

In the name of God



SHEIKH BAHAE UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE TRANSLATOR'S
STYLE IN RENDERING LITERARY TEXTS:
THE CASE OF DARYABANDARI'S TRANSLATIONS**

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN
ENGLISH TRANSLATION

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THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE CONTENT, FORMAT AND QUALITY OF
PRESENTATION OF THE THESIS SUBMITTED BY

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Dedicated to

My Family

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Abstract

Universals of translation are the features which typically occur in translated texts rather than original utterances and are not the results of interference from specific linguistic systems. The most important universal features of translation are explicitation, simplification and normalization. The present study aims to investigate the translator's style in the light of mentioned universal features of translation. First, the study discusses why in the field of translation the translator's style seems to be less important than that of the original writer and if the writer's style is important, how is it possible for a translator to show his finger print in the translation? Secondly, it studies style of one of the leading literary translators in Iran in the light of the universals of translation. To this end, three well-known American novels and their Farsi translations were selected as the texts under investigation. Then, 40 randomly selected sentences from each novel and their Farsi translations were examined as specified based on universals of translation. The obtained data were analyzed and the results tabulated. The results showed that the translator has succeeded to show his stylistic features in the translations through the application of the universals of translation and that he has used his own special style. He also has applied normalization as the most frequent stylistic technique to leave his finger print in the translation.

List of Abbreviation

SL: Source Language

ST: Source Text

TL: Target Language

TT: Target Text

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

According to Nida (1984): “Translation 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.” (p. 83) Nida believes that transfer of message in the translation process includes two parts: transfer of meaning and transfer of style.

According to Leech and Short (1981): “Style is a way in which language is used; therefore it consists in choices made from the repertoire of the language. Style is defined in terms of a domain of language use (e.g. what choices are made by a particular author, in a particular genre, or in a particular text).” (p. 13) Lynch (2001) says that style means everything about the way by which the writer presents himself in words, including grace, clarity, and a thousand undefinable features that separate good writing from bad. Style is the essential feature of every piece of writing. In fact it is the outcome of the writer’s personality and his emotions at the moment.

Shi (2009) says: “Style and content formulate a whole that cannot be neatly separated. Any content is expressed in a specific style. Stylistic differences are representable through three aspects: writer’s style, genre style and historical style.” (p. 3) He states that in literature, style is the novelist’s choice of words and phrases, and how the novelist arranges these words and phrases in sentences and paragraphs. Style allows the author to shape how the reader experiences the work. Every writer has a literary style and his style is reflected in his writing. Writers are not the same and their writing style may be different from each other based on their spiritual, intellectual and moral characteristics. For instance, the study of Hemingway’s books shows that, although his style is simple and almost childlike but it has complex effects on reader’s mind. He has used simple verbs and nouns to make an effective communication with

his addressees. (Encyclopedia article from Encarta of Ernest Miller Hemingway, 2004) By contrast, a complex style uses long, elaborate sentences that contain many ideas and descriptions. The writer uses lyrical passages to create the desired mood in the reader. American author Henry James (1902) uses a complex style in novels such as *The Wings of the Dove*.

Shi (2009) continues that the second factor is genre style. Genre is one of the categories that artistic works of all kinds can be divided into on the basis of form, style, or subject matter. Based on this definition we can see genre is also closely associated with style. Literary genres cover the followings: biographies and autobiographies, children's literature, history writing, poetry, short stories and so forth. The third factor is historical style. In the English literature history, there were two important movements: classic and romantic which formed their own specific styles. Classicism refers to the admiration and imitation of Greek and Roman literature. In fact the ancient literature is the basis of classicism. In translating this style, the translator will have to equip himself with wide knowledge about Greek and Roman literature, art, and other cultural aspects so as to preserve the archaism in the target language and to make such stylistic accommodation easy to carry out. Romanticism emphasizes on individual creativity; the development of nationalistic pride; and the exaltation of the senses and emotions over reason and intellect. (Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 2004)

At the beginning of the third millennium, Baker (2000) in *Towards a Methodology for Investigating the Style of a Literary Translator* wrote about the translator's style and his presence in the text. After that many books, papers and theses pursued this issue such as unpublished theses of Bosseaux (2000, 2004), Mollanazar (2001) and Bankhead (2005), and papers of Whitefield (2000), Marko (2004), Leech (2005), and

Shiyab and Lynch (2006). Marko (2004) says: “It has been shown that translators sometimes bring their own stylistic priorities to their translation practice.” (p.73) Shi (2009) in his research about translation from English to Chinese with the title of ‘Study of style and stylistic accommodation in translation’ which was performed in Xinzhou Teachers University found that principle of stylistic accommodation in translation including writer’s style, genre style and historical style is considered as a challenge for Chinese translators and neglecting this principle takes the reader away from the writer’s purpose.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

According to Vermeer (1989), translation is not only a lingual event, but it is basically a kind of transition between two cultures. Therefore the translator should have dominance not only on both languages, but also on both cultures. Translation conforms to two rules: coherence rule and fidelity rule. Coherence means the compatibility of text with its situation. Based on the coherence rule, the source text considered coherent in its own culture and its literal translation may not be considered coherent in the target culture. Based on the fidelity rule, although translation conforms to its purpose and translator’s perception, there must be coherence between the target text and the source text.

There is no doubt that different literary works have discernibly different styles and there are different opinions about translatability of the original style. Some believe that a translation should reflect the style of the original and others say that a translation should possess the style of the translator.

Issues of translating style and style of the translator have sporadically been studied in Iran. Qaderi (1992) mentions some useful notes about translating stylistic features

of the novel of *The Sound and the Fury* (1959). Khazaefar (2010), the chief editor of *Translator Journal*, in his article about problem of translating style of literary texts in Iran says that accommodated version of translation is the one that accommodate to the source text stylistically. Horri (2011) studies Saleh Hosseini's (1990) style as a literary translator in his Persian translation of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* in the light of Baker's (1996) universals of translation including explicitation, simplification, leveling out and normalization. Finally, the results show that Saleh Hosseini (1990) has got his own style and that normalization is his most frequent style in translation.

According to Baker (2000) there has been little or no interest in studying style of the translator so far. She says that this is clearly because translation has traditionally been regarded as a derivative activity and not a creative activity. The implication is that a good translator is the one who is invisible and doesn't have a style of his own. Therefore in stylistic studies of the translated works, style of the original author is investigated and the translator's style is not considered. But the fact is that Hermans (1996), Schiavi (1996) and Baker (2000) have accepted that the readers know the author's voice and style through the translator and his style. There is a contradiction here: If the reader knows the author's voice and style through the translator and his style, so what will happen to the author's voice and style? Another point is that how can the translator leave his traces in the translated text? At this point the translator is involved in a dilemma. On the one hand he tends to have his own style and on the other hand he should be faithful to the author's style.

Since not a lot of studies have been conducted in this field on the texts translated into Farsi, this study aims to investigate the translator's style in the translation of literary texts from English as SL to Farsi as TL. In fact in this study a Persian

translator's style in the translations of *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) written by Ernest Hemingway and *As I Lay Dying* (1930) by William Faulkner is investigated in the light of Baker's (1996) universals of translation.

1.3. Research Questions

The questions raised in this study are as follows:

- 1- Do translators leave their finger prints in the literary translations?
- 2- Which universal features of translation are used as the most and the least frequent stylistic techniques by the translator in the translated texts?

1.4. Significance of the Study

Style is considered as one of the most important features of writing. In fact style forms the writing and introduces writer's and translator's method. Translation has long been viewed as a derivative rather than a creative activity, meaning that the translator should faithfully preserve the original style of the source text rather than have his own style (Baker, 2000). Maintaining or reproducing the original style is considered an essential prerequisite while at the same time it is acknowledged that in any translation there are inevitably traces of the translator. The assumption that the translator cannot and should not have a style of their own is questioned by Baker (2000) who claims that "We may want to question the feasibility of these assumptions, given that it is as impossible to produce a stretch of language in a totally impersonal way as it is to handle an object without leaving one's fingerprints on it." (p. 244)

The translator's presence in the text or the fingerprints that he leaves in the text, has received some attention in the literature, most notably in May (1994) and Hermans (1996a, 1996b). Hermans (1996b) asserts that the translator's voice exists in the text and in every word of it. His presence become evident in particular through paratexts which are the inventions by the translator in the form of notes, comments, forewords, afterwords, prefaces, etc. In such paratexts the reader hears only the translator's voice, whereas in the main text of the TT, he might hear a mixture of the original author's and the translator's voices.

1.5. Definition of Key Terms

1. **Translation:** It 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, 1984)
2. **Style:** Style is a way in which language is used; therefore it consists in choices made from the repertoire of the language. Style is defined in terms of a domain of language use (e.g. what choices are made by a particular author, in a particular genre, or in a particular text). (Leech G. and Short M., 1981)
3. **Stylistic Accommodation:** Content and style formulate a whole that cannot be neatly separated. Any content is expressed in a specific style. Yet when comparison and contrast is carried out, certain nuances are found to exist uniquely among a group of writers, between different genres and within a certain historical period. (Shi, 2009)