In the Name of God

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M.A. Thesis

A Study of the Translation of Adjectives as a Feature of Joseph Conrad's Impressionist Style in Two Persian Translations of *Heart of Darkness*

۱۳۸۸ / ۲ / ۲

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October 2008

پایان نامه ی کارشناسی ارشد رشته ی زبان انگلیسی گرایش مترجمی

بررسی ترجمه صفات به مثابه یکی از مشخصه های سبک تاثرگرایانه جوزف کنراد در دو ترجمه فارسی از " دل تاریکی"

استاد راهنما:

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پژوهشگر:

شهرزاد پرورش

۱۳۸۸ / ۴ / ۲

مهر ماه ۱۳۸۷

Acknowledgements

To My Loving Parents

&

To My Understanding Husband

Abstract

Literary linguistics or linguistic criticism—the gathering of linguistic information—about a literary text, and the use of that information in critical interpretation of the text has aims and practices related to those of many stylisticians. Stylistics, therefore, is a reading of literature that attends to language in order to pursue interpretative ends beyond the conventional methods of literary criticism. Furthermore, with regard to translation, such an analysis can be used to evaluate different translations of a single text in order to assess the reasons for the differences among them.

In this study, Conrad's style regarding his adjectival features in *Heart of Darkness* and its two Persian translations is investigated to see what kind of procedures have been used by different translators and which procedure(s) is/are the most appropriate one(s) in conveying Conrad's impressionist style. The analysis of the data demonstrates that Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is first rich in adjectives. Second, most of these adjectives are descriptive and semantically ambiguous ones which show the author's attitude and perception towards his surrounding so as to impress the addressees and to force contemplation. This is in accordance with the principles of impressionist style in literature. The study also demonstrates that despite the fact that Conrad's prose is called poetic-prose, yet it is possible to transfer his style into Persian to a great extent. However, it requires the translator's familiarity with Conrad's style on the one hand, and employing appropriate translation procedures on the other. Based on the results of the analyses done in this study, it is shown that Hosseini has translated *Heart of Darkness* more adequately. In other words, he has been highly aware of Conrad's style and his procedure in translating the novella has proved effective. Considering the translation of Hosseini's دل تاریکی, one may observe that the most frequently-employed procedure (literal translation) is one of the most useful and effective procedures.

All in all, it is realized that familiarity with source language style affects the quality of translation. Therefore, the translator who is more familiar with the style of the source language has been more successful in rendering stylistic patterns into the target language.

Key words: Style, Stylistics /Linguistic Criticism /Literary Linguistics, Impressionism, Translation.

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List of Abbreviations

H.o.D: *Heart of Darkness*

SL: Source language

T. : Translation

TL: Target Language

T.P. : Translation Procedure

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Literature involves the use of language in order to attract, to share experience and to provide the reader with new insights. From the study of literature, therefore, one will learn more about the nature of language and discourse due to its thorough use of language resources. Just as one can learn a great deal about language and discourse from reading literary language and discourse, one can learn a great deal about translation from literary translations. This is because the problems encountered in the translation of literature are so much more obvious than in the translation of texts whose primary purpose is to transmit ideas. Thus, an examination of the task of translating literary texts can be useful and of great value especially to those who enjoy and appreciate works of literature.

The present chapter includes the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, research questions, and the definition of key terms.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Apparently, each reading of a text is a unique act. Inevitably, a translated text reflects the translator's reading and this is a factor which defines the translator as a non-ordinary reader. Nida and Taber (1969) define translation as an activity which "consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style" (12). In translation, faithfulness in content has always been treated seriously but faithfulness in style seems to pose more difficulties. Style allows the author to shape how the reader experiences the work. For example, one writer may use simple words and straightforward sentences, while another may use difficult vocabulary and elaborate sentence structures. Even if the themes of both works are similar, the differences in the authors' styles make the experiences of reading the two works distinct. Without extensive reading grasping style is almost impossible. Therefore, in translation this is the translator who is responsible to preserve the writer's style as closely as possible. In this study effort will be made to compare Conrad's style regarding his adjectival features in *Heart of Darkness* and its two Persian translations to see what kind of procedures have been used by different translators and which procedure(s) is/are the most appropriate one(s) in conveying Conrad's impressionist style. So far, little attention has been paid to this crucial aspect in Persian translations of literary works, hence doing such case studies is important for translators to have a better understanding of literary texts. In this way, literature would well enjoy the appreciation and admiration of different nations.

1.3. The Significance of the Study

Readers are able to engage with choices of meaning in a text through linguistic and literary competences. Such engagement requires understanding grammatical structures, words, literary effects, meanings, and a skill with language analysis. Although such skills may not account for 'total' meaning in a

text, they explain why a reader reacts in a particular way to a text (Birch, 1989: 88).

Stylistics–the formal analysis of style and its variations in speech and writing–emerged from the study of classical rhetoric and developed as an area of literary studies. Systematic analysis of style, the significance of which was emphasized by literary critics, has proven to be a useful way in describing and analyzing literary works by digging out layers of meaning and unveiling the 'buried life of words'.

A literary style as opposed to an ordinary style is evidently not the grouping of a set of verbal elements, vocabulary, imagery, sentence structure and so on, rather it is a means whereby the author describes characters, comments on the action and manipulates the plot. The significance of style in modern literary studies with attention directed to authors with distinctive methods of writing has shed light on multiple and elusive ways of reading texts. As far as translation is concerned, such an analysis is useful to evaluate different translations of a single text in order to assess the reasons for the differences among them.

The present study intends to show how literary linguistics can be both pleasing and useful in textual studies, and how this could be helpful to translators attempting to translate great works of literature. The study could also be useful to those who are interested in improving translations as far as style of the original texts is concerned.

1.4. Research Questions

1. To what extent is it possible to transfer style in the Persian translation of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*?

2. How style-conscious have the Persian translators of *Heart of Darkness* been?

3. What translation techniques are used, and how effectively, in the two Persian translations of *Heart of Darkness* in order to transfer style with regard to the translation of adjectives?

1.5. Definition of Key Terms

1. **Style:** The manner of linguistic expression in prose or verse − as how speakers or writers say whatever it is that they say (Abrams, 1999: 303). A style is a manner of expression, describable in linguistic terms, justifiable and valuable in respect of non-linguistic factors (Fowler (ed.), 1973: 236). The idea of style involves an idea of choice among equivalent ways of expressing the same thought. Such a proposal is anathema to the New Critics, for whom a change in wording is inevitably a change in meaning (Fowler (ed.), 1973: 238).

2. **Stylistics or Linguistic Criticism or Literary Linguistics:** The study of language in literature (Toolan, 1998: viii). It must be seen as a way of reading (not a method), whose shaping orientation (not an exclusionary obsession) is a systematic and analytic attention to the language of the text (Toolan, 1990: 28). The term 'stylistics' or 'linguistic stylistics' has come to designate any analytic study of literature which uses the concepts and techniques of modern linguistics (Fowler (ed.), 1973: 238).

3. **Impressionism:** The dominion of moment over permanence and continuity, the feeling that every phenomenon is a fleeting and non-to-be-repeated constellation, a wave gliding away on the river of time, the river into which 'one cannot stop twice', is the simplest formula to which impressionism can be reduced (Hauser, A., 1999: 159).

4. **Adjective:** A type of word whose main function is to modify a noun, expressing a characteristic quality or attribute. Adjectives typically occur

within noun phrases, when they are referred to as attributive adjectives, but they may occur in other parts of a sentence, such as after a verb, when they are referred to as predictive adjectives. They may also function as the head of an adjective phrase (Crystal, 1992: 7).

5. **Translation:** An activity which "consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style" (Nida, E and Taber, C.R. 1969: 12).

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

2.1. Introduction

Every text reflects certain poetics and ideology in a given society. Translation can thus contribute to the evolution of a literature and society. Translated literature can introduce new concepts, new genres, new literary devices and styles. Every style renders an impression, therefore, introduction of a new style into a language means transferring the intended impression produced by adopting that particular style. Therefore, it is demanded of the translator to have great mastery over the source and target languages, their linguistic system and literary poetics in order to render the particular style as closely to the original text as possible. In this chapter, first a brief account of literary language, style, stylistics, and the significance of stylistics in literary studies and translation studies will be provided. Then, different translation theories regarding translation of novels specifically those focusing on style will be discussed.

2.2. Literary Language

The language of literature, according to Chapman (1982), is the special and highest use of language (2). He believes that "the linguistic utterance which involves imagination has a quality beyond the use of words to convey referential meaning" (1973: 3). Whereas figurative language is an expressive use of language, literal language refers to the usual meaning of a word or phrase (Crystal, 1992: 135). Abrams (1999), perhaps in a more poetic way, defines figurative language as "a conspicuous departure from what users of a language apprehend as the standard meaning of words, or else the standard of words, in order to achieve some special meaning or effect" (96).

2.3. Style: Definition and Concepts

Style is the manner of linguistic expression in prose or verse- as how speakers or writers say whatever it is that they say (Abrams, 1999: 303). A style is a manner of expression, describable in linguistic terms, justifiable and valuable in respect of non-linguistic factors (Fowler (ed.), 1973: 236). The idea of style involves an idea of choice among equivalent ways of expressing the same thought. Such a proposal is anathema to the New Critics, for whom a change in wording is inevitably a change in meaning (Fowler (ed.), 1973: 238).

In his book *Language of Fiction* (1966), David Lodge has drawn attention to three different concepts of style proposed by Middelton Murry who discriminates between 'Style, as personal idiosyncrasy; Style, as technique of expression; Style, as the highest achievement of literature' (52). As to the first concept, according to Lodge, "the Romantic movement with its expressive poetics and cult of personality, encouraged and extended the idea, and the nineteenth century is notable for a flowering of many diverse and idiosyncratic styles" (52). Murry's second category, Style as a technique of exposition, derives from classical and neo-classical theories of rhetoric. It has an orientation towards discursive and persuasive prose, and tends to be expressed prescriptively. As Lodge puts it, to

the rhetorical tradition we owe most of our terminology for describing various devices of verbal expression (53). Murry's third category, Style as the highest achievement of literature, is the all-inclusive concept of style, in the sense that it takes in everything that we value in literary works of art. That is, such works make their effects through language and that in so far as we account for these effects we are talking about style. Yet, Lodge maintains that the word 'style' is more important in the discussion of discursive prose than that of fiction, but it is much more in evidence in the latter than in the discussion of poetry (54).

2.3.1. Style in Literature

A literary style as opposed to an ordinary style is evidently not the grouping of a set of verbal elements, vocabulary, imagery, sentence structure and so on, rather it is a way by which the author describes characters, comments on the action and manipulates the plot. According to Chapman (1982), the language of literature is the special and highest use of language. The primary purpose of literature is not to transmit a message, and if, there is a message, it is of secondary importance (1-29). The significance of style in modern literary studies with attention directed to authors with distinctive methods of writing has shed light on multiple and elusive ways of reading texts.

2.3.2. Style in Fiction

In his discussion of poetry and prose, Lodge refers to Paul Valery who has asserted the discontinuity of prose and verse in terms of an analogy with walking and dancing:

> Walking, like prose, always has a definite object. It is an act directed towards some object that we aim to reach. The actual circumstances-the nature of the object, my need, the impulse of my desire, the state of my body and of the ground- regulate the rhythm of walking, prescribe its direction speed and termination….