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AN ANALYSIS OF PERSIAN TRANSLATION OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGY IN GEORGE ORWELL'S WORKS: A RELEVANCE APPROACH

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ART IN TRANSLATION STUDIES

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In the name of God

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Abstract

Considering translation as a means of communication, the goal of all translators should be communicating what the original text means. To achieve this purpose, what is translated is expected to be relevant to the target text reader. Scholars of the field offer different theoretical frameworks and believe that using them in the process of translation will help a more communicative translation to be done.

This study aimed to take the case of three literary works by George Orwell, on the basis of his social and political ideology and apply Relevance theory proposed by Gutt (2004) to find out what translation strategies i.e. which one of the two direct and indirect translations are used more by the Persian translators to infer the original author's ideology. It also aimed to check the degree to which the translators managed to transfer the original ideology to the target text and achieving optimal relevance, considering the cultural, social and political differences of the original and target audiences. Another aim was to see how successful the Persian translations were in transferring the conceptual relevance of the original author's ideology. In order to make the comparison, in addition to the researcher, ten M.A students of translation rated and evaluated data in a questionnaire based on the criteria mentioned at its beginning.The analysis of the data revealed that the indirect translation was used more in order to achieve optimal relevance, but it seems that it was mostly not very successful in transferring the conceptual relevance of the original author's ideology.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Translation is not merely an interlinguistic process. It is more complex than replacing source language text with target language text and includes cultural and educational nuances that can shape the options and attitudes of recipients. Translations are never produced in a cultural or political vacuum and cannot be isolated from the context in which the texts are embedded (Dingwaney and Maier, 1995, p.3).

Translation Studies is a new discipline which is concerned with the study of theory and phenomena of translation and it has really only began in the past fifty years. Among different theories which introduce variants norms about translation, the concept of equivalence is significant. A classical concern for translation theory which is frequently mentioned in older literature on the subject is the level at which equivalence should be established, i.e. what units of translation one should choose during the translation process. Catford (1965, p.21) suggests that the goal of translation theory is to define the nature of translation equivalence.

For a translator, the fundamental issue is searching for equivalents that produce the same effects in the translated text as those that the author was seeking for readers of the original text. This forces the translator to consider the text, always from the perspective of literary translation, as the base of an ongoing "negotiation" with the author so that the language of the new text presents equivalent values to those of the original language, without forgetting its strength, dynamic elements, or aesthetic quality. It is generally accepted that meanings are not translated, but messages, which is the reason that the text must be considered in is totality.

When the source and target languages belong to different cultural groups, the first problem faced by the translator is finding terms in his or her own language that express the highest level of faithfulness possible to the meaning of certain words. For example, words related to typical fabrics, culinary specialties, or jobs that are all particular to the culture of the author and the audience of the original text needs to be handled with care.

About the concept of literary translation, Professor Rainer Schulte mentioned that it bridges the delicate emotional connections between cultures and languages and furthers the understanding of human beings across national borders. In the act of literary translation the soul of another culture becomes transparent, and the translator recreates the refined sensibilities of foreign countries and their people through the linguistic, musical, rhythmic, and visual possibilities of the new language.

It has sometimes been said that "the translation of literary works is considered by many [to be] one of the highest forms of translation as it involves so much more than simply translating text." It has also been said that "the very concept of translation tends to be restricted to literary translation in comparison with other types of translation and other texts." The concept of different types of translation is directly related to Katherina Weiss' functional approach on a

textual level, which calls for a different translation strategy to be employed for different text types and the situation in which they will be used.

If literary translation is "the highest form of translation", then there seems to be some inconsistency in the fact that it is perhaps the least financially rewarded and that there is very little agency work. This last point could be explained by the fact that many authors and publishing companies tend to work with a preferred translator. Nevertheless, there seems to be no shortage of translators willing to pursue the dream of having their work published. There may be many reasons for this, some of them altruistic, some of them less so. Some literary translators perceive their work to be "making a contribution, however small, to greater understanding between cultures", while others persevere "out of love for literature." However, there is something intellectually challenging and intrinsically satisfying in toiling long and hard to find a solution to a puzzle, and it is rewarding and it may be considered prestigious to see one's name associated with that of a well-known author. Whatever the reasons for deciding to become a literary translator, Landers tells us that "translation should be enjoyable, not something we look upon as a chore", and that "perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of good literary translators is their sense of dedication."

In this work a good and successful translation is defined by 2 main features to be checked in scoring for each unit of translation maintained by Farahzad (1992) and they are:

1.   Accuracy: the translation should convey the information in the ST precisely i.e. the translation should be close to the ST

2.   Appropriateness: the sentences sound fluent and native, and are correct in terms of structure

And as well, by what Gutt (1991) said about the ultimate goal of translation, that is its optimal relevance to the source language text as well as target cultural context. Also based on the Minimax theory, the translator should communicate maximum contextual effects for minimal processing effort. So these factors will show how successfulor unsuccessful are the Persian translations in transferring the conceptual relevance of the original author's ideology in this work.

The criterion for translation is the key factor in translation theory and is also the standard to criticize whether the translation is good or not. Different translation theorists have advanced different theories according to their own points of view. Sperber& Wilson proposed their influential Relevance Theory from the cognitive point of view in 1986. Then in 1991, Ernst-August Gutt applied RT to translation study and put forward his famous relevance-theoretic translation approach (Zhao Yanchun, 1999).

In 1975, Grice proposed a theory of cooperative principle and conversational maxims. The main idea of Grice's principle is that if a behavior is communicative, it must be assumed that the communicator is trying to meet certain standards and Grice called these standards maxims: the maxim of quality, the maxim of quantity, the maxim of relevance and the maxim of manner. On the basis of maxim of relevance, Sperber and Wilson proposed the relevance theory in their book Relevance: Communication and Cognition in 1979. In this book, Sperber and Wilson put forward the relevance theory which is mainly concerned with communication and cognition and has exerted a far-reaching influence on the western pragmatic field. Relevance theory, a branch of pragmatics, is about communication from the cognitive point. Since then, many scholars home and abroad have done further researches on this theory

On the developing stage, in 1981, Sperber and Wilson published an article entitled On Grice's theory of conversational implicature, and pointed out the relevance theory can subsume Grice's cooperative principles as well as all maxims under the principles. They also made comparisons between each maxim of cooperative principles and the relevance theory. However, relevance theory doesn't oppose to Grice's theory. In comparison to Grice's theory, relevance theory is brief and clear, that's why Sperber and Wilson used the word "subsume" instead of replace. During this period, relevance theory was defined by Sperber and Wilson as "The speaker has made the minimal efforts to achieve the maximal relevance". (Sperber& Wilson 1981)

RT provides us with a new approach to pragmatics, which attempts to answer not only philosophical question about the nature of communication, but also psychological question about how the interpretation process unfolds in the hearer's mind. RT focuses on both human communication and cognition. In the framework of RT, utterance comprehension is not just a mechanical decoding process, but an intelligent activity involving reasoning and imagination. From the communicator's end, to communicate is to overtly claim an individual's attention with the implication that the information communicated is relevant. From the hearer's point of view, to understand an utterance is to recover the overtly intended interpretation through inferential process.

RT is concerned with language communication. In Gutt's point of view, translation is a special form of communication, which involves three parts: the original author, the translator and the target language text reader, thus it should follow the general rule of communication. Therefore, in the framework of RT, translation is also a process of ostensive-inferential communication. Because translation concerns with two languages and cultures as well as the author, translator and reader, this ostensive-inferential process constitutes two processes of communication. And

the difference caused by intercultural and intralingual communication combined with the intervention of translator make the situation more complex (Lin Kenan, 1994).

1.2. Statement of the problem

Considering the application of relevance theory in translation, on the one hand the translator should make inference according to the ostensive behavior of the original author and achieve the efficient contextual effect, and on the other s/he has to show his/her understanding of the original author's intention ostensively to the target language text reader in order for the reader to be able to make inference and get contextual effect. These two communication processes are not static but dynamic, inevitably being affected by the cognitive psychology of the three parts.

In order to achieve efficient contextual effect, the translator has to choose code based on both the intention of original author as well as the cognitive environment of target language text reader; so that he can find out optimal relevance between the translation and context.

Since the ultimate goal for translation, as is assumed by Gutt (1991), is its optimal relevance to the source language text as well as the target cultural context on which the contextual assumptions are built; so the translator, as a communicator, should match the source language text communicator's intention with the target language text reader's expectation.

Gutt also distinguishes two different approaches to translation, direct and indirect translation. Applied to cross-language situations, one can define a mode of interlingual communication, direct translation, which presumes that the intended interpretation of the receptor text will completely resemble the intended interpretation of the original - provided it is processed in the original context (Gutt 1991, pp.128-129). Since contextual information is rarely ever exactly the

same between two individuals, the claim of direct translation may be better expressed as a dependency relationship: the closer the context of a direct translation resembles that intended for the original, the closer its interpretation will resemble that of the original. (Gutt, 2004)

In Gutt's view, direct and indirect translation are not two new approaches to be applied, but two broad categories in which existing translation methods can be analyzed for communicative effectiveness. Either translators strive for complete interpretive resemblance (direct translation) or they settle for interpretive resemblance in relevant respects (indirect translation). Their translation objective, defined in terms of the desired level of interpretive resemblance, determines the conditions for communicative success and, therefore, the choice of translation methods.

If the translation objective is complete interpretive resemblance, relevance theory lays down two conditions for communicative success, one linguistic, the other contextual. Firstly, the translation must retain all the communicative clues of the original. The linguistic properties of the source text functioned as communicative clues from which the original readers could infer the author's intended meaning. (Smith, 2002) Secondly, the translation must presuppose that the receptor audience will "interpret [it] in the context envisaged (by the original author) for the original audience" (Winckler and Van der Merwe 1993). As Gutt mentioned an essential implication of relevance theory is that there is a causal interdependence between stimulus, context and interpretation. Since a stimulus functions as a clue to meaning in a context, any change of context can and often does completely alter the meaning of a statement.

If the translation's objective is less than complete interpretive resemblance (indirect translation), the conditions for success change. Indirect translation aims to convey only those assumptions of the original text that are deemed relevant to the target audience. Once it is no longer essential to

capture every nuance of meaning, the requirement that the receptor audience interpret the translation using the contextual assumptions envisaged for the original audience becomes obsolete because the relevant points can usually be conveyed in the receptor context, perhaps by reformulating some phrases to make their contextual implications explicit. What is essential for an indirect translation is to maximize relevance, that is, to spontaneously communicate maximum contextual effects for minimum processing effort. This is best done by allowing the receptor audience to interpret it using the contextual assumptions of the receptor language context. An indirect translation is an accurate, though incomplete, representation of the content of the source text in the receptor language. Although it does not endeavor to convey all the assumptions of the source text, those assumptions it does convey must be derived from the source text. (Smith, 2002)

This study aims at analyzing the translation of social and political ideology of George Orwell in Down and Out in Paris and London, Animal farms and 1984 in Persian, based on relevance-theory proposed by Gutt (1991) and the distinction he made between direct and indirect translation. The focus of the study , considering the differences between the two cultures as well as social and political situations, to see the extent to which the translators used each one of direct or indirect translation to infer the intention and ideology of the original author so that the reader can get the right contextual effect without unnecessary processing effort.

1.3. Significance of study

Conveying all the concepts in the source text, especially implicit concepts and information related to the ideology of the writer is of a great importance in the process of translation. In the relevance theory the ultimate goal for translation, as is assumed by Gutt (1991), is its optimal

relevance to the source language text as well as the target cultural context on which the contextual assumptions are built.

What is significant here is to find out the extent to which the ideology of the source text author, as understood in the original work, is conveyed in the act of translation and which one of direct or indirect method of translation, considering their definition based on relevance theory, are used the most by different translators of Orwell's three books.

1.4. Purpose of the study

This study aims to take Orwell's social and political ideology and its Persian translations into account and evaluate it on the basis of the application of relevance theory in translation proposed by Gutt (1991).

What is important here is to see which one of the two direct and indirect translations are used more by the translators to infer the original author's ideology and to transfer it to the target text and achieving optimal relevance, considering the two different cultural, social and political situations of the original and target audiences. It will also focus on how successful or not successful are the Persian translations in transferring the conceptual relevance of the original author's ideology.

1.5. Theoretical framework

To investigate the relevance theory approach on three literary texts and their translation into Persian, Down and Out in Paris and London, Animal farms and 1984 by George Orwell are selected on the basis of his social and political ideology.

After the necessary data have been selected based on the ideology of the original author , their equivalents in Persian translations will also be tabulated categorically; then, data selected in all texts will be analyzed based on Relevance-theory model proposed by Gutt (1991).

In Gutt's view, direct and indirect translation are not two new approaches to be applied, but two broad categories in which existing translation methods can be analyzed for communicative effectiveness. Either translators strive for complete interpretive resemblance (direct translation) or they settle for interpretive resemblance in relevant respects (indirect translation). Their translation objective, defined in terms of the desired level of interpretive resemblance, determines the conditions for communicative success and, therefore, the choice of translation methods.

This study would compare the original texts with their translated versions and would find out which one of the two direct and indirect translations are used more by the translators to infer the original author's ideology and to transfer it to the target text and achieving optimal relevance, considering the cultural, social and political differences of the original and target audiences; as well as how successful or not successful are the Persian translations in transferring the conceptual relevance of the original author's ideology.

In order to make the comparison, in addition to the researcher, ten M.A students of translation will rate and evaluate data as well based on the criteria mentioned below:

Farahzad (1992) maintained that 2 main features are to be checked in scoring for each unit of translation and they are:

1.   Accuracy: the translation should convey the information in the ST precisely i.e. the translation should be close to the ST

2.   Appropriateness: the sentences sound fluent and native, and are correct in terms of structure

Gutt (1991) said that the ultimate goal of translation is its optimal relevance to the source language text as well as target cultural context. Also based on the Minimax theory, the translator should communicate maximum contextual effects for minimal processing effort.According to the Minimax principle, a successful communication is the one in which maximum gain is possible with minimum effort.

1.6. Research questions

1.   To what extent have the Persian translations of Orwell's works been successful in transferring the conceptual relevance?

2. What are the frequency counts of translation strategies for achieving optimal relevance in target texts?

1.7.Definition of key terms

1.   Relevance Theory: Sperber and Wilson (1986) define this as an expectation on the part of the reader that an attempt at interpretation will yield adequate contextual effect at minimal processing effort. (Hatim&Munday, 2004)

2.   Translation: The process of communicating the meaning of the source language text in the natural form of the receptor language. (Larson, 1984)

3.   Ideology:

a. The body of doctrine, myth, belief, etc., that guides an individual, social movement, institution, class, or large group.

b. Such a body of doctrine, myth, etc., with reference to some political and social plan, as that of fascism, along with the devices for putting it into operation. (dictionary.com)

4.   Direct translation: it endeavors to convey all the assumption conveyed by the source text and strives for complete interpretive resemblance. (Smith, 2002)

5.   Indirect translation: it may settle for conveying only those assumptions of the original text that are most relevant to the target audience. In other words it settles for interpretive resemblance in relevant respects. (Smith, 2002)