

Chapter One

Background and Purpose

1.1 Introduction

In the nineteenth century, translation was mainly a one-way communication between prominent men of letters and, to a lesser degree, philosophers and scientists and their educated readers abroad while trade was done in the language of the dominant nation (Newmark, 1988). The present century, however, has been called the ‘age of translation’ by Jumplet (1961), or ‘reproduction’ by Benjamin (1923) since translation and translated works are not merely needed by scholars anymore. The exponential increase in technology (patents, specifications, documentation), the attempt to bring it into developing countries, and the increase in the world communication has correspondently increased requirements. Thus a translator has to take several elements into account when translating any type of text. The primary aim should be to reproduce the message, which requires many grammatical adjustments as well as lexical ones (Nida & Taber, 1969). Also, every language has its own concept and its use. There must always be some non-equivalence between languages.

By the significant increase in the number of postgraduate students in Iran in the last few years, a very common kind of translation in Iran includes translating abstracts of master’s theses since the students of other fields other than English Literature, translation and teaching are obliged to place a translated version of the abstracts of their theses in their work. This research tries to investigate what translation strategies proposed by Baker (1992) have been used in translating the abstracts of master’s these. Moreover, the cohesion and coherence of the translate works will be assessed.

1.2 Significance of the Research

Translated abstracts are used to be later sent to foreign journals and in case they are approved in terms of both their topic and their English, the writers will be asked to send the whole article. Therefore, it is very important that these abstracts be written with appropriate English since there have been many cases when the abstracts are rejected due to their weak English.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Different researchers in different parts of the world have investigated the strategies used to translate written works ranging from novels (Kampe, 2008) and short stories Su (wong, 2004) to travel documents (Aumnuch, 2004) and advertisements (Smith K., 2006) and even to classroom assignments (Binh, 2010). These researches, on the one hand, indicate that the applied strategies are in some cases appropriate to produce proper equivalents (Ashia, 2008). On the other hand, they reveal that the strategies used to translate different words are not selected carefully in all cases leading into mistranslations of the target lexicon or expression (Ulrichsen, 2011).

Concerning the second part of the current study, there have been many studies which have dealt with the assessment of the cohesion and coherence of translations. Many researchers (such as Xuefan, 2007) have focused on the cohesion and coherence of essays or projects translated by or written by student translators. Also there have been some studies done by different researchers (like Saeed Taki, 2012) working on the

cohesion and coherence of stories, novels, or articles. Machine translation and its cohesion and coherence has been also dealt with by many scholars (like Schiller, 2008)

Such assessments have made use of various criteria determining the cohesion and coherence of different works. In fact, different scholars have proposed different sets of cohesion and coherence elements used by different researchers some of whose findings are mentioned in the second chapter of this research.

Although some researches were found on the examination of abstracts like the one done by Mungchomklang (2009), almost no study was found that could propose guidelines for translators to have in mind while translating thesis abstracts. The present research tried to discover what translation strategies were used in translating abstracts and to analyze the cohesion and coherence of the translated abstracts. It later tried to provide translators with a framework for translating abstracts through discovering those cohesive devices missing most often. Also, unlike most similar studies which have only shown what elements contributing to coherence are missing in translated texts, this study aims to explain how abstract translators can practically make use of these elements before they initiate a translation job.

If a student, a researcher or a scholar in any field needs to become aware of the researches and studies conducted by other researchers in different countries and needs to know about what they have done in their fields, he or she must refer to translated articles or papers and use the findings of those researchers to carry out their own research with a higher level of awareness and background knowledge on the other

hand. Moreover, postgraduate students in many non-English speaking countries like Iran have to add an English abstract of their doctoral or master's theses to their work.

The abstract plays an important role in research as it is a short summary that gives information on a research or a study. It helps readers determine whether they should read the whole work or not. Moreover, it helps readers who do not have much time to read the whole work to know about a study. Normally, the abstract of a master's thesis appears before the table of contents. A good abstract should be concise and complete. It should comprise the problem statement, the research methodology or approach to the problems, the research findings and the implications of the findings (Robert Hazen, 2008). It is, therefore, interesting to investigate translation strategies being employed in translating abstracts of master's theses from Persian into English to see what strategies are used and to what extent the meaning in the translated text is equivalent to that of the original one. Nevertheless, few, if not any, researchers have investigated the employed strategies as well as the cohesion and coherence of translated abstracts.

Abstract, as a brief summary of a research article, thesis, review, conference proceeding or any in-depth analysis of a particular subject or discipline, is often used to help the reader quickly ascertain the paper's purpose. (Robert Hazen, 2008).

In this master's thesis, the researcher would like to investigate the translation strategies used in translating abstracts of master's theses from Persian to English. Moreover, the cohesion and the coherence of these translated works, which are available at the end of each thesis, is assessed using one of the well-known translation evaluation models.

1.4 Research Questions

This thesis will try to answer the following questions after the research is conducted and data is collected.

1. What translation strategies proposed by Baker (1992) are used in translating technical terms in the abstracts of master's theses in the realm of postgraduate Management studies?
2. Are the abstract translations in the realm of postgraduate management studies cohesive according to De Beaugrande and Dressler's (1991) model?
3. Are the abstract translations in the realm of postgraduate management studies coherent according to De Beaugrande and Dressler's (1991) model?

1.5 Definition of the Key Terms

This thesis centers on some key concepts which are concerned about abstract translation. *Abstract*, *Baker's translation strategies*, *Beaugrande and Dressler's model of cohesion* and *Beaugrande and Dressler's model of coherence* are the four main concepts which will be defined here.

1.5.1 What is an Abstract?

An abstract is a brief summary of a research article, thesis, review, conference proceeding or any in-depth analysis of a particular subject or discipline, and is often used to help the reader quickly ascertain the paper's purpose. When used, an abstract always appears at the beginning of a manuscript, acting as the point-of-entry for any

given academic paper or patent application. Abstracting and indexing services for various academic disciplines are aimed at compiling a body of literature for that particular subject. The terms précis or synopsis are used in some publications to refer to the same thing that other publications might call an "abstract". In management reports, an executive summary usually contains more information (and often more sensitive information) than the abstract does. (Gliner & Morgan, 2000).

The abstract of a master's thesis or project is a short summary that gives information of the research study done as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree. Normally, the abstract of a thesis or master's project appears at the very beginning, before the table of contents (Robert Hazen, 2008).

1.5.2 Baker's translation strategies

Baker (1992:26-42) suggests that translators use different strategies for dealing with various types of non-equivalence. Her eight translation strategies to deal with non-equivalence at word level will be used to identify and categorize the translated parsed parts. The strategies are as follows:

1. Translation by a more general word (superordinate): This is one the commonest strategies for dealing with many types of non-equivalence, particularly in the area of propositional meaning. It works equally well in most, if not all, languages, since the hierarchical structure of semantic fields is not language-specific.

2. Translation by a more neutral word/less expressive word: this strategy can be used when there is a noticeable difference in the expressive meaning of a SL word and its nearest TL equivalent.
3. Translation by cultural substitution: this strategy involves replacing a cultural-specific item or expression with a target-language item which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader. The main advantage of using this strategy is that it gives the reader a concept which s/he can identify, something familiar and appealing.
4. Translation using a loan word or a loan word plus explanation: this strategy is particularly common in dealing with culture-specific items, modern concepts, and buzz words. Following the loan word with an explanation is very useful when the word in question is repeated several times in the text. Once explained, the loan word can then be used on its own; the reader can understand it and is not distracted by further lengthy explanations.
5. Translation by paraphrase using a related word: this strategy tends to be used when the concept expressed by the source item is lexicalized in the target language but in a different form, and when the frequency with which a certain form is used in the source text is significantly higher than would be natural in the target language.
6. Translation by paraphrase using an unrelated word: if the concept expressed by the source item is not lexicalized at all in the target language, the paraphrase strategy can still be used in some contexts. Instead of a related word, the

paraphrase may be based on modifying a superordinate or simply on unpacking the meaning of the source item, particularly if the item in question is semantically complex.

7. Translation by omission: this strategy may sound rather drastic, but in fact it does no harm to omit translating a word or expression in some contexts. If the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression is not vital enough to the development of the text to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanations, translators can and often do simply omit translating the word or expression in question.

8. Translation by illustration: this is a useful option if the word which lacks an equivalent in the target language refers to a physical entity which can be illustrated, particularly if there are restrictions on space and if the text has to remain short, concise and to the point.

1.5.3 Beaugrande and Dressler's definition of cohesion

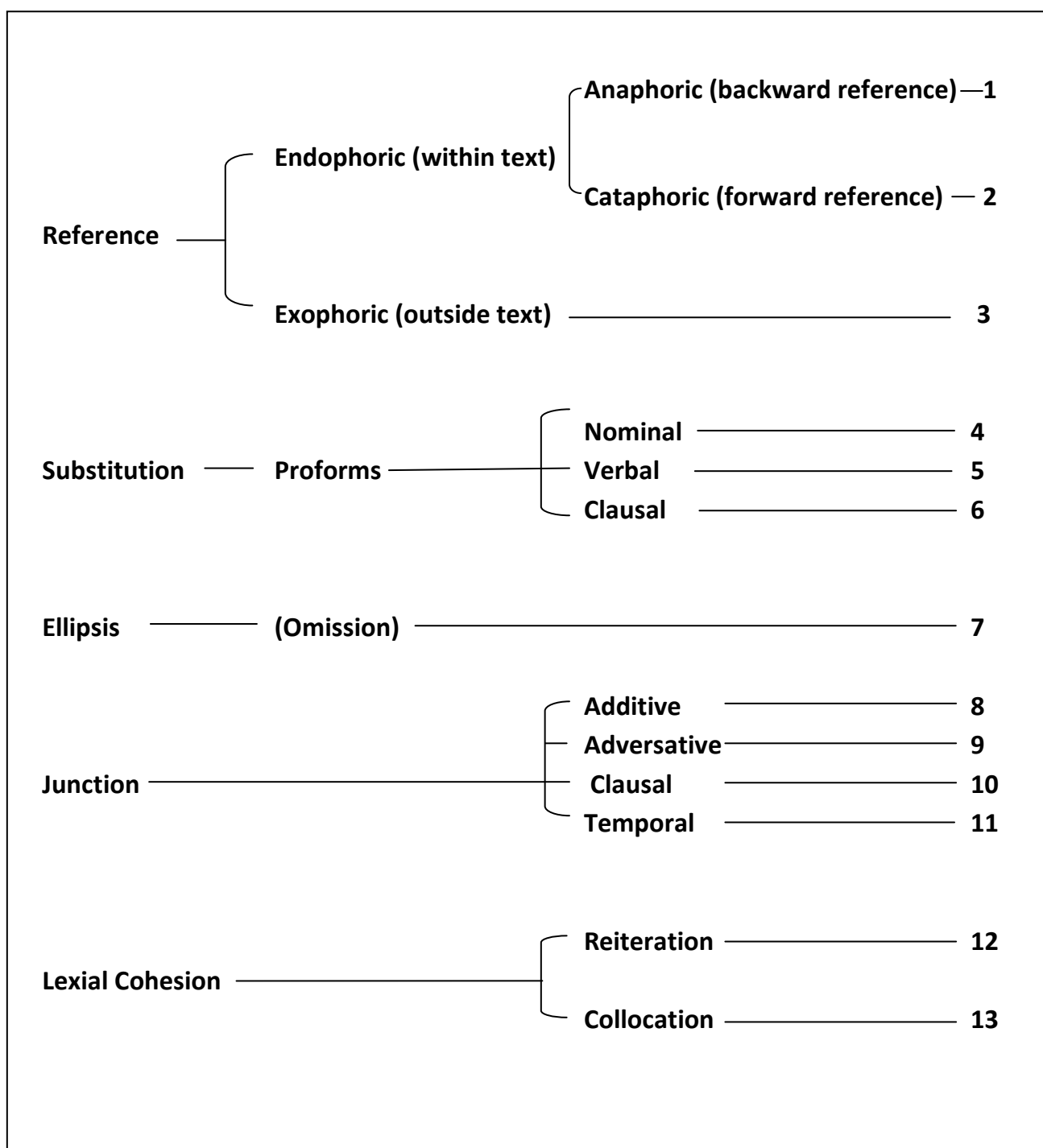
De Beaugrande and Dressler (Bell, 1991) propose seven defining characteristics of text; the set of standards which applies to all texts that possess communicative value, i.e. function in, and as, discourse. Each of the seven is essential and failure to comply with any one of them constitutes failure overall; the 'text' which lacks any one of these characteristics is not a text but merely an aggregate of words, sounds or letters (p. 163).

De Beaugrande and Dressler (Bell, 1991, p. 165) believe that

“... the first two standards – cohesion and coherence – are distinct from each other but share one crucial characteristic; they both have the function of binding the text together by creating sequences of meanings. But it is in the manner in which they do this and the nature of the ‘meaning’ involved that they differ. Cohesion, the first of the seven standards of textuality, makes use of formal surface features (syntax and lexis) to interact with ‘underlying semantic relations’ or ‘underlying functional coherence’ to create textual unity.”

Cohesion is achieved in five major ways by means of sets of markers of cohesive relationship. We shall provide examples (the numbers referring to the examples given after the following figure (1.1)).

Figure 1.1 – Markers of cohesive relationships (Bell, 1991, p. 155)



1. Here's Sue. *She* has just arrived.
2. They've gone to Spain, *the Smiths*.
3. It's over *there*.
4. *We* gave *them* it.
5. Let's *do* it.
6. I think *so*.
7. Who's there? Fred?
8. I got up *and* had a coffee.
9. I woke up *but* went back to sleep.
10. I was awake *so* I got up.
11. I got up *then* I had a coffee.
12. I drank *coffee* after *coffee*.
13. There were plenty of hot drinks: *tea, coffee, milk ...*

So we see that cohesion consists of the mutual connection of components of SURFACE TEXT within a sequence of clauses/sentences; the process being signaled by lexico-syntactic means. Cohesion is, then, concerned with the manipulation of selections from the options available in the MOOD system; Subject, Predicator, Complement, Adjunct, etc.

1.5.4 Beaugrande and Dressler's model of coherence

According to De Beaugrande and Dressler (Bell, 1991), coherence, in contrast to cohesion, consists of the configuration and sequencing of the *concepts* and *relations* of the *textual world* which underlie and are realized by the surface text; the propositional

structures (Actor, Process, Goal, Circumstances, etc.) which are the creation of the systems of *transitivity* .

The distinction between cohesion and coherence can be readily seen in the following examples and explanations provided by De Beaugrande and Dressler (Bell, 1991):

- 1) I had a cup of coffee. I got up. I woke up.
- 2) Burn the paper in the incinerator.
- 3) Generals fly back to front.
- 4) He found her an efficient typist.

The first is perfectly cohesive but lacks, as we know from our `real world' knowledge, coherence; people normally wake up before they get up and have a cup of coffee. It is possible, of course, to have coffee in bed and it is also possible, though less common (it is called sleep walking) to wake up after having already got up and had a coffee; the clauses are fine but the acts are out of order.

The remaining three are syntactically ambiguous with two apparently equally appropriate interpretations:

- 2 (a) Predicator Object
(b) Predicator Object Adjunct
- 3 (a) Subject Predicator Adjunct (place)
(b) Subject Predicator Adjunct (manner)
- 4 (a) Subject Predicator Object (direct) Complement

(b) Subject Predicator Object (direct) Object (indirect)

The – code-relations alone – the cohesive linkages provided by the lexis and syntax – cannot resolve these ambiguities; reference to the co-text is insufficient.

Disambiguation, in these instances, can only be achieved by reference out of the code to the context of the use of the code, i.e. by turning to real-world knowledge and by making inferences on the basis of that knowledge.

We need to know the propositional structure underlying the syntactic structure. *In the incinerator* (in 2) is clearly a realization of an **applies-to** relationship but 'applies to' what; to the *paper* (a quality) or to the *burning* (circumstance; place)?

Equally, *back to front* (in 3) is, without doubt, a Circumstance but is it *where* (place) or *how* (manner)? And is 4 *to be* interpreted (a) Actor Process Carrier Attribute (i.e. He found her to be an efficient typist) or (b) Actor Process Client Goal (i.e. He found an efficient typist *for* her)?

We are still unable to decide, until we ask the question: 'What kind of world do we think we live in?' Not, it should be noted, 'What kind of world do we think we *ought* to live in?' We may regret how things are and may attempt to change them but we have to engage in the activity of matching the world as presented to us by the text (the 'text world') with the world as we know it (the 'real world').

Is paper, necessarily, always in an incinerator ready to be burned? Our commonsense knowledge tells us that it is not and that, without further information about the specific situation of utterance, we are left with the ambiguity.

Do generals fly backwards? Not, we would suppose, in the 'real world'. The text must mean that the generals were flying back to the battle-line. Of course, it is possible to imagine alternative worlds in which generals do swoop around the sky facing the direction from which they have come but that is called 'fiction' or 'fantasy' precisely because it is not a representation of the 'known', 'real' world.

Finally, do we live in a world where a 'boss' (male) normally employs an efficient typist for someone else (female) or one where typists are normally female and expected to be found to be 'efficient'? The first seems implausible and we would be more likely to accept the second.

This appeal to our knowledge of the world and the attempt to get the text to 'make sense' in terms of it raises a number of questions which are of considerable significance for the translator: (a) which world are we attempting to match with the text, given the subjectivity of personal experience, the certainty that different cultures perceive (or, at least, model) the world differently?, (b) how can we act upon the realization of the highly interactive nature of text? and (c) how can we come to any principled understanding of text-processing, unless we find ways of relating 'real world' and 'text world' together in a way which 'makes sense' for us?

1.6 The Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

This research tries to examine the abstracts of master's theses. In fact, it tries to determine the strategies used to translate key words, the cohesion and the coherence of them. However, it is limited from different aspects. First of all, the researcher needed a

few books to study the theoretical framework of the research in greater depth but neither were the books available on the market nor could the researcher buy them on the internet.

Moreover, some libraries of the Islamic Azad University branches the researcher visited did not allow him to access a part or any of the theses because most of them asked for a letter from the Research Office of the researcher's university but the manager of the office declined to issue such a letter. The researcher could finally gather a corpus of only 50 abstracts and their translations, comprising 100 pages, found at the university libraries of Mazandaran. As a result, too few of the abstracts have been only available to the researcher although there are many abstracts available in different university libraries.

Furthermore, this research is delimited by investigating these abstracts for the strategies used in translating technical terms at word level; clearly, it will not be possible to check the strategy used in the translating each word of the abstracts at other levels due to the time limit placed by the university for carrying out a master's thesis. Moreover, this research has studied two of the seven standards of textuality proposed by De Beaugrande and Dressler (1991) in the translated abstracts. The other standards were left unstudied. It is also delimited through choosing Baker's (1992) proposed translation strategies and De Beaugrande and Dressler's (1991) model of cohesion and coherence.

Chapter Two

Review of the Related Literature

2.1 Introduction

Due to the two sided nature of this research, one side concerning the examination of abstracts to see what translation strategies are used and the other related to assessing the cohesion and coherence of the translated abstracts using De Beaugrande and Dressler's Standards of Textuality (1981), the literature review in this research comprises two main parts, namely translation strategies and cohesion and coherence assessment.

2.2 Translations strategies

This section of chapter two contains two subparts. The first deals with theoretical definitions and classifications of translation strategies by different scholars. The other examines the studies carried out by other researchers in this area.

2.2.1 Terminology: Translation Strategies

Different translation theorists have proposed different approaches and emphasized different principles in translation. One influential theorist from the second half of the twentieth century was Nida (1969), who proposed his theories based on his experience in the field of bible translation. During the course of translating the Bible for people from very different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, Nida stressed that the translation of the original text should make efforts to achieve the same response in readers from the target culture as that which the source text brought about in readers from the source culture. A good example to illustrate this is that Nida proposed using a young seal, which is white and innocent of sin in Inuit people's culture, as an

alternative to sheep, when translating Lamb of God, because Inuit people are not familiar with lambs and its cultural implication. Nida argued that to people living in Palestine the words Lamb of God had the connotation of a totally innocent (white) young animal was sacrificed to make up for the sins of people in general. Considering the fact that different languages have different semantic fields to reflect their everyday reality, finding an equivalent that achieves semantic consistency may need to take into account the connotations of particular words. Nida defined the type of effect achieved by this kind of translation as „dynamic equivalence“ (1969, p. 13 ff). According to Hu (1992), a Chinese translation scholar (1992), Nida’s dynamic equivalence is not likely to be attained. This is supported by three concerns. Hu (1992) comments that the meaning of the SL text is unlikely to be transferred to the TL text without distortion. It is possible to find a TL content-form entity which can substitute for its corresponding SL entity, but an entire transference without altering the original connection between the content and the form is unlikely to happen. Hu also argues that even though dynamic equivalence can be achieved in some cases, it does not necessarily mean that it can elicit equivalent response. The differences between the audience of the SL text and the audience of the TL text are so evident that they cannot be eliminated by the so-called dynamic equivalence. What the audience can elicit from a dialogue differs because of cultural differences. According to Hu (1992), despite the efforts made by the translator to reproduce the original meaning of the SL text for the target audience, how the target audience perceives or interprets the text is not under the translator’s control. Hu’s comments are relevant to the current study in that they criticize Nida’s

ideas in relation to the English-Chinese language pair. However, this study will follow Nida in that the researcher agrees that “dynamic equivalence” constitutes an effective translation in terms of overcoming cross-cultural differences and achieving an effect on the Target Language reader that is similar to that in the receivers of the original text. Nida also contends that, in Bible translation, contextual consistency should take precedence over verbal consistency, in other words, the translator should choose words which make sense to the target reader in the given context. It will be interesting to see whether the subtitle translators in the current study could be said to have followed a similar approach to the one advocated by Nida. In addition, Nida examined the different features of various texts, classifying texts according to their linguistic function, ranging from informative, to persuasive and expressive. According to Nida, different texts warrant a different translation approach dependent on the function of the text. In his view, a text that is meant to persuade the audience (such as an advertisement or a piece of propaganda) should be translated in such a way that dynamic equivalence is achieved, rather than formal correspondence. As indicated briefly above, Nida’s theories continue to have relevance today, as an assessment of translation often involves determining whether the translator has followed an approach of maintaining „formal correspondence“ with the original, or of trying to create „dynamic equivalence“ (Nida, 1969). In the researcher’s view, dynamic equivalence will result in translation which has a similar impact on the translation target audience as that which the original text had on the original target audience, in this case, the American viewers. The researcher feels that when it comes to subtitling a television