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# باسپاس

من از همه کسانی که در گردآوری این مجموعه نقش داشتند سپاسگذاری می کنم.  
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## ABSTARCT

This study was conducted to identify and compare the strategies applied by two Persian native translators in rendering Culture Specific Items (CSIs) of a Persian literary text entitled ‘*Savošūn*’. In this study CSIs refer to the materials, concepts, and traditions available in one language and culture, but non-existent in the other language and culture. Aixelá’s proposed strategies of translation of CSIs were taken as the model of this study and 280 extracted CSIs from the original novel were categorized according to the classification proposed by Newmark in 1988. The researcher compared the two translated versions, one of them entitled *Savushun* translated by Mohammad Reza Ghanoonparvar in 1990, and the other one translated by Roxane Zand in 1991, entitled *Persian Requiem*. The results of the comparison were as follows: a) the most frequently used strategy by Ghanoonparvar was *Extra-textual Gloss* (26.701%). In fact he has explained 120 CSIs extra-textually. The most frequently used strategy by Zand was *linguistic translation* (22.513%). She has explained 35 items extra-textually while only named Proper names under the general titles of *Hazrat*, *Imam*, *Shahnameh* and *Ta’zieh*. b) None of the translators has used a single strategy in rendering CSIs under a specific category. c) *Extra-textual Gloss* was the major strategy by both translators in rendering Proper names of ‘*Savošūn*’.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	i
ABSTARCT .....	ii
CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE	
1.1. Background and Purpose .....	1
1.2. Statement of the problem .....	4
1.3. Research Questions .....	6
1.4. Significance of the Study .....	6
1.5. Definition of Key Terms .....	9
1.6. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study .....	11
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE	
2.1. Introduction .....	13
2.2. Translation and Culture .....	15
2.3. Translation and Ideology .....	16
2.4. Literary Translation .....	18
2.4.1. Translation as Text .....	20
2.4.2. Translation as Process .....	20
2.4.3. Links with Social Context .....	21
2.5. Culture Specific Items .....	21
2.6. Translation Strategies .....	22
2.7. Translation Procedures to Translate CSIs.....	24
2.7.1. Newmark's Procedures for Translating Cultural Words .....	26
2.7.2. Vinay and Darbelnet's Translation Procedures .....	31

2.7.3. Aiexlá- Culture Specific Items .....	38
2.8. Proper Names .....	43
2.9. Description of the Corpus .....	50
2.9.1. Savošūn and the Plot .....	50
2.9.2. The Author .....	52
2.9.3. Translators .....	55
2.10. Translation into a Non-Mother Tongue .....	58
2.10.1. Definition of Native Speaker .....	58
2.10.2. Inverse Translation .....	62

### CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction .....	65
3.2. Corpus .....	65
3.3. Theoretical Framework .....	67
3.4. Design .....	70
3.5. Procedures .....	71

### CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.1. Introduction .....	74
4.2. The Corpus .....	74
4.2.1. Material Culture .....	75
4.2.2. Social Culture – Work and Leisure .....	98
4.2.3. Organizations, Customs and Ideas .....	101
4.3. Analysis of Data .....	117
4.4. Proper Names.....	121

4.5. Names of the Characters .....	137
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	
5.1. Introduction .....	144
5.2. Summary of the Findings .....	146
5.3. Proper Names .....	149
5.4. Names of the Characters of ' <i>Savošūn</i> ' .....	150
5.5. Implications .....	151
5.6. Suggestions for Further Research .....	153
REFERENCES .....	154



## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table (4.1): Classification of 280 CSIs of ‘*Savošūn*’

Table (4.2): Persian Foods and Their English Translations and Strategies

Table (4.3): Clothes and Their English Translations and Strategies

Table (4.4): Houses and Their English Translations and Strategies

Table (4.5): Transport and Its English Translations and Strategies

Table (4.6): Objects and Their English Translations and Strategies

Table (4.7): Measurement and Its English Translations and Strategies

Table (4.8): Places and Their English Translations and Strategies

Table (4.9): Social Culture and Their English Translations and Strategies

Table (4.10): Social Customs and Their English Translations and Strategies

Table (4.11): Legal Ideas and Their English Translations and Strategies

Table (4.12): Religious Concepts and Their English Translations and Strategies

Table (4.13): The Frequency and Percentage of Strategies Used by Translators in  
Rendering CSIs

Table (4.14): Proper Names and Their English Translations and Strategies

Table (4.15): The Frequency and Percentage of Strategies Used by Translators in  
Rendering Proper Names

Table (4.16): Names and Their English Translations

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure (4.1): Percentages of Strategies Used by M. R. Ghanoonparvar

Figure (4.2) Percentages of Strategies Used by R. Zand

Figure (4.3) Percentages of Strategies Used by M. R. Ghanoonparvar in Rendering  
52 Proper Names

Figure (4.4) Percentages of Strategies Used by Roxane Zand in Rendering 52  
Proper Names

# CHAPTER I

## Background and Purpose

“Culture-oriented translation studies” have been taken into consideration in translation studies “around 1980” (Leppihalme, 1997, p. 1). In fact “linguistic theories of translation have been sidelined and attention has centred on translation as cultural transfer and the interface of translation with other growing disciplines within cultural studies” (Munday, 2006, p. 141).

Regarding different senses of “cultural translation”, Kate Sturge (2008) states,

The term “cultural translation” is used in many different contexts and senses. In some of these it is a metaphor that radically questions translation’s traditional parameters, but a somewhat narrower use of the term refers to those practices of Literary Translation that mediate cultural difference, or try to convey extensive cultural background, or set out to represent another culture via translation. In this sense “cultural translation” is counterposed to a “linguistic” or “grammatical” translation that is limited in scope to the sentences on the page (as cited in Baker, 2009, p. 67).

Sturge (2008) explains that cultural translation “raises complex technical issues: how to deal with features like dialect and heteroglossia, literary allusions, culturally specific items such as food or architecture, or further-reaching differences in the assumed contextual knowledge that surrounds the text and gives it meaning” (2008, as cited in Baker, 2009, p. 67).

Among the problematic factors involved in cultural translation, this study set out to concentrate mainly on the translation of Culture Specific Items (CSIs). In order to clarify the concept of culture, the researcher refers to Larson (1984) who points out, “culture is a complex of beliefs, attitudes, values, and rules which a group of people share” (p. 431). He notes that the translator needs to understand beliefs, attitudes, values, and the rules of the source language (SL) audience in order to adequately understand the source text (ST) and adequately translate it for people who have a different set of beliefs, attitudes, values, and rules (p. 431). In this relation, Culture Specific Items are:

Those textually actualized items whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the nonexistence of the referred item or of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text (Aixelá, 1996, as cited in Alvarez & Vidal, p. 58).

This definition of CSIs demonstrates that translating these items from one language to another is a complicated and vital task and that translator should be aware of cultural differences between ST and Target text (TT) in literary translation.

Actually, the selected literary text for the purpose of this study, namely '*Savošūn*' contains profound Persian cultural items such as religious ideas, social customs, kinds of foods, clothes and many proper names and so on, that the translation of them needs broad awareness of the differences between SL and target language (TL) cultures.

To translate CSIs, translators resort to translation strategies that various translation scholars have presented. Lörscher (1991) defines translation strategy as "a potentially conscious procedure for the solution of a problem which an individual is faced with when translating a text segment from one language to another" (as cited in Leppihalme, 1997, p. 24). In this regard Aixelá (1996) groups all possible strategies applied to CSIs in translation. This categorization, as he claims, is intended to have a "methodological usefulness, and not to describe objectively any supposedly pre-existing classes" (as cited in Alvarez & Vidal, p. 60). In this study Aixelá's categorization was selected as the model for identifying strategies used by two Persian native translators in rendering CSIs from Persian into English. Besides, Newmark's classification of cultural words was considered practical and convenient by the researcher for the classification of 280 extracted CSI from '*Savošūn*'.

## Statement of the Problem:

As mentioned by Zare-Behtash (2010, ¶ 26) “a translator who uses a cultural approach is simply recognizing that each language contains elements which are derived from its culture, that every text is anchored in a specific culture, and that conventions of text production and reception vary from culture to culture”. Among different types of translation, “literary translation is an original subjective activity at the centre of a complex network of social and cultural practices” (Bush, 1998, as cited in Zare-Behtash, 2010, ¶ 4). Therefore “literary translators are often seen as communicators between cultures” (Baker & Saldanha, 2009, p.156). And translation of these texts “is the most testing type of translation, because the first, basic articulation of meaning (the word) is as important as the second (the sentence) and the effort to make word, sentence and text cohere requires continuous compromise and readjustment” (Newmark, 1988, p. 162).

*‘Savošūn’* as a literary masterpiece which is the material of this study entails many elements that are typical of the Persian culture, and are only really accessible and meaningful to people who have grown up within the culture. Persian cultural elements such as wedding ceremonies, Qashqai’s tribal life, images of Shrines and Sufis, burial ceremonies, Persian requiem, and etc. are culture specific and pose many translation problems.

It can be said that the main problem with translating culture-specific items is related to the lexical and cognitive gaps between the SL and the TL. It is therefore noteworthy to mention Leppihalme's keywords in her conception of the translator as "cultural mediator" and "decision-maker" who are "competent" and "responsible" (1997, p. 19). She points out that "TT readers have a different cognitive environment from ST readers, which means that the translator will need to consider also the implicit part of the message, the contextual and referential part, and to decide whether it needs to be explicated in the TT" (1997, p. 20).

Furthermore, the translators of '*Savošūn*', Mohammad Reza Ghanoonparvar and Roxane Zand, have translated the text from Persian into English. It means that CSIs of this significant literary text have been translated into English by two translators who are Persian native ones.

It should be noted that many research have been conducted to investigate different problems which translators are faced with while translating from English into Persian but a few carried out to identify the strategies that are used by Persian native translators in rendering CSIs from their native language (Persian) into English.

## Research Questions:

The present study was conducted to address the following research questions:

- 1) What strategies have been used by M. R. Ghanoonparvar in rendering culture specific items of '*Savošūn*' according to Aixelá's model?
- 2) What strategies have been used by R. Zand in rendering culture specific items of '*Savošūn*' according to Aixelá's model?
- 3) What is the most frequently used procedure in dealing with culture specific items by each translator?

## Significance of the Study:

The current study can be considered important from two perspectives. First, it is related to the significance of CSIs of '*Savošūn*'. This masterpiece has been packed with Persian traditional customs and rituals such as Shirazi marriage, religious and funeral ceremonies. It evokes images of Shrines and Sufis, of the tombs of the great poets, of Persepolis and the great monuments of pre-Islamic Iran, and, in the hinterland, of the nomadic (Qashqai) tribes which is not however easy to convey in a few sentences the significance of tribalism in the Iranian consciousness. Daneshvar's style is both sensitive and imaginative, while following cultural themes and metaphors. '*Savošūn*' is a unique piece of literature that transcends the boundaries of the historical community in which it



was written, it is also the best single work for understanding modern Iran (Spooner, 1990). According to these, it can be said that the process of translating CSIs of these kinds of texts which are encompassed ST traditional customs and rituals are problematic. Considering this fact Aixelá (1996) states:

In translation a CSI does not exist of itself, but as the result of a conflict arising from any linguistically represented reference in a source text which, when transferred to a target language, poses a translation problem due to the nonexistence or to the different value (whether determined by ideology, usage, frequency, etc.) of the given item in the target language culture (p. 57).

Secondly, this novel has been translated into English by two translators, once by Mohammad Reza Ghanoonparvar in 1990 and then in 1991 by Roxane Zand. The point is that the translators are Persian natives and have translated a native language text to a foreign language while it is commonly believed that translators have better performance in translating a foreign text into their native language and “inverse translation, especially of literary texts, has always been frowned upon within translation studies in Western cultures with a dominant language” (Pokorn, 2005, p. ix). In this relation, James Dickins (2005) points out, “translator training normally focuses on translation into the mother tongue, because higher quality is achieved in that direction than in translating into a foreign language” (p. 2). The researcher then aimed to find out what strategies

Persian native translators have used in rendering CSIs of '*Savošūn*' in their translated versions. Therefore the two English translated versions of this novel were considered as sources of this comparative analysis. In this regard M. Snell-Hornby (1985) states, "... the problems do not depend on the source text itself, but on the significance of the translated text for its readers as members of a certain culture, or of a sub-group within that culture, with the constellation of knowledge, judgement and perception they have developed from it" (as cited in Alvarez & Vidal, 1996, p. 57).

The researcher of this study took Aixelá's taxonomy of CSIs into account in order to identify the strategies applied by the two Persian native translators in rendering CSIs of '*Savošūn*'. These strategies were adopted as the model, due to Aixelá's specific definition of CSIs and the classification of strategies that consists of all possible strategies applied to CSIs in translation and are ordered based on the degree of intercultural manipulation (from a lesser to a greater), in order to obtain a frame which will allow discovering quickly the general tendency of a translation (with conservative or substitutive nature). Aixelá's "conscious categorization has a methodological usefulness and not to describe objectively any supposedly pre-existing classes" (as cited in Alvarez & Vidal, 1996, p. 60).

Actually, the findings of this study are helpful in understanding the general tendency (conservative or substitutive) of Persian native translators in rendering CSIs from Persian into English.

### **Definition of Key Terms:**

**Culture:** Goodenough (1964) defines the concept of culture as:

Whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its [i.e., a society's] members, and do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves...Culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behavior, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their model of perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them (as cited in Hymes, 1966, p. 36).

Also according to Larson culture is “a complex of beliefs, attitudes, values, and rules which a group of people share” (Larson 1984, p. 431). He notes that the translator needs to understand beliefs, attitudes, values, and the rules of the SL audience in order to adequately understand the ST and adequately translate it for people who have a different set of beliefs, attitudes, values, and rules.

**Culture-Specific Items (CSIs):** According to Aixelá (1996):

CSIs refer to those textually actualized items whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the nonexistence of the referred item or of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text (as cited in Alvarez & Vidal, p. 58).

In this study the researcher considered CSIs as items refer to different aspects of everyday life such as materials or artifacts, social customs, religious concepts and proper names that are available in one culture and language (here Persian) but non-existent in the other culture and language (English).

**Translation strategy:** Lörcher (1991) distinguishes the term ‘strategy’ from related notions such as *method*, *plan*, *rule* and *tactics* and defines it as: “a potentially conscious procedure for the solution of a problem which an individual is faced with, when translating a text segment from one language to another” (as cited in Leppihalme 1997, p. 24). In this relation, Leppihalme (1997), points out that Lörcher’s analysis of the constituents of the concept clarifies that “in non-technical use, strategy implies (1) procedures carried out by an individual; (2) planning; (3) goals; and (4) a sequence of actions for reaching a goal (p. 24). According to Leppihalme (1997), Lörcher focuses on