Kharazmi University

Department of Foreign Languages

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in English Translation Studies

Title

A Comparative Study of Military Science Terms and Their Persian Equivalents as Approved by the Academy of Persian Language and Literature

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September 2013

We hereby recommend that this thesis by AbdolReza Rostami entitled "A Comparative Study of Military Science Terms and Their Persian Equivalents as Approved by the Academy of Persian Language and Literature" be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English Translation Studies.

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DEDICATION

to my beloved mother

(the late)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor Dr. Mahmood Reza Atai. He guided my work from the very beginning and maintained his comments and guidance throughout the stages of this dissertation. I am profoundly grateful for all the efforts he has done for me to complete this study. I have received the valuable help, assistance and scholarly notes from him. My sincerest thanks go to him.

I also wish to express my sincere thanks to my advisor Dr. E. Babaii. Her words of advice, encouragement and steadfast support have kept my spirits up and motivated me to finish this research. I am grateful for encouragement at the early stage of the research from her.

Special thanks are expended to all of my teachers and professors during my life, who have best done to teach me their knowledge and I shall be forever indebted to them. They made me what I am and, in fact, their teaching efforts are now seen in this work.

ABSTRACT

Considering equivalence and establishing equivalent(s) for military terms as introduced by *Academy of Persian Language and Literature*, this study investigated the military translation in I.R. of Iran and analyzed the academy established Persian equivalent(s) for English military terms in order to highlight the academy's adopted dominant strategies. Comparing the academy's selected English military terms and the established (approved) Persian equivalents, this study analyzed a single source text (ST) - target text (TT) pair and used Newmark's translations procedures. To this end, six academy's publications named *A Collection of Terms Approved by The Academy of Persian Language and Literature* from 1997 to 2012 during the past sixteen years containing different scientific terms including *military science terms* were chosen. The findings of this study indicated that Literal Translation, Functional Equivalent, and Recognized Translation were the dominant strategies of establishing Persian equivalents for the English military terms. The results indicated that some of the established Persian equivalents were semantically and culturally acceptable and considered as exact equivalents. Due to applying the different translation procedures such as expansion, reduction, shifts, etc. as imprecise ones, some other established equivalents were unacceptable because they were near, partial, single to multiple and non equivalents. In translating the military terms, *military culture* and its essential elements were not considered and neglecting the military concepts and their interrelationship caused some unacceptable Persian equivalents. According to Kastberg (2007, p.104) even technical terms are not culture free and a translator must have cultural competence in L1 and L2 in order to translate the technical terms. This study revealed that the military translation has shortcomings at national, military, and academic levels in I.R. of Iran and needs the military and linguistic knowledge and cultural competence in L1 and L2 as well as other translation competences. The current situation of the military translation can certainly be improved by researches in translation studies.

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Chapter One:

Introduction

1.1 Overview

Translating military texts and terms, which have intertwined technologies, techniques, theories, concepts, and culture, is a difficult task. Emergence of the military complex terms dates back to World War II. Nearly 104 countries directly took part or were affected by this war and languages and translation played a significant role in that era. Applying modern technologies such as electronic and signals and the cultural gaps caused to emerge military loan words or establish equivalents for them in target languages (TLs).

A good example is psychological operation(s) or *psyops* in which a military organization as well as employing experts, modern technologies, mass media, different languages and translation activities aims to change the target audience's points of view and their culture. Undoubtedly, Translating concepts such as white, grey, and black propaganda would be very different from technical translation in which lexical meanings are intended and military definition is not merely a propaganda in the color of white, grey, or black.

On the other hand, as Edwin (2000, p.7) states "*military culture* is essentially how things are done in a military organization. It consists of the accepted values, philosophies, traditions, and customs that are passed along to each successive generation of service members to create a shared professional ethos". Therefore, many military terms fall into military culture domain not technical one. These distinctions become more problematic when the cultural fundamentals belong to an individual service.

According to Burk (1999, pp.447-461), "the four essential elements of military culture are *discipline, professional ethos, ceremony and etiquette,* and *cohesion and esprit de corps"*. Discipline as a main factor distinguishes the armed forces from the other armed groups, the professional ethos focuses on the requirements of combat, *ceremony and etiquette* such as salutes, uniforms, ribbons and medals manifest the most obvious signs of military culture, and cohesion shares the devotion, self-sacrifice and identity and examples of esprit de corps are serving and having self- esteem.

Kastberg (2007, p.104) properly explains "… we have a basis for arguing against what still seems be to a generally accepted idea, namely the culturelessness of technical culture.

Or rather, the notion that technical domains are devoid of cultural influences is due to the fact that the laws of the sciences from which technical domains stem, namely the laws of physical sciences, are above the constraints of any one national culture. That, of course, is true. But this doesn't mean that sciences are acultural, they are artifacts of a professional culture".

Regarding to the competences of the skilled technical translator, Kastberg cites five competences as "(1) general language competence L1 + L2, (2) LSP competence L1 + L2, (3) knowledge of the relevant domain, (4) LSP translation competence L1 <–> L2, and (5) cultural competence L1 + L2" (ibid, p.104). Therefore, as technical texts and terms are not culture free, it is difficult to draw a clear-cut distinction between *technical* and *cultural* translation in military science.

Considering *lexical, grammatical and cultural equivalence* in translating military terms is necessary. "Within lexical equivalence, there are three levels of difficulties: monosomy, synonymy, and polysemy" (Maillot, 1981). A translator can't also convey the meaning of a text without using the appropriate grammatical relations. Ignoring the cultural aspects such as concepts, attitudes and values as cultural equivalence causes the translation to be worthless. Military life has its own culture, concepts, objects, levels, and terms.

At the cultural level, fixing a scale for military culture and life is not valid because this scale belongs to a few fields of military science. While Wikipedia.Org describes the various military *music*, *songs*, *dances*, and *games* as subcategories of the SL military culture, the terms such as *martyr, martyrdom, jihad,* and *holy defense* are obviously used in the TL one. The cultural issue becomes more complicated where the terms such as *terrorist* and *rebel* are used, the terms which have an additional meaning load amongst different nations.

In this regard, *Academy of Persian Language and Literature* annually establishes (approves) Persian equivalents for the foreign terms including English military terms. These Persian equivalents have been established during the past sixteen years from 1997 to 2012. Analyzing translation of the English military terms on the basis of Newmark's translation procedures helps to clarify how *the Academy of Persian Language and Literature* deals with equivalence and what translation strategies are adopted by the academy in the process of establishing equivalent(s).

This study attempts to examine the problems in translating and establishing equivalents with their originals and investigates the future vision of military translation within I.R. of Iran. It tries to compare and contrast the established Persian equivalents with the English military terms and to analyze the translation strategies adopted by the academy to handle the translation problems. It also examines the academy's adopted strategies during the passage of time (the past sixteen years from 1997 to 2012) in order to clarify the changes in the application of translating strategies and may refer to the first and second academies' established Persian equivalents for better understanding these changes in the course of time.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

While equivalence is a key concept in translation studies, defining equivalence in translation, as the central problem has not yet been solved. Anderman & Rogers (1996, p.4) argue that “we cannot begin to translate a text without reference to the word”. In fact, they refer *the words* as the units of translation. They believe that words' interaction with other textual elements plays “an essential role in the cohesive construction of a text” (ibid, p.4). So, it is necessary to consider equivalence in terms of lexical nature, and the other textual elements, namely grammatical and cultural elements.

In the recent years, *Academy of Persian Language and Literature* has attempted to establish equivalents to preserve the Persian language. It annually publishes a new book named *daftar e jadid* with new terms of different sciences including military terms. Following the academy's adopted translation strategies; Iranian translators encounter many problems in translating military terms. The most problematic issues can be seen in *lexical, grammatical,* and *cultural* equivalences.

Some of the established Persian equivalents for acronyms, loan words, and collocations as lexical equivalents were problematic. Not to using the appropriate grammatical relations between the complex lexical units in Persian equivalents as grammatical equivalents was another problem. Disregarding the professional ethos, ceremonies and customs as the cultural equivalents and also military concepts, attitudes, and history caused another more significant problem. Retranslation of the military terms, using addition and omission in translation of the military terms and neglecting the cultural terms were also problematic.

However, some inexact or near equivalents, partial equivalents, single-to-multiple equivalents, and non-equivalents were obvious. Some parts of meanings of the established Persian military terms remained untranslated, some terms have not been translated correctly, some meanings had to be added, and some redundant meanings had to be omitted. The coinage and eponyms in new industries and inventions have been neglected, and introducing the military acronyms and coining the Persian acronyms were the least. The unsuitable class shifts or unsuitable transposition in units of Persian equivalents were other problems. Many of SL compounds were split into two words during the translation.

Examining the academy's established Persian equivalents and the English military terms, this study takes up the existing problems in military translation and illustrates shortcomings of such translations. These problems are presented in Newmark.s procedures whenever they could be available and recognizing them could undoubtedly help Iranian translators of the military texts.

1.3 Significance of the Study

While unacceptable translating of a text or a term in some fields (branches) may or may not cause challenges, the wrong translation of even a single military term undoubtedly causes unpredictable impacts. The findings of this study can help *the Academy of Persian Language and Literature* and the *Ministry of defense* to recognize the adopted, ignored and neglected translation strategies. It also helps military trainers how to develop their translations' courses in military academies or schools. Thereby, other non military translators can acquaint with the dominant translation strategies in translating military science terms.

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of *military science* and its numerous subdivisions such as military organization, force structuring, military education and training, military history, military strategy and doctrine, military geography, military intelligence, military logistics, and military technology and equipment, this study permits translators to get through the linguistic barriers and to elaborate translating of new military fields like military concepts, future advanced and smart weapons, future capabilities, military jargon, military slangs and even the various meanings of military terms in different English language countries.

Throughout the comparative study of military terms, the emphasis lies on terms which have been established Persian equivalents so far in terms of meanings, equivalents, explicitness, power of conveying all meanings and contents to target language (TL) and possibility of deriving new items. Also, an emphasis is put on probable strength or weakness of Persian equivalents in meaning. The new military concepts are discussed and new proposals and recommendations will be provided in establishing equivalent(s) for the future.

The military science terms have been translated by the academy since 1997 though no significant research has been comprehensively made to analyze the established Persian equivalents. This study compares and contrasts the selected military terms and their Persian equivalents on the basis of Newmark's translation strategies to deal with the arisen problems and to introduce the probable sources of errors. It is hoped that the findings of this research aim at achieving clear strategies for developing military translation and could assist and serve all decision makers dealing with Persian language.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out how *Academy of Persian Language and Literature* uses the translation strategies in translating military terms and conveys the source language message to the target language to make TL audience understand the military terms. This study is done to analyze the established Persian equivalents together with their originals to find the dominant strategies adopted by the academy in translating military terms. Moreover, it investigates the effect of time on application of the academy's adopted strategies in translating the military terms.

1.5 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What translation strategies are used by *the Academy of Persian Language and Literature* in translating the military terms?
2. Are the established Persian equivalents acceptable or unacceptable ones for the English military terms by ISO standard 5964-1985?
3. Does the passage of time affect the use of strategies adopted by the academy in translating the military terms?