Metaphor and Translation A case study of the story of Zal and Simorq in the Shahnameh

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Paper Information	A B S T R A C T
	This study aims in investigating the translatio[1]ns of metaphors in the Shahnameh. As an important form of figurative language, metaphor is considered to have its most sophisticated forms in literary language. However, reproducing them in the target language is not an easy task for the translator. Metaphors in literary works are also usually rich in culture-specific connotations. This gives rise to the difficulties in the translation process. Although different procedures for rendering a metaphor have been presented, translators always face the challenge of choosing the right one to translate the metaphor. The study employs Newmark's model of metaphor translation to analyze the translation approaches to rendering metaphors in literary discourse, with specific reference to the story of Zal and Simorq in the Shahnameh. The data analyses show that five procedures have been applied in the translation of the Shahnameh's metaphors. Besides, the translator has not employed any new starategy in rendering the metaphors into the target language apart from those proposed by Newmark. The findings of this study also suggest that neglecting the source form of the metaphor for reading ease may not be the right way in translating metaphors. When metaphors are deleted or converted into sensein the translated text, the semantic power of the original text is weaken.

Introduction

The Shahnameh (Persian: شاهنامه) (other transliteration forms are "Shahname", "Shahnama", and "Shah-Nama"(is a huge poetic opus composed by the Persian poet "Firdausi" (934 - 1020) (another spelling is Ferdowsi) around 1000 AD. The Shahnameh narrates the historical and mythical background of Iran starting from the creation of the world up until the Islamic conquest of Iran in the 7th century. According to Safa (2009), Firdausi spent 35 years on the Shahnameh. The epic consists of 60,000 rhymed coupletspresented in two parts,making it more than three times the length of Homer's Iliad, and more than twelve times the length of the German Nibelungenlied,. The first part deals with legendary Persian kings and heroes. The second part gives highly romanticized accounts of historical figures such as Darius I (522 - 486 BC) and Alexander the Great (356 - 323 BC).

There are many masterpieces in Persian literature including the Divan of Hafiz, Masnavi Mowlavi, and both the Bustan and Golestan of Sa'di. However, no other literary work comes up with a profound effect on the Persian language as that of the Shahnameh. Studying the Shahanme has become a necessity for attaining mastery of the Persian language by next Persian poets, as it is evidenced by many references to the Shahnameh in their works (Minovi, 1986). Firdausi's role in the formation of the Persian language and literature is the same as that of Pushkin for the Russians, of Goethe for the Germans, or of Shakespeare for the English-speaking world (Meskub, 1964). This is also because of the fact that Firdausi went to inordinate lengths to eschew any foreign words notably from the Arabic language which had more and more entered the Persian language as a subsequent to the Arab conquest of Persia in the 7th century. This painstaking path was followed by Firdausi to purify and preserve the Persian language. He made an attempt to weed out Arabic words from the Persian language, replacing them with suitable Persian alternatives (Islami Nadushan,1997).

The Shahnameh is regarded as one of the greatest Persian literary works and also the most voluminous epics of Persian. Shafiee Kadkani (2010) states that one of the reasons to consider the Shahnameh as a unique opus is the use of figurative language in a creative and skillful way. One can find the book as a masterpiece, when he analyzes it from the standpoint of figurative language, he believes that Firdausi has an outstanding skill in creating figurative language like metaphor. Rastegar (1989) also refers to Firdausi's mastery on figurative language and states metaphor, with no doubt, constitute the greatest type of figurative language in the Shahnameh. Firdausi utilizes figurative language to create manner, to show moments, to display the various aspects of life and nature as they are happening in the event. To throw some light on this issue it seems best to go through some examples.

Metaphor can be described as the use of language to refer to something other than what it was originally applied to or what it literally means, in order to suggest some resemblance or make a connection between two things (Knowles & Moon, 2006, p.3; see also Hawkes, 1972, Ortony, 1998, Goatly, 1998). According to Tajalli (2005, p.106) "a description by metaphor is not only comprehensive and concise, but also graphic, pleasing and surprising". Consider the following example from the Shahnameh:

Persian Text: شب از چنگ خورشید گردد رها   مرا گفت جو تیره گردد هوا (Verse: 980)

English Translation: He told me that when the sun releases its grip on the world and night comes (Davis, 2006: 336).

The expression شب از چنگ خورشید گردد رها "night is freed from the clutches of the sun" is a metaphor for "sun set". In the above couplet, a personification is exemplified by the words "sun" and "clutch". The sun is resembled to an animal that is holding night in its "clutches". Here the sun sets when "night" is released from the clutches of the sun.

Metaphor as a distinctive feature of literary works has arised arguments in translation practice. Although different ways for rendering a metaphor into the target text have been presented such as changing metaphor to a simile, converting the metaphor to its sense and etc. (cf. Newmark, 1988), translators are always challenged in choosing the right way to render metaphors. Dagut (1976, p.24) states that "since a metaphor in SL is, by definition, a semantic novelty, it can clearly have no existing equivalence in TL". See two different strategies applied in translating metaphors:

Persian Text: چنین تا رخ روز شد لاژورد   همی رفت لشکر به کردار گرد (verse: 963)

English Translation 1: Raised such a dust! But swift as dust they sped till day's cheeks turned to lapis-lazuli. (Warner and Warner, 1908, p. 202)

English Translation 2: : They rode quickly until the day turned purple with dusk. (Davis, 2006, p. 642)

Lazhevard (لاژورد) is a metaphor for night and it means literally a dark blue stone, by using this metaphor the writer is implying that it is getting dark. The first translator has used lapis-lazuli that is a semiprecious stone valued for its deep blue color. Therefore, the first translator has reproduced the same image through the same metaphor. The second translator, however, has converted the metaphor to its sense, i.e. the color it represents.

Metaphor

Aristotle is believed to be the first to define metaphor, and his metaphor is "the thing a name that belongs to something else" (cited in Raymond and Gibbs, 2008). Metaphor has traditionally been taken for granted to be the most underlying form of figurative language. According to Ortony (1996), people generally use metaphors to explain something new by reference to something familiar not only in conversation, but also in wide areas like science and psychotherapy. Metaphors are not just nice, they are essential, they are essential to cast abstract concepts in terms of the apprehendable. Tajalli (2005, p.106) concurs with Goatly (1996) that a description through metaphor is not only precise and comprehensive, but also graphic, pleasing and surprising. Tajalli believes that "metaphor, by combining the familiar with the unfamiliar, adds charm and distinction to clarity. Clarity grows out of familiar every day's words and charm from the intellectual pleasure afforded by the resemblance noted in metaphor; therefore, it would be nice to say that a metaphor is a kind of added extra to language" (p. 107).

The translation of metaphor

The translation of metaphor has been discussed to be problematic. There are a number of reasons why metaphors are hard to be translated. Dagut (1976, p.24) points out the fact that "since a metaphor in the source language is, by definition, a semantic novelty, it can clearly have no existing equivalence in the target language. He argues that there is no simplistic general rule for the translation of metaphor, but the translatability of any given SL metaphor depends on two factors: first, particular cultural experiences and semantic associations exploited by it, and second, the extent to which these can, or cannot, be reproduced non-anomalously into the TL, depending on the degree of overlap in each particular case. The question arises out of this argument is whether metaphors can be transferred directly or as Dagut states they should be reproduced in the TL in some way. In this sense, the literal reproduction of a metaphor in the target language seems imposible.

Another reason has to with culture. According to Lomheim (1995:102), "most words in a language have absorbed cultural aspects and historical experiences". Thereby, most metaphors are culture-bound, and can only be understood in direct translation by those sharing the same (or a closely related) language and/or culture. Larson (1984) also implies that metaphors

can be a translation problem as they are rich in culture-specific connotations. He believes that the literal translation of metaphors usually results in the distortion of meaning. The word "owl", for example, holds the symbolic meaning of "bad omen" in Persian while in English it stands for "wisdom". Therefore, reproducing such an image into English not only miss out the true sense of the image "bad omen" it also brings about an erroneous concept "wisdom" (Cooper, 1987; Abdollahi, 2003; Amid, 2011).

Strategies for translation of metaphor

It is believed that one of the main contributions to metaphor translation has been made by Dagut (1976). Although he does not explore strategies for translating metaphors, he implies that while dead metaphors should be substituted, live metaphors need a recreation job. Metaphor translation has also been argued by other scholars like Newmark (1988) and Larson (1984). They have suggested strategies to translate different metaphors which are discussed as follows. Consider five strategies for translating metaphors proposed byLarson:

1. The metaphor may be kept if the receptor language permits.
2. A metaphor may be translated as a simile.
3. A metaphor of the TL which has the same meaning may be substituted.
4. The metaphor may be kept and the meaning explained.
5. The meaning of the metaphor may be translated without keeping the metaphorical imagery.

Newmark (1988) also proposes strategies for translating metaphors. Although these strategies are similar, Newmark includes two more strategies for translating metaphors. He uggests that If the metaphor is redundant or serves no practical purpose, there is a case for its deletion, together with its sense component. A metaphor can be translated by simile plus sense.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based Newmark's discussion on metaphor (1988) that is presented along with examples.

Reproducing the same image in the TL,

Persian Text: علی شیراست

English Translation: Ali is a lion (Tajalli, 2010, p. 107).

Replacing the image in the SL with a standard TL image

Persian Text: دل خودم را خالی کردم

English Translation: I got it off my chest (Tajalli, 2010, p. 107).

Translation of metaphor by simile, retaining the image.

Persian Text: ساحل همچون خط سبزرنگی دیده میشد

English Translation: The coast was only a long green line(Tajalli, 2010, p. 108).

Translation of metaphor by simile plus sense

Persian Text: او خوک است

English Translation: He is dirty like a pig. (Tajalli, 2010, p.108)

Conversion of metaphor to sense

Persian Text: دود چراغ خوردن

English Translation: To study hard (Tajalli, 2010, p. 108).

Deletion of metaphor

Translation of metaphor by the same metaphor combined with sense.

Persian Text: زبان آتش است

English Translation: The tongue is fire. The fire is destructive, what we say is destructive (Tajalli, 2010, p. 108).

Data collection and procedure

The data for this study is a collection of 30 metaphors and their equivalents were extracted randomly from an English translation of the story of Zal and Simorq the Shanameh that is: Shanameh, the Persian Book of Kings by Davis (2006). Metaphors were selected from a list provided by Rastegar (1989).Then the equivalent translated metaphors were identified and analysed in the translated text. In the next stage, a comparative analysis was carried out between the original metaphors in the Persian source text and the receptor equivalents in the translated text. Finally, these data were analyzed to see what strategies have been applied in the translation of metaphors in the story of Zal and Simorq in the Shanameh. The study also aims to determine whether any new or different procedures for translating metaphors have been applied other than those proposed by Newmark (1988).

Findings and conclusion

The study aimed to determine which translation procedures for translating metaphors introduced by Newmark (1988) were applied in the translation of the metaphors in the Shanameh by Davis (2006). The analysed data revealed that five out of

seven procedures proposed by Newmark (1988) are applied in the translation of the Shanameh's metaphors. Exploring any new strategies for rendering metaphorsapart from those proposed by Newmark was another aim of this study . Here, the translator has not employed any new starategy in rendering the metaphors into the target language. The results are shown in the following table.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage of strategies applied by Davis (2006)

	Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
1	Reproducing the same image in the TL	3	10
2	Replacing the image in the SL with a standard TL image	5	17
3	Translation of metaphor by simile, retaining the image	-	-
4	Translation of metaphor by simile plus sense	-	-
5	Conversion of metaphor to sense	10	33
6	Deletion	8	27
7	Translation of metaphor by the same metaphor plus sense	4	13
	Total	30	100

According to the analysed data, the procedures three and four , i.e. "translation of metaphor by simile plus sense" and "translation of metaphor by simile, retaining the image" were not employed in the translations of the selected metaphors in the Shanameh.As showed in the table, the procedures one, two, five, six and seven were used in all translations among which procedure six and five have the highest frequency, respectively.

The applicability of the deletion procedure is verified by Davis's (2006) translations as he produced a verse to verse and prose translation of the Shanameh. It should be mentioned that there are recurring phrases and sentences whose meanings are of no account and consequently can be deleted in the prose translation of poetry. However, neglecting the source form of the metaphor for reading ease may seem the worst way in translating this figure of speech. When metaphors are deleted or converted into sense, the semantic power of original text is weaken.Therefore, when metaphors are deleted and converted into sense in the translated text, the aesthetical and cultural power of context are lost.

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