among the most frequently used models in translation studies. Baker (1998) believes that this framework uncovers the underlying power and ideological relations in the text. An additional approach to text analysis was introduced by Fairclough (to the existing “bottom-up” approach), namely the “top-down” approach, which explains not only how lexical and syntactic elements create meaning, but also how the political, social, and the individual background knowledge affect the choice of linguistic elements to create the different effects on the participants in a communicative situation (Fairclough, 1995). According to Schaffner (2002), CDA is used to analyze the ST and TT, bringing translation theory to a completely new level (for a detailed discussion of Fairclough’s model see section 3 below).

Many studies have probed into the relationship between translation, ideology, and discourse. Sertkan (2007) investigated the ideology in five different abridged Turkish versions of Charles Dickens’ *Oliver Twist* (1838). Through a CDA, he observed that there were many discrepancies between the original and its five TTs. Schaffner (2008) looked at translations influenced by institutionalized forms of political discourse, including texts that were produced by media or political institutions. In this study, the link between translation profiles and the social, institutional, and ideological conditions of text production was illustrated with reference to authentic political texts (interviews, speeches by politicians, and press conferences), mainly in German, French, and English. She concluded that an awareness of translation as a social practice suggests that translation strategies have to be compatible with the sociopolitical conditions in which the STs were produced.

According to Blackledge (2005), all transformations that occur in recontextualisation processes are “dependent on the goals, values and interests of the context into which the discursive practice is being recontextualised” (p. 122). Khajeh and Khanmohammad (2006) focused on the relationship between language and ideology in translation, while uncovering the underlying ideological assumptions implicit in the ST and TT. They observed that there were significant alterations made by the two translators under study in their selection of syntactic structures and lexical items, in comparison to those in the ST. Attaran (2009) investigated the influence of ideology on translations, relying on two different models; one of them was proposed by van Dijk (1977) and the other by Fairclough (1995). The study revealed that Fairclough’s CDA framework could provide a better analysis of the situation.

Moradijooz (2009) focused on the underlying truths of translated political subtitles, utilizing a CDA approach. Of course, his focus was not on the whole text as he limited himself just to modality in the corpus, while excluding other parts of the
context. The study found that there was intentional manipulation in different translations of political texts. Most obviously, the ideological content is the target of manipulation in such translations. Another observation in the literature suggests that in many cases translators do not tend to transfer the intentions of the ST and simply implement an insufficient linguistic choice or even omit the whole segment in translation. The next section substantially explores the model used in the present study. What can be inferred from the extant literature is that detecting underlying ideologies and political assumptions in a literary text can be a challenging task and translation quality assessment or translation criticism models would have to specifically address this area of translation.

Method

Materials and Framework

This study investigated the political allegory, *Animal Farm* (by George Orwell) as the ST, along with three Persian translations of the book: (a) Javaherkalam (2003); (b) Mosaee (2003); and (c) Golkarian (2006). The theoretical framework was based on Fairclough’s (1995) CDA model, which emphasized the relationships between language, ideology, and institutional positions. As Baker (1998) explains, Fairclough’s framework uncovers the underlying power and ideological relations in the text, and through the “top-down” approach it pursues, it can serve the basic purposes of translation theory (which now considers major variables and macrostructures). Fairclough (1995) discusses different levels of critical studies in CDA by distinguishing and subdividing them into three stages, namely interpretation, explanation, and reproduction (as same as translation in this study).

According to this framework, primarily the resources in the ST should be analyzed to see what the most significant features of ST are; these sources are called *members resources* (MR) (Fairclough, 1995, p. 143). As a result, in this study, first the ST ideology was uncovered. More specifically, social orders, interactional history, and the linkage between them through semantics, pragmatics, and discourse, were studied and interpreted (see Figure 1). To reveal the author’s intention, Fairclough (1995, p. 144) states:

… to interpret the global coherence and ‘point’ of a text, you draw upon interpretations of the local coherence of parts of it; and to arrive at these, you draw upon interpretations of utterance meanings; and to arrive at these, you draw upon interpretations of the surface forms of utterances.

The next step involved an *explanation* of the interpretive resources found in the previous stage. Normally discourse participants may not readily figure out how a discourse relies on background assumptions or how the ideological properties of these assumptions link them to social struggles and ideology. The translator, then, has to unveil these elements for participants through explanation, to show how the text is “as part of a social process” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 163). Finally, in the reproduction stage, the translator has to use strategies in finding the most natural and appropriate equivalents in the translation process and then determine the proper translation.
Social and ideological meanings cannot be simply explored in the surface structure of the text. In fact, all the data gathered from MRs through interpretation and explanation must guide the translator on how to decide the equivalents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpreting procedures</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Interpreting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social orders</td>
<td></td>
<td>Situational context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional history</td>
<td></td>
<td>Intertextual context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 1. A Re-Version of Fairclough’s Model](image)

The process, however, is not yet complete. From the perspective of translation, to find the most appropriate equivalents and to make an analytical interpretation for reproducing the TT require some other principles to be observed. To this end, some other issues complementing the previous framework must be considered according to Fairclough (1995) (see Figure 2).
Data Collection and Analysis

In the first phase of data collection, the study tried to find the underlying ideologies of the ST. These ideological relations were revealed according to the “interpretive procedures” of Fairclough’s CDA model. For example, in terms of interactional history, what was Orwell’s historical intention to illustrate a character like Mr. Jones, a drunkard with some grievous dictatorial characteristics, or what was the function of the tame raven, Moses, one who was Mr. Jones’s special pet, a spy and a tale-bearer. What does Sugarcandy Mountain represent? How did the Persian translators transfer these elements into Persian? Did they reflect the interactional history in the translations? Demystifying such ideological relations was the first task of the researchers in data collection.

Next, through a comparative and contrastive analysis between the ST and TTs, the study determined the types of equivalents and lexical choices, along with critical points raised by literary critics about this novel. At this stage, the bottom left part of Fairclough’s model (Figure 1), including cohesion, coherence, and pragmatics were considered to find the meaning of the utterances and text structure. In exploring the situational settings, the researchers investigated the events in the novel. Who are the characters involved? What are their relations? And, what is the role of language in expressing the events?

For example, the relationship between the characters of the novel with their possible corresponding politicians in the real world was an important question.
(Welch, 1980): (a) like George III to the American colonists or Czar Nicholas II to the Russian revolutionaries, Jones is the embodiment of the tyranny against the animals’ rebel; and (b) Old Major’s ideas reflect the thoughts of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. The Seven Commandments correspond to the Communist Manifesto of 1848, as the main principles of socialism. Therefore the social orders and institutional settings were explored. This type of analysis helped us to reveal the ideological relations. Therefore, the findings of the first stage were used to make sense of the ST original utterances, the meaning of the utterances, their local coherence, and their equivalents.

Findings and Results

In this section, some samples taken from the ST, along with their three Persian translations, are presented in tables. The Persian translators are as follows: Javaherkalam (TT1), Mosae (TT2), and Golkarian (TT3). Following each ST-TTs set, the choices are evaluated and compared according to Fairclough’s CDA model.

### Table 1. ST-TTs Set 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT1</th>
<th>TT2</th>
<th>TT3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I do not think, comrades</td>
<td>عزیزیام فکر نکنید</td>
<td>رفقا، فکر نکنید</td>
<td>گمان می‌کنیم</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Major in his speech introduces himself to his listeners as one who has reached a high degree of wisdom in his long life of twelve years and views the other animals as equals, not as misguided rabble need advice and correction from a superior intellect. As a result, he addresses his audience as “comrades”, trying to maintain an equal level of communal status with the other animals in the farm. This is one of the most important words used in a communist society and those who are familiar with Marxist’s ideology. Being unaware of the setting and ideology of the ST could lead to misunderstanding. The appropriate Persian equivalent of this word is not observed in TT1 and TT3, although the choice in TT2 is appropriate (رفق).

### Table 2. ST-TTs Set 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT1</th>
<th>TT2</th>
<th>TT3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tame raven</td>
<td>کلاغ سیاه دست أموز</td>
<td>حیوان دست أموز</td>
<td>کلاغ زاغی</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A good example of ideological intention is expressed through the role of Moses, the *tame raven* in the novel. This role reminds the reader of the time the biblical Moses freed his people out of bondage and led them to the Promised Land; Moses, the raven, only tells a *story* about an obviously fictitious place, utopia. Therefore, the “religious figure” in this story was Moses. According to Moran (2001, p. 21), this refers to...
Marx’s famous quotation which reads, “Religion . . . is the opium of the people - an idea shown in the animals’ acceptance of Moses’ tales.” Given the TTs, one can understand that none of them tried to retell the story behind Tame Raven and because of this there was a misunderstanding in conveying the message. The researchers even did not find any footnote or endnote as the complementary explanation for the ideology behind the character.

Table 3. ST-TTs Set 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT1</th>
<th>TT2</th>
<th>TT3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugarcandy</td>
<td>..................</td>
<td>Sugar Candy</td>
<td>کوه شوگرکندی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>..................</td>
<td>Shoogarkandi</td>
<td>شوگرکندی</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the very beginning of the story, in terms of the situational context of the novel, it is revealed that Sugarcandy Mountain (or paradise) is an unattainable place as a farm wholly devoted to the principles of Animalism and the Seven Commandments enacted to attain that utopia. As the TTs show, no sufficient equivalent was suggested for this important underlying idea.

Table 4. ST-TTs Set 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT1</th>
<th>TT2</th>
<th>TT3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When Mr. Jones got back he immediately went to sleep on the drawing-room sofa with the News of the Worlds over his face.</td>
<td>وقتی آقای جوزز در حالی که صورتش ظاهر ارباب خسته و مانده از شهر آمد و یکسر به اتاق خوشش رفت و قبضهای مالیاتی را روی هر ریخته مشغول حساب شد.</td>
<td>آقای جوزز پس از بارگذشت به مزرعه بلافاصله روز کانفی بارگذشت.</td>
<td>اتاق پنیری با قبضهای مالیاتی را روی صورتش به خواب رفت.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“News of the World” is a proper name, the title of a popular periodical in the ST. The Persian equivalent of this word is conveyed improperly in the TTs. Although the first letters of the title are capitalized, TT1 is totally oblivious to the fact that the item is a proper noun and translated it into "پیش‌های مالیاتی را روی هم ریخته". TT2 rendered it into "پیش‌های مالیاتی را روی هم ریخته" which repeated the same mistake. TT3 also translated the phrase as a generic word "صورت‌گیری‌های آخیار" and deleted the title of the periodical. Unfortunately, none of the TTs decoded the meaning in the reproduction stage (translation).

Table 5. ST-TTs Set 5
Early in October, which all readers must consider, is the purpose of the book. According to Welch (1980), Orwell’s purpose in writing this novel was to show that political idealism can turn sour, like the Rebellion of 1917, which happened in Russia. The Russian Revolution is also known universally as the *Octoberists’ Revolution*. Among the TTs, however, only TT3 was aware of the situational context and the interactional history of the text, which are two important elements in Fairclough’s theoretical framework. Neither TT1 nor TT2 conveyed their equivalences appropriately.

**Table 6. ST-TTs Set 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT1</th>
<th>TT2</th>
<th>TT3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early in October</td>
<td>يك روز صبح أول أقناب</td>
<td>اولى ماه اكبر</td>
<td>اولی ماه اکثر</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One aspect of *Animal Farm*, which all readers must consider, is the purpose of the book. According to Welch (1980), Orwell’s purpose in writing this novel was to show that political idealism can turn sour, like the Rebellion of 1917, which happened in Russia. The Russian Revolution is also known universally as the *Octoberists’ Revolution*. Among the TTs, however, only TT3 was aware of the situational context and the interactional history of the text, which are two important elements in Fairclough’s theoretical framework. Neither TT1 nor TT2 conveyed their equivalences appropriately.

According to Moran (2001, p. 55), although the narrator of *Animal Farm* humorously states that the tune is “something between Clementine and La Cucaracha,” two of most famous popular folk songs, the animals found it rousing and moving. The use of the song was to stir the citizenry as an old political maneuver. These references along with some other cultural elements are found in different parts of the novel but most of them are omitted by the translators. Fairclough (1995, p. 155) argued that:

> Interpreters draw upon semantic aspects of their MR which represent their ability to combine word meanings and grammatical information and work out implicit meanings to arrive at meanings for whole propositions. They also draw upon pragmatic conventions within their MR, which allow them to determine what speech act(s) an utterance has used to ‘perform.’

The roles of these concepts in this political allegory were highlighted to represent the popular culture at the time it was written. TT1 and TT3 did not recognize these speech
acts and their roles. As a result, the meanings are conveyed erroneously, and the MR
Fairclough talks about was not taken into consideration in the interpretation stage.

Table 7. ST-TTs Set 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT1</th>
<th>TT2</th>
<th>TT3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animalism and Seven</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commandments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Seven Commandments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| correspond to the Communist Manifesto of 1848, which represent the main principles of socialism. But Moran (2001, p. 73) explains his idea about Seven Commandments in another way: “The Seven Commandments of Animalism, like the biblical Ten Commandments, are an attempt to completely codify the Animals’ behavior to comply with a system of morality”. Like the Ten Commandments, the Seven Commandments are direct and straightforward, leaving no room for over-interpretation or qualification of what will happen in the future of revelation. The fact that they are painted in “great white letters” on the side of the barn shows the animals’ desire to make these laws permanent (like the permanence of the Ten Commandments which were engraved on stone tablets). Another similarity between Seven Commandments and Ten Commandments is that Seven Commandments are bound to be broken by those who are looking for a loophole to perpetrate their wrongdoings. TT1 provided no translation for this part. TT2 and TT3 provided word-for-word translations and did not convey the meaning appropriately.

Table 8. ST-TTs Set 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT1</th>
<th>TT2</th>
<th>TT3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A bird’s wing is an organ of propulsion and not of manipulation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most important part of Fairclough’s CDA model is the way ideological differences can be understood through representation of language in the real world (the way words are coded to show a clandestine meaning). There is a word (manipulation) in this example which conveys a strong political sense and the author uses it at the very beginning of the novel. The word manipulation means making someone think and behave exactly as you want them to, by skillfully deceiving or influencing them. This word is used intentionally as the reason for what Napoleon did for Animalism maxims, what was known as Seven Commandments. Because none of
other Animals on the farm could get further than letter “A” in literacy, therefore Napoleon abused them and made some alteration in Seven Commandments. The representation of political, social, ethical events, along with some allegorical representations like “Seven Commandments” (as a kind of constitutional law), illustrated an ideological stance and consequently included the message of the novel. This use of language, in fact, represented social-cultural meanings and power relations occurring in the story.

In TT1, the word “manipulation” is entirely omitted. In TT2, this word is not conveyed and is translated as (a motor organ) instead. TT3 rendered this idea into (dominance). In the translation process, what is regarded as a unit of translation must clearly convey the general message of the text and the most important task for the translator is to observe and keep ST’s message in the TT, without any word-for-word or word-by-word translation. As it is represented in TT3, the word was intended to convey a political sense as implied in the ST, although TT2 ignored this implication and reproduced a literal translation. In this way, the reader of the TT2 cannot perceive what will happen in the following parts of the story from a political viewpoint.

Table 9. ST-TTs Set 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT1</th>
<th>TT2</th>
<th>TT3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>… except that</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“friend” was</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>written</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“freind” and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one of the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S’s was the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>round</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation involves a combination of what is in the text and what is in the interpreter’s MR; from an interpreter’s perspective, the formal features of a text are “cues” which contribute to the interpreter’s MR, while interpretations arise from the dialectical interplay of the cues and MR. MRs are often called background knowledge and are often ideological; ignoring the MRs could be a reason for misunderstanding this political allegory in translation. Table 9 shows such a misunderstanding, in which TT3 did not convey the message, TT2 conveyed the word erroneously, and TT1 did not even translate it.

Discussion and Conclusion

Texts with political implications are particularly challenging to translators, especially as such texts have not been sufficiently explored. Many CDA-based studies have found that translators usually misunderstand the ideologies behind STs with political
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Khajeh and Khanmohammad (2006) and Yazdanimogaddam and Fakher (2011) investigated the relationship between language and ideology in translation in general, but more specifically, tried to reveal the underlying ideological assumptions which are invisible in the ST and TT, to find whether translators’ ideologies are superimposed on their translations or not. Their study revealed that the two translators made significant changes, either unintentionally or intentionally, in their selection of syntactic structures and lexical items in comparison to those in the ST. They concluded that translators, as any other language users who actively participate in the process of creating meaning, need to be conscious of every discursive choice or strategy, ranging from addition and deletion to lexical and syntactic variations.

Attaran (2009) looked at the influence of ideology on translation, relying on two different theoretical frameworks. One of the frameworks was suggested by van Dijk (1997) and the other by Fairclough (1995). The study traced different types of ideologies, which were manipulated especially those related to the religious ideas incompatible with the translators’ ideological stances. This manipulation was more clearly revealed through Fairclough’s CDA theoretical framework.

Sertkan (2007) probed into the ideological dimension in five different abridged Turkish versions of Charles Dickens’ Oliver Twist (1838). Through critical discourse analysis, he observed a great number of discrepancies between the original novel and its five different abridged Turkish versions. The findings of the present study support the findings of Sertkan (2007) who investigated the impact of ideology on translators’ lexical choices. The author concluded that the differences between the source book and the translated versions are ideologically-laden.

Generally speaking, the CDA approach used in the present study to explore three Persian translations of the Animal Farm, primarily revealed the translation choices. Although the three Persian versions were translated from an identical English original, apart from other syntactic and lexical variations between TT1, TT2, and TT3, they displayed noticeable differences mainly in terms of additions and deletions. As Fairclough’s CDA model indicates, a misunderstood decoding of one step in interpretive procedure of the CDA framework could lead to another interpreting mistake in the subsequent stages.

From the perspective of the institutional settings in the novel, the most common problem among the translators was their unawareness of the content, subject, relations, and connections. Among these problematic issues, unawareness of connections and contents were more remarkable than the other problems. In order to avoid such problems, Fairclough (1995) proposed a framework including interpretation, explanation, and reproduction. The major problems arose from the interpretive procedure, because this stage failed to provide appropriate input for the next stages including translation. For instance, when the narrator of Animal Farm humorously mentions that the tune is “something between Clementine and La Cucaracha” (p.32), two of most famous popular folk songs, TT1 and TT3 did not

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recognize the speech acts involved and their roles. As a result, the meanings were erroneously conveyed.

The roles of these concepts in this political allegory were highlighted to represent the popular culture at the time the novel was written. The results, however, showed that the reproductions were not appropriate equivalents. Fairclough’s (1995, 2013) emphasis on decoding social order or institutional settings represents an important issue for translators because when they fail to accomplish the decoding processes, the outcome might be an ill-framed translation with incongruent sets of words that do not contribute to the whole discourse. In cases the background knowledge of the original text receivers cannot be recreated in the final translation product, TTs appear incoherent and less effective.

References


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Abstract

The present study sets out to investigate whether the position of literary works in the English literary polysystem influences the Iranian translators’ translational behavior at the textual level. Given the prominent position of canon and bestseller novels in English literary polysystem, the study intends to find out whether the translators of canon and bestseller novels are faithful to their source texts, and whether the translators of peripheral novels tend to adopt target language norms and translate much more freely than the translators of canon and bestsellers novels. To this end, based on a descriptive-comparative method, nine English novels comprising three canons, three bestsellers, and three peripherals were selected and compared with their Persian translations using Berman’s (1985) deforming tendencies. The comparison showed that the position of literary works in English literary polysystem does not have a considerable role in the Iranian translators’ translational behavior at the textual level, and the translators attempt to produce a target language-oriented translation to suit the needs of target readers.

Keywords: Canon Novels, Bestseller Novels, Peripheral Novels, Deforming Tendencies, Position of Literary Works, Berman
Introduction

Translating western literary works was incorporated in the Iranian literary polysystem in the 19th and early 20th century which led to the development of the Persian literary polysystem as well as the emergence of novel in European style. A closer look at these translations reveals that powerful European languages such as French and English, according to Karimi Hakkak (1995), were the principal mediums for translation into Persian. The relationships between these two languages and Persian are by no means those of equal partners. According to De Swaan (2001), some language groups and cultures such as English and French have a greater weight and a somewhat more important role in the world system than marginalized languages which lack influence on developments in other language communities.

This discussion, as Casanova (2010), Wolf and Fukari (2007), De Swaan (2001), and Heilbron (1999) put it, leads us to the distinction between central and peripheral languages in sociologically aware approaches to translation. In his global language system, De Swaan (2001) distinguishes four rungs in the hierarchy among world languages with English as the hyper central language, French as a central language, and Persian as a peripheral one. The reason for this classification varies among different scholars. Whereas Casanova (2010) and Bourdieu (1986) consider the cultural capital of the language community as an important factor in distinguishing different languages, scholars like Heilbron (1999) assign languages to the central/peripheral ranking according to the share of translations from those languages in the world market for translated books. Peripheral language communities, with little cultural capital, in Bourdieu’s (1986) terms, use carefully selected translations to import ways of thought, ideological substrates, and various cultural influences. The reception and nature of these influences, according to Rion (2009), whether they bring innovation into the home literary system or reinforce the canons, will depend on the place the work occupies in the new literary system.

The centrality of English in the language hierarchies is reflected in the number of translations from English into other languages. As Curwen (1986) puts it, 40 percent of all translated books worldwide around 1980 were translated from English. This is especially true about translated children’s literature into Persian which according to Ansari, Vazirpour Keshmiri and Ghasemi (2013), by far exceeds originally written children literature.

Translation strategies and translators’ behavior differ when texts get translated from or into central or peripheral languages. As Venuti (1995) puts it, translators who translate into a central language decide much more freely how to translate a text, that is, what to leave out, add, explain, and change and the translations were adapted much more to the target reader than do translations into a peripheral language, where the translators are following the original more faithfully, sometimes to the point of a foreignizing translation. This is also discussed in Berman’s (1985) deforming tendencies where he states that translations into peripheral languages open the foreign work to the readers in its utter foreignness while translations into a central language remain faithful to the source text. This is shown in a case study by Hrastelj (2014 as
cited in Moe, Žigon & Južnič, 2019), where she seeks to show what differences arise concerning respecting translation norms in translation from English as a hyper-central language into German as a central language and Slovene as a peripheral language. The analysis showed that the German translator took greater freedom with the translation than the Slovak translator.

Given that translation from a central language into a peripheral one tends to keep the foreign trace in the translation and respect its otherness, it is interesting to find out whether all texts that are translated from a hyper-central language are treated the same, regardless of their position in the source language literary polysystem. That is to say, the present study intends to see whether the importance and (inter)-national recognition of literary works in English and their position in the source language polysystem influence Iranian translators’ translational behavior in their approach to the source text.

**Methodology and Theoretical Framework**

This study intends to find out whether the position of literary works in the source language literary polysystem influences the Iranian translators’ translational behavior at the micro-textual level. To this end, three English cannon, bestseller, and peripheral literary works were chosen and compared to their Persian translations, using Berman’s (1985) twelve deforming tendencies. These tendencies are (1) rationalization: this tendency affects syntactic structures such as punctuation, sentence structure, sentence order, even tendency to generalization and translation of verbs by substantives; (2) clarification: making clear and explicit what the writer does not wish to write explicitly in the ST; (3) expansion: it means overtranslation which adds nothing but reduces the clarity of the work’s voice; (4) ennoblement: rewriting of the original text in a more elegant style. In poetry it is poetization and in prose it is rhetorization; (5) qualitative impoverishment: replacement of original text terms, expression and figures with its equivalents that lack sonorous richness or iconic richness; (6) quantitative impoverishment: refers to lexical loss, i.e., rendering multiple words into fewer words in translation; (7) destruction of rhythms: rhythm of the text will be destroyed if punctuation and word order are deformed; (8) destruction of underlying networks of signification: destruction of the linkage of certain words make sense throughout the text; (9) destruction of linguistic patterning: grammar and syntactic structures get deformed; (10) destruction of vernacular networks or their exoticization: this deformation relates to patterns of language and local speech in which exclusion of these local speech in translation lead to loss of conveyed meaning in the source language; (11) destruction of expressions and idioms: replacing the proverbs and idioms of SL by their equivalents in TL which fails to convey the exact meanings of the source text; and (12) effacement of the superimposition of languages: elimination of co-existent different form of source language such as idiolect or dialect in target language (Venuti, 2012). Berman’s (1985) twelve deforming tendencies were used to find out whether all the source texts were treated the same and remained faithful to their origins, regardless of their importance in the source language polysystem, or the translators treated the source texts differently owing to their importance in the source literary polysystem. Having consulted six authentic social cataloging websites like
Goodreads, The Guardian, The New Canon, The New York Times, Amazon, and Vulture and having interviewed five professors of English literature from the University of Tabriz, the corpus of the study was selected. The canons were selected using the list of canon books on The New Canon, The Guardian, and Vulture websites and also the recommendations of five English literature professors from the University of Tabriz. The New Canon website focuses on great works of fiction and the finest literature of the current era which are gaining recognition as the new classics of our time. The Guardian and Vulture provide the list of canonical novels written in English every year.

The bestsellers were selected from the list of bestsellers books on The New York Times, Amazon, and Goodreads websites. These websites provide the sales rank of literary works which acts as an indicator of their popularity among the readers. Similarly, Goodreads is an online community of readers sharing book recommendations that enable the readers to find out the names of popular and classic books. Finally, the peripheral novels were selected using Goodreads and Amazon. These novels were not found on the list of bestsellers books and scored a very low sales rank on Amazon. The corpus of the study was chosen randomly from these lists.

Since there are several translations available for these novels in Persian, the researchers chose the ones that were published first. The researchers also contacted the publishers of the novels in April 2020 to make sure that they were aware of the position of the novels in English literary polysystem and they affirmed that they have consulted social cataloging systems before setting out to do the translations and they were aware of the position of the novels in the source language literary polysystem.

The canon novels are:

1. *Handmaid’s Tale* is a dystopian novel by Canadian author Margaret Atwood published by McClelland and Stewart in 1985

The Persian translation of the canon books are:

مرگ کشتن ندیم، مترجم سهیل سعیدی، انتشارات گلدن، سال نشر 1386

قصه باز هدایا، مترجم روزای خانم رضوان، انتشارات ویدا، سال نشر 1391

جاده، مترجم سلیمان رضوانی، انتشارات قطره، سال نشر 1389

The bestsellers are:

1. *Me before You* is a romance novel written by Jojo Moyse and published by Michael Joseph in 2012
2. *Harry Potter and Sorcerer’s Stone* is a series of fantasy novels written by British author J. K. Rowling published by Scholastic 1998
Bestsellers’ Persian translations are:

1. *It Ends with Us* is a romance novel by Colleen Hoover published by Atria Books in 2016.

And finally, the peripheral novels are as follow:

1. *It Ends with Us* is a romance novel by Colleen Hoover published by Atria Books in 2016.

The peripheral novels are translated as:

1. *It Ends with Us* is a romance novel by Colleen Hoover published by Atria Books in 2016.

The Procedure of Data Collection and Analysis

Approximately 100 pages of the source texts and their translations were selected for the textual comparison. These include 30 pages from the beginning, 30 pages from the middle, and 30 pages from the end of each book. The Persian translations were compared with their source texts using Berman’s (1985) twelve deforming tendencies to investigate the ways Iranian translators have treated the source texts which take different positions in the source language literary polysystem.

Data Analysis

Analysis of Canon Novels

In this section, three canon novels *Handmaid’s Tale*, *A Dance with Dragons*, and *The Road* are compared and contrasted with their translations.

Analysis of *Handmaid’s Tale*

*Handmaid’s Tale* is one of the literary canons which is translated by Soheil Sommi into Persian. Having interviewed with the Publisher Qoqnoos (personal communication, April 2020), they claimed that they were aware of the canonical position of the novel in the world of literature, and they cited this important position and the fame of the author as the main motives for translating the book into Persian. Regarding the wide-spread recognition of the English novel, its canonical status, and the directionality of translation which is from a hyper-central language to a peripheral one, it was expected that the translator would follow the source text faithfully and s/he would not try to improve or correct the source text. However, having analyzed the
text, based on Berman’s deforming tendencies, the researchers found some instances of ennoblement, expansion, and even destruction of rhyme of the source texts. Many mismatches were also found in the comparison.

Table 1. Ennoblement in *Handmaid’s Tale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Ennoblement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Refers to the rewriting of the original text in a more elegant style.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Examples    | 1. Powdering the dancers with a snow of light.  
               گردن گلو بر سر حضار دار حال رقص می‌پاشد.  
               2. The tulips are red, a darker crimson towards the stem, as if they have  
                   been cut and are beginning to heal there.  
               لاله‌ها سرخند و به سمت ساقه برخ‌گردونه، پناری رزخم برداشته و حبال‌ رو به بیهوود.  
               3. The threshold of a new house is a lonely place.  
               بِرگاه این خانه جدید وادی نهایی است. |

Table 2. Rationalization in *Handmaid’s Tale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Rationalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>This tendency affects syntactic structures such as punctuation, sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>structure, order, even tendency to generalization and translation of verbs by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>substantives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Examples    | 1. Like me, they listen at doors, no doubt, and see things even with their eyes.  
               بیشتر آنها م مثل من یشته در ار دارا فل قَوْش می‌ایستند و حتی بدون نگاه کردن هم  
               چیزی را می‌بینند.  
               2. I used to tease him about being pedantic.  
               به خاطر این جور فضل فروشی مسخره‌اش می‌کردم.  
               3. What does she envy me?  
               چرا غبطه مرا می‌خورد. |

The translator used discursive word order in sentences 1 and 2 by moving underlined expression to the beginning of the Persian translation and also used a different punctuation mark in sentence 3 in the way that the source text used a question mark at the end of the sentence but the target text had a period. All these modifications are done to respect the natural flow of language in Persian and to produce a target-oriented text.

Table 3. Expansion in *Handmaid’s Tale*
### Title Expansion

**Definition**
Overtranslation adds nothing but reduces the clarity of the work’s voice.

**Examples**

- I *hunger* to touch something, other than cloth or wood. I hunger to commit the act of touch.
- Better *her* than *me*, Rita said and I opened the door.

---

### Table 4. Destruction of Linguistic Pattern in *Handmaid’s Tale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Destruction of linguistic pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td>Berman believes that linguistic patternings of a text will be destroyed if punctuation and word order are deformed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples</strong></td>
<td>The window is as open as it goes, there’s a breeze, hot in the sunlight, and the white cloth blows across my face.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- From the outside I must look like a cocoon, a spook, face enshrouded like this, only the outlines visible, of nose, bandaged mouth, blind eyes. |
- What would she tell me, about the Commander, if she were here? |

---

Apart from the alterations in the number of commas between the Persian and the English texts which change the pause patterns in the source text and the translation, the translator changed the word order in the third sentence. These manipulations can change the linguistic patterns of the source text.

**Mismatches in *Handmaid’s Tale***:

1. Guns were for the guards, specially picked from the Angels.

   اسلحه مختص نگهبان‌ها بود که از بین فرشته‌ها انتخاب می‌شد.
2. Sunlight comes in through the window too and falls on the floor, which is made of wood, in narrow strips, highly polished.

The word Angels, a proper noun with the capital letter, was given its literal meaning in the Persian translation.

Although the source text enjoys the status of a canon in the source literary polysystem, the translation does not seem to follow the source text closely, and it adapts much more to the target readers’ expectations.

Analysis of The Road

This canonical book is translated by Sanobar Rezakhani who has 12 literary translations and published by Qatre publication in Iran. According to the interview with the publisher (personal communication, April 2020), they claimed that McCarthy, the author of the book, is a renowned, prolific writer with a lot of international prizes and that is the main reason for translating his book in Iran. Having compared the source with the target text, the researchers determined that there were many manipulations in the translation and the translator sought to adapt the text as closely as possible to the target reader.

Table 5. Ennoblement in The Road

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Ennoblement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Refers to the rewriting of the original text in a more elegant style.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Examples | When he woke in the woods in the dark and the cold of the night he’d reach out to touch the child sleeping beside him. |

| Examples | a raw red mudbank |

The Persian equivalents in the examples are more eloquent than in the source text.

Table 6. Rationalization in The Road

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Rationalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>This tendency affects syntactic structures such as punctuation, sentence structure, order, even tendency to generalization and translation of verbs by noun forms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Examples | The lake dark glass and window lights coming on along the shore. |

 فقط اینگونه تاریک دریاچه و پنجره های روشن خانه‌ها را در امتداد ساحل می‌پوشاند.
And we’re still going south
و هم چنان به سوی جنوب می‌رویم؟

So we’ll be warm.
اون چجایی می‌شم؟

Examples
standing there in the wind, wrapped in their blankets, watching for any sign
of a fire or a lamp.
در معرض باد استکاند و در جستجوی نشانه‌ای از آتش و یا لامپ، اطلاع‌را نظیره کرده.

The translator changed the source text statements into Persian questions. Furthermore, the translator used discursive sentence order in Persian for sentence 3. By recomposing the English sentence and the change of punctuation, the translation deformsthe original text.

Mismatches in The Road:

1. Crouching there pale and naked and translucent, its alabaster bones cast up in shadow on the rocks behind it.
ساپه لخت و مات استخون‌های مرمرین شیشه‌های صخره‌های پشت سر افتاده بود

2. Grimacing at the day.
انگار که به دنیا دهن کجی می‌کرد.

The underlined phrase in the first sentence was not translated in Persian and in the second example, the underlined word “day” was given the wrong equivalent “دانیا”.

Concerning the above examples, one may reasonably assume that the reception of the translation among the target readership is important in the Iranian context and there are some deviations from the source text to achieve a natural text in Persian.

Analysis of A Dance with Dragons

This book was translated by Roya Khademoreza, who has 36 literary translations, and it was published by Vida publications in Iran. Similar to the previous cases, the publisher was aware of the status of the novel in the source language literary polysystem. The publisher claimed in the interview (personal communication, April 2020) that the publishing house usually checks the websites like Amazon, Goodreads, and the New York Times before translating a book to make sure that the book is well-known and popular among the international readers. However, after analyzing the translation, the researchers found lots of Destruction of Linguistic Patternings and
mismatches in Persian translation. The poor translation of this canon book persuaded the researchers to contact the publisher and ask about the reason. The publisher, acknowledged (April 2020) the poor quality of the translation and stated that the product needs a complete revision.

Table 7. Destruction of Linguistic Patternings in A Dance with Dragons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Destruction of Linguistic Patternings</td>
<td>Grammar and syntactic structures get deformed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Examples**

A sigh of piney wind brought the man-scent to him, over fainter smells that spoke of fox and hare, seal and stag, even wolf.

پیامی بود آدمی را برایش اورده بود، همراه با بوی رویه و خرگوش، شیر دریایی و گوزن شمالی و حتی گرگ‌ها.

Varamyr Sixskins was a name men feared.

و ارامیر شش پوست مرد ترسناکی بود.

The phrase in the first sentence was translated to a simple noun in Persian and in the second sentence, the underlined proper noun was given a literal meaning in Persian.

Mismatches in A Dance with Dragons

1. A child’s flesh, he thought, remembering Bump.

پا خودش گفت: «گوشت نوزاد. گوشت انسان»

2. All around the carcasses, the frozen snow turned pink and red as the pack filled its bellies.

زیمین پوشیده از برف اطراف اردوگاه صورتی و سرخ شده بود.

3. yet Loptail still came when father called him.

پا این حال هنگامی که پدر سوما صدا کرد، حیوان آمد.

In these examples, the underlined words had inaccurate equivalents in the Persian language.

Statistics of Berman’s Tendencies in Canon Novels

In this section, the researchers present the frequency of tendencies and mismatches which occurred in the first 30 pages of Handmaid’s Tale, The Road, and A Dance with Dragons.

Table 8. Frequencies of Tendencies and Mismatches in Handmaid’s Tale
As the above statistics show, there are some instances of ennoblement, rationalization, and expansions in the translations of canon novels. This implies that the translators attempt to produce a target text-oriented translations and the prominent position of the texts in the source language does not encourage the translators to follow the source text closely.

**Analysis of Bestsellers**

In this section, three bestsellers *Harry Potter and Sorcerer’s Stone*, *Me before You*, and *The Girl on The Train* are compared and contrasted with their translations.

**Analysis of *Harry Potter and Sorcerer’s Stone***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tendencies</th>
<th>number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ennoblement</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationalization</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destruction of linguistic patterning</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mismatches</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. Frequencies of Tendencies and Mismatches in *The Road*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tendencies</th>
<th>number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Destruction of linguistic patterning</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationalization</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destruction of Rhythm</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mismatches</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10. Frequencies of Tendencies and Mismatches in *A Dance with Dragons*
This book was translated by Saeed Kebriaei who has 63 literary translations and published by Ketabsaraye Tandis publications in Iran. The publisher claimed (personal communications, April 2020) that they were aware of the status of the novel in the source language literary polysystem through consulting the websites like Amazon and New York Times.

### Table 11. Ennoblement in *Harry Potter and Sorcerer’s Stone*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refers to the rewriting of the original text in a more elegant style.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mr. Dursley stopped dead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. As he had expected, Mrs. Dursley looked shocked and angry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. “Well, I just thought... maybe... it was something to do with... you know... her crowd.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the sentences above, the Persian translations are more elegant than the words in the source text.

### Table 12. Rationalization in *Harry Potter and Sorcerer’s Stone*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Rationalization</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This tendency affects syntactic structures such as punctuation, sentence structure, order, even tendency to generalization and translation of verbs by noun forms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. “It must be really annoying.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. And don’t you dare let it burn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. There was no point in worrying Mrs. Dursley.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The punctuation marks such as period, comma, and semicolon in the source text were changed to the question mark in the Persian text.

### Table 13. Destruction of Linguistic Patterning in *Harry Potter and Sorcerer’s Stone*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Destruction of linguistic patterning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar and syntactic structures get deformed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The table was almost hidden beneath all Dudley’s birthday presents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>