

# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

## **1.1 Overview**

According to Berman (cited in Susam-Sarajeva, 2003, p. 154), translation is an activity which is subject to time and is possessed by its own temporality. The phenomenon of presenting more than one published translation of any literary text – whether literarily valuable or not – as being socially significant in the target system is, therefore, of great importance in the area of translation research projects. By means of reaffirming or challenging the prevailing norms of the receiving culture, retranslations can shed light on the evolution of the afore-mentioned system rather than its mere demonstrating the specific characteristics of the SL and culture. In the present study, retranslation(s) of some English literary texts, novels, in particular, have been looked upon with the aim of bringing into light the significance of the concept of norms in retranslation.

## **1.2 Background of the Problem**

The practice of retranslation has partly gone hand in hand with translation itself. However, the first traces of retranslation studies, go back to 1990 when the works of Antoine Berman (1990), and Paul

Bensimon (1990), largely in the context of literary translations, focused on retranslation, putting forth the idea of retranslation as a “great translation” (Berman 1990, p. 2). Subsequently, the developed version of the above-said idea was released as the *retranslation hypothesis*, which claims that retranslations are much closer to the ST than the first translation of the same ST. Berman (1990, p. 2) regards subsequent translation(s) of the same ST as a way through which there is a great opportunity to compensate for the flaws evident in the preceding translation(s).

Retranslation hypothesis at the outset appears to be of much interest to some of the translation scholars. The innovative way of regarding retranslation as an independent phenomenon paved the way for further investigations on the diachronic nature of successive translations of a same ST. Nevertheless, due to the fact that the linear progress model followed by the supporters of retranslation hypothesis proved not to be of much validity, and that there could potentially be some cultural reasons for retranslation, the area has witnessed a shift of interest towards social-individual factors such as norms at work in society, TC, in particular. The concept of struggle has, furthermore, found its way into the field by some translation scholars` particular

attention to “competing interpretations” that invoke retranslation (Venuti, 2004, p. 26).

Venuti (2004), maintains that nowadays retranslators are usually aware of the previous translations of the same ST, reaffirming the idea of their – subconscious sometimes – attempts to establish differences between their practice of retranslation and any of the previous translation(s). He further introduces two key factors in the task of examining such differences as the “selection of texts for retranslations” and the “strategies of retranslating” them (Venuti, 2004, p. 25). The assumption is based on the social or ideological premises, rather than an evident “linguistic or literary lack” in previous translation(s) (Venuti, 2004, p. 25).

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The practice of retranslation enjoys a long history in Iran like any other society; nevertheless, few studies have been dedicated to the analysis of its very nature.

Moreover, in Iran, Translation Studies may have witnessed a rise in the number of descriptive studies whose corpora have been English

into Persian novels. Nonetheless, the afore-mentioned studies appear to be less of a diachronic nature, for instance studies on novels translated before and after the Islamic Revolution, (e.g. Shabani-Rad, 2004); and when they are, those studies pivot on translation, but not on retranslation; and as such their findings focus on norms governing translations and not retranslations.

As mentioned earlier, researches on translational norms may have taken into consideration the two variables of *adequacy* and *acceptability*, but not the special significance of time factor. The examples are thin on the ground (e.g. Khadem, 2007). Hence, the field appears to suffer from an apparent lack of literature on diachronic studies on retranslation in Iran. Furthermore, researches taking account of the variable of time appear to ignore the influence of such factors on a distinctive phenomenon as retranslation.

Finally, the researches intended to investigate the reasons for the emergence of retranslation appear to be rare in the field and as such in Iran.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The present research was an attempt to investigate the norms governing retranslation. This study took use of a large corpus of some texts extracted from English novels authored by the English twentieth century writers and their corresponding Persian translations and retranslations. The two norms assumed as initial, namely adequacy and acceptability, have been investigated through a comparison of English texts and their translations as well as retranslations and subsequently two questionnaires developed by the researcher have been administered and analyzed in an attempt to check the degree of acceptability by TL native speakers as well as to evaluate the degree of adequacy by Iranian translators.

Furthermore, the present study sought to investigate the effect of time through a diachronic study of texts translated before the Islamic Revolution, in the course of, and after it.

The present study also aimed to provide would-be translators with information about the most common strategies used by retranslators who may try to show the changes either by manifesting differences from the first translators or reaffirming them.

This study might, therefore, provide the future researchers on the ground with the bibliographical information about the novels translated and retranslated in the appointed time period.

### **1.5 Purpose of the Study**

The present study aimed at discovering some of the norms of retranslating English novels into Persian and categorizing the reasons behind their retranslation. To accomplish these objectives, the present study attempted to shed light on the synchronic as well as the diachronic aspects of retranslation, which is not only a product but it also serves its function in the target system.

Furthermore, it has thrown light on the motives and reasons behind retranslation in the Iranian context in the course of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. To pursue this aim, the researcher focused on the textual and extratextual aspects of the aforementioned novel.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

For the purpose of the present study, the following research questions were formulated:

- a) What are the norms governing retranslations of English Novels into Persian after the Islamic Revolution in Iran?
- b) Are the retranslations of English Novels into Persian after the Islamic Revolution in Iran more acceptable or more adequate compared to the first translations of the same STs?
- c) What are the main reasons behind retranslation of the English novels translated into Persian after the Islamic Revolution in Iran?

## **1.7 Research Hypothesis**

According to the above-mentioned research questions, the following hypothesis may be put forth:



The first translations tend to be more adequate than the retranslation(s) of the English novels into Persian immediately after the Islamic Revolution.

## **1.8 Theoretical Framework**

This research was carried out on the basis of the notion of translational norms as proposed by Toury (1995/2000). According to him, norms are categorized into three main types which are as follows:

- a) Initial
- b) Preliminary
- c) Operational

In the present study the first two types of norms are looked upon.

## **1.9 Definition of Key Terms**

**Retranslation:** The term ‘retranslation’ refers to “subsequent translations of a text or part of a text, carried out after the initial

translation that introduced this text to the ‘same’ target language” (Susam-Sarajeva, 2003, p. 2).

**Retranslation Hypothesis:** As proposed by Berman (1990), there is a return to the ST made by retranslation, after an alleged assimilation carried out by first translations.

**Aging of First Translation:** After a time gap through which there are some historical changes in the TC, a translation may be considered obsolete.

**Struggle:** It is a kind of debate in the target system which comes from the competing nature of norms in the society. Such struggles are the major reason behind the difference between first translation and retranslation(s) because of representing “new interpretations” (Venuti, 2004, p. 26).

**Translational Norms:** There are different ways – but not the ones which bear no relation with each other – in which norm has been defined by translation scholars. From among them, applying a definition taken from sociology, Toury explains norms as "the general values or ideas shared by a certain community as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate — into specific

performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to specific situations providing they are not (yet) formulated as laws" (Toury 1995, p. 51).

**Adequacy (Closeness):** According to Toury (1995), it is one of the main translational norms, i.e. initial norm, that is adhering to the norms of the ST and SL. Observing the degree of obligatory shifts occurred in the translated text, one can estimate the level of adequacy.

**Acceptability (Naturalness):** As Toury (1995) put it, acceptability is one of initial norm based on which translators can subject themselves to the norms of the TL and TC than to those of the SL. Relating it to the concept of "naturalness," Mollanazar (2001, p. 79) believes that as norms are "set and followed" by the native speakers of the target system, their "expectations" and "knowledge" are needed in order to analyze the norms at work in the society. For Newmark (1988), acceptability is considered as providing the possibility for the reader to read the text "naturally" which means that "it is written in ordinary language" (p. 25).

## **1.10 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

The limitations of the present study were as follows:

- a) Due to the large number of texts in the corpora, it seemed really time-consuming to perform the analysis on all the corpora. Hence some of the texts were randomly selected for the study. Furthermore, in order to perform the textual analysis, some parts have been chosen to be meticulously studied. Another problem caused by the large corpus can be the impossibility of taking into account the existence of self-retranslators, i.e. the translators who have retranslated their own already translated and published text.
- b) The lack of in-depth research on retranslation in Iran has caused many difficulties in considering it as a complex phenomenon with its own distinctive qualities.
- c) One of the most important limitations of the present research is the administration of some questionnaires that deal with Persian native speakers as the reference of judgment. The researcher, therefore, had to omit some of the participants' judgements due to their apparent reluctance to participate or

their hasty answers which made the real number of participants lower than what had been expected.

- d) As it was not possible for the researcher to dig out all of the norms at work in retranslation of the English novels after the Islamic Revolution, just the initial and preliminary norms were looked through in the present study.

The delimitation of the study was that all of the translations and retranslations of the English novels have been published in the book market in Iran after the Islamic Revolution and before that. The time period is between 1963 and 1994. Hence the outcomes of the study might be considered as a good representative of the period of the time intended.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of the Related Literature**

## **2.1 Overview**

Throughout the long history of Translation Studies, little studies have been dedicated to retranslation as a distinctive phenomenon. It has always been overshadowed by some closely related yet different phenomena such as revision, indirect translation, polemical translation, or compilative translation. In order to solve the problem of its being neglected in the theoretical grounds, it is well worth to pinpoint its distinctive features in the following sections alongside its relationship with translational norms.

## **2.2 Retranslation**

### **2.2.1 Definition**

The *Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (2010, p. 233) gives two definitions of retranslation concise versions of which are as follows:

- a) An indirect, intermediate, or relay translation, i.e. a text translated through a mediating language.
- b) The act of translating a work that has previously been translated into the same language, or the result of such an act, i.e. the retranslated text itself.

The prefix “re” in retranslation tends to refer to the concept of “again” in both of the afore-mentioned definitions. The first representation of retranslation cited above denotes that “re” refers to “again” no matter whether there is a mediating language or not. On the contrary, the “same language” in the second definition clarifies the point of reference to a fixed set of SL and TL in a retranslation project. A great proportion of the works dedicated to retranslation as a distinctive phenomenon has also considered the second definition as the main one (see also 2.1.3).

### **2.2.2 Retranslation versus First Translation**

There are many translation scholars who have made a distinction between the fundamental nature of first translation and the retranslation(s).

In the context of literary translation, Berman (1990), for instance, believes that first translation always fails to accomplish the aim of translation. According to him, the larger the number of translations from an ST, the closer the later ones will be to the author’s original text. He believes that translation is an “incomplete act” (1990, p. 2). Hence compared to retranslation(s), the prior translations always fail to



reach the completion of the literary value of the ST in the TL (Susam-Sarajeva, 2003, 135). Presumably this is why he calls retranslation “great translation” (Berman, 1990, pp. 1–3).

Apart from this linear trajectory, there is a general approach in distinguishing between first translation and retranslation; it can easily be seen that retranslation tries to make differences. All the first translation does is to render the ST into the TL and TC. Retranslation, on the other hand, attempts to justify its act, i.e. performing translation again, by making changes.

### **2.2.3 Retranslation vs. Translation Revision and Re-edition**

Translation revision is defined as “the scenario in which a person other than the original translator checks a draft translation for errors and makes any necessary changes” (Künzli, 2007, p. 42). However, an unchecked translation, regarded as “a draft translation” can also represent any other published translation of the same text used for producing the revised version. The necessity of changes through revising the text is also challenged by Paloposki and Koskinen (2010, p. 47), who believe that translation revision can be regarded as a “continuum” the two poles of

which are mere “grammatical and orthographic” corrections with the purpose of upgrading the text and some stylistic changes which can lead to creation of a “new translation”. The most probable source of their statement is Vanderschelden (2000, p. 2) who describes revision as “the first step towards retranslation” due to the fact that it retains “the major part, including the overall structure and tone of the former version”. On the other hand, some other translation scholars like Chesterman (2000), Gambier (1994), and Pym (1998) believe that revision is different from retranslation with respect to its center of attention; in fact revision concentrates upon the previous translation(s), i.e. first translations or translations performed prior to the retranslation, while retranslation concentrates on the ST as well as the first translation.

Re-editions, on the other hand, are “cases where the same translation was reprinted or brought out in a second, third, or n’th edition by the same or a different publisher” (Pym, 1998, p. 79). In this case, it is quite clear that at least one translated text is available to be looked through as the point of reference. Accordingly, the aforementioned distinctions may be applicable to re-edition and retranslation too.

#### **2.2.4 Retranslation vs. Indirect Translation**

As mentioned earlier, retranslation has long been used as a substitute for indirect translation. Together with such a historical interchangeability, there are some major differences between retranslation and indirect translation which can be recognized through scrutinizing their specific features. In case of an indirect translation, it is inevitable to face at least one “mediating language” (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997, p. 413). On the contrary, there is no such a clear-cut feature in case of retranslation due to the fact that sometimes the retranslator is not aware of the presence of any previous translation.

However, when the retranslation is, partly or totally, based on the previous translation (i.e. by an aware retranslator), it has something in common with indirect translation with regards to their having dealt with a translated text as the starting point.

#### **2.2.5 Retranslation vs. Polemical Translation**

The conflicting nature of retranslation seems to have arisen the question of any relation between retranslation and polemical translation, which is identified as a kind of translation in which the “translator’s operations are directed against another translator’s operations that are

representative of a different or antagonistic concept of translation” (Popovič, 1976, p. 21). Shuttleworth & Cowie (1997) believe that a polemical translator may point to the writer in order to update the ST or go against the act of the writer. In retranslation, however, differences might be made in order to “invalidate” not only the ST but also the previous translation(s) recognized by the aware retranslator (Susam-Sarajeva, 2003, p. 137). Furthermore, there is a difference between the two in the process of conducting a research; in fact, a study on retranslation involves different translations of the same ST, while a whole generation of translated texts and their STs must be studied in case of polemical translation. The main characteristic of the aforementioned distinction seems to be providing an atmosphere in which the concepts of difference and conflict can be clarified.

### **2.2.6 Retranslation vs. Compilative Translation**

Moreover, Popovič (1976) defines compilative translation as a type of translation which is formulated on the basis of a “preceding translation” (p.16). It is evident that both retranslation and compilative translation enjoy dealing with more than one translation. Nevertheless, compilative translation does not necessarily have competing nature or any struggle